

Others



Ever notice that it is not easy to think of others when you just hit your thumb with a hammer, Hurt is like that. It makes even the spiritually mature become absorbed with their own pain. Hurt makes us self centered. Emotional hurt can be the most isolating of all. There is nothing more likely to cause self centered behavior and thought than emotional pain.

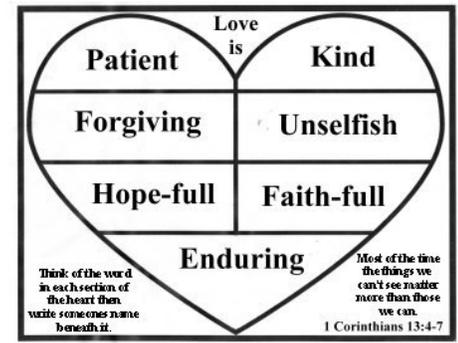
Children have less scar tissue than adults and are thus prone to being hurt deeply without we adults even noticing. The greatest of childhood hurts is likely the divorce of parents. Whether the hurt is seemingly large or small the result is the same...an exaggerated interest in self. This self centeredness leads easily to preoccupation with drugs, sex, greed etc. anything that helps a child feel more powerful or at least to forget their hurt for a time. The following activity can be a help with adults, but especially when working with a group of children...VBS, Sunday School, etc.

Draw a heart similar to the one pictured here. Divide the heart into seven sections selected from the chapter on love 1 Corinthians 13. My choices would be: Patient, Kind, Forgiving, Unselfish, hope-full, Faith-full and enduring but do make your own. If desired the heart can be colored making a rainbow of love. Leave enough space in each section of the heart to write in a few names.

The children take turns choosing whose name goes in which section of the heart. For example: "Shannon, our first quality for a whole heart is Generous. Who in this group do you think is generous. Proceed around the group until each child has had his or her name given at least once, likely more than once, If one child seems to be left out stop and work with the problem, Example; "Alright children no one has given Jerry's name. All of us have these things in our hearts. Sometimes it is just harder to see them because a person has been hurt. Who will take a real good look at Jerry and tell me which part of the heart we can write his name in. Jerry may not see these things himself so we have to help him,

The only rule is that you can't give your own name. The idea of focusing on others catches on very quickly. Sixteen year olds and six year olds are the two groups who need it most, six year olds because they are view of self worth and sixteen year olds because they are preparing to refind it in a life of their own. One wonder-full side effect of the game is that the children are affirmed for affirminmg one another. This in itself can be a difficult situation to set up.

Another nice characteristic of the exercise is that it can be repeated any time it is needed, It can be helpful when one child is having a difficult time being included by other children. Abused children are especially apt to be rejected as they may retreat from everyone, even their peer group, End the lesson in one of two ways. Appeal to the children to look for the good in other people because it will help them act the way God wants us to. Or explain that people who have been hurt may not be able to love as easily as other people. These people will likely sense that they are not loving freely and may make them feel unworthy to receive love. They may push



people away to keep from facing the love they feel they do not deserve. Which is why each of us should keep in mind that our Sunday School class is actually a church...a group of people doing their best to love one another and look for the good in others, a daily attempt to build them up.

Even we adults may sit next to the lonely, the rejected without realizing we could be building them up. With God on our side we need not ignore one another's pain. The clouds in us all will fade if we succeed in helping one another see others as Jesus sees them.

I have found the exercise excellent when entering a new Sunday School class as teacher. It tends to make the children aware of one another. Even those who have experienced little hurt of their own are able to understand the need to focus on others. It builds us as it builds them.

Charles White is a retired christian pre-school teacher and web editor of www.bibleparent.com