**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Expect the Unexpected**

Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. ([Proverbs 3:5–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Pr3.5-6))

*We all make plans—plans for where we’re going and what we want to do. But life is more often a story of unexpected interruptions. Our faith helps us to recognize God’s hand at work in unanticipated ways. By faith we learn to embrace life’s interruptions as the place God so often does miraculous things. We learn to respond with compassion and faith when things seem impossible.*

**Session Overview**

**Respond with Compassion**

**Biblical Encounter:** Jesus Interrupts a Funeral Procession ([Luke 7:11–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.11-17))

**Outcome:** Respond compassionately when faced with others’ needs.

*In this session, we’ll see how Jesus responded when He approached a funeral procession. A widow had just lost her only son. Jesus’ heart went out to the woman for her loss. In response, Jesus raised the son back to life. The crowd following the procession was filled with awe at what happened. This encounter reminds us that when we’re filled with compassion for others, we need to take action, too.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Two large hula hoops, one per team* *• Open space for the group to line up into two teams****Getting Ready*** **• *First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Thank God for the opportunity to gather as a group. Thank Him for each student and their family. Ask God to speak to every person present and to challenge them to live out what they learn. Thank Him for the Bible, our instruction on how to live.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**Where is your favorite place to visit? |

Jesus was often on the move, going from town to town to minister to others. Today, we’ll explore how Jesus handled an unexpected encounter as He traveled about. Jesus showed up just as a widow was about to bury her son. In case you don’t know, a widow is a woman whose husband has died. So, this poor woman had lost both her husband and only son. But what happened next was quite amazing! Jesus showed great compassion, and the lives of the widow and her son took an incredible turn. But first, let’s have a bit of fun with a game.

**Group Activity**

Chain Link Neighbor

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| ***You Will Need*** *• Two large hula hoops, one per team* *• Open space for the group to line up into two teams**No prep is needed for this activity.* |

Let’s start with a fun team game. This game is called Chain Link Neighbor. We’ll divide into two teams. Your team will line up, side-by-side, and everyone will hold hands with each person next to them. Each team will get a hula hoop at one end of their line. The object of the game is to see which team can get their hula hoop to the opposite end of their line without letting go of their neighbors’ hands. You will have to work with your neighbors to ensure that they get the hula hoop over their heads to move it on to the next person in the chain. If you let go of your neighbors’ hands, your team has to start over!

• *Make sure you enforce the rule to not break the hands holding together.*

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| **QUESTION**What was the most difficult part of this game for you? |

We can’t really be the most successful in this game without helping the person next to us. In a similar way, God is pleased when we’re willing to care for those near us in life. People around us are hurting and in need of compassion. It’s important that we see people’s needs just like Jesus did. Before we move into today’s session, let’s check out this video!

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Today, we want to focus on putting our compassion into action. People have varying levels of response when it comes to being compassionate. Some get misty-eyed over a show on television. Some show their feelings less than others. What about you? What do you do when you come across someone in trouble or in need? And what does the Bible say about being compassionate? Compassion may not always be our natural response when we encounter the needs of others. If not, why not? And how can we put our compassion into action?

**Jesus Was Moved by Compassion**

Read [Luke 7:11–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.11-13).

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| **QUESTION**When Jesus encountered the funeral procession, what were His options? |

Jesus walked up to a funeral procession, but He didn’t just watch everyone pass by. He responded to the grief of the widow. The widow’s only son had just died. The pain of losing someone you love is never easy. Sadly, life is filled with loss, and some losses are harder to handle than others. So, let’s talk about Jesus’ compassionate response in this situation.

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| **QUESTION**Do you think it was okay for Jesus to tell her not to cry? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the woman felt when Jesus told her not to cry? Why do you say that? |

We know that Jesus felt compassion for the mother. But we don’t know if this woman knew who Jesus was before this encounter. We don’t really know how she might have felt about Jesus telling her not to cry. Put yourself in her shoes for a moment, though. In the middle of this funeral for her son, she was interrupted by someone she may not have known and was told to stop crying. That’s an odd comment at a funeral. What she didn’t know yet was that this wasn’t some annoying interruption.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think it means that Jesus’ “heart overflowed with compassion”? |

When we see someone’s need, compassion should motivate us to do something about it. Jesus understood this woman’s pain. He responded to her tears and sadness with compassion. This is a clear picture of the heart of Jesus. He understands our pain. He cares about it and acts on it.

**Did You Know?**

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| In the biblical world, one of the most difficult positions socially for a woman to find herself was to be a widow. As the ancient world didn’t have any true forms of social welfare and professions for women were few and far between, a woman was often left with only a few options after the death of her husband. If she was young enough, she might remarry. If her children were old enough, a widow would then rely on her children to provide through either her son’s income or her daughter’s marriage price. However, if a woman lost both her husband and her children, she had very little hope apart from begging. |

**Jesus Turned His Compassion into Action**

Read [Luke 7:14–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.14-15).

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| **QUESTION**What’s the difference between just feeling compassion and acting on compassion? |

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| **QUESTION**How did Jesus act on His compassion? |

Jesus and His disciples could have just simply let the funeral procession pass them by. This encounter with the woman, though, was fueled by His deep compassion for the needs of others. Note how Jesus immediately stepped in to meet a critical need for this woman. All of us can feel compassion, but Jesus acted. He touched the coffin and helped the widow.

When we show compassion, we may not see someone raised from the dead. But, we all can do something to help someone and their situation.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the woman’s life changed when Jesus raised her son? |

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| **QUESTION**What impact might seeing Jesus show such compassion have had on His disciples? |

Imagine being an eyewitness to this miracle of resurrection as Jesus raised this young man to life! This widow faced an impossible situation. But for Jesus, there were no limitations to His compassion. Anyone can feel bad for someone facing loss or going through a tough time. It’s another thing to act on what you’re feeling.

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| **QUESTION**How do you usually respond when you see someone in need? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you think most people think of Jesus as being compassionate or not? Why do you say this? |

**The Crowd Was Amazed**

We can only imagine how the woman reacted when her dead son was raised back to life. But how did the crowd react? It’s a big part of the story.

Read [Luke 7:16–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk7.16-17).

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| **QUESTION**Do you think Jesus would have acted the same way if there wasn’t a large crowd around Him? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think the crowd responded to the miraculous act of Jesus the way they did? |

It’s amazing how this act of compassion not only brought about a miracle, but it impacted the lives of many. Not only was the crowd impacted, but news about Jesus spread throughout the area.

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| **QUESTION**If you had been in the crowd that day, what would you share about what happened? |

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| **QUESTION**How can acting with compassion affect the lives of those around us? |

Often, our compassionate acts for others affect more people than we realize. We shouldn’t take action just so the crowd can see. But anytime we respond to someone’s need, we may impact more than just the needy person.

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| **QUESTION**Can you think of someone who has shown you compassion? What happened? |

* *You may want to have an example to share while students think of one.*

**Reflect**

**Respond compassionately when faced with others’ needs.**

Jesus showed that we need to respond compassionately when faced with the needs of others. What seems impossible for us is possible with God. He isn’t limited by anything. There is no circumstance, heartache, or pain that He can’t mend or heal. God wants us to share the compassionate love of Jesus with those around us. He is compassionate toward us, and we can also be compassionate toward others.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**What have you learned about having compassion toward others from this Bible story? |

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| **QUESTION**Would you describe yourself as a compassionate person? Why or why not? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you grow in the area of acting with compassion toward others? |

**Activate**

While you may not be able to meet needs exactly as Jesus did, you can have faith that Jesus can meet impossible needs around you. When you encounter the needs of others, see it as an opportunity instead of an interruption! It’s an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work through you. You may not always know the perfect words to say to someone in their moment of need, but the Holy Spirit does. And He can equip you. The first step is to be willing. Be willing to step out and show others the compassion that Jesus has shown you. Let’s go around the group and share one thing we can do to respond more with compassion.

• *Give each student an opportunity to share their response.*

**Conclusion**

Compassion requires action. Jesus may not have expected to meet that hurting woman that day, but He did. He had sympathy for her pain, and it led Him to act with compassion for her situation. Jesus helped the widow who lost her only son. With compassion, Jesus told her to stop crying. Then He did something about it. The crowd couldn’t believe it, and they knew it was nothing short of an act of God himself. News spread, and even more people heard about Jesus.

Can one simple act of compassion change the world around you? Yes! Don’t just feel bad for others. Jesus is calling you to step out and take action. If you step out in faith, you can meet others’ needs with compassion. And just imagine what God might do through you! Imagine how a simple act of love can demonstrate a heart of compassion.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*No one can really have godly compassion for someone until they’ve experienced it for themselves. God’s greatest act of compassion was sending Jesus to pay for our salvation. Have you encountered this compassion? Do you know God as your Heavenly Father, who has great compassion for you? If not, this is your chance to receive His forgiveness and invite His Son, Jesus, into your life.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Dear Jesus, thank You for Your amazing compassion for us. There’s nothing too big for You. I thank You for opportunities to love others the way that You love us. Grow our faith. Help us to trust You more. Help us to respond in compassion when we are faced with the needs of others. We love You! Amen.

**Dismissal**

Don’t forget the devotions located on the Bible Engagement Project app. Five days of devotions give us the opportunity to have daily time with Jesus. Thanks for a great discussion today. I look forward to seeing you next time.