

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH

What we want students to learn: That a life void of compassion is a life that hasn't been changed by Jesus.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To flesh out what showing compassion to others looks like in their lives.

Scripture Focus: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; Luke 3:9-11; James 2:15-18

Overview: Our calling as believers is to be Christ-like. Over the past two lessons, we've talked about compassion being a part of God's character and Jesus being the full revelation of that compassion. So, if we're going to be Christ-like in our daily lives, we must show compassion to those around us. Without it, we aren't living like Jesus. We aren't following Him. So, what does Christ-like compassion look like in your teenagers' lives? God has placed them in unique situations and circumstances and given them great opportunities to model His love and kindness to those around them. In Lesson 1 we learned that compassion is a part of God's nature and character. In Lesson 2 we learned that Jesus is the full revelation of God's compassion. In this lesson, you'll challenge your students to show Christ-like compassion to those around them.

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 37 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 37, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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 **YM370** 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

Luke

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Timeframe:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 AD.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels and has much in common with the Matthew and Mark.

2 Corinthians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Timeframe:** Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55 or 56 AD, a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians and a year before he wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth.
- **Purpose:** According to the ESV Study Bible, the main theme of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was "the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message."

James

- **Author:** James, who was Jesus' brother and the leader of the Jerusalem Church.
- **Timeframe:** Most people believe the date was sometime in the mid-40s A.D.
- **Purpose:** James was seemingly writing to a Jewish audience. His message was pretty straightforward throughout the book: don't let your faith be one of words only, and live your faith powerfully. It's a message that James hammered home in direct, easy-to-grasp language. It's what makes James such a practical book for all believers.

THE MAIN POINT

The first thing you'll help your students understand is that the compassion we've received from God allows us to show compassion to others. You'll help them see this through teaching 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. You're hanging some practical actions on the truths you established in Lesson 36. In that lesson, you talked about God's compassion in changing our hearts and allowing us to be merciful to others. You'll talk about what these verses practically mean. It helps give some level of meaning to the pain and suffering we experience.

Then you'll teach students that their compassion toward others can't be limited to just words, it must take action. You'll teach this through a nice discussion of James 2:14-17 and Luke 3:9-11. These passages dig into the nitty-gritty of how we interact with those in need. The passage is pretty straightforward and plain. There has to be more than just words to our faith. There has to be action, and this action practically plays out in how we treat those around us. You'll talk about the great mercy and compassion we've been shown. If that's the case, how can we not show it to others?

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

- **Goal:** The goal is for the students to understand that a life that's truly been changed by Christ will be one that shows compassion to others.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a piece of paper, a vase (or something of that sort) that is OK to break, a paper bag that the vase will fit in, a hammer, and a plate or tray.

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to talk for a moment about the life change that comes by placing your hope and trust in Jesus.

THEN, take the two things you've chosen for the demonstration. Show the students that you have a perfectly good piece of paper and an intact vase (or glass, or whatever you chose). Have them take a look at each of them. Now, instruct students to imagine these represent something valuable to them. Have them visualize these objects.

NEXT, take the piece of paper and wad it into a ball. Then, place the vase in a paper bag, break it with the hammer, and pour the broken pieces out on a plate or tray. You now have a broken vase and a very crumpled piece of paper on your hands.

THEN, ask the students (somewhat rhetorically):

- **So, did I change the paper and vase? How so?**
 - Answer: Kind of. They certainly look different than before. But in another sense, not really. There is some aspect of their nature that is the same.
- **If I were to flatten this piece of paper out and super glue the vase back together, could I convince you that nothing happened to them?**
 - Answer: You could try. But it wouldn't fly. You'd still see the wrinkles in the paper and the lines and glue on the vase.

Explain to the students that the change that was made to the paper and vase are undeniable. It's obvious to everyone that sees them that something happened. The same is true when it comes to following Jesus. Ask:

- **Do you believe that's true? Explain.**
 - Answer: The change that Jesus makes in our lives should be obvious and undeniable. If it's not noticeable, we have to ask ourselves if a change really happened.

FINALLY, explain that part of that change includes showing Christ-like compassion to others. We've talked about compassion being a part of God's nature, and we've talked about how Jesus is the full revelation of that compassion. Say:

- **This means if we're seeking to be Christ-like, we too will show compassion to others. In this lesson, we're going to dig into what that looks like on a practical level.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the students to understand how Christ's compassion towards us empowers us to be compassionate to others in both word and deed.
- **Set-Up:** None.

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FIRST, begin this section by asking the students what they remember so far from what you've covered. See if students can recall some of the main points from the last two lessons. Help them using the bulleted points below:

- **Lesson 35**
 - You learned that God is full of compassion for those in need.
 - You challenged students to trust that they can depend on the Lord during times of need and distress.
- **Lesson 36**
 - You discovered that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God's compassion.
 - You encouraged students to evaluate their own lives, examining whether or not they are full of mercy and compassion, and then reflect on what this means.

THEN, ask the following questions to introduce the Bible study:

- **Have you ever been in a situation where someone says something along the lines of, "I understand what you're going through" or "I feel your pain," and all you can think is, "No you don't. You have no idea what I'm going through"? Talk about how that made you feel.**
 - Answers will vary. You may be prepared to share your own examples.
- **Now, have you ever been in that situation and the person talking to you actually could understand what you're dealing with and going through? How was that different?**
 - Answers will vary, but the point is that when people do understand what we're going through, they have credibility.

NEXT, tell students to turn to 2 Corinthians. If you want, provide some context for the book using the Bible Background. Then read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. When you've finished, ask:

- **What do you think those verses mean?**
 - Answer: Answers here may vary, but the point of the passage is straightforward. God comforts us in our pain and suffering, which allows us to be His vessel of bringing comfort to others in pain.
- **How does the truth of this passage bring some level of meaning and purpose to our suffering?**
 - Answer: As we learn to cling to God in the midst of trials and suffering, He uses those experiences to help us minister to others.

Take a moment and talk to the students about how we minister to those who are going through trials and suffering. Remind them that our pain and suffering here on earth are temporary. Say:

- **Our greatest comfort comes from the truth that if we trust Jesus, there will be a day with no more pain and suffering. So, as we seek to show compassion to those that are hurting, we're to point them to their only source of true, eternal hope.**

THEN, explain that as you've talked about this 2 Corinthians passage, you've focused on the emotional and spiritual support and comfort you're able to provide for those around us. Ask:

- **What are some other ways we show love and compassion to those that are hurting?**
 - Answer: We are also called to show compassion and love to those that are hurting by addressing their physical needs as well.

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NEXT, have a student read James 2:14-17. When he or she is finished, read Luke 3:9-11. Talk to the students a little bit about these verses and what they mean. Ask them for their thoughts on the verses. Remind them of what you discussed in the last lesson, that Jesus is the full revelation of God's compassion. Say:

- **So, if our desire is to be more and more like Christ, we're called to show compassion to others. Do these verses strike you in any particular way? Are they convicting? How so?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Why is it important that our faith produces action? Why is it an essential part of showing compassion to others?**
 - Answers: Being there for people and talking with them about their struggles is crucial. However, there's got to be some action involved in our compassion. Anyone can talk a good game. The issue is whether or not you're willing to get your hands dirty and get some skin in the game.

In order to make sure students are clear on what we're talking about, reread the first part of James 2:14 for them again. Then ask,

- **What are your thoughts on this verse? What is it saying?**
 - Answer: Answers here will vary. But be very clear that as you're talking about this verse, remind them that our compassionate deeds don't save us from our sins. No amount of good works can overcome the debt of our sin. Remind them that our faith in Christ's atoning death on the cross saves us. What James is saying is that our compassionate works are the evidence or proof of the change Jesus makes in us.

FINALLY, explain to students that this fruit, or evidence, is important. It shows whether or not Christ has truly transformed us. If our lives are unchanged from the world, or from before we knew Christ, we ought to do some serious soul searching with God. Say:

- **We don't ever have to fear if we're saved or not. The Bible is clear: if you believe in Jesus and place your faith in His work on the cross, you're saved from the penalty of your sin and are restored to a right relationship with God. But it's a good question to ask ourselves: are our actions matching up with our faith, especially as it pertains to our compassion toward others?**

Transition to The Last Word.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The goal of this section is for the student to get a picture of how they can practically show Christ-like compassion to those around them.
- **Set-Up:** None.

FIRST, let your students know that we're "piggy-backing" the Main Event discussion and getting really practical with it. We want to talk about how we live out 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, James 2:14-17, and Luke 3:9-11.

THEN, having a student re-read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Then, ask:

- **Have you ever been able to minister to someone more effectively because of situation or trial you've experienced? If you're comfortable with it, share a little bit about that experience.**

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o Answers will vary.

- **What are things we can do or think about that puts us in the position to comfort and minister to people effectively?**

o Answer: Answers here will vary. One thing to think about is that if we're intentional about building relationships with people, we'll be in a much better position to minister to them when they're hurting. They'll know we care about them and they'll trust us rather than feeling like we're just swooping in to fix a problem and then leave them alone.

NEXT, have a student re-read James 2:14-17 and Luke 3:9-11. Then ask (and maybe give a personal example yourself):

- **Have you ever been guilty of doing what James 2:16 is talking about? Explain.**
- **Why did you brush it off? Did you justify it somehow? If so, what did you do or think to justify it?**
- **What are some practical ways you can put these verses into practice? How can you do it with the people you're around everyday (family, friends, teammates, people at school, etc.)?**
- **What about branching out into the community? What about globally?**

FINALLY, as you talk with your students through this, encourage them to think about ways they can invest in people on a consistent basis. This is easiest when it comes to those people they see each and every day. A mission trip or local mission project is a great way for them to branch out a little bit. Particularly when you're talking with them about things in the community, encourage them to think of things are more than one-time events. Think about nursing homes, shelters, or other ministries that can be plugged into on a more regular basis. This will allow them to develop meaningful relationships and invest in people more long-term.

Close in prayer.

- 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@youthministry370.com.