



PRETEEN
SEPTEMBER 2024

FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COMPASSION AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

Think back to a time when someone made time for you. Maybe that looked like caring for you when you were sick, or teaching you how to tie your shoe, making food for you, or teaching you how to read or learn a new skill. No matter what it is, when people make time for us, it can bring us joy. It's like a light shining on a dark day. Caring for one another isn't always the easy thing to do, but it certainly is what Jesus asks of us. When Jesus gave the command in Matthew 5 to let our light shine, it wasn't just to bring joy into each other's lives, but also to bring glory to God. We are reflections of Who God is, and as we "Live Bright" this month, we'll discover exactly how we can shine God's light.

CORE INSIGHT: The theological foundation for **COMPASSION**

Compassion that reflects God's character.
My faith in Christ is revealed by my compassion and care for others.

God's compassion for us led to the greatest act of love the world has ever seen. God sent Jesus to rescue us. We reflect God's compassion when we care about others and work to make things right.

COMPASSION is caring enough to do something about someone else's needs.

HEADS UP: IDEAS TO KEEP IN MIND AS YOU TALK ABOUT COMPASSION WITH KIDS

As you talk about compassion this month with kids, keep in mind that some may see possessions as essential to their ability to make an impact in someone's life. Remind kids that compassion is more than the things that we have and own; it's about caring enough to act. Encourage and empower the kids to get creative and think of ways they can make a difference in someone's life no matter their background, or what they do or don't have.

For week 3, as you talk about the Bartimaeus story, be sensitive to the kids and volunteers in your environment who may be differently abled in any way. Avoid statements that could be unintentionally hurtful—for example, that Bartimaeus' life must have been awful because he couldn't see. Enter any conversations about this topic with a posture of listening and encouragement. Talk through ways everyone has unique gifts, talents, and abilities to share with others that can help show Jesus' light.



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FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 1

Key Question: How can you be a light? There are so many different types of light—from the sun, to a flashlight, to a candle, and so many more! Each kind of source functions in a different way, but its purpose is the same: to bring light into someone's world. We hope this question gives preteens a chance to hold great conversations about what it means to shine God's light—not just at home, but everywhere they go.

We start the month in **Matthew 5:14-16** with the Sermon on the Mount. In this passage, Jesus announced to the crowd, "You are the light of the world." Each of us can shine God's light to the world around us. When we shine our light by living God's way, we bring glory to God and show people what God is like.

Bottom Line: You can shine God's light. God didn't give us light so that it could be hidden. God gave us light so that we could shine brightly . . . and so that the world could see Who God is. When we look around and identify those who could use some light in their lives—and then do something about it—we reflect God's light.

WEEK 2

Key Question: What do you have that you can use to help others? When you think of light, do you typically think about the brightest light in the sky, or the little light emitting from your phone? When you're in the dark, either one could come in handy and help get you where you need to go. This question is a great way to engage preteens in moving from *seeing* light to *being* a light, making a difference right now with what they have.

In week 2, we read about a massive miracle found in **John 6:1-13**. Jesus had just crossed over the Sea of Galilee with His disciples when a massive crowd arrived. Jesus knew that the people would be hungry . . . and instead of sending them on their way, He had compassion on them and fed them. With a little boy's small meal of only five loaves and two fish, Jesus turned a small amount of food into a huge blessing.

Bottom Line: Use what you have to help others. Some light is better than *no* light. Whether it's a flashlight lighting up what's in front of you or a spotlight illuminating the whole stage, each light impacts those who need it. God has given each of us something we can offer to help someone else—whether we have a lot or only a little. Any amount of light can make a difference in someone's life.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 3

Key Question: When has someone made time for you? Whether you're seven or 77, it feels good when people make an effort to spend time with you. It especially means a lot when someone is busy and they go out of their way to make you feel seen or welcomed. The same is true when we take the time to see others. This question allows preteens to think about other people in a different context, and invites them to explore the bigger world around them and how they can make a difference.

In week 3, we head to **Mark 10:46-52**. Jesus was headed out of the city with His disciples and a crowd in tow. Even though there were several people surrounding Jesus, one voice stood out above the others. A man named Bartimaeus, who was blind, sat on the side of the road begging for help. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was passing by, he shouted to ask Jesus for mercy. The crowd tried to shush Bartimaeus, but Jesus brought him forward and made time for him, changing his life forever.

Bottom Line: Make time to help others. Think back to a moment when someone helped you learn a new skill or helped you with a school project. How did you feel in that moment? When we make time to help others, we reflect Who Jesus is to them. Not only can we make a lasting impact in their life, but the act of showing compassion changes us too.

WEEK 4

Key Question: How can you show someone you care? Sometimes it's so easy to get lost in our own problems that we forget the needs of those around us. Yet God created us to be in community with one another, showing love and compassion. We can do that through physical actions or words of encouragement. We hope this question gets preteens thinking about ways they can make a difference in someone else's life by showing God's love.

For week 4, we head to **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**. Paul was writing a letter to the church in Corinth in which he shared about the troubles he and Timothy had faced. Yet in the midst of all their difficulties, Paul and Timothy were still able to praise God because of the comfort God offered them. In this passage, Paul encouraged the believers in Corinth to offer comfort to others who were in trouble because of the comfort they had experienced from God.

Bottom Line: Comfort others the way God comforts you. What brings you the most comfort? Maybe it's a blanket, ice cream, or giving your pet a big squeeze. Maybe it's talking with a friend or binge-watching your favorite show. As good as those choices may be, the best comfort of all comes from God. And because of God's comfort towards us, we can be a comfort to others too.



FOR LEADERS ONLY (CONTINUED)

WEEK 5

Key Question: Where have you seen the light of Jesus?

Jesus brought light to the world in a way that no one had ever seen before. He showed love and compassion to everyone He met. He came to be our Savior and bring light to a dark world. This question will help preteens think about how God sent Jesus to be light in our darkness . . . and how they've seen that in action in the world around them.

We wrap up the month in **John 8:12**, where Jesus said to the people, "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness. They will have that light. They will have life." Because of Jesus, we never have to go through life alone. Jesus brings light to guide us and help us grow. And, of course, the light of Jesus meets our greatest need. When we turn away from our sins and choose to follow Jesus, it's as if He shines a bright light into our hearts and our lives.

Bottom Line: Jesus is the light of the world. Sometimes it's hard to see past our current circumstances. When darkness surrounds us, how do we move forward? We take time to remember that Jesus came to be the light of the world. Jesus' light shines so bright that darkness cannot overcome it. When Jesus died on the cross, He showed the ultimate example of compassion towards us.