**Compassion**



Opening Activity: Scan the code to the right to watch a short video clip and then respond to the following statement – Write about a person who has been a healing presence to you. How did they share in your pain or suffering? What did they do that helped you heal from your pain?

Read the following passages. If you had to choose one to be a guiding statement for living a life of compassion that reflects the image of God, which passage would you choose and why?

* Exodus 34:6
* Isaiah 30:18
* Isaiah 54:10
* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
* Ephesians 4:32
* 1 Peter 3:8-9

(When you meet with your small group, you’ll choose one of the above passages. Then, together craft a mission statement that would be worn on a t-shirt)

[Watch this video on Compassion](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJEtyAiAQik)

The word “compassion” literally means “to suffer with”. Suffering is usually something we think to avoid – none of us wanted to experience pain, loss, or grief. As you saw in the Bible Project video, the story of the Bible is marked by continued examples of compassion from God. It’s one of the main ideas that not only shapes our sense of what God is like, but also how we are to reflect that same compassion in the world around us. This week you were assigned to read Mark 7-8. Can you name a story in those chapters that show an example of compassion? Who are the people suffering, in need, or experiencing pain in the story? Which of their needs are not being met? Who ends up being a healing presence and how do they go about doing that?

Showing compassion also requires that we pay attention to where there is

pain and suffering in the world. That may mean paying attention by participating in a mission trip to a developing country. It EQUALLY may mean paying attention in your school, in your neighborhood, on your sports team, etc. Our lives are moving at such a fast pace sometimes and we’re often so distracted that we miss opportunities to comfort someone and extend compassion.

Our words can also be tools we use to extend compassion. Conversely, they can also be used in ways that are callous and hard-hearted. Take a few minutes to think about the news you hear on TV or the things you read or see on social media platforms – where do you see people speaking or acting with a lack of compassion in those forms of media? What kinds of things do people do that are lacking in compassion?

You may or may not have heard of a man named Mr. Rogers. His real name was Fred Rogers and he had a children’s television show called Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood which aired on television for over 30 years! One of his most famous lines was:

***“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find the helpers.’”***

Not everything happening in the world is bad. There are people who are regularly showing compassion to others through their words and actions. What are some of the compassionate stories you see on television, in the news, or on social media platforms? That Mr. Roger’s quote can help remind us that we are called by God to be compassionate followers of Jesus. So not only are there always people helping with compassionate action, but YOU are being called to compassionate action. In other words, YOU are called to be one of the helpers in the world 😊! Finish by answering these final questions:

* When have you shown compassion rather than judgment to another person?
* What motivated you to make this choice? How did it feel?

**Breath Prayer on Compassion**

INHALE: May God’s compassion

EXHALE: Flow through my action

1. Write about a person who has been a healing presence to you. How did they share in your pain or suffering? What did they do that helped you heal from your pain?
2. If you had to choose one to be a guiding statement for living a life of compassion that reflects the image of God, which passage would you choose and why?
3. Can you name a story in those chapters that show an example of compassion? Who are the people suffering, in need, or experiencing pain in the story? Which of their needs are not being met? Who ends up being a healing presence and how do they go about doing that?
4. Take a few minutes to think about the news you hear on TV or the things you read or see on social media platforms – where do you see people speaking or acting with a lack of compassion in those forms of media? What kinds of things do people do that are lacking in compassion?
5. What are some of the compassionate stories you see on television, in the news, or on social media platforms?
6. When have you shown compassion rather than judgment to another person?
7. What motivated you to make this choice? How did it feel?