

Showing God's Love by Being Compassionate

(Zechariah 7:9)

Objective: *The student will learn that they can show God's love by being compassionate to those who are hurting.*

Materials: *Bible, large sheet of newsprint, masking tape, permanent markers or ball-point pens, red marker, large Band-Aids of assorted shapes, two blindfolds, a packet of seeds and a mature plant of the same type as the seeds or a picture of a mature plant or flower of that species.*

Before Class: *Cut a sheet of newsprint to about 3 by 5 feet.*

When class arrives, put the newsprint on the floor. Have one child lie on the newsprint and trace around his shape to make a silhouette.

Pre-Session Warm Up

What is “*compassion*?” Compassion is *kindness*. What actions show compassion? What does compassion feel like? What other words are related to compassion?

Have you ever wanted to help a friend who had fallen and scraped a knee or gotten a splinter in his finger? Have you ever ached inside when one of your friends was made fun of at school? Have you ever felt true sorrow when something really bad happened to someone you love? These are feelings of compassion.

Compassion is feeling as if you really know how another person is feeling because of your own personal experiences.

God wants us to be compassionate towards others. We need to notice when people are in need and develop compassionate hearts. When we have compassion for other people it makes us happy.

Opening Prayer

Father, help us to see others like You see them. Help us to look past ourselves and our own concerns and see the needs of others. Help us to have a heart that is really concerned about others. Help us to be more like You. In Jesus name, Amen!

Memory Verse

This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another. (Zechariah 7:9)

Lesson Review

We've been learning about how to show God's love to others.

1. In our first lesson we learned that God's love is everywhere and that he wants us to love Him back with all of our heart, mind, and soul.
2. Next, we learned that God knows all about us. He always knows where we are and what we're doing and what we're thinking and feeling. And, even so, He still loves us completely. In the same way, He wants us to love others, even people who do wrong to us and don't deserve our love. Because that's the way He loves us.
3. Third, we learned that because planet earth belongs to God, we can show others that we love Him by taking care of our environment properly. We did an activity that showed the effects of an oil spill on the ocean, birds, plants and animals. We talked about ways to care for God's possessions.
4. In last week's lesson we learned that one way of showing God's love is by being a good neighbor—that is, by thinking of others first and sharing what we have with them. We did an activity to show how sharing brings people together and often brings beautiful things into our lives—we put individual drops of food coloring in a dish of milk. Then when we added drops of dish

soap it caused the food coloring drops to swirl together to make a beautiful rainbow.

Lesson

Let's pretend this is a person in our class. We'll call her Jenny. She is a visitor. But there is a big problem. Jenny is very sad. Her life is all mixed up. She doesn't know where to turn.

[Draw a broken heart on the silhouette figure and tape the newsprint to a wall.]

See how Jenny's heart is broken. She hasn't told anyone else about her problems, but sometimes she looks so sad.

- What could you do to help Jenny? (Tell her jokes to cheer her up. Ask her what the matter is.)

We all feel bad at times. It's easy to see when someone has fallen off his bike and scraped his knee. That kind of hurt is on the outside. But we all have hurts on the inside. Those are harder for our friends to see.

God wants us to help those who are sad, lonely, scared, shy, or feeling rejected. The Bible tells us that we must try to help them.

Zechariah 7:9

This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Judge fairly, and show mercy and kindness to one another.

- What does this verse say we must do when people we know are hurting on the inside? (Show mercy and compassion to them; take care of them.)

Sometimes when we know someone is hurting on the inside, we are afraid to help. Or, maybe we don't know *how* to help.

- Have you ever seen someone who looked really sad and you didn't know quite what to say or do? (For example, my neighbor, who's old, fell down and broke her arm and I didn't know how to cheer her up. My mom was sad one day and I didn't know what to say. My friend's dad moved away and he felt very lonely.)

Sad things happen to people we love. When these sad things happen, God wants us to show compassion for them. He wants us to show love to them in His name.

Jesus is our example of how to be compassionate. Can you think of some of the compassionate things that Jesus did? How did Jesus show compassion for people?

- Healed the sick
- Made the lame to walk and the blind to see
- Feed 5,000

In the last hours of His life, as He hung there on the cross, He showed compassion to His mother, and to the thief that was being crucified with Him.

Let's read one story of how Jesus showed God's love to someone in need.

Mark 7:31-37

Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns. (32) A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him. (33) Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man's tongue. (34) Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, "Ephphatha," which means, "Be opened!" (35) Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly! (36) Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they spread the news. (37) They were completely amazed and said again and again,

"Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak."

- What did the people think when Jesus healed the man? (They were surprised. They told everyone about what Jesus had done.)

All through the books of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, we read about compassionate things Jesus did. He healed people. He held the children. He fed people who had no food. He taught them of God's love.

Band-Aid Bluff

Today, we want to think about how we can help people who are hurting. To think of new ways to help people, let's play *Band-Aid Bluff*.

[Form two teams. Give each team a blindfold, permanent marker or pen, and enough Band-Aids so that each person has one.]

Let's try to heal Jenny's hurting heart. Which team can do the best job? This is how the game is played. Teams will take turns putting Band-Aids on the heart. The goal is to get your team's Band-Aids in the best places. But you must do it blindfolded.

The first team will think of a way to help someone who is hurting. For example, you might decide to tell that person you love them. Write "I love you" on a Band-Aid. Then choose someone to put the Band-Aid on Jenny while blindfolded. Then the second team will write a saying on their Band-Aid and choose someone to put it on Jenny's heart.

[Help the first team to write a compassionate saying on a Band-Aid. Have the team explain what they would do to use their saying in a situation. Then blindfold the first player and stand her a few feet in front of the silhouette. Uncover half of the tape on the Band-Aid so

the player can grasp the covered part. Then allow the blindfolded person to walk to the silhouette and stick the Band-Aid on it.

Give teams an equal number of chances to play. Some examples of compassionate sayings are:

- Can I help you with something?
- I will pray for you.
- Would you like to tell me about your hurt?
- I am your friend.
- I will spend time with you.
- I am so sorry you are hurting.
- I know an adult who can help.

When the game is over have kids sit in a circle.]

- What does it feel like when someone helps you when you are hurting? (I feel calmer. I get happy.)
- What does it feel like to help someone who is hurting? (I feel good about myself. I feel like I did something God wants me to do.)

God planned for us to show His love to others by helping them when they are hurting. Not only does the hurting person feel better, others will see how much we love through our actions. Then we can explain to everyone that we are acting with love because we love God. We are showing God's love.

If Jenny was a real person, I'm sure she would be happier right now. Each of us would also feel happier because we had shown God's love.

Developing Compassion

Phillip was a thirteen-year-old retarded boy whose family just started coming to church. His mother was concerned about how well Phillip would be accepted.

On his first Sunday in Sunday school, Phillip entered his new class. From the back of the room came a question, "*Hey, who's the guy with the thick glasses and the weird eyes?*"

Phillip had a breathing problem which meant that often he had to stick his tongue out in order to get enough air. Seeing Phillip, one of the boys in the class turned to his friend, stuck out his tongue and said, "*Look guys. Guess who I am?*"

Later that day at home, Phillip told his mother that he did not want to ever go back to church.

- What wrong things did the kids in the class do?
- How would you feel if you were Phillip?
- If you were in this class, what would you do?
- If the class made fun of you, what would you do?
- If Phillip were a friend of yours, how would you feel?

Continue the story...

Phillip's mother decided to ask to speak to the class the next Sunday, without Phillip being present. The teacher allowed Phillip's mother to explain: "*When Phillip was born, the doctors did not think he would live. He was born with an imperfect body that does not allow him to do as much as some of you are able to do. He may not look like you, but he has the same kinds of feelings you do. He feels alone. He is a little afraid to be here, because he doesn't think he has any friends. I am concerned that without your help, he will never want to come back to church.*"

During the next few weeks there was a decided change in the attitude and actions of the class. One of the girls in the class was sick on a Sunday morning and was told by her mother that she would not be able to go to church. The girl protested, "*But Phillip needs me.*"

- Tell about a time that you really *felt* for another person who was hurting or angry?
- Have you ever felt as if you were feeling another person's embarrassment?
- Has anyone ever treated you with compassion?
- How do we become compassionate?

[Show the children a packet of seeds and a mature plant (or a picture) of the same type of plant as the seeds.]

When we become children of God, He plants the seeds of the fruit of the Spirit within our hearts—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. In order for us to become truly compassionate, we must take care of and work with these seeds, just as we have to water and tend vegetable or flower seeds for them to mature.

Brainstorming Idea

- Who are some people that need compassion? [Teacher, let the children identify a family or a group of people in the community who might feel comforted by the student's expression of kindness.]
- How might we show compassion toward other people, animals, the earth, and oneself? [Have students write letters, make greeting cards, or do some other kind gesture for them.]

[If time permits, develop plans for a future class project related to compassion—for example, a food drive, a collection of old towels for an animal shelter, litter removal, or a fund raiser for a local cause.]

Wouldn't it be fun to do one, small, individual "*random act of kindness*" for someone and keep it a secret? You can practice compassion that way!

Colossians 3:12

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Closing Prayer

Father, I'm so glad that You love me. Help me to show Your love to others who are hurting. Help me know what to say and do to make them feel better. And help me to tell them about You and Your love. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Draw a picture of someone who is hurting inside and give the children Band-Aids to put on them. Then have the children turn their paper over and write a story about their picture.

