

“Come and See” Phase Level 1a - Outreach (Covenant Group) Small Group Lessons

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“Come and See” Level 1 Small Group Lesson Format

Use this basic format for leading a “Come and See” level 1 outreach small groups.

CONNECTING

The first few minutes of the meeting are usually reserved for getting better acquainted.

1. Welcome everyone.
2. Introduce guests.
3. Ice breaker or
4. Share about what has happened throughout the previous week.

DISCUSSION: Lesson Title: _____ (Scripture: _____)

[Use any of the following small group lesson discussion guides here.]

CLOSING

Thank Everyone For Coming. Remind Them Of The Next Meeting. Enjoy Additional Time Together For Refreshments And Fellowship.

“Come and See” Level 1 Small Group Lesson Sample

Title: Controlling Anger

CONNECTING

The first few minutes of the meeting are usually reserved for getting better acquainted.

1. Welcome everyone.
2. Introduce guests.
3. Ice breaker or
4. Share about what has happened throughout the previous week.

DISCUSSION: Controlling Anger (Ephesians 4:26-27)

1. What persons or circumstances most cause you to become angry and lose control?
2. What are some of the results when that happens?
3. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. Does Paul say that anger is a sin?
4. What will happen if anger is not resolved quickly and constructively? (Ephesians 4:27)
5. Read James 1:19. How would being "slow to speak" help when you are angry?
6. James 3:7-12 illustrates how the tongue has been a problem for Christians since the early church. How can we gain control of our speech?
7. Even though you may not be able to prevent feelings of anger, what are some constructive ways to maintain control over your tongue and prevent injury to others? (Proverbs 21:23)
8. How are you presently struggling with controlling your anger and speech?
9. Pray for each other in this difficult area of controlling the tongue and managing our responses to anger.

CLOSING

Thank everyone for coming. Remind them of the next meeting. Enjoy additional time together for refreshments and fellowship.

TEN RULES FOR THE ROAL (10 Commandments)

The God Above All Gods

Rule For The Road No. 1

1. How many of the Ten Commandments can you recall from memory?
2. Where did they come from? (*Exodus 19-20*) To whom were they given? Why were they given to us?
3. What makes the Ten Commandments more relevant today than ever?
4. Commandments one through four (written on the first tablet) have to do with what? Commandments five through ten (written on the second tablet) have to do with what?
5. Read *Exodus 20:1-3*. State, in your own words, the first “Rule for the Road” “You shall have no other gods before Me...”
6. In these modern times, how do some people try to find value and meaning – order and purpose – in their lives?
7. How does your concept of God effect how you view human life? How you view others? How you view yourself?
8. What did Paul teach the Greeks in Athens about who was the true God? (*Acts 17:22-27*)
9. Where does worshipping false gods lead?
10. Talk about these popular myths in relation to what God is like?
 - a. Santa Claus
 - b. Harsh Tyrant
 - c. Magician
 - d. Giant Aspirin

In the Lord’s Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*) Jesus taught us that the true concept and understanding about God is that He is our Heavenly Father. How has your relationship or lack of relationship with your earthly father affected either favorably or unfavorably you concept and relationship with God?

Care Enough To Choose The Very Best

Rule For The Road No. 2

1. What was your favorite thing to play on as a child when you went to a playground?

2. Read *Exodus 20:4-6*. What is the sin of idolatry?

3. How does the keeping or breaking of the second “Rule for the Road” (*Exodus 20:4-6*) affect the generations to come?

4. How is sin like a slippery slide?

5. Read together *Exodus 32*. While Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, how were the children of Israel already breaking the Commandments?
 - a. How did this affect Moses?
 - b. Why did this upset God so much?
 - c. What was the one thing that saved the nation of Israel from being completely wiped out by God for this terrible sin?

6. How does idolatry open the door to more sin?

What kind of sins did the children of Israel commit after they started worshipping the golden calf they had created?

7. How serious is the sin of idolatry? (*Romans 1:18-32*) Talk about the possessive/degressive nature of sin.

8. What are some of the gods that people in our society bow down to worship as their god?

9. Close with the penetrating question that Jesus asked Peter three times in *John 21:15-17*.

What is the “more than these” in your own life?

10. Do you love Jesus more than anything else?

Cleaning The Gutter

Rule For The Road No. 3

1. Describe the consequences when people no longer respect and obey the traffic laws in our community.
2. In your own words, what is the third Rule for the Road? (*Exodus 20:7; Leviticus 22:31-32*)
3. Do you think there has been an increase of gutter language spoken by the average person today as opposed to 25 years ago? Why do you think so? What are some contributing factors?
4. In *James 3:3-12*, what do we learn about the power of words?
5. How does speaking profanity or speaking positive words affect the following:
 - a. Your body?
 - b. Your relationships?
 - c. The way people judge you?
 - d. Self-esteem – both the other person's and yours?
 - e. Your relationship with God?
6. What does it mean to misuse the name of God? (*Exodus 20:7*)
7. Why is it so offensive to God when we swear at another person?
8. Discuss: **Praise builds love for life, while profanity destroys the love for life.**
9. Where do both praise and cursing come from? (*James 3:10*)
10. What is really needed to put a stop to the sin of profanity? (*Jeremiah 31:33*)
11. Have someone in your group share from their own life how they have broken the swearing habit.

Thought Question: Do you think the rise of praise and worship in churches today is God's way of helping Christians counteract the epidemic of profanity in our society today?

Fit Stop

Rule Of The Road No. 4

1. Discuss this thought: As important as work is for a good life, there is more to life than labor.
2. When you hear the words “Fit Stop,” what thoughts come to your mind?
3. What is Rule No. 4 for the road? (*Exodus 20:8-11*) What does the word “remember” suggest?
4. **The FIT STOP is written into the very fabric of creation.** During the first six days of creation, God moved from the most basic elements of creation to the more complex. For example, on the fifth and sixth days, He filled the earth with animals. And then, the last thing He did on that sixth day was to create man and woman by breathing into them the breath of life. What did God do on the seventh day? (*Genesis 2:2-3*) Why did He do this? Did He need the rest from all the strenuous labor? Was He personally fatigued? Or, what was it He was trying to teach us?
5. *Exodus 16:22-30* gives us a living illustration of this principle. God supplied manna every day for the church of Israel when they were out in the desert. What happened on the sixth day and what were they instructed to do? In *Exodus 27:16* what happened? What is the lesson for us to learn from this?
6. In the Jewish tradition, the Sabbath was practiced on what day of the week?
 - How did most Christian churches come to observe the Sabbath on Sunday? (*Colossians 2:16-23; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Galatians 4:9-11*)
 - Do you think it really matters on which day one chooses to celebrate the Sabbath as long as they obey the Sabbath principle in the cycle of their week?
7. What are the benefits of regularly going to a public worship service in the weekly cycle? How important is the spiritual fit stop in your life?
8. **True or False:** When things are the most stressful and demanding is when we need to observe the fit stop all the more.
9. What are some of the problems of observing the Sabbath in modern society? How do you intend to practice the Sabbath principle?

Close with a prayer and a renewed commitment to *Hebrews 10:25*

Make Peace With Your Parents

Rule For The Road No. 5

1. Review the first four commandments in *Exodus 20*.
 - The second group begins with one that deals directly with our family relationships. (*Exodus 20:12*) What does this tell us?
 - List all the benefits that come from being brought up in a family where there is honor, cooperation, respect and love.
2. How does your relationship with your parents affect your relationship with God? How does rebellion against parents affect the way one relates to authoritarian figures in their life?
3. What does it mean to honor? What are we promised if we keep this commandment?
4. What do we learn from *Ephesians 6:1-4* that gives a clear understanding of the fifth rule for the road?
5. Read *Ephesians 4:29-32* and make a list of those things we can do to make our family a mutual admiration society.
6. Personal question: Are you a giver or a taker? A selfish person or a team player?
7. “Whether your parents are good or bad, for your own good you need to make peace with them.” How have you found this to be true in your life?
8. Describe an irregular parent.
 - a. How is it possible to stop the chain of abuse and destructive patterns in a family?
 - b. Talk about the baton in a relay race and how what you do with it (in the time that you have it before you pass it on), is up to you.
9. Is it too late to change? _____ Why not?

Close with this thought: God calls us to forgive and put love into action no matter what other family members do or do not do.

Life Is Fragile- Handle With Care

Rule For The Road No. 6

1. Describe one of your favorite birthdays (the celebration of your life).
2. Why do Christians believe that life is sacred? (*Genesis 2:7*)
3. What is the sixth rule for the road? (*Exodus 20:13*)
4. Read about the first homicide in *Genesis 4:1-12* and answer the following questions:
 - a. Who were the first two sons of Adam and Eve?
 - b. Why was the one son's sacrifice to God accepted and the other's sacrifice rejected?
 - c. What was the strong emotion that Cain experienced?
 - d. What do we learn from *Genesis 4:7*?
 - e. What did Cain do to his brother? What did God ask him? What was his reply?
 - f. What was the penalty or punishment that was given to Cain for committing the act of murder?
5. What are the results of anger when it is allowed to run out of control? Who is responsible for your anger?
6. Talk about some healthy ways to handle anger as opposed to some unhealthy ways of handling anger.

Some tough questions we have to answer in our world

The sixth rule for the road: "You shall not murder." Is it ever right to take another person's life?

1. What about war?
2. What about capital punishment?
3. What about abortion?
 - a. How has the 1973 Supreme Court ruling affected our nation's attitude about life?
 - b. Is the fetus a human being or not? What does genetic science show? What does medical science show? What do x-rays show? What does ultrasound show?
 - c. If the fetus is a human being, then abortion on demand for convenience is what?
4. What about suicide? What does *1 Corinthians 6:19-20* say? If someone commits suicide who is all mixed up in their mind, how does God provide for that person's sin of suicide?

What about euthanasia? Is it ever right? _____ Why do you think so? How do you feel about people being kept alive on machines?

Sex, Sin And Self-Control

Rule For The Road No. 7

True or false

- T ___ F ___ 1. Everybody is doing it, so it must be okay.
- T ___ F ___ 2. If your mate is cold or unresponsive, then you have an excuse to have an affair.
- T ___ F ___ 3. If you are a single person, it is all right for you to go out and sleep with someone.
- T ___ F ___ 4. An affair can be good for a marriage and can revive a dull one.

1. How does our world view and sell adultery? What is adultery?
2. Who invented sex in the first place? (*Genesis 1:27-28; 1:31; 2:24-25*) What is significant about the fact that sex came before sin? What kind of lovers do you think Adam and Eve were in the garden? What does the Bible mean when it says that they were naked and unashamed? (*Genesis 2:25*)
3. When the Bible says the male and female came together and became one flesh, is this physical, emotional, or spiritual? What do you think?

Note: The devil takes what God has already created and tries to get us to pervert it and misuse it. Sin always **diminishes** pleasure. That is why, in sexual sins, people have to keep seeking new adventures to get any pleasure.

4. Read *Proverbs 5:1-23* and write down several of the consequences of the misuse of our sexual gift.
5. Talk about the following seven things that adultery is against:
 - a. Against love
 - b. Against the other person
 - c. Against your own body.
 - d. Against your emotional health
 - e. Against our self-esteem.
 - f. Against the church.
 - g. Against God.
6. What are we told to do in *1 Corinthians 6:18*? How do we do this?
7. Four things that will help you flee from sexual sins.
 - a. Stay away from pornography.
 - b. Control your thought-life.
 - c. Stop when you are tempted and talk a long look.
 - d. Accept God's moral laws as absolute and right for yourself. When is the time to decide you are going to live a clean life?
8. What is the answer for someone who has fallen into a sexual sin? (*John 8:1-11*) How would you help this person?

The High Cost Of Stealing

Rule For The Road No. 8

1. Share an experience when your private property was taken and the emotions that you felt.

How does the teaching of Jesus: “Treat others as you want to be treated,” relate to stealing?

2. What are some of the high costs of stealing what we all have to pay for?

3. What is Rule No. 8 for the Road? (*Exodus 20:15*)

4. What does giving a fair days work to your employer have to do with stealing? (*Ephesians 4:28*)

Discuss: If you do not make your employer a profit, your employer cannot afford to keep you.

5. How big of a problem is tax evasion?
As Christians, what are we to do according to *Romans 13:6-7*?

6. At what point does something you borrow and have not taken back become something that you have stolen?

Is it important to take things back quickly that we have borrowed?

7. Read together *Luke 19:1-10*. What do we learn from this passage about the cure for stealing?
How was Zaccheaus’ character rebuilt?

8. What did Jesus do for the thief on the cross that asked for forgiveness?

Why do we all need Jesus’ forgiveness and grace? (*Romans 3:23*)

The Truth About Lying

Rule Of The Road No. 9

1. Define these five different ways to lie:
 - a. Bold face lie:
 - b. Shading the truth:
 - c. Slandering:
 - d. Exaggeration:
 - e. Insinuation/implication:
2. What is the ninth rule for the road according to *Exodus 20:16*?
3. What do you think is the root cause of lying? What are some reasons why people chose to tell a lie?
4. What's wrong with spreading lies, commonly known as gossiping? What are some reasons we excuse ourselves from gossiping? What harm does gossiping do?
5. How does lying destroy trust? How important is trust to a marriage? How important is trust to any relationship?
6. Is it true that people who have a habit of lying also have trouble trusting other people?
7. Who is the father of lies? (*John 8:44*)
How is it that lying plays into the hands of Satan?
8. What is the cure for lying?
 - a. Confess the truth about the deceitfulness.
 - b. Repent (turn away) from it.
 - c. Begin this day to live in cooperation with "the Spirit of Truth" (the Holy Spirit).
9. How can we learn to love truth?

What did Jesus mean when He said the truth will set you free?

Turn On To Contentment

Rule Of The Road No. 10

1. Why does the grass always seem to be greener on the other side of the fence?
2. Read Rule for the Road No. 10 in *Exodus 20:17*. Now define in your words what it means to covet. How does Rule No. 10 summarize the first nine?
3. Why is covetousness such an insidious sin? (*James 1:14*)

How does this sin open the door to the breaking of the other Commandments?

Talk about some people in the Old Testament who illustrate what happens when one turns on the sin of covetousness.

4. Is desire right or wrong?

When does desire become the sin of covetousness?

5. Speaking of material things-how much is enough? (*Proverbs 30:7-9*)
6. What happens when a person tries to be like someone else?

How do you feel when the other person gets the award, the position, or the trip that you wanted?

7. Read *Philippians 4:11-13*. Where was Paul when he wrote these words and under what condition? What was Paul's secret of contentment?
8. Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Have you accepted Jesus Christ and His plan for your life?
 - b. How well do you accept other people who are honored above you?
 - c. How do you react when you do not get what you want?
 - d. What is missing in your life that causes you to have discontent?

Remember: In Christ's presence there is contentment, both now and forevermore.

PRIME-TIME PRINCIPLES

Prime-Time Principles

The Success Principle

1. How do you think the world defines success?

2. After reading these verses (*Matthew 6:33; Corinthians 3:17-18*) define success according to the Bible, as you understand it.

3. Read *Proverbs 3:1-21* (preferable in the Living Bible) and list all the things we are to do that will help us be more successful in our lives.

4. Talk about these pitfalls to success and why a person cannot be successful and do any of these five.
 - a. You cannot be immoral and be successful. Why? (*I Corinthians 6:18-20*)

 - b. You cannot be out of balance in your life and be successful. Why? (*I Corinthians 14:1*)

 - c. You cannot abuse and misuse power and be successful. Why? (*Ephesians 5:21*)

 - d. You cannot be greedy over money and be successful. Why? (*Proverbs 15:27; Ecclesiastes 5:10; I Timothy 6:10*)

 - e. You cannot leave God out of your life and be successful. Why? (*Proverbs 3:6*)

Prime-Time Principles

The Forgiveness Principle

1. In your own words, what is forgiveness?
2. In your own words, describe an unforgiving spirit.
3. In what way does an unforgiving spirit hurt you more than it hurts the other person?
4. What does God forgive us in the following verses?
 - a. *Psalm 103:3*
 - b. *Ephesians 1:7*
 - c. *I John 1:9*
5. Why did Jesus teach us to pray these words, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us?” (Two good reasons why.)
 - a.
 - b.
6. Who needs forgiveness and why?
7. Talk about this statement: There are no enduring relationships without forgiveness.
8. Think about a relationship that has failed because there is no forgiveness. Talk about a relationship where forgiveness was given and the relationship was healed.
9. What do we learn about emotional health and well-being from *Hebrews 12:15*?
10. What is *Matthew 18:21* really teaching us?
11. Study the parable of the two debtors in *Matthew 18:22-35*. What is the one central teaching of this parable that we are to apply in our lives?
12. Write down every excuse that you can think of that is valid for **not** forgiving.

Who is someone you need to forgive and with God’s help you are going to do it? From now on you are going to pray blessings for that person. Write their name down right here and ask God to help you live out this great forgiveness principle.

Prime-Time Principles

The V.I.P Principle

1. What is the V.I.P. Principle? State it in your own words. (*Luke 6:31, Matthew 7:12*)
2. In the V.I.P. Principle, Jesus teaches us two things. What are they?
3. Talk about this statement. Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in their place.

How do you want to be treated?

1. Like a V.I.P.

- a. What is a V.I.P.?
- b. How do you treat your employees or employer?
- c. How do you treat children?
- d. How do you treat people who don't treat you well?
- e. How do you treat people closest to you?
- f. How did Jesus treat people?

2. I want to be listened to.

- a. What is the difference between hearing and listening?
- b. What do we learn from *James 1:19*? If we don't listen to another person, what is the message they get?

3. I want to be appreciated

- a. "The deepest principle in human nature is a craving to be appreciated." Describe a recent "appreciation" that came to you.
- b. When was the last time you expressed appreciation to someone. Who was it and how did you express appreciation?

4. I want to be believed in

- a. Talk about the tendency in our world today to be vultures.
- b. When someone believes in you, how does it affect you?

5. I want to be encouraged and edified.

- a. What do we learn from *Romans 14:19*?
- b. What does it mean to have "empathy" for another person?

6. I want acceptance

- a. What happens when I expect everyone to be just like me?
- b. What happens when I give people my acceptance and love and allow them to be themselves? What happens when we try to change other people?

7. I want consideration and kindness Read these verses and talk about them:

- a. *1 Corinthians 13:4*
- b. *Ephesians 4:2*
- c. *Galatians 3:12*

8. I want understanding

- a. Do the people in your life need solutions or your understanding the most?
- b. Talk about practical ways that you can give another person understanding.

Prime-Time Principles

The Harvest Principle

Today's seeds are tomorrow's harvest

Read together *I Kings 17:12-14* and write down the lessons that we learn from this about seed-faith giving.

Five laws of the harvest

1. Seed time and harvest

- a. Before you can have a golden wheat field, what has to happen?
- b. What did God say to us in *Genesis 8:22*?

2. Sowing and reaping

- a. Read *Galatians 6:7*. Write down all that you learn from this verse.
 - i. How does what we do, or not do, change God or this law?
 - ii. When we sow good seeds, what happens?
 - iii. When we sow bad seeds, what happens?
 - iv. If we have been sowing bad seeds, what should we do in order to get a good harvest?
- b. Talk about this: "Everything starts with a seed." What seeds have you been planting that are good seeds economically?
- c. Why does every person need to give? What is our need for giving? What does giving do for us? "Giving is planting a seed at the point of our need."

3. The lord of the harvest

- a. According to *2 Corinthians 9:10-11*, what is it that God does?
- b. Who is your source?
- c. Who owns it all? (*Psalms 50:10; Haggai 2:8*)
- d. Who is it that gives the increase?

4. Proportion and return

- a. What do you learn from *2 Corinthians 9:6*?
- b. In *Proverbs 3:9-10*, why are we told to bring the first fruit off the top? If we do not give God the first tenth, what do we usually give Him?
- c. If you were a farmer, what kind of seed would you want to plant to get the best crop?

5. Multiplication

- a. The Bible says, "To whom much is given, much will be required." How does that apply to us as a church?
- b. Have someone share about their experience with sowing seed and reaping a harvest.

In closing, talk about how the seeds you sow today, are tomorrow's harvest.

Prime-Time Principles

The Turned On Joy Principle

Share how this week you have refused to let the devil get your joy, and how you found the joy of the Lord was your strength.

1. Say this together: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.” (*Philippians 4:4*)
2. Turn to *Habakkuk 3:17 and 19* and read together.
 - a. What are the problems that this fellow was having?
 - b. *Verse 18*, what did he do in the midst of his trouble?
 - c. How do you like *verse 19*?
3. Read *Acts 16:22-26*.
 - a. What was the condition in which Paul and Silas found themselves?
 - b. In *verse 25*, what did they do?
 - c. *Verse 26 and 27*. What were the results?
 - d. What lesson do we learn from this?
4. Read together *James 1:2-6*.
 - a. What does it mean in *verse 2* where it says, “Count it pure joy?”
 - b. When we keep joy in our hearts, what can be the results of going through tough times? Which is the most important in our lives the circumstances or the results? Which is most important, circumstances or the building of our character?
5. Read *Psalms 27:5-6*.
 - a. What does God do for us in time of trouble?
 - b. When it says to bring the sacrifice of joy into the tabernacle, what do we learn from that?
 - c. When is this sacrifice that we are to offer to God? Is it an easy thing to do? When are we to do it?
6. Read together *Hebrews 10:34-39*.
 - a. When the devil takes our goods, what are we to do? (*Verse 34*)
 - b. What does it tell us in *verse 35*?
 - c. What does it tell us to do in *verse 36* and what will God do?
 - d. How does getting the right perspective through expressing our joy to the Lord help us to make it through trouble?
7. Pay-back time is coming.
 - a. What is the lesson that we learn from Job? What trouble came into his life? What did he do when trouble came? When he started praising the Lord and expressing joy again, what happened? What lesson do we learn from Job’s life?
 - b. Talk about this statement: If you don’t let the devil get your joy, God won’t let him keep your goods.
 - c. How is God the great restorer?
 - d. How many times are we paid back according to *Proverbs 6:31*?

Prime-Time Principles

The Joy Of The Lord Principle

According to the announcement of the angels at Jesus' birth, what did He come bringing? (*Luke 2:10*)

The Bible describes Jesus as being full of what? (*Luke 10:21*)

In *Hebrews 12:2*, what did joy help Jesus go through with victory?

1. The gift of joy

- a. According to *Nehemiah 8:10*, what is prophesied that we are going to have?
- b. What is one of the reasons the Bible is written, according to *I John 1:4*?
- c. What does the psalmist in *Psalms 16:11* teach us about where we could find joy?
- d. Share ways that you come into the presence of Jesus and have your joy refilled.

As we fellowship with Jesus
The joy of the Lord becomes our strength.

2. Don't let the devil rob you of your joy

- a. Who is the thief in *John 10:10* that is out to rob you, kill and destroy your joy?
- b. What are some of the ways that Satan tries to rob you of your joy?
- c. Talk about this statement: It's the little things that get our joy. (List some of the little things that have taken your joy in the last two weeks.)
- d. Why does the devil want to get your joy? What happens to you if you lose your strength? What can the devil do then?
- e. In *Philippians 4:4*, what do we learn? When are we to do this? What if I don't feel like it? What is the result?

THE EASTER STORY

The Easter Story

Lord's Betrayal

Matthew 26:1-16

1. What comes to mind when you think of being betrayed?
2. What did Jesus predict would happen at the Feast of the Passover?
(Matthew 26:2)
3. Why do you think these religious leaders gather? (26:3-4)
4. Why do you think these religious leaders would plot to murder Jesus?
5. Read Matthew 26:6-13. How did the disciples react to this sacrifice of love? (26:8)
6. How did Jesus respond to the disciples? (26:10)
7. What valuable act of service can you offer to Christ this week?
8. Who initiated the meeting between Judas and the priests? (26:14)
9. How did the chief priests demonstrate that they were interested in what Judas had to offer?
(26:15)
10. Why did Jesus choose a disciple who would eventually betray Him?
11. What would motivate someone to betray a man like Jesus? (26:16)
12. What are some ways that people betray Jesus today and how can you avoid betraying Christ this week?

The Easter Story

The Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:17-30

1. When are some times during the year when your family tradition brings you together for a meal?
2. What question did the disciples ask Jesus? (26:17)
3. What instructions did Jesus give His followers? (26:18)
4. What did Jesus say during the meal that shocked His disciples? (26:21-22)
5. What sobering statement did Jesus make about His betrayer? (26:24)
6. What did Jesus say about the Passover bread that brought new meaning to it? (26:26)
7. What did Jesus say the cup symbolized? (26:27-28)
8. When did Jesus say He would celebrate again with His disciples? (26:29)
9. How do you feel when you remember that Jesus shed His blood on the cross for you?
10. In light of what Jesus has done for you, how can you express your gratitude and love to Jesus this week?

The Easter Story

The Last Hours

Matthew 27: 32-56

1. Why does it hurt so much when people reject you and make fun of you?
2. After He was arrested, where was Jesus taken? (Matthew 26:57)
3. When first questioned by the High Priest, how did Jesus respond? When He did respond regarding His identity, how did the High Priest react to Jesus' words? (26:62-66)
4. Read Matthew 27:1-2. Describe what is taking place and when it is happening.
5. When the Chief Priests had brought Jesus before Pilot, how did the religious leaders influence the crowd and how did Pilot attempt to evade any responsibility? (27:20-25)
6. Once Jesus was handed over to the guards, what took place? (27:26-31)
7. What did those who watched shout at Jesus? (27:39-40)
8. What was the behavior of the religious leaders as they watched Jesus die? (27:41-43)
9. What did Jesus cry out at the ninth hour? And what do you think His words meant? (27:46)
10. After Jesus died, what events took place that support the Centurions' declaration, "Surely He was the Son of God." (27:50-54)
11. What can you do this week that would declare that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Easter Story

The Lord's Resurrection

Matthew 28:1-10

1. If you could go back in time and witness any historical event, which one would you choose and why?

2. After Jesus died, what happened to His body? (Matthew 27:57-61)

3. Why did the Chief Priests and the Pharisees go to Pilot the day after Jesus was crucified? (27:62-64)

4. What did Pilot allow them to do? (27:65-66)

5. Imagine yourself at the tomb of Christ on that first "Easter Morning". Describe what you see and explain how you feel. (28:1-6)

6. What three commands did the angel give to the women at the tomb? (28:5-7)

7. What happened as the women were going back to tell the disciples about Jesus? (28:8-10)

8. Why is the Resurrection so important to our Christian faith?

9. How would you answer someone who doesn't believe that Jesus really rose from the dead?

10. After Jesus had spent several weeks with His followers, He met the 11 disciples one last time on a mountain in Galilee. What did Jesus tell His followers to do? (28:16-20)

11. What steps can you take this week to obey Christ's command to make disciples?

The Easter Story

Jesus Ascends Into Heaven

Acts 1:1-11

1. Talk about a time when you were given an assignment that you knew you couldn't carry out in your own power, or by your own abilities.
2. After His resurrection, how did Jesus spend time with His followers?
(Acts 1:3-5)
3. What specific commands did Jesus give the apostles and what promise accompanied them? (1:4-5)
4. What important point did the apostles still misunderstand? (1:6)
5. How did Jesus respond to their question? (1:7-8)
6. What did Jesus say the apostles were going to do? (1:8)
7. How did Jesus indicate that the apostles would be enabled to accomplish this overwhelming task? (1:8)
8. What is the importance of this final promise and command of Jesus to you?
9. After He finished speaking to the apostles, what did Jesus do? (1:9-11)
10. How did the apostles react? (1:10)
11. Who were the figures in white, and how did they encourage the apostles? (1: 10-11)
12. What steps can you take this week to tell someone about Jesus Christ?

EMMANUEL

“GOD WITH US!”

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:18-25

Small Group Lesson 1

1. How does the media illustrate how our society is so drawn to gossip and scandal?
2. What happened in Mary's life before she and Joseph were officially married? (Matthew 1:18)
3. What do you suspect Joseph thought when he first heard about Mary's condition? (1:18-19)
4. How does Matthew describe Joseph's character? (1:19)
5. How did Joseph intend to handle this difficult situation? (1:19)
6. What caused Joseph to reconsider his marriage plans? (1:20)
7. If Joseph wasn't the actual father of Christ, who was? (1:18, 20)
8. What name did the angel command Joseph to give the child and why? (1:21)
9. What is one reason that Matthew gives regarding the importance of Mary being a virgin? (1:22-23)
10. What does Emmanuel mean? (1:23)
11. What do you imagine were the thoughts and feelings Mary had through all these events?
12. What challenges do you face now that you must simply trust God and obey?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Visit of the Magi

Matthew 2:1-12

1. Why do we give gifts a Christmas?
2. Though Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth, where was Jesus born? (Matthew 2:1)
3. Who were the Magi and what prompted the Magi to search for Jesus? (2:2)
4. What title did the Magi give to Jesus? (2:2)
5. How did King Herod and the people of Jerusalem react to the questions of the Magi? (2:3-4)
6. Why was it important that Christ be born in the city of Bethlehem? (2:5-6)
7. What amazing sign helped direct the Magi to the place where the Christ child was? (2:9-10)
8. How did the Magi's respond when they realized they had finally found the Christ child? (2:10)
9. How would you define worship and what sort of activities does worship involve?
10. Where was Jesus staying when the Magi found Him? (2:11)
11. What gifts did the Magi bring to Jesus? (2:11)
12. Why didn't the Magi report back to Herod as he had requested? (2:12)
13. What gift can you bring to Jesus this week to demonstrate your love for Him?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Escape to Egypt

Matthew 2:13-18

1. Why is it especially difficult when there is a death of a child ?
2. What unthinkable act did King Herod have in mind? (Matthew 2:13)
3. How did God warn Joseph and what did He instruct him to do? (2:13)
4. How did Joseph respond to this warning? (2: 14-15)
5. How do you think the gifts of the magi may have helped provide for Jesus' family during their exile in Egypt?
6. How did King Herod react when he realized the Magi had tricked him? (2:16)
7. What orders did King Herod give in an attempt to kill Jesus, the Christ child? (2:16)
8. How was this horrible incident a fulfillment of prophecy? (2:17-18)
9. How should Christians respond to victims of senseless violence today?
10. How is the quick obedience of Joseph an example to you? Is there any area in your life today where there has been a delay in your obedience?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

The Return to Nazareth

Matthew 2:19-23

1. Have you found it difficult to move from one place to another?
2. Where were Joseph, Mary and Jesus at the time the angel appeared to Joseph? (Matthew 2:19)
3. What were the angel's instructions? (2:20)
4. What comforting news did the angel bring? (2:20)
5. Who was reigning in Herod's place when Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt? (2:22)
6. Why was it significant to Joseph that Archelaus was ruling in Judah? What was Joseph's emotional response to this knowledge? (2:22)
7. Where did Joseph locate his family and what helped him make that decision? Why? (2:22-23)
8. Why was it significant that Jesus' family settled in Nazareth? (2:23)
9. Where is your hometown and what influence has that had on your life?
10. Look back over your life and remember how God has guided and directed you. How can you demonstrate gratitude to God for His loving care for you?

Emmanuel - God With Us!

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

Matthew 3:1-12

1. What preacher has had the most influence on your life?
2. What famous preacher is described in Matthew 3:1?
3. What was John's message? (3:2)
4. What does it mean to repent?
5. What was the significance and purpose of John's ministry? (3:3)
6. Describe John's physical appearance? (3:4)
7. What was unusual about his diet? (3:4)
8. How did people receive John's message? (3:5)
9. What action did John require of those who responded to his message of repentance? (3:6)
10. Describe the confrontation John had with the religious leaders? (3:7-10)
11. What was the purpose of John's water baptism? (3:11)
12. How did John describe the type of baptism and ministry Jesus would bring? (3:11-12)
13. In what way could you demonstrate repentance and obedience this week?

CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Christ's Death and Resurrection

The Last Supper

Luke 22:7-38

Lesson 1

1. What was significant about the day of Unleavened Bread, the day that Jesus sent Peter and John to make special preparations for this "Last Supper"? (Luke 22:7-13)
2. What was this meal to commemorate? (Exodus 12:12-28)
3. Why was Jesus so eager to eat Passover with His disciples? (22:15-16)
4. What did Jesus instruct His disciples to do in remembrance of Him? (22:17-20)
5. What did the bread and cup represent? (22:19-20)
6. Why do you think Jesus chose the Passover elements of bread and wine to represent His body and the new covenant? Why is Communion important for Christians to observe?
7. How will you prepare yourself for Communion so that you better appreciate what Jesus has provided for you?
8. What did the disciples begin to argue about after the meal? (22:24)
9. What did Jesus say in response to this dispute? (22:25-27)
10. Why is it so tempting to seek greatness and recognition? How can we follow Christ's example of servant-hood this week?

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jesus Arrested

Luke 22:39-65

Lesson 2

1. What would you describe as a low point in your life?
2. What was Jesus referring to when He said, "Take this cup from me"? (Luke 22:42)
3. How did God choose to strengthen Jesus at this difficult time? (22:43)
4. What happened while Jesus was praying that demonstrated the extreme anguish that He felt? (22:44)
5. How do you respond to painful events in your life?
6. What place should prayer have in your times of struggle and anguish? (22:45-46)
7. Who was leading the crowd to Jesus? (22:47-48)
8. How did Jesus respond during His betrayal and arrest? (22:49-53)
9. How did the guards treat Jesus and how do you think Christ responded? (22:63-65)
10. How do you think Jesus wants you to respond to criticism or persecution? How would spending additional time alone with God in your personal "garden of prayer" help you be better prepared to face your trials?

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jesus' Crucifixion

Luke 23:26-49

Lesson 3

1. When have you had to endure teasing, slander or even abuse?
2. Read Luke 23:26-38. Describe the situation in your own words.
3. What did the criminals have to say to Jesus? How did Jesus respond to the plea of one? (23:38-43)
4. How are people like these two criminals on the crosses? Which one do you wish to identify with?
5. At the time of Jesus' death, what unusual things happened? (23:44-46)
6. What is significant about what took place at the temple? (23:45)
7. How did the Roman centurion react to Jesus' death? (23:47)
8. How did the spectators react? (23:48)
9. How did Christ's death on the cross make a new relationship with God possible? (Romans 5:1-11)
10. Tell how Jesus' death on the cross has changed your life and relationship with God.

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jesus' Resurrection

Luke 24:1-12

Lesson 4

1. When did you tell a true story that people found hard to believe?
2. Why did the women go to Jesus' tomb? (Luke 24:1)
3. What unexpected things happened upon their arrival? (24:2-8)
4. How did the apostles react to the report given by the women? (24:9-11)
5. Even though Peter may have doubted the women he investigate their report. What did he find and how did he respond? (24:12)
6. Why did the disciples express doubt even though Jesus told them He would rise from the dead?
7. What was it Paul wished to remind the Corinthian people of and why was it important? (1 Corinthians 15:1-2)
8. What was the "Gospel" Paul had preached by which they had been saved? (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)
9. What evidence helps you hold firmly to the "Gospel" of Jesus Christ? What evidence could you use to persuade others this week about the truth of the Gospel.
10. Who can you talk to this week who may need to learn about Jesus Christ and what He has done by His death and resurrection?

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Luke 24:36-49

Lesson 5

1. When have you been really surprised and/or frightened?
2. Why were the disciples frightened and how did Jesus calm their fears and reassure them? (Luke 24:37-48)
3. If Christ had not, in fact, been raised from the dead, what would be true of Christians and Christianity? (1 Corinthians 15:12-18)
4. How is Christ's resurrection from the dead a "first fruits" or a sign that He is first of all those who will be resurrected from the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:20-22)
5. What things do you find described in the Bible about Jesus' resurrected body? (Read Luke 24:13-53; John 20:19-31; Acts 1:1-11)
-it was recognizable...
6. Paul describes the resurrected body that you will have. How does your earthly body differ from the heavenly body that you will enjoy after your resurrection? (1 Corinthians 15:35-53)

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Earthly Body</u> | <u>Resurrected Body</u> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
7. Because of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection what should be our hope as Christians? (1 Corinthians. 15:54-57)
8. In light of our resurrection hope in Christ Jesus, how should we live? (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Christ's Death and Resurrection

Jesus' Ascension

Luke 24:50-53

Lesson 6

1. From whom would you most wish to receive a "blessing"?
2. What happened as Jesus blessed his followers? (Luke 24:50)
3. What instructions and promises had Jesus given them prior to His ascension? (Acts 1:1-8)
4. What does Acts 1:8 teach us about the mission of the church?
5. What happened as they watched Jesus ascend into heaven? (Acts 1:9-11)
6. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' ascension into heaven? (Luke 24:52, Acts 1:10,11)
7. How did Jesus' followers express their worship at His ascension? (Luke 24:52)
8. Why were the disciples so joyful? (Luke 24:52)
9. What did Jesus' followers do after He had returned to heaven? (Luke 24:53, Acts 1:14)
10. The disciples worshipped Jesus by listening to His words and obeying Him. What has Jesus indicated for you to do and how can you demonstrate your obedience this week?

JESUS LIVES!

Jesus Lives!

The Last Hours Of Jesus' Life

1. Why would one-third of all the material in the four Gospels be designated to the last week of Jesus' life?

2. Rearrange these last events in the order in which they happened, beginning with the number "1", "2", and so forth.
_____ Roman soldiers mock Jesus
_____ The crucifixion
_____ Gethsemane
_____ Simon of Cyrene carries the cross
_____ Peter's denial of Jesus
_____ The kiss by the betrayer and Jesus' arrest
_____ The Last Supper
_____ Jesus before Pilate
_____ The death of Jesus
_____ The burial of Jesus.
_____ Before the Sanhedrin
_____ The triumphant entry

3. Share what the cross means to you.

4. Look up the last seven words of Jesus and talk about what they mean to you personally.
 - a. The word of forgiveness (*Luke 23:34*)
 - b. The word of eternal life (*Luke 23:43*)
 - c. The word of kindness (*John 19:26*)
 - d. The word of despair (*Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46*)
 - e. The word of need. (*John 19:28*)
 - f. The word of completion (*John 19:30*)
 - g. The word of commitment (*Luke 23:46*)

5. Why did Jesus die?
 - a. *Ephesians 1:7*
 - b. *Colossians 1:20*
 - c. *I Peter 1:18-19*
 - d. *Galatians 3:13-14*
 - e. *Revelations 1:5*
 - f. *Matthew 26:28*
 - g. *Ephesians 2:14*

6. Why was the curtain of the Temple torn in two, from top to bottom? (*Mark 15:38*) What does this mean to you?

Jesus Lives!

He Is Alive To Meet Real Needs

1. Contrast the teaching of reincarnation with the teaching of resurrection. For example, which one of these devalues the person and which one gives value to the person? Which one is accomplished through the power of God?
2. List the four appearances of Jesus that are recorded in *John 20 and 21*.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
3. Read through *John 20:1-18* and answer the following:
 - a. Who was the other disciple that outran Simon?
 - b. Who was Mary Magdalene? What did Jesus do for her? How did she react to His death on the cross?
 - c. What happened to her emotionally in *Verse 11*?
 - d. Describe a person who has lost hope. What is it like?
 - e. How did Mary get her hope back? (*verses 16-18*)
4. Read *John 20:19-23*. What were the disciples doing behind closed doors? What was their emotional state? How did the appearance of Jesus change them?
5. Read *John 20:24-30*. What kind of person was Thomas? What was he like before he met Jesus? How did Jesus change him? How did the crucifixion affect him?
 - a. What happens to people who lose their faith?
 - b. How did he get his faith back?
 - c. How can we help other people get their faith back?
6. Why are these things written according to *John 20:31*?
7. Scan *John 21*. Where is Peter and what is he doing when Jesus comes and appears to him?
 - a. How did Peter get disconnected from Jesus' love? What did he do that made him feel like such a failure?
 - b. In *verses 15-21*, how does Jesus reinstate Peter? How did Peter get reconnected with God's love?
 - c. When you have become disconnected from the love of God, what do you do to get reconnected?
8. What is the lesson that we learn from what Jesus says to Peter when he wanted to know what John is going to do? (*John 21:22-23*)

Jesus Lives!

The Patterns Of The Resurrection Life

1. If you were a ghost, who would you visit? Why?
2. Look at *Luke 24:36-43*. What was the Apostles' first impression upon seeing Jesus?
 - a. What did they think He was?
 - b. Jesus went to great lengths to show them that He did have a physical body. What kinds of things did He demonstrate to them as proof of His physical existence? (*Luke 24:41-43*)
 - c. It is obvious that Jesus was not satisfied with the fact that they perceived Him as a spirit. They needed to understand Him as having a physical body. Look at *I Thessalonians 5:22* From Paul's blessing in this verse, what do you discover about human nature?
3. We know a lot about the Resurrection body and its nature from Jesus and His personal experiences. The nature of these bodies seems to be wonderfully complex, as we look at Jesus in this section of Scripture in Luke. We see that He is able to appear and disappear at will, which would indicate qualities of the spirit. He is also able to be felt, handled, and touched. He is also able to eat, it seems that He specifically asked for some fish to demonstrate this fact. So it looks like the resurrection body has the best of both worlds, the spiritual and the physical. Now turn to *I Corinthians 15:35-50*. Paul is answering a question put to him by some of the people in the Corinthian Church about the nature of the resurrection body and how the dead will be raised.
 - a. In what ways does Paul compare the resurrection to the sowing of seed and reaping of harvest? (*I Corinthians 15:36-37*)
 - b. Paul is absolutely clear about the source of this marvelous miracle. What is it?
 - c. Not only is the body physical and spiritual, but also it is something else that is very, very important. We see that this body is imperishable and eternal. How does this differ from our present condition in our physical bodies?
 - d. It seems that our Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, finally undoes the harm that Adam did, by bringing sin and death into the world. Through Adam came death, but through Jesus Christ comes life everlasting and a new resurrection body. This resurrection power in principle, not only applies to our physical existence, but also it helps us to cope with the day-to-day disappointments, situations, failures and brokenness of life. Look up *John 10:10*, and the promise of Jesus to bring us abundant life. How does this cross-reference with our study of resurrection power?
4. Share a personal experience of your own that demonstrates the resurrection power of Jesus Christ at work in your life, overcoming the disastrous effects of sin, death and brokenness?
 - a. How has your experience in our group helped you to realize and receive more and more of Jesus' resurrection power into your own life?
 - b. How can you help hurting people find the resurrection power of Jesus Christ for their own lives?

Jesus Lives! Because He Lives

1. How old were you when you first became aware of the fact that someday you would die? What caused this awareness?
2. If you had the choice, what are the last words you would like to say before you die?
3. If you had been watching the Crucifixion, what emotions do you think you would have experienced?
4. Read *John 20:1-9*. What do *verses 2, 8, & 9* tell us about the disciples' understanding of Jesus' purpose on earth?
5. What is your definition of a **miracle**?
6. Read *John 20:10-18*. How would you describe Mary's grief?
7. What does this paragraph say about her love for Jesus?
8. Compare Mary at the beginning of this reading with the Mary at the conclusion. What has caused the change?
9. When has Jesus met you at your point of need as He did with Mary?
10. What did you learn in that experience about God's care for us?
11. Examine *John 20:17* again. What is the strong message there for us today?
12. With whom will you share the good news from *John 20:18* this next week? "I have seen the Lord."

Jesus Lives!

Walking And Talking With Jesus

1. If Jesus walked into this room right now in His resurrected body, describe your feelings in one or two words.
2. If Jesus came to sit in our empty chair and you could ask Him one question, what would you ask?
3. Read *Matthew 18:19-20* and spend a few moments acknowledging His presence.
4. Review the events of the Crucifixion/Easter weekend.
Thursday:
Friday:
Saturday:
Sunday:
5. Read *Luke 24:13-35*. Why were these two disciples going to the country on this Sunday afternoon?
6. If you have ever had someone break into your quiet time away, what did you feel?
7. What were some of the things that made them sad...almost to despair? What caused them to be puzzled?
8. How did Jesus bring them into dialogue? (*Luke 18:19*) What can we learn from this in order to improve our communication with the people around us?
9. Even though they had lived in the Scriptures for several years, what seemed to be missing? (*Luke 18:25-26*)
10. How did Jesus help them make a commitment to Him? (*Luke 18:28-29*) What can we learn from this as we encourage people to make commitments to Jesus?
11. What was it that revealed His identity to these two disciples? (*Luke 18:30-31*)
12. And what proved to them that He was indeed supernatural?
13. Read *Luke 18:32* together: **“Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”** What are some of the differences you have noticed in your life since you began walking and talking with Jesus?

Jesus Lives! Surprised By God

1. How long has it been since you have experienced a **good** surprise? Describe it.

2. It was not a good Friday for the disciples when Jesus was crucified. It was not a good Saturday either, as they hid in fear and loneliness. Sunday was worse because their Lord's body was missing. But God had a **big** surprise waiting! Name some of the surprises the disciples had experienced during the three years they walked with Jesus.
 - a. *John 4:26*

 - b. *John 8:9*

 - c. *Luke 7:11-15*

 - d. *Luke 23:42-43*

 - e. Others

3. These are only a taste of the **big event**. What is the first surprise Mary discovered when she got to the tomb? (*John 20:1*)

What was the second surprise?

4. Read *John 20:10-16* and talk about your feelings if you had been Mary in this personal encounter with Jesus in His resurrected body.

5. What is happening in your life right now (your dark night) for which you need an "Easter Surprise" by God?

6. Memorize the five lines of this verse from *1 Corinthians 2:9* as your promise to stand on:

"No eye has seen,
No ear has heard,
No mind has conceived
What God has prepared
For those who love Him!"

Note: Jesus is always full of good surprises!

WHEN GOD CAME NEAR

When God Came Near

A Shocking Announcement

Luke 1:1-25

Lesson 1

1. When have you been completely surprised?
2. Read Luke 1:5-10. What do you learn about Zechariah and Elizabeth?
3. What do you know about the social status of the women in the ancient world who were unable to have children? (see Genesis 17:15-21; 18:9-15; Judges 13; and 1 Samuel 1:1-20)
4. What experience did Zechariah have that gripped him with fear? Where was he and what was he doing at the time? (Luke 1:11-12)
5. What promises and instructions did Gabriel give to Zechariah? (1:13-17)
6. Why was Zechariah rendered unable to speak until the time of John's birth? (1:18-22)
7. When have you doubted God's promised provision for you?
8. How did Elizabeth react to the good news that Gabriel had given her? (1:23-25)
9. Is there a long-term frustration in your life that needs to be given to God? How can you strengthen your belief that God is in control of the events of your life?

When God Came Near

An Unexpected Honor

Luke 1:26-38

Lesson 2

1. When was a time you received an unexpected announcement of good news?
2. Who was sent to speak to Mary and how did he greet her? (Luke 1:26-28)
3. What was Mary's first response to Gabriel's greeting and how did Gabriel put her at ease? (1:29-30)
4. What were the details of Gabriel's announcement? (1:31-33)
5. How did Mary's response to the angel (1:34) differ from Zechariah's? (1:18-20) Why wasn't Mary struck dumb as Zechariah was?
6. How has the fact that "with God, nothing is impossible" become a vital truth for you?
7. How was Elizabeth's pregnancy an encouragement to Mary? (1:36-37)
8. What kind of attitude was apparent in Mary's response to the angel's visit? What was her final statement to Gabriel about her faith in God? (1:38)
9. What can you do to maintain a servant's "Yes, Lord," attitude as you live from day to day?

When God Came Near

A Visit From Mary

Luke 1:39-56

Lesson 3

1. Mary was from Nazareth in northern Israel. Where did she hurry off to and who did she visit? (Luke 1:39-40)
2. What remarkable thing happened when Mary greeted Elizabeth? (1:41)
3. How did Elizabeth indicate that she knew the significance of Mary's pregnancy? (1:42-45)
4. What kind of reassurance do you think Mary felt when she heard Elizabeth's words?
5. What titles for God did Mary mention in her song and what actions did she say God had taken for her? (1:46-49)

Titles

Actions

6. How did Mary describe herself? (1:47-48)
7. What characteristics of God did Mary list as she continued her song? (1:50-56)
8. According to Mary's song, What kind of people did Mary declare are given God's favor? (1:50-55)
9. How can you "glorify the Lord "and "rejoice in your Savior"?
10. Who needs to hear you express your faith and love for God this week?

When God Came Near

The Birth of John the Baptist

Luke 1:57-80

Lesson 4

1. How do parents often choose names for their children?
2. What response did the relatives have when Elizabeth told them the child wouldn't be named after his father or another family member? (Luke 1:61)
3. Why did they have to make signs to Zechariah about what he wanted to call the child? (1:62)
4. What did Zechariah do when his voice was restored? (1:63-64)
5. What effect did all these things have on the people where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived? (1:65-66)
6. Who gave inspiration for Zechariah's song? (1:67)
7. What does Zechariah declare about God in his song? (1:68-75)
8. What outstanding title did Zechariah say would be given to his son? (1:76)
9. What was to be Zechariah's son's purpose in life? (1:76-77)
10. What limited information did Luke include to summarize John's childhood? (1:80)
11. Review Zechariah's song and use all or part of Luke 1:68-75 as a personal prayer of praise and worship to the Lord.

When God Came Near

The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7

Lesson 5

1. When have you endured a long uncomfortable trip?
2. Why did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem?
(Luke 1:1-4)
3. What was Joseph and Mary's marital status at the time of their journey to Bethlehem? (2:5)
4. Why was this trip especially difficult for Mary? (2:5)
5. What are the historical facts prompting this trip that provide an approximate date of Christ's birth? (2:1-4)
6. In what ways did God manage the events of history to get Joseph and Mary where He wanted them at the appropriate time and why was this necessary (Matthew 1:4-6)?
7. Describe this event based on Luke 2:5-7. How long were they there before Christ's birth? Where did they stay? Was the town crowded, etc.?
8. Were people in Bethlehem aware of the great event that had happened?
(2:15-18)
9. Are people around you living with an awareness of Christ's Glory and Majesty?
10. How can you demonstrate in your everyday life that you have room for Christ the Lord?

When God Came Near

The Angels and the Shepherds

Luke 2:8-20

Lesson 6

1. What is the most unique birth announcement you've ever seen?

2. At what time and place did an angel of the Lord appear to the shepherds?
(Luke 2:8)

3. How many angels were first present when the shepherds were told the news of Christ's birth?
(2:9-12)

4. What names were used to describe Jesus and by what sign would the shepherds recognize Him? (2:10-12)

5. How many angels did the shepherds hear praising God and what was their message of praise?
(2:13)

6. If you had been one of the shepherds on the night Christ was born, what would you have done after the angels left?

7. How did the shepherds react to the news? (2:15-16)

8. After finding the Christ child, what did the shepherds do? (2:17-20)

9. How should we handle the good news that God has entrusted to us?
What is our responsibility since we have "discovered" the good news about Jesus, the Christ?

10. Who do you know that needs to hear the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ our Lord?

When God Came Near

Mary & Joseph Dedicate Baby Jesus

Luke 2:21-40

Lesson 7

1. What ceremonies, rituals or traditions does your family or church have to honor the life of a newborn child?
2. What was the first significant ceremony or ritual Mary & Joseph did for their child? When was it and what took place? (Luke 2:21)
3. Following the birth of a son, according to Jewish Law, the mother had to wait 40 days before going to the temple to offer sacrifice for her purification. Why did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple? (2:22-24)
4. Who was Simeon and what was the significance of his encounter with baby Jesus in the temple? (2:25-29)
5. How did Simeon's prophecy point out that Christ would be the Savior for the whole world? (2:30-32)
6. How did Mary and Joseph respond to Simeon's words? (2:33)
7. What additional things did Simeon say to Mary and why were his words important? (2:34-35)
8. Who was Anna? And what was her response to finding Mary, Joseph, and the Christ child in the temple? (2:36-38)
9. Were you dedicated to God as a child? Have you chosen to dedicate your life to God now that you are grown?
10. How can you demonstrate this week that you are a person who has been dedicated to God?

When God Came Near Jesus, the Boy at the Temple

Luke 2:41-52

Lesson 8

1. Have you ever accidentally left someone behind while on a trip or outing?
2. How did Jesus get left behind in Jerusalem and why did three days go by before Mary and Joseph located Him? (Luke 2:43-46)
3. What was Jesus doing during the three days that He was on His own in Jerusalem? (2:46)
4. What effect did Jesus' dialogue have on the teachers of the law in Jerusalem? (2:46-47)
5. All adult Hebrew men were required by law to attend three annual feasts: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. (Exodus 23:14-17; Deuteronomy 16:16) What might cause you to believe that Jesus had attended the Feast of the Passover with his parents in years prior to this trip? (2:41)
6. What kind of pattern or model were Mary and Joseph setting for Jesus by their family traditions? What happens when parents try to pass on to their children, beliefs or habits which they do not practice themselves?
7. How did Mary respond when she and Joseph finally found Jesus? (2:48)
8. How did Jesus answer His parent's concern for Him and after replying to His parents, what did Jesus do? (2:49-51)
9. If Jesus were being raised under your care, what positive traits, characteristics and patterns for life and worship would He pick up from you? How would your pattern of living help Him grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." (2:52)

SMALL GROUP LESSONS ON VARIOUS TOPICS

Controlling Anger

Ephesians 4:26-27

1. What persons or circumstances most cause you to become angry and lose control?
2. What are some of the results when that happens?
3. Read Ephesians 4:26-27. Does Paul say that anger is a sin?
4. What will happen if anger is not resolved quickly and constructively?
(Ephesians 4:27)
5. Read James 1:19. How would being "slow to speak" help when you are angry?
6. James 3:7-12 illustrates how the tongue has been a problem for Christians since the early church. How can we gain control of our speech?
7. Even though you may not be able to prevent feelings of anger, what are some constructive ways to maintain control over your tongue and prevent injury to others? (Proverbs 21:23)
8. How are you presently struggling with controlling your anger and speech?
9. Pray for each other in this difficult area of controlling the tongue and managing our responses to anger.

Strength For The Struggle

1. What are some of the struggles that individuals are going through today?

What struggles are you going through right now?

2. Read *Isaiah 40:31* in unison, “*Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*”

What message is here for you to apply in your life?

3. How does the chapter begin? (*Isaiah 40:1*)

What is the message in *verse 2*?

4. What do these two verses tell us about God and what He wants to do in our lives?

5. In *Isaiah 40*, we see the contrast between the frailty of man and the strength of God. How is the frailty of man described in *verses 6-8 and 23-24*?

6. How is the strength and glory of God described in the following verses?

- a. *Isaiah 40:5*
- b. *Isaiah 40:10*
- c. *Isaiah 40:11*
- d. *Isaiah 40:15*
- e. *Isaiah 40:26*
- f. *Isaiah 40:28*

7. In *Isaiah 40:28* what are the three things that we learn about God that give us great comfort?

8. God wants to strengthen us in our struggles (*Isaiah 40:29*). What is it that keeps us from yielding to Him in full trust?

9. What is our part of the promise of *James 4:10*?

10. What is God’s part in this promise?

Healing Your Hurts

1. Why do people get their feelings hurt so easily at Christmas time?

Why do the memories of past hurts seem to surface at Christmas time?

2. What does Jesus know about being hurt? (*1 Peter 2:21-24*)
3. How does Jesus feel about our sickness and hurts? (*Mark 1:40-42*)

Is God still able to heal our hurts? (*Hebrews 13:8*)

4. Name some ways we hurt ourselves. Why would we do that?
5. Discuss the following five things **not** to do when you are hurt. Illustrate from your own life how each of these has hurt you more
 - a. Don't deny your hurts.
 - b. Don't wear your feelings on your sleeve.
 - c. Don't strike back out of hurt.
 - d. Don't rehearse the hurt.
 - e. Don't nurse your hurt.
6. Discuss together the five steps to take in order to receive healing for your hurts:
 - a. Make up your mind that you want to stop hurting and be healed.
 - b. Visualize Jesus Christ reaching out to you.
 - c. Come to Jesus and open up.
 - d. Come clean before the Lord.
 - e. Receive the healing touch of Jesus.

Did Jesus Love Himself?

1. Take the self-esteem test. Rate yourself from 1 to 10 with 10 being the yes and 1 being the no.
 - ___ a. Are you considered overly sensitive by friends or family?
 - ___ b. Are you argumentative?
 - ___ c. Are you a critical person?
 - ___ d. Are you forgiving?
 - ___ e. Are you excessively jealous?
 - ___ f. Are you a good listener?
 - ___ g. Do you find it hard to accept compliments?

2. Why is it true that if we don't love ourselves, our neighbor is in big trouble? What kind of trouble would we be in if Jesus did not love Himself?

3. In loving Himself, Jesus showed us how to love ourselves. As we look at these seven ways, let's make application in our own lives.
 - a. Jesus loved Himself because He knew who he was. Read *John 10:36*. Who are we in Christ?

 - b. Jesus loved Himself because He knew what He was to do. Read *Luke 19:10*.

 - c. How early did Jesus know what He was to do? Share an example of a way that Jesus gave love to others. Share an example of when you have given love to others and how it made you feel about yourself.

 - d. Jesus loved Himself because of the way He responded positively to abusive treatment. Give examples of when Jesus was mistreated and yet had enough self-love to keep responding positively instead of reacting negatively.

How is it possible to still love yourself when everybody else is treating you in an abusive manner?

 - e. Jesus loved Himself because of the way that He trusted other people with His ministry. What was it like?

Who needs to have their self-esteem built up the most: leaders or those that they lead?

 - f. Jesus loved Himself because of the way that He gave Himself on the cross to be our Savior. (*Romans 5:8*) What does Jesus dying on the cross mean to you personally?

The bottom line: Jesus loved Himself because of the special relationships that He enjoyed with the father. Have someone in your group share about their special relationship with God and how it makes them feel about themselves as a person.

Why Do Good Things Happen To Bad People?

1. Why is pain sometimes called “the gift nobody wants”?
2. Does it seem sometimes that God’s people suffer more than the wicked? The psalmist thought so! (*Psalm 73:2-14*) How did he get into that position?
3. How was the psalmist set free? (*Psalm 73:23-24*)
4. What eternal principle in *Psalm 73:1* helps us to hold our ground against Satan’s attacks?
5. In the Garden of Eden, Satan touched the nerve of envy in Eve. How would the concept of a “Good God” in *Psalm 73:1* have prevented Eve from falling into sin?

Who suffered when Adam and Eve believed Satan’s lies that God did not want the best for them?

6. Have you felt the way the psalmist did in *Psalm 73:2-3*?
7. What is the answer to the psalmist found in *Psalm 73:17*?
 - a. How did entering the sanctuary of God help him understand the final destiny of the wicked?
 - b. What sacrifice do we bring to God in *Psalm 73:1*?
8. For us to win the victory over this temptation, to ask “why do good things happen to bad people,” what else are we to do?
 - a. *Psalm 73:23*
 - b. *Psalm 73:24*

Why Do Bad Things Happen To Good People?

1. When was the last time you asked God “**WHY?**”
2. Read together *1 Peter 2:21-25* and discuss what you can learn about suffering from this passage.
3. Suffering involves two main issues: My pain and my response. Which of these two do you think a person should expend their energy on?
4. Describe what kind of man Job was (*Job 1:1-5*).
 - a. What did God say to Satan about Job? (*Job 1:8*)
 - b. How did Satan reply to God’s affirmation of Job (*Job 1:9-11*)?
5. List the five disasters that happened to Job. (See *Job: 1*)
 - a. Disaster #1 – *Job 1:14-15*
 - b. Disaster #2 – *Job 1:16*
 - c. Disaster #3 – *Job 1:17*
 - d. Disaster #4 – *Job 1:18-19*
 - e. Disaster # 5 – *Job 2:7-8*
6. How did Job respond to the first four disasters? (*Job 1:21-22*) How did he respond to the fifth disaster when his wife began to turn against him? (*Job 2:9-10*)
7. Talk about these four different types of suffering and give illustrations from within your group experiences in suffering:
 - a. Natural disaster such as an earthquake:
 - b. Man’s inhumanity to man, such as war:
 - c. Suffering illustrated by Job’s life when he is under the attack of Satan. It is important to remember that Satan was out to beat God and Job merely was an object or target as a means to an end.
 - d. Suffering from our own erroneous actions:
8. Is it natural to ask why?
 - a. When we are asking why, what kind of counsel do we need?
 - b. When a friend is suffering, what do they need from us? Do they need quick answers?
9. In *Chapter 38-40*, God gives His answer to Job’s “why” by asking Job seventy questions. Read some of these passages together. What is the bottom line for Job? What does the sovereignty of God mean to you?
10. In *Job 42:1-5*, what made the difference for Job? What was the turning point for him? Why didn’t the question “why” matter anymore?

Discuss: “If there is anything that a sufferer needs, it is not an explanation but a fresh, new look at God.

Who Is Jesus Christ To You?

1. Who is Jesus?
2. How is Jesus different from other “religious leaders”?
3. Read together these “I am” passages from the Old Testament:
 - a. *Isaiah 46:9*
 - b. *Deuteronomy 32:39*
 - c. *Isaiah 43:1-3*
4. In the following “I am passages where Jesus claims His Deity as God, what does He say about Himself?
 - a. *John 4:26*
 - b. *John 6:35*
 - c. *John 8:23*
 - d. *John 8:58*
 - e. *John 9:5*
 - f. *John 10:7*
 - g. *John 10:36*
 - h. *John 11:25*
 - i. *John 13:13*
 - j. *John 14:6*
 - k. *John 15:1*
 - l. *Revelations 1:8*

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAID ABOUT JESUS:

5. What did John the Baptist say in *John 1:29* and *John 1:34*?
6. What did Peter say about Christ? (*Matthew 16:16*)
7. What did Martha, a close friend of Jesus, say to Him? (*John 11:27*)
8. What did Stephen say when he was being stoned? (*Acts 7:59*)
9. What did Thomas say when confronted with the resurrected Jesus in *John 20:26-29*?
10. What do you say about Jesus?
 - a. Who is Jesus to you personally?
 - b. What difference does He make in your life today?
11. Why would you recommend Jesus to a friend?

Overcoming Failures With New Beginnings

1. What were some of the goals you reached in 20__? What were some of the goals you failed to reach in 20__? What should we do with those goals that we did not reach – throw them away?
2. Did any Bible character ever fail in their life? _____ Give some examples. Was God able to use them? What do we learn from this?
3. Discuss this statement: “The sin is not in failing, it is in not doing something about it.” Read *I John 1:5-2:2*. What do we learn from these verses?
 - a. *I John 1:5-6*
 - b. *I John 1:7*
 - c. *I John 1:8,10*
 - d. *I John 1:9*
 - e. And even when we do slip back, we still have a way out. *I John 2:1-2*
 - f. And confirmed: *Isaiah 43:25*
4. What is the key that unlocks the process of overcoming failures? It is easy for us to talk about “goals of performance” that we may not reach, but what about the very personal ones? The failures in our attitudes, our behaviors, our relationships. Look back at Question No. 1 – Did you get honest? Personal? How are you doing as:
 - a. A mate?
 - b. A parent, a child?
 - c. In your work?
 - d. In your ministry?
 - e. As a friend?
 - f. Spiritual growth?

“Don’t let failure have victory in your life. Rather see every failure as an opportunity to gain a victory in your life!”

FIVE STEPS TO VICTORY OVER FAILURE

1. Admit your failure.
 - a. First to yourself. Why is this important?
 - b. Next to God. (*I John 1:9*)
 - c. And to others (*James 5:16*)Discuss: Your future success is tied directly to your willingness to admit your specific point of failure.
2. Ask God for His forgiveness. And accept God’s forgiveness.
3. Be prepared to live with and overcome the consequences of your failures. Remember: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!” (*Philippians 4:13*)
4. Learn from your failures
5. Put your failures behind you, look forward – set your VISION on VICTORY in the future.

REMEMBER: When Satan brings up the past, you remind him of the FUTURE! Discuss this principle: “In Christ Jesus we have the way and in the Holy Spirit we have the power to set our sights on, and to attain victory in the very important, personal areas in our lives.”

Fear Or Faith Freeing The Human Spirit

1. If you could raise one person from the dead, who would it be and why?
2. Read *Mark 5:21-43*
3. What had been the woman's experience with doctors (*Mark 5:25-26*)
4. What was the attitude of her heart? (*Mark 5:27-28*)
5. How did Jesus know she had touched His robe? (*Mark 5:30*)
 1. Why did He insist on finding the woman?
 2. Why did the woman come forward?
 3. What was she feeling (*Mark 5:33*)
 4. How did Jesus react to her? (*Mark 5:34*)
 5. What does His reaction to the woman say to you today?
6. What attitude did Jairus have when he first came to Jesus? (*Mark 5:22-23*)
7. What happened while Jairus was waiting for Jesus to finish with the woman? (*Mark 5:35*) How would you have felt if you had been Jairus?
8. What did Jesus tell Jairus? (*Mark 5:36*) What do you suppose Jairus felt? What did Jesus do? (*Mark 5:41-42*) Why?
9. Define fear. What does Scripture tell us about fear? (*2 Timothy 2:7*) Where then does fear come from?
10. What does Scripture tell us about faith? (*Hebrews 11:1*)
11. What does Scripture have to say about our prayer life when we have a mixture of fear and faith in our lives? (*James 1:6-8*)
12. What is the human spirit?
 - In what ways does God use the human spirit?
 - What is the promise in *I John 3:21-22*?
 - Why is it worth the effort to free the human spirit?

If Christ Is Not Risen

1. How old were you when you first experienced the death of someone close to you?
2. What was your understanding of death at that time?
3. Approximately how many people actually saw Jesus in His resurrected body? (*Matthew 28: 1-10, 16-20; John 2:11-18; Luke 24:13-35; John 20:26-28; Acts 1:3-8*)
4. What are some popular theories (then and now) that try to refute the fact that Jesus did, in fact, come from the grave?

Note: The Apostle Paul and the other first century Christians were willing to stake their very lives on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They fearlessly preached it. They were persecuted as a result of preaching the resurrection of Jesus, not His death. In *I Corinthians 15:12-22* Paul shows that our faith stands or falls on this one point. Read *I Corinthians 15:12-14*.

5. If Christ is not Risen (*I Corinthians 14*) Have you ever felt that your faith was futile? Why?
6. If Christ is not Risen (*I Corinthians 15-16*) How would this affect the way you feel about deceased loved ones and your own death?
7. If Christ is not Risen (*I Corinthians 17*) What difference does this fact make in your daily life?
8. If Christ is not Risen (*I Corinthians 18*) When the dead are raised, who is the first person you want to visit with? Why?
9. If Christ is not Risen (*I Corinthians 19*) According to this verse (and verse 13) what difference does it make in our world if Jesus Christ is still dead?

Conclusion: Read again the angel's message in *Acts 1:9-11*. What does it mean, "in the same way you have seen him go"? How did He go to heaven?

The Great Escape

1. What is the biggest escape you ever heard of or ever made?
2. If you could escape (or get away) right now from the responsibilities of life where would your favorite place be?
3. List kinds of prisons in life people find themselves captive in.
(*Acts 12:1-19*)
4. Could we say that mankind in general has been imprisoned? How? (*Genesis 3:17-19*)
5. Both James and Peter escaped from prison. James died! When and how is death an escape?
6. Is it possible for our death to be a positive experience? (*I Thessalonians 4:13-18*)
7. Discuss this statement made by Charles Frohman as his ship was sinking “Do not fear death, death is a beautiful adventure.”
8. Look up *Romans 8:1*. What truths are found in this passage?
9. When in life have you felt the freest? Why?

Young Boy In A Wiseman's World

1. Read *Luke 2:39-52*
Notice in *verse 39* how the idea of faithfulness was a part of the lives of Mary and Joseph. They were not only concerned about following through for themselves, but they fulfilled the requirements for their infant son. Why is forming a pattern of faithfulness and responsibility so critical in the life of a family?
2. Why does God value a faithful person?
3. *Verse 40* tells us all we know about the first twelve years of Jesus' life. Human curiosity has led to all sorts of speculation on what Jesus was like, what He did, who His friends were, etc.
 - a. Why do you suppose the Bible is quiet concerning the childhood of Jesus Christ?
 - b. This verse does tell us three things about Jesus. What are they and what is implied?
4. Twelve years pass and in *verse 41* we see that the parents of Jesus are still faithful in doing all that the law commanded. All Jews were required to go to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Mary and Joseph went every year. In Jesus' twelfth year, mom and dad brought Him along in order that He might be exposed to the religious life of the nation.
 - a. What is the value of parents allowing their children to participate in spiritual experiences?
 - b. This trip for Jesus was also in preparation for another big event in His life. At age 13 a Jewish boy became a "Son of the Commandment" and a full member of the religious community. The ceremony was called Bar Mitzvah. Usually, the child was taken to the Temple at age 12 in anticipation of this event. Notice that Jesus is now beginning to take His spiritual responsibility upon Himself. No longer do His parents have to fulfill it for Him. Are there any parallels in your life? When did you start becoming responsible for your own spirituality?
5. Look at *verse 43*. Often at the conclusion of a feast the women would leave for home ahead of the men along with the younger children. The older boys, like Jesus, had the option of staying with mom or dad. Mary thought Joseph had Him and Joseph thought Mary had Him. It was custom for the two segments of the caravan to meet at a prearranged spot after the first day's journey. It was then they noticed their boy was missing. What happened next?
6. Put yourself in their place. How would you feel as a parent if you lost your child?
7. In *verse 46* we find Jesus having a conversation with the teachers. What was their response to Jesus and why?
 - a. Intellectually Jesus seemed to be their equal. Why was this so?
 - b. Look at mom and dad's response in *verse 48*. In what way is it typical of parents?
8. What does Jesus' response in *verse 49* teach us about Him and His goals and purposes for His life? *Verse 51* and *verse 49* need to be compared. What was Jesus' attitude toward this experience (especially toward His parents)?

Honest Doubts Are Healthy

1. What is the opposite of faith?

How is DOUBT related to faith?

2. What is the opposite of courage?

How is FEAR related to courage?

3. In your experience, what are some of the things that cause doubts to come into your mind?

4. Do you think it's okay to ask God "why?"
Why?

5. Read this 19th Century poem:

*The centipede was happy quite,
Until the toad-in-fun
Said, "Pray, which leg goes after which?"
Which worked her mind to such a pitch,
She lay distracted in a ditch,
Considering how to run.*

How does this illustrate the need for us to deal with the doubts that come to mind?

Read *Luke 24:36-43*. Discuss the importance of the disciples being able to ask Jesus the tough questions.

The Suffering And Death Of Jesus Christ

1. What pictures come to mind when you think of the suffering and death of Jesus? (*Matthew 27:27-56*)
2. Why did Jesus Christ allow himself to be crucified? (*Romans 5:6-8* and *I Peter 3:18*)
3. What are some of the consequences of sin? (*Isaiah 59:2* and *Romans 5:12*)
4. How did Jesus Christ overcome the problem of sin?
 - a) *Romans 5:17-21, 6:23*
 - b) *II Corinthians 5:17-21*
5. Jesus had predicted that He would be condemned to death by crucifixion. What did He also predict would happen on the third day following His death? (*Matthew 20:18-19*)
6. What would it mean to you if Jesus' body were still in the tomb?
7. What did the Apostle Peter say to the people of Jerusalem concerning Jesus Christ whom they had crucified? (*Acts 2:22-38*)
8. What hope do you gain knowing that Jesus did rise from the dead?

Read Paul's description of Jesus Christ in *Colossians 1:15-20* then spend time thanking Jesus for what He has done and praising Him for who He is.

The Person Of Jesus

Jesus is the center of our faith. It's important to understand who He is and what He has done for us.

1. What did Jesus claim concerning Himself? State in your words what Jesus meant when He said these things:
 - a. *John 10:30-33*
 - b. *John 14:6, 8, 9*
 - c. *Matthew 28:19, 20*
 - d. *Mark 14:61, 62*

2. What did others say about Jesus? State in your words what each of the following meant:
 - a. His enemies (*John 8:13*)
 - b. Peter (*Matthew 16:16*)
 - c. Martha (*John 11:27*)
 - d. Thomas (*John 20:24-28*)

3. How did Jesus come into the world?
 - a. According to *John 17:5*, where was Jesus before He was born?
 - b. Read *Matthew 1:18-23*. What was unique about Jesus' birth?

4. The life and ministry of Jesus.
 - a. Describe Him as a teacher.
 - b. Describe Him as a miracle worker.
 - c. Describe Him as a healer.

5. Why did Jesus have to die? (*1 Peter 2:18* TLC)

6. The resurrection of Jesus.
 - a. What does *John 20:1-18* tell us?
 - b. Why did Jesus rise from the dead? (*1 Corinthians 15:3-6*)

7. Where is Jesus now? What do the following scriptures tell us?
 - a. *Mark 16:19*
 - b. *Hebrews 4:14*

8. What does the future hold?
 - a. *Matthew 26:65*
 - b. *Acts 1:11*

The Last Hours In Jesus' Hours

1. Why would one-third of all the material in the four Gospels be designated to the last week of Jesus' life?

2. Rearrange these last events in the order in which they happened, beginning with the number "1", "2", and so forth.
 - _____ Roman soldiers mock Jesus.
 - _____ The crucifixion
 - _____ Simon of Cyrene carries the cross.
 - _____ Peter's denial of Jesus
 - _____ The kiss by the betrayer of Jesus' arrest
 - _____ The last supper
 - _____ Jesus before Pilate
 - _____ The death of Jesus
 - _____ The burial of Jesus
 - _____ Before the Sanhedrin
 - _____ The triumphant entry

3. Share what the cross means to you.

4. Look up the last seven words of Jesus and talk about what they mean to you personally.
 - a. The word of forgiveness. (*Luke 23:34*)
 - b. The word of eternal life. (*Luke 23:43*)
 - c. The word of kindness. (*John 19:26*)
 - d. The word of despair. (*Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:46*)
 - e. The word of need. (*John 19:28*)
 - f. The word of completion. (*John 19:30*)
 - g. The word of commitment. (*Luke 23:46*)

5. Why did Jesus die?
 - a. *Ephesians 1:7*
 - b. *Colossians 1:20*
 - c. *I Peter 1:18-19*
 - d. *Galatians 3:13-14*
 - e. *Revelations 1:5*
 - f. *Matthew 26:28*
 - g. *Ephesians 2:14*

6. Why was the curtain of the Temple torn in two, from top to bottom? (*Mark 15:38*)
What does this mean to you?

Blessings, Which Are Ours Through The Cross Of Jesus

1. What was the promise given to Abraham in *Genesis 15*?

2. When one thinks of the Jewish people today, what is there that still stands out as a characteristic of their race?

3. Read *Galatians 3:13-14*. What does the word “redeemed,” mean?

4. Where did the curse come from and what were the results on the earth and in our lives? (*Genesis 2:3*)

5. What does Jesus do with the curse?

6. What does the word “salvation” mean to you?
 - a. Where does salvation come from? (*Psalms 27:1; Isaiah 12:2*)

 - b. Who was salvation made possible through? (*John 10:9; Acts 4:12; Acts 15:11*)

 - c. What are some of the conditions of our salvation? (*Romans 10:9; James 1:21; II Peter 1:10-11*)

 - d. Who is salvation possible for? (*Luke 3:6; Acts 2:21*)

7. What are all the benefits that are ours because Jesus died on the cross to destroy the curse and give us salvation? List all of these blessings.

8. Do you think God wants us to have a prosperous soul or a poor soul? (*III John 2*) What is it that gives a prosperous, healthy soul according to *III John 3-4*?

He Is Alive

1. Contrast the teaching of reincarnation with the teaching of the resurrection. For example, which one of these devalues the person and which one gives value to the person? Which one is accomplished through the power of God?
2. List the four appearances of Jesus that are recorded in *John 20 and 21*.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
3. Read through *John 20:1-18* and answer the following:
 - a. Who was the other disciple that outran Simon?
 - b. Who was Mary Magdalene? What did Jesus do for her? How did she react to His death on the cross?
 - c. What had happened to her emotionally in verse 11?
 - d. Describe a person who has lost hope. What is it like?
 - e. How did Mary get her hope back? (Read *John 20:16-18*)
4. Read *John 20:19-23*. What were the disciples doing behind closed doors?
 - What was their emotional state?
 - How did the appearance of Jesus change them?
5. Read *John 20:24-30*. What kind of a person was Thomas?
 - What was he like before he met Jesus?
 - How did Jesus change him?
 - How did the crucifixion affect him?
 - a. What happens to people who lose their faith?
 - b. How did he get his faith back?
 - c. How can we help other people get their faith back?
6. What are these things written according to *John 20:31*?
7. Read *John 21*. Where is Peter and what is he doing when Jesus comes and appears to him?
 - a. How did Peter get disconnected from Jesus' love? What did he do that made him feel like such a failure?
 - b. In verses 15-21, how does Jesus reinstate Peter? Another way of asking that, how did Peter get reconnected with God's love? When have you gotten disconnected from the love of God, what do you do to reconnect?
 - c. How important is it for us to be connected to God's love? What's it like to be disconnected from the love of God?
 - d. What's the lesson that we learn from what Jesus says to Peter when he wants to know what John is going to do?
(*John 21:22-23*)

Sinners, Saints, Lost Sheep And A Loving God

1. *Luke 15:15* opens with the tax gatherers and sinners flocking to Jesus. What was the Pharisees big gripe about this?
 - a. How did the Pharisees see themselves in relation to God?
 - b. How did the Pharisees see others in relation to God?
 - c. What kind of a corner does a person work themselves into when they can't admit they are a sinner? (*John 1:8-10*)
2. The Pharisees think they know what God is like. They are right on one point – God hates sin. But they missed the boat on those who commit sin. God loves sinners. God values sinners so much that what happens when one of them repents? (*Luke 15:7-10*) Who are modern days Pharisees?
3. Read the Parable of the Prodigal Son. What picture do you get of the son who squandered his wealth?
 - a. Of the other son?
 - b. Of the father?
4. What does the prodigal son's experience teach you about the effects of sin?
 - a. What does the other son's attitude teach you about self-righteousness and an unforgiving spirit?
 - b. What does the father teach you about God's love?
5. Notice the father. He didn't quarrel when the boy demanded his share. He didn't judge when the boy repented. He didn't say, "I told you so," when the son wanted to be a hired hand. What does this teach you about parenting?
6. The attitude of the father should be that of the church: loving, accepting and forgiving. When the church loses sight of these things, what becomes of its effectiveness in the world? Any church is only as good as the individual parts. What kinds of attitudes do we need to maintain toward sinners?
7. What does *Romans 3:23* teach us?
8. What do we need to encourage ourselves or anyone else to do when we fall into sin? *Luke 15:7,10,18*.
9. What does it mean to repent?
10. Look at *Luke 15:16*. We are to love, accept, and forgive. How does holding people accountable fit into this? *Luke 15:17* tells us the outcome of this tough love situation. What is it?

Shedding The Shame –The Power Of The Blood

1. Why does sin bring shame?
2. Where does the feeling of guilt come from? (*Leviticus 5:17*)
3. Are there any people in the world who are not guilty of sin? (*Romans 3:10-20*)
4. What are some of the ways modern man tries to deal with guilt?
5. How were the people of the Old Testament instructed to handle guilt and sin?
6. Was the sacrifice of the bulls and lambs able to totally cleanse from sin? (*Hebrews 9:9,10,22; 10:1-4*)
7. Read *Hebrews 9:11-14*. How did Christ remedy the guilt problem for you?
8. Discuss this statement: “God did for us what no one else can do.”
9. Fill in the six ways Christ shed His blood for us. Discuss how each might be important to you.
 - a. *Luke 22:24*
 - b. *Luke 22:63*
 - c. *Mark 15:15*
 - d. *Matthew 27:29*
 - e. *Matthew 25:35*; note *Luke 24:40*
 - f. *John 19:34,35*
10. Explain what these words mean: “What can wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.” (*Romans 3:24,25*)
11. Is there any reason why you should still feel “shame” for sin?
(*Ephesians 1:7, I John 1:7*)
12. Affirm together your spiritual, emotional, and physical freedom in Christ. (*Revelations 1:5*)

Mary's Thoughts And Feelings Concerning Jesus

1. As Moses and many of the Old Testament saints discovered, being in the center of God's will does not mean that problems will disappear or pain cease. Many of God's faithful ones were acquainted with much suffering and grief. Read *Luke 2:33-35*. What was Simeon trying to communicate to Mary?
 - Look at *Luke 2:19, 51*. What do you learn about Mary's temperament?
2. Read *Luke 2:21-38*. Every new mother has deep urges to nurture and protect her child. How do you think the attention the baby Jesus was receiving was affecting Mary?
 - Put yourself in her place. How would it affect you?
3. There were forces at work that would seek to destroy the Baby Jesus. Look up *Matthew 2:13-23*. Mary and Joseph were just fitting into the neighborhood when instructions came from heaven. What did the angel command Joseph and why?
 - How would the knowledge the children were being murdered because of her Son affect Mary?
4. Ten years later a different kind of sorrow touched Mary's life. Read *Luke 2:41-52*. What is it?
 - a. How does a mother feel when she begins to see her child grow up and pull away and start to think for himself?
 - b. How would this experience affirm the message of the angel, Simeon and Anna, the prophetess?
 - c. How does the three-day search parallel her three-day wait after His death?
5. Read the story of the wedding in Cana in *John 2:1-11*. Jesus firmly, yet lovingly, asserts His independence from mom. Jesus is no longer dependent upon her and has his own course and path to follow. Why must a mother "let go" of her child?
6. Read *John 19:25-27*. Mary's sorrow is made complete by the spectacle of her Son dying on the Roman cross. She may have said to herself, "It's not fair that my child should die before me". What must it feel like to watch your child die?
7. Just as her sorrow was made full, so is her joy. This is God's way. Read *Acts 1:14*. Mary had seen her Son alive from the dead but now He was gone again. She didn't know it, but in a few days she would experience being with Him in a new and more wonderful way. She had carried Him as an infant in her womb and now she would carry Him in her spirit as King of kings and Lord of lords. What do you think her feelings would have been?
8. How does this lesson apply to you today?

Shepherds & Angels At Jesus' Birth

Read Luke 2:1-20.

1. What impresses you about Joseph and Mary in this account?
 - a. Dutiful citizens
 - b. Ordinary people
 - c. Descendants of David
 - d. Their special courage
 - e. Their flexibility and resourcefulness

2. Why do you suppose the Savior of the world was born in an obscure village and laid in a manger?
 - a. It just happened that way
 - b. God didn't want to draw attention to Him
 - c. To show He was an ordinary person
 - d. He demanded no special favors
 - e. No place would have been as grand as He deserved

3. Why do you think God chose to announce the birth of the Son to Shepherds?
 - a. Only ones listening and receptive
 - b. Lowliest people around
 - c. Lived close to nature and God
 - d. They happened to be closest to the action

4. What effect did these nighttime events have on the shepherds?
 - a. They wondered if they had been dreaming
 - b. They lost a night's sleep
 - c. Their lives were changed forever
 - d. They saw God in a new way
 - e. Their relationships changed
 - f. Business as usual the next morning

5. What do you think the Shepherds were most excited about telling other people?
 - a. Hearing the angel chorus
 - b. Their wait for a Messiah was over
 - c. Seeing the newborn baby
 - d. God's plan for their salvation
 - e. The fact that what the angel said was actually true

6. Do you think Mary and Joseph understood the cosmic significance of the child they had just brought into the world?
 - a. Probably not
 - b. They must have
 - c. Mary could not have
 - d. Up to a point
 - e. They couldn't have

MY OWN STORY

1. Give a brief account of your birth. Include details such as: who your parents are, where they lived, who was President at the time, where you were born, and how your arrival was announced to the world.

2. What signs of promise were evident when you were an infant and toddler?
 - a. Strong will
 - b. Strong lungs
 - c. Cheerful nature
 - d. Good health
 - e. Little need for sleep
 - f. Superior intelligence
 - g. Vigorous energy
 - h. My own unique quality

3. What effect has the news of Christ's birth had on you?
 - a. Business as usual
 - b. Awakened a sense of joy
 - c. Given me hope for the future
 - d. Caused me to thank God for his forgiveness
 - e. Helped me to focus on spiritual growth
 - f. Triggered some confusion about God's plan

4. What signs of promise do you see in yourself as Jesus grows from "infancy" to "adulthood" in your life?
 - a. Developing wisdom for life's big decisions
 - b. Growing desire to know God
 - c. Deeper love for others
 - d. Freedom from sin
 - e. Infectious joy
 - f. Strength through the tough times
 - g. Commitment to serve Christ in the world

5. If you were to spread the word about what Jesus has done in your life, with whom would you share the news first?
 - a. Members of my family
 - b. Co-workers
 - c. Perfect strangers
 - d. My pastors
 - e. The first person I meet
 - f. Christian friends