

FAMILY FAITH BUILDER

Character Lessons for Practical Application of Faith

Compassion v.

Indifference



Helping those in need

Compassion is about loving actions to help another person in pain. Acting compassionately requires that we see the person we are helping as a person and not just a problem that needs fixing.

Advent is the perfect time to be studying Compassion as it is a time of self-reflection and a reminder to turn away from sin and self-centeredness. It's the perfect time to replace consumption with Compassion. Filled with this compassion, we are commissioned by our Baptism to act compassionately towards others. These acts are not just random and when convenient. We are called to make it a plan, a way of life, a commitment, a second job. This calling is so strong that we should actually feel pulled to seek out those that need our help. This month turn the noun Compassion into an action verb.

To Practice Compassion I Will:

- stop to help
- listen when others want to talk
- give of my resources to help those in need
- look for lasting solutions
- comfort others without regard to race, gender, faith, age, or nationality

Any others appropriate to your family?

God's Word on Compassion

"Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble."

1 Peter 3:8

"Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body."

Hebrews 13:3

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on the faithful."

Psalms 103:13

"If someone who has worldly means sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in him?"

1 John 3:17

"He who has compassion on the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his good deed."

Proverbs 19:17

Jesus said in reply: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 10:27

The Parable of the Good Samaritan Teaches Us about Compassion

In Luke's Gospel we hear Jesus tell the story of the Good Samaritan in answer to the question: "Who is my Neighbor?". The story begins with an unknown man being beaten and robbed as he traveled out of Jerusalem. A priest and a Levite both pass by the injured traveler and offer no assistance. These men, both professional religious, could have been seen as otherwise good guys but in this instance, neither let their faith guide their actions. The parable teaches us that Compassion should be an extension of our faith.

The next person to pass the injured man was a Samaritan. Now, Jews considered Samaritans to be of a low class. They never would have said 'good' and 'Samaritan' in the same sentence but it was the Samaritan who was 'moved by compassion' to help the traveler. He didn't just feel bad for the guy. Helping was something he just couldn't avoid doing. The parable teaches us that Compassion compels us to action.

The Samaritan did not know if the man was a Jew or a Gentile or anything. He helped the man because he was in need, not because he could help him back someday or because he was worth it. The parable teaches us that Compassion is based on need, not perceived worth, race or creed.

Everything that the Samaritan did for the injured man cost him something. It took time to take care of him and get him to an inn. The man used his own wine and oil on the wounds. He had to use something he had with him to bind the wounds – his own clothing, perhaps? The parable teaches us that Compassion will cost us something and it may not be convenient.



Egg Drop



If the family is large you can divide into 2 groups or do this exercise together. Start with a raw egg (or perhaps more for multiple attempts). Instruct them to construct something for the egg so that when it is dropped, the outer shell will not break. Show them the height from which it will be dropped such as the height of a table. Provide some materials to work with such as: packing peanuts, bubble wrap, Popsicle sticks, yarn, felt, straws, string, and tape. Allow them a short amount of time to work and then let them test their idea. If it works, celebrate. If it doesn't, learn and try again. When they are done, explain that they spent lots of time thinking about how to keep their egg from getting hurt. We need to put that same effort into making sure that we do not do things to hurt those around us. Compassion is not just about healing hurts but acting in ways to prevent them from happening.

*“Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.”
Galatians 6:2*

POSTER IDEA:

Compassion

Helping those in need



**“Be kind to one another,
tenderhearted, forgiving one
another, as God in Christ forgave
you.”**

Ephesians 4:32

**Do you see the person
or the problem?**

Dear Jesus,

We praise you for your goodness and mercy and thank you for the example of Compassion in your life. We remember how you healed many believers. Remind us to stop to help whenever we can and to listen, just listen, when someone needs to talk. Help us to learn to look for lasting solutions and to give of ourselves to those in need. Guide us to comfort others without regard to race, gender, faith, age, or nationality. Help us to act in all things in harmony with the will of the Father. Amen.

Other ways to teach character in the home:

- Display the character quality and definition in a prominent place such as on the refrigerator or let each child decorate it for their bedroom door.
- At the dinner table ask if anyone noticed anyone (not just family members) demonstrating the character quality (or not demonstrating it).
- Point out news stories where character was or was not involved.
- During car trips, challenge the kids by describing scenarios and having them identify if it describes being the quality or being the opposite.
- Praise with character by recognizing the character quality involved rather than the achievement.

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For more activities that can be adapted for family use, visit
www.charactercincinnati.org/quality_resource.php?q=compassion