

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH

**What we want students to learn:** That Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God's compassion.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To evaluate their own lives, examining whether or not they are full of mercy and compassion, and then reflect on what this means.

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 6:30-34; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 10:45; Matthew 15:32; Matthew 5:7

**Overview:** We all blow it at one point or another, right? We're sinful people and can make messes of situations and relationships on a pretty regular basis. On the other hand, there are plenty of things in our lives that we just can't control. Life isn't fair and bad things happen. You combine all this together, and the result is that we all go through plenty of pain and turmoil. We need to be shown compassion, and we need to show kindness to others. Jesus is the full revelation of God's compassion and shows us what true mercy and compassion really looks like. He tells us that the merciful will experience mercy themselves, all because of His life, death, and resurrection. In Lesson 35 we learned that compassion towards those in need is a part of God's character. In Lesson 36 we'll see how Jesus shows us what true compassion really looks like.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **God's Compassion** lesson 36 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 36, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

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## THE DETAILS

### Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.
- **Timeframe:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

### Mark

- **Author:** The Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter's firsthand accounts.
- **Timeframe:** Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50's AD.
- **Purpose:** Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus' identity.

## THE MAIN POINT

You'll start by showing students that Jesus showed compassion to those around Him by addressing their spiritual needs. You'll do this using Mark 6:30-34 and Mark 10:45. When we think of being in need or in distress, we usually think of our physical or emotional situation. It's critical for students to remember that our most pressing need is a spiritual one. We're all sinful people at our core and left to our own devices; we put our trust in ourselves and the things of this world. Jesus knew this and showed compassion.

The next thing you'll help students understand is that Jesus showed compassion to those around Him by addressing their physical needs. Matthew 9:35-38 and Matthew 15:32 show us that Jesus showed compassion by healing sickness and feeding the people. He saw they were being harassed and had compassion on them. He met their physical needs.

Finally, you'll show students that trusting and following Jesus means that we'll show mercy and we'll be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7 will help your students grasp that they can't receive God's mercy and compassion and not show it themselves. This passage doesn't teach some sort of works-based salvation. It's teaching us that those who truly show Christ-like mercy and compassion are those who have new hearts that trust Jesus.

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## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

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## THE LEAD IN

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- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the students to begin thinking about the concept of Jesus being the full revelation of God's compassion.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a way to show a brief video clip. Search YouTube and find a clip of a "big reveal" from a show like Extreme Makeover or Fixer Upper.

FIRST, begin this section by asking students:

- **How do you handle surprises? Do you love them or hate them? Why?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **When you have things like a birthday or Christmas coming up, do you want to be totally surprised by your gifts or do you try and figure it out beforehand?**
  - Answers will vary.

THEN, explain that some people love surprises and some hate them. Even when we know we're going to get one (like at a birthday or Christmas), the anticipation of what's coming can kill some people. They just want that surprise or mystery to be revealed.

NEXT, ask the students if they're familiar with the makeover TV shows. If any of them are, have someone explain the concept of the show. If they're not familiar with it, explain to them that it's a show where they remodel and upgrade homes. Say:

- **At the end of the show, there was always the "big reveal" where the family got to see how their house had been transformed. Watch these folks' reaction. (Play the video you've chosen.) As you can see, there's tons of anticipation leading up to the moment of the reveal. The revelation of what they see has a huge impact on them because it's something they couldn't have done on their own. In many ways, the coming of Jesus was God's "big reveal."**

Ask:

- **Do you agree with that statement? Explain. What do you think it means?**
  - Answer: The entire Old Testament pointed to humankind's desperate need for Jesus. As we get further and further along in the Old Testament, more and more is revealed about the coming of the Messiah. It's like the bus driving out of the way in super slow motion. Then Jesus comes on the scene, and it's the big reveal. He's the full revelation of God's love, grace, mercy, compassion, etc.

FINALLY, remind the students that in the last lesson we learned how compassion was a part of God's character. In this lesson, we're going to learn how Jesus fully reveals that compassion to a lost and dying world.

## THE MAIN EVENT

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- **Goal:** The goal of this lesson is for the students to get a picture of how Jesus showed compassion to those around him.
- **Set-Up:** None.

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FIRST, begin this section by asking the students:

- **What are some ways Jesus showed compassion to those around Him? Give some examples we see in Scripture.**
  - Answers will vary.

Ask if anyone can remember exactly what you covered in the first lesson. Remind students that in the first lesson you defined compassion as the mercy and goodness God shows to those in need. Ask:

- **What are some needs that people have that Jesus can address?**
  - Answer: Throughout the gospels we see Jesus meet the physical needs people have. Even more importantly, He addressed their deepest spiritual needs as well.

THEN, instruct students to find Mark 6 in their Bibles. As usual, take this chance to provide a little context for the Book. Then, read or have a student read Mark 6:30-34. Ask:

- **What do you think it means that the people “were like sheep without a shepherd”?**
  - Answer: Sheep with no shepherd have no direction; they just wander around aimlessly. That’s what we’re like apart from Christ. We don’t know our right from our left, and we’re unaware of our deepest needs.
- **Why did that cause Jesus to have compassion for them?**
  - Answer: Jesus loves people. He cares for them. When He saw them with no direction, purpose, or awareness of their biggest problem, He cared deeply for them.
- **Jesus’ compassion towards them led him to teach them “many things.” What do you think He may have taught them? How was that showing them compassion?**
  - Answer: Although we don’t know for sure what Jesus taught them, it’s likely that He talked to them about the Kingdom of God and their need to follow God. People’s need to trust and follow Jesus is their biggest need. So the greatest form of compassion we can have towards people is to talk them about Christ.

NEXT, ask if there are any questions or comments. Then, have a student find Mark 10. Read or have a student read Mark 10:45. Explain to students that the greatest expression of Jesus serving others was His willingness to lay down His life and meet their greatest need. Say:

- **Jesus didn’t just show compassion through words. He showed it by literally laying down His life for His people. But while Jesus came to address people’s deep spiritual need, He also chose to engage their physical needs as well. Why do you think this is important?**
  - Answer: The biggest need we have in this world is our need for Christ. However, if we just talk to people and don’t take a genuine interest in their lives and situations, how can we expect them to listen? Jesus shows us throughout the Gospels that it’s important to care for the physical needs of people as well.

FINALLY, instruct students to flip over to Matthew. If you have a chance, give them the context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read Matthew 9:35-38. Have another volunteer read Matthew 15:32. Explain that both passages refer to Jesus’ compassion for the people. This led Him to heal sicknesses and diseases as well as feed those that were hungry.

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- **Do you think Jesus' care for their physical needs impacted people's willingness to listen to His teaching? Explain.**
  - Answer: While we can't know that it impacted their ability to come to faith in Christ, it definitely impacted their willingness to listen.
- **What can we take from this as it pertains to our own lives?**
  - Answer: If all we seek to meet are people's spiritual needs, telling them about Christ, we're missing it. We have to meet both their physical needs as well as their spiritual.

Make sure there are no questions before transitioning to The Last Word.

## THE LAST WORD

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- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the students to understand that if Christ has truly changed their hearts, they'll show mercy and compassion to others.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a dry-erase board and marker.

FIRST, begin this section by having a student read Matthew 5:7. Then, ask:

- **What do you think this passage means?**
  - Answers will vary. Allow students to answer as they see fit. Then redirect with the following discussion.

THEN, write the following two statements on the board with room to write under each one:

- **We show mercy to others in order to receive mercy from God.**
- **We show mercy to others because God has shown us mercy.**

Ask:

- **What's the difference? What is different about the motivations behind showing mercy to others in each statement?**
  - Answer: Write some of their answers under each statement to highlight the differences. Statement #1 is motivated by a desire to earn God's compassion and mercy. Statement #2 is an overflow of having been shown mercy by God.
- **As believers, which should be our motivation?**
  - Answer: There's nothing we can do to earn God's love, grace, mercy, or compassion. He freely lavishes them on his children. When we receive God's mercy, it prompts us to show that same kindness to others.

FINALLY, wrap up the lesson by explaining to the students the only way for us to show Christ-like compassion to others is for our hearts to have been changed by him. When the Matthew 5:7 passage says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy," it means that those who show mercy are those that have experienced life-change through Christ. Allow students a moment to flesh that out in discussion, asking any questions they may have. Then, explain that in the next lesson we'll dig into what it practically looks like for us to show compassion to those around us.

Close in prayer.

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- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).