

Well Fed Family

Lessons for Families

The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount

I. Lesson text and Memory Verse

(You can memorize the whole text, or you can choose one or more of the single verses to memorize.)

Matthew 5:1-12

1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them. He said:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

II. Lesson introduction

Name a time when you were sad.

Name a time when you were worried.

Name a time when you were discouraged.

Name a time when you were lonely.

Have you ever felt any of these feelings? Have you ever felt like you needed some comforting? What do you do when you feel like this? When you are really little you often run to mommy or daddy, or grandmother or grandfather to be picked up and held. Sometimes when you are more grown up and feeling bad you want to eat a special food that reminds you of when you were little; some special food that mom or grandmother made that you really liked.

Those special foods that remind you of special people and of home are called “comfort foods”. Different people have different comfort foods. It all depends on where you grew up and what your family liked. All around the world people have all kinds of comfort foods. In Italy many like spaghetti carbonara made with eggs, bacon and cheese. Irish people might like Colcannon which is mashed potatoes mixed with cooked cabbage. People in parts of Canada long for Poutine which is potato fries topped with cheese curds and covered with gravy. It is fun to look at what people in other countries say is their favorite comfort food. Like Pierogies, Matzo ball soup, rice Congee, Mofongo, Moussaka, Shakshuka, or Goulash. It’s fun to just learn these new words!

We know that food might taste good, and might make us feel better for a little bit; we know it can remind us of people and places we love, but when Christians are sad, discouraged, lonely, or worried there is more they can do besides eat. They can pray to God about the things that are bothering them. They can open up their Bible and read encouraging scriptures. One special passage of scripture that encourages many people is the one we are studying in this lesson.

III. Lesson

(Note: this lesson is long enough that you can break it into two or three shorter lessons such as verses 1-6, 7-12 or possibly 1-4, 5-8, 9-12. This depends on the age and attention span of your family members.)

Read verse 1&2 from Matthew 5. *Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them, saying...*

Ok, try to visualize Jesus walking while more and more people keep following along. A new word you might not know here is *disciples*. This is another word for students or followers. Jesus had been walking and teaching in many towns and villages all over the region. Word about him kept spreading and everywhere Jesus went people would find him and follow him around looking for teaching, for wisdom, for blessings and for healing. So many people were following along that Jesus decided to walk up the side of a mountain so that everyone could gather around and be able to hear and see. Jesus may have sat down on a big rock, because it was a tradition of that time for teachers to sit down and have their students sit beneath them during lessons. Then Jesus began to teach everyone about God and about what God wants from His people.

The entire lesson Jesus taught that day is pretty long. In fact it takes up three whole chapters of the Bible. The entire lesson, all three chapters, is often called The Sermon on the Mount. The entire lesson, or sermon, is intended to bring comfort and joy to Jesus’ disciples. It tells about what was in store for their future, what blessings and rewards they could look forward to from God.

This Family Bible lesson comes from the first part of the sermon. This part is often called the Beatitudes.

Read verse 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Nine verses in a row all begin with the same word *blessed*. The word means more than just happy. It means a spiritual well-being. It means having the approval of God. There is a famous hymn many people sing in church that says "It is well with my soul." That is the feeling of *blessed*.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? We know what it means to be poor – without any money. When you don't have enough money you know that you must depend on someone else to buy your food or pay your bills. When you are poor you can't live in a mansion or a palace!

When you are poor in spirit you know that you need to depend on God who can make us spiritually rich. When this happens we will receive the kingdom of heaven! In fact in a different scripture, John chapter 14, Jesus says He will prepare a place for us in His Father's house where there are many rooms. There is another song many people like to sing called "Mansion Over the Hilltop". That song is about the special place for us in God's kingdom!

Verse 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Mourn means to be sad. In fact this word in the original language that Jesus used means the strongest form of sadness you can imagine. This verse is talking about people who are sad because of sin, and because of all the evil things in the world, and especially being sad about their own sins.

We hear a lot about the world being full of sin – about people who do not give glory or thanksgiving to God, but instead think only about themselves. It is good to know that even though we are sad now about all of this that God will comfort us. It is very comforting to me right now to know that God is in control!

Verse 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Meek is a funny word that we don't use very often. It is supposed to mean a combination of both gentle *and* strong. Meek people are humble people. They might be strong enough to be a bully and get their way all the time, but instead they choose to obey God. They choose to submit their own will and do what God wants them to do instead, even if it means not getting their own way. Jesus is the perfect example of someone who is meek. Jesus submitted to God by allowing himself to be crucified and to die on the cross.

Verse 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

When you are really hungry for something to eat do you just sit around and not do anything about it? Of course not! You probably go into the kitchen and look for food! Well we need to do the same thing with spiritual hunger. We should get up and go find ways to be filled with God's righteousness! When we do this Jesus says we will definitely be filled! Ways to be filled with God's righteousness include reading our Bibles every day, praying to God every day, and looking for ways to "bear good fruit" or doing good to those who are around us in loving, kind, unselfish ways.

Read verse 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Being merciful means being compassionate. It means that when you see someone who is feeling bad it makes you feel bad too, and you want to do something to help them not feel bad anymore. It also means you don't do things on purpose to people just to make them feel bad either. So playing mean tricks on your sister or brother would not be merciful. Neither would slamming a door at your mom or yelling at your dad. The cool thing about this Beatitude is that your reward comes twice. God will of course be merciful to us, but in addition to that when we are merciful and compassionate to our family, to our friends, to people around us, it will make them feel like being merciful and compassionate too! Mercy can be contagious and pretty soon if you keep it up you will have people being merciful back to you!

Read verse 8. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

I love the promise in this verse. Isn't it a wonderful thing to be able to see God?! The Bible mentions a handful of people who have seen God already. Each time these people are transformed and blessed by this experience.

Being pure in heart is one of the main goals for every Christian. It is also one of the hardest things to do sometimes. Being pure in heart means your thoughts that you think and your actions that you do are a reflection of God's influence in your life. The trouble is we tend to repeat the words and copy the actions that we hear and see most often. So, if we watch a lot of videos and movies with bad words or bad people in them, or listen to music with inappropriate topics or language, or if we spend a lot of time with people who try and convince us to do bad things then we won't be very successful being pure in heart. We made a rule at our house not to watch movies that aren't rated G or PG with only a few exceptions. We watch PG-13 only if we have read reviews from Christian movie reviewers who say it is a worthwhile movie. This is a really good topic for families to talk more about and see if this is a good idea for you, too.

(Here are links to some Christian media review sites:

World Magazine <https://world.wng.org/tags/movies> there are also music reviews.

Plugged In/Focus on the Family <https://www.pluggedin.com/> reviews for movies, music and video games)

Read verse 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*

Peace is very important to Jesus who is also called the Prince of Peace. He emphasized peace a lot in His teachings, and many of the writers in the New Testament also highlighted the importance of peace. The apostle Paul tells us Christians are called to peace, and lists peace as one of the fruits of the Spirit. Peter tells us to pursue peace. James wants us to plant peace like a farmer would plant his crops.

Peace can be outward such as making an end to war, helping people resolve arguments and being a good neighbor. Peace can also be within us as spiritual peace. Spiritual peace comes when we give God control over all of our fears and worries and trust Him to know what is best. Peacemakers can help make outward peace, and they can also help others find spiritual peace.

Read verses 10 and 11. *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.*

Being persecuted can literally mean people are chasing you away because they don't like what you believe in. Being persecuted means getting in trouble, or suffering, for doing what God wants you to do. Sometimes people will make fun of you for doing what the Bible says. In some countries around the world Christians are being persecuted in ways that are much more dangerous than just being made fun of. Jesus promises that God will bless us even when everyone else is angry with us for sticking up for the Bible. We should also pray for people around the world who are being persecuted that they can help their enemies to know about God. That solution would make us happy and God happy, too!

Read verse 12. *Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

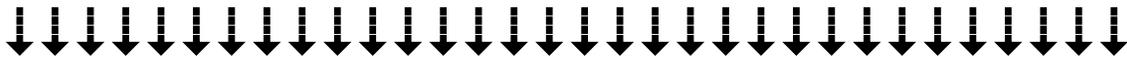
Verse 12 begins with a command. Jesus commands us to rejoice and be glad! There are many times in the Bible we are commanded to be joyful. Do you think it is important that Christians, God's people, have a joyful attitude even when times are tough? This verse also reminds us that when we are persecuted because of following God we are not the only ones. Many well known people in the Bible were persecuted just because of what they believed. Do you know the story of Daniel in the lions' den? What about Joseph and his coat of many colors who was sold by his brothers into slavery? Even the prophet Jeremiah was tied up and thrown into a well.

Just like compassion, joy is contagious. When we are joyful during tough times we can uplift the feelings of those around us. It is harder to be angry or sad when you are

around someone who is truly happy. When we face troubles like Daniel or Joseph we can be glad because we know we have a reward in heaven.

Do the Beatitudes bring comfort to you? Go back and read them all together once again and pay attention to all of the promises in each verse. I hope this brings you comfort! If we can remember to trust God, listen to God, be humble, stand up for what is right, forgive others, be pure, be calm and be courageous we will be living just like God wants us to live! We will have part of the Kingdom of God in our lives already!

Keep Reading for fun projects to do with the family and bring a new perspective on the scriptures used in this lesson!



IV. Recipe

As we talked about during the introduction to the Bible lesson, there isn't just one kind of comfort food. The recipe I chose for this lesson is for a kind of comfort food that a lot of people like in my family! Mashed potatoes! You can make plain mashed potatoes, plus I give options at the end of the recipe for garlic or cheesy mashed potatoes. And a bonus recipe to use any leftovers for breakfast the next day.

Mashed Potatoes

2 lbs russet or Yukon Gold potatoes
3/4 cup half and half
4 Tablespoons butter
Salt and pepper

You can peel the potatoes or leave the skins on depending on how you like it. Cut the potatoes into even sized pieces a few inches big.

Place them in a large saucepan.

Add cold water and a teaspoon of salt to the water. Bring the water to a strong rolling boil over medium-high heat. Turn down the heat to a simmer keeping the pot uncovered.

Depending on how big the potato pieces are it will take about 15-20 minutes to get done.

Check the potatoes for doneness by sticking a fork or the tip of a sharp knife into them. They are done when the fork or knife slips in easily.

Drain the potatoes in a colander and return them to the empty pot.

Add the half and half and the butter.

Use a potato masher to mash up the potatoes with the butter and cream, then add salt and pepper until it tastes good then continue mashing until everything is nice and creamy. You can stir them with a rubber spatula at the end to help everything come together.

*to make garlic mashed potatoes:

While the potatoes are boiling, put 4 cloves of crushed garlic plus the half and half into a small saucepan. Heat the half and half with the garlic until it simmers. Turn off the heat and let it sit until the potatoes are done. Add the garlic/ half and half along with the butter as directed in the recipe above.

**to make cheesy mashed potatoes:

Grate 4 ounces of a sharp flavored cheese like parmesan, pecorino or sharp cheddar. Add the shredded cheese to the potatoes along with the half and half and butter and mash as directed. Note: cheese is salty so you may need to add less salt to the finished potatoes.

***Try making cheesy garlic mashed potatoes by combining all three recipe options!

Leftover Mashed Potato pancakes

Mash together 1 cup leftover mashed potatoes any flavor, with 1 large egg and ½ cup shredded cheese. Melt 1 Tblsp butter on a griddle until it is bubbling. Scoop large spoonfuls of the potato mixture onto the hot griddle pressing lightly to make a thick, flat pancake. Cook about 3-4 minutes until browned on the bottom, carefully flip with a metal spatula and cook on the other side another 2-3 minutes until browned. Repeat until all of the potato mixture is used up.

V. Music

Several hymns were mentioned in the lesson. Gather your family together and learn these hymns if you don't already know them. It is a comfort and a blessing to sing together with family and friends who love Jesus! Playing and singing worship music at home is a great way to keep your mind centered on good things; it helps us be pure in heart.

It is Well With My Soul (When Peace Like a River)

Here is a link to the words and a piano accompaniment. There are additional links for printable music pages and other audio choices.

http://openhymnal.org/Lyrics/It_Is_Well_With_My_Soul-It_Is_Well-Ville_Du_Havre.html

Here is a link to the BYU mens chorus singing a beautiful a capella rendition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FexGqNDBK3g>)

Mansion Over the Hilltop

Here is a link to the words and a piano accompaniment <https://youtu.be/UHG3dvZgrmc>

Here is a link to the Harding University Concert Choir singing a congregational a capella version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuHMuOM8f6Q>

Purer in Heart, O God

Here is a link to the words and sheet music for this hymn plus a piano playing along for you. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_YEqkrNLao)

VI. Relaxing Aromatherapy Project

Aromatherapy means an aroma, or pleasing smell that gives therapy, or makes us feel better in some way. Essential oils have pleasing aromas. They are made from special extracts from plants some of which have been in use for thousands of years. Essential oils are mentioned over 500 times in the Bible. I love the quote from Hippocrates, a famous Greek doctor who lived around 400 B.C. He said, “the way to health is to have an aromatic bath and scented massage every day.”

Many people like to use essential oils to help bring a feeling of comfort and peace. The easiest way is just to open up a bottle of essential oil and hold it a few inches under our nose and inhale to enjoy the beautiful aroma. Another very nice way to use them is to mix a few drops with some kind of oil and then rub it into our skin just like Hippocrates advised! Whenever you plan to use essential oils on your skin it is very important to mix them with something else like olive oil or coconut oil before you spread it on yourself. While essential oils are very safe, it is always wise to follow good safety guidelines.

Scientists have even done studies to prove some essential oils can reduce stress. (Search PubMed+essential oils+stress) Some of the best relaxing essential oils to use include lavender, roman chamomile, bergamot, and vetiver. Peppermint and grapefruit are peppy instead of relaxing and might be fun choices, too.

Soothing Massage Cream with Essential Oils

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ cup softened coconut oil
1 tsp grated beeswax (optional)
36 drops of your favorite essential oil, or a combination of oils

Put the olive oil and coconut oil in a small saucepan or double boiler. Add the beeswax if using. Melt everything together stirring gently over very low heat just until the beeswax is melted.

Pour this mixture into a medium size bowl and let it cool at room temperature for about 30 minutes (or place in the refrigerator to speed cooling, but don't forget about it or it will be hard again!)

Once the mixture is cool to the touch, use a mixer to whip the oils. Whip for about 30 seconds, then add in your chosen essential oils. Whip another 30 seconds.

At this point you can place it in the refrigerator for another 15 minutes, then whip again until your mixture is fluffy and has lightened in color.

Scoop this into glass jars or other small containers. You can store this on the counter as long as your room temperature isn't above 72 degrees. Otherwise it will melt again. If you have a warm house then keep this in the refrigerator so it will stay fluffy.

Use this mixture anywhere you would use lotion. It's nice to use it for a relaxing foot rub, or shoulder rub before bed. Practice being a merciful person by offering to give another family member a foot rub when they are tired.

VII. Geography: Where was the Sermon on the Mount?

We don't know exactly which mountain Jesus climbed when He gave the Sermon on the Mount. We do know it was near the fishing village of Capernaum and the Lake of Gennesaret (also called the Sea of Galilee).

Look online or in books for pictures of the Lake of Gennesaret. You will notice there are many mountains of various sizes and heights all around the whole lake.

Here are links to Drive Thru History where Dave Stotts shares several pictures, a description and even a short video showing the area where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.

<https://www.drivethruhistory.com/sea-of-galilee/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXhIZzgWQk0>

VIII. More Comfort Food research and recipes

Pierogies are from Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. They are dumplings filled with mashed potatoes or other savory fillings. You could try making Pierogies if you have any leftover mashed potatoes from this lesson.

<https://www.kingarthurfleur.com/recipes/homemade-pierogi-recipe>

Matzoh ball soup is a favorite with many Jewish families. Matzoh is crispy unleavened bread. Crunch it up and mix it with some other ingredients to make the matzoh balls in this soup. <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/matzoh-ball-soup-recipe-2041995>

Rice Congee is a breakfast porridge that is most often savory, but can also be made sweet. It is common in many Asian countries. In San Francisco's China town area I found several restaurants that had congee on their breakfast menus.

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/matzoh-ball-soup-recipe-2041995>

Mofongo is from Puerto Rico and made from mashed green plantains. Plantains are in the banana family, but not as sweet. <https://www.thespruceeats.com/traditional-mofongo-recipe-2138186>

Moussaka is the ultimate Greek comfort food. This is a rich casserole made with eggplants and a flavorful sauce. <https://www.themediterraneanandish.com/moussaka-recipe-eggplant-casserole/>

Shakshuka can be breakfast or dinner, either way it's a delicious way to eat eggs!
<https://www.zenbelly.com/shakshuka/>

Goulash – the name is fun to say and the soup is delicious to eat.
<https://www.daringgourmet.com/traditional-hungarian-goulash-gulyas/>

What other comfort foods from around the world can you find?

I hope you had fun and learned a lot from this lesson! For more lessons like this and more yummy recipes please visit www.wellfedfamily.net