



# COMPASSION

What does **compassion** mean?  
*Think of as many words as you can  
that you associate with compassion.*

What does it mean to **show  
compassion?**

If someone shows kindness, caring, and a willingness to help others, they're showing compassion.

**Compassion** can best be described as “love in action”. Compassion is not just love, not just sympathy, not just feeling for people who have problems. Compassion is when those feelings lead to action. If someone is going through a hard time, sympathy might lead you to feel sorry for them, but compassion leads you to help them, in a practical way.

**Com·pas·sion** [kuhm-pash-uhn]

*noun* : a feeling of deep sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.



What specific examples of people showing compassion (love in action) can you think of?

- A new person in your class has no friends and is being bullied because of the way they look.
- You come across a cat stuck up a tree.
- You watch a video clip about orphaned street children who are starving to death in India.
- You notice an old lady has fallen over and is hurt and upset.
- You come across a homeless man begging for money.
- Your friend calls you to say that they've just discovered their parents are splitting up.


Which of these scenarios would you feel most compassionate about?

What actions might you take to alleviate the person's suffering?

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT COMPASSION?

Psalm 86 describes God as **compassionate** and **gracious**.

- *What do you think this suggests about God?*
- *Is this how you think about God?*
- *How might this challenge or change your view of what God is like?*



"But you, Lord, are a  
compassionate and  
gracious God, slow to  
anger, abounding in  
love and faithfulness."  
- Psalm 86:15; NIV

FaithGraceJesus.com

# GOD THE COMPASSIONATE FATHER

The story of the lost son is a parable told by Jesus. You might well have heard this story before and can watch the LUMO retelling by following the link [here](#). In the story Jesus shows how much the father loves the son who has rejected him. When the father sees his rebellious son coming home he “was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNUEdx6jYCo>

The Bible often uses metaphors to help us understand what God is like. In this story, the Father is a picture of God and the rebellious son is a picture of what we can be like when we reject God. However, when the Bible describes God as a Father, it is not a metaphor. God isn't a bit like human fathers, who often get things wrong and don't always show compassion to their children. God is the **perfect** loving Father.

- *What do you think about the way the Father responded to the son in the story?*
- *How would a perfect Father show compassion for his children?*

## REFLECT

The Father had compassion on his son, even though the son didn't deserve it.

Who could you be showing compassion to – even if they don't deserve it?

*At this time when it might be harder to actively show compassion to our wider community, how you be acting compassionately towards those in your home?*



As you think about how you can be compassionate to others, you could [listen to this song](#), which reminds us that God's love has no limits and that in the midst of struggles, we can lean on him. He is the compassionate Father.

But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,  
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

*Psalm 86:15*

## **Father God**

Thank you that you are the perfect Father. Thank you that though we reject you and run away from you, you come out to meet us when we come to our senses.

Thank you that you are compassionate and gracious, showing love to us – even when we don't deserve it.

Help us to show compassion to others around us, to not just look on in sympathy but to act in love.

**Amen**

Why not ask God to help you to understand how he is a loving, compassionate Father.