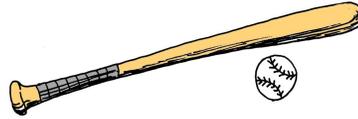


A HOME RUN – OR NOT

Theme: Loving others

Scripture: Matthew 22:37-39



Today's story is about a girls' softball team. One day they were playing a game against a rival team. It was an exciting game because the score was so close. Right up to the last inning the score was tied.

One of the girls came up to the plate and got ready for the pitch. The pitcher wound up and threw the ball, the girl swung the bat with all her might and WHAM! - the ball soared out over the fence for a home run. Her teammates were so excited they were all jumping up and down, yelling, "We won! We won!"

However, when the girl hit the ball, she twisted her ankle so badly she couldn't run. And according to the rules, even if you hit the ball over the fence you still have to run around and touch all the bases in order for it to count as a run. But she couldn't even walk, let alone run! So she began crawling down to first base.

Her teammates thought about helping her, but that's against the rules.

Then something very unusual happened. Two of the girls from the opposite team came over, picked her up and carried her around so she could touch each of the bases. Of course, by helping her score, it meant they themselves would lose the game.

Well, those girls may not have thought of it this way, but by doing what they did, they were living one of Jesus' most important commands: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

You see, Jesus said there are two great commandments. Let me read you Matthew 22:37-39: "Jesus replied, 'Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" You see, not only should we love God, but we should love other people, too.

How much are we willing to love other people? Are we willing to love someone else so much we'd give up something we really want – like winning the game – to help her? I hope so, because Jesus tells us we should.

That's something we should pray about: Heavenly Father, we know that your Son Jesus tells us to love other people, but sometimes we forget and sometimes it's really hard. But we want to please you, so we ask that you help us to be better at it. And we ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Note: this message is based on a true story.)

Song: "The Servant Song"