

Compassion

Aim of the assembly

For some children the idea of “compassion” would be a natural expression of their character, for others showing compassion would be a learning curve because by nature they are wired to be competitive, to win and to exert their influence over others. The story of Zachaeus shows up the negative side of someone who has managed to achieve wealth at the expense of others. His life is changed by an encounter with Jesus and by the insight that “compassion” is vital to life.

Throughout the life of Jesus, mercy and compassion were marks of his teaching and lifestyle. It is good to tell stories about Jesus in which he shows his positive influence on others. Encountering Jesus was life changing in Bible times, and it still can be today.

Props needed

Several watches, “Compassion-onometer”, Zachaeus costume, money bag, ladder with cardboard tree attached, table with food laid out.

Intro

Hello everybody – today we want to talk to you about a very important word:
COMPASSION!

Wendy: Hi Bob, do you know what time it is? Should we start now?

Bob: Let me have a look? ...(looks at his three watches..)Well, if we are in England, then I think, yes it's time...

W: What do you mean ...

B: I've got three watches. One shows me the time in London, this other one does Hamburg in Germany and the third one is for South Africa.

W: And what is that??? (Points to the pendulum of the compassion-onometer..)

B: That is my compassion-onometer, showing me how compassionate people are. Let me check what it says about you.... Oh, wow, very compassionate..

W: Compassion? Is that not when you had a fall and feel dizzy?

B: No, Wendy, that is “concussion”!

*W: Ah, now I know, it means that you see someone who is sad and feel sorry for them.
Compassion!*

B: Yes, very close. Compassion is seeing a need and feeling it and doing something about it – like Jesus always did.

W: Let me ask the children ... do they know what compassion is? (Ask a few children for their definition...)

B: That's all really good ... perhaps if we told a story, that would make it even clearer, so that everyone understands what the word really means...

Do you remember what happened to Zachaeus? We could act that out and then everyone will see how Jesus had compassion and taught Zachaeus about compassion too...

Story/ Drama :

(Bob to dress up as Zachaeus. Needs some sparkly clothes and a very good hat. He always has a money bag handy. Make up a climbable tree with a ladder. Wendy narrates story and uses the "Compassion-onometer" to test people's compassion. It is made from a little board of plywood with a movable indicator. Some sort of stethoscope looking attachment goes on the body of the person to be tested. Wendy then moves the dial by a screw on the the back of the indicator.)

Narrator: Here comes Zachaeus

Zachaeus: I am Zachaeus, the rich man

N: Zachaeus has really nice clothes...

Z: Well, I am a rich man, I like to wear nice clothes ... do you like my coat?

N. And he has a fancy hat too

Z: I had this hat made for me especially, so that everyone can see, how rich I am and be impressed by me ...

N. Z. makes his money by collecting taxes for the Roman government. But he always keeps some money for himself too.

Z. I make my money by collecting taxes from everyone in the village... And I take some money for the government.. and some for myself. That way I get rich... Very good for me!

N. But Zachaeus has no compassion on the poor villagers... Look they would wear shabby clothes like this, because they were so poor...

Z. What do I care... these villagers are poor and pathetic, what do I care that they don't know how to make lots of money ...Where can I go to collect money today? Perhaps over there, they don't have a lot, but I can squeeze some taxmoney out of them. Some for the

government, some for me. And over there, she is a poor widow, hasn't got a lot. But I can squeeze some money out of her ... some for the government, some for me...

N. Let's stop here and talk a moment... Do you think that Z. is showing compassion to the people in his village. Cheer if you think yes, booh, if you don't. Shall we try to measure his compassion with the compassion-onometer? There you go, no compassion at all!!! But let's go on with the story. What would Jesus do to teach Z. about compassion... Tell him off perhaps?

Story continued

N: One day Jesus came to the village. He was very famous and everyone wanted to see him. Zachaeus too.

Z. I have heard so much about Jesus. He sounds amazing. He does so many very kind things for people. I think he must be very different from me.

N. That same week, Jesus came through our town. We were all excited... we had heard so much about him, we all wanted to see him... He came, he walked right by, over there ... and there in that tree, Zachaeus was waiting, sitting on a branch high up ... Jesus stopped ... out of all the people in town ... he calls out to Zachaeus: Come down Zachaeus, I must eat at your house today!

Z: He was looking at me! He wanted to come to my house!! Nobody ever wanted to come to my house. No one ever wanted to be friends with me, everyone hated me. But Jesus did not. That day really changed me. He taught me the meaning of compassion by being kind and compassionate to me. I don't know how he did it, but he did something to my hard heart. Suddenly I was looking at the village with different eyes and realised: EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION. I needed compassion because, though I was rich, I was also lonely and unhappy and without friends. EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION. And the people in the village were poor and needed help, EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION!

L: Shall we quickly test Zachaeus now with the compassion-onometer? Wow, he has lots of compassion now! Yes and that is where our story ends. Zachaeus learned what compassion was all about. It was showing kindness, making someone else's day better, loving people, helping people. And he realised EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION.

We all do... shall we say that together: EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION!

Compassion ideas powerpoint

Show pictures of things children could get involved in to show compassion. Shoebox appeal, welcoming new children at school, including people at playtime and similar...

... repeat after each slide: EVERYONE NEEDS COMPASSION

Song:

Help me be your eyes Lord Jesus

www.youtube.com/watch?v=N94BBGiq_vQ&index=27&list=PLGOIQuX191CahA0rWCCy2VUzKV_rrFG_w

Memory verse

My children, our love should not be just words and talk/ My children, our love must show itself in action!

Prayer