

COMPASSION FOR OUR ENEMIES

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

HURT

COMPASSION

DO GOOD

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

2 Kings 6:8-23, Matthew 5:44

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children understand the necessity of showing compassion to others, including those who want to hurt us

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

The king of Syria was at war against Israel, being the aggressors. Israel had found themselves happy and peaceful with Syria, but Syria continually pestered them with armed forces entering their land. They went to the border of Israel to rob, kill and take their people captive.

Soon, everything started to fall apart for the Syrians. Israel counted on their divinely inspired intelligence system. God would tell Elisha where the Syrians would appear for their next attack, and Elisha would then tell the king. This happened so often that the king of Syria thought that one of his officers was a spy. But they all denied it and told him that it was coming from the prophet Elisha; that he found out everything they were doing and told the king of Israel.

The king of Syria sent spies to find Elisha, and when they returned they said, "He is in Dothan." Dothan was north of Samaria, not too far from the territories that the Syrians occupied. By the next morning, the Syrians had already surrounded the city. The only thing they needed to do was capture Elisha. With so many horses and chariots, they thought that it would not be difficult to trap the prophet. The plan was so easy, but apparently, the Syrians had forgotten about the God of Israel.

When Elisha's servant saw the Syrian army surrounding the city, he hurried to tell him. But Elisha was not worried, he was sure that God was in control of the situation. He responded, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Elisha

knew that God always took care of His city, no matter what kind of danger or insecurity it faced.

Afterwards, his servant had a vision where he saw a heavenly army all around the Syrians. Compared to God's army, the Syrians were nothing.

When the Syrian army started to advance, Elisha prayed that God would blind them. Then, Elisha led the Syrians to Samaria, where the king (probably Jeroboam) and the army of Israel waited for them. After Elisha prayed that their eyes be open, the Syrians realized that they were in Samaria. The king of Israel found himself anxious to seek revenge, but he followed Elisha's advice. (It must have been so hard for him to prepare a grand banquet in honor of his enemies.)

But Elisha knew something the king of Israel did not. Hostility only brings about more hostility, and war provokes more war. The advice that he gave turned out to be the wisest. The attacks against Israel finally stopped. The act of compassion that Elisha showed brought peace to his country.

One of the most radical concepts that Jesus preached, and that he asked his followers to practice, was love and compassion towards one's enemies. The meaning of the word "enemy" is widely used. It does not only mean the hatred that is represented by evil villains, but it also means those people who look for ways to hurt us, sometimes with reason, sometimes without.

The commandment that Jesus gave us was clear and does not give room to doubt. We should love. Children know other children from school or in the neighborhood that annoy them, make fun of them, hurt them, and pester them. These are enemies to our children and hopefully through this lesson they'll learn that through the eyes of God, they can love them and have compassion on them.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Remind the group that in the last session we learned it is necessary to also show compassion to leaders and other powerful people. Ask the group: "Is it necessary to also show compassion to people who mistreat us?" (allow responses) Then say: "One of the most radical concepts that Jesus preached, and that he asked his followers to practice, was love and compassion towards one's enemies."

Then ask the group to tell you the meaning of the word "enemy". Say: "It does not only mean the hatred that is represented by evil villains, but it also means those people who look for ways to hurt us, sometimes with reason, sometimes without. The commandment that Jesus gave us was clear and does not give room to doubt. We should love."

Ask the children: Do any of you know other children from school or in the neighborhood that annoy you, make fun of you, hurt you, and pester you?" (Do not allow them to provide names.) Then say: "These are enemies to us but hopefully through this lesson we will learn that through the eyes of God, we can love them and have compassion on them."

TEACH THE LESSON

Today's story is a play. Prior to the session assign children certain parts to read aloud. If there are too many children who want to participate, have someone be the narrator to set the scene; otherwise you read it.

"BUT THEY'RE THE ENEMY?!"

Characters: Syrian king, guards, Syrian soldiers, first officer, second officer, Elisha, Elisha's servant, other soldiers (optional)

ACT I

(In a Syrian army camp. A scared soldier enters. You can tell by his face how scared he is. He bows in front of the king.)

Syrian soldier: Your highness! The ambush against Israel has failed, again!

Syrian king: (angrily) AGAIN?! There has to be a spy among our men that is communicating our plans to the Israeli king. Go call all of the officers immediately! We will discover who our spy is!

Syrian soldier: Yes, your majesty! I will go right away! (He leaves and returns with the officers.)

Syrian king: Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?

First officer: None of us, my lord the king. Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom.

Second officer: Yes, your majesty! This prophet knows exactly where we are going to attack. His God reveals to him our plans, then he shows them to the king of Israel.

Syrian king: Go, find out where he is so I can send men and capture him.

(The officers leave and the king writes on a piece of parchment. The first officer enters and bows before the king.)

Syrian king: Have you found where the prophet Elisha is?

First officer: Yes, he is in Dothan!

Syrian king: Dothan? Surround the city right now!

First officer: Yes, your majesty! (He leaves.)

Syrian king: (claps his hand together and smiles evilly) Elisha, I will make you my prisoner soon enough!

ACT II

(Early in the morning in Dothan, Elisha's servant goes to the well to bring in water. He realizes that the entire city is surrounded by the Syrian army. He hurries to tell Elisha.)

Elisha's servant: Master, the city is surrounded by the Syrian army! They are going to kill us! Oh my lord, what shall we do?

Elisha: Do not be afraid. Those who are with us are more than those who are with them. (Elisha bows his head and starts to pray.) Oh Lord, open his eyes so that he may see.

Elisha's servant: (looks around him in awe, rubs his eyes) I cannot believe what I am seeing! There are other horses and other chariots on the hills surrounding the Syrians. They are so bright, like they are on fire!

Elisha: (looks to the sky and prays) Strike these people with blindness.

(The Syrian soldiers begin to trip on the road; they have no idea where they are going.)

Elisha: (walks close to the first officer) This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me and I will lead you to the man you are looking for.

First officer: (Orders his men) Follow me.

(Elisha guides them to the king of Israel and prays once more.)

Elisha: Oh, Lord, open their eyes so they may see.

First officer: (looks around) Where are we?

Second officer: It looks like Samaria, but it could not be!

Israel's king: Should we kill them, my lord?

Elisha: Do not kill them. Would you kill men you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat, drink, and then go back to their master.

First official: Did you hear that? They are going to give us something to eat and then let us leave freely and return home!

Second official: What kind of people are these? (2 Kings 6)

Life application

Help the children think of some ways that they can put this lesson into practice. Talk about how to show compassion to those who need help, and how to show compassion and forgive those who hurt us.

Organize the group into a circle where they are comfortable and can talk. Lead a conversation in which the children can talk about experiences they had. This can be an opportunity to ask questions like, "What has been done to you that resulted in a painful situation for you?" "What do you dislike that they do to you?" "What would you never do to your best friends, siblings or your parents?" "What could they do that you would never forgive them for?"

It is very important to keep in mind:

1. If you are trying to get them to open sensitive parts of their heart, it could take a little work. Be creative and wise in order to do it correctly, not forcefully.
2. As previously mentioned, this is working with sensitive parts of children's emotions. Your children could start talking about and remembering delicate facts and things that are very significant in their personal, family and spiritual lives. Be wise and professional when you direct the conversation in order to assimilate and manage the information that could come up.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Review

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #308-A and #308-B and help the group review the lesson.

Who does not deserve compassion?

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #308-C. Ask the students to look at the pictures on this activity page. Ask them: "Who do you think does not deserve compassion?" (The children could mention the people in the pictures: the one that is stealing the wallet, or the person yelling at the mailman.) "Why do not these people deserve compassion?" (Let the children respond.) "How do you think we should treat people who do not deserve compassion?" (Talk about how God treats people much better than what they deserve. This is the grace of God.) Because we are His children, he wants us to treat people better than we may think they deserve to be treated.

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #308-D and help the group plan ways they can show compassion.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Have the children who are ready repeat Galatians 6:10 in unison. Ask a volunteer to explain the meaning of the verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

For the end-of-session prayer, ask the Lord to help the group to show compassion to others, especially those we may think do not deserve it.

Encourage

Thank the group 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 this is a good time to invite new group members.