

WC ENCOUNTER GROUPS CURRICULUM  
**WEEK ONE: MERCY IS A VERB**  
**MERCY**



## Mercy: Mercy Is A Verb

### OPENING PRAYER:

Dear God of Mercy, help us to see our own brokenness and respond to the brokenness of others with grace and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

### ENCOUNTERING GOD:

How have you seen God at work this week?  
What good did you do this week?

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# WEEKLY SCRIPTURE READING:

## Read Matthew 9:10-13

“And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’”

## REFLECTION:

*A couple months ago, I dropped my daughter off at her preschool and I set my GPS to the church’s address. To my surprise, Google Maps directed me to a different route than what I am used to taking. I passed one school zone, traveling at one appropriate speed, but sped up, not realizing that I was entering into another school zone. I was riding along, thinking about all the things that I needed to accomplish for the day. Then, I was pulled from my immersion into thought at the sight of flashing lights. I looked down at my speedometer and surveyed my surroundings and realized I was 8 miles over the speed limit. The police officer asked me if I was aware that I was speeding in school zone. I apologized to the officer and I told him that I was unfamiliar with the area, and I should have been mindful of the signs. He gave me a warning rather than a ticket. I deserved a ticket. What I did was wrong. I missed the mark, yet I was given mercy.*

*Jesus and his disciples sat at the table with people at the margins of society and sinners. None of the people deserved to sit at the table with the Messiah, yet God, wrapped in flesh, chose to sit with them. Our position or place at the table of Jesus does not depend on our goodness. It's dependent on the grace of God. If we are honest with ourselves, we can admit that none of us deserve to sit at the table with Jesus. Jesus acknowledged the sinfulness and brokenness of the people at the table. Their sinfulness and brokenness were not reasons to exclude them, it was the very reason to include them. Likewise, is true of the church or community of believers today. The church is a hospital for sinners, a place where Jesus is present and his disciples- that is you and me- are invited to participate in the healing of the wounded and broken. The Pharisees were committed to keeping the law by making sacrifices to atone for sin. Jesus' desire was that we show mercy to the sinner.*

*What is mercy? Mercy is an action that considers the condition and needs of our sisters and brothers. Mercy is not given because of the merit of the recipient. Mercy is given as loving gift, meaning it is a means of grace. People who give mercy to others are channels of God's grace. In Methodism, works of mercy include:*

**Individual Practices:** *Doing good, visiting the sick and prisoners, feeding and clothing people, giving generously to the needs of others*

**Communal Practices** – *Seeking justice, ending oppression and discrimination (for instance Wesley challenged Methodists to end slavery), and addressing the needs of the poor*

*According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, "In both the Old and New Testaments mercy is an action taken by the strong towards the weak, the rich towards the poor, the insiders towards the outsider, those who have towards those who have not." Mercy can also be given by those who are at the bottom to those who are at the top (often given to those who oppress or victimize). A great example would be the hug that Brandt Jean, the brother of Botham Jean, gave to Amber Guyger, his brother's killer.*

# GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

## Encounter The Head:

What is mercy?

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What is grace?

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Why should we show mercy to others?

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## Encounter The Heart:

Share a time when you were shown mercy. What did you learn about God, yourself, and the person who showed you mercy?

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Why is mercy sometimes difficult to give?

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# GROUP REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Share a time when you showed mercy to others. What did you learn about God, yourself, and others?

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## Encounter The Hands:

Write down some works of mercy that you would like to get involved in. Share what you have written down with the group.

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Discuss how the group could get involved in works of mercy together. WC Faithworks is a great resource. Check our church's website for information.

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# PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

## Encounter The Hands:

Please go around the group and have each person share a praise for this week and a prayer request/concern.

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Have a volunteer lead closing prayer: asking for prayer concerns and lifting up the needs of the group.

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# DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

We encourage everyone to do a daily reflection. This can be done alone, as a couple, or with your family. This spiritual practice will help answer the questions you have and it will improve your ability to see where God is at work in your life, and in the lives of those around you. Please answer the following questions during your personal devotional time at the end of the day.

Where have you seen God today? For the children, we say, “what made you happy today?”

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What broke your heart or made you sad today?

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What good thing did you do for someone else today?

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What are you thankful for today?

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