

FAMILY PAGE: BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

FAMILY QUESTION: HOW CAN OUR FAMILY SHOW MERCY AND ALSO KEEP GOOD BOUNDARIES?

In Jesus' Beatitude blessing the merciful, the people recognize God because God is merciful. Mercy is feeling what someone else feels, acting on their behalf, and then dedicating yourself to continue to work for their well-being. Sometimes it is easier to show mercy to a stranger than to show mercy to a family member. We get on each other's nerves! This week, pay careful attention to your responses to one another. Are you being harsh or merciful? Begin by role-playing a scenario that usually brings out harshness in your family. Perhaps there are arguments over screen time, mealtimes, or bedtimes. What would it be like if you all spoke with mercy and grace? How would the situation be transformed? When a tense situation arises, stop yourselves. Take a moment, breathe, remember Jesus' words about mercy, and start over. Does that feel different?

BRIEF REFLECTION

A huge crowd of people followed Jesus. He saw their hurts and pains and cared for them in many ways. He led them to a mountain and told them about God's kingdom. You can think of a "kingdom" as the way the world works or is set up. In God's kingdom, there is abundance: more than enough honor, food, money, love, power, and resources for everyone to thrive.

Jesus says, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*" Can you think of a time you received kindness when you did something hurtful? Maybe you said something unkind to your sibling, but they used their words to tell you how they felt, forgave you, and still wanted to play with you. How did that feel?

Have you ever made a mistake, and someone responded with harshness? Maybe they snapped at you, raised their voice, or they threw something? How did that harsh behavior make you feel?

Every day we have opportunities to choose merciful or harsh responses. When we offer mercy, we feel what the other person feels, take action on their behalf, and continue to work for their well-being. When we respond harshly, we hurt one another and ourselves.

Of course, that does not mean we permit others to treat us poorly or cross our boundaries. Mercy is about showing one another understanding. Mercy is not about being okay with mean behavior. Telling someone to "Stop right now!" is not harsh. We show mercy to ourselves by making safe choices and getting help if we need it. The people listening to Jesus would have heard "mercy" as a reminder of who God is—merciful. And when we try to feel how others might be feeling and show mercy by acting on their behalf and dedicating ourselves to their well-being, we are following God's example. This is why Jesus said those who are merciful are blessed.

PRAYER

Loving God, Thank you for your mercy and unbreakable love which hold us close to your heart, no matter what we do or feel. Please help us be merciful this week. We want to treat each person as you do, and show your mercy in all situations. Keep us connected to you and each other. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

When have you received mercy?
How did your heart feel? Your
body?

When have you shown mercy to
someone else? How did your heart
feel? Your body?

Why is mercy important to Jesus?

How does showing mercy keep us
close to Jesus and close to each
other?

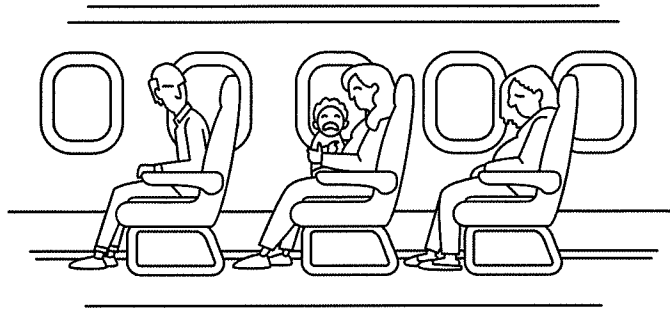
*In the coloring page's blank space, write or
draw what this beatitude looks like or means
to you, or write or draw a modern-day
version of the beatitude.*

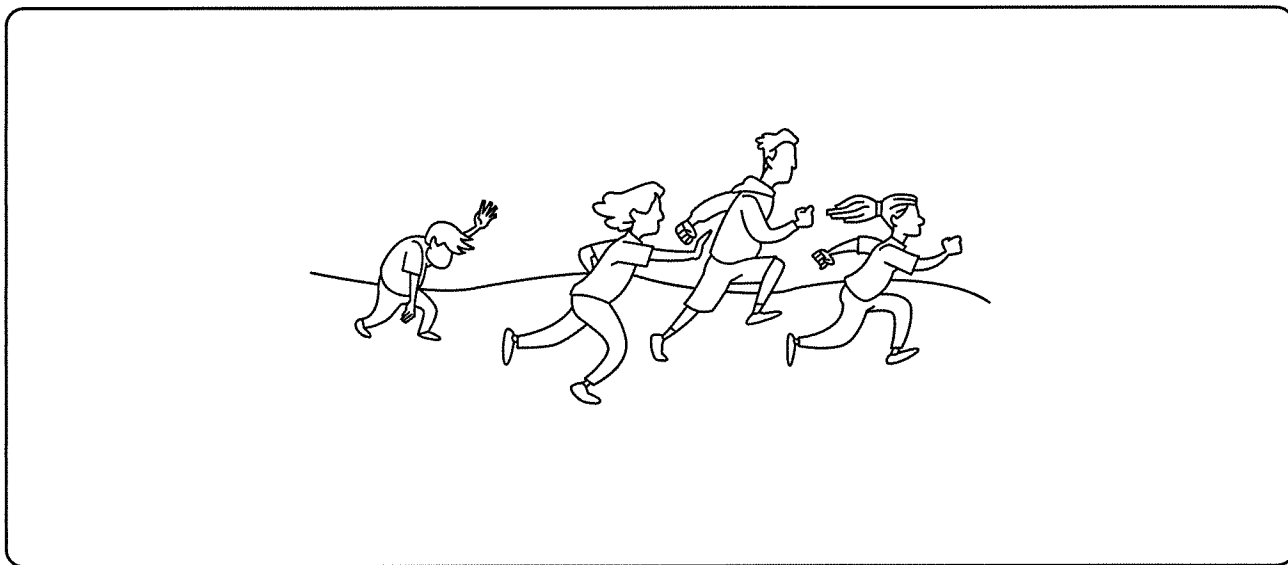
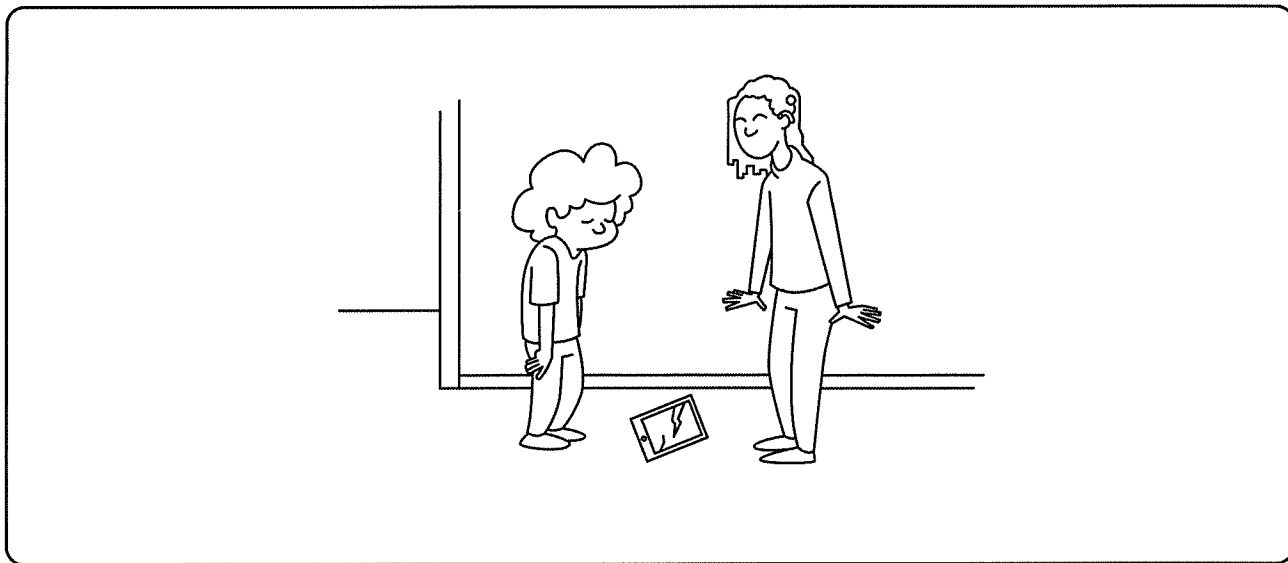


ACTIVITY PAGE

Look at the four scenes and ask these questions:

- What would a harsh response be in each situation?
- Who could be merciful in this scene?
- What could they do to show mercy?





After you discuss each scene, choose one scene and draw or color in some mercy. Or you can use improv to role-play the scene and act out your answers. What could you add to show mercy in the situation?