



## Saved by God's Mercy - A Gift We Can't Earn

By Ariel Presswood

Titus 3:5 - "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

## Setting the Scene

### Key Concept:

God's mercy is the foundation of our salvation and transformation. It is not something we can earn or achieve through our actions, but a gift freely given by a loving and compassionate God. His mercy washes us clean, renews our hearts, and draws us into a relationship with Him through the Holy Spirit. By embracing this incredible gift, we are called to live lives that reflect His compassion, forgiveness, and grace, bringing His light to the world.

### Engaging Analogy:

"Imagine being stranded in a stormy sea, struggling to stay afloat. Suddenly, someone throws you a life preserver and pulls you to safety. You didn't earn it, but it saved your life. God's mercy is like that life preserver—it rescues us from sin, renews our hearts, and gives us the strength to live anew. Just as we would be grateful for a physical rescue, we should rejoice in the spiritual rescue offered by God's mercy."

### Invitation:

Encourage participants to reflect on the gift of God's mercy and its power to transform their lives. Challenge them to consider how they can embrace this mercy in their hearts and share it with others through kindness, forgiveness, and compassion.

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## Section 1: Reflect and Discuss

### Reflection Questions

1. What does it mean that God saves us because of His mercy, not because of what we do?
2. How does God's mercy transform the way we see ourselves and others?
3. Why is it important to remember that salvation is a gift and not something we can earn?
4. How can we reflect God's mercy in our daily actions and relationships?
5. Can you share a time when you experienced God's mercy or showed mercy to someone else? How did it impact you or the other person?

### Family or Group Discussion

- **Biblical Examples:** Explore stories in the Bible where mercy changed lives, such as:
  - Jesus healing the ten lepers and commending the one who returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11-19).
  - The Good Samaritan showing compassion to a stranger (Luke 10:25-37).
  - God sparing Jonah and the people of Nineveh after their repentance (Jonah 3). Reflect on how these stories reveal God's mercy and how we are called to extend that mercy to others.
- **Practical Mercy:** Discuss ways to practice mercy in everyday life, such as forgiving someone who wronged you, helping a friend in need, or showing patience and kindness in difficult situations.

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## Section 2: Hands-On Activities

### Activity 1: Mercy Life Preserver Craft

**Objective:** Create a life preserver as a symbol of God's mercy rescuing us.

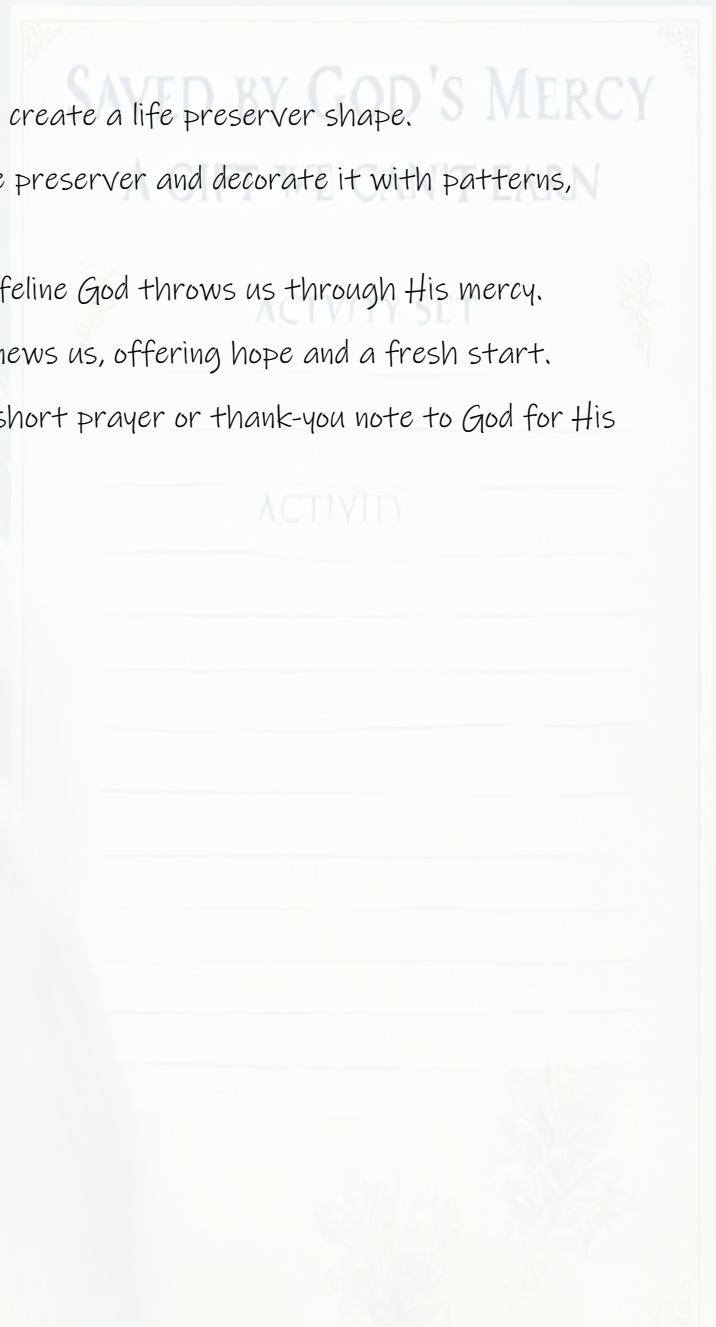
#### Materials Needed:

- Paper plates
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Ribbon or yarn
- Stickers or decorative items

#### Instructions:

1. Cut out the center of the paper plate to create a life preserver shape.
2. Write "God's Mercy" in bold letters on the preserver and decorate it with patterns, symbols, or scripture verses.
3. Attach ribbon or yarn to represent the lifeline God throws us through His mercy.
4. Reflect on how God's mercy saves and renews us, offering hope and a fresh start.

**Extension Idea:** Invite participants to write a short prayer or thank-you note to God for His mercy on the back of their life preserver.



## Activity 2: Mercy Tree Craft

**Objective:** Create a tree to symbolize the fruit of mercy in our lives.

### Materials Needed:

- Poster board or large paper
- Construction paper
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Decorative items like stickers, glitter, or paper flowers

### Instructions:

1. Draw or cut out a large tree trunk and branches from construction paper.
2. Cut out paper leaves and write ways to show mercy on each leaf (e.g., "Forgive others," "Help those in need," "Speak kindly," "Be patient").
3. Attach the leaves to the branches, creating a tree that represents the fruit of mercy in our lives.
4. Decorate the tree with symbols of God's love, such as hearts, doves, or crosses.
5. Reflect on how God's mercy inspires us to act with kindness and compassion toward others.

**Extension Idea:** Encourage participants to add new leaves to their tree throughout the week, representing acts of mercy they practice or observe.

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### Activity 3: Timeline of Mercy Moments

**Objective:** Create a timeline of moments in the Bible and personal life where God's mercy was evident.

#### Materials Needed:

- Large paper or poster board
- Markers or crayons
- Sticky notes or index cards
- Tape or glue

#### Instructions:

1. Draw a horizontal timeline across the poster board and label key moments from the Bible that illustrate God's mercy, such as:
  - The prodigal son returning home (Luke 15:11-32).
  - Jesus forgiving the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43).
  - Peter's restoration after denying Jesus (John 21:15-19).
2. Write short reflections or lessons from each event on sticky notes or index cards and attach them to the timeline.
3. Add moments from your own life where you experienced or witnessed mercy and reflect on their impact.
4. Discuss how these moments reveal the beauty and power of God's mercy.

**Extension Idea:** Encourage participants to share their timeline moments with the group, fostering a deeper understanding of how mercy transforms lives.

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## Section 3: Music and Creativity

### Memory Verse Song

Set Titus 3:5 to the tune of a familiar children's song, such as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star":

*"He saved us, not by what we do, / But by His mercy, strong and true. / Washing and renewal bring, / The Holy Spirit's gift we sing."*

Encourage participants to add hand motions or additional verses to personalize the song and make it more engaging.

**Extension Idea:** Invite participants to compose their own songs or poems about God's mercy and share them during a group worship session or family devotional.

### Creative Writing Prompt

Ask participants to write or draw about a time when they experienced mercy, either from God or someone else. How did it change their perspective or actions? What lessons did they learn about grace and forgiveness?

**Extension Idea:** Combine participants' stories and illustrations into a group "Book of Mercy," celebrating God's transformative power and the ways His mercy is reflected in our lives.

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## Section 4: Closing Reflection and Prayer

### Reflection Questions:

1. How can I embrace God's mercy in my life today?
2. What are some ways I can show mercy to others this week?
3. How does understanding God's mercy deepen my faith and trust in Him?

### Prayer:

Lead a prayer thanking God for His incredible mercy and asking for a heart that reflects His compassion and love. Pray for opportunities to share mercy with others and to live as examples of His grace.

**Extension Idea:** Encourage participants to write personal prayers of gratitude for God's mercy and share them with the group or keep them for private reflection.

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