

## Compassion Sunday for Children

### A lesson plan to teach Sunday school students about poverty

Dear children's ministry leader,

Thank you so much for taking this opportunity to teach the children at your church about poverty. By doing so, you're helping them develop empathy and a global perspective. We appreciate your advocacy on behalf of children in need — and thank you for sharing the gospel with children in your community!

This lesson plan and activity will make your Compassion Sunday an engaging, fun, educational and inspiring day for the kiddos!

Sincerely,

Your friends at Compassion

## Poverty Lesson Plan for Children's Ministries

### **Age level**

Elementary

### **Time**

35 minutes

## Lesson Overview and Preparation

### **What students will learn**

Through a class discussion and an activity sheet, students will learn why your church is hosting a Compassion Sunday, what poverty is, what God says about helping the poor and how to help.

### **Activity sheet and take-home handout**

Ahead of time, print out one activity sheet per child, which they will fill in and color while you go through the discussion (hand it out at the start of class). Also print out one take-home handout per child, which you will give to them or their parents before they leave class.

### **Bible focus**

God wants all children to be healthy and happy and to know the love of Jesus. The Bible says we should help the poor. Helping them changes our lives too.

### **Memory verse**

Proverbs 19:17 — “Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

### **How to help**

Ways kids at your church can help children living in poverty

### **Additional resources**

At the end of the lesson plan are links to free printable activities, stories and devotionals on our Compassion Explorer website for kids.

## Class Discussion

### Introduction (5 minutes)

Millions of children around the world live in poverty. Does anyone know what poverty is? *[Wait for answers.]* Poverty is when you don't have enough of what you need. Children who live in poverty might not have enough food, water, medicine or other things we'll talk about today.

Our church is having Compassion Sunday today. It's an event where everyone learns more about poverty and how we can help. The word "compassion" describes the feeling you get when you see someone who is sad, sick or in pain and you want to help. There are lots of ways to help people who live in poverty.

Do you know anyone who has less than you, who doesn't always have enough food to eat or a coat to wear in the winter? Does it make your heart sad to learn that some people don't have those things they need? It makes God's heart sad too. Even if you don't personally know any children who live in poverty, they are still our brothers and sisters in Christ. God has asked us to care about them and to love them, just like He does.

Today we're going to talk about some of the things children need to be happy and healthy. Then we'll talk about ways to help children in poverty.

*[If you haven't already, hand out an activity sheet to each child.]*

### The Need for Water (3 minutes)

Can anyone name something that everyone needs to live? *[Wait for answers.]*

One thing everybody needs is water. When you get thirsty, where do you get water? *[Wait for answers.]* Do you get sick from drinking it? *[Wait for answers.]* In the United States, most people have clean water in their homes. But kids in many countries don't. Some kids walk an hour or more every day to get the water their families need! They collect water in buckets from lakes, rivers or wells. The water can have germs in it. Sadly, kids who drink dirty water can get very sick and can even die.

Churches around the world are teaching kids to never drink water that hasn't been purified. They get clean water and healthy meals. If they do get sick, their churches help them get medicine. And some churches help build wells with clean water near sponsored children's homes.

### **The Need for Health and Medicine (3 minutes)**

Another thing everyone needs is a healthy body. Do you remember the last time you got sick? Did you take medicine or go to a doctor so you could feel better? *[Wait for answers.]* How do you think you would have felt if you hadn't gotten to see a doctor or get medicine?

Sadly, many kids around the world die because their families can't afford medicine or doctor visits. In places with a lot of poverty, kids face more dangers than we face here in the U.S., like raw sewage in the streets, mosquitoes that cause diseases, and bathrooms that are dirty and don't have faucets for washing away germs.

Thankfully, churches around the world help Compassion-sponsored children stay healthy and they get them the doctor checkups and medicine they need.

### **The Need for Food (3 minutes)**

Another thing every kid needs is food. Many kids living in poverty don't get all the nutritious food they need. This makes them hungry and less healthy.

What was the last food you ate? *[Wait for answers.]* How many meals do you normally eat each day? *[Wait for answers.]* What about snacks? *[Wait for answers.]*

Did you know that a lot of kids around the world get only one meal per day? Others go a day or more without eating anything. We are blessed to have more than enough food. But many poor people can't afford or find the food their families need. When children don't get enough nutrients from food, their bodies and minds don't grow strong. Some kids get sick and die because they don't get enough nutrients.

God tells us to help people who don't get enough food. Proverbs 22:9 says, "The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor."

Can you think of any ideas for how you could help people who don't get enough food? *[Wait for answers, and if they get stuck you can suggest: giving food to a local food pantry, joining a food drive at your school or at our church, volunteering to serve a meal to homeless people in our town.]*

### **The Need for Love and Hope (3 minutes)**

Every child also needs love and hope. Many children living in poverty have difficult lives and have a hard time believing things will get better. They can't always see God's plan for their lives. But in the Old Testament, the prophet Jeremiah passes along an important message from God to God's people: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Do you know that God loves you? *[Wait for answers.]* How does it make you feel to know that God sent His only Son, Jesus, to Earth so you can have Him as a friend for your whole life and then go to heaven? *[Wait for answers.]* Learning that makes children living in poverty feel hopeful and happy!

What are some ways you can show love to someone this week? *[Wait for answers. Some ideas: Do a chore at home without being asked, invite a classmate who may be lonely to play with you or eat lunch with you, share your toys with your siblings, etc.]*

### **The Need for Shelter (2 minutes)**

The next thing that every kid needs is shelter. Some families live on the streets because they can't afford to pay rent or buy a home. In countries where Compassion-sponsored kids live, many families have homes that are smaller than most bedrooms in the United States.

Can you imagine if your whole family lived in a home the size of your bedroom, with a dirt floor that you slept on together? That's what life is like for many kids around the world.

### **The Need for School (3 minutes)**

Did you know that some kids who live in poverty can't go to school? Can you name some reasons why school is important? *[Wait for answers.]* School makes you smarter, and all kids deserve to gain knowledge and skills they will need to live a good life. That's why all kids need school.

Some parents don't have enough money to pay for their kids' school fees, uniforms, books and supplies. So the kids can't go to school. That means when they grow up, they won't be able to get the good jobs they need to get out of poverty. But kids who have sponsors do get to go to school because having a sponsor helps the whole family.

What is your favorite thing to learn about in school? *[Wait for answers.]* What do you want to be when you grow up? *[Wait for answers.]* Aren't you thankful that you have the chance to go to school so you can be whatever you want to be when you grow up?

### **Memory Verse (5 minutes)**

Now that you know more about what kids need and how kids in poverty don't have everything they need, let's learn what the Bible says about it. We can work on memorizing Proverbs 19:17 together.

#### **Shortened memory verse for ages 4-7**

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD" (Proverbs 19:17). *[Wait for children to repeat, then say it again and have them repeat it again.]*

#### **Memory verse for ages 8-11**

"Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done" (Proverbs 19:17). *[Wait for children to repeat, then say it again and ask the children to repeat it again.]*

#### **You say (for all ages)**

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to whom? *[Wait for children to answer, "the LORD."]*

Now repeat the whole verse after me. *[Repeat verse, and then wait for children to repeat.]*

## How Kids Can Help (5 minutes)

By now you might be wondering how you can help kids living in poverty. One way is by sponsoring a child through Compassion International, which is a charity that connects families like the ones at our church with children living in poverty around the world. Sponsored kids go to churches for Compassion activities, like learning about Jesus, playing games, getting health checkups and eating yummy meals. You could talk with your family to see if you might be able to sponsor a child together.

What are some ways you can raise money to help people who live in poverty? *[Wait for answers. Here are some ideas: making and selling baked goods, holding a car wash, setting up a lemonade or hot chocolate stand, shoveling snow, mowing lawns, asking for donations instead of birthday gifts, holding a garage sale to sell toys, books and clothes they no longer use, etc. Find more ideas in the “Care” section here: [explorer.compassion.com/explorers/](http://explorer.compassion.com/explorers/)]*

Another way you can help children who live in poverty is by praying for them. Let's spend some time praying for kids who live in poverty.

*Dear God, thank you for blessing us with clean water, food and medicine and the chance to go to school. Most of all, thank you for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We pray for kids around the world who don't have everything they need. I pray that you would give them clean water, food, good health, shelter, school, hope and love. Please give me ideas of how I can help kids who live in poverty. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

**End of lesson plan. Give the handout to kids or their parents at the end of class.**

*All Scripture verses are taken from the New International Version.*

## Additional Children's Resources

### Video/photo story about Compassion Sunday

A 2.5-minute video and a photo story about a 10-year-old girl who hosted a Compassion Sunday and also visited her sponsored child: [explorer.compassion.com/sorpresa/](http://explorer.compassion.com/sorpresa/)

### Compassion 101

A photo-filled, illustrated guide to explain to children what Compassion International does: [explorer.compassion.com/compassion-101/](http://explorer.compassion.com/compassion-101/)

### Pipes and Rivers board game about water issues

[explorer.compassion.com/pipes-and-rivers/](http://explorer.compassion.com/pipes-and-rivers/)

### Health Matters activity sheet

[explorer.compassion.com/health-matters/](http://explorer.compassion.com/health-matters/)

### Where's My Toothbrush logic puzzle

[explorer.compassion.com/wheres-my-toothbrush/](http://explorer.compassion.com/wheres-my-toothbrush/)

### Food "A-Cross" the World crossword puzzle

[explorer.compassion.com/food-cross-world/](http://explorer.compassion.com/food-cross-world/)

### "Following Hope" devotional

[explorer.compassion.com/following-hope/](http://explorer.compassion.com/following-hope/)

### Chasing the Dream quiz

[explorer.compassion.com/chasing-the-dream/](http://explorer.compassion.com/chasing-the-dream/)

### Ready to Roll one-player game about Compassion Sunday

[explorer.compassion.com/ready-to-roll/](http://explorer.compassion.com/ready-to-roll/)

### Patintero

A playground game that kids in the Philippines love:

[explorer.compassion.com/patintero/](http://explorer.compassion.com/patintero/)

*More activities, recipes, devotionals and stories:* [explorer.compassion.com](http://explorer.compassion.com)



# COMPASSIONsunday®

## What we talked about today

Millions of children around the world live in poverty. Poverty is when you don't have enough of what you need. Children who live in poverty might not have enough of what they need.

## What do all children need?

Water, health, food, love and hope (Jesus!), shelter, school

## What can I do to help?

- Pray for kids who live in poverty.
- Sponsor a child with Compassion!
- Raise money for kids who live in poverty in other countries or in your community.

## How does Compassion

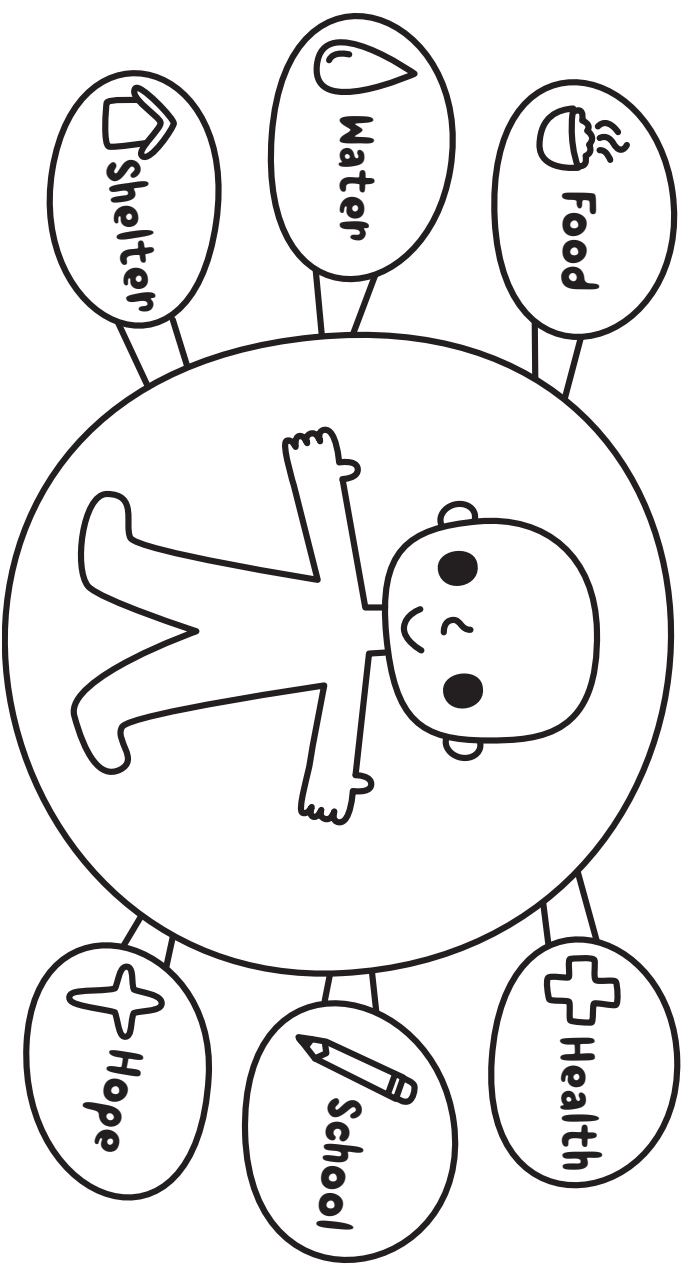
### International help?

People who sponsor a child with Compassion are helping release that child from poverty in Jesus' name. Sponsorship enables a child to go to a church-based center for Bible lessons, tutoring, health checkups, meals, games and much more. Sponsors receive letters from their children and can write back to them and even go visit them!

## Conclusion

God wants all children to be healthy and happy and to know the love of Jesus. The Bible says we should help the poor.

# What Do Kids Need?



## Memory verse:

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.”

— Proverbs 19:17, NIV

## Discussion questions

- How did you feel when you think about kids who live in poverty?
- What do you think it would be like to walk hours every day to get all the water we need?
- What are some ways our family can help people in need in our town? Let's brainstorm.

Choose a child to sponsor as a family!  
[compassion.com/familysponsorship](http://compassion.com/familysponsorship)