



THE AMAZING GRACE OF GOD

KEY VERSES

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no man can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."
Ephesians 2:8-10

BIBLICAL BASIS

Romans 5:1-5,15,18-21;
Ephesians 2:1-10

THE BIG IDEA

Grace is an undeserved gift to you from God.

AIMS OF THIS SESSION

During this session you will guide students to:

- Examine the amazing grace that God has for each of us;
- Discover how that grace impacts their lives;
- Implement a life of grace and an attitude of thankfulness to God.

WARM UP

GIFT SURVEY—

Students interview each other about receiving gifts.

TEAM EFFORT— JUNIOR HIGH/ MIDDLE SCHOOL

A FREE GIFT—

An object lesson and discussion about undeserved gifts.

TEAM EFFORT— HIGH SCHOOL

COIN GIVEAWAY—

An activity to illustrate the free gift of God's grace.

IN THE WORD

THANKS GOD, I NEEDED THAT!—

A Bible study on the undeserved gift of the grace of God.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT (OPTIONAL)

Questions to get students thinking and talking about God's unmerited favor.

PARENT PAGE

A tool to get the session into the home and allow parents and young people to discuss the gifts God has given their family "just because."

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LEADER'S DEVOTIONAL

"But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!" (Romans 5:15).

My eighth-grade math teacher, Mr. Kim, began many of his classes with classical music. Not a single fourteen-year-old was about to admit a liking for Mr. Kim's choice of entertainment. When you're in junior high, culture goes as deep as the acceptance level of your peers.

I had a successful year in Mr. Kim's class. Math came easier for me than most students so I rose to the top of the class, but not without hard work. Nobody got off easy in Mr. Kim's class. At the end of the year, I was in line for the eighth grade math student-of-the-year award. I was delighted in spite of the ribbing from a few classmates.

Unfortunately, my laziness clouded my judgment. I decided I could miss out on a final class. I already bagged an A, the award was mine so I reasoned "Why bother with the last class?" As I sat out on the school lawn, I remember a classmate finding me and saying "Webster, Mr. Kim is looking for you. You're in trouble for ditching class." Well, I wasn't quite ditching, I just wasn't showing up for work I already finished.

Mr. Kim didn't buy my excuse. I remember him saying "Do you want to take your hard work and your award and throw it away in one day?"

Mr. Kim's track record was not laced with grace. He was a tough teacher. In my case, Mr. Kim extended forgiveness. I received the math award after all. My fly-the-coop swan song discredited an attitude in keeping with the award. Even though my grade was an A, students don't get awarded for skipping class. Mr. Kim's grace gave me something I didn't deserve—regardless of my "good" past. I went sour in a second when I chose to dishonor my teacher. He had every opportunity to debunk me.

God doesn't honor us for good work. He extends His award of life as His grace. Have you ever had a time when you received something you really didn't deserve? It's called grace. Kids today need grace and forgiveness even though they deserve to be dropped from the ceremony. I've yet to meet the perfect student. God, however, continues to bring us along with His love. He's the one standing in the audience applauding when our name is called just like Mr. Kim. Knowing that Mr. Kim knew I didn't deserve it, my gratitude for the award was deepened. (Written by Doug Webster)

**"If you judge people,
you have no time to
love them."
—Mother Teresa**



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KEY VERSES

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no man can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-10

BIBLICAL BASIS

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THE BIG IDEA

Grace is an undeserved gift to you from God.

WARM UP (5-10 MINUTES)

GIFT SURVEY

- Have students form pairs.
- Give each student a copy of "Gift Survey" on pages 91-92, or display a copy using an overhead projector.
- Students interview each other to find out about gifts they have received.

Describe:

1. The best gift you have ever received.
2. The most useless gift you have ever received.
3. The ugliest gift you have ever received.
4. The gift you always wanted but have never received.
5. The most expensive gift you have ever received.
6. The smallest gift you have ever received.
7. The strangest or funniest gift you have ever received.
8. The most meaningful gift you have ever received.

SO WHAT?

1. What is one thing that has challenged or surprised you from this session on God's grace?
.....
2. What is one area in which you need to experience more of God's grace?
.....

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT (OPTIONAL)

- Use the questions on page 96 after or as a part of "In the Word."
- 1. From Ephesians 2:8, why did God do it all for us?
- 2. "Mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve." What does that statement mean?
- 3. Why is it so difficult for us to understand and accept God's grace? What would you tell him or her?

PARENT PAGE

- Distribute page to parents.

Fold

TEAM EFFORT—JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL (15-20 MINUTES)

A FREE GIFT

- Prepare a nicely wrapped box with something of some value inside (\$10.00, a scholarship to a youth group event, or anything else you can think of). Make a big deal about the gift and say that you as the giver can give it to anyone you want to.
- Select a visitor or someone from your group. Ask them a few questions and give them the gift. Let them open the gift in front of the group.
- Discuss the following questions:
 1. Did _____ deserve the gift?
 2. (To the person) How did it feel to get a gift that you didn't deserve?
 3. (To the group) How is this like God's grace to us?
- Divide the students into groups of two or three and give each group a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
- Have each group come up with a list of the many undeserved gifts that God has given them.
- After three to five minutes, have the groups share their lists. Make a master list on a piece of posterboard, a chalkboard, a white board or an overhead projector.
- Discuss the following questions:
 1. How do you feel after looking at that list?
 2. Why do you think God has given us so much, even though we don't deserve it?
 3. How would you explain the word "grace" to someone?

TEAM EFFORT—HIGH SCHOOL (15-20 MINUTES)

COIN GIVEAWAY

- Provide enough pennies or other coins so that everyone in your group can have two or three.
- Tell students that on the count of three their job is to give away as many coins as they can according to the following rules:
 - They can only give away one at a time.
 - They must take any coin given to them.
- Give them about two or three minutes to give away as many coins as they can.
- After the allotted time is up, discuss the following questions:
 1. How did you feel when you gave away money?
 2. How did it feel to receive money?
 3. What are some things that God has given you by His grace? (Just because He loves you—even though you don't deserve it!)
 4. How would you explain the word "grace" to someone?

IN THE WORD (25-30 MINUTES)

THANKS GOD, I NEEDED THAT!

- Divide students into groups of three or four.
 - Give each student a copy of "Thanks God, I Needed That!" on pages 93-95 and a pen or pencil, or display a copy on an overhead projector.
 - Have students complete the Bible study.
- God's grace is amazing because it's free. God gives us grace not because we deserve it but because of His love for us. God is a God of grace, giving us that which we don't deserve.
- Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

GRACE IS A GIFT OF LIFE (VV. 1-3, 5)

1. According to verses 1-3, what were we dead in?
2. How does verse 5 reflect God's grace?
3. What are we alive to now (see Romans 5:1-5; 18-21)?

GRACE IS A GIFT OF LOVE (V. 4)

1. According to verse 4, where does God's mercy and grace for us come from?
2. What are some words that describe the love of God?
3. How does it feel to know that you are loved by your Creator no matter who you are or what you've done?

GRACE IS A GIFT OF SALVATION (VV. 5-9)

1. What do you think it means to be saved by grace?
2. From verses 5-9, what has God done for you by grace?
3. Why does God save us by grace through faith?
4. What are some ways people try to attain salvation?

GRACE IS A GIFT OF A FUTURE (V. 10)

1. What do you think it means to be God's workmanship?
2. What is it that "God [has] prepared in advance for us to do"?
3. How does it feel to know that God believes in your future and has taken time to plan it?
4. How does verse 10 reflect the grace of God?



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GIFT SURVEY

Describe:

1. The best gift you have ever received.

2. The most useless gift you have ever received.

3. The ugliest gift you have ever received.

4. The gift you always wanted but have never received.

5. The most expensive gift you have ever received.

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7. The strangest or funniest gift you have ever received.

8. The most meaningful gift you have ever received.

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IN THE WORD

THANKS GOD, I NEEDED THAT!

God's grace is amazing because it's free. God gives us grace, not because we deserve it, but because of His love for us. God is a God of grace, giving that which we don't deserve.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

Grace Is a Gift of Life (vv. 1-3,5)

1. According to verses 1-3, what were we dead in?

2. How does verse 5 reflect God's grace?

3. What are we alive to now? (See Romans 5:1-5; 18-21.)

Grace Is a Gift of Love (v. 4)

1. According to verse 4, where does God's mercy and grace for us come from?

2. What are some words that describe the love of God?

3. How does it feel to know that you are loved by your Creator no matter who you are or what you've done?

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Grace Is a Gift of Salvation (vv. 5-9)

1. What do you think it means to be saved by grace?

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Grace Is a Gift of a Future (v. 10)

1. What do you think it means to be God's workmanship?

2. What is it that "God [has] prepared in advance for us to do"?

3. How does it feel to know that God believes in your future and has taken time to plan it?



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4. How does verse 10 reflect the grace of God?

So What?

1. What is one thing that has challenged or surprised you from this session on God's grace?

2. What is one area in which you need to experience more of God's grace?

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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. From Ephesians 2:8, why did God do it all for us?

2. "Mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve." What does that statement mean?

Why is it so difficult for us to understand and accept God's grace?

3. Who in your life needs to hear about the message of God's grace? What would you tell him or her?


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GETTING WHAT YOU DON'T DESERVE

It was a cold, overcast day as I stood in front of Cell 21 in the basement of Barracks 11—the Death Block. What stood before me was a memorial to one of the most extraordinary people and events in all of Auschwitz—Father Maximilian Kolbe.

Father Maximilian Kolbe was a Catholic priest sentenced to be imprisoned in Auschwitz in May 1941. Upon his arrival at KL Auschwitz, he was informed that the life expectancy of a priest was about a month in Auschwitz. Father Kolbe took it upon himself to be an agent of love within the dismal hopelessness of the barbed wire fences.

One night in July 1941, amidst the sounds of motorcycles and barking dogs, a man from Barracks 14 escaped from Auschwitz. The next morning as the prisoners lined up for morning roll call, they noticed the gallows in front of them—empty. The escapee had succeeded, yet someone would pay the price for him. That morning, 10 men were selected to die in the starvation bunker inside the Death Block. One of those men was 5659. As the ten were being led away to screams of horror, a small, frail man stepped forward. His number was 16670. His name was Father Maximilian Kolbe.

"Sir, I'd like to die in place of one of those men."

"In whose place do you want to die?" asked the Commander.

"For that one." Father Kolbe lifted his finger and pointed at 5659. And in an instant, 5659 was erased off the death ledger and 16670 was entered. One life for another—a gift of life. On August 14, 1941, in a starvation bunker known only as Cell 21 in the basement of Barracks 11, one man gave the gift of life by dying in place of another. Number 16670 died in place of 5659.

As I peered through the bars into the starvation cell where Maximilian Kolbe died, I felt as if I were on holy ground. The plaque on the wall of the cell and the memorial fire in the center of the cell pointed to what was one of the most extraordinary events in the history of this place called Auschwitz. Here was light in the darkness, love afloat in the middle of a sea of hate, and hope in the midst of madness. As I stood at the place where one man gave his life for another in an act of love—the gift of life—I was broken and changed.

It was a cold, overcast day when another Man gave His life. He was Light in the darkness, Love afloat in the middle of a sea of hate, and Hope in the midst of madness. On that hill, Jesus gave His life for all humanity—not only for all humankind but more specifically for you and me. A gift of life and an act of love given because of God's incredible love for you and me.

Too often I lose sight of God's love and His grace. Too often I get so wrapped up in my busyness for Him, that I miss the opportunity to be with Him. Standing in front of that cell, I was brought face-to-face with the radical love that God has for you and for me. God loved you and me so much that He couldn't stand to live without us for eternity. It was a love that drove Him to action—a love that drove Jesus Christ to die on a cross for you and me. That's the message of the New Testament.

As I walked away from that moment in time at the starvation cell where Father Maximilian Kolbe gave his life for another, I wondered about 5659. Who was he? What went through his mind as he saw Father Kolbe being led away to his death, while he was given the gift of life?

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I walked away from the basement of Barracks 11 broken—and changed. Broken, that a man would give his life for another—changed in my gratitude for what was done for me on calvary. Just like 5659, I was being led away to my death when another Man stepped forward out of the crowd. Looking into my eyes, He saw the terror and the pain.

“Sir, I’d like to die in the place of one of those men,” He said.

“In whose place do you want to die?”

“For that one.”

Just as Father Maximilian Kolbe, 16670, gave the gift of life to prisoner 5659, so Jesus Christ has given us the gift of life and of grace. For just as prisoner 5659 experienced a radical grace—a gift that was never deserved—so do we experience a gift that we do not deserve: the amazing grace of God!

1. How does the story of Father Maximilian Kolbe illustrate the grace of God?

2. What are some things God has given or done for you or your family “just because” even though you didn’t deserve it?

3. Read Romans 5 as a family and take some time to reflect and thank God for His grace and what He’s given you—even though you don’t deserve it!



Session 6: “The Amazing Grace of God”

Date _____