

Human Relations Day

Preparation: *Bring a backpack filled with heavy books.*

Good morning! How is everyone today? Are you having a good new year so far?

Allow children to answer.

Show children the backpack.

What do I have here?

Allow children to answer.

That's right. It's a backpack. How do you wear a backpack?

Allow children to answer.

Does anyone want to try on this backpack?

Call on a child and let him or her try to wear the backpack. If, after trying, the child says he or she can't put it on, ask why. If the child is able to put it on, ask how it feels. The child should say "heavy." Allow other children to lift the backpack if they wish.

Ask the children: Would you be able to walk very far with this on your back?

Allow children to answer.

What about doing jumping jacks with this on your back?

Allow children to answer. Add similar questions, asking if they could do a variety of difficult activities while wearing the backpack.

Why couldn't you do those things?

Allow children to answer.

That's right. The backpack would weigh you down too much. You would get too tired to keep going. It would be too hard.

Sometimes other things can weigh people down. If you were super tired, even without the backpack, would it be hard to do those same things?

Allow children to answer.

What if you were hungry? Would that make it difficult to do your homework or to stay awake in school?



Allow children to answer.

Sometimes children grow up with many things weighing them down. Maybe they don't get enough to eat. Maybe they don't have air conditioning or heat in their home. Maybe teenagers have to get a job to help their family and don't have enough time to finish their homework. Maybe there is a lot of violence in their neighborhood. All these things would make it difficult to grow up, stay healthy and be good students. It would be kind of like trying to live your life with this heavy backpack on your back all the time. How would that make you feel?

Allow children to answer.

In the church, we work to help children and adults who have these and other problems preventing them from leading healthy lives. We learn here at church that God loves everyone and that all people are God's children. So when some of God's children are not able to live happy and healthy lives, it is our job as Christians to help.

Today we celebrate **Human Relations Day**, and we will share a special offering. The money we collect will go to programs in the United States and Puerto Rico that help everyone have a fair chance in life.

Let's pray.

Dear God, thank you for all you have given us. Help us to make sure every one of your children has enough to eat and is able to go to school to prepare for a better life. Please help everyone who is weighed down by different problems like a heavy backpack and help us to lighten their load. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.