



Worship Service Theme: Compassion

Helpful elements:

Green table covering (Ordinary Time)

Large (at least 8.5x11) color photo of Mother Teresa

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is _____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Our theme for today is **compassion**.

[Hold up large photo of Mother Teresa] I wonder if anyone knows who this is? If so, shout out her name!

This is Mother Teresa, whose birthday is August 26 and who died in 1997. Because of her work as a nun caring for the poorest of the poor, in 2016 Mother Teresa was recognized as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Today, we'll think more about compassion and Mother Teresa's example, and how we, too, can be people of compassion.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we ask your Holy Spirit to bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and as we confess our sins, for forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace that passes all understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd," together:

¹The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Suggested Hymns:

Great is Thy Faithfulness

Amazing Grace

First reading: Psalm 103:1, 10-13

¹ Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name! ...

¹⁰ The Lord does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is God's steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does God remove our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy

Jesus Loves Me

Second reading: Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and

sickness. ³⁶ When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Suggested Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Interactive Homily: Let’s think a little more about compassion, and especially the example of Mother Teresa today.

- What does it mean to have compassion?
 - Let’s break down the word: Who remembers their Latin? [*use a white board if available*]
 - “com” = with
 - “passion,” from the Latin *passus* = the word that gives us “a patient,” as in, a doctor’s patient.
 - If someone is a patient in a hospital, why are they there?
 - They need help! Sick, suffering, needy.
 - So the “compassion” roots in Latin mean “with-suffering.”
Compassion involves *being with* someone who is hurting.
- What might be the difference between sympathy and compassion? Both are good, but how do you think sympathy and compassion differ?
 - Sympathy is a feeling—sorrow or concern—but might stop there.
 - Compassion involves not just feeling, but action: being with someone, doing what you can to relieve their suffering; a response of warmth and care.
- [optional:] Is it sometimes hard to have compassion? Why?
 - Feeling overwhelmed, when there are many people who need help.
 - Feeling like one action won’t make a difference.
 - Not liking / distaste for the person or group who needs help and is suffering.
 - Other reasons?

- Let's go back to Christ's words in Matthew: [*reread v. 36*: "When Jesus saw the people, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."] How did Jesus feel about the people? Why?
 - Jesus felt compassion for them because they were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." I wonder what you think that means? Have you ever felt harassed or helpless?
- Because Jesus felt compassion, what did he do? (*reread v.35, 38*: "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness ... and he said, 'Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers ...'")
 - Jesus told people the good news of God's love.
 - Jesus healed every kind of disease and sickness.
 - Jesus urged his followers to pray for more people to do the same.
- Let's think a bit more about Mother Teresa and her example of compassion. How many Mother Teresa's were there? Just one! But what did she do?
 - Mother Teresa did what Jesus did:
 - Mother Teresa told people about God's love.
 - Mother Teresa tangibly healed people's wounds, physical, emotional, and spiritual. "In 1952, Teresa ... converted an abandoned Hindu temple into the Kalighat Home for the Dying, free for the poor, and renamed it Kalighat, the Home of the Pure Heart. [There,] people ... received medical attention and the opportunity to die with dignity in accordance with their faith: Muslims were read the Quran, Hindus received water from the Ganges, and Catholics received extreme unction. As Teresa said, 'A beautiful death is for people who lived like animals to die like angels—loved and wanted.'" ¹
 - Mother Teresa prayed for others to join her in caring for the needy. Today, thousands of women and men care for the poor through the Missionaries of Charity, the order Mother Teresa founded in 1950.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa

- Each of us is just one person, but we all have the same opportunity to do acts of compassion. What acts of compassion can we do day by day?
 - A listening ear, a smile, asking how someone is doing, getting a blanket, praying for someone, assuring them of God's love and presence. [*generate more ideas*]
 - Small acts of compassion matter! As Mother Teresa said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the blessing of compassion. I'll close with a prayer from Mother Teresa.

(Silent Prayer) ... Lord, thank you for your compassion. Here is Mother Teresa's Prayer of Compassion:

Lord, open our eyes
 That we may see you in our brothers and sisters.
 Lord, open our ears
 That we may hear the cries of the hungry,
 the cold, the frightened, the oppressed.
 Lord, open our hearts
 That we may love each other as you love us.
 Renew in us your spirit.
 Lord, free us and make us one. Amen.

Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Suggested Hymns:

**This is My Father's World
Just As I Am**

Third Reading: Quotes on Compassion from Mother Teresa

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

“At the end of life, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made, how many great things we have done. We will be judged by [Jesus’ words,²] ‘I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless, and you took me in.’”

“I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world.”

“I would rather make mistakes in kindness and compassion than work miracles in unkindness and hardness.”

“Let us not use bombs and guns to overcome the world. Let us use love and compassion. Peace begins with a smile.”

Suggested Hymns:

Jesus Calls Us

Shall We Gather at the River

Fourth Reading: “Anyway” by Kent M. Keith.³ This poem is often attributed to Mother Teresa because she posted these words on her wall in Calcutta.

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Love them anyway.
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Do good anyway.
If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway.
The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.
Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

² Matthew 25:31-40

³ <http://heavy.com/news/2016/09/mother-teresa-do-it-anyway-poem-quotes-kent-keith-paradoxical-commandments-author-words-sainthood-prayer-who-wrote/>

Give the world the best you have and it will never be enough. Give the world the best you've got anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Suggested Hymns:

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

When the Saints Go Marching In

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word "Lord")

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)