

# DIVINE MERCY

IN THE SECOND GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD

## GUIDEBOOK

*Questions for Review and Discussion*

### Session 1

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*Jesus, I Trust in You*

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# SESSION ONE

GOD'S SCHOOL OF TRUST

## Step 1

## INTRODUCTION

To fully appreciate *Divine Mercy in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told*, we have to remind ourselves of the *first* greatest story. That amazing story sets the stage for the dramatic events that will unfold later in history.

## Step 2

## OPENING PRAYER

*Heavenly Father,  
as we begin this study of your merciful love for us,  
please fill us with your grace.  
Send your Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds  
and enkindle our hearts  
that we may be transformed by your mercy.  
Help us to trust in your mercy, receive your mercy,  
and be merciful to others.  
We ask this in the name of our merciful Savior,  
Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

*Mary, our Mother of Mercy, we entrust to you ourselves  
and this time together. Please pray for us.*

## Step 3

## VIEW VIDEO FOR EPISODE 1

*Before watching the video, together read through the  
“Ten Commandments for Small-Group Success” in the Appendix.  
Then, watch Episode 1. (This episode’s video is shorter, so you’ll  
have extra time.)*

## SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

### Step 4

*[Go over these questions in your small group. It's alright if your group only gets through a few of them during your discussion.]*

1. **What was your favorite part from the video? In other words, what most touched your heart or enlightened your mind?**
2. This study centers around St. John Paul the Great as the Second Greatest Story Ever Told. More specifically, it's about the most important part of John Paul's life: Divine Mercy. *So, how has Divine Mercy affected you? For instance, as happened to Pope Francis at the time of his conversion after going to Confession, have you ever experienced the loving gaze of Jesus on you? Or have you been touched by the Divine Mercy message and devotion?*
3. God seems to be giving us the Second Greatest Story in our day for an important reason. Specifically, he wants to convince us that *now is the time of mercy*, that now is a time of great and extraordinary grace for the Church and the world. In fact, he seems to be telling us that he desires to give us unprecedented grace and mercy in response to the unprecedented evil in our modern world. *Alright, so if now really is the time of mercy, what specific gifts of mercy do you want from Jesus in your life? In the lives of others? In the life of a particular loved one?*
4. All of Salvation History can be summarized as a School of Trust, as God's great effort of trying to get us skittish, fearful creatures to give up our fear of him and to trust in his love and goodness. *Describe how God has shown his merciful love to you in your life and so earned your trust. Perhaps it was a situation where everything seemed hopeless, and then, suddenly, it all worked out in a way that only God could have done.*
5. It's not always easy to trust in God, and the reason goes back to Genesis and the wound from humanity's first sin. That original sin caused us to have a distorted image of God that makes us hide from him, like Adam and Eve. *So, can you think of one way that you have run away from God or hid from him in the past? Also, how can you avoid hiding from him in the future?*

## Step 4

## SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

6. A contract is an exchange of goods or services. A covenant is an exchange of *persons*. Now, the Bible teaches that God is constantly giving himself to us in covenant and that he wants us to give ourselves back to him. And even if we are unfaithful, he remains faithful. In other words, he doesn't stop giving himself to us even when we turn away from him. ***So, do you trust God enough to give yourself to him? What areas in your life have you not given over to him? Or what areas of your life do you struggle with giving over to him?***

7. At the time of Israel's greatest sin (the worship of the Golden Calf), God could have revealed divine wrath. But Moses interceded for his people and reminded God of his promise of faithfulness to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. So, instead, God relented and revealed Divine Mercy, and revealed how he is always faithful to his promises. Specifically, he declared to Moses that he was a "God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). This is a hugely important revelation! It tells us who God is as the darkness of our own sins swirls around us. ***To help ponder this glorious revelation, pick the one description of God in the passage from Exodus that most touches your heart. Is it "merciful," "gracious," "slow to anger," "abounding in steadfast love," or "abounding in faithfulness"? Why did you pick the one that you did, and what does it mean to you?***

8. Regarding that revelation of God's mercy in Exodus 34:6, St. John Paul II explained that Israel often found strength in that revelation during difficult times. Specifically, he said that the Israelites would actually *remind God* himself of that revelation of his mercy! Imagine that. Think of one of God's people saying to him, "Now, Lord, I've really blown it here, but please don't forget how you promised to be merciful to me!" And God heard those prayers. ***Have you ever prayed in such a way to God? In other words, in times of difficulty, have you ever reminded God about what he has revealed about his mercy? During such prayer, what specific things would you remind God regarding his mercy?***

***Homework: Don't forget to read and reflect on all the questions that you don't cover during your small-group discussion!***

## CONCLUSION

In this first session, we learned that one of God's main activities since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden has been to convince us to place all our trust in him. Now, according to St. John Paul the Great, *mercy* is the central revelation, the central lesson in God's School of Trust. And that "school" is teaching us how, in the face of great infidelity and sin, God remains "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." But school is still in session, and we have quite a way to go to better understand his incredible mercy.

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Thank you, Heavenly Father,  
for your tireless efforts to pursue us with your mercy.  
We thank you that, while we are yet sinners,  
you take action to find us, to save us,  
and to make us your own.  
Give us clear minds and pure hearts  
to see you as you really are: Love and Mercy itself.  
Help us to be truly grateful for the many men and women  
who have carried your message of mercy to the world.  
We give you thanks for all your gifts,  
Almighty God, who lives and reigns now and forever.  
Amen.*

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*Trust in You*

