

Purposeful Compassion

To the Leader:

This week's lesson is on *Purposeful Compassion*. There are seven traits for the Church of the Nazarene, and the seventh trait is *Purposeful Compassion*. These traits depict what we believe should characterize every Church body.

Purposeful Compassion displays the loving heart of God. Jesus' life, ministry, and death are our model for compassion. Jesus was particularly moved with compassion in love and care for those who were poor, lost, sick, marginalized, and vulnerable.

- Purposeful compassion displays the loving heart of God.
- Purposeful compassion is always done in the name of Jesus. We do every act of service, generosity, and mercy in Jesus' name; and we offer our efforts to reveal Jesus' love.
- Purposeful compassion respects the dignity of each person.
- Purposeful compassion flows naturally from transformed believers.
- Purposeful compassion is our mission.

Objective:

To help children understand that compassion is the response to the suffering of others and motivates a desire within us to help. When we show compassion, we show God's love. Help children understand that compassion is not just to feel bad for someone but to also take action.

Materials Needed:

Paper	1 or 2 blind folds
Pencils/crayons/markers	Obstacles to make a path (chairs, etc.)
Poster board	25-30 items (rocks, crayons, marbles, pennies, etc.)
Marker	Dice or coin
Scissors	

Scripture and Memory Verse: 1 John 3:16 (NIV)

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Early Arrival Activity: Jesus has Compassion

Give each child a piece of paper, and have them draw a picture of a time when they were hurt or a picture when someone else was hurt.

Give them a chance to tell the story about the picture they drew. Ask them if someone helped them or the person who was hurt.

Say: Today we are going to talk about the word compassion. Compassion is a deep feeling of sorrow and a strong desire to help someone in need.

Let's pretend for a minute that you are playing with a friend and that friend falls down and scrapes their knee. How would you feel? What would you do? That's right, you would want to help them. Right? Well, that is having compassion.

When we love others we have compassion. We see their needs, and we want to help. Our story today talks about compassion.

Bible Story with Discussion: Jesus has Compassion (Matthew 9:35-38, NIV)

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Ask: Who showed compassion in this story? Why did He have compassion for the people? What did Jesus do because He had compassion for the people?

Say: Not only were some of these people sick and had diseases, but they also were lost and confused. They did not know the way to God. The Bible says they were like sheep without a shepherd. What would happen to sheep if they didn't have a shepherd? They would wander away and get lost and they could get hurt.

Say: Some of the Pharisees, the religious teachers in that day, were making it hard to know the truths of God. The people were confused and tired of being confused. They didn't understand. Jesus knew they wanted to know the truth about God and His ways, but they didn't know how to find the truth. Jesus explained that when a farmer's field is ready to be harvested, you need workers to go out and harvest the field. In the same way, people who are ready to hear about God need someone to tell them about Him.

Ask: How is this story in God's Word like our world today? What did Jesus ask his disciples to do? What do you think Jesus is saying to us through this scripture? What could we do to help others?

Scripture Memory Verse and Activity: 1 John 3:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Ask the following questions:

What did it mean for Jesus to lay down His life for us, and why did He do it? (He unselfishly died on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins. He did it out of His great love for us.)

In the context of this verse who are our brothers and sisters? (everyone)

What does it mean for us to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters? (See the needs of others and unselfishly do what we can to meet their needs)

Say: When we show compassion, we show God's love to others.

Scripture Puzzle: Before class, draw a large heart on a big piece of poster board or paper. Write the scripture verse inside the heart. Cut the heart into large puzzle pieces cutting out each word in the verse and hide around the room. During class, tell the children they are going on a “scripture word hunt.” Once all of the pieces have been found, let them put the puzzle together. Have the children say the memory verse several times. Each time they say the verse, remove one piece of the puzzle.

Review Game: The Shepherd’s Voice

One person is blindfolded at one end of the room. A few chairs or items are placed in the path of the person to make it difficult for them to walk to the other side. A second person stands at the other end or walks along with the blindfolded person without touching him/her, giving the blindfolded person instructions to aid in making their way past the obstacles. (Using words like stop, step over, turn right, turn left etc.) You can also do this with two teams as a relay race. Have several children take turns being the blindfolded sheep or the shepherd.

Discuss with them how it felt to be the sheep, blindfolded and not able to see the path and obstacles in their way. As Christians, when we don’t know what to do or face difficult situations, we can pray and talk to God and seek His help. How would you feel if you didn’t know that God loves you and that you could pray to Him? Discuss how great it was to have someone willing to help you.

As the shepherd, what were the difficulties that you faced? Even when it was difficult or the person wasn’t listening to you, did you give up? How did it feel when the person got to the other side? In the same way, when we show compassion, we can’t give up even when it is hard. It is very rewarding to persevere and be able to help someone in need.

“Gather the Harvest”

Select a number of items (rocks, pennies, crayons, etc.) to be used to represent the harvest. Place the items in a pile, and have the players sit in a circle. (You can do several circles of children if you have a large group. Make sure you have enough items for each group)

Each player takes a turn to gather the harvest. If you use a 6 sided die, the player rolls the die; if it lands on 1, 2, or 3, they gather that number of items and add it to their collection. If they roll a 4, 5 or 6, their turn ends. If you use a 2 sided coin, they flip the coin, and continue to gather an item for each time it lands on heads. Their turn ends when the coin lands on tails. The game can end when one player collects a set number of items, or when the center collection of items is all taken.

Personal Challenge:

This week, look for opportunities to show compassion to others. If you see someone who needs assistance, take the time to stop and help. Look for opportunities to tell someone about Jesus and how much He loves them. Ask God to help you see ‘the harvest.’”

Prayer:

God, thank You for loving us. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. Thank You for the compassion that You have shown to us. Help us, Lord, to look past ourselves and our own concerns and see the needs of others. Help us to have a heart of love and compassion. Help us to be more like You. In Jesus’ name. amen.