

Warm Up

As a child, can you remember escaping a telling off or a punishment from your parents? What had you done? How did you feel?

Background and context

God's mercy means His pity, compassion, and kindness toward people. His mercy shows up in the believer's life at salvation, and then God continues to show mercy in forgiveness. Mercy triumphs over judgment, but refusing God's mercy is disastrous. Millard Erickson wrote in *Christian Theology*, "God's mercy is His tender-hearted, loving compassion for His people. It is His tenderness of heart toward the needy." In the Old Testament *khesed* means "goodness," "loving kindness," or "mercifulness." It is used to describe the mercy of God. In the New Testament the word is *splagnitzomai* which also suggests deep compassion or pity stemming from our innermost being. It's the idea of divine forbearance in showing compassion and passing over sins.

Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity



1. In **Genesis 3:11-24, Genesis 6:5-8, Genesis 18:20-32**. How does God show mercy in these situations?
2. From your knowledge of the story of Jonah, how and why does God show mercy?
3. **Read Luke 15:11-31**. How does this story reveal the merciful nature of God? How could the father in the story have reacted?
4. Scripture calls us to show mercy to others because we have been shown mercy. What does this mercy look like in our lives? Look up: Matthew 25:31-46,
5. How does God respond to the merciful? **Luke 6:36, Proverbs 11:17, Matthew 5:7, James 2:13**.
6. "The wages of sin is death" Rom 6:23. So why does God show mercy? Work out a simple way of explaining the Gospel and practise on each other. Spend about 10-15 minutes doing this.

Discipleship and Application

7. Spend some time in quiet reflection about your own life and the need for God's mercy in it.
8. Explore practical ways in which you and your life group can show mercy to others.



Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.



There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.