

TOPIC: The Beatitudes

OBJECTIVE: To help students realize that Jesus has given us ways to live the great commandment - Love one another.

MATERIALS: copies of *The Beatitudes* and *BEATITUDE PEOPLE*

TEACHER'S BACKGROUND MATERIAL:

To be **poor in spirit** is to look to God for our fulfillment. We trust that God wants us to be happy. We believe that caring for the needs of others can bring happiness. When difficulties come, such as a death, the loss of a job, the birth of a sick child, they can adapt because they are open to what life brings.

Those who **mourn** are people who are not deadened to the pain of others. Perhaps after watching a TV show about hunger, or a segment of the news, they might mourn (feel deeply) for the suffering of others. They know we are all united. We have compassion for those who suffer. We trust that God looks after suffering people. We seek ways to bring joy where there is sadness.

The **meek** treat all people with dignity. They are not falsely humble, claiming that they are not talented, nor do they let people walk all over them. They know that the gifts they have been given--their intelligence, humor, and skills --are things they can share with others. The meek regard all life as a gift and seek to use God's gifts in life-giving ways. By their gentle presence, they seek to bring peace and freedom. In their gentleness there is great strength.

Those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness** seek to know and carry out God's plan for all people. They work to correct injustice so that everyone can share in God's gifts. They care enough to be involved in significant causes.

The **merciful** care about the needs of others. They do not judge others but try to forgive and offer help when it is needed. The merciful live by the golden rule. They treat others as they would like to be treated.

The **clean of heart** live simply. Loving God is foremost in their lives. They care more about loving others than about owning many things. They share themselves with others and, in the sharing, discover God.

The **peacemakers** work to guarantee human rights for all people. They bring God's peace by opposing violence with peaceful actions.

Those who are **persecuted for the sake of righteousness** are people who live a good, honest life. They don't stop doing what they know is right, even though they might be

punished for their work. They trust that God's love can bring good out of evil.

from *WE CELEBRATE CONFIRMATION*

PART I

ACTIVITY: Distribute copies of *The Beatitudes* to each student. Have them read them first to themselves then ask for a volunteer to read them aloud. Do not presume that the students have ever heard these before. Using the **TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIAL** above to help you, lead a discussion of each beatitude

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think it means to be _____? (*Meek, poor in spirit, clean of heart, a peacemaker, etc.*)
2. How are the Beatitudes different from the 10 Commandments?
3. How difficult or easy is it to live your life in the spirit of the Beatitudes? Why?
4. Who do you know who you feel lives in the spirit of the Beatitudes?
5. How do you feel about these people?
6. What changes can you make in your life to make it more in the spirit of the Beatitudes.

PART II

ACTIVITY: Distribute copies of *BEATITUDE PEOPLE* to the students. Depending on your students and your style of teaching, you may want to use this as a simple hand-out and have the students work silently and individually then have a discussion when they are finished; or you can pick a situation from the hand-out and have the class work on it as a group using the blackboard to record ideas.

CLOSING PRAYER: *Psalm 23*

The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.
In grassy meadows he lets me lie.
By tranquil streams he leads me
to restore my spirit.
He guides me in the paths of saving justice
for his namesake.
Even were I walk in the valley of the shadow of death
I should fear no evil, for you are at my side.
Your staff and your crook are there to soothe me.
You prepare a table for me
under the eyes of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup brims over.
Kindness and faithful love pursue me
everyday of my life.
I make my home in the house of the Lord
for all time to come.