

CITY LG – Nov 28th/29th

Bible Story: God Loves Us, Everyone (God showed His love) • 1 John 4:9-12

Bottom Line: God loved you first. How will you love others?

Memory Verse: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16, NIV

Life App: Compassion—caring enough to do something about someone else’s need.

Basic Truth: I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

SFX: Play high-energy music as kids enter.

Worship:

Christmas This Year - Toby Mac

Angels We have Heard on High - Chris Tomlin

Emanuel - Chris Tomlin

Host enters, a little down in the dumps (think Debbie Downer). There is a box in the corner of the stage, wrapped as a present and labeled “Triple Dog Dare You: A Challenge in Compassion,” but Host doesn’t notice it.

Opener

HOST: *(Dramatically melancholy)* “Hey, guys. Welcome to The CITY. It’s almost December, which I guess means I should wish you a merry Christmas. But the truth is, it doesn’t feel so merry to me this year. I guess you could say I’m feeling a bit Scrooge-like this year. No reason, really. Just not feeling the spirit, ya know? I’ve been trying to shake it off, but ... *(look over and notice the present for the first time)*.

(Perking up a bit) “Hey, what’s that? *(Walk over to the present and read the description)* ‘Triple Dog Dare You: A Challenge in Compassion’?

CG: Theme Slide

“What in the world does that mean?! Hmm, there’s a card here. *(Pick up the tag and read it)* “To [Host’s name], I heard you were having a hard time getting into the Christmas spirit. I got you a present to help you have the merriest of Christmases. XOXO.

“This is super cool! It doesn’t say who it’s from, but hey, I’m not one to turn down a present, ya know? Let’s see what it is!”

Open up the lid and pull out the paper.

“Another note? Let’s see ... *(read the note)*

"In this month when we celebrate Jesus' birth
Not everyone is happy or dancing with mirth
Everywhere around you are people in need
Just open your eyes and you'll see what I mean

Your challenge this month is to show them compassion
Together, we can show Jesus' love in action
This Compassion Challenge won't be easy to do
But do it well; do it fast; I triple dog dare you"

"So this month we all have a dare in front of us. Not a normal dare, not a double dare, not even a triple dare ...

Video: The Christmas story clip

CG: Triple Dog Dare Theme Slide

"Yes, I'm talking about a triple dog dare! That's right: the daringest of dares. We have all been triple dog dared to show compassion.

CG: Compassion Slide

"Compassion is caring enough to do something about someone else's need. That means our challenges this month will be all about helping others in need. I like it! So let's see what our challenge is. It says I've got a costume in here. (*Dig around in the box. Pull out the Santa jacket and green gloves.*) It says, Oh no, I think I know what this means. (*Put on the jacket and gloves.*) If this is any clue, it looks like we've had a visitor who has even less Christmas spirit than I do—the GRINCH! I wonder what he's been up to!

(*Continue reading the note*) "Watch the video on the screen." Well, Ok I guess we should do that....

Video: How the Grinch Stole Christmas clip

Oh, no. (*Continue reading the note*) It's as I feared. The Christmas tree from the _____ has been undecorated. That sounds like the work of one green fellow I know. Our challenge is to get the tree re-decorated before everyone notices! This is a big task, but I know we can do it!

Have someone carry out the undecorated Christmas tree and the box of decorations, places them in the middle of the stage, and leaves.

"It looks like I'm going to need a few volunteers to help me with this Compassion Challenge. (*Select three or four volunteers to come on stage.*) You guys have one minute to redecorate the Christmas tree so we can return it to the _____ in time. Are you up for the challenge? Okay, let's get one minute on the clock! Three ... two ... one ... GO!

CG: 60-second countdown

SFX: "Welcome Christmas" from the Grinch

Note: You want this to end on a happy note, so if the kids are struggling to get it finished, pitch in and help them.

"Three ... two ... one ... and STOP! Whew! You guys did AWESOME! Way to go! I'm so glad we can return this tree to its rightful place just in time.

"And, hey, look! *(Point to your smiling face. Say the next line while you're smiling.)* I'm smiling again! Wow. Who knew that showing some compassion would be just what I needed to bring back the Christmas spirit?! I can't wait to see what other Compassion Challenges this fun present will bring us this month! The note told me each one will be from a Christmas movie!"

Bring up the table that has the blanket-covered boxes on it.

SETTING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER: "I imagine when you guys think of the Christmas story, you're like me, and you think of the story of an angel appears to Mary, she and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, there's no place for them to stay, and all that stuff about the manger. And that is indeed the story of Christmas and it's GREAT and we'll talk about that later this month. But today I'm going to show you something really cool, and that's that the Christmas story isn't just about that. In fact, you can tell the story of Christmas without even mentioning the angels or the shepherds or the manger! Check it out.

"This is found in 1 John 4:9-12. *(Open your Bible and read from it.)* 'Here is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world. He sent him so we could receive life through him. Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us this much, we should also love one another. No one has ever seen God. But if we love one another, God lives in us. His love is made complete in us.' *(NirV)*

"Wow! That's a really long verse, so let's break it down a bit." *(Pull the blanket off the stack of boxes.)*

GOD LOVED US

STORYTELLER: "The first part of that passage is a life changing message for us: God LOVED. God loved US. God STILL loves us. God loves EVERYONE. That is where the story of Christmas begins. *(Turn the first box around so the heart is seen.)* But it doesn't stop there. God didn't just make us and love us and leave us alone. No, there was a problem—and that problem was our sin. It separated us from God. So that leads us to the next important part of this story."

GOD SENT US JESUS

STORYTELLER: "Because God loved us so much, He wanted us to live with Him forever. But our sin was getting in the way of that. So, God sent us Jesus. *(Turn the second box around so the audience can see the cross.)* Because God loved us and wanted us to have a relationship with Him, He sent us Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. And if we accept that Jesus paid for our sins, our sins are forgiven and we can live with God forever. And not only that, but that new life we have in Jesus can lead to something else really important."

WE SHOULD LOVE OTHERS

STORYTELLER: “Since God loved us, we should love others. *(Turn around the third box so the audience can see the picture. That’s who this person is (point to the stick figure)—the ‘others.’ The ‘one other’ is anyone God puts in your life: your sister, your brother, your mom, your dad, your next-door-neighbor, your teacher, or even the school bully. Because God loved you, you can love all the (point to the stick figure again) ‘others in your life! And it gets even better.”*

WRAPPING UP THE STORY

STORYTELLER *(Turn the final box around so the audience can see the picture.)*

“When we start loving all the ‘others in our life *(point to the various stick figures)*, something really great happens *(point down to the original box with the heart on it)*. All of that love—that love that started with God—points people TO God. When you show love to others in God’s name, it gives them a glimpse into who God is and how much He loves them!

(Use your finger to point to all four boxes.) “And then in turn, they can begin to understand that God sent Jesus for them too, and then they can show God’s love to all the ‘one anothers’ in their lives! So it all comes down to this:

CG: Bottom Line Slide

[Bottom Line] “God loved you first. How will you love others?”

I will say, “GOD LOVED YOU FIRST” And you will say, “HOW WILL YOU LOVE OTHERS!” This is SO important for you to know so shout it out!

ST: God loved you first!

KIDS: How will you love others!?

One more time!

ST: God loved you first!

KIDS: How will you love others!?

“It’s so simple, and yet it can change the world. So how do we love others? Think about what makes you feel loved, and then go and do that for others. And remember to tell them that the reason you are able to show them such incredible love is because God loved you first. And He loves them too! THAT, my friends, is what Christmas is all about.

“Let’s ask God for help in sharing the good news of Christmas by showing love this week to all the ‘Others’ in our lives.”

Pray

STORYTELLER: “Dear God, thank You so much for showing us what love really is when You sent Jesus. You sent Your only Son to us out of Your great love for us, and that love allows us to show love

to all of the people You put in our lives. Please help us live out that love this week by treating others the way we want to be treated. We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus' name, amen."

CG: Parkview Kids Challenge

ST "Before you go, our church is doing our own Compassion Challenge to help kids your age in our area! All month long we'll be collecting school supplies for the teachers at Taft School in Lockport. This school does not have a lot of money so they are not able to buy supplies for the teachers. We are collecting these three things:

- Markers for their dry erase boards
- Post it notes
- Paper clips

You can bring these things when you come to church one of the next 3 weeks and can put them_____. And our challenge will be_____ and they will win_____.

"That is way cool that we can be a part of something that will show God's love to a whole school. I know I'm feeling much more in the Christmas spirit now. In fact, now I kind of can't wait for Christmas! Unfortunately, I'll have to wait. But at least it's just one more week until our next Compassion Challenge from another Christmas movie! I wonder which one it will be? You guys be sure and come back next week, because we will probably need your help!"

Dismiss children to their Small Groups.