

my journey with Jesus

BEATITUDES

name _____

THE BEATITUDES

The **Beatitudes** of Jesus give us ways to live the great commandment. People who try to live by this “way of the blessed” open their minds and hearts to the call of God and the needs of others. When we ourselves are in need, we try to have faith and trust that God will reach us through the care of others.

The Beatitudes: Jesus offered some special helps for doing what is right. They are called the Beatitudes and they are found in the Gospel of MATTHEW (5:3–11). They also help Christians know how to live their faith.

- ◆ **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** We need God and the support of others. To recognize our neediness, we must have a poverty of spirit that rejects selfishness and seeks the good of others.
- ◆ **Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.** This beatitude reminds us that suffering is part of what it means to be human. Jesus wants us to understand that our suffering, like His, can open our hearts to others and their suffering.
- ◆ **Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.** Meekness is strength

tamed by love. The meek are generous. They have nothing to lose. They don't force themselves on others.

- ◆ **Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.** People who hunger and thirst for righteousness are people who crave the truth. They don't take the easy way out. And so, they are the most satisfied.
- ◆ **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.** This beatitude tells us that mercy is a permanent way of viewing the world around us. It means viewing and treating the world and all in it with compassion.
- ◆ **Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.** The pure of heart are single-minded people. They are focused outward, not inward. That open outlook gives them every opportunity to discover God in everything and everyone they see.
- ◆ **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.** Jesus knew that everyone seeks and admires peace. Jesus wanted his followers to do something about it. Peacemakers face the difficulties of building solid relationships between human beings head-on.
- ◆ **Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** The final beatitude reminds us that living out our faith often means appearing foolish in the eyes of others. With a smile, we continue to walk in the way of the Lord.

The Beatitudes are guidelines for true happiness.

In the time of Jesus, God's people were again in need of someone to lead them to true freedom. As a nation they had suffered through many wars and domination by foreign rulers. They were looking for the Messiah to free them from this oppression and to show them the path to true happiness.

God had given the Israelites the gift of the Law of Moses as their way of life, and Jesus wanted to teach again its lesson: love God and love neighbor. He told the people that His Father is the God of love, not of fear.

When Jesus spoke to the people, He sensed that their spirits were low. They had lost their way. Jesus challenged the people to take a giant step toward freedom, no matter how painful it seemed. Jesus promised that those who suffer for the sake of the Kingdom of God would be rewarded. At the very beginning of one of the best-known sections of Matthew's Gospel, called the Sermon on the Mount, we find Jesus' plan. We have come to call it the Beatitudes.

The Beatitudes are eight guidelines for true happiness given to us by Jesus. They promise freedom to live Jesus' way and teach us the spirit in which we are to live for God's Kingdom, or the *Kingdom of heaven* as it is called in Matthew's Gospel.

Jesus promised great rewards for those who would follow His ways of happiness. When we depend on God's love and not on possessions, when we show compassion, humility, and mercy, we are working to build up the Kingdom of God. This is also true when we work for justice and peace, even when this sometimes requires heroic effort on our part. How blessed and how happy shall we be!

Which of the Beatitudes challenges you most? Why?

How do the Beatitudes compare with your ideas about true happiness?



Church Teachings: Christian Living

- The Beatitudes are eight guidelines for true happiness given to us by Jesus.
- The Beatitudes are found in Matthew's Gospel at the beginning of the section called the Sermon on the Mount. The entire sermon can be found in Matthew 5—7.
- Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to love others as He loves us.
- A virtue is a habit of doing good. The three theological virtues are faith, hope, and love.



I WILL DO

Think of someone you know or have read about who lives according to the Beatitudes. Explain how that person lives the Beatitudes.

What can you do to be more of a "beatitude person" today?

Will you do it?

The Kingdom of God Is . . .

Read the following parables and tell the *qualities* of the kingdom the parable tries to show:

1. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches'" (*Matthew 13:31-32*).

The kingdom is _____

2. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened" (*Matthew 13:33*).

The kingdom is _____

3. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it" (*Matthew 13:45-46*).

The kingdom is _____

4. Make up a sentence that compares God's kingdom to a common item of today. Then, explain what your sentence tells about the kingdom.

KNOW

1. Who is invited to participate in God's kingdom? _____
2. Why is the image of a banquet appropriate for describing God's kingdom? _____

We try to live with faith, hope, and love.

The Beatitudes are wonderful guidelines for living as followers of Jesus. They are also surprising because they turn our ideas about happiness upside down. They are not always what we have in mind about being happy! But if we want to be followers of Jesus, we will try to live according to the Beatitudes. To help us do this, God gives us the gifts of faith, hope, and love.

- ❖ We live as people of *faith* by accepting all that God teaches us. We profess our faith

in the Apostles' Creed and the teachings of the Church.

- ❖ We live as people of *hope* by trusting in Jesus and His promises of the kingdom and eternal life.
- ❖ We live as people of *love* by loving God above all things and our neighbors as ourselves.

When we live with faith, hope, and love, we gradually come to understand and live the happiness that Jesus was teaching in the Beatitudes.

In the **Beatitudes**, Jesus sums up the basic principles of life in God's reign. They tell us how to respond to the problems of poverty, injustice, and oppression that prevent God's kingdom from being shared by all people.

The Beatitudes

What the Beatitudes Mean for Us

"Happy are those who are poor in spirit; the kingdom of God belongs to them."

"Happy are those who mourn; God will comfort them."

"Happy are those who are humble; they will receive what God has promised."

"Happy are those who do what God wants; God will satisfy them fully."

"Happy are those who are merciful to others; God will have mercy on them."

"Happy are the pure in heart; they will see God."

"Happy are those who work for peace; they will be called children of God."

"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God wants; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them."

People who are poor in spirit depend on God for everything. Nothing becomes more important to them than God.

People who mourn are saddened by sin, evil, and suffering in the world. They trust that God will comfort them.

Humble people show gentleness and patience towards others. They will share in God's promises.

People who are fair and just towards others are doing God's loving will.

Merciful people are concerned about others' feelings. They are willing to forgive those who hurt them.

People who keep God first in their lives are pure in heart. They give their worries and concerns to God.

Peacemakers are people who bring peace and reconciliation into the lives of others. They treat others fairly.

People who are willing to be ignored or insulted for doing what they feel God wants will share in God's kingdom.

From Matthew 5:3-10

Choose one beatitude and explain what it means to you.

To whom does the kingdom of God belong?

2. What do we believe about God's kingdom?
3. What will Jesus announce when he comes in glory?
4. What does God call us to do?

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-10)	Living the Beatitudes
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	We recognize our need for God. We depend on God. The poor in spirit know that God is more important than anything else in life.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.	We mourn the sin and suffering that we see in the world. We trust that God comforts anyone who suffers from loss of injustice. We reach out to anyone who needs to be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.	We humbly recognize that all our gifts and talents come from God. We share these gifts with kindness and patience to serve God and others.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.	We long for God's peace, love, and justice to rule in the world. We work for equality and truth. We share our possessions with those in need.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	We forgive anyone who has hurt us. We accept others and have compassion for them.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.	We want only to do God's will and to follow God's commands. We keep our minds and hearts focused on God, seeking good and avoiding evil.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.	We work to be a sign for others of God's forgiveness. We pray for peace and unity in our family, in the community, and in the world. We try to settle arguments and disputes.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	We continue Jesus' mission in the world. We speak out against situations which prevent the rule of God's peace, love, and justice. We stand up for our beliefs even if we are made fun of or criticized.

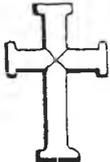
The Fulfillment of the Kingdom

1. Jesus teaches us that the kingdom, or reign, of God belongs to all humble, kind, peaceful, and compassionate people. God will welcome all those who have worked for unity, equality, and justice to the kingdom. People who have tried to be a sign of God's kingdom by trusting and accepting God's will for the world will share in the kingdom.

We have learned that the kingdom of God is already present in the minds and hearts of all those who live as faithful disciples of Jesus. The kingdom is present wherever God's justice, peace, and love are lived. When we live the Beatitudes, we are helping God's kingdom grow in the world. We believe that God's kingdom one day will be completed, or fulfilled. On this wonderful day,

Pledge of Allegiance

Read and sign the "pledge of allegiance" to God's kingdom. Choose a regular time to renew your pledge in the months and years ahead.

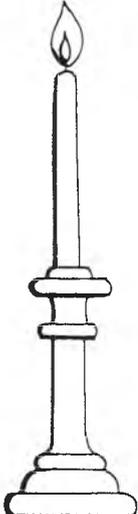
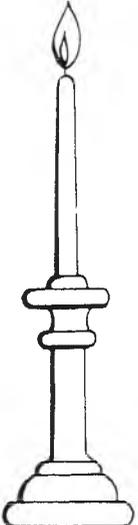


I pledge allegiance to the kingdom of God,
and to the Church, its living sign on earth:

one People of God,
holy, catholic, and apostolic,
with justice and peace,
forgiveness and salvation for all.

(Signed)

(Date)



Remember

Jesus taught us the Beatitudes as guidelines for being truly happy. We try to live the Beatitudes with faith, hope, and love.

Review

1. Name three of the Beatitudes.
2. Choose one beatitude. Tell how you can live this beatitude in your home.

3. Read the last beatitude. Name a time when you will need courage to do what God wants you to do.

Family Note

This lesson emphasizes the Beatitudes and the virtues of faith, hope, and love. Help your child to see that these guidelines enable us to live in peace and harmony with one another.

DO NOT BE AFRAID

In Matthew 5:3–12, Jesus taught how his followers should act. You can be a witness by living Christ’s Beatitudes in your daily life. Read the following Beatitudes. For each, write one example showing how you can give witness to the love of Jesus. With a partner, dramatize one of your examples.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. _____

Blessed are you who mourn. _____

Blessed are the meek. _____

Blessed are you who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Blessed are the merciful. _____

Blessed are the clean of heart. _____

Blessed are the peacemakers. _____

Blessed are you who are persecuted in my name. _____

DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

Martyrs are remembered on the day of their death—the day they were born into God’s kingdom. On the feast day of a martyr, the priest wears red vestments, the color of blood—and the color of love. In your prayer, ask these martyrs to help you be a faithful witness to Jesus.

Chanel, Saint Charles Lwanga, Saint Peter Perpetua, Saint Felicitas, Saint Stephen, Saint Ignatius, Saint Polycarp, Saint Justin, Saint Lawrence, Saint Cyprian, Saint Boniface, Saint Stanislaus, Saint Thomas Becket, Saint John Fisher, Saint Thomas More, Saint Paul Miki, Saint Isaac Jogues, Saint Jean de Brebeuf, Saint Peter Chanel

As you gave your martyrs the courage to suffer death for Christ, give us the courage to live in faithful witness to you.



You may not be aware of it, but your relationship with Jesus probably started in your own home. Who introduced you to Jesus? Take a moment to thank this person for being a witness of Jesus’ love for you. Be sure to describe specific times and events and to tell what led you to see Jesus.



These words from the prayer of Saint Francis can help us to live as beatitude people.

**Lord, make me an instrument of
Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is sadness, joy.**

Beatitude Living

- Leader:** Let us begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen!
- Leader:** Jesus surprised the crowds when He told them the kingdom ways to be happy. These Beatitude ways did not talk about money, power, or possessions. They focused on who a person is on the inside that affects what the person does on the outside. Let us pray to some of the saints who show us the Beatitude way of living.
- Child:** "Happy and blessed are the poor in spirit." Saint Thérèse, help us to keep in mind that there are little ways in our every day living by which we build the kingdom of God.
- Parent:** "Happy and blessed are they who mourn." Saint Mary Magdalene, show us how to suffer with dignity and hope, and how to bring comfort to those in need.
- Child:** "Happy and blessed are the meek." Saint Maximilian, help us to see that meekness is a sign of strength and conviction.
- Parent:** "Happy and blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness." Saint Paul, show us how to be willing to reach out to the sick, the poor, and the outcasts so we can bring justice to the world.
- Child:** "Happy and blessed are the merciful." Saint Stephen, help us to be as willing as you were to forgive those who hurt us. Be with us as we try to let go of our hurts.
- Parent:** "Happy and blessed are the clean of heart." Mary, we ask you to show us how to open ourselves completely to God's love.
- Child:** "Happy and blessed are the peacemakers." Saint Francis of Assisi, help us to understand that peace begins in our own hearts and in our own homes.
- Parent:** "Happy and blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness." Saint Ignatious, help us to find value and hope in our daily struggles and sufferings.