

LEADER NOTES

ACT JUSTLY (Part 1)

Luke 13:10-17

Discussion Questions:

1. No work was to be done on the Sabbath according to Jewish law. Healing fell into the category of work. Jesus also put his hands on a woman in public, in the synagogue.
2. Jesus gave a logical explanation for his actions and included a relatable example of how they take care of their animals on the Sabbath. He showed the hypocrisy of their response.
3. Allow for answers.
4. Pain management, advocating for a patient in poverty without the means that another patient might have, advocating for someone who is from another culture or who does not speak English as their first language, speaking up for an elderly patient, someone who is differently abled, or someone who is medically illiterate. Nurses can give explanations to patients of medical terminology, offer choices to patients to give them more control, speak up for their patients with a doctor or medical team, seek answers to questions a patient may not be bold enough to ask their doctor, pray and ask God for wisdom and direction in the situation.
5. Jesus had mercy on this woman, saw how long she had been suffering, and did not wait a day to heal her. In his response to the synagogue leaders, he described how they offered mercy to their animals on the Sabbath. He wanted them to think about the inconsistencies of how they treat people. At this time, women were often regarded as less than animals. Jesus sought justice for women by elevating their position – by recognizing this woman’s suffering, reaching out to touch and heal her, and then standing up against criticism to support his actions. There are times when we will have compassion on a patient’s situation and may have to speak up for them or defend an intervention on behalf of their health or healing.

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: Jesus advocated for people, even if it went against the social norms.
- Then, share the application questions. Divide the group into pairs or small groups to discuss the question and encourage participants to identify a few concrete next steps.
- End with a time of prayer for one another to live out this advocacy in the coming weeks.

LEADER NOTES

ACT JUSTLY (Part 2)

Matthew 7:1-5

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss if we should judge, as verse 1 says “do not judge” and verse 2 says “in the same way you judge.” Does this mean we are not to judge or to examine how we judge?
2. Allow for answers.
3. Allow for answers.
4. Self-reflection seems to be important, according to this passage. In order not to be a hypocrite, we need to ensure that our *actions* match our *words*. The biblical concept here is *repentance* which means that we change both our heart motives as well as our actions.
5. There are plenty of other biblical passages that suggest correction and criticism are necessary, especially within the Christian community. In addition, the Bible speaks strongly against injustices and inequalities. As followers of Jesus, we have a responsibility to speak out in those situations. There can be multiple examples, such as a situation that can cause harm to someone, or if someone is being publicly humiliated. One rule of thumb is not to further demean someone when responding to them; always come in with a humble spirit rather than a public rebuke or attack. Consider approaching someone in private and inviting dialogue, such as “I’m concerned...”

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: We need to examine ourselves before being critical of others.
- Second, break into smaller groups and pick one application to discuss. If there is time, both applications can be discussed.
- *For the internal application*: Be prepared to share an example or two. For instance, you are upset that someone shared something negative about you but, in self-reflection, you realize that you have gossiped about others too.
- *For the external application*: When discussing this question, be sure to think about both ACTIVE and PASSIVE responses. For example, you can passively choose not to engage in the criticism by abstaining from the conversation. But you can also suggest alternative perspectives that give the person the benefit of the doubt.

LEADER NOTES

LOVE MERCY (Part 1)

Matthew 15:21-28

Discussion Questions:

1. The woman is asking Jesus to heal her daughter despite being a non-Jewish foreigner and a female; she has no right to ask.
2. This is speculative. We see the irritated response of the disciples who want Jesus to send her away – get rid of the problem. Jesus hesitates in his response. He explains the cultural and religious constraints. She parries with him and her faith is evident. Jesus rewards her faith – which is a lesson for all who are observing.
3. Usually persistence is rewarded with some concession, mainly because it seems to wear down the person being asked.
4. Ask good assessment questions. Set aside your perspective to try to understand the other person. Recognizing that your way may not be the only way to end up with the same outcome. Have pity or compassion on others who may be challenging to relate to. Ask God to help you see this person through his eyes – as someone created by God, with value.
5. This is a difficult question, perhaps an ethical dilemma at times. In cases of mass trauma, when triaging is done, sometimes hard decisions must be made due to capacity. There are also situations beyond our control or we do not have the capacity or means to do more, even if we want to, because the need is too great. Understanding that doing what we can for those directly in our care is a good place to start.
6. When we truly see someone through God's eyes and he gives us mercy for them despite all circumstances, it often propels us to advocate for them.

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: Seeing someone through God's eyes can propel us towards mercy and advocacy.
- Second, share the application and lead the discussion with the whole group.
 - About the question: "How do you think we should respond if we were put in that position?" Possible answers include: counter negative words with positive ones, model compassion and care for the patient, speak up for the needs of the patient on their behalf.

LEADER NOTES

LOVE MERCY (Part 2)

Psalm 103:1-14, 17-18

Discussion Questions:

1. Allow for answers.
2. Discuss God's example and ways that it may be hard for us to emulate him.
3. In **verse 4**, God brings us from the lowest of lows to the highest level by crowning us with his compassion because of his love for us. He sees value in us. Compassion is an action.
In **verse 8**, compassion is a core characteristic of God. It is seen in his patience with us and being slow to anger.
In **verse 13**, compassion is illustrated as a father-child relationship with God. In this case, "fear" is equivalent to respect. This may be a hard concept for people who haven't had a loving relationship with their earthly fathers. This might be a good way to show them that God is the perfect Father who loves them in a variety of ways.
4. Through compassion and forgiveness
5. God does not treat us as we deserve ("justice" v. 10). He works justice for the oppressed (v. 6) who also happen to be sinful (v. 3). Many other examples from the passage demonstrate the way mercy and justice work together.

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: Because of God's compassion for us, we should gladly extend and show mercy and compassion to others.
- Second, break into smaller groups and pick one application to discuss. If there is time, both applications can be discussed.

LEADER NOTES

WALK FAITHFULLY (Part 1)

James 1:19-27

Discussion Questions:

1. The psalmist talks about moral filth and evil that is prevalent (v. 21). He recognizes that their frustration might result in “human anger” (v. 20).
2. Being quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry are not the world’s way of responding.
3. Note the self-deception here. This isn’t just a mistake of forgetting; it is the sin of self-deception.
4. This question builds on the previous question about how we live out our faith.
5. Multiple answers: God is looking for our action in caring for others and living a righteous (non-polluted) life, as opposed to calling ourselves followers of God and but not following up our words with actions, or using our mouths in sinful ways.

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: Our faith is expressed in how we listen, speak and act, not just in what we believe or think.
- Then, share the application question. Divide the group into pairs or small groups to discuss the question and encourage participants to identify a few concrete next steps.

LEADER NOTES

WALK FAITHFULLY (Part 2) Galatians 5:13-26

Discussion Questions:

1. We desire the freedom to do what we want. This self-centeredness leads to a lot of sinful acts. God wants us to serve one another humbly in love and to love others as we love ourselves. It is an other-centered perspective and results in true care and love.
2. Living by the Spirit and letting him have control can help us resist. Ask God to help us love and serve others as he would. Keep our eyes on God and resist selfish desires.
3. When Jesus died for our sin, he put to death the passions and desires of our sinful nature (v. 24) and gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us. If we allow the Holy Spirit to lead us, walk beside us, and be a part of our lives, he will let us know right from wrong, help us resist our self-centered natures, and convict us of sin. However, this is a conscious act on our parts. The spiritual disciplines of reading God's Word, praying, getting spiritual instruction, and worshiping God can help us to stay in step with the Spirit.
4. The fruit of the Spirit is so opposite to the acts of the flesh that you will stand out among your co-workers and patients. They will notice that there is something different about you. They may be drawn to those qualities or they may resist them due to guilt and perhaps create a tough working environment for you.
5. When we are attuned to the Spirit and seeking to obey God, we will have compassion for our patients and seek to advocate for the best care for them.

Application:

- First, share the **Big Idea**: Through the Holy Spirit, we can live a faithful life that impacts those around us.
- Second, break into smaller groups and pick one application to discuss. If there is time, both applications can be discussed.