

STUDENT LESSON PLAN

DIXIE JACKSON
**ARKANSAS
MISSIONS**
OFFERING

2024

Please adapt the following lesson plan to your own teaching style. Use whatever fits your class. This lesson plan was written to be taught during the annual Dixie Jackson Arkansas Mission Offering and Week of Prayer which occurs each September. During this week, churches around the state share stories about Arkansas Baptist ministries, pray, and have an annual offering. This year's focus is on medical and dental clinics right here in our own state.

PREPARE

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as you prepare this lesson and then teach it.
- If you are not familiar with Dixie Jackson, read about the woman who inspired this special week: Arkansas Baptist State Convention—The Story of Mrs. Dixie Jackson (absc.org/dixiestory).
- Ask God to open the hearts of your students.
- Learn more about medical and dental missions here: Arkansas Baptist State Convention—Ministries—Medical and Dental Missions (absc.org).
- You can watch videos about medical and dental clinics at absc.org/dj.
- Read Matthew 9, "The Son of Man Forgives and Heals."
- As you read Matthew 9, look for every reference to faith. If you print Matthew 9, highlight these references.
- Read Psalm 23. Ponder this verse: "The LORD is my Shepherd." What does this mean to you in your daily life?

TEACH: COMPASSION IN ACTION

- Begin your group time with a prayer.
- Briefly explain why there is an annual Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer.
- Introduce this year's theme: **Compassion in Action**.

LESSON

This week our church is participating in the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer. As we pray and give to ministries in our state, each of us can help.

We will learn how the life of Jesus was a model of compassion for us today in keeping with the theme verses of **Matthew 9:35–38** (CSB).

Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Dixie Jackson's love for Arkansas Baptist women and missions lit a passion that remains today. That is why the annual offering was named in her memory. As we pray and give to local ministries, we are each able to do something to help.

Arkansas Baptists show compassion in action through local outreaches such as disaster relief, pregnancy care centers, One Day Acts 1:8 Missions Experience, and more. This year's Dixie Jackson Offering and Week of Prayer highlights medical and dental clinics right here in our state.

During medical and dental clinics held in 2023, more than 100 people received the free gift of salvation. They confessed their helpless, sinful state and put their trust for eternity solely on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:23).

Dr. Joe Barker, a dentist in Searcy, is one of the many physicians, nurses, and dentists who go on mission through Arkansas Baptist ministries. For many years he has joined with area churches to provide free dental clinics in Arkansas. "When Jesus went to towns," he says, "most of the time, He was meeting their needs. He was loving on them. He was meeting them right where they were."

For Dr. Barker, being the hands and feet of Jesus has been very fulfilling.

He says community missions have given him an opportunity to give back. As he does this, the people he serves, and some of his employees, hear about Jesus.

He and other physicians have also given their time and medical skills during the annual One Day Acts 1:8 Missions Experience. Throughout One Day, there are multiple ministries in one community for one day. These include block parties, prayer walking, food distribution, medical and dental clinics, and much more. The Gospel is shared throughout it all.

Jesus modeled a life of **Compassion in Action**. How can we do the same?

SEE ME

Has anyone seen the television ad about the musician who was afraid to show her skin because of her painful psoriasis? "See me," she pleads.

Have you ever felt like those around you did not really see you? That they didn't really know the challenges and pressures you felt in your life?

When Jesus went into towns and villages, He didn't just look into a sea of faces. He recognized hidden hurts ... needs for healing ... utter exhaustion, and even despair. He saw into the very souls of men and women, boys and girls, and understood their deepest desires.

He saw them as sheep in need of a spiritual shepherd—a Savior.

The LORD said to Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:7, "...Man does not see what the LORD sees, for man sees what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart."

Read Matthew 9: 1–2:

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own town. Just then some men brought to Him a paralytic lying on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven." (HCSB)

1. Did the men who carried the paralytic believe Jesus could help him?
2. Could the paralytic have gotten to Jesus without their help?
3. What did Jesus see that prompted him to tell the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven."

Read Matthew 9: 4–8:

But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts. For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But so you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He told the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your mat, and go home." And he got up and went home. When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck and gave glory to God who had given such authority to men. (HCSB)

4. What was Jesus' first priority? Healing the paralytic physically or spiritually? Why do you say this?
5. Who can heal sins? What was Jesus indicating when he said to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven."
6. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." What does this mean to you?
7. How does seeing non-Christian classmates and friends as lost sheep, who need a divine Shepherd, affect how we "see" them?

HEAR ME

Read Matthew 9:35–36:

Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd. (HCSB)

Sheep are totally dependent on their shepherd. If they have a good shepherd, he protects them from danger. He also leads them to water and green pastures. When one sheep moves, the rest of them in a herd will follow.

In 2006, in eastern Türkiye, 400 sheep plunged to their death when they had no shepherd to lead them. Instead, they followed a foolish sheep that tried to cross a ravine that was about 50 feet deep.*

* *Sheep 201: Behavior (sheep101.info)*

What would have happened if these sheep had followed a good shepherd instead of the foolish sheep?

8. Why do you think Jesus compared the crowds to sheep without a shepherd?
9. Why did Jesus say in Psalm 23 that He is the Good Shepherd?
10. Take a minute to think of yourself and examine your lifestyle and

decisions. Who are you listening to and following? What evidence shows this?

Read John 10:27–28:

My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand. (HCSB)

Sheep learn to recognize their shepherd's voice and trust him. How can you know the voice (or will) of God and learn to trust what it says?

11. Choose one or two age-appropriate Bible verses for your class. Ask them how these verses help them to know God's "voice." For example, ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 13: 4–8a:

Love is patient, love is kind.
Love does not envy,
is not boastful, is not conceited,
does not act improperly,
is not selfish, is not provoked,
and does not keep a record of wrongs.
Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.

Then ask your class something like: What does the world say love is? What does the voice of God say about love?

JOIN ME

Read Lamentations 3:22–23:

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. (NIV)

Jesus's life was filled with love for mankind and He saw our helpless state. His life overflowed with deep compassion. That is why He healed the sick and diseased not only in body, but also in soul.

Jesus preached the only answer to spiritually empty hearts—the Good News that He alone is the path to salvation.

As Jesus was dying on the cross, He said, "It is finished." The work the Father had sent him to do was done. He had become the sacrificial lamb—the Way to eternal life.

12. Students today are searching for meaning in their lives. Some feel lost as they navigate the world as a child of divorce. Others look for satisfaction in all the wrong places or put their identity in material things. Where is the only place that true meaning in life can be found? (John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.")
13. Think of your classmates and neighbors. Why do so many of them follow the worldly passions?
14. How can your life follow Jesus's example of compassion for others?

PRAY TOGETHER

- For one another—that this class would be filled with the love of Christ and with a desire to tell others about Him.
- For natural opportunities to share Christ with friends and family.
- That those who know Christ in this class will hear His voice through God's Word and will follow it.
- For the love of Christ to fill the Arkansas Baptist medical and dental clinics across the state.
- That God would work through dental and medical clinics, and other ministries of Arkansas Baptists, to meet physical and spiritual needs.
- For Arkansas Baptist ministries to have adequate volunteers and funds.

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