James 2

*Faith and Mercy*

**Scripture:** James 2:1-26

**Memory Verse:** “*For judgement is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement.”* James 2:13

**Lesson Focus:** Our faith needs to work through the Holy Spirit by how we treat others.

**Activities and Craft:** Coloring Picture, Work Sheet and 3rd – 5th grade questions to be asked in class.

Craft for 1st and 2nd Grades: Seeds of Faith Packet

**Introduction:** Skit: (choose 3 kids to act out this skit)

 After the skit ask the kids:

 √ Do you think anything like this cold ever happen at RMC?

**Bible Study:**

 When you are playing the game of football what are the two sides of each team

 called? (Offensive and defensive lineup)

 Offensive lineup tries to score.

 Defensive lineup tries to prevent the other team from scoring.

 Both teams are different in how they function – but both are needed to play and

win the game. The same is true of our Christian walk. We must be actively involved in the “game” of Christianity. The book of James says that no one can sit on the sidelines. We need to be engaged in following Christ and loving Jesus will produce a changed life that produces action. We are on the offense and defense everyday with the help of the Holy Spirit. Today we will look at chapter two of James and see some more offensive actions that we need to take.

 **James 2:1-4; Faith and Favoritism:**

√ Do you know what the word “prejudice” means? (Intolerance or hatred of

 other races or people different from us.)

 √ Do you think that we have a problem with this in America?

 √ Do you think that you have an intolerance problem?

James thought that this was a problem in the church – one that needed to be tackled with strong words and warnings. The message of the book of James is to live by faith. He wants our lives to be a “living picture” of a “faith” led life.

This is not the same intolerance that the world talks about these days. The world is saying that Christians are intolerant of things we call sin, i.e.; (same sex marriage, marijuana, and other issues.) The Bible is our truth source. God tells us what is sin – but He also tells us to love others. We have to be very careful to love people – but not the sin.

√ What two things oppose each other in James 2:1?

 (faith and favoritism)

√ What example does James give in James 2:2-3?

√ How does this example show favoritism?

√ Do you think that anything like that could happen here?

√ What does James tell us in James 2:4 that we have when we show favoritism?

(We have evil thoughts and we judge others). Usually when we show favoritism we are thinking about ourselves. This person looks nicer – this person might be a good person for me to know.)

**What James is saying tis that “faith and favoritism” do not mix!**

**James 2:5-7; Faith that is Rich:**

√ How does God describe the poor in James 2:5?

1. Chosen
2. Rich in faith
3. Heirs to the Kingdom of God
4. They love God

 √ What is the description of the rich man?

1. Oppress others
2. Drag you into court
3. Slander Jesus

From those two descriptions, which type of person would like to be around?

 **James 2:8-13; Faith that Loves:**

1. **Faith that Loves by love: James 2:8**

√ What does James tell us is the one important law? (love)

 How many commands did Jesus give us while He was on earth?

 Mark 12:29-31:

1. **Love God**
2. **Love others**

Jesus tells us that no other commandment is greater than these.

√ Do you think that these two commandments are important to the heart of God?

 **2. Faith that loves by not sinning: James 2:9-11**

 √ Do you think that it is fair that James says we commit a sin when we

 treat people unfairly?

 √ What do verses 10-11, teach us about sin?

**Illustration:** Draw a measuring stick on a poster board or on the white boards in the room.

Have the markings on the Measuring stick and at the top of the stick write “Sin Measurer.”

Have the kids tell you some “sins” and then tell you where they should be placed on the measuring stick by how bad they are. Then tell them this is how God looks at sin…sin is sin to God. He does not measure it like we do. We put it into categories and we think that our sin is not that bad. We are separated from God by sin and only by believing in Jesus Christ and that He paid the price for our sin do we have a relationship with God. (Put a cross over the word “Sin.”)

**GOD**

**S**

**I**

**N**

 **“Sin Measurer”**

**Very Bad Sins**

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**Not Bad Sins**

1. **Faith that loves by showing mercy: James 2:12-13**

God’s mercy has been shown to us through Jesus Christ.

We follow Jesus by showing mercy and kindness to others.

We cannot claim to love Jesus and not love others.

We cannot claim to love Jesus and treat others unfairly.

We cannot claim to love Jesus and show favoritism.

We need to confess our sin and follow Jesus is love.

 **Faith that Works; James 2:14-26**

In today’s world we want everything to be easy. If you go on a diet – you buy “light” food. There are packages of 100 calorie cookies and crackers. There is “light” mayonnaise, soups, pies and frozen dinners. We don’t just want to teach vegetables and fruits we want them in a little package to make it easy for us. But everything is not easy. If you are going on a dies you need to do the hard work to make it work. When you live a life of faith you need to take actions steps to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit and to follow God. A “lazy” Christian is a Christian without faith!

1. Faith demands action:

Hebrews 10:38, tells us that “a righteous person will live by faith….”

All of Scripture teaches that once you believe in Jesus Christ for your salvation you begin your life long journey of “faith.” This is exactly what James is telling us here. If you believe in God your life will show it.

1. Prove It:

√ Has anyone ever said to you “prove it?” You make a “claim to fame” and your friends say “prove it.” (I can run a mile in 5 minutes – prove it!)

That’s exactly what James is saying. You have faith – prove it! Faith is a mental decision to believe in God and your life long journey living out your faith. James is not saying that the good things that you do save you – he is saying the “good things” that you do reveal your faith in God. To ignore people in need around us – is to ignore a living faith.

√ Who does James tell us believes in God in James 2:19? (Demons)

(Scripture teaches us that the demons and the devil know who Jesus is. But they do not live a life of faith. Knowledge alone is not faith.

1. Examples of great faith with action:

Abraham:

* Abraham believed God and followed God’s leading
* God promises a son to Abraham and Abraham believes
* Abraham trusted in God’s provision when he was asked to sacrifice his only son
* Abraham did sin and make mistakes – but He always came back to believing in God
* James 2:23 – tells us that Abraham believed and he was called a “friend of God.”

Rahab:

* Joshua 2 – shows us Rahab
* She hides the spies that Joshua sent to check out Jericho
* She ask protection from the spies because she has heard of their God
* Rahab is saved (Joshua 6:22-25)
* Rahab is mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. She is one of four women who are mentioned (Matthew 1:5)

James gives us two examples of living faith.

Our actions reveal what we believe. Our faith should produce “right living.” People cannot see God, buy they can see us representing God by how we live.



1. Do you think that rich people are seen as more important in this world?
2. If you had two friends at school, one had lots of money and one had none...who would you want to be your friend more? Why?
3. How does discrimination show that we have wrong motives, (vs. 4)?
4. Do you think that God looks on the value of a person by what he has or who he is? Explain?
5. Do these verses tell us that all “rich” people do not love God?
6. One way to not show “favoritism” is to get to know others. What could you do here on a Sunday morning to not show favoritism?
7. Do you think that it is true that what you believe is proven by your actions?
8. Why is it so hard to act the way we should? What gets in our way?
9. If God points out a need (physical need of others) to you what should you do about it?
10. Why is it important to help others?
11. List ways that you could reach out to someone in need?
12. What did this passage teach that demons know about God? What does that show us about having “knowledge of” and “believing”?

Skit for James 2

**Reader #1 is the Usher**

**Reader #2 is the “well dressed church goer.” (Fancy)**

**Reader #3 is the smelly poor person, (Smelly)**

**Setting:** Usher is standing at the front of the classroom, looking very important.

**Usher:** It’s just a beautiful day for another Church service. I can’t wait to greet people and make them feel welcome, yes that’s my job and I’m good at it. (He pretends to greet people. “Hello, welcome to Church....good morning, it’s so good to see you here this morning. Ok, I’m ready Lord!” Oh, look who’s coming to church today!

**Fancy:** (Walks in looking very snooty and very important, never says a word to the usher just walks to her seat nodding her head as he talks.)

**Usher:** “Well, hello Mrs. Fancy, it is soooooo good to see you today. What a beautiful day we are having. Please come this way, I have your seat waiting for you. It’s the best seat in the place. This seat has the best view of the stage and there is not one air conditioning vent that will blow on you here in this seat. Enjoy our service.”

As he walks away he mumbles to himself, “what a privilege to serve at this church.”

**Smelly:** (Walks in looking sad and afraid, but walks up to the usher.)

**Usher: (talking to himself) -** Looking toward Mr. Smelly, says, “Oh, no here comes that disgusting dirty man. It’s so embarrassing that He keeps coming here. It just bothers people so much when he sits near them. I will have to handle this carefully.)

**Usher:** Well hello Mr. Smelly, come this way please. Leads him to a chair in the back. Here’s your bulletin. (Usher walks away.)