God Is Gracious and Merciful

ROUND 1 QUESTIONS

What do you want to be when you grow up? Take responses.

Let's pretend you're grown up and you're at your job. Would you be a good worker if you didn't do the work you were supposed to do? Maybe you didn't even come in to your job. Take responses.

Do you think you deserve to get a paycheck if you don't do any work? Take responses.

What if that happened and then you were given the biggest paycheck with a *big* bonus after you had done nothing? Take responses.

Well, when we talk about God's grace, or God being gracious, it's kind of like you receiving something even when you *don't* deserve it. Gracious means God gives you a good gift you don't deserve. You did nothing to deserve it, but God gives you amazing things anyway, like the opportunity to be part of his family.

Ephesians 2:8 tells us we're saved by God's grace and it is a gift.

And John 1:16 tells us we receive grace upon grace from God.

ROUND 2 QUESTIONS

Now, how about this? What if you were told *not* to get a snack out of the fridge but you went and secretly got one anyway when you thought nobody was looking, and then your parents found out? What might happen? Take responses.

What if, instead of you getting in trouble, your parents forgave you and didn't punish you? Take responses.

That's kind of what God's mercy, or God being merciful, is like. Merciful means God *doesn't* give you the punishment you *do* deserve.

Lamentations 3:22–23 tells us God's mercies never come to an end; they're new every morning.

So to review, God being gracious means what? Take responses—God gives you good gifts you don't deserve.

And God being merciful means what? Take responses—God doesn't give you punishment you do deserve.

See how they are kind of alike, but kind of opposite?

Aren't you thankful that the one true God is gracious and merciful toward you?

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God Is Good

QUESTION: Who here likes to get gifts? What's a favorite gift you've received?

Alternative: You could have a gift for one of them to unwrap with small, wrapped candies inside—one per child. Show them but don't pass them out until the end of the day.

Did you know God likes to give good gifts to his children? And he isn't *stingy* in giving good gifts. James 1:17 tells us God is the giver of every good gift. That means every single good thing you've ever experienced is from God.

Let's think of some good gifts we may have received from God—ones that don't come in a package you unwrap.

I'll give you some examples, and then we'll see what you come up with.

My examples of good gifts from God:

- The gift of a new day
- The gift of petting a pet
- The gift of receiving a hug
- The gift of being loved by someone

Now it's your turn! Think of something good you've experienced. Take responses. You may want to write these down on a dry-erase board or poster board as they say them.

A couple verses about God's goodness:

Psalm 34:8 Read verse.

1 Chronicles 16:34 Read verse.

Every single good thing you've ever experienced is from God, because God is good.

Aren't you thankful that the one true God is good?

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God Is Slow to Anger

QUESTION: Do you know what a synonym is? Take responses.

Let's take a quick quiz. If I said "intelligent," you might say ____.

If I said "start," you might say ____.

If I said "incredible," you might say ___.

If I said "yummy," you might say ___.

Today, we're talking about God being slow to anger. Can you think of a synonym for slow to anger? Take responses.

In a word, "slow to anger" can mean patient. But what does "patient" mean? Take responses.

God is patient—or slow to anger—with each of us. He wants us to come to him and be his children (2 Peter 3:9). And once we are his children, he continues to be patient with us as we sin. He doesn't sit up in heaven just waiting to zap us with a lightning bolt when we do something wrong. No! God isn't like that. He is a patient God.

In fact, the Bible tells us in 1 Timothy that God has perfect patience (1 Timothy 1:15–16). It also tells us that love—God's love—is patient and kind (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Aren't you thankful that the one true God is a patient, forgiving, kind, slow to anger God?

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God Is Abounding in Steadfast Love

QUESTION: If you could have a whole room overflowing from top to bottom with something you love, like ice cream or stuffed animals, what would you pick? Take responses.

Did you know God loves you with an *overflowing* love? The Bible tells us he is abounding, or overflowing, in love. Steadfast love is loyal and devoted and won't change.

- It doesn't depend on how you behave.
- It doesn't depend on what you do.
- It doesn't depend on what you don't do.
- It doesn't depend on your abilities.
- It doesn't matter what's going on in your life.

Romans 8:38–39 reminds us that nothing can separate God's children from his love—not death or life, angels or rulers, present things or future things, or anything else in creation.

God will still be there with his steady, faithful love that overflows. It's not about earning love—he just loves.

Aren't you thankful that the one true God is abounding in steadfast love?

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