

BIG TRUTH: GOD'S MERCY IS JUST AND LOVING

Exodus 34:6-7; Titus 3:4-6; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10

BIBLE VERSE: 1 JOHN 4:10

"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

BIG IDEAS

- God is fully loving and fully just.
- God offers mercy to those who do not deserve it.
- At the cross God's love, mercy, and justice are on full display.
- God can offer us mercy because Jesus bore the just penalty for our sin.

BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 18:21-35

A king's servant owed him an enormous debt. The debt was so great, the servant would never be able to repay it. The king chose to forgive the servant his debt out of his mercy. The servant received mercy, but he did not show the same mercy to another servant who owed him money. We have all been shown mercy by God and we should show mercy to others.

STORY: REDEMPTION

Thankfully, God does not just leave us in the broken world, but is repairing the brokenness through His Son. From the very beginning of time, God promised He would fix creation, and He kept His promise by sending Jesus to rescue us from our sin. Jesus came to live on the earth and willingly died on the cross so that sin's power over creation would be broken forever.

BIG AIMS**Every child should know that:**

- God provides mercy and grace through Jesus
- Mercy is when God does not give us what we deserve; grace is when God gives us what we do not deserve

**Every child should feel:**

- Awe at God's goodness in His mercy and grace to us

**Every child should:**

- Give thanks because God is merciful and gracious to us

**Every child should want:**

- To accept God's gifts of mercy and grace that He extends to us through Jesus

GOD IS JUST AND MERCIFUL

With your child, create a "bill" of what your child owes you for all the years of living in your house, eating your food, wearing clothes that you buy, etc. Talk with your child about how much the bill would be and how long he or she would have to work to pay it back. Make sure your child knows that it is your love for them that makes taking care of them worthwhile. Because you love them, you do not care to do all that you do. God loves us and He chooses to show us mercy and not ask us to pay our sin debt because Jesus paid our sin debt.

DISCOVER IT: *(Use the passage to illustrate the Big Truth.)*

Matthew 18:21-35.

THINK ABOUT IT: *(Use the commentary to reinforce the Big Truth.)*

God is a merciful God. Though He is merciful, He is also just. God is perfectly just because justice comes from God. Jesus shared a story about a king whose servant owed him a great debt. The servant's debt was so great that the servant could work his entire life and never make enough money to pay it back. Each person owes a sin debt that is that great. There is nothing that we could ever do to pay our sin debt. The king showed his servant mercy. He forgave the servant's debt and chose not to sell him and his family. God shows us mercy by sending Jesus to pay our sin debt for us. Our sin debt is forgiven us when we have saving faith in Jesus. The servant received the king's forgiveness and then he went to his friend who owed him a debt and demanded that the debt be paid. The servant did not show mercy to his friend like mercy had been shown to him. The king heard about the servant's lack of mercy and he threw the servant in jail. When we choose not to forgive people, we are being like the unforgiving servant. God forgives us and we should forgive others. God shows us mercy when we do not deserve it. He can show us mercy because Jesus paid our sin debt.

TALK ABOUT IT: *(Use the questions to discuss the Big Truth)*

- What did the king do for his servant? (He forgave his great debt.)
- How did the servant treat his friend? (He demanded his friend pay his debt.)
- What happened to the unforgiving servant? (He was thrown into jail.)
- What does God do for us? (He shows us mercy even when we do not deserve it.)

**KNOW**

As a family memorize 1 John 4:10 by playing a game of Verse Hangman.

**DO**

Write down the main events of the story on index cards. Number the cards and hide them throughout your house. Call out a number and have your child hunt for that card. Once all of the cards are found, spend some time reviewing the story and reminding your child that God shows us mercy even when we do not deserve it.

**FEEL**

Spend some time as a family doing acts of service for one another. Talk with your child about how God shows us mercy when we do not deserve it just like they are showing kindness when it hasn't been earned.

Help your child create a Mercy Chart at the beginning of the week. Write each family member's name on the chart and draw a box for each day of the week. Next, write down different ways to show mercy on index cards and place them in a bowl or jar. Each day, family members should draw a card and try to do what is on the card that day. When a family member is successful, they should tape the card to the square next to his or her name. At the end of the week, talk with your child about how God showed us mercy by sending Jesus to pay our sin debt.

**WANT**

Spend some time this week praying with your child thanking God for showing us mercy by sending Jesus to pay our sin debt.