

**Blessed Are . . .**

(based on Luke 6:17-26)

Jesus went down the mountain and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there. Many other people were there too.

The people came from all over to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. Everyone tried to touch Jesus.

Jesus told the people that God's Kingdom was all around them. In God's Kingdom, people who are poor and hungry and sad are cared for by people who have money and food to help. God loves us so much that God sends other people to help us.

When Jesus told the people that God loved them, some questioned him.

One person shook his head and said, "How can you say that God loves my family and me? We have nothing. God's blessings come with money and many fine things."

Jesus assured the man,

"In God's Kingdom, people who have lost everything and have no money are blessed. People who are poor are blessed because they learn to trust in God more than money. When other people help you by giving you what you need, know that God has blessed you. And when you help others, you too are blessed."

A woman with her children rose and said, "God doesn't love us. How could he? We have no food. My children are starving."

Jesus assured her,

"In God's Kingdom, people who have no food are blessed. People who are hungry are blessed because they learn to trust in God more than food. When other people help you by giving you what you need, know that God has blessed you. And when you help others, you too are blessed."

Jesus looked at the crowd of people. He was sad that so many people thought God didn't love them. Most people thought that being rich meant that God had blessed them and loved them more than other people. The crowd around Jesus didn't have any money, or houses, or enough food for their families. But they needed to know that God loves them too!

Jesus continued:

"When people are mean to you and say bad things about you because you love me, God blesses you. Be glad and jump for joy. You will receive many blessings in heaven."



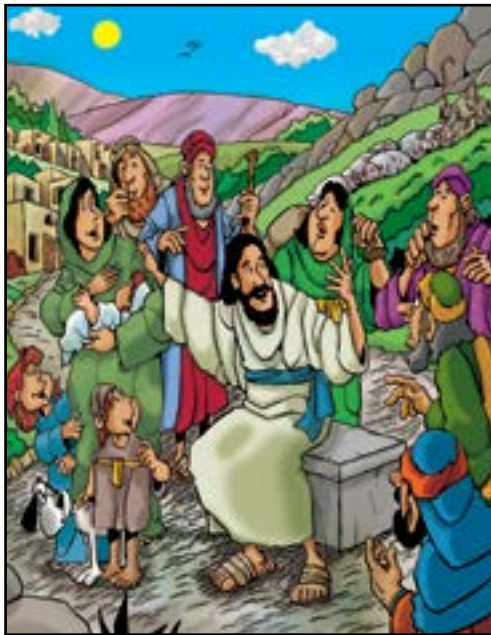
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Help your children list the blessings your family enjoys. Remind your children that everything you have is a gift from God.
- Provide magazines and let your children make a collage of people God loves by cutting and gluing pictures of many kinds of people on a large piece of paper.



Responding to God's Grace

- Visit presbyterianmission.org to search for “Gracie,” the One Great Hour of Sharing fish. You may also want to search for “fish banks.” Help your children participate in the offering to benefit the Presbyterian Hunger Program.
- Be a blessing to others. Find out if your school sends special backpacks filled with healthy snacks home with children who are at risk of being hungry over the weekend, when there is no school lunch. Find out how your family can contribute to this ministry.
- Talk with your children about what to do when someone is mean to them. Encourage them to remember that God loves them AND the person who is being mean. Give some strategies to respond, and tell them they should ask for advice in situations that are beyond their abilities.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Have a “Jump for Joy” moment. Let your children see how high or how broadly they can jump.
- Have a time of sharing stories of when your family was helped by someone and a time when your family helped someone.
- Pray the following prayer each day this week:

God, we know that every blessing we have comes from you. Help us to help others. Amen.