Lesson at a Glance

COMPASSION

The Character of Jesus
LESSON 1

LESSON TEXT

Mark 1:40-45, 2:1-12

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will explain why Jesus showed compassion and identify one example of his compassion.
- The students will define "compassion" and give a practical example of how they show compassion.
- The students will identify someone in need and show compassion toward that person.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:
- pen or pencil

For the teacher:
- dictionary
- 1 concordance and 1 topical Bible for each group of 3-4 students
- 3 large poster boards
- markers
- glue sticks
- magazines
- scissors
- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world
- extra Bibles
- dirty rag (optional)

Reproducible Pages:
- Page A, 1 copy for every 3-4 students
- Page B, 1 copy for each student
- Page C, 1 copy for each student

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
- Teacher Focus
- Teacher Tips

Preclass Activity: Bible Challenge

Starting Up
- Welcome and Singing
- Opening Prayer
- Victories
- Good News from the Kingdom

Getting into God's Word

Story: Hurting from Hurricane Mitch

Scripture Study

Activity: Illustrating Compassion

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Mark 1:41

Weekly Challenge and Snack Time

Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

Mark 1:41

GENERATION Preteens

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GETTING READY

FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Mark 1:40-45 and Mark 2:1-12. Think of all the ways that God has shown compassion to you personally. Be ready to share these examples from your life with your students. These real-life examples of God's compassion will help your students understand the compassion that Jesus had for others, and will inspire them to show compassion in their own lives.

TEACHER TIPS

Prior to this class, you should identify those individuals or families in your congregation who may be experiencing physical or emotional needs. You should have these names available to your students to help them with this week's challenge. In addition, you should consider how well you are practicing compassion toward those around you and toward your students.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

BIBLE CHALLENGE

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- pen or pencil for each group of 3-4 students
- 1 concordance and 1 topical Bible for each group

Reproducible Pages:

- Page A, 1 copy for every 3-4 students

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, divide them into groups of three or four, depending upon the size of your class. Provide each group with a copy of Reproducible Page A (Bible Challenge), a pen or pencil, a concordance and a topical Bible.
2. As a team, they should begin looking up the scriptures that complete each statement, writing these scriptures in the appropriate place on the group's worksheet. The group may decide that one or two students will work in the concordance, while the others work in the topical Bible. One student should record for the group.
3. Encourage the students to find as many scriptures as they can for each statement. Challenge the groups to a "friendly competition" to see which team can find the most scriptures. If there is time remaining, have the students look the scriptures up in the Bible.

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GETTING READY

STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER

Who would like to say a prayer to start today's time together? Let a few students lead the prayer. Encourage the students to mention missing students, special church activities, illnesses, and to pray that all the students can show the compassion of Jesus to others.

VICTORIES

Take the time to have the students share about the challenge they were given at the end of last week's class. *Did everyone complete their challenge? How did it go? What fears did you face as you met the challenge to put the lesson into practice? How did everyone do with having consistent quiet times? Who would like to share something they learned this week?*

Praise and encourage all the students' efforts, especially noting any area of significant growth. Offer help and suggestions so they can have even more victories in the coming week.

GOOD NEWS FROM THE KINGDOM

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:

- 1 copy of "Good News from the Kingdom"
- globe or map of the world

INSTRUCTIONS

Now let's take a few minutes to share "Good News from the Kingdom." Be excited as you read about what is happening around the world. Have a globe or map ready, pointing out the location as you share. Remind your students that the kingdom of God is worldwide, and the victories of our brothers and sisters on other continents can inspire us and spur us on.

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GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

STORY

HURTING FROM HURRICANE MITCH

This story brings the students face to face with a natural disaster and its effect on people. They will see how the disciples in Honduras showed compassion by looking for their brothers and sisters in Christ, and making sure they were safe. They showed the kind of compassion that Jesus showed to others.

MATERIALS USED

For the teacher:
- dictionary
- dirty rag (optional)
- extra Bibles

Reproducible Pages:
- Page B, 1 copy for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible Page B (the story) to the students.
2. Tell the students to listen as you read the story.

PREPARATION

A great visual aid to illustrate how someone might have felt about touching a person with leprosy would be to hand the students a very filthy rag. If you choose, bring a rag covered with dirt, motor oil, dust, rust, etc.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Today we are going to talk about compassion. Ask the students to listen as you reread the first paragraph of the story.

- *What are some of the bad things that happened to these people in Central America?*
- *How do you think Marta was feeling when she saw the mud slide coming toward her village? When she was being carried along in the mud and water? When she was stuck in the mud up to her waist?*
- *How did the disciples in Honduras show compassion for their brothers and sisters?*
- *Many natural disasters happen around the world each year in countries where we have planted churches. What are some ways we can plan and prepare for these emergencies in order to help these churches and countries more quickly?*

The more we understand what someone is feeling, the more we can show compassion for them. Ask the students if anyone can define "compassion." Take several responses. Have a dictionary ready, and ask one of the students to look up the definition of "compassion" and read it to the class.

These people in Central America were definitely at a low point in their lives. They were hurting. Today we are going to read about two people during the time of Jesus who were at very low points in their lives. They were hurting and in need. As we read these passages, think about how Jesus responded to the needs of these individuals.

Select a volunteer to read Mark 1:40-45 aloud. Pause and briefly explain that leprosy was a terrible disease in Jesus' time. A person with leprosy was cast out from society because the disease was contagious. A person with leprosy was difficult to look at because his or her body became deformed and the skin began to decay. The man in this passage begged Jesus to heal him. Jesus did heal him, because he hurt deeply for the man. His heart was filled with pain and compassion for the man and his suffering.

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GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

(If you brought a dirty rag to class, this is the time to bring it out. Ask the students to pass it around. See how many of the students will touch the rag, and observe how they touch it. Let them discuss their feelings.) Explain that this is how most people felt about touching those with leprosy. Yet, Jesus touched and healed the man.

Select a second volunteer to read Mark 2:1-12. Here is another person who was physically hurting. This man was paralyzed and could not walk. His friends went to great lengths to help him get to Jesus. Again, Jesus was filled with compassion, forgave his sins, and healed his physical ailment.

Ask the following questions of the group. Encourage the students to look at the passages before they answer the questions.

- *Why do you think Jesus touched the man with leprosy?*
- *Would you have touched this man? Why or why not?*
- *How would you feel if you were either one of these men who had been healed by Jesus?*
- *What does it mean when the Bible says that Jesus was filled with compassion?*
- *Did the paralytic's friends have compassion? How do you know?*
- *How would you feel toward your friends if you were the paralytic?*

ACTIVITY

ILLUSTRATING COMPASSION

The students will make collages showing practical expressions of compassion.

MATERIALS USED:

For the teacher:

- 3 large poster boards
- markers
- glue sticks
- magazines
- scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide the class into three groups. Provide each group with a poster board, markers, magazines and glue sticks.
2. Assign each group one of the following sentences to be written on their poster board:
   - I see God showing me compassion when...
   - I can show compassion to others when...
   - My friends help me know God cares when...
3. The groups will each decorate their poster board to illustrate the assigned sentence. They can draw or cut pictures from magazines, as well as write statements and scriptures to illustrate the sentence.
4. Encourage the students to use some of the scriptures found during the Bible Challenge segment of the lesson.
5. When the posters are complete, have a representative from each group share about their group's poster.

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GETTING IT TO OTHERS

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"
Mark 1:41

MATERIALS

Reproducible Pages:

- Page C, 1 copy for each student

PREPARATION

Prior to the class, print the memory verse (Mark 1:41) in large letters on the blackboard or on a large piece of poster board.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Refer the class to the scripture written on the blackboard. Have the students read it aloud together.
2. Encourage the students to smile and be cheerful as they recite the verse. Make it a fun time. Allow the students to use hand motions or act it out if they wish.
3. After practicing the verse several times, erase the board. Have the class pair off and practice the verse with their partners. Encourage teamwork so that one student can help another be successful.
4. Be sure that all the students can recite the verse by the end of class.
5. Give each student a copy of Reproducible Page C (Memory Verse). Remind the students to practice the scripture daily and to be working on the challenge throughout the week.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you explain to them the challenge for the week.

While the students are eating, discuss specific ways that they can show compassion to someone this week. Also, have the students discuss why they want to show their compassion.

The students should each select someone who is going through a difficult time. It could be a parent of a sick child, a preteen having a hard time at school or an adult with physical or spiritual needs. You should also have some individuals in mind in the event that your students cannot think of anyone who needs compassion.

Once they have decided on their person, the students should make a plan for how they will show compassion to that person. It may be that they can help a mother of a young child, write a card and bake some cookies for an elderly disciple who is housebound, or help another preteen or a child with a school subject. Give your students plenty of ideas of the variety of forms that compassion can take. Let the students know that they can call you during the week if they are having difficulty carrying out their plan.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Think of someone who is going through a difficult time.
Make a plan for how you will show compassion to that person, and follow through with the plan.

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Lesson at a Glance supplement

COMPASSION

The Character of Jesus
LESSON 1
(SUPPLEMENT)

LESSON TEXT

Mark 1:41; Matthew 9:35-38

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The students will explain why Jesus showed compassion and identify one example of his compassion.
- The students will define "compassion" and give a practical example of how they show compassion.
- The students will identify someone in need and show compassion toward that person.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For each student:
- construction paper
- pen or pencil
- 4 index cards, 3" x 5"

For the teacher:
- markers
- glue
- trimmings—ribbons, sequins, buttons, etc.
- scissors
- extra Bibles

LESSON PLAN

Getting Ready

Faithful Instruction
- Teacher Focus
- Teacher Tips

Preclass Activity: Encouragement Cards

Starting Up
- Welcome and Singing
- Opening Prayer and Review
- Great News Sharing

Getting into God's Word

Scripture Study

Activity: Peer Encouragement

Getting It to Others

Scripture Memory: Mark 1:41

Weekly Challenge and Snack Time

Conclusion

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"
Mark 1:41

GENERATION NEXT
Preteens

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GETTING READY

(SUPPLEMENT)

FAITHFUL INSTRUCTION

TEACHER FOCUS

Pray before preparing this lesson. Read and meditate on Mark 1:41 and Matthew 9:35-38. Consider your own level of compassion for others. Are you aware of the needs of those around you? Do you have the heart for the lost that exemplified Jesus' life? As your students grow in their compassion for others, they will look to you as an example and a guide.

TEACHER TIPS

Prior to your class, you should become aware of those members of your congregation who have health challenges. Have these names available for the preclass activity. NOTE: "Get Well" is not appropriate for someone with a chronic condition whuch is not going to go away. Rather, use "Jesus Loves You," "We are praying for you," or similar encouraging statements.

PRECLASS ACTIVITY

ENCOURAGEMENT CARDS

MATERIALS USED

For each student:
- construction paper
- pen or pencil

For the teacher:
- markers
- glue
- trimmings—ribbons, sequins, buttons, etc.
- scissors
- extra Bibles

INSTRUCTIONS

1. As the students arrive, let them know that they will be making cards for some of the members of the congregation. Have the students think of someone they would like to encourage in this way. You should have several names available to help the class get started.
2. Provide the students with construction paper, markers, scissors, glue and trimmings to make the cards.
3. The students should write an encouraging message (not simply "Get Well Soon") and add a scripture to the cards if possible.
4. Tell the students that they should deliver the cards as soon as possible.

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GETTING READY

(SUPPLEMENT)

STARTING UP

WELCOME AND SINGING

Call the students together in a circle. Welcome everyone by name, being sure to recognize anyone who is visiting. Let them know how glad you are to see them, and how much you looked forward to being with them. Sing a few great songs.

OPENING PRAYER AND REVIEW

- Open with a student praying for each student to show compassion toward the people in their family, at their school and in the preteen class.
- Have one student recite the memory verse for this lesson: Mark 1:41.
- Have a student briefly review the previous lesson (Core Lesson).

GREAT NEWS SHARING

Allow several minutes for the students to share great news about their lives. This could be about a family member who became a disciple, someone healed from an illness, someone studying the Bible, great grades, etc. Remind the students to be brief so as many as possible can share.

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GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

(SUPPLEMENT)

SCRIPTURE STUDY

In the last class, your students learned about Jesus' compassionate nature. Using Mark 1:40-45 and Mark 2:1-12, the students learned that Jesus showed his compassion by healing a man with leprosy and a paralyzed man. In this lesson, your class will come to understand another level of Jesus' compassion toward those around him.

Begin the lesson by reviewing the highlights of the last class. Ask your students the following questions:

- *Who can tell us the definition of "compassion"?*
- *Who can give us an example of a time when Jesus showed compassion to someone? How did he show compassion in this instance?*
- *Can anyone remind the class of another time that Jesus showed compassion? How did he show compassion in this circumstance?*
- *What are some ways that you show compassion to others?* (Allow as many of the students to share as possible.)

Today we are going to talk about another way that Jesus showed compassion. Select a volunteer to read Matthew 9:35-38 aloud.

- *How did Jesus feel about the people around him? Why do you think he felt this way?* (Jesus felt compassion for the people. He saw the crowds that he taught and healed and felt deeply about their needs. He was God in the flesh and felt the love for people that God felt.)
- *What did it mean for the crowds of people to be "harassed and helpless"?* (They had many needs in their lives, and they felt stressed and helpless about their situations. They did not know God, so they did not know that he could help them.)
- *How did Jesus show his compassion for these people?* (He preached, taught and healed.)
- *Why did Jesus say that the "harvest is plentiful but the workers are few"?* (Jesus knew that these people needed God, but he knew that there were not enough disciples to teach them.)
- *What does this example mean for us today? Are the people in our schools, neighborhoods, sports teams, etc. harassed and helpless? Give some examples.*
- *How should we be showing compassion to these people?*

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GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

(SUPPLEMENT)

ACTIVITY

PEER ENCOURAGEMENT

Each student will generate a list of peers they will show compassion to in specific ways during the coming week.

MATERIALS USED

For each student:

- 4 index cards - 3" x 5"
- pen or pencil
- paper clip

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Give each student four index cards, a pen or pencil and a paperclip.
2. Have the students think about four people at school, in their neighborhoods or on their sports teams that are "harassed and helpless" (e.g. friendless, sad, struggling at school, poor family situations, etc.).
3. Then they should consider how they could show compassion toward each person. This could be by spending fun time with them, helping with schoolwork, inviting them to church or a preteen event, bringing them a special treat to eat, etc.
4. Have the students write one person's name on each card, along with a plan for showing compassion to him or her.
5. The students should pray about one name every day for the next four days and implement their plans to spend time showing compassion to each person over the next few weeks.

COMPASSION

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GETTING IT TO OTHERS

(SUPPLEMENT)

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"
Mark 1:41

Ask your students: *Who can recite the memory verse for the week?* After several students have taken a turn, have the class recite the verse together several times.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE AND SNACK TIME

If your students bring a snack, allow them to eat while you remind them of the challenge for the week.

The challenge for this week was for each student to select someone who is going through a difficult time.

The students were to make a plan to show compassion to that person, and carry that plan out during the week.

Ask how the students are doing with the challenge, and offer help and suggestions to any of those students who are having difficulty.

CONCLUSION

End the class with a prayer.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Think of someone who is going through a difficult time.
Make a plan for how you will show compassion to that person, and follow through with the plan.

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BIBLE CHALLENGE

The topical Bible lists these scriptures under "Jesus, compassion":

When we look up the word "compassion" in the concordance,
we find these scriptures:

Core/Getting Ready/1 copy for every 3-4 students

GENERATION Preteens

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REPRODUCIBLE PAGE B

HURTING FROM HURRICANE MITCH

"For a brief moment, Marta Velasquez thought the thunderous noise approaching her village in northwestern Nicaragua on October 30 was a helicopter coming to evacuate her family after three solid days of torrential rains. But the 19-year-old woman was wrong: the sound...was a raging wall of mud and water higher than the rooftops. [It] barreled through her village, El Porvenir, and turned it almost instantly into an earthen tomb.

"The mudslide...carried Velasquez more than a mile down the slope before she came to a stop, waist deep in the mire, in a coffee plantation. She cried out for help... By the time her two brothers and two friends finally rescued her, Marta's right leg was so swollen and infected that it had to be amputated.

The loss of a leg is a small part of the tragedy Velasquez suffered: seven members of her family died in the mudslide, including her mother and father."*

In October of 1998, Hurricane Mitch caused one of the worst disasters in the history of Central America. More than 65 bridges were destroyed, many roads were blocked and 70% of the crops were destroyed. The disciples in the church in San Pedo Sula, Honduras, met together and prayed for the 108 disciples who were missing. They did not know if they were dead or alive. Certainly, they were very concerned and had compassion for their brothers and sisters in Christ. They formed search-and-aid teams to go find them.

They gathered clothes and food, and they were able to find all who were missing. Thirty of the disciples had their houses washed away and more than 130 lost all their possessions due to the rain and the looting.

One disciple, Sandra, lived for four days in a bus with her family following the hurricane. Twenty-three people lived in the church office, while one sister, Blanca, had thirty-six people living with her in her home. The Turcios family had ten people living with them and another sister in the church, Maribel, provided housing for twenty people.

The disciples were showing the compassion of Jesus to others, both disciples and non-disciples. They were giving anything they could to meet the needs of people.

*Alan Zarembo and Brook Larmer, "Fields of Death," *Newsweek* 16 November 1998: 50-52.

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REPRODUCIBLE PAGE C

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Filled with compassion,
Jesus reached out his hand
and touched the man.
"I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

MARK 1:41

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Think of someone who is going through a difficult time.
Make a plan for how you will show compassion to that person,
and follow through with the plan.

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