

Bible Study

Compassion – Ours in Christ

by Rev. Bill Knippa

Compassion is a beautiful and powerful characteristic of our God. As the psalmist says, our Lord is "gracious and full of compassion" (Ps. 111 :4; 112:4; 145:8). Compassion is made up of two components.

The first is sympathy, which involves sharing or experiencing another's feelings of distress or pain. The second component is the desire to do something to alleviate the distress or pain of the person experiencing it. So, compassion is more than sympathy—much more.

Compassion Continuum

Have everyone stand in the middle of the meeting room. As the leader reads each pair of words below, each person is to move to the front or the back of the room, depending on how he or she defines compassion. Once positioned, volunteers are to tell why they went to the end they did. You may want to add your own pairs.

Compassion is: (Front of room)	(Back of room)
Strong	Weak
Passive	Active
Warm	Cold
Easy	Difficult
Individual	Group

Compassion and Jesus

Read John 19:8-16. Do you think Pilate had compassion on Jesus? Why or why not?

Complete the following sentences. If you desire, share your responses with the group.

- A time I really needed compassion was...
- It is difficult for me to show compassion when...
- It is easy for me to show compassion when...

Divide into groups of four. Give each small group a piece of newsprint and a marker. Have each group develop their responses to the following questions. Afterwards, move back to the large group to share responses.

What needs did Jesus see in the following people and what did He do about them?

- Mary (John 19:26)
- John (John 19:27)
- The soldiers (Luke 23:33-34)
- The thief (Luke 23:39-43)
- Mary Magdalene (John 20: 11-18)

Turn to your small groups, complete the following and share with the others in your group.

- When someone shows me compassion I...
- A person who needs my compassion is...
- I can show my compassion by...
- _____ showed me compassion when...

In what ways does Jesus' life, death, and resurrection show us God's compassion?

Devotion:

Come together in a circle. Close your eyes and imagine you are one of the persons from the Scripture passages. What would Jesus' words mean to you? Share your responses.

Follow with a circle prayer. Conclude with one of the group's favorite songs or hymns.

*Originally published in Resources for Youth Ministry 85.4.
Updated for youthESource March 2017*

youthESource is published on the Web by the LCMS Office of National Mission—Youth Ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 South Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295; 1-800-248-1930; www.youthesource.com. Editor: Sherrah Holobaugh Behrens. VOL. 14 NO. 3. March 2017.