

Backpack

We don't know what burdens others are carrying.

Prep

Get 3 backpacks of different sizes if possible (but they can be the same size if necessary). In the largest one put some light weight items, such as feathers. In the medium sized one put some heavier items, such as a number of water bottles and in the smallest backpack put as heavy of items as you can, such as bricks or a lot of canned food items.

Mark your Bible to Luke 6:36 and James 2:13.

Demonstration

Call up 3 volunteers and privately tell them that you are going to give them each a backpack weighing a different amount and that you want them to try to each act like their backpack is the opposite of what it really is. So the person with the light backpack should try to act like it's really heavy, the 2 folks with the heavier backpacks should act like they are pretty light.

Then give them each a backpack to put on their backs and have them follow you to the front of your class.

Tell your students you now need 3 additional volunteers who are willing to do jumping jacks in front of the class. Call up the 3 one at a time and let them choose which backpack they each want to wear while doing 10 jumping jacks.

As they choose which backpack they want, have them say why they have chosen that backpack.

The point is to have them pick the ones that seem the lightest.

Then have all 3 put on a backpack on their back and try to do 10 jumping jacks.

Object lesson

"When you saw the backpacks being worn it was hard to tell how much each of them really weighed. One only had light objects but it seemed heavy and one had very heavy objects and it seemed pretty light.

Many times this same thing happens in life. We see what people are like outwardly but we don't know what they are going through in their lives or the feelings they may be dealing with.

We are called by God to have mercy on everyone. Having mercy means having compassion for someone, especially someone who doesn't deserve it.

Luke 6:36 reminds us that *"We first show mercy because God has shown us such great mercy by forgiving ALL our sins."* And the last part of James 2:13 says, *"Mercy is better than judgment."*

Instead of judging people by looking down on them, we should have mercy on everyone and love people no matter what.”

Wrap Up

“Remember that it doesn’t matter what we see about others on the outside. Maybe someone’s life seems perfect or maybe someone seems like a real jerk, but we have to remember to love everyone and show everyone mercy because we don’t know what others are going through.”