

2 and 3 John

Walking in the Truth (Compassion Kids Update)

Scripture: 2 and 3 John select verses

Memory Verse: 3 John 4: *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."*

Lesson Focus: Each RMC kids' classroom sponsors a different Compassion child. In our study of 1 John, he has challenged and encouraged believers to practice "agape" love towards other believers. As we look at 2 and 3 John, we would like to give the kids an opportunity to do that towards their classroom sponsor kids! There are various ways in which our RMC kids can do this and one way that we wish to highlight in this lesson is writing them letters (just like John did to the recipients of these letters that he "agape" loved).

Schedule: The basic lesson structure will be the same but the main teaching content is shortened a little so that there is more time to have some classroom discussion about your Compassion sponsor kid. We will provide you with letters from each kid to read in your classroom and some ideas on how to encourage the RMC kids to support their sponsor kids.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Kids across the World and Compassion activity sheets

Group Activity for All Kids: Write a Letter as a Class!

Starter Activity: Compassion Video

We will have all of the kids (1st-5th grade) remain in the Summit Room for a quick introductory video. In this video, we will get to observe what a day at a Compassion center/church in Tanzania looks like for the local sponsor kids.

We will then ask our kids a few questions about the video to get them thinking about the kids that they sponsor in their classrooms and how they aren't all that much different from them! *

Finally, we will introduce our Scripture by talking about writing letters. 21 books of the Bible are letters between believers! We just finished 1 John which was a letter from John to several churches. Today we're going to read a few verses from 2 and 3 John, both of which are more personal letters from John. Afterwards, we will have the kids write one letter as a class to their class's sponsor child as a response to the Bible lesson (see activities at the end of lesson).

Bible Study:

2 John 1-2: Like any letter you would write today, you would identify yourself so that the person getting it knows who it is from. * John refers to himself as the "elder". He was likely the last of the original disciples still alive and a very old man now. *

Q: Who did he write it to? A: The elect or "chosen" lady and her children. Some Bible experts think the "lady" refers to a person and her kids and others to a church and the believers at that church. Back then the church was greatly persecuted so perhaps John used these more cryptic titles in case the letter was intercepted by the bad guys!

The "truth" he is referring to that unites them in love is not just facts, but a Person who described Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Q: Who is this? Jesus!

2 John 3: John reminds them of the wonderful blessings of God that they all share through their common faith and trust in Jesus. Let's talk about these so we all know what they mean.

Grace: Freely getting what you do NOT deserve! Because of our sin and rebellion against God we deserve punishment and hell. Yet, God freely offers us forgiveness and favor, blessings that we do NOT deserve. How? By faith in Jesus! This is grace!

Mercy: NOT getting what you DO deserve (punishment, as we just discussed)! Grace and mercy go hand in hand.

Peace: After receiving God's grace and mercy by faith, this is what we experience as God's kids. * We are at peace with God! Our sins, past, present, and future, are forgiven! We are on His side now and will be His forever because of His grace!

But this greeting doesn't just apply to them back then. It applies to ALL believers in Jesus Christ throughout the world today, including you and me! This includes the Compassion kids that we sponsor as a class. They are learning about Jesus and the Bible just like you. They have experienced the grace, mercy, and peace of God just like you!

2 John 4: John tells them that he is rejoicing and very happy about something.

Q: What is that? A: That some of these "children" are walking in truth. This isn't just talking about how "honest" they are but that they are walking in the ways of Jesus. The ways and teachings of Jesus that we find in the Bible are to shape and inform everything they and we do as Christians!

2 John 5-6: And what we have had "from the beginning" from Jesus is that His way is the way of AGAPE love. Followers of Jesus are to love others in the same way that Jesus loved them: sacrificially. This was a major theme of his first letter and he stresses the same thing in this letter: practice AGAPE love! *

One simple way that you can practice this is to give to the sponsor kids in your class. I'm not referring to asking for money from your parents to put in the box but giving some of your OWN money as an act of sacrificial love toward these kids!

Teachers: At this point consider summarizing the rest of 2 John and beginning 3 John.

3 John 1: Again, John identifies himself as the "elder".

Q: Who is he writing this letter to? A: Another believer in Jesus named Gaius. This was one of the most popular Roman names *. Since he could have been one of many Gaius's we read about in history, we do not know anything else about him except that the was a believer in Jesus loved by John.

3 John 2: John opens this letter mentioning how he is praying for him.

Q: What is he praying for? A: God's blessing over him in his life and his health. This is a great model prayer for us to pray over others as well! This is something you can pray over your sponsor kid as a group!

3 John 3: Again, just like we saw in the 2 John, he says he is really happy and rejoicing about how Gaius is following Jesus in both word and in deed (walking in the truth).

3 John 4: In fact, John says nothing gives him greater joy than knowing that his children (the believers that he has been leading and teaching) are walking in the truth.

Q: What are some things that give you great joy? A: Ice cream, being with friends, getting presents, etc.

Q: Why do you think John finds greater joy in learning that believers are walking in the truth (following Jesus)?

A: Perhaps it's because it is everyone's greatest need. When we know people are walking with Jesus we have confidence of their eternal destiny and that we will be with them and Jesus FOREVER!

Boys and girls: I could say the same thing about you! Fewer things give me more joy than knowing that you are following Jesus and walking in the truth! By God's grace, let's all do that this week!

Teachers: At this point we will transition into small group time per classroom where you will lead some discussion about the Compassion children in your room and help your kids respond to the lesson. See the materials that we left in your classroom about your child. Below are some ideas to better acquaint the kids with the sponsor child:

- 1) Show the kids the picture and introduce the child by reading their letter(s).
- 2) Highlight where the child lives on the map hung up in your room. *
- 3) Read some of the background info that we provided about the child's Compassion center/church and highlight a few things that are interesting.
- 4) Ask some questions to help the kids better understand what life must be like for those kids.

Q: So how can we apply John's encouragement to walk in the truth and apply AGAPE love to your sponsor kid?

A1: You can write a letter to the child.

- **Teachers:** See the blank letter we provided and please write a letter to the kids as a class. Leave it with us and we will get it in the mail!

A2: You can give some of your money to them in the giving jars.

- **Teachers:** If you talk about this, be sure to emphasize that we do not give to EARN God's love, but we do it BECAUSE God first loved us and we want to respond to what God has done for us!

A3: You can pray for the kids and their families.

- **Teachers:** I would suggest closing the lesson with prayer as a group. Reference 3 John 2 and pray just like John prays for Gaius. Even encourage the kids to participate and pray out loud for the kid in their classroom!