



Collegiate Quarterly

## Teacher's Guide

# To Love Mercy

## Surveying the Source

Matt. 6:25–34; 7:12; James 2:15, 16; 1 John 3:16–18

## Plotting the Course

### The students will:

- ▶ Feel empowered to make a difference in the community and world.
- ▶ Discover that mercy, like virtue, is its own reward.
- ▶ Understand that all are equipped to minister to the least of these in some way.

## Preparing to Lead

An American television station, CBS, produced a show called *Undercover Boss*. The premise is simple: the boss, unbeknownst to his employees, lowers himself to an entry level position at his own company and is working among them, recording all he or she observes in hopes of improving the company. God,

like the undercover boss, sees what we do with the opportunities we have been given and how we treat others. He also sees our personal challenges and dreams. We, similarly, have the choice of disregarding our fellow human beings or showing them the mercy that God has shown us.

## Getting Started

**A.** Ask the class if they have ever heard of the following names: Christian Bale, Mila Kunis, Chris Rock, Lady Gaga, Michael Phelps, Elon Musk, Kate Middleton, Elisha, Joseph, or Mary Magdalene. *Ask:* “What do they all have in common?” *Say:* “They were all victims of bullying. It happens to many people, even famous ones.” Ask the class to think of a time when they might have been bullied. Did someone step up for them? Did they step up for someone else who was powerless? Perhaps they witnessed someone else running interference? Ask the students to share their story with the class.

**B.** *Say:* “In 2006 a gunman entered an Amish schoolhouse near Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania. He shot thirteen young girls, killing five, before killing himself. The grieving Amish families traveled to comfort the widow of the killer and took up a collection for her and her children. The world was awestruck at this gesture of forgiveness.” *Ask:* “Is there a crime that you could not forgive? What if it was a family member who was the one that was hurt? What if it was a family member who was the perpetrator?” Encourage a discussion around the responses.

## Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles

## Delving Into the Word

**A.** The Bible has many examples where mercy has been shown, from God to humanity and from human to human. Have the class take turns looking up the following texts and reading the passages aloud: Gen. 12:10–20; 18:22–33; 39:20–23; Esth. 7; Ruth 2:8–12; Isaiah 38:2–8; Jonah 2:1–10; Luke 8:27–37; John 9:3–11; Acts 9:17–20; Titus 3:3–5.

Have one class member record the texts on the flip chart and another record the situations mentioned in the texts. *Ask:* “Do you think that mercy should have been shown in all these instances? Were there any examples where the giver of mercy was as blessed as the recipient? In what way?”

**B. Say:** “So many people around us need help and some needs in society never seem to change.” *Ask:* “What social issues were prevalent in New Testament times? How did the Bible characters address them? Did they advocate or look the other way?” Ask the class to locate some of Jesus’ contributions to the needs of society in the following texts. Have a volunteer write the texts on the flipchart: Matt. 8: 5–13; 15:30–37; 20:30–34; Mark 6:34; Luke 17:11–19; John 2:1–11; 5:1–10.

As the class looks up each text have a volunteer write the particular needs addressed next to the text. *Ask:* “How did Jesus avoid compassion fatigue? What part, if any, does mercy play in these biblical interactions? How do some of these stories compare to social situations today and how can we renew our passion for others as Jesus did?”

## Discussing the Ideas

1. How do you display mercy when you forgive?
2. What things might prevent you from caring deeply for others?
3. What are some ways that we misrepresent Christ in our daily lives?
4. How are hope and mercy alike?
5. How could setting priorities in your

life lead to the merciful treatment of others?

6. Does showing mercy extend to the treatment of animals?
7. How is freedom from worry merciful?
8. Are there situations where it is more merciful to withhold a hand-out?

## Closing the Activity

Hand out the Reproducible Activity. Ask the class if they consider Jesus a social justice warrior? There were many problems in His day that He addressed and He still listens and acts today through us. Tell the class to work together to fill

in suggestions of how Jesus might address the list of social issues on the hand-out. What means would He use? What resources? How would society respond?

End the class with a prayer for strength to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

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## Jesus and Social Activism

What issues plaguing society today would Jesus likely address? What form of action would He take? Fill in the following sentences with your responses. Room is left to add other social issues to the list.

Jesus would address global warming by

Jesus would stand up for the differently abled by

Jesus would address polluted waterways by

Jesus would fight for equality for women by

Jesus would diffuse hate groups by

Jesus would advocate for ethical treatment of animals by

Jesus would address homelessness by