**Small Group Material: w/b March 11th**

**The Beatitudes: Compassion**

*Welcome*

What are the most inspiring examples of compassion you have seen in your life?

*Worship*

Ask one member of the group to read out psalm 103 slowly. As they read, write down one aspect of God’s character or a verse that particularly strikes you. Turn your verse or characteristic into a prayer of thanks and spend some time praising God together as a group.

*Word*

Bishop Steven explains why he is using the Beatitudes as the basis for the vision of the Diocese.<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/mission-ministry/projects/towards-a-common-vision/>

Read **Matthew 5 verses 1-9.**

1. Jesus does not address the Beatitudes to a crowd but to his small group of disciples. Why do you think this is so?
2. It is easy to gloss over the word ‘blessed’ as a Christian platitude. But it is a deeply significant word repeated 8 times in these verses alone. What do you think it means? (Some common synonyms are ‘fulfilled’, ‘complete’, and ‘content’ – how do these versions of the word change your understanding of the verses?)
3. What do the Beatitudes show us about Jesus’s character?
4. ‘Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ There is a paradox here between being ‘blessed’ and mourning. What do you think Jesus meant to say through this seeming contradiction?
5. ‘Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy’: In what ways is biblical mercy/compassion distinct from the kind of love or mercy we might encounter in the rest of society?
6. In what ways could we be more merciful both as individuals and as a church?

*Witness*

**You might like to watch this video produced by the Diocese to go with this course:** <https://vimeo.com/240455127>

Who around us could we love better? Spend some time in twos or threes thinking about those whom we could love or reach out to in practical ways this week. Pray for the work of CAP.

Discuss what you could do as a Small Group in the week before Easter. You could go together to ‘Journey to Easter’\*, or sign up in groups of 3 to welcome guests to the exhibition (Contact Christine Clinch 01608 6439232; christineclinch@gmail.com). Pray for this event and who you could invite to it.

*\* 7 - 9pm on Mon, Wed - Sat, the church is closed to the public but available for church groups to go round. Arrangements need to be made with the office. Why not invite friends to join you?*