



Diocese of Chichester

Living the Mystery of Faith

THE YEAR OF MATTHEW

YOUTH LENT COURSE

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW



WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION



AIM/THEME

Mercy not Sacrifice – Do not come to call the righteous but the sinners






LEARNING OUTCOME

The new covenant is not about sacrifice, punishment and making right, but about mercy and forgiveness



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Facility to play a video from YouTube
 - Dilemma cards – Separate download
 - Colour Blind game – printout of story, coloured balloons 5 for each team
 - Takeaway and memory verse handout printed for each person
 - Candles for each person (maybe electric if you don't trust them with fire)
 - Haribo Starmix for prayers
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INFORMAL START

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Hand out cards when people arrive – each one should have a real dilemma on it.
(See appendix 1 for a print out of 'crimes').

Each person takes it in turns to read out the card and the rest of the group have to decide how bad it was and what punishment would fit the crime!





WEEK 1 ICEBREAKER

COLOUR BLIND

You will need – 5 coloured balloons (Red, Yellow, Green, Blue, Orange) for each team and a paperclip for each person.

In this game there are 5 balloons given out to each group Red, yellow, green, blue and orange (pick the colours in the story and feel free to change it up)

I will read you a story, when you hear a colour in the story pop that colour balloon. You must be quick as the last team to pop a balloon will be eliminated. If you pop the wrong colour balloon you are eliminated. (if they were not last, the last team is not eliminated only the wrong colour is)

The team who makes it to the last colour and pops the correct balloon first is the winner. below is the story. Feel free to change it and make it personal to your group.

It was the morning of the 46th birthday party of little Alex Mombo. No one was excited but it was a beautiful day. The sky was clear, the sun was bright, and the grass was looking even more neatly mowed than usual. As is tradition, the party was held at the golf course next to His house on the 9th GREEN. Unfortunately it was illegal to be there so Alex found himself running from the boys in BLUE. He took off down the street and around the corner. Finally he made it to his home. Once Alex was home, Alex READ (RED) all of his birthday cards. One of his birthday cards was from the mayor and had all of his favourite fruits on it. Apples, a bunch of bananas, and his favourite of the citrus family, a lovely round grapefruit. Alex heard his phone ring. "Yeah?", he answered. It was his uncle, calling to ask if Alex had opened his inexpensive gift. The signal wasn't great, so Alex had to YELL, "OH (YELLOW), yes. I did. Thank you!"

(There is no pop for orange it is a decoy)

BIBLE READING & CONTEXT

MATTHEW 9:9-13

Jesus calls Matthew the Tax Collector.

– Read the passage or ask young people to take it in turns reading each verse so everyone can hear it read aloud.

Go and Learn What This Means...

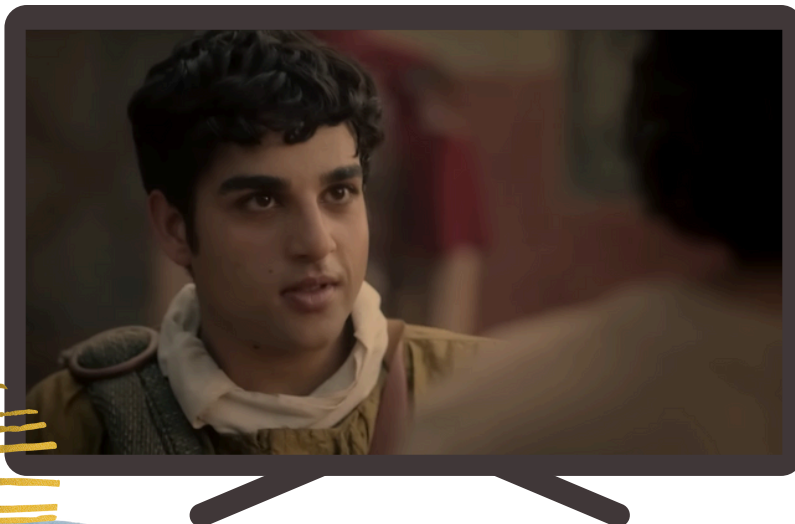
– This was a common rebuke for those that didn't know something they ought to. The pharisees would use it as a put down to followers; Jesus uses their own phrase back to them as a rebuke!

I desire compassion and not sacrifice....

The Pharisees tended to focus on the outward ritual and ceremonial parts of God's Law and neglected the internal and moral parts. This made them appear harsh and judgemental. Controlling and manipulating others rather than extending compassion and love.

VIDEO CLIP

[WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=7IUL9YQOWE8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IUL9YQOWE8)



This (3 min) video clip is from "The Chosen" a TV series that follows the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. Simon is shocked that Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector. Ask young people to reflect on the video. What stood out to them?

WEEK 1 DISCUSSION

Why do you think Jesus chose to spend time with tax-collectors and “sinners”?

- Pointer: Encourage reflection on the social context (tax-collectors were seen as collaborators/oppressors).
- Follow-up: What does that tell us about who Jesus cares about? How does that challenge our groups/ friendships?
- Extra: Ask: Are there people we avoid or judge rather than show mercy to?

What might “mercy not sacrifice” mean for how we live in everyday life (school, home, friendship)?

- Pointer: Make the connection to the temple sacrificial system which we don’t follow anymore. Think about sacrifice = doing “everything right”, meeting expectations, performance. Mercy = kindness, forgiveness, reaching out.
- Follow-up: Can you share an example when mercy felt more important than “doing the right thing”?
- Extra: What might you need to let go of (sacrifice mindset) to focus more on mercy?

What is one action you feel God might be inviting you to this week to show mercy instead of focusing on “sacrifice/performance”?

- Pointer: Encourage practical, achievable ideas (forgiving someone, reaching out, helping someone without being asked).
- Follow-up: How will you remind yourself? Who will you tell to help you follow through?
- Extra: What might stop you? Let’s talk about barriers and how to overcome them.

RESPONSE

Ask everyone to think about one person that they think has wronged them. Somebody they might feel owes some penance or apology for their behaviour. We’re going to try to see them the way that Jesus sees them – try to believe that they’re doing their best with what they’ve been given in life.

Turn out the lights and make the room as dark as it can naturally be. Hand out a lighted candle to each person. Have everyone pray a prayer of forgiveness and mercy for the person they’re thinking of and then blow out their candle.



MEMORY VERSE

In the dim room now introduce the memory verse.

We read part of it earlier.

Set the challenge to people to remember all the memory verses over the 5 weeks.

**"FOR I HAVE NOT COME TO CALL THE
RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS" - MATTHEW
9:13**



A moment of mercy. –

Ask everyone to think about a moment of mercy that they can show this week. It could be a moment when they help somebody, forgive somebody, stick up for someone. An invitation to join in with an activity at school etc.

Ask your group to plan this and start the session next week with a reflection on how it went.

TAKEAWAY



FINAL GAME/ACTIVITY

Haribo prayers – say a short prayer relating to each sweet and ask the group to pray in their hearts. invite everyone to eat their sweet as an 'Amen' to each prayer as you finish praying it.

Fried Egg – The mess in our lives and in the world

Cola bottle – The fun and fizz of our lives

Heart – God's big love for us

Bear – The closeness and intimacy of God's love

Ring – Our family and friends



APPENDIX 1.

Let the Punishment fit the Crime!

I googled the Answer to a quiz question	I used Chat GPT to write an essay
I pretended to be sick to take a day off school	I opened a new milk when there was already one open in the fridge
I stole a glue stick from school	I used my parents bank card to pay for PlayStation Plus without them knowing
I broke an ornament and didn't tell anyone	I made a new group chat to leave out just one friend
I watched a 12/15/18 movie when I wasn't old enough	I graffitied a toilet cubicle
I used up the last of the toilet roll and didn't replace it	I was late for school
I broke into a neighbours garden and moved all their gnomes about	I wrapped my uncle's car in cling film
I swapped the salt and the sugar around in the jars at home	I caught a train and didn't buy a ticket
I punched my brother	I threw a crisp packet out of our car window
I stole lifesaving medicine to save my mother's life	I was given money to buy lunch and used it to buy chocolate

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Find a moment this week when you can show mercy - An opportunity to help somebody, stick up for somebody. Maybe it's an invitation to join in with an activity at school. Be ready to share about it next week with the group.

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