

COMPASSION FOR THE NEEDY

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

SERVE COMPASSION NEEDY DO GOOD BELIEVER

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

2 Kings 4:1-7

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children recognize that God can have compassion on those who are needy through the people who are willing to serve

MEMORY VERSE

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

In our journey for Christlikeness we are being transformed daily into the image of Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit, and we make ourselves available to God's work in us and through us. When we are consecrated to God we long to share his love for the lost and his compassion for the poor and the broken. Because of this we are committed to inviting people to faith in Jesus Christ, caring for those in need, standing against injustice, and encouraging those who are oppressed. Through our mission in the world, we demonstrate the love of God.

Elisha was the successor of Elijah, prophet of Yahweh. Elisha was called by God when he was out plowing his land (1 Kings 19). Maybe he was someone who had lots of money. In his ministry, he took an active part in Israel's public issues, he preached and performed miracles. Out of all of the prophets, only Elisha predicted several of Christ's miracles, which makes us remember his goodness. Elisha was God's prophet, and God declared things through his life. People of all classes sought out his help. Many recognized him as someone important, but Elisha did not let this divert his attention from his ministry and what the people needed.

The husband of a widow had acquired a debt that he could not pay before he died. During this time, widows did not have a source

of income because they were not allowed to work outside of the home, so she could not pay the debt.

According to the law (Leviticus 25:38-42), a creditor could take the debtor's family as slaves for a period of time, up to 50 years, and that way pay the debt. The widow wanted to save her children from their similar destiny.

"Compassion" is a strange concept today, especially for children who, far from practicing it, have the tendency to think only of themselves. Not only are they predominantly thinking about themselves, but also they are quick to judge others and think poorly of those who are different. It is a psychological trait or characteristic of children.

During the biblical time, where this passage comes from, compassion was reduced and limited by laws and certain social prejudices. However, Elisha knew exactly who had called him and why. He was to serve the Living God. He was to proclaim his message and show a lifestyle that conformed to his divine will.

Many of Elisha's followers forgot the word of Yahweh, but he preached it. Many did not live according to what God wanted, but Elisha did. The city with its customs, did not show compassion. As a result, Elisha decided to show compassion to those who needed or asked for it.

"What can I do for you?" With this question, Elisha made his personality obvious. We should imitate his attitude in our lives, even when the world in which we live is not compassionate, but instead is selfish, cruel and uncaring. God calls us to be different and to carry out his will.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What is compassion?

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #305-A and help the group understand compassion through this activity. Have them use the code to fill in the blank spaces on top of the numbers and they will figure out the meaning of the word "compassion": to love enough to help someone.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #305-B.

TEACH THE LESSON

What can I do for you?

Knock, knock! Elisha hurried over to see who was at the door. He recognized the woman immediately; she was the widow of one of his friends.

"What's going on?" Elisha asked.

"Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you know that he revered the Lord. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves," she said.

Her husband owed a lot of money when he died. The law said that people who were owed money were allowed to take the debtor's family as their slaves, until their work paid for the debt. Elisha knew that the widow had no money.

Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she said, "except a little oil."

Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Do not ask for just a few. Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side."

The widow thought to herself, "What will this little bit of oil do for me now?" But, she closed the door, gathered her sons, and told them what Elisha had told her. They went from house to house asking their neighbors for all of the empty jars they could get. Once they were back at their house, the widow asked her sons to please bring her a jar. As they brought the jars to her, she kept pouring. She told them that, as each one got full to move it aside so it did not get in the way. The sons saw how many empty jars they had all over the house and thought, "How is it possible that with so little oil we can fill all of these?" But they obeyed their mother's instructions anyway.

One of the sons passed a jar to his mother and attentively watched how she took what little oil they had and started to fill the empty jar. When it was full of oil, the other son took it away to make room for another jar that his brother brought.

They filled jar after jar. Their mother kept pouring the oil into every empty jar she got. "Bring me another jar." But her son replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your

debts. You and your sons can live on what is left.”

CONNECT THE LESSON

Show compassion to the needy

Have the children find Distribute Student Activity Sheet #305-C and #305-D. Divide the students into three groups and give each group the beginning of a story. Have them read it, and then ask them to think about it, and then discuss the following questions before they write the end of the story.

1. Who has a need in this story?
2. What is that need?
3. What can someone do to show this person compassion?

Tell the children that they should now finish the stories. Make sure to tell them that by working together with God they can show compassion to others.

Story #1 - “There is a child in the class who uses hearing aids to help him hear. He also uses very thick glasses. Some children make fun of him. They say that he sounds weird when he talks.” (This little boy obviously is in need, since he already is confronted with physical impairments. God loves him, but he also needs friends who accept him for who he is. The children can show him compassion by inviting him to join a group of friends; or ask the ones that do make fun of him to not do it anymore. Emphasize that we should not blame anyone for having physical impediments.)

Story #2 - The father of a little neighbor girl lost his job. The little girl has a new baby sister. (Everyone has a need here. The father lost his job and the mom just had a baby. It is harder for children to think of what they can do in this situation. But if the little girl is younger, they could offer to take her to and bring her home from school, or the bus stop. They could also play with her while the mother rests or watches the baby.)

Story #3 - “A lady lives by herself in the neighborhood. She does not come outside often. A nurse visits her house once a week to see how she is doing. Sometimes she sits in front of her house and watches the people pass. Every once in a while she yells at children that come into her yard.” (This lady has a need. She cannot come outside often and she is lonely. The children can show her compassion by visiting her when she sits in front of her house. They could bring her the mail, or bring her flowers and small gifts.)

Let the children read the ending to their stories.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

In this unit, the group will be learning a new verse, it is quite short. Tell the students the memory verse: “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10, NIV). Challenge them to learn it quickly. You can think of games and activities to make it easy to learn. If you need ideas see the “KidzFirst Memory Verse Activities” sheet.

WRAP-UP

Pray

To end the lesson, pray with the group asking God to help them find ways to show compassion to others.

Encourage

Thank the students for their attendance and encourage them not to forget what they learned.

Invite

Announce something about the next session to increase the group’s interest. Remind them that visitors are welcome.

