
Showing Compassion

Sunday School Lesson on Mark 6:30-44, 53-56

What does compassion mean? Who demonstrates compassion, and how can we show it to others? We hear a great deal about the miracles of Jesus, but don't always pause to contemplate why He did so many amazing things. The Savior truly loves and cares about all people (including us!). He provided healing during His earthly ministry because He had compassion. The same Jesus still lives with us and has compassion upon us, and He wants us to care for those around us.

Lesson focus: This lesson considers what it means to have and to demonstrate true compassion. Students will explore what compassion is and how it feels. They will also see Biblical examples of compassion, including the miracles of Jesus, the prime example of care and kindness.

Passage: Mark 6:30-44, 53-56

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper, markers, stickers, paper plates, paper bags, small items (band-aids, snacks, socks, etc.), glue, scissors, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, cups, sheep toys or puppets (all optional, depending which activities you choose to use).

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the [video of this children's lesson](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Compare another full [Jesus feeds 5000 Sunday School Lesson](#)
- Compare another [Sunday School lesson on Jesus feeding the 5000 from Matthew 14](#)
- Get more teaching helps from the [mission Bible class lesson on this story](#)
- Download our [free coloring page for the book of Mark](#)
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Lesson Introduction Activities and Games

Lesson Opening: The focus of this lesson is on compassion and kindness, which God gives to us so that we can share it with others. A few suggested openers here include items that demonstrate how we can have or share kindness. To get started, select from one of the following openers, or select another of your own choosing!

- Kindness feels better....provide students with soft items like cotton balls or pom-poms. Invite them to pass or toss these around the group, or even to gently throw them at one another. Ask how it might feel if they were using rocks in place of cotton balls. It would be painful! Emphasize how it feels much better to treat others with kindness.
- Pass it around...use a ball or balloon. Stand or sit in a circle and try to keep the ball going around the circle or between students. As students work to keep the ball in the air, have them also pass around kind words and compassionate compliments.
- Loaves and fishes...since one of the components of this story involves the miraculous feeding of the multitude, start or finish the lesson with a snack. Provide fish crackers or gummi fish and regular cracker “loaves” for kids to divide amongst themselves.
- Compassion relay: have students line up in two teams. Select one student on each team to need “help,” and call out various ways that the relay racers will provide assistance. This might include placing band-aids on the team mate, providing a kind word, or wrapping an arm or foot with an ice pack.
- Talk about times when students have felt sorry for someone in need, or provided something as a means of kindness. Brainstorm some ways to show kindness and write them on a poster or white board. These can later be used to make the “compassion flower” craft.

Transition into the Scripture study component and explain a little about the meaning of compassion.

Compassion has to do with caring for someone, especially feeling sorry for something that a person has gone through. Compassion usually involves an element of wanting to help alleviate pain or hardship, as well.

Sunday School Lesson (Mark 6:30-44, 53-56) Showing Compassion

Ask: When have you ever felt sorry for someone else? When have you received kindness from someone who cared about you?

Bible Lesson:

Use whatever translation best suits you and your audience. This passage is one that could be acted out dramatically or simply read and described in turns. Explain to students that the disciples were still discovering who Jesus was. Despite all of the amazing miracles He did, they did not quite understand that He was actually God in the flesh. The miracles He shared took place because He loved people and had compassion on them.

The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. -Mark 6:30-32

Jesus and His followers are working together, doing so much and working so hard that they didn't even have time to stop and eat! They tried to get away and rest by themselves...it must have worn them out to spend so much time helping people in need.

Ask: Have you ever been so busy that you felt like you needed to escape and take a break? What do you do to get away?

Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. -Mark 6:33-34

Even though Jesus was tired and tried to rest, He couldn't quite pull away without the crowd following Him. Jesus might have been able to escape or go somewhere else, so why didn't He? The passage says He had compassion on the crowd. He thought they seemed lost and needed help, and He wanted to lead and teach them. In fact, He helped them for so long that it got to be dinnertime...and those poor tired disciples still hadn't gotten the rest they wanted!

And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. 36 Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" 38 And he said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then he commanded them all to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups, by hundreds and by fifties. 41 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. And he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And they all ate and were satisfied. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 And those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. -Mark 6:35-44

This is a story that is likely familiar to students, and appears in all of the Gospels. But the emphasis here is why Jesus performed this miracle for the people. He knew they had needs, and at this particular time their needs were hunger. Jesus took care of their physical needs, and He promises to care for ours, as well. He provides all we need for body, mind, and spirit!

Explain that after this, Jesus and His disciples went across the lake to another area. News of His wonders must have traveled fast, because people in that region flocked to Him, as well. And Jesus took care of those needs, too:

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore. 54 And when they got out of the boat, the people immediately recognized him 55 and ran about the whole region and began to bring the sick people on their beds to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well. -Mark 6:53-56

Ask: If you could ask Jesus for anything, what would it be? How have you seen God provide for you the things that you need?

Reiterate the comfort of these miraculous events: It is wonderful that Jesus did so many remarkable things throughout His earthly ministry, but it gives us hope, as well. We know that He is still alive and present, and He promises to be with us and have compassion on our needs. He might not do miracles in

our time and preference, but we know we will be with Him someday and He has already given the greatest compassion example of all, in dying to save us!

In addition to this Gospel, you might also consider other Bible passages and stories that involve demonstrations of kindness and compassion. Some examples include:

- King David and Mephibosheth (relative of Saul, who was shown mercy and compassion)
- Abigail and David (Abigail showed kindness to David and his men, despite danger)
- Jonah (God has compassion)

Pray: Say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His compassion and kindness towards us. Ask for His help in demonstrating compassion to others.



Sunday School Crafts on Compassion

It's important to help children understand and embrace what it means to have compassion. It often takes modeling and encouraging, but is essential to developing character and kindness. Students should first value and appreciate how much compassion Christ demonstrates towards us, and out of that appreciation, they should share that compassion with others. These two crafts aim to assist in efforts to understand compassion. A "blooming with compassion flower" offers an opportunity to consider ways to show others kindness. A "compassion kit" allows students to compile items that can be given to someone else our of concern and compassion.

Bible Verses and Craft Captions to Consider... (Main Text: Mark 6:30-56)

- *When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things. -Mark 6:34*
- *And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or countryside, they laid the sick in the marketplaces and implored him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment. And as many as touched it were made well. -Mark 6:56*
- *You are loved! Enjoy some special tokens...*
- *I can show compassion by....*
- *Jesus demonstrated compassion...and so can I! Here's how:*

Craft one: “Blooming with Compassion” Flower

You will need:

- Construction paper or card stock
- Paper plate
- Yarn, pipe cleaner, popsicle stick, or string
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Other decorations (jewels, stickers, etc.)



Procedure:

1. Cut out several pieces of paper or cardstock in petal shapes.
2. Brainstorm ways of demonstrating compassion, and write them on the petals.
3. Glue a circle or cupcake liner in the center of the plate, and attach the petals around it using glue or staples.
4. Attach a popsicle stick “stem” to the bottom of the plate, or a pipe cleaner or string to the top to hang it on display.



Craft Two: "Kindness Kit"

You will need:

- Paper bags
- Stickers/decorations
- Markers/crayons
- String or ribbon (optional)
- Small treats and tokens (snacks, stickers, band-aids, socks, etc.)
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Scissors
- Captions/verses

Procedure:

1. Decorate the outside of the paper bag with stickers, designs, and messages.
2. Create a card or caption to go with the bag, describing the items inside and why they are there.
3. Collect "comforting" objects such as small treats, snacks, band-aids, or even socks. Place the items in the bag.
4. Attach extra verses to the bag and string or ribbon for additional decoration.
5. Give the care kit to someone in need or to someone who is going through a rough time. Share and spread the compassion!





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This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer