The Beatitudes for families

The Sermon on the Mount found in the Gospel of Matthew (chapters 5-7) proclaims some of the richest and most familiar teachings of Jesus: the beatitudes (see 5:3-10).

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
The poor include both literally poor people, in need of basic necessities, and figuratively poor people, who are aware of their spiritual poverty, people who acknowledge their need and utter dependence upon God. The reward mentioned here is nothing less than the kingdom of heaven. What do we consider to be our family's greatest riches?

2. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted."
Those who mourn could be anyone who is sad or experiencing a loss of any kind. Jesus promises comfort for those who suffer. When we suffer we have a choice to make: we can become bitter, or we can become more compassionate to others in pain. How do we find comfort in our family?

3. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land."
The meek are people who are humble and patient. A person who chooses other ways to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence is meek. The reward is great wealth. How do we resolve conflict in our families?

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4. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied."
This blessing is for people who hunger for justice in our world. Children have a great capacity to see wrongs and often possess a simple view of complex issues. Perhaps our kids can use their creativity to solve some of the local injustices in

schools and communities.

5. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”
Mercy is a word that holds many meanings: forgiveness, kindness, compassion. It is easier to extend mercy to others when you begin with yourself. In our family, rather than keeping track of mistakes, we try to see God’s grace among us. With mercy, you receive back the more you give.

6. “Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.”
Who better to be clean or pure of heart then little ones? They lack malice and have such innocence, at least during the first few years. Of course, they see God, because there is nothing clouding their vision! The clean of heart can also be people who single-mindedly see God first in all situations and people.

7. “Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God.”
What risks do we take to make peace? Jesus asks us all to be peacemakers; we are, after all, children of God. As his children, we must continue to work for unity and understanding. Our families are microcosms of the world in which we learn peacemaking skills. Peace begins at home.

8. “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
It can be difficult to do what is right, such as standing up to someone who is acting like a bully. But we learn from Jesus, and, through practice in our family, we see that doing the right thing is what it really means to be a follower of Jesus.