



Popular Gospel Stories

Feast of All Saints

Matthew 5:1-12 — The Beatitudes

1. Collect the materials you need for this activity: a Bible.
2. As a family, brainstorm as many advertising slogans as you can. Then, see if family members can match the slogans below to the right products:
 - ⇒ We're changing the shape of America (Nordic Track)
 - ⇒ It's everywhere you want to be (Visa)
 - ⇒ Must see TV (NBC)
 - ⇒ Celebrate the moments of your life (General Foods Int. Coffee)
 - ⇒ Everybody needs some money sometime (Western Union)
 - ⇒ Head for the mountains (Busch)
 - ⇒ Get the sensations (York Peppermint Patty)
 - ⇒ Just do it! (Nike)
 - ⇒ We are driving excitement (Pontiac)
 - ⇒ Life is a sport, drink it up (Gator Aid)
 - ⇒ I love what you do for me. (Toyota)
 - ⇒ . . . gets the red out (Visine)
 - ⇒ You're in good hands with . . . (Allstate)
 - ⇒ When you care enough to send the very best (Hallmark)
 - ⇒ Like a good neighbor, . . . is there (State Farm)
3. Ask: What is the goal of companies such as those whose slogans we just guessed?
4. Next, ask the family to think about familiar television shows, commercials, movies and other media entertainment. What way of life are these forms of media

advocating? Talk about a few examples. What values are portrayed through these media messages? See if the family can come up with five statements which reflect how society wants us to live, or which reflect what society in general thinks is most important. (For example: make as much money as possible, look young and beautiful, etc.)

5. Jesus gave us statements on what is most important for us; statements about the kind of people we are to be. The shocking thing about Jesus' statements is that they were the opposite of what the society of his time was advocating. Listen to the kind of people Jesus raises up and calls holy.

6. Read Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on the side of the mountain and sat down.

Jesus' disciples gathered around him, and he taught them:

God blesses those people who depend only on him.

They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

God blesses those people who grieve.

They will find comfort!

God blesses those people who are humble.

The earth will belong to them!

God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink.

They will be given what they want!

*God blesses those people who are merciful.
They will be treated with mercy!
God blesses those people whose hearts are pure.
They will see him!
God blesses those people who make peace.
They will be called his children!
God blesses those people who are treated badly for the doing right.
They belong to the kingdom of heaven.*

God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

7. Share with the family:

Being poor, mourning, and hungering are the three basic honorable and esteemed behaviors offered by Jesus. "Being poor" in the Bible is never an economic designation. It describes someone who has temporarily lost honorable status and must seek at all costs to regain that status. Poor was generally associated with widows (loss of a male to care for her) or orphans (loss of connections with the family). These positions could be changed at any time: the widow could remarry and the orphan could be adopted into an extended family.

Jesus says that "being poor" constitutes true honor, as does being merciful, and being humble, mourning and being hungry. The things that God considers truly honorable and worthy of praise are usually the opposite of what human beings of any culture think.

8. Discuss these questions together. Ask:

- ◆ What is "blessed" about being poor, suffering, sorrowing, lowly or persecuted?
- ◆ Where is the irony in the beatitudes?
- ◆ How have you been able to walk with (or minister to) the poor, the suffering, the sorrowing, the lowly or the persecuted?
- ◆ Have you ever experienced them ministering to you?
- ◆ Are the beatitudes the opposite of what our culture thinks is important today? How?

9. Keep a book mark in the Bible this week. Pray the Beatitudes as a family during the week.

