

Five Truths for Loving Those Who Believe Differently

As our children grow up in a diverse world, it's important that we teach them to peacefully coexist with people who have different backgrounds, ideals, and lifestyles. Consider sharing these truths in your next family home evening or family council.

1 Many good people believe differently.

The fact that someone believes or behaves differently than we do doesn't necessarily mean they're bad. Most people are trying their best to follow what they believe is right. If your children are wondering why a person is making choices that we know are wrong, explain that not everyone has the same gospel understanding we have.

Discussion: Who are some people we know outside the Church? What good things are they doing? Why is it important to look for the good in others?



2 We should respect people's agency.

Agency is "the ability and privilege God gives people to choose and to act for themselves."¹ It is a right that we chose to preserve in premortality and that we must continue to protect now, for us and for others. Therefore, we should respect other people's right to choose, even when their choices are different from our own.

Discussion: What are some daily decisions that we each make? (Examples: wardrobe, food, playtime.) What are the consequences of these decisions? How would we feel if we lost that agency?



3 God loves all of His children.

Every person is a beloved child of God, and "all are alike unto [Him]" (2 Nephi 26:33). Just as God "esteemeth all flesh in one" (1 Nephi 17:35), we should treat others with equal love and respect.

Discussion: Think of a friend not of our faith. Name five similarities we share. Why should we focus on similarities more than differences? What evidence do we see of God's love for those who believe differently?



4 Kindness is not condoning.

People may worry that supporting a person who doesn't live according to gospel teachings means advocating a lifestyle they don't agree with. But you can love someone without approving of that person's choices. The Lord commanded, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12) and "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). Love will never be the wrong way to treat someone.

Discussion: Think of a friend at school who's different. How can you reach out in kindness, friendship, and love?



CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

With Children

- Julie Cornelius-Huang, "Don't Forget to Pray for Erik," *Friend*, Jan. 2017, 36.
 - Katie Pike Brooks, "The Perfect Match," *Friend*, July 2019, 22.
 - Henry D., "Friends and Other Faiths," *Friend*, July 2019, 21.
- For other resources, visit lessonhelps.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



5 We can be good examples without making people feel bad.

In our interactions with others, we should take extra care to communicate love and inclusion. We should never make someone feel like they don't belong.

Discussion: How can we make others feel welcomed instead of judged or excluded? How can we be an example? Try role-playing different situations, responding in a Christlike way. ■

NOTE

1. Guide to the Scriptures, "Agency," scriptures.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.



With Teens

- Jeffrey R. Holland, "Conviction with Compassion," *New Era*, July 2013, 2.
 - David A. Edwards, "Do's and Don'ts of Defending Your Beliefs," *New Era*, Aug. 2014, 18.
 - "What does it really mean to be tolerant and not judgmental?" *New Era*, July 2018, 43.
- For other resources, visit youth.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

