

BIG IDEA

Jesus shows us caring is worth repeating.

BIBLE

Mark 1:40–45; Psalm 146:6–10;
Romans 13:8

ABOUT THIS WEEK

One of the ways we can show our friends we care about them is by making a custom playlist for them. This week, we'll hear a story about how Jesus helped care for someone he met while traveling. Jesus took care of this man's needs in a way that only he could, and by doing so, **Jesus shows us that caring is worth repeating.**

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | The Whisper Challenge

- Welcome back to *On Repeat!* We have been looking at the life of Jesus in the book of Mark to help us learn how to care for the people around us. Often, people try to treat us well, but it's too subtle for us to recognize. While it's nice of them to try, it's like someone trying to help you remember a song by just whispering the lyrics to you.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *To play this game, you'll need a pair of headphones, some index cards, and a playlist of looping music. Before your weekly program, write the names of a few popular songs appropriate for your group's culture onto index cards. To play, ask for four volunteers and split them into two teams. Have one person on each team put on headphones with the looping – music playing at a volume high enough to make it difficult to hear. Another player will quietly whisper the song title. By only reading lips, their teammate with the headphones attempts to guess the song title. The first one to guess the correct song wins that round. Have the pair switch positions. The first team to guess three songs wins. To help your audience engage, create slides with the names of the songs to put into your presentation software.*
- Some of those songs were so hard to guess! You needed to slow down and pay close attention to get the correct answer.

POLL | Whose Playlist?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your weekly program, ask a volunteer, parent, friend, or someone familiar with your group to make a playlist of ten songs they've been playing on repeat that week. Have them send you a screenshot that you can show on the screen. They will try to guess who made the playlist. If it helps, give them a list of people to choose from. Have the group vote on whose playlist it is by raising their hands or moving to different sides of the room.*
- A solid playlist like this can be a lifesaver if you are going through something difficult. Music can sometimes express our needs better than we can. When we feel alone or isolated, having songs we can listen to on repeat can help ease the tension. But we also want to help! What do we do when we want to show them we care but don't know how?

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **What song do you find annoying? What about it annoys you?**
 - **Have you ever had someone show up for you when you needed help? What did they do for you?**
 - ⊕ **Has there been a time you wanted to do something for someone else but didn't know how to help? What happened?**

STORY | When Somebody Showed Up For Me (Part One)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about when you needed someone to care for you by tangibly connecting with them. Talk about what was happening in your life. Did you need to feel seen and heard by someone when you were experiencing a period of grief, a broken heart, or a loss? Maybe you were just in a bad mood for no reason. Were you questioning your worth and value? Spend most of your time focusing on the feelings you experienced, why you needed someone to care for you, and what you wanted from the people around you. You could also have a volunteer share. Don't resolve the story yet! You'll come back to that later.*
- We have all had an experience where we want someone to see what we are going through and help us, but there's a good chance you have been in a situation where you saw a need and wanted to help but didn't know how. Let's look at a story from the life of Jesus that can help us learn to care for people's needs.

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

SCRIPTURE | Mark 1:40–45

- There's a fantastic story early in Jesus' ministry. He just finished this streak of healing and helping people in tangible ways. So, after he returns from connecting with God and praying, this happens ...
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 1:40–45.*
- Jesus was starting to become well-known as a healer and teacher, so when a man with leprosy saw him, he ran up to him and begged Jesus to "make him clean." Leprosy was a condition that affected your skin, but if you had it, not only were you sick, you couldn't participate in the religious life of your community and had to live on the outer limits of the city. The most important parts of being connected and cared for by others were off-limit until your condition was gone and verified by religious leaders.
 - Jesus was deeply moved by compassion for what was happening to him. Jesus had an outburst of sympathy and frustration at how broken this situation was. He was neglected, and no matter how sick or what had happened, he didn't deserve to be ignored.
 - Because of his condition, this man was isolated and alone, and Jesus was moved to do something about it. Caring for him meant more than just healing his skin disease. It meant being cleansed in a way that allowed him to participate in the community again.
 - That's why he asks Jesus for what he does. It isn't "Heal me, Jesus." It's "Make me clean." He wanted to be cleansed in body and spirit, restored to participate in the life he longed for. He wants things to go back to how they were before his disease.
- Jesus was angry and stirred with compassion because he saw how unfair this situation was. He's frustrated this man lives alone, the disease is eating away his body, and God's people, who are supposed to be helping him, are ignoring and isolating him.
- So, Jesus did something unique. He didn't just heal him and move on. He reached out his hand and *touched* him.

- It's a big deal because if you touch a leper, *you become unclean*, too. Jesus did it anyway. This man's condition made it so this man rarely had human interaction or was never touched.
- Imagine how meaningful this moment of human connection would be to someone with so little of it. Jesus cared so much for this man that this simple action healed him not only of his physical condition but also of his emotional wounds.
- Jesus invites us to pay attention to the people around us with a willingness to see people's situations. We can learn so much from the willingness to be moved emotionally, the desire to be near someone hurting, and the willingness to help change the situation. Jesus repeatedly shows us what it looks like to care for others and be moved by compassion to help heal the brokenness we see around us.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **Suppose you had been in the shoes of the man who had leprosy. What would you have felt as a result of Jesus not just healing you but touching you?**
 - **If you had been in the crowd and saw Jesus touch the man with leprosy, how would you would have responded?**
 - **Why do you think Jesus made an effort not just physically to heal people but to restore them to relationships and community?**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 146:6–10

- Jesus showed us how to care for others as God does, but this wasn't a new idea. God has been encouraging us to care for each other this way for centuries because caring for others is part of who God is. One of the poets in the Psalms captures this wonderfully.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Psalm 146:6–10.*
- Doesn't that fill you with hope? It's a Psalm that worships God for being a faithful protector. God is described as being on the side of people who are pushed down and overlooked. God gives sight back to the blind and sustains the fatherless and the widow. These were people who, in this culture, had to fend for themselves.
- I love how God asks us to notice. God isn't quietly sitting on the sidelines hoping those hurting get helped. God is showing us through the life and actions of Jesus and poems like this one that caring for others is something we learn to cultivate.
- God has always cared about people. So, when Jesus—divinity in the flesh—walks around and meets people, it's not a surprise he acts in the same way. God has always cared. Jesus cares for people, too. Poems and stories like these are invitations for us to do the same.

OBJECT LESSON | Busted Cassette Tape

- Decades ago, there was a sparkling new technology called "the cassette tape." Before you could make a playlist by clicking or tapping songs in a music app, people used these to make things called mixed tapes.
- Making a mixtape took time, and people meticulously and carefully added songs that expressed what they were going through. Most of the time, you didn't need to worry about your treasured mix tape, but occasionally, something horrible would happen, and you'd end up with a cassette that looked like this one.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this object lesson, you will need a cassette. If you don't have one, you can check out a local thrift store or show an image of a mangled cassette tape like [this one](#). Take one of the tape cassettes and pull the magnetic tape out. Keep the other cassette intact. Throughout the teaching, look for opportunities to pull more of the magnetic tape out to show how delicate the tape is. Then, as the teaching indicates, use a pencil to wind it up.*

- You never knew *when* this would happen, but you knew it would happen eventually. And when it did, it was a nightmare. If your cassette were still in your tape deck, you'd suddenly hear your music start to warble, and then bam, the sound stopped. You were left with a mess of super delicate magnetic tape.
 - So you needed to unravel your tape gently and hope you didn't bend or tear it. From there, you'd need to stick a pencil into those little holes and *slowly* wind it back together.
 - Rewinding your tape wasn't some big strategy that required money or resources. It was super simple. It required noticing what was going on and acting on it. It was a process that required repetition, care, and patience.
 - Each time you "repeated" a rotation of the pencil, the tape became closer to how it was created to be in the beginning when it first became a cassette. This is a lot like how we can approach caring for others.
- Jesus shows us we can help change people's lives by slowing down and seeing them for who they are and what they're going through. We can give people a new sense of hope and direction when we show them we see their situation, want to help, and are moved with compassion because of who they are—people created with the intention and purpose of being in a relationship with a good and loving God. There's so much we can learn from Jesus about how to treat others, and in this story, **Jesus shows us caring is worth repeating.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

STORY | When Somebody Showed Up For Me (Part Two)

- What Jesus does here is incredible. And I know how much of a difference it can make when someone notices what I am going through and cares in simple ways like he did.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Finish the story you started telling above about when you needed someone to notice. How did people show you they care? Highlight ways they cared in simple ways. Maybe it was through regularly checking in with texts, phone calls, a card, or hanging out. In your story, be sure you highlight the takeaway points you see below. You can also invite a volunteer to share their experience.*
- **Jesus shows us caring is worth repeating**, so here are a few ways you can do this in your life this week.
 - **SEE THE NEED.** Seeing a need is as much about being with people as it is about checking in on the people we care about. Ask your friends how they're doing, and if they share a need, thank them for their honesty, and then shoot them a text telling them you are thinking and praying for them.
 - **FEEL THE NEED.** When Jesus heard about a need, he was moved with compassion. We may not do this instinctively like Jesus did. But it's something we can learn. Start by thinking about what it might be like to be in someone else's situation. How would you feel? How would you respond? Caring for others isn't just setting out to fix a problem but also identifying the feeling that motivates us to act. Before jumping to action to meet a need, take time to ask why you feel the need to help.
 - **RESPOND TO THE NEED.** Sometimes, we might have an idea for a solution and need more help. Other times, we might find the best response is to join up with someone already doing the work. Try to notice one need in someone around you this week, put a plan into place, and do something about it.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups. If you conduct this discussion, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **What do you think is the biggest barrier keeping you from noticing and acting on the needs of**

others? What would it look like to overcome that barrier?

- How do you think not just seeing the need but feeling the need someone else has can help you care for them?

REFLECTION | I Am Willing Wall

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You will need some butcher paper and a bunch of permanent markers for this reflection. Before your gathering, cut butcher paper into five squares and write the following labels: I am willing to love, I am willing to help, I am willing to serve, I am willing to share, I am willing to care. Place these posters around your meeting space with a handful of markers near each sign. Allow them to write their names on the posters they're comfortable committing to and how they plan to take action to care for that need. If they want, they can write their names on multiple posters. Consider playing some reflective music as they reflect.
- **Jesus shows us caring is worth repeating.** Do you remember what he said to the man with leprosy? "I am willing." This is an invitation and a question: are we willing to care for others? We can see people as regular folks like us struggling with the same things—school, family, social pressure, our futures, and everything else. But if you never decide to be willing to help people, then nothing will change.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion and save it for small groups.
 - **Read Romans 13:8. How do you think living like you owe people an ongoing debt of care or kindness can change the way you see others and your responsibility towards them?**
 - **What's one way you will care for others like Jesus did this week?**

RESPONSE | Our Community Playlist

- Throughout this series, we're creating a playlist as a community, where each of you picks a song to add to the playlist. This week, pick a song that helps you reflect on what it looks like to notice others and care for them.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For instructions on how to set up this community playlist, look at the instructions for the "Our Community Playlist" module in Week 1.
 - **NOTE:** If you would like to filter the songs on the list before they are added, you could have an adult leader add teenagers' songs to the playlist or have them hand in an index card with their music on it that you can add later.
- Imagine what it could look like in the life of our community if we noticed others and were moved with compassion to do something to help. People's lives and our community would be transformed.

ACTIVITY | Spiritual Gifts Assessment

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** If you haven't already done so, this would be a great series to encourage your group to complete the Spiritual Gifts assessment, [which you can find in your Discipleship folder](#). You can do it during your program or give it to leaders or teenagers to do later. However, you do it to create space to follow up about what they found and what it looks like to put what they learned into practice.
- So this week, remember that **Jesus shows us that caring is worth repeating.**