

WEEK TEN

O THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE MERCIFUL; FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY

BIG IDEA

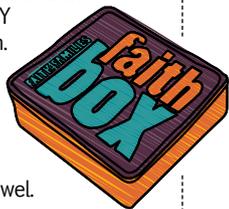
WHEN WE ACCEPT OTHERS & SHOW MERCY,
then we will discover God's care for us.

PREP

- Wrap up a treat (box of chocolates or pineapple lumps) like a present.
- Write the word MERCY on small cards – one for each person.
- Find a low stool or something easy to stand on.

WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- The pieces of card with the word MERCY written on them.
- Pens or pencils.
- One party hat and one tea towel.



INTRO

- Mum or dad comes to family time holding the beautifully wrapped present (a box of chocolates or some other edible treat).

When do you get a present?

How do you think you would feel if someone gave you a present for no reason?

Why would someone give a gift for no reason?

- (One parent says to the other) “This present today is for someone I love”
Present the gift.

Today's beatitude is 'Blessed are the merciful'.

Receiving mercy is like getting a wonderful gift that we don't deserve

Giving mercy is like giving someone a wonderful gift they don't deserve.

OUT OF THE BOX

- Everyone takes off their shoes and puts them in a pile.
Beginning with the youngest, everyone chooses someone else's shoes and puts them on.
- Line everyone up and ask them to walk to the end of the room and back again in the shoes they have chosen. (This is not a race)

- Now put out several cushions (for stepping on), a low stool (for stepping over) and a chair (or something similar for climbing under) to create an obstacle course.
 - Give everyone a 'mercy' card.
 - Start with the person who has the curliest hair.
 - Time each person walking through the obstacle course (include standing on the low stool with two feet). If they drop a shoe they must go back to the beginning, or they may hand in their 'mercy card' and carry on.
- Alternatively, another person can give them their 'mercy' card, so they can continue without going back to the beginning.
- The one who has the best time is offered a treat from the box of chocolates.



Being merciful is being willing to understand how it feels to walk in someone else's shoes.

Think what it is like to be...

...A person who loses something important or valuable that belongs to someone else?

...A person who breaks a rule and is going to be punished?

...A person who has no one who really cares about them?

Give everyone the same treat as the winner (an act of mercy – receiving what we don't deserve).

READ

- Everyone take their 'mercy' card and a pencil.

In a game of hockey or soccer or rugby what does it mean when someone gets a yellow card or a red card?

Well in this story from the Bible someone gets a 'mercy' card! See if you can work out who it is, and, when the story has finished, write your answer on your mercy card.

This is a parable that Jesus told his disciples when they asked how many times they needed to forgive someone.

- Appoint one child as the king (party hat) and another as the servant (tea-towel over arm). The King sits on a chair and, as you read, they act out the story. Everyone else can be the other servants.

“ The kingdom of God is like a king who decided to square accounts with his servants. As he got under way, one servant was brought before him who had run up a debt of a hundred thousand dollars. He couldn't pay up, so the king ordered the man, along with his wife, children, and goods, to be auctioned off at the slave market.

The poor wretch threw himself at the king's feet and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' Touched by his plea, the king let him off, erasing the debt.

The servant was no sooner out of the room when he came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him ten dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded, 'Pay up. Now!' ●●●

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WEEK TEN

continued

The poor wretch threw himself down and begged, 'Give me a chance and I'll pay it all back.' But he wouldn't do it. He had him arrested and put in jail until the debt was paid.

When the other servants saw this going on, they were outraged and brought a detailed report to the king.

The king summoned the man and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave your entire debt when you begged me for mercy. Shouldn't you be compelled to be merciful to your fellow servant who asked for mercy?' The king was furious and put the screws to the man until he paid back his entire debt. And that's exactly what my Father in heaven is going to do to each one of you who doesn't forgive unconditionally anyone who asks for mercy." »

Matthew 18:23-35, The Message (MSG)

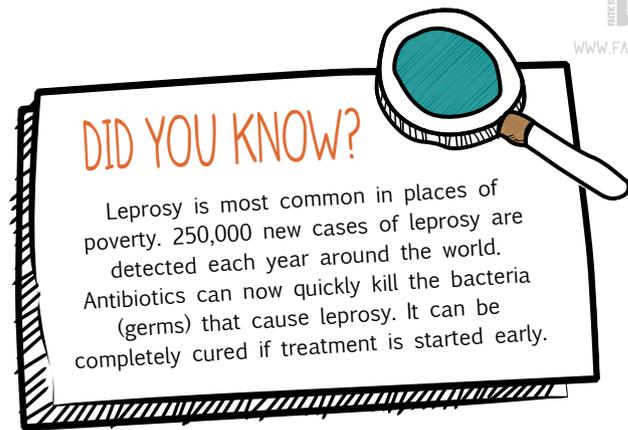
FAMILY TALK TIME

Questions

- Who was given mercy in this story?
- What do you think mercy is?
Mercy means not receiving a bad consequence that you deserve.
- Can you think of a time that someone gave you mercy?
- What did it feel like to be given the 'Mercy' card in the obstacle race?

Sometimes we make bad choices, yet Jesus still loves us and shows us mercy and forgiveness.

- Everyone write their own name on the mercy card.
Because God shows mercy to us we must show mercy to others



READ

Listen to the story of Father Damien, an amazing man, who lowered himself to the level of those who were hurting, and offered them mercy.

“ Father Damien became a priest when he was only 19 and in 1864 he was sent to Hawaii as a missionary. From there he asked to go to live and work at the leper colony on the island of Molokai. It was a terrible place of hatred and fear, because the 800 people living there were all suffering from leprosy, and dying. They didn't have any houses. They didn't follow any rules, and were violent and mean to each other.

Father Damien created new laws, as well as working as a doctor, a minister and a counsellor. He built a church, a hospital, a cemetery, and houses for all the people. He built an aqueduct to bring fresh water into the settlement; he planted orchards, and imported cattle for food. Because of his work people all over the world sent clothing and medical supplies to help the lepers. But after working on Molokai for 12 years, Damien himself contracted the worst kind of leprosy and four years later he died among the people he loved and served. He is remembered by many as » the 'Servant of Humanity'.

Father Damien showed that true love – 'Gospel love' is full of mercy; it means committing ourselves and getting involved to help others.

☺ WHEN WE ACCEPT OTHERS AND SHOW MERCY, THEN WE
WILL DISCOVER GOD'S CARE FOR US. ☺

- MARK HOPKINS -

- Why do you think Father Damien wanted to go to the island of Molokai?
- What does this tell you about Father Damien?
- Why do you think someone would want to give mercy?
- Why do you think someone would not want to give mercy?

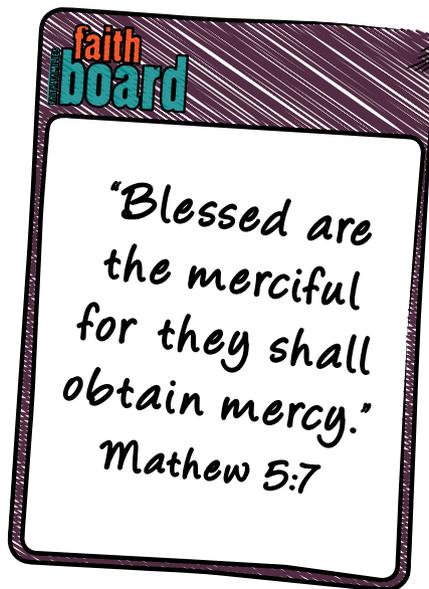
The wonderful thing about mercy is that the more we give it away to others the more we receive it ourselves. This beatitude is a promise that as we are merciful to others so we will be given mercy.

PRAY

- Invite everyone to take turns passing their 'Mercy' card to the person on their left.
- As you receive the card, thank God for giving you His mercy and ask Him to help you show mercy to others.

LIVE

Put your 'Mercy' card in your pocket this week and when someone does something mean to you, touch the card and ask God to help you respond to them with mercy, instead of what you think they deserve.



OTHER IDEAS

- Play a board game together. Before you start take out your 'Mercy' cards and hand one to everyone. Play the game as usual, but explain that, in order to win, their 'Mercy' card must be played during the game. Playing the card saves another player from a penalty they deserve, e.g. if playing snakes and ladders, you could play the card to help someone not go down a snake.
- Do some research and learn about the work of the leprosy mission. Think about how your family might help support people with this disease.
- Watch the DVD about Father Damien ('Molokai') together.

CHECK OUT WHAT YOU
NEED FOR NEXT WEEK...

