



UNIT 12 | SESSION 4

GOD IS GOOD TO GIVE MERCY

LUKE 18

KEY PASSAGE:

Exodus 34:6-7

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is mercy? Mercy is when God does not give us the punishment that we deserve.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The tax collector knew he needed God to forgive him, and he cried out to God. Everyone is a sinner who needs God's mercy and forgiveness. Jesus took the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. We can cry out to God like the tax collector and because of Jesus, God will have mercy on us.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

In Luke 18, Jesus shared several parables and encounters to illustrate the richness of God’s mercy toward sinners. From the widow, to the tax collector, to the blind man, Jesus repeatedly proved Himself to be a Savior who takes great joy in extending the hand of mercy to the most unlikely of people.

Throughout the Bible, we discover that God is merciful. We see it in His gracious act to preserve Noah and his family from the flood, in the kindness of God to provide a lamb so Abraham would not have to sacrifice his son Isaac, in Jesus’ kindness toward Peter even after his denial, and so much more. God is clearly merciful.

In Luke 18:6-8, we see that the question of God’s mercy is really no question at all. “Will not God grant justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night? Will he delay helping them? I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

The question is not, ‘Will God show justice and mercy?’ The question instead is, ‘Will God find faith?’

In Hebrews 11:1, we find this explanation of faith: “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.” If God’s mercy is shown to people of faith, we must cling tightly to that which is unseen—

namely to the work of God in the world. We must grasp that there is an invisible God who has made Himself visible through Jesus Christ. And we must not forget that it is by grace that we are saved, through faith.

The mercy of God, though undeserved, is an overflow of His holy character. People with faith in the invisible God, who works in ways that bring great delight to His people, can have confidence that God will show mercy. And that mercy is ours to be enjoyed because of the finished work of Christ.

As you consider God’s wondrous acts of mercy, let it stir up faith. And as faith arises in your own heart, be reminded that you will receive mercy as well.

TERMS TO KNOW

Mercy: Not giving a deserved punishment. Salvation is God’s merciful act of withholding His wrath and eternal punishment as well as His grace in granting forgiveness and eternal life.



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “How has God been good to you this week? Think of some ways He has answered your prayers or provided for you in the last seven days.”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Hidden Message Maze” on the activity page.

SAY “Mercy was the hidden message in your activity, but mercy isn’t hidden in today’s Bible story. Listen closely to hear who cried out for mercy in their prayer.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: IMPOSSIBLE TASK



Give each kid candy and tell them to hold on to it. Decide on an impossible task for the class to attempt. For example, stack all the cups in a pyramid in 20 seconds. Explain to the class that if they do not complete the task on time, their punishment is to give up their candy. Allow the kids to attempt this task and be sure to remind them of their punishment. Right before you take up their candy, decide to show them mercy and allow them to keep the candy.

SAY “You failed at your task and deserved the punishment of losing candy, but you were shown mercy. Due to our sin, we fail and cannot rescue ourselves. We need mercy. God provided us mercy through the gift of Jesus.”

OPTION 2: GOD IS GOOD

Before class write God is good in big bubble letters on the craft paper. Place the banner in the middle of the room. Give each kid a stack of sticky notes. Give them five minutes to fill out as many sticky notes as possible about why God is good. Invite kids to place their sticky notes in the God is good bubble letter. Allow kids to point out three of their favorite reasons for why God is good.

SAY “There are so many reasons why God is good! Today, we are going to learn that God is good to give mercy. Pay close attention so you can learn more about our merciful God.”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 18. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Is Good to Give Mercy.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD IS GOOD TO GIVE MERCY

“Jesus told a story to some people who looked down on others. These people thought they were better than everyone else. Jesus wanted to teach them a lesson.

“Two men went into the temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee, or a religious leader,” Jesus began. Pharisees tried very hard to please God by following the rules. They even made up new rules to follow.

“The other man was a tax collector,” Jesus said. Many people did not like tax collectors. They were often dishonest and unfair in the way they collected money.

Jesus said, “The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed, ‘God, I thank You that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful like other people. I am glad I am not like that tax collector. I fast two days a week and tithe.’

“The tax collector stood far away. He did not even lift up his head because he was sorry for the things he had done. The tax collector pounded on his chest and said, ‘Have mercy on me, God! I am a sinner!’”

The prayer of the Pharisee was very different from the prayer of the tax collector. Jesus explained that God was happy with the tax collector, and He forgave him. But God was not happy with the Pharisee.

Jesus said, “If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you are humble, God will honor you.”

Christ Connection: The tax collector knew he needed God to forgive him, and he cried out to God. Everyone is a sinner who needs God’s mercy and forgiveness. Jesus took the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. We can cry out to God like the tax collector and because of Jesus, God will have mercy on us. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Assign roles: Assign half of the class to act like the Pharisee and the other to act as the tax collector. As you tell the story, encourage them to creatively represent their person. Swap the roles and tell the story a second time.

Sketch someone: Give each kid a large sheet of art paper and a pencil. As you tell the story, invite the kids to sketch each character.

Small Group Discussion/Questions

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ We read of two men praying to God, but each man had a very different prayer. The tax collector was not liked by people because he would often do his job in deceitful ways. He entered the temple aware of his sin. The Pharisee thought much of himself and couldn’t see his sin.

Sometimes we can be like the tax collector and think we are better than others. The Bible tells us that ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Rom. 3:23). No one, apart from Jesus, lives a perfect life. While the Pharisee may have thought his actions were righteous, his heart was far from God.

Who was Jesus telling this parable to? Look at Luke 18:9. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 18:9.]** This lesson was for those who trusted more in themselves than in God. The Pharisee was proud of his outward achievements, but his heart did not love God.

What happens when we humble ourselves and cry out for mercy? Look at Luke 18:14. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 18:14.]** Through this parable, Jesus reveals that the one that exalts himself will be humbled but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ We do not have to be perfect to approach God. The tax collector knew he needed God to forgive him, and he cried out to God. Everyone is a sinner who needs God’s mercy and forgiveness. Jesus took the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. We can cry out to God like the tax collector and because of Jesus, God will have mercy on us. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 12, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is there a right way to pray and a wrong way to pray?
2. What have you learned about prayer today?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ Victor and Ludmila Moura are immigrants to the United States. This means that they were born in a different country, Brazil, but now live in the U.S. The United States is home to almost 45 million immigrants.

What do you think would be difficult about moving to another country? **[Allow kids to answer. Answers may include learning the language, trying new foods, meeting people who are different from you, and so on.]** God gave the Mouras family a heart for Brazilian immigrants in the United States. It probably wasn’t easy for the Mouras to move to another country, but God called them to