

ADULT LESSON PLAN

DIXIE JACKSON
**ARKANSAS
MISSIONS**
OFFERING

2024

The following lesson plan is meant as a guide for you. Use whatever fits your teaching style and class. This year's Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer will focus on medical and dental clinics here in our own state.

PREPARE

- Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as you prepare this lesson and then teach.
- 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).
- Watch this year's videos about medical and dental clinics at absc.org/dj.
- Learn more about medical and dental missions here: Arkansas Baptist State Convention—Ministries—Medical and Dental Missions (absc.org).
- 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, asking God to open the hearts of your class.

Briefly explain why there is an annual Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering and Week of Prayer. Some in your class may not be familiar with this.

- 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. During this special time, Arkansas Baptists will pray for missions here in our state and give financially.

We will look at how the life of Jesus was a model of compassion for us today as we look at the theme verses. The **Compassion in Action** theme was taken from **Matthew 9:35–38** (CSB):

Jesus continued going around 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 distressed and dejected, 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 still remains today. That's why the annual offering was named in her memory. As we pray and give to local ministries, we are each able to do something tangible to help.

Arkansas Baptists show compassion in action through ministries such as disaster relief, pregnancy care centers, Christian Men's and Christian Women's Job Corps, and the annual One Day Acts 1:8 Missions Experience. The focus during our 2024 Dixie Jackson prayer and offering week is on medical and dental clinics right here in our state.

Dr. Joe Barker, a dentist in Searcy, is one of the many people who go on mission through Arkansas Baptist ministries. For multiple years, he has joined with area churches to provide free dental clinics. He says, "When Jesus went to towns, 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. And as he does this, not only the people he serves, but also some of his employees, hear about Jesus.

Medical and dental clinics in Arkansas are just two of the many missions supported by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering. Filled with compassion for those in need, they provide venues for Arkansas Baptists to join God in His supernatural work of saving the spiritually lost.

During medical and dental clinics held in 2023, more than 100 people received the free gift of salvation.

Jesus modeled a life of compassion in action. How can we do the same?

SEE ME

Have you ever seen the television ad about the musician who was afraid to show her skin because of her painful psoriasis. "See me," she cries.

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 longings.

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

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." How does seeing unbelievers as lost sheep, needing 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)

7. What does a shepherd do for a flock of sheep?
8. Sheep are defenseless and totally dependent on their shepherd. Why then do you think Jesus compared the crowds to sheep without a shepherd?
9. Verse 35 says that Jesus preached the "good news of the kingdom*." What does this mean to a "lost sheep"?

*The website gotquestions.org says, "The gospel of the kingdom is the good-news message of repentance, redemption, and restoration offered by God to all who will receive Christ. *What is the gospel of the kingdom?* | GotQuestions.org

JOIN ME

Read Matthew 9:37–38:

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." (HCSB)

10. What does "harvest is abundant" mean? (Think in spiritual terms.)
11. Who are the workers Jesus is referring to in verse 38?
12. Why did Jesus say it's the Lord's "harvest"?

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' life was marked by love of mankind. As He saw our helpless state, He was filled with deep compassion. He healed the sick and diseased not only in body, but also in soul. He 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.

As we look around us today, countless people are searching for meaning in their lives. Some feel lost as they struggle just to make ends meet financially. And then there are unwelcome words from a doctor such as, "You have cancer."

How does the way we see others, know God's Word, and look to eternity affect the way we share the Good News?

13. Discuss:

- What needs do you see in our own community?
- Who is in your personal mission field?
- What needs do you have in your own life?
- Does our relationship to Christ impact the compassion we have for others?

PRAY

Pray I Corinthians 15:58:

Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. (HCSB)

- That our class and church would be filled with the love and compassion of Christ.
- For those on mission with Arkansas Baptist ministries to look for natural opportunities to share the Gospel.
- That God would work through medical and dental clinics, and other ministries of Arkansas Baptists, to meet physical and spiritual needs.
- That many would come to saving faith through ministries funded by the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering.
- For Arkansas Baptist ministries to have adequate volunteers and funds.

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