

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



**FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH**

**Produced Weekly**

***The Incomparable God***  
**Micah 7:8-20**

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #...). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

### Gathering Time Leader:

**Bible Study Leader:**

Copy the sheet at the end of this session that has the scripture references to be read during the Bible Study Time. Cut apart to distribute as required.

As usual, read the youth Bible study application exercise. You may want to make copies of that sheet for each teenager (if you have teenagers who will want to make their own applications to the Bible study apart from the adults and children.

**Worship Time Leader:**

Make copies of the responsive reading which is given at the end of the Worship Time.

**Music Sources:**

**We Bow Down**, *The Worship Hymnal* #31; CCLI #20003

**Speak, O Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #432; CCLI #4615235

**How Majestic Is Your Name**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 52; CCLI # 26007

**Great is the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #61; CCLI # 1149

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***The Incomparable God***

### **Focal Text**

Micah 7:8-20

### **Background Text**

Micah 7

### **Main Idea**

God's righteous character requires that he deal seriously with sin yet offer forgiveness and mercy towards those who will repent.

### **Questions to Explore**

What does God's response to our sin reveal about his character?

### **Teaching Aim**

The learners will:

Recognize their own sinfulness before God.

Understand God's gracious character to forgive sins.

### **Gathering together:**

Sing one or both of the following:

**We Bow Down**, *The Worship Hymnal* #31; CCLI #20003

**Speak, O Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #432; CCLI #4615235

### **First thoughts:**

Shortly before the death of Joshua, he spoke to the various tribes or groups of people who had been a part of settling the land promised so many years before to the Israelite people. Here are the words he said to one group:

***Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the***

***Lord commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. For a long time now –to this very day – you have not deserted your brothers but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given your brothers rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan.***

***But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”***

***Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. Joshua 22:1-5.***

This is the end of the story which began when the people of the tribes called the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh asked to be given the land on the east side of the Jordan which was good for running cattle which they wanted to do. They left their wives and children in fortified cities on the east side of the Jordan, but they crossed the Jordan to help secure the land for the Israelite people. The verses above indicated that they were faithful in the task they were given and were now free to go back to the east side of the Jordan.

However, they were not to forget that they were a part of the Israelite nation and were to keep the commandment and the law of Moses. They were to love the Lord, to walk in his ways, obey his commands, hold fast to him, and serve him with hearts and souls.

That was the admonition to all the Israelites when they were given the Promised Land as an inheritance. That expectation was never changed. But the people to whom Micah spoke had long forgotten the sacrifices others had made on their behalf. They no longer loved the Lord, walked in his ways, obeyed his commands, held fast to him, and served him with heart and soul.

Was there any hope for the people of Micah’s day. Today’s study brings hope. In fact hope is the word used in verse 7 of Chapter 7 ***But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.***

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *The Incomparable God*

#### **Focal Text**

Micah 7:7-20

#### **Background Text**

Micah 7

#### **Main Idea**

God's righteous character requires that he deal seriously with sin yet offer forgiveness and mercy towards those who will repent.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What does God's response to our sin reveal about his character?

#### **Teaching Aim**

The learners will:

Recognize their own sinfulness before God.

Understand God's gracious character to forgive sins.

#### **Introduction to your personal study:**

The pastor received the phone call from a teen-age young lady who had run away from home and had made a mess of her life. She wanted to come home to her parents, but she didn't have the heart to call them. She called her pastor instead. "I know I've broken my parents' hearts, but I believe that they still love me. Now I want to come home. But even if Mom and Dad take me back, after what I've done will God ever take me back?"

Today's passage deals with God's gracious and compassionate character. God's righteous character requires that he deal seriously with sin yet offer forgiveness and mercy towards those who will repent. Probably the most relevant lesson to be gained

from this text is to understand the unchanging holy, righteous, and loving character who is willing to forgive and restore sinful people when they repent.

## **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the **“Introduction”** article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Micah's final message closes out the book with a note of hope and assurance. He looked past the upcoming defeat and destruction (1:1-16) to the day in the future when Yahweh would reverse that judgment. Micah looked forward with hope (7:7) because those who would repent of their sin would be raised again (vv. 8-9), God's enemies would be defeated and Israel would be rebuilt (vv. 10-11), the exiles would be re-gathered (v. 12), and a new exodus would take place (v. 15) causing the enemies fear, tremble, and be humiliated (vv. 16-17). This hope for the future is based upon the unchanging character of God who is willing to forgive undeserving sinners (vv. 18-19), being always faithful to his promise made to Abraham (v. 20).

The key to understanding this passage is by understanding the numerous references that Micah made to the classic description of God's character given to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7:

***Yahweh, Yahweh, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.***

This passage, so foundational to all biblical teaching on God's character, is quoted numerous times in the Old Testament (e. g. Psalms 86:15; 103:8, 17; 145:8; Numbers 14:18; Jeremiah 32:18-19; Joel 2:13; Nahum 1:3; Nehemiah 9:7; Jonah 4:2) and referenced in numerous other passages. This passage speaks not only of God's holiness to judge sin, but also his grace to provide forgiveness. It is to this God that Micah offers his plea that "you would shepherd your people" once more (v. 14). Micah appeals to God's holy and righteous character, a God full of love and compassion.

## **Focusing on the Meaning:**

### **"He pleads my case and establishes my right" (vv. 7-10)**

Micah's faith was placed in Yahweh, the God he could boldly proclaim as "my Savior" and "my God." He could "watch" in hope and "wait" with the calm assurance that God

would hear his cry and answer his call for help (v. 7). Speaking as a representative of his people, Micah acknowledged that God's judgment and "wrath" on Israel's sin was well-deserved because "I have sinned against him" (v. 9). This is God's holiness in action, because he will not leave the guilty unpunished (Exodus 34:7). God had used a foreign enemy to conquer his people, but Micah's message to his conquerors was "Do not gloat over me" because one day he would "rise" see God's "light" and "see his righteousness" (vv. 8-9). In seeing the tables turned and the despised people redeemed, the enemies who wanted to gloat would be ashamed and defeated (v. 10). Micah knew that ultimately the God of justice would set things straight.

### **"The day for building your walls will come" (vv. 11-17)**

Micah looked to the day when Judah would be rebuilt, and the people would come back from countries where the people had been enslaved such as Assyria and Egypt (vv. 11-12). The earth would suffer God's judgment and become "desolate" because of the evil deeds of inhabitants (v. 13).

The focus of this section is actually on verse 14. Using covenant language Micah petitioned Yahweh to shepherd "your people" and lead "your inheritance" or "possession" (cf. Exodus 19:6) to the fertile lands that once belonged to Israel, in much the same way that Yahweh led the people from the land of Egypt in the first exodus (v. 15). When God acts once more in salvation this way, the nations would see God's power and "be ashamed" of their own puny strength (v. 16). They would cover their mouths in amazement, tremble in fear at God's power and strength, and "fear the Lord," humbling themselves before "Yahweh our God" (v. 17).

### **"Who is a God like you who pardons sin and forgives transgression?" (vv. 18-20)**

Micah's own name means "Who is like Yahweh?" and this is the question he leaves ringing in our ears. "Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives transgression?" Micah is not the first person to ask this question. Elsewhere "Who is like you?" is asked to show that no one can compare to Yahweh in his glorious and mighty deeds (Exodus 15:11; Psalms 77:13-15), in his deliverance from threatening death (Psalms 71:19-20), in his aid of the weak, poor, and needy (Psalms 35:10; 113:5-7), and in his power over all other gods (Psalms 89:5-8). Here Micah asks the same question, but the reasoning behind the question is different. ***No one could compare to Yahweh in his amazing mercy.*** Yahweh is both willing and able to forgive even the worst of sinners. Only he can solve our greatest problem – sin.

Micah used three of the most frequent terms used for sin in the Old Testament to make his point. In using such a wide vocabulary, Micah was in a sense describing any kind of sin a person could commit. "Sin" refers to missing a target, falling short, or failing to meet a goal (Judges 20:16; Proverbs 19:2). "Transgression" means rebellion or revolt

against an authority. It is probably the strongest term for sin, referring to a willful, deliberate breaking of established terms (1 Kings 12:19; Jeremiah 2:29; Amos 1:3). "Iniquity" refers to something that is twisted, crooked, or perverse (Job 33:27; Jeremiah 3:21), like a sheep that wanders from the right path or a city that has been ruined.

Micah also used four different terms picturing God's forgiveness. He "pardons/removes" iniquity, picturing lifting a burden and carrying it away. He "passes over" transgression, like the angel of death "passed over" the Israelite houses (Exodus 12:13). He "treads/tramples" iniquities underfoot like a warrior conquering his enemies. And he "hurls/casts" into the sea all of their sins (vv. 18-19). When God is finished, sin is utterly and totally removed from us like a burdened carried away, passed over or disregarded as something no longer important, stomped into pieces in the dirt, and thrown like a stone into the bottom of the sea. God's holiness requires his "anger" over sin, but his love does not allow him "**to stay angry forever.**" He cannot remain angry, but neither can he simply wink at our sin or sweep it under the carpet like it doesn't exist. Instead, God deals with our sins totally and completely so that sins are judged but mercy is offered.

How can God do this? What kind of God would be willing to thoroughly cleanse undeserving sinners of their wickedness? He is a God who "delights to show mercy" (v. 18). He is a God full of "compassion" (v. 19). And he is a God marked by "truth/faithfulness/steadfastness" who is faithful to his promises he made to Abraham and Jacob so long ago (Genesis 22:17; 28:14). Four times in these verses (vv. 18-20) Micah referred to the description of God's character made to Moses at Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:6-7), "he does not stay angry forever," his "mercy/grace," his forgiveness of "iniquity" "transgressions" and "sins," and his "compassion." The terms "mercy" and "faithfulness," translated into Greek, and brought into traditional English are "**full of grace and truth**" (cf. John 1:14). Anyone in a saving relationship with this God may rest securely in hope because his character never changes.

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

This passage is primarily about the character of God – unchanging in his intense holiness and unwavering in his undying love towards sinful people. When God chooses to punish people for their sins, he is holy and righteous to deliver the discipline. But the same God is full of love, grace, and compassion. He is willing to restore the repentant and forgive forever the sins they have committed. Micah, filled with amazement and praise, asks the question, "What kind of God does this?" That is a good question for us to ponder.

## **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***The Incomparable God***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Micah 7:8-20

#### **Background Text**

Micah 7

#### **Main Idea**

God's righteous character requires that he deal seriously with sin yet offer forgiveness and mercy towards those who will repent.

#### **Questions to Explore**

What does God's response to our sin reveal about his character?

#### **Teaching Aim**

The learners will:

Recognize their own sinfulness before God.

Understand God's gracious character to forgive sins.

#### **Connect with Life:**

As the group gathers, ask someone in the group who has been married for a while how well they feel they know their spouse. (If no one is married or has been married for long, ask one of them to describe a good friend.)

Connect with the group with this explanation: “Realizing that we can never get to know someone totally, there are certain aspects of their character that make themselves evident by what the person says and does. Today we will be looking at God’s character. He has demonstrated who he is by what he says and what he does.”

Place a cup of tea or coffee in front of them and pour milk or cream into it, stirring it so it mixes well.

Ask the group, “How easy or difficult would it be now to separate this cream from the coffee (or milk from the tea)?”

Point out: No analogy is perfect but here is one that makes the point. Once the two are mixed, they are virtually inseparable. Even a “separator” that is used to separate cream from milk would not separate the essence of the tea or coffee from the cream.

Explain: Two aspects of God’s character that can never be separated are his holiness and his love. He is **always** holy and he is **always** loving.

State: “As such, God’s righteous character requires that he deal seriously with sin yet offer forgiveness and mercy towards those who will repent. Let’s see what God’s actions and attitudes reveal about his character.”

## **Guide the Study:**

### **I. God's Faithful Justice (vv. 7-10)**

Have someone read verses 7-10.

Ask: “What words or phrases describe the personal relationship Micah had with God (v. 7)?”

Follow with this: How confident was he that God would hear his prayer (v. 7)?

Add: What would he do in the meantime until God answered (v. 7)?”

Point out that in verses 8-10 Micah speaks as a representative of his people.

Ask: “Looking at verse 9, how deserving of God’s punishment were Micah and his people?”

Point out that this is God's holiness in action.

Have the group look up Exodus 34:6-7 and explain that this passage is the background for Micah’s description of God’s character. It was written hundreds of years before the time of Micah’s generation.

Seek an answer: “What phrase in Exodus 34:6-7 is relevant here?” [He will not leave the guilty unpunished (Exodus 34:7)]

Point out that God had used a foreign enemy to conquer his people.

Encourage responses to these questions:

But what was Micah's message to his conquerors (v. 8)?

What hope did Micah see for the future of God's people (vv. 8-9)?

What would eventually happen to his enemies (v. 10)?

## **II. God's Willingness to Restore (vv. 11-17)**

Have someone read verses 11-17.

Share: This is a description of how God would "turn the tables" (ie: reverse the course of their banishment and persecution), and restore his people after their punishment.

Ask, "What would happen to Jerusalem and Judah after they would be destroyed (v. 11)?

Encourage responses: What would happen to God's people who would be exiled (v. 12)?"

Point out that Micah described God coming to save his people once more as he did at the exodus.

Now ask: "What would be the reaction of God's enemies when he demonstrated his power (vv. 15-17)?" Point out that the focus of this section is actually on verse 14.

Seek an answer: "What picture does Micah use to describe God's relationship with his people (v. 14)?

Question the group: What was Micah asking God to do once more (v. 14)?

How did Micah describe the personal relationship God had with Israel (v. 14)?" ["your people" and lead "your inheritance" or "possession" (cf. Exodus 19:6)]

Ask: "After God punishes his people for their sin, is he finished with them forever?"

## **III. God's Incomparable Mercy (vv. 18-20)**

Have someone read verses 18-20.

Then hand out slips of paper with the following scripture references: Exodus 15:11; Psalms 71: 12-14, 19-20; Psalms 35:10; Psalms 89:5-9.

Discuss with the group: “What is the question that is common to all of these passages?” [Who is a God like you?] Point out that God is incomparable in so many ways.

*If you have young people in your group, you may want them to work on this exercise by themselves.*

With each scripture reference, have the group determine what aspect of God is brought out. **(This is a good teaching/learning exercise! They begin to understand how they can use scripture to teach themselves).**

(Exodus 15:11) His glorious and mighty deeds.

(Psalms 71:12-14, 19-20) In his deliverance from threatening death.

(Psalms 35:10) In his aid of the weak, poor, and needy.

(Psalms 89:5-9) And in his power over all other gods.

Ask: “What aspect of God’s character does Micah want us to consider (v. 18)?” [his forgiveness of sin] Point out that only he is able solve our greatest problem – sin.

Using the **Teacher Preparation** notes, describe to the group the three terms Micah uses for sin here. “Sin” refers to missing a target, falling short, or failing to meet a goal (Judges 20:16; Proverbs 19:2). “Transgression” means rebellion or revolt against an authority. It is probably the strongest term for sin, referring to a willful, deliberate refers to something that is twisted, crooked, or perverse (Job 33:27; Jeremiah 3:21), like a sheep that wanders from the right path or a city that has been ruined.

Entertain a brief discussion: “Why would Micah use so many different terms and describe different types of sins?” [One or more of these words describe any kind of sin a person could commit.]

Ask: “In what different ways does Micah describe God’s forgiveness?” Be prepared to explain the pictures using the teacher notes. Micah also used four different terms picturing God’s forgiveness. He “pardons/removes” iniquity, picturing lifting a burden and carrying it away. He “passes over” transgression, like the angel of death “passed over” the Israelite houses (Exodus 12:13). He “treads/tramples” iniquities underfoot like a warrior conquering his enemies. And he “hurls/casts” into the sea all of their sins (vv. 18-19). Also: “Will God’s holiness allow him to leave sin unpunished?” [no]

Include this question: “But after the punishment, how long will God’s anger at our sin still burn?”

Have the group examine the description of God's character given in Exodus 34:6-7.

Have them list the aspects of God's love Micah reiterates here. Use a whiteboard or poster-size sheets of paper if available to write the answers.

State, "The terms "mercy" and "faithfulness," translated into Greek, and brought into traditional English are "full of grace and truth" (cf. John 1:14). Anyone in a saving relationship with this God may rest securely in hope because his character never changes. Micah, filled with amazement and praise, asks the question, "What kind of God does this?""

Point out that God's holiness was displayed to judge the sins of the entire world when Jesus died on the cross.

Remind them that this was also the greatest display of his love to extend forgiveness to sinners (John 3:16).

Spend a few moments sharing how the understanding of God's holiness to judge sin and God's willingness to forgive sin might personally affect their lives.

### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

In light of what we have studied in God's word today:

What does God want me to *believe*?

What does God want me to *do*?

Is there a *promise* here I need to claim?

Is there an *example* I need to follow? Or to avoid?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### *The Incomparable God* Micah 7:8-20

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### THE ASPECTS OF GOD

With each scripture reference, determine what aspect of God is brought out. **(This is a good teaching/learning exercise! You begin to understand how you can use scripture to teach yourselves).**

(Exodus 15:11) His glorious and mighty deeds.

(Psalms 71:12-14, 19-20) In his deliverance from threatening death.

(Psalms 35:10) In his aid of the weak, poor, and needy.

(Psalms 89:5-9) And in his power over all other gods.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***The Incomparable God***  
**Micah 7:8-20****Beginning the Service:**

Sing:

**How Majestic Is Your Name**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 52; CCLI # 26007

**Great is the Lord**, *The Worship Hymnal* #61; CCLI # 1149

Use the following responsive reading *The Worship Hymnal Responsive Reading* #61. You should have enough copies for all your participants to read—copied from the final page of this session.

**Worship Leader:** The Lord is a great God.

**Worshippers:** A great King above all gods.

**WL:** The Lord is great and highly praised;

**Worshippers:** He is feared above all gods.

**WL:** The Lord is great in Zion.

**Worshippers:** He is exalted above all the peoples.

**WL:** The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love.

**Worshippers:** Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite.

**WL:** Great is the Lord!

**Worshippers:** Great is the Lord!

**WL:** Great is the Lord!

## Offering:

## Praying for the World:

The Shiites of the Arabian Gulf are a people with deep sadness who are often in a state of mourning. Numbering between 5 million and 6 million, they live in several countries of the Gulf, speaking both Arabic and Farsi. They need love, joy, peace, gladness, and Jesus. In all the world, Shiites are the second largest branch of Muslims; they number between 10—15% of all Muslims.

## Sharing Guide:

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

## Who Is God?

A nine year old recently asked her mother and her grandparents "Who is God?" The question was not an easy one to answer. To understand who God is, we must understand something about his characteristics. Micah helps us understand much about the nature of God when he asks ***Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance. You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.***

A nine year old could easily see God as a God who punishes wrong doing. In fact, if children are not taught about God's love and forgiveness, they may easily come to feel that God's main job is to know about our wrong doing and punish us for it. Young children most often understand right and wrong in terms of what is rewarded and what is punished. Even adults sometimes determine what is all right for them to do based on whether or not they will get caught and punished for it.

Micah has spoken often of the punishment which would come to the Israelite people because of the long years of disobedience on the part of rulers, priests and ordinary people. God is a God of mercy, but He is also a God of justice. Justice requires punishment for sinful acts.

But God is also a God of forgiveness. ***Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance.*** These words were originally spoken of the faithful remnant of Israel just before their return from Exile, but should be seen now in the fullness of God's revelation as applying to all of God's people.

When Moses went up to Mount Sinai early in the morning the Lord came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name. ***And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate, and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; (Exodus 34: 6-7a).***

A nine year old or a ninety year old needs to understand that the God of justice is also a God of compassion. He is a gracious God. That is, God is One who gives grace. Grace is often described as undeserved favour. God gives us that which we have not earned nor we deserved. God is slow to anger. He is abounding in love and faithfulness. He has love for thousands and He forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin. The Message says ***God, God, a God of mercy and grace, endlessly patient – so much love, so deeply true – loyal in love for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion and sin.***

If we were answering a nine year old's question "Who is God?" we might want to use many other Biblical illustrations of His character. But we can begin with Micah's statement ***Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance. You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.*** We can rejoice that our God is a God like that.

### **Call to Commitment:**

Ask the group to close their eyes and bow their heads and think about the characteristics of God which we have considered. Ask the group to mention other characteristics which are important to them – mighty, creator, redeemer, shepherd...

Consider how you would answer the question of a child "Who is God?"

### **Concluding the Service:**

Use again the Responsive Reading with which you began the Worship Time. Or, in preparation for this day, choose one of Paul's blessings on the churches to which he wrote and read it to the church. Then close the service with prayer.

Bible Study Leader: Hand out slips of paper with the following scripture references:

+++++(Cut here)+++++

**Exodus 15:11**

+++++(Cut here)+++++

**Psalms 71: 12-14, 19-20**

+++++(Cut here)+++++

**Psalms 35:10**

+++++(Cut here)+++++

**Psalms 89:5-9.**

Make copies to be used during the Worship Time.

*The Worship Hymnal Responsive Reading #61.*

**Worship Leader:** The Lord is a great God.

Worshippers: A great King above all gods.

**WL:** The Lord is great and highly praised;

Worshippers: He is feared above all gods.

**WL:** The Lord is great in Zion.

Worshippers: He is exalted above all the peoples.

**WL:** The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in faithful love.

Worshippers: Our Lord is great, vast in power; His understanding is infinite.

**WL:** Great is the Lord!

Worshippers: Great is the Lord!

**WL:** Great is the Lord!