

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the Merciful

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. –Matthew 5:7

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

Being merciful means showing kindness and compassion to someone who has wronged you. Jesus was merciful. He consistently showed mercy to those who persecuted Him and He still shows that same mercy to us as we sin even though He came here to die on the cross as punishment for our sins so that we may have eternal life. That's a hard truth and something to remember when you are angry with someone who needs your forgiveness. Jesus says, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15).

As an athlete, you can sometimes become angry when you feel another team is cheating or when a teammate of yours made a mistake- or even when you make a mistake yourself! Jesus tells us to forgive so that we receive forgiveness. When your teammate makes a mistake and you offer mercy and grace, you are setting a precedent for others to follow. That's called leading by example. The next time you make a mistake, hopefully your teammates will follow that example and offer you the same mercy and grace that you showed them.

Grow (*Talk it over*)

- Why is it hard to forgive?
- Why is it important to show others mercy?
- How can you lead by example on the field this season?

Pray

Father God, we thank you for the great mercy you showed us by sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sin. It can be hard to show others the same forgiveness that we accept from you. Please soften our hearts so that we may lead others in mercy and grace. We pray these things in your son's name, Amen!

Overtime (*Team Building Game to Support Concept*) Worth Object Lesson

Materials: Paper money of any denomination.

-Begin this object lesson by holding up a new bill.

-Ask how much it is worth and would anyone like to have it.

-Take the bill and crumple it into a tiny ball. Ask if anyone would still like to have the bill. Remind them that it is now crushed and wrinkled. Ask - "*Does it still have value? How much is it worth now? The same as before?!*"

-Rub a bit of dirt into the bill. "*Now, it's dirty. Do you still want it?*"

-"*Let's consider something: What if you were this dollar? Sin has caused some wrinkles and dirt to appear. Are you worth any less to God even though you no longer look perfect? No! God loves you so much that he sent Jesus to sacrifice His life for you to provide a way back to Him. THAT is extreme mercy and grace!*"