



Imagining Mercy

Small Group Discussion Guide

Week of October 11, 2026

Primary scripture text: Deuteronomy 9:6-21; 10:1-11

Secondary scripture texts: Ps 103:8-18; 1 Tim 1:12-17; Luke 18:9-14

Learning outcome: Participants will be able to understand and articulate how we are rebellious, stubborn and wayward children. In spite of our sin and weakness, God is merciful in saving and sustaining us. Because of His steadfast love and mercy toward us, we can be merciful in forgiving others.

Questions that are marked with an asterisk () are priorities. If you are worried about having enough time, focus on these questions and skip those that are unmarked.*

LOOKING BACK (5 MINUTES)

Last week's discussion was focused on how the Kingdom of God has come and is coming into the world and into our lives.

Invite any willing participants to share briefly about how they practiced "realignment with God's kingdom" this past week. What did they notice?

DISCUSSING DEUTERONOMY (12 MINUTES)

Ask one or two group members to read Deuteronomy 9:6-21; 10:1-11 aloud.

Invite listeners to notice: These passages of Deuteronomy are a litany of the sins of the people of God against Him. Imagine yourself in the company of Israel hearing these words directed at you. How do you feel?

1. *Why are the people of Israel to remember their rebellion/provocation against God as they enter the good land that the Lord is giving them?

2. What does Moses' response to the righteous anger of God reveal about Moses' character? What do we learn about God in these interactions with Moses?
3. *How did God show His mercy to the people of Israel after they had sinned?
4. *How are you aware and attentive to God's mercy in your own life?

OPENING THE CATECHISM (10 MINUTES)

The assigned reading for this week was Qs. 193-201. These are attached at the end of this document.

1. Did anything in the assigned catechism questions strike you as encouraging, challenging, or confusing?
2. *Qs 194 defines "trespasses" *...as a sin—a thought, word, or deed which offends God's holy character and violates his Law, missing the mark of his will and expectations. (Isaiah 53:6; 1 John 3:4).* How does this conception challenge the way you typically think of sin?
3. *According to the catechism, how do we receive forgiveness of our sins?
4. Qs 199 states: "Failing to forgive impede's God's work in my life and gives opportunity to the evil one." Have you experienced this in your life or the lives of others? How is it overcome?

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (13 MINUTES)

Read the following excerpt from *Divine Intimacy* by Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen O.C.D. (Baronius Press)

There is no limit to God's mercy. He never rejects us because of our sins, He never grows weary of our infidelities, He never refuses to forgive us, He is always ready to forget all our offences and to repay our ingratitude with graces. He never reproaches us for our offences, even when we fail immediately after being forgiven. He is never angered by our repeated failures and weaknesses in the practice of virtue, but always stretches out His hand to us, wanting to help us. Even when men condemn us, God shows mercy to us; He absolves us and sends us away justified, as Jesus did the woman taken in adultery. "Go, and now sin no more" (Jn 8,11). By his words and example, Jesus has shown us the inexhaustible depths of God's mercy: let us think of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, Magdalen, and the good thief. But he has also said to us: "Be ye therefore merciful, just as Your Father is also merciful" (Luke 6,36). How far does our mercy go? How

much compassion do we have for the faults of others? The measure of our mercy to our neighbor will be the measure of God's mercy toward us, for Jesus has said "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again" (Matt 7,2).

God does not require us to be sinless that He may shower upon us the fullness of His mercy, but He does require us to be merciful to our neighbor, and moreover to be humble. In fact, to be sinners is not enough to attract divine mercy; we must also humbly acknowledge our own sins and turn to God with complete confidence. "What pleases God," said St. Therese of Lisieux, "is to see me love my littleness and poverty; it is the blind hope I have in his mercy. This is my sole treasure" (Letters, 176). This is the treasure that supplies for all our miseries, weaknesses, relapses and infidelities, because by means of this humility and confidence we shall obtain the divine mercy. And with this at our disposal, how can our wretchedness discourage us (685-686)?

Discussion questions

1. *Take a few moments to prayerfully consider the question: "How far does our (your) mercy go?" Is there a relationship in your life where you have limited your mercy? How might you honestly confess that to the Lord? Share with the group as you are willing.
2. *Humility requires honesty about our "littleness and poverty." How can we live small and humble lives, aware of our own sin and yet be relieved of shame and self hatred?

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

One of the most common prayers in the great tradition of the church is the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Can you commit to praying this prayer at a regular time and place throughout the week to remember who Jesus is and who you are: a beloved child of God in need of His mercy? Share your commitment with the group as you are comfortable.

Close by standing together to recite the following collect from the *Book of Common Prayer* (Anglican Liturgy Press, 2019)

79. For Mercy

Almighty God, you have not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; grant that we, who for our evil deeds deserve to be punished, by the might of your grace may mercifully be relieved; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE FIFTH PETITION:
“AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES”

193. **What is the fifth petition?**

The fifth petition is “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.” (*Matthew 6:12; see also Luke 11:4*)

194. **What are trespasses?**

A “trespass” is a sin—a thought, word, or deed which offends God’s holy character and violates his Law, missing the mark of his will and expectations. (*Isaiah 53:6; 1 John 3:4*)

195. **Do you sin against God’s Law?**

Yes. I, together with all humankind, sin daily against God’s Law, in thought, word, and deed, both by what I do and by what I fail to do. (*Psalms 14:2–3; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:9–18, 23; 1 John 1:8–10*)

196. **What is God’s forgiveness?**

God’s forgiveness is his merciful pardon of sin and removal of the guilt that results from our disobedience. (*Psalms 32:1–2; 51:1–17; Isaiah 1:18; 55:6–9; Jeremiah 33:7–9; Matthew 18:23–27; Colossians 2:13–14*)

197. **On what basis do you ask forgiveness?**

I ask God our loving Father to forgive me through his Son, Jesus Christ, who bore my sins upon the Cross, so that through faith and Baptism I can receive his righteousness. (*Isaiah 53:4–12; Daniel 9:16–19; Luke 18:9–14; Acts 2:38; 13:38–39; Romans 5:17; Hebrews 9:11–26*)

198. Does God forgive your sins?

Yes. In Christ, God freely forgives the sins of all, including me, who sincerely repent and in true faith turn to him. (*Leviticus 16:29–34; Psalm 103:8–14; Isaiah 55:6–9; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Matthew 6:14–15; Hebrews 10:11–18; 1 John 1:9–10*)

**“AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO
TRESPASS AGAINST US”**

199. Why should you forgive others?

I should forgive others because, while I was still a sinner, God forgave me through Jesus Christ. Failing to forgive impedes God’s work in my life and gives opportunity to the evil one. (*Genesis 50:15–21; Psalm 133; Matthew 18:21–35; Luke 23:34; Ephesians 4:30–32; Colossians 3:12–13*)

200. How do you forgive others?

Forgiveness is a decision of my will and an attitude of my heart that seeks the good of my neighbor, and chooses not to hold against them the damage they have inflicted. I forgive whether they have asked for forgiveness or not. (*Exodus 23:4; Leviticus 19:17–18; Matthew 5:38–48; Luke 17:3–4; 23:34; Acts 7:60; Romans 12:14, 17–21; James 5:9; 1 Peter 3:9*)

201. Will your forgiveness of others always result in reconciliation?

No. Though my decision and desire to forgive may not result in my neighbor’s repentance or our reconciliation, I am still called to forgive. (*Matthew 18:15–35; Romans 12:17–21*)

**THE SIXTH PETITION: “AND LEAD
US NOT INTO TEMPTATION”**

202. What is the sixth petition?

The sixth petition is “And lead us not into temptation.” (*Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4*)