

DISCOVERING MATTHEW

BIBLE STUDY FOR YOUTH AND QUIZZING FOR YOUTH



By Jim Wilcox

DISCOVERING

MATTHEW



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Bible Study for Youth and a Leaders's Guide
By Jim Wilcox

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USER'S GUIDE

FOR DISCOVERING MATTHEW

Discovering Matthew is best used in a “Discovery Group” setting. A Discovery Group is a group of youth committed to growing in God’s Word, meeting regularly for a set period of time to study and share. The use of Discovery Groups is described in more detail in the next section of this guide. It also serves as a great group study workbook for youth involved in Bible quizzing.

Here are some guidelines to help facilitate your use of Matthew:

- This study is divided into 13 Study sessions, and then the Bible quizzing. Each Group Study lesson is written to take approximately 45-60 minutes. This Bible study is meant to be only a part of a total session that includes you and your youth sharing insights from your personal study plus events and activities of the week and ending with prayer. A meeting of an hour to an hour and a half will provide adequate time for these components.
- Each Group Study session covers a specific section of Matthew and also identifies a key verse for you and your participants to memorize.
- This leader’s guide gives you a complete session plan for the entire Bible study portion of your weekly meeting. Each session contains the following elements designed to assist you in your preparation and presentation.

TEACHING AIMS and PERSPECTIVE--these will help you gain an understanding of the “main points” of the lesson.

BIBLE BACKGROUND--this extensive section will provide you with additional information that will broaden your understanding of the passage being discussed.

- The actual group study time is designed to take place through the structure of the session activities. After you’ve prepared yourself through studying the Purpose, Perspective, and Bible Background, read through the session activities to develop an understanding of what to expect from the coming group study time. Make sure you understand exactly what is intended to happen through each activity; remember, also, that these activities are here to assist you. Feel free to adjust them as necessary to fit your group environment, resources, and/or time frame.
- Regarding the group activities, you will find specific instructions that actually say, “Say, . . .” or are printed in bold italics. This does not mean that you must quote this information word for word to your students. We’ve included this material only as a guide for you regarding what we recommend to be communicated to your group.
- Each session provides you with four activities; each one intended to bring your students into an encounter with the Scripture through a certain perspective. These activities are: Engage the

Word, Explore the Word, Apply the Word, and LIVE THE WORD. The session activities are intended to give you strong teaching options without neglecting your own creativity. Adapt and tailor the sessions to meet the individual needs and personalities of your group.

- Occasionally, you will find sections entitled “Terms/People to Know.” These brief sections will give word definitions, explanations about terms or people, etc. that will help your class members better understand the passage being studied.
- Students are encouraged to keep personal notebooks as they read and study during the next several weeks. During the group sessions, they will often be asked to reflect in writing. Encouraging each youth to have a “notebook-type” journal will keep you from having to provide blank notepaper each time.

The first place to start on your journey through Matthew is with the Word itself. Read through Matthew entirely before you begin your Bible studies. Then look through this leader’s guide and acquaint yourself with the contents.

GUIDE TO DISCOVERY GROUPS

An effective small-group Bible study ministry for youth in the local church begins with Discovery Groups. Discovery Groups are important in: communicating acceptance, teaching by example, building personal relationships and modeling discipleship in a real-life setting.

There are many ways to start a Discovery Group in your church. The best way is to invite all of your youth to be involved. Use posters and promotional announcements beginning three or four weeks in advance to spread the word about the group. Personally contact those persons whom you feel would especially benefit from the study. Also, make personal contact with those whom you think will be involved in quizzing in the coming year, encouraging them to be involved in the group.

There are at least two ways to form a Discovery Group. One is to hand-pick those already strongly committed to becoming all God wants them to be. These hand-picked, highly motivated youth will usually respond more eagerly to discipling than others would. This approach to discipling is called for when a major purpose of the discipling is training for leadership, as in Jesus' training of the Twelve.

At the same time, every Christian needs to be discipled. Every Christian needs to belong to a warm, accepting fellowship that calls out the best in him. In the loving fellowship, the half-hearted disciple can begin to catch a vision of his

potential; he can taste the excitement of growth.

In many churches, all the youth will fit into a single small group. If you need more than one group, provide different groups for those with different levels of commitment. You may want to hand-pick a group for in-depth discipling, then provide other groups for those not yet ready for the intense commitment expected of the first group. Rather than dividing the youth arbitrarily, you may want to set specific conditions for membership in the more in-depth group. These conditions might include disciplines of attendance, spiritual journaling, Bible study, accountability, and so on.

Any Discovery Group member must have some level of commitment. An obvious minimum commitment is to attend the group regularly. To build mutual trust in the group, members have to get to know each other. If one group member drops in only occasionally, he will be a relative stranger to the rest of the group, at least at the level of sharing expected in the Discovery Group. The presence of a relative stranger will immediately reduce the trust level in the group, limiting the openness of sharing. Of course, some absences are inevitable. The needed commitment here is for each group member to make group attendance a very high priority so that attendance is regular. A discussion of the priority of group attendance can be helpful in the early weeks of the group.

What's the best time for a Discovery Group? Again, it depends upon your goals and the personality of your group.

How long should we continue the Discovery Group? As long as the youth involved can stay committed. There have been groups who continued year round. Once they finished the 13-week study, they worked chapter-by-chapter on other Bible books or started on a new workbook. It is generally best to run the group for 13 weeks. After the study has finished, there may be other youth who want to be a part of the Discovery Group who did not sign up before. If so, arrange for a leader for them. Some of the youth in the original group may want to continue, while others focus more on other activities. If you cannot continue to serve as leader, be sure another adult leader is there to carry on.

How do I facilitate the Discovery Group Bible study? To facilitate means to "make easy." A small-group facilitator, then, is a person who makes it easy for the group to relate. He or she keeps the group moving, nudges it back on track when it starts to stray, and encourages participation. The leader's role is to help group members discover for themselves what the scripture means, how they can apply it to their lives, and then encourage them to follow through with obedience. The group leader's role is not to be a resident authority who tells group members what the scripture means and how they are to apply it to their lives. He must resist the temptation to lecture.

The Discovery Group leader is not authoritarian but an authority. This authority, though, is a spiritual authority, flowing out of an authentic life. Youth follow this leader, not because they are forced to, but because of the kind of person the leader is.

This book has been created with the prayer that the Word of God will find a place in the heart and mind of you and your students so that you will all be equipped to be effective disciples of Jesus Christ in the midst of the contemporary pagan culture you face each day.

1 THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 1:1 - 4:11

KEY VERSE: “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:17).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Recognize the Christ-child as the fulfillment of centuries of Messianic prophecy.
2. See God as a Father of love and not just a Judge of justice.
3. Appreciate Scripture for its compelling story line and dramatic importance.

PERSPECTIVE

The book of Matthew is a two-edged sword: first, it is a story about the most famous person who has ever lived, which makes it accessible to the 2000s youth; on the other hand, it is a familiar story taught in so many ways in so many places that it perhaps has become clichéd and stale. Some teens may enter with an “I already know this” attitude, while some may think “This again?” Others, however, will be comforted by the familiarity and participate more freely than with another more obscure book of the Bible.

Bible study is an active activity: by that we mean it is something to be pursued with enthusiasm

by all in the group and not simply absorbed through some kind of spiritual osmosis by most while a few lead out. It is important that each student takes the initiative in his or her personal discovery time during the week, then be encouraged by the group to share his or her insights during this Discovery Group session.

This lesson will help your teens to understand that Jesus was, in many ways, just like they are. Born of “real” parents in a “real” place and tempted in “real” ways, Jesus was the world’s only “200 percent Being”: 100 percent man and 100 percent God.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

It may be important to establish the differences in the types, or genres, of writing found in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. There are narratives (stories), epistles (letters), and prophecies (revelations). Even within the narratives, of which Matthew is one, there are various genres: discourses, parables, anecdotes, etc.

The New Testament, or The New Covenant, starts with four versions of the same story. Together they offer the reader four perspectives and emphases on the deity and humanity of this man called Jesus. The first three Gospels, or “good newses,” are grouped in what is called “The Synoptic Gospels,” which simply means they correlate closely with one another. John’s

Gospel tells the same story, but its order of events, its purpose, and style set it apart from the Synoptics.

Matthew was a Jewish tax collector who worked for the Roman government. Renowned in the land for his shady dealings and sinful attitudes, Matthew was introduced to the Master by his given name, Levi. Jesus changed Levi's name to Matthew and invited him into the inner circle.

Its purpose: Matthew clearly wanted to establish Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecy--the Messiah (or Christ in the Greek language). Matthew includes more quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament than any other writer in the New Testament. He traces Jesus' lineage to Abraham, the "father" of Israel, God's chosen people. Although this may establish Matthew's immediate audience as Greek-speaking Jews, he is also appealing to a universal audience with a timeless message.

The book is controlled by five great discourses, or speeches, found in chapters 5-7 ("The Sermon on the Mount"), chapter 10, chapters 13-14, chapter 18, and chapters 24-25. The author closes each of these with the same refrain: "When Jesus had finished saying these things." Five narratives lead up to each of these discourses, providing a cohesive thread that binds the entire book into one smooth fabric of artistic writing. Some suggest that Matthew modeled his story after the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), with Jesus as the new (and greater) Moses.

It may be wise to remind your youth that the society in which Jesus walked and talked, and in which Matthew wrote, was skeptical, and sometimes even hostile toward this new religion called Christianity. The Church in Matthew's time was not the established holy body it has

become today through 20 centuries of struggles and wars, summits and councils. It was a group of everyday men claiming they had lived with God on earth. Imagine how the media would portray that idea today!

Matthew's prologue (vv. 1-17) includes an extensive genealogy that establishes Jesus as the Son of David, which links Him to fulfilled prophecy, and the son of Abraham, which links Him to the Jewish audience. Note that Matthew breaks a social norm by including three women in the lineage, Tamar (v. 3), Rahab (v. 5), and Ruth (v. 5). Matthew wrote Jesus' genealogy in three groupings of 14 ancestors each.

Engagements were not casual "trial marriages"; they were "pre-marriages" in which no sexual relations were permitted. Note that Matthew uses the terms "husband" and "wife" to describe Joseph and Mary before they were officially married. An engagement back then could only be "broken off," as we might say, by a formal divorce, just as a marriage would. Premarital pregnancies were punishable by execution—public stoning. Joseph, then, contemplated divorcing Mary quietly and privately when he discovered her pregnancy during this "pre-marriage" stage of their relationship. But a dream-vision by an angel assured him of Mary's innocence and her baby's divinity.

The gifts of the Magi, who have traditionally been considered kings of various realms, have come to symbolize three Christian truths, though the Magi almost certainly knew little of that future symbolism. An early church writer named Epiphanius claimed that the gold represented Christ's humanity, myrrh His death, and incense His divinity. In other words, gold showed Him as King, incense showed Him as God, and Myrrh showed him as mortal, accord-

ing to R. V. G. Tasker, former professor of New Testament Exegesis at the University of London (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew, An Introduction and Commentary* [London: The Tynedale Press, 1963], 42).

John the Baptist's exhortation to "repent" (3:2) means a direct and radical change in lifestyle (today's vernacular might say "turn or burn")

and is followed by a phrase repeated 33 times in Matthew's gospel, the only gospel of the four to use it: "The kingdom of heaven." John, after baptizing Jesus (yet another fulfillment of prophecy), claims that water is only surface baptism, cleaning only the external. It will be the Holy Spirit who cleanses the heart.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

It's a Boy!

Begin by helping your students focus on how they approach the study of the Bible. This first activity calls for some great creativity and imagination, which will be the hallmark of many if not most of the later activities as well.

You could start by filling in the first part of the "shower" information together as a group. Then get each student to suggest some guests that would come to the shower and what gifts they could bring. Remind the students that the gifts are not limited to material things: they could be talents or skills too.

Your study group is planning a baby shower for Mary and Joseph. As a host/hostess, your job is to register each guest's name and the gift he/she brought to the baby so that the parents can send appropriate "Thank You" cards. You know what the three Magi brought, but the other folks and their gifts will have to be products of your imagination. You might want to do this on your own at first, then as a group.

Date and Time:

Location:

Hosts/Hostesses:

Guest

Gift

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Welcome to Matthew

Humanity has experienced its own set of “passages.” The Bible recounts the first man and woman, Adam and Eve; the Great Flood; the Roman Empire. World history books recount many passages, but there is one single event, one shining moment, that divides the calendar of humankind like no other —the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, the Promised Man. No other incident in the past or future can separate the ages like Jesus’ coming.

His birth marks the beginning of the New Covenant, the contractual addendum that fulfills our relationship with the Creator of the Universe. Jesus’ life shows us mortals what the immortal God is really like. Jesus’ death affirms the Father’s sense of self-giving love. And His resurrection marks the beginning of the His “forever presence” in the person of the Holy Spirit.

There are three basic genres, or types of writing in the New Testament (hereafter referred to as The New Covenant): there are the “books,” the “letters,” and the “prophecies.” The book of Matthew is a story, more particularly a theological biography, of the life, activities, thoughts, and frustrations of Jesus, the Son of God. It fits the classical characteristics of good narrative writing, and even though it is non-fiction, it contains great fictional technique—like a great novel. It has a beginning with setting and main character, a chronicle of conflicts that reach a peak or climax, then a resolution that concludes the story. It’s simply fascinating reading.

Matthew was one of the 12 disciples or apostles who lived with Jesus during His ministry on earth. Unlike many of the chosen dozen, however, Matthew had led a life completely unworthy of the calling. He had been a tax collector, not the noblest of career choices back then, and a dirty scoundrel as well, cheating many people out of their hard-earned incomes. It seems significant, then, that the New Covenant God initiates with humanity begins with the account written by Matthew, a man whose own destiny was transformed through the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel was written between A.D. 60 and 80, but most scholars place it early in the time frame. It’s original language was Greek, so obviously it was written for Greek-speaking Jews, and it contains more references to the Old Testament than any New Covenant writer in order to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Jewish messianic prophecy and hope. It is organized around Jesus’ five great discourses, or speeches, with narrative elements providing transition between each.

After this overview, ask your group to complete the following statements:

- The fact that Jesus was a human being means . . .

- The fact that Jesus was God means . . .
- One story from Matthew’s book that strikes me is . . .

“God’s people.” This reminder to Matthew’s readers of their origins set the stage for his description of the conception of Jesus, which was similarly miraculous but even more dramatic. This recitation of lineage is then followed by the actual birth of the baby Jesus, which changed the world forever.

When your group has finished reading the first chapter of Matthew, ask them to answer these questions:

- If I could sit down with Jesus right now, I would ask Him . . .

- Note that Matthew divides the genealogy into three sections. What do you think was his purpose? What do you notice about each division?

- If I had to capture this book in one sentence, it would be . . .

- Choose one name from each section and write down all you know or can find out about that person.

2. Roots on the Family Tree (1:1-25)

Whew! Forty-two generations! That may seem like just a bunch of biblical trivia to you, but to Matthew it was a strong message that Jesus was the fulfillment of centuries-old prophecy. And he used it to establish Jesus as The Messiah to his Jewish audience.

- a.
- b.
- c.

Remember that Sarah, the wife of Abraham (who “begins the begat” in verse 2), was barren, so it was only God’s divine intervention that enabled them to produce what was to become

- Joseph was tempted to divorce Mary when he found out about her pregnancy. What do you suppose was going through his mind?
- If you had been Mary's mother or father, what advice might you have offered her before she left for Egypt?

• If you had been in Joseph's shoes, what would that dream (vv. 20-23) have done to you?

• Write down three things Mary and Joseph did that you think were good decisions.

• Look up the name "Jesus" in the biggest and best dictionary you can find and discover its meaning. Write it down here and think about it.

• Just what exactly is Herod's problem? Why is this birth so important to him?

3. Joy to the World (2:1-23)

No birth in the history of humanity has been celebrated as widely, eagerly, or religiously as the birth of this little Baby. After your group read this particular account, have them to respond to the following questions and instructions.

• There are several dreams and angel messages in this passage. Write them down and jot down your opinion as to what purpose each serves.

• What makes the birth of Jesus similar to what you know about your own birth?

4. The Wander Years (3:1-4:11)

Jesus' childhood is pretty much left out of Scripture. There's Luke's story of the visit to the Temple and His parents' subsequent panic, and there's a little bit about Joseph's carpentry business, but for the most part we jump from Jesus the baby to Jesus the man. This section of Matthew shows God's plan for Jesus through the parallel life of John the Baptist. After the group finishes reading this chapter and a half, ask them to answer the following items:

- The Baptist held no punches when he preached. We have only one of his sermons in Scripture, but from it we can see he was a strong orator with even stronger opinions. What was his message in verses 7-12?

- Enter the Nazarene. Jesus comes to the river to be baptized. Describe that scene in your own words.

- What is John's reaction to Jesus' request? Does that seem fitting or out of place? Why?

- Describe the appearance of John the Baptist. Use all five of your senses.

- Why was God pleased with Jesus at this point? What had He done?

- Jesus immediately goes off by himself to meditate and is tempted. List the three temptations and Jesus' response to each. What does this tell you about the character of Christ?

**APPLY THE WORD
IS IT ALL IN THE GENES?**

The Spiritual Family Tree is a great idea to show the youth that they have had two lives merged into one. They have been given life by their biological heritage, and they have been given eternal life through their spiritual heritage.

Each pastor, each Sunday School teacher, each conversion will have enough stories to fill hours of the session, so you will have to monitor your clock fairly closely.

Here's an interesting twist on "The Family Tree" for you to fill in (as much as you can), tracking your Spiritual Heritage.

First, find all your pastors' names and the names of their churches you attended. Get the dates they pastored that church and the dates you attended those churches too if you can.

Pastor _____ of the _____ from _____ to _____.

Pastor _____ of the _____ from _____ to _____.

Pastor _____ of the _____ from _____ to _____.

Pastor _____ of the _____ from _____ to _____.

Now, trace your conversion heritage.

The person who led me to Jesus was _____ in _____ (year). The person

who led him/her to Jesus was _____ in _____. And the person

who led him/her to Jesus was _____ in _____. And the person who led

him/her to Jesus was _____ in _____.

2

CHRISTIANITY

THE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:12-5:16

KEY VERSE: “At once they left their nets and followed him” (Matthew 4:20).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Recognize that the disciples’ obedience to the invitation of the Master was immediate and unquestioned.
2. Develop a sense of the essence of the Christian lifestyle and commitment.
3. Exchange worldly reactions to wrongs for the reactions of Christ to the wrongs of the world.

PERSPECTIVE

In four quick chapters (1-4), we have a summary of the childhood of Jesus, and the next three-plus chapters (4:12-7:29) are dedicated to seemingly a single few minutes. Jesus’ great Sermon on the Mount is the “Constitution of Christianity,” really, as it establishes the ethics and moral values of what it means to follow Christ—to call oneself a “Christian.”

It is divided into three types of discourse: the beatitudes (“preamble”), or declarations of blessedness and righteousness; the ethical exhortations; and then the contrasts between the

legalism of Jewish traditions and Jesus’ revolutionary concept of love.

It must be understood that this most famous discourse of history is calling us to the ideal of Christian lifestyles. Some have suggested that Christ’s call is too high and have therefore dismissed it. Others have suggested that Jesus is more likely describing life in the kingdom of heaven, not holy living here on earth. Whichever the case, most ideals are too high to be reached without outside help and inner commitment and determination.

This lesson will help your youth conceive the concrete characteristics of Christian lifestyle. They will be challenged to contrast what their human nature teaches to what God’s divine nature instructs. It’s the Word vs. the world in a nutshell.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The opening verses to this section of study contain two of the most fascinating anecdotes in the entire New Covenant, yet they are often overlooked or hurried past without much thought. These are the calling of the first four disciples, Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, and John—two sets of brothers.

When Jesus walks by and essentially says, “What are you men doing today?,” their faces must have looked befuddled and dumbfounded. “Well,

sir, we are preparing our nets to fish, to catch enough fish to put food in our mouths and coins in our purses. What are you doing today?”

“Well,” Jesus might have said, “I’m gathering followers for my ministry. If you are interested, all you need to do is to lay your nets aside and come with me.”

These four men did not say what we might have said: “Well, that’s a pretty neat idea, Mister, but I can’t just leave my family at home without providing for them.” Or, “I really would like to, Mister, but I’m going to have to pray a few days about it. No need to jump into anything too hastily.” Or, “Yeah, right!”

Scripture records that “at once” and “immediately” the men left their nets, their boats, and their families and followed Him. That is obedience that is almost beyond comprehension. Pause right now as you study this lesson and pray that God will give you grace and mercy to become that sensitive and obedient as you lead your teens.

Of course, Matthew precedes these two scenes with Jesus’ own decision to leave the comfort of home in response to the calling for which He was sent to earth. In all things, Jesus never asked His followers to do anything He had not yet done himself. That is the sign of a truly ordained leader, and in today’s world, a truly effective leader. Leaders are followers first, and they never lead by pushing. They always pull.

With this gathering of disciples, Jesus began His public ministry, which is threefold: teaching, preaching, and healing. The main difference in teaching and preaching is that one is explanatory, explaining truths and listing facts, while the second is persuasive, interpreting truths and illustrating facts. Jesus was the Master Teacher,

fully knowledgeable of Jewish law and tradition, comfortable in the synagogue with the religious scholars.

It was Jesus’ healing power, however, that seemed to draw the most attention, for He alone was able to “practice what He preached,” giving physical evidence of His spiritual claims. So many modern preachers and evangelists who long for His power to draw crowds mock Him with their vain attempts to mimic and copy. He alone is God-man, and He alone has the power to heal. Only through His Holy Spirit do we see physical healing today, and He will not be mocked by the false prophet.

There has been some question as to whether the Sermon on the Mount was one sermon delivered on a single occasion or a summarized compilation of many sermons. Some have suggested that Matthew centered this passage around one main sermon to which he added relevant passages from other sermons. The parallel passage in Luke (6:17-49) supports this idea.

The word “blessed” has often been misrepresented by the word “happy” in modern thought, but its meaning is much stronger and deeper. Whereas “happy” relies on outward situations and circumstances, “blessed” refers to the joy and security of belonging to the kingdom of God.

“Poor in Spirit” (5:3) is not a reference to emotional depression or even distress. It is a contrast to spiritual haughtiness or pride, running rampant in the synagogue at that time. Jesus is calling for humbleness of spirit as we approach the throne of God.

Jesus often spoke with metaphors (figures of speech) and hyperboles (intentional exaggeration). It is in this vein that He calls His follow-

ers the “Salt of the Earth” and the “Light of the World.” Salt was not only a flavor enhancer, as we know it today, but it was a preserver of freshness. The lamp of which He speaks was a small clay lamp that burned olive oil, and the bowl with which some cover it up is a small bowl that

was used to hold flour. Verse 16 is not permission to show off our goodness, but it is an admonition to allow others (non-believers) to see the works God has performed through us so that they, too, will be drawn toward the Kingdom.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Life with an Attitude

This well-worn rephrasing, though seemingly trite, will lend new meaning to the Beatitudes for those who have never seen it. You might remind your youth at this point that Christianity is far less what you do than it is who you are.

This activity is aimed toward helping youth understand the Beatitudes. By placing it in the realm of what young people know well, whether it be sports or church or school or family, this activity helps them see how the form of the Beatitudes reflects the meaning of the Beatitudes. For every attitude, there is either a reward or a consequence. Encourage them to consider positive suggestions.

Choose a lifestyle in our society and write your own set of ‘Beatitudes.’ Try nine of them and you can start off with “Blessed are the . . . for they . . .” Some suggestions might be football (or any sport), or school (including students, teachers, principal, etc.), or church (including pastor, musicians, board, etc.), or children (including sons, daughters, infants, teenagers, etc.), or any other thing you can think of.

Blessed are the

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EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Drop 'Em (4:12-22)

This section contains three distinct relocations, first of Jesus himself, then of two sets of brothers. After your group reads these 11 verses, ask them to respond to the following questions:

- Why did Jesus leave Nazareth and go to live in Capernaum?

- Andrew and Simon (Peter) were brothers, as were John and James. Why do you suppose Jesus called two sets of brothers to be His first four disciples?

- What do you think is the significance of these men's occupation?

- What was their response? Did they whine and try to reason with Jesus? Did they suggest they needed to go pray about it? Did they even go tell their families? How would you have responded to Jesus' request?

2. Now Here's Some Good News (4:23-25)

One of the attributes of Jesus that even the world noted and continues to respond to is His healing power. Jesus had all power over suffering, and when word got around, He was followed by people afflicted with a wide variety of illnesses.

These three verses summarize a lifetime of compassion. Read them, then answer the following:

- If you could ask Jesus today for physical healing for yourself, what one thing would you want Him to heal?

- What societal ill do you pray Jesus would heal today?

- How does the healing ministry of Jesus reflect the essence of the kingdom of Heaven?

- Many non-religious people turn to God for help when they face a crisis. Why do you suppose it takes a sense of desperation for so many to turn to Him for help?

3. The Be-Attitudes (5:1-12)

Like the 23rd psalm and The Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes are some of the most beloved and memorized verses in the entire Bible. Challenge your youth to commit themselves to memorize them and answer the following questions.

- How do you “translate” the word, “blessed,” as it appears in these verses? Does it mean “happy”? Does it mean more than just being happy and carefree?

- The poor in spirit have the kingdom of Heaven while the meek will inherit the earth. Are those two characteristics similar or the same? Are the two rewards similar or the same? The persecuted also receive the kingdom of heaven--how does that fit in here?

- Blessed is not really how most people feel when they are “insulted,” “persecuted,” and lied about. How do most people feel? How do you feel?

- There are nine beatitudes. Do the Matthean thing: put them into three groups of three and justify your arrangement.

4. Pass the Salt, Please (5:13-16)

Jesus ends the introduction to His great sermon with a couple of metaphors: salt and light. After your students read these four verses, have them answer these questions:

- What is salt used for today? What has been its uses historically?

- If salt that has lost its saltiness cannot be made salty again, does Jesus mean that if we lose our salvation, we cannot be reclaimed?

- Many of us grew up singing “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” What exactly does it mean to let your light shine? How does one keep it from shining?

- Jesus tells us to let others see our good deeds (v. 16), but later in His Sermon (6:1-18) He says that if we pray or fast or do any holy thing to impress people, we are simply whistling in the wind. What's the difference?

APPLY THE WORD
IT'S TIME TO MAKE A DECISION

Life is full of choices, especially for the youth. Every day might seem overwhelming as they try to balance who they are with what they look like and how they think others perceive them.

This exercise divides those decisions into the ones that are daily and somewhat trivial, those that will make a difference to people other than ourselves, and those that will make a difference in how we live the rest of our lives.

By approaching each decision systematically, summing up with pros and cons, your youth will learn a valuable lesson in decision making. Every option has an upside and a downside, and it is up to each individual to measure the impact of each on all persons involved.

The following table offers some examples for you to play with, then ask your group to come up with two or three other decisions that might be unique to them and where they are in life. Weigh the pros and cons of each decision to help them finally decide.

Quick Decisions

Pros

Cons

Run the red light

Homework or TV

Argue or keep quiet

Not So Quick Decisions

Pros

Cons

Change jobs

Buy a new/used car

Begin a relationship

LIVE THE WORD

This last activity requires group interaction, and intends to encourage your students when they see all the real-life ministry opportunities.

Your pastor wants to start two kinds of ministries at your church and you have been appointed to be on the steering committee to get these things rolling. It's a good idea (you think), but you're completely bamboozled by the names: Shakers and Flashers.

Your pastor got this brainstorm, when he re-read Matthew 5:13-16, where Jesus tells us that we are the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world."

Here's what the pastor wants you to do: first come up with a list of ministry ideas for each of the groups. What will the Shakers do and what will the Flashers do? After you have done that he'd like to see some of your ideas on designing a sweatshirt for each group—you know, to give them a sense of identity.

The Shakers' Ministries

-
-
-
-

Design their sweatshirt here

The Flashers' Ministries

-
-
-
-
-

Design their sweatshirt here:

3 THE LAW OF LOVE

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:17-6:24

KEY VERSES: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . .” (Matthew 5:43-44).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Realize that God looks at the heart and the hand.
2. Understand that the motives for our actions are more important in the long run than our actions themselves.
3. See the importance of giving in secret.

PERSPECTIVE

It’s hard to watch the news anymore with murder and mayhem grabbing all the headlines. While national news is full of international crises, the local stations feature the gory story of the day.

Those problems are not new and this section of Jesus’ great sermon show that powerfully. But the Son of God is not just concerned with our behavior toward each other; He is equally concerned about our attitudes toward each other. In fact, He says that it is our motives that are prominently projected on heaven’s big screen TV—as much as, if not more than, our actions.

Although most of your youth may have not experienced a murder in their circles of friends and family, fewer and fewer today are ignorant of the pain of divorce or the temptations of infidelity, lust, and vengeance. That’s what makes this section of the Sermon so important for careful study and open, informed discussion.

This lesson will help your students understand God as He looks at us through eyes of judgment and a heart of mercy. His truth has never wavered and His love for us has never faded. He wants us to be pure and righteous, and He sent us His Son to show us the way.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

At the beginning of this passage Jesus declares that He has not come to earth to discount centuries of human relationships with God, as guided by the Law (namely, the first five books of the Jewish Scripture). Neither has He come to discredit the prophets, which not only refers to the major prophets (Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah) but also to the minor prophets (known to the Jews as the Book of the Twelve) and the former prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings). When you put the Law and the Prophets together, of course, you have most of the Old Testament.

Jesus recognized the power He had over both the people of His day and the people yet to come. Had He chosen to claim autonomy from the

Law, He would have violated one of the strongest characteristics of the Messiah—the fulfillment of the Law. He never intended to displace the Law. That is why it is important for you to stress to your youth that although it's easy to do so, we cannot simply call the Old Covenant “the Law Book” and the New Covenant “the Love Book.” There are law and love in both “books.” More accurately, the New Covenant builds on the Old, showing that the Law of God has always been based on love and mercy. Jesus stressed that the Law is to be embedded deeply into the heart and mind of the believer, not simply acknowledged and mechanically acted out on the external surface.

Jesus never speaks against the Law or disparages those who follow its true objectives and responsibilities—He does, however, condemn the hypocritical lip-service paid the Law by the Pharisees and their narrow legalistic interpretations. The old letter of the law vs. the spirit of the law debate.

Jesus follows His support of the Law and condemnation of the legalists with six examples of how the Law has been misinterpreted and mis-enforced by the Pharisees.

Murder. Jesus does not rewrite the law in these six verses; He corrects the Pharisaic and rabbinic insistence on outward appearances. Jesus contends, and rightly so, that to take away someone's existence through thought or word is the same as taking away his or her existence through deed. To drag someone's name through the mud, to assassinate someone's character willfully and knowingly, is as much a sin (although not the crime) as taking the person's life away. The Greek word for “hell” is “gehenna,” which is the name of the ravine outside Jerusalem where heathen sacrifices once took place. It eventually

became a garbage pit where fires burned day and night.

Adultery. As He did with murder, Jesus preaches against the power of the human imagination when it turns another human being into a sex object. This desecrates the virtue and beauty of God's intention. Jesus says that if we mentally lust in a sexually aberrant way, it is the same as committing that aberration externally or physically. His point is emphasized in verse 30 with hyperbole (purposeful overstatement). He is not suggesting physical mutilation; He is merely pointing out the drastic nature of such behavior and its equally drastic consequences.

Divorce. This problem resurfaces in chapter 19 when Jesus is asked about divorce by the Pharisees who were out to entrap Him. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 provides some legal guidelines on divorce. In Jesus' day, there was a dispute about the words “some indecency” as the grounds for a man to divorce his wife. One interpretation contended that “indecency” referred exclusively to infidelity. The other side of the dispute broadened the interpretation of “indecency” to anything that offended the man, including burning breakfast. Jesus obviously preferred the first interpretation.

Oaths. An individual's integrity is crucial. A person should never have to qualify her or his response with any kind of expletive oath, such as “I swear on a stack of Bibles,” or “On my mother's grave,” or “Swear to God.” If a person is pure and righteous, whether or not others believe him or her, all that is necessary is a simple “yes” and “no.”

Vengeance. Revenge is an evil action that insists on returning in similar fashion whatever wrong was committed against you. If your eye is taken, then an eye is owed you. If your tooth is bro-

ken, then the person who broke it must have his tooth broken. That is a strict definition of justice: giving back what was done to you. Jesus states that for members of God's kingdom, mercy is the bottom line: giving back good for the evil that was done to you.

You could take this opportunity in your discussion to ask what Jesus might say about today's capital punishment laws. Read together Exodus 21:24-25 and Leviticus 24:20. Ask your teens if Jesus would pull the trigger, collapse the scaffold, or inject the poison. You might also consider Jesus' own execution and the fact that He allowed himself to be taken in place of Barabbas, a convicted killer.

Agape Love. The Law allowed for love of neighbor and hatred of enemy. Jesus says, "Wrong!" Anybody can love someone who loves him/her back. Even the worst sinner does that. But members of His kingdom are to do more than the "pagans"--we are to love anyone, even (and especially) our enemies.

How do we show love for our enemies? We pray for them. It's impossible to hate someone very long when you are lifting him to the throne of a loving God all the time.

Jesus ends this section with three examples of misplaced priorities, found at the beginning of chapter 6. First, giving to be noticed; second, praying to be praised; third, fasting to be pitied. These sacrificial activities are spiritually correct and divinely recognized only when they are done privately and personally. Those who do these things for recognition may get their recognition, but it will be short-lived and shallow. But those who go about God's work anonymously and humbly will receive a reward with lasting value.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Book'em, Danno. Murder One

Most of us don't like to think about spending any time in prison, particularly if we think about being incarcerated for an act that didn't "really hurt anyone." The trouble is, the sins of our spirit can be the most damning of all, and Jesus' sermon reminds us of that over and over again. "It's the motive--not just the action," He says.

Encourage your youth to take this activity seriously, particularly if they can be honest enough to write about a real situation in their own lives. They needn't tell names publicly to the group (or even use enough details to offer too many clues), but they might privately address the problem in the future.

You've been thrown into Spiritual Prison for committing murder. You didn't wear a mask and wield a hefty ax. No. Far worse. You wore the mask of a Christian and wielded a hateful tongue. As part of your sentence, you are required to write a letter not only asking forgiveness from your victim, but also granting forgiveness for the wrong done to you that triggered such a damning response.

This sentence is not a far-fetched as it first appears. Perhaps you have "bad-mouthed" someone recently because of some bitter motive and you do, indeed, need to ask for forgiveness. At the same time, you should forgive and forget. Take this opportunity to do so.

- Define “righteousness” in your own words:

- Now define “holiness”:

- What similarities do you see?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Innocent of Murder? (5:17–42)

This section of the discourse begins with Jesus denying that He was simply the “change-agent” some of His detractors said He was. His purpose was not just to take away centuries of good laws and grand commandments. His purpose was completion, fulfillment, and consummation. He lived on earth to bring sense to the law, not to make it nonsense.

The next group of verses defines murder as a spiritual act—not merely a physical act. This takes the weapon out of the hands and puts it into the heart, and, as we have learned, the heart is the focus of Christ’s ministry.

Read this passage prayerfully, then answer the following questions:

- Jesus views what many believe to be the most serious crime, murder, as a motive of the heart. That makes external appearances superficial at best and comparatively meaningless. We can appear virtuous, but if we have hatred in our hearts for someone, we are no better than murderers. Respond to that idea.

- How does Jesus’ view of murder differ from that in our society?

- “Raca” is the Aramaic word for “empty-head.” (Jesus probably spoke Aramaic most of the time.) That sounds a lot like “air-head,” doesn’t it? Do you think if you call someone an “air-head” you are answerable to the Sanhedrin (the Church Board, if you will)?
- Verses 38-42 are pretty tough for most of us to swallow, for they suggest that mercy is the heart of the Lord; therefore, mercy should be the heart of people who call themselves followers of the Lord. Read Exodus 21:24-25. How do you interpret Jesus’ interpretation of the law?

- Jesus says that as long as we have turmoil or distrust among us, there is no meaning behind offerings. Why is that?

- Divorce is now so commonplace, we don’t hear much about it from pulpits. Jesus mentions it from His pulpit (vv. 31-32) and says that only infidelity justifies divorce. Compare this with Matthew 10:3-9; what differences and similarities do you see? What reasons have you heard or read about for people today getting a divorce? Do you think those are justifiable? Are those reasons morally “Christian”?

2. Two Sides of the Same Coin (5:43–6:4)

Love and hate are more closely related than you might think. If you think in terms of extremes on a straight line, you might put love at one end of the continuum and hate on the opposite end. However, life’s situations show us that true hatred is most powerful when directed at someone we have once loved.

Jesus reminds us in this passage that we are not to be enemies even though we will probably have enemies. He declares that it is virtually impossible to hate someone for whom you are praying sincerely and fervently. If you lift that name to the throne, God’s love will transcend your hatred. (It must have been interesting for Matthew, a reformed tax-collector, to hear his profession used as the lowest of the lowlives when it comes to this “love your enemies” stuff.)

Read over these verses and then answer some questions:

- How does love match up with giving, and hate match up with taking?

- Where in your life is hating your enemies easier than loving them?

- If Jesus were running the government of your country, what changes do you think He'd make right away?

- The first four verses of chapter six tell us to keep secret our giving and our loving. We aren't to impress others with our compassion, after all; that reward is too temporary even to consider. How do you balance this teaching with the one in 5:16 to let our light shine before

3. The Perfect Prayer (6:5–15)

Have you ever heard someone pray out loud? Of course you have. Have you ever been asked to pray in front of a group? Probably so. Do you pray when you're alone? Good for you.

- What are some of the differences between these three prayers just described?

Jesus saw that even the religious leaders had difficulty understanding the purpose of prayer. They had begun to pray simply for the praise from their listeners: "Oh Rabbi Sheinstein, that was such a lovely prayer. Your words were beautiful. Will you come to our next party and say a prayer so that all my friends will hear such wonderful words?"

Sickening, but true. And if we were all honest, we do get a little nervous when we have to pray aloud in front of people we don't know so well. We treat our public prayers like some kind of campaign speeches. Jesus didn't find that sincere. In fact, He condemned it straight out in verse 5.

Read over these verses then answer the following questions:

- Why do we get stressed out when we pray in public?

- The sixth chapter to this point is divided into “Giving,” “Praise Giving,” and “Forgiving.” How do those ideas merge together?
- Why is forgetting so imperative?

It seems far easier to say “I forgive you” than it is to forget what you did to me. (Of course, we can never erase an experience from our memories. “Forget” here means that we don’t allow the past to prevent a healthy relationship with someone in the present and future.) Jesus says you can’t have it both ways. Either you forgive others for what they have done to you and don’t let that hinder your further relationship, or your Heavenly Father will not forgive and forget what you have done to Him and others.

There are four “fors” to Mercy: Forgiving, Forgetting, Forebearing, and Foretelling. The first two are rather self-explanatory. The third, Forebearing, is patience--certainly a defining characteristic of mercy. Foretelling means just what Jesus said in verses 14 and 15. The level of mercy you extend to others now foretells what will be done to you at judgment.

- What makes the “forgetting” part of forgiveness so difficult for human beings?

4. Fasting is More than a Fad Diet (6:16–24)

Fasting is never just a physical act—it is a spiritual act. This is quite a consistent sermon, isn’t it? Jesus suspects that too often we have gone on prayerful fasts but have forgotten the prayerful part in a hurry. Instead, we focus on how our body is changing and we begin to seek congratulations from those around us for being holy and righteous.

Read over these verses and answer the following questions:

- How do hypocrites fast?
- Have you ever fasted? For how long? For what reason?
- What does it mean to sacrifice something we love for something we love more?

- Verses 19-24 talk about treasures. Not like the lottery jackpot—in fact, quite the opposite. Treasures that last are immaterial—they can't be held or worn or driven or flown. What are the treasures Jesus is talking about in this passage?

- Why is greed such a dangerous sin?

a. What does God look at as much as action?

b. What are Jesus' instructions?

c. How do Jesus's words fulfill (complete) the Law?

d. How can we apply His teachings to us today?

e. What would happen if the government judged its citizens in this way?

APPLY THE WORD

This activity highlights four passages from the study. Divide the class into four teams, even if only one person forms a group.

Each group should read the assigned verses and then write their answers to the questions that follow. If the teams are large, each team could appoint one person to write down the answers.

Give enough time for them to do a complete and good job. The appointed scribe should then share the team's responses with the whole group.

1. Matthew 5:21-26

2. Matthew 5:27-32

3. Matthew 5:33-42

4. Matthew 5:43--6:4

As you study these passages together, answer these questions:

LIVE THE WORD

Jesus prayed the original prayer in Aramaic and Matthew wrote it down in Greek. In your most honest natural language (the way you would talk to your best friend or your favorite sister or brother), paraphrase this short model prayer found in 6:9-13.

4 GO AHEAD

ASK ME, MAKE MY DAY

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:25-7:29

KEY VERSE: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Spend less energy worrying about tomorrow and more time building the Kingdom today.
2. Look at other people and groups of people through the compassionate eyes of Jesus Christ.
3. Discover what kind of fruit they bear and focus their attention on bearing it.

PERSPECTIVE

Did you spend much time worrying about what you were going to wear to work this morning? How much time did you spend preparing dinner? Did you concern yourself a great deal with a job presentation or this Bible study today?

Do you think the members of your group wasted any time gossiping about somebody at school today or “dissing” someone from church?

The conclusion to Jesus’ great sermon asks these kinds of life-altering questions. He admonishes Christians to cease the hypocrisy of worry, judg-

ing others, and avoiding the throne of God. He reminds your youth that He loves them without question or hesitation or condition, which is precisely the way He wants them to love each other.

This lesson will put Jesus’ questions and words into modern-day terms that can be applied to the youth’s life and times. Its theme will be: “I am the chief of sinners. What right do I have to judge another human being?”

BIBLE BACKGROUND

It’s important to note with the students that this section of scripture, particularly the last section of chapter six (vv. 25-34), is connected to the preceding section on laying up our treasures in heaven. The “therefore” that begins verse 25 reflects a cause-and-effect relationship between the obsession we have for “stuff” and worrying about tomorrow.

It is interesting that Jesus uses birds to illustrate His point. Have you ever watched birds? They are always busy: building nests, gathering seeds, protecting and feeding their young. The difference between the concerns of birds and the concerns of humans is that birds go about their necessary tasks almost mindlessly—automatically. They don’t worry about time, a time to reap and a time to sow, a time to build and a time to tear down. They simply do what their instincts drive

them to do. Flowers do the same. Their sole purpose is to produce a blossom. That is all they want to do and that is their single grand reward. Because they go about it so quietly, without fret or fuss, peacefully and serenely, we assume nothing is happening. But when we suddenly see the blossom, the glorious result of their “labors” we recognize that there was indeed something happening.

Let it be it understood that Jesus is not asking people to mimic the lives of birds and flowers—that would be ridiculous. He simply wants us to understand that He loves birds and flowers enough to provide them everything they need to live their lives simply and within their purpose. If He does that for birds and flowers, He will do it a thousandfold for the climax of His creative genius: human beings.

Not only is our worry useless (“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” or as Eugene Peterson paraphrases, “Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch?”), but it is also a demonstration of a lack of faith in Him. Some have even suggested that worry is blasphemous, denying the very sovereignty of the mighty God. To put such things as clothes, food, and drink ahead of God and His kingdom is a sign of godlessness.

“What I’m trying to do here,” as Peterson paraphrases the words of Jesus, “is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God’s giving.... Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions.”

Chapter seven begins with an imperative that is hard to live by: Do not judge. We must be careful here to not confuse judging with the God-given ability to discern and analyze and logically reason. First Thessalonians 5:21 tells the Christian

that he is to “test everything.” First Corinthians 5:9 says, “I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people...” First John 4:1 says, “. . . test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

What Jesus calls “judging” is a lifestyle of hypocritical self-righteousness. This warning should be heeded not only on a personal level, but in the Church as well—perhaps particularly in the Church. Congregations that search out the bad, seek the negative and publicize the weaknesses of other groups, denominations, or faiths are not using the gift of discernment as God intended. That kind of criticism never builds and strengthens as its practitioners might pretend. Instead, it weakens and saps the very juices of the institution being questioned. Finally, that type of criticism invites the target to respond in the same manner, thus starting the cycle over again.

Many of our own failings, about which we are not at all concerned, even if we are aware of them, are often so glaringly obvious to others, protruding from our eye, as Jesus with deliberate exaggeration expressed it, like a large piece of timber, that it ill befits us to draw attention to the tiny speck which we may happen to notice in the eye of another. This masks evil with the disguise of good intentions, a most dangerous moral combination. Suffice it to say, in all matters, it is better to confess that we are the chief of sinners with no room to condemn others, which, according to 7:1, is God’s job.

Verses 7-12 reiterate the relationship God longs to have with people. He wants us to ask, to seek, to knock constantly, persistently, eagerly. It is the relentless prayer that will be answered, for it is that prayer that acknowledges a total and

complete dependence on God. Yet it is not God's nature to put off a son or daughter, to trick him or her. God never mocks His children. Jesus uses the example of an earthly father to illustrate His point. No good father would offer a stone instead of a piece of bread, a snake instead of a fish to his son.

“The Golden Rule” in verse 12 is a positive flip-flop of the Jewish Golden Rule that says “Whatever you would not wish done to you, do not yourself to another.” This same negative admonition is also found in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Peterson phrases it, “Ask yourself what you want people to do for you, then grab the initiative and do it for them.”

The final 17 verses of chapter 7 include three metaphors, mini-parables, really. The first one, which is about the two gates suggest that the world's easy ways and its formulas for success and happiness are little more than money-making cons. This gate is wide because the number of people who are fooled by such deceptions is huge. That pseudo-safety is a disguise for eternal loss and suffering. The gateway to eternal life and celebration, however, is narrow and few find it.

The parable of the two trees, one good tree bearing good fruit and one bad tree bearing (you guessed it) bad fruit, reminds us that we must bear fruit to be known by both man and God. The Letter of James tells us that to claim faith without putting feet and hands to it is like whistling into the wind.

Our society is no different from the one in which Jesus made these remarks. Recent news stories have decried the modern-day evangelist as vociferously as did the Master 2,000 years ago. The message of the false prophet is easy to accept, easy to live, and will pay him great dividends.

If someone makes money in dispensing “the truth,” then it is not the truth at all. Matthew is the only writer to include this warning of the apparent resemblance falsehood has to truth.

Finally, Jesus simplifies the will of God with the story of the two builders. Just as verse 12 simplified and summarized the entire Old Testament, this metaphor captures the essence of God's primary aim for us: to build our houses (lives) on the rock (Him). So many young people spend a lot of time and energy seeking to find God's will for their lives, wondering what job they should seek, what school they should enroll in, whether or not they should date Boy A or Girl X. Those are important decisions, certainly, but when one can look objectively at those questions one can see that God made us with certain gifts and talents and desires. He will never, NEVER ask us to do something for which we have absolutely no skills, no wish, no joy.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

This activity asks your youth to focus their attentions on the kinds of things they really enjoy doing. They should be encouraged to cultivate those desires and dreams, to dedicate and consecrate them. No one should be discouraged from following their hearts. Who knows how great one might become if stroked and praised for something he/she does well and loves?

Mrs. Rowland has been named mentor for your Bible Study group. She begins her session with a story about herself.

“When I was just a little older than you are—I had just graduated from college, to be honest—I didn't know what I wanted to do for a living. You know, to make money and survive. It was then that I

got some great advice from the twin sister of one of my roommates.

“She told me to make a list of the three things I most wanted to do in my life, so I did. That wasn’t hard—I’d been dreaming about these things for a long time. (1) A musician. (2) A stand up comic. (3) An editor of a small town newspaper.

“Now,’ Louise told me, ‘go after those things, knowing that God made you and filled you with gifts, talents, and desires, and He’s not in the business of tricking people. He won’t ask you to do something you hate, are afraid of, or will fail at. That’s not His style. So go for it!’

“And did you know,” Mrs. Rowland concluded, “I am doing all three of those things today? Sure, it says on my job title that I’m a college professor, but that’s not all that I do. (1) Once a year I participate in a campus show, often singing. (2) Every day I have two or three or four captive audiences in a classroom who have to listen to my jokes as I teach. (3) And wouldn’t you know it, I’m also adviser of the school paper, so I get to write, edit, and assign stories right along with our student editor.

“Louise was right. And she was right for you too. So what I’d like for you to do right now is to write down the three things you really would like to spend your life doing. Be honest and be careful. Look at what happened to me.”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“Now you may or may not want to prioritize these, but you ought to talk now with your group about what steps you can begin taking to pursue those goals. Don’t be afraid. God made you and will never trick you in this decision. Remember, His will is simply for you to build your house on the Rock. He has given you the freedom to decide how to earn the bricks and lumber.”

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. A penny for your thoughts (6:25-34)

Verse 25 of chapter six is a connecting word that links one part of the sentence to a follow-up part. Even though this word begins another verse and sentence (and in some Bible versions an entirely new section), it belongs to what precedes it as much as to what follows it. The word is “therefore.” (So let’s find out what it’s “there for!”)

The word “therefore” connects the “treasures in heaven” ideal to the “do not worry” lesson. Jesus seems to be saying that if we put all our marbles into one basket, the one we carry around on earth, we’re gonna lose all our marbles.

Have the students to answer the following questions:

- What three things does Jesus say to stop worrying about?

- What three things do you tend to worry about?

- What three things does your best friend worry about?
- What do you think Jesus knew about human nature, about the future, that His listeners (both then and now) didn't (or don't) seem to grasp?
- Instead of worrying about those things, what does Jesus instruct us to do?
- That “dogs and pigs” thing in verse 6 is weird. What do you think it means?

2. Judge not! (7:1-6)

Well, now He's really starting to meddle, isn't He? What does He mean, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged”? Talk about taking away some of our funnest fun. That's how we get even. That's how we knock folks down to size.

Aha! That's the problem. We knock them down to our size, and Jesus wants us to be “bigger” than that. We need not search the world for scapegoats for our problems. Jesus has already provided one: himself. To place another human being in that position is not only harmful, it's downright sacrilegious!

Read this passage once, then read it a second time. You might even want to do it aloud. Then honestly address the following:

- What is so wrong about judging?
- What people do you know (groups or individuals) who get judged a lot? Maybe even by you?

3. Ask, seek, knock (7:7-12)

Interesting, isn't it, that when you take the first letter of each imperative verb in verse seven, you have the acronym, A.S.K. That's not how it worked out in the Greek, but in the English it's almost a pun.

More than clever language, though, this section may be the most important of the entire discourse. It draws a parallel between our Heavenly Father and a good earthly father. It ends in verse 12 with a synopsis of the entire Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets): “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you . . .” We know it as “The Golden Rule.” Ponder these verses, then answer the following questions:

- How can modern day readers read verses 7 and 8 without thinking they have a magic genie in a bottle?

- What do verses 9 through 11 tell you about the nature of God?
- You are in the time of life when most Christians wonder, “What is God’s will for my life?” That question gets more and more important as you get older. The will of God is a mysterious thing with many interpretations, but it wouldn’t be bad to consider verses 24-27 as a capsule explanation of His Will. What is He asking you to do?
- Write a “For instance” illustration from your own life that demonstrates the Golden Rule.

- Read Luke’s version of this same section in Luke 11:9-13. Anything different? Why do you think that’s so?

3. Three memorable moments (7:13-29)

Jesus used stories as ancient “photographs” to illustrate His teachings in a memorable form that could be called to mind over and over again. He ends the Sermon on the Mount with three such photographs: the Gates, the Trees, and the Builders. Study each one separately, then view them together and answer the following questions:

- Why do you suppose He called the gate to destruction “wide” and the gate to life “narrow”?
- What is the fruit of the “Good Tree”? What is the fruit of the “Bad Tree”?

APPLY THE WORD HERE COME THE JUDGE

This activity will afford the chance for your kids to pass judgment on groups of people that are often maligned in our society anyway; some deservedly so, some not.

The fact that the judge is deaf makes it imperative to write the material down. Students tend to be more serious when writing, not to mention more thoughtful and succinct. After the writing and after the sharing, you might open it up for discussion. Surely one or more of the groups will elicit such.

- Murderers
- Child molesters
- Liars
- School cheaters
- Procrastinators
- Old drivers
- Hovering parents

- Homosexuals
- Unwed teenaged parents
- Back stabbers
- Flag burners
- Incompetent employees
- Hypocrites
- Gamblers
- Divorced people

After you have written your own views on each matter above, go back and play the role of Jesus. How would He rule? Are your judgments different from or the same as His? In all cases? What makes the difference in His view and yours?

LIVE THE WORD

The temptation with an activity like this is to judge, so encourage your teens to be positive.

You might bring a basket of fruit to eat while pursuing this activity. Talk about the sweetness, the succulence, the health for the body of each fruit. Discuss the variety of fruit to be found, not only in the market but all around the world.

Look around the room you're in right now. Notice each person who is sitting there with you. Jesus tells us that we shall know the tree by the fruit it bears. That makes each one of us a fruit-bearing tree.

1. List the members of your group below, including your leader and yourself. By each person's name identify the fruit that falls at the base of his or her trunk.

2. Name the type of tree of each person.

3. How do you know that person's fruit? Was there anyone whose fruit you were unable to identify? Why do you suppose that is? Have you encouraged any of your group lately in the bearing of his or her fruit? When was the last time you bore fruit?

5 IT'S A MIRACLE

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 8:1-9:38

KEY VERSE: “When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, ‘I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such faith’” (Matthew 8:10).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Increase their faith in God as a miracle-worker.
2. Realize that the miracles of the Bible are still taking place in the world around them.
3. Recognize that miracles and faith are two sides of the same coin.

PERSPECTIVE

Miracles happen today. Real miracles of God’s divine power and love. Unfortunately our minds are finite and it is hard to understand why some people receive the miracle for which they pray and others seemingly do not. Only eternal perspective will provide us the answers to that difficult question.

If we had our way, all sickness would be eradicated, all pain soothed, all suffering done away with. No one would die and all would know Jesus personally and powerfully. But then, that would be describing heaven, wouldn’t it? And

this life on earth, as enjoyable as it can often be, is no heaven.

One aspect of eternity that we have access to now is God’s willingness to honor faith and obedience. We see that time and time again in these two chapters from Matthew’s gospel. From the centurion’s servant to the sick woman touching the cloak of a passing Messiah, Matthew shows that Jesus hears and sees those who honor Him with trust and faith.

This lesson will not only direct your students to examine their own levels of faith, but also to become sympathetic to the plights of others who are around them. It shows Jesus not only as the great preacher of the Sermon on the Mount, but as the Great Physician, making His rounds, healing and touching desperate and hopeless people.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

These two chapters contain nine specific miracles of Jesus, divided into three distinct groups. Matthew may or may not have adjusted the order of events from the way they really occurred, depending on which Bible scholar you follow; in any case, Matthew did cleverly insert material that provides logical transitions between each set of miracles.

There are three healings in verses 1-17, then the story of two follower “wannabes,” one who wants to come after Jesus and one who doesn’t

(vv. 18-22). This is placed (and some believe took place) after Jesus commanded the disciples to accompany Him to the other side of the lake, but before they actually left.

In Matthew's arrangement the storm on the lake begins the next set of miracles. The second set of miracles (8:23-9:8) is separated from the third (9:18-34) by the story of Matthew's calling and inclusion as one of the disciples and by the conflict over fasting posed by the Pharisees and John's disciples.

The first miracle in this passage merits extensive discussion, for the attitude toward leprosy in that culture was much like AIDS is in our culture. It was the most feared and misunderstood of all communicable diseases and proved fatal nearly 100 percent of the time. In Old Testament times (and these can be read about in Leviticus), the priests of the community were responsible for enforcing the laws that segregated the lepers, thereby protecting the healthy populace. Lepers were deemed unclean--both physically and ceremonially--and legend has it that they were even required to precede any movements with that exclamation: "Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!"

In light of lepers' outcast status, what Jesus did was a profound example of His love for the alien, the ostracized, the discarded of society. The Messiah, as He reiterated at Matthew's dinner party (9:9-13), came not to hang around with the wealthy, the healthy, the powerful, the hopeful. No, His purpose in coming to earth was to minister to the poor, the sick, the downtrodden, the underdog. This may be one solid reason for the enthusiasm of services at many of today's churches that are filled with the poor, the minorities, and the unemployed people in our society.

Here is a leper who was breaking a social norm. He was coming close to the Great Physician, close enough to be seen and heard, close enough to kneel in submissive humility. Why did he come to Jesus? How had he heard about Jesus' power? Why would he risk legal action (certain arrest, possible execution) in order to get close to the Nazarene? He knew Jesus had the power, but would He be willing to exercise it publicly in a way that could be considered breaking the law?

When Mark tells this same story, he includes the unique observation that Jesus was "filled with compassion" (Mark 1:41). Knowingly defying the law, Jesus "reached out his hand and touched the man" (Matthew 8:3).

Is that not the most beautiful sentence in all of scripture? If you had been that leper (and in a figurative sense we all are) wouldn't you have leaped out of your rags, danced around the courtyard, and celebrated the Christ, the promised and prophesied Messiah? Jesus broke man's law in order to fulfill His own: "Love one another."

There has been much debate over the centuries as to what Jesus meant when He told the healed leper to "not tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." Some have said that Mark and Matthew followed many of Jesus' miracles with this admonition in order to explain why He was not more widely recognized as "the Messiah." Many others say that it was simply a matter of survival. Had the word of Jesus; healings spread too quickly and too far, the situation might have escalated to a point of chaos and riots, certainly not an advantage to Jesus' purpose, although some of His more zealous followers surely would have embraced such a "problem."

The healing of the centurion's servant stands out because he was a Gentile in Jewish territory. Clearly, Jesus was focusing His earthly ministry on Israel, in hopes that they would recognize Him as the promised King. That is why he makes a public example out of the centurion's faith. Note as well that the Roman officer was fully cognizant of power. He wielded a hefty bit of power, himself, over 100 of the finest Roman soldiers around. At his command, 100 war machines would instantly obey. He evidently recognized that Jesus was even more powerful, more influential, and was subservient to no one. "I know," the centurion said, "what it is like to be under authority and to have authority." It was in response to this remark of faith that Jesus said, "I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith." Israel, who had seen the centuries of miracles of Father God, was blind compared to this Roman soldier.

When Jesus went to Peter's house, He found Peter's wife's mother ill. Without being asked, according to what we read here, he healed her. What was her response? She arose and began fixing Him dinner. This has set a pattern that is still practiced today: those who have been touched and healed by Him express their gratitude by serving Him. Serving begets serving.

The first "transitional bridge" (vv. 18-22) could be titled, "That's none of your business." First a "certain scribe" (religious scholar) asks if he can tag along as Jesus sails across the lake to the east side. Jesus tells him that they're not going to take an easy route to a Marriott Hotel; discipleship has its hardships.

Another follower-to-be tries to beg off for a while, until his father's funeral. Jesus in effect tells him that the boat is leaving: climb aboard now or get left behind. These seem to be rather

terse words, but some scholars believe the man spoke in a figure of speech. His father may not have really been dead at the time. The would-be disciple meant that he would follow Jesus when he had completed all his duties to his family, which could be many years in the future. Jesus knew a lame excuse when He saw one and challenged the man to put following Him ahead of his family ties. (See also Matthew 10:37 and Luke 14:26.)

The next three miracles establish Jesus as the Controller of Nature, the Conqueror of Demons, and the Forgiver of Sins. During the group's sojourn to the east side of the lake, to the region around the city of Gadara, a raging storm struck, threatening the lives of everyone on board. Jesus, tired from the pressing crowds, had fallen asleep and was completely unaware of what was happening. Even after awakening to the screams and shouts of the men, however, He remained calm. What bothered Jesus was the spiritual immaturity of His followers. Granted, this was still fairly early in their ministry together, but after seeing what they had seen that day, were they not certain that here was a "man" who could control nature? "Oh ye of little faith," the King James version says. Peterson's paraphrase says, "Why are you such cowards, such faint-hearts?"

After calming the storm and landing on the other side of the lake, Jesus came upon the two demon-possessed men who wondered aloud why Jesus had come so early, "before the appointed time." The demons recognized Jesus as God ("the devils also believe, and tremble," James 2:19) and knew that His presence marked the beginning of the end of their demonic activity. Some have suggested that though Christ consented to their request to be reincarnated in the herd of swine, their subsequent bolt to the sea to

drown is symbolic of the Abyss (see Luke 8:32). Because Jews did not raise pigs, it is likely that this story took place in Gentile territory. The local people asked Jesus to leave probably more out of fear that they would be financially ruined by continued acts such as this than out of awe.

The last miracle of this triad shows Jesus as the sovereign ruler over sin. Jesus is challenged when He forgives the sins of the paraplegic man. In Jewish thinking, it was blasphemy, pure and simple, for any mortal to presume to forgive sins (reserved for God only) and that was a crime punishable by death. Jesus rebukes the critics by asking which is easier, spiritual cleansing or physical healing. Before they answer, He also heals the man. Of course, the crowd is impressed, but read verse 9:8 carefully. “. . . they praised God, who had given such authority to men.” They still didn’t get it. They thought God had given such power to men, failing to recognize this one “man” as the Son of God.

Jesus then leaves the frying pan and jumps right into the fire: first He forgives a man’s sins, then He has dinner with a sinful man. On this occasion He reveals His heart of mercy. “Who needs the doctor,” He asks, “the healthy or the sick?” Peterson puts it, “I’m after mercy, not religion. I’m here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders.” As a case study, an outsider, Levi the unpopular tax collector, becomes one of the true, chosen “insiders,” Matthew.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

In order to grasp the Messianic hope that Jesus fulfilled and Matthew talked about throughout his gospel, it would be wise for the students to trace some of the power of God as it becomes realized in the life of Jesus, the Son of God.

This activity gets your students into the Old Testament and helps them to recognize this link through history and into the present.

Jesus possessed supernatural powers over disease, over demons, even over death. One of the “fulfillments” of Old Testament prophecy is that the Messiah would have such powers. Look up the following scriptures from the Old Testament and write down what they say:

- *1 Samuel 10:10 and 11:6*

- *2 Chronicles 32:7*

- *Isaiah 29:18-19*

- *Isaiah 35:5-6*

- *Isaiah 40:10*

- *Isaiah 61:1*

- *Isaiah 63:12*

- *Jeremiah 10:6*

- *Hosea 13:14*

What kind of power were these references speaking about? How does Jesus, the Messiah, either contradict, re-define, or fulfill these?

- The second miracle is intriguing in that it features a military man, voicing compassion for one of his servants. The word “centurion” means he commanded 100 soldiers, yet was concerned about a single servant. (Kinda reminds us of the Lost Sheep story Matthew includes later, doesn’t it?) Why is Jesus equally impressed with this man?

- What do you think “demon-possessed” in verse 16 means?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Faith feeds miracles (8:1-22)

One of the truths that these awesome stories reveal is that faith and miracles are virtually inseparable. That certainly is not to say that when the miracle for which we are longing and praying does not happen just as we had hoped it would, we have not exercised enough faith.

Read the first 22 verses of chapter 8, then answer the following questions:

- You will see in the healing of the leper an interesting command from Jesus to this man. What does He tell the man, and why do you think He did that?

- Jesus seems almost callous in verses 18-22, particularly the last verse. Why do you think He said, “. . . let the dead bury their own dead”?

2. Severe thunderstorm warning (8:23–9:13)

Have you ever been out on a boat when a storm hit? The waves can seem like monstrous fists pounding your boat like a sledgehammer. Storms are scary enough when you’re on land—inside your house even; how much more alarming when you’re being tossed 30 feet into the air over deep water.

The miracle of calming the stormy seas commands our attention because we, too, will face out-of-control situations that place us in grave peril. We need to know that Jesus has been there before, protecting and defending.

Read these stories of miraculous salvation and healing, then answer the questions that follow.

- What was Jesus' purpose in calming the storm?

- What things make this miracle different from those before and after it?

- Jesus seems to honor the request of the demons in the story found in verses 28-34. Why do you suppose He did? And why pigs?

- The healing of the paralytic was an overt sign of power. Jesus was proving a point. Just what was His point?

- We end this section of Matthew with the story of his own calling to become a disciple. What's the most interesting feature of that story?

3. "If I only touch his cloak" (9:14-26)

Jesus is grilled by the disciples of John the Baptist about fasting. "Why us," they ask, "and not them?"

Read Jesus' response and the accounts of two more miracles, then answer the following:

- Explain in the best way you know how about the new wine in old wineskins. Is Jesus referring to the Passover meal before His death?

- Why would the disciples of John ask such a question in the first place?

- The sick woman in verses 20-22 demonstrates remarkable faith in Christ's power. What action in this story makes it different from other miracle stories we have just read?

- For the first time in Matthew's record, Jesus shows His power over death itself (vv. 22-26). Is this a foreshadow for anything?
- The last two verses, 37-38, sound an awful lot like the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). What similarities do you see?

4. Lord of the harvest (9:27-38)

Here are three more specific miracles of healing: two blind men and a mute man. By now, the Pharisees are watching Jesus like hawks, trying to catch Him breaking their law so that they might arrest Him and do away with His threat to their power.

Read these verses, then answer the following:

- On what basis, according to Jesus, do these two blind men receive their sight?

- What is the reaction of the Pharisees after Jesus heals the mute man?

- When you read verses 35-38, do you sense that Jesus was frustrated by the enormity of His task? Or was He simply forecasting His short time left?

APPLY THE WORD

Here's a way of allowing your students to become agents of God's miraculous power. As you lead the discussion that is sure to follow, you might consider questions like this:

- Why are miracles so important?
- What were some of the criteria you used to decide who would make it on your list?
- Is there a way to insure that a miracle will take place?
- How does one stay hopeful when suffering such pain?

At this point, listen to your students' responses. Let them respond to each other without too much feedback from you.

Make a list below of 10 people you know who need a miracle. Some of them will be personal acquaintances, some of them will be people you have only heard about or read about. After each person's name, describe the situation that placed this person on your list. Then describe specifically what kind of a miracle needs to happen for this person. If you're having trouble getting started, put yourself first. Then your brother or sister. Then your best friend.

Name	Situation	Describe Miracle
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

LIVE THE WORD NEED A FAITHLIFT?

It seems like we take a lot of things for granted. We assume we'll be able to function tomorrow pretty much as we did today; we talk without thinking about being unable to; we walk without regard for those who can't; we trust our friends to remain friends.

This activity brings some of those "take-for-granted" and puts them onto paper so that we

can see them and start to appreciate that for the most part, life is a series of faith lifting actions.

Faith, as we know from reading Hebrews 11, is the hope of things we cannot touch or feel, the promise of things we cannot see. Using this definition, we exercise a little bit of faith every day . . . lots of little bits of faith.

In the chart below, list five things under each heading that you have faith will take place.

And if you want to test your faith a little bit, make one of them a “fleece”; that is, a hope of faith (a miracle?) for which you are or will be praying. You might begin each one with something like, “I trust that . . .” or “I honestly believe that . . .” or “I have faith that . . .”

Home

Church

School

Relationships

Your Future

6

CHECK YOUR BURDENS AT THE DOOR

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:1-12:50

KEY VERSES: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Comprehend what it means for followers of Jesus to call themselves “Christians.”
2. Appreciate the sacrifice He made every day to keep His ministerial purpose top priority.
3. View their relationship with Christ as a haven of rest from the stresses of this world.

PERSPECTIVE

Every one of us feels pressure to conform, perform, and stay informed on a daily basis. If it's not our intellect, it's our integrity. If it's not our lifestyle, then it's our personality. Rarely, though, are we asked to transform.

Peer pressure is most keenly felt during the teen years. Teens get it at school, at home, and at church. They read about it in the newspaper and see it on the television. Conformity is their

middle name. That's why these chapters are so important for them to study and commit to in their own changed lifestyle.

Young Christians need to realize that Jesus also felt all kinds of pressure: the Zealots wanted Him to overthrow the oppressive Roman government; the disciples wanted Him to take them to His kingdom; the crowds wanted Him to heal their sickness and relieve their suffering; the Pharisees wanted Him dead. That makes covering up a blemish in the morning seem pretty mundane, doesn't it? But not to the teenager!

This lesson shows Jesus in several settings, always being questioned and suspected, yet always being a loving and compassionate teacher. He showed us that indeed, He is our Haven of rest, our Bearer of burdens, our Lifter of spirit. He invites us to come to Him with everything!

BIBLE BACKGROUND

During His recently completed evangelistic crusade, Jesus had become acutely aware of both the breadth and depth of the problems He faced in getting His message out. First, there was so much geographical area to cover that one man on foot couldn't do it. Second, the people were so confused and directionless; their spiritual condition was suffering terribly. It was on this last note that the Master felt some hope. So helpless were they that they were quite open to

accepting the good news that “The Kingdom of Heaven is upon you.”

If only Jesus had more helpers. We read at the end of chapter 9 that Jesus said the “harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” In chapter 10, He pairs up His 12 closest followers and sends them out. Notice that His instructions to the Twelve are to minister to the Jews only. It was His purpose to convince them first during His earthly ministry. After His resurrection He would commission the disciples to pursue His ministry into all the world (more specifically, the Gentiles). This, then, in chapter 10 becomes “The First Commission.”

This mission that they were to commence immediately required two ways of thinking. First, they were to be humble and innocent, taking little in the way of food and clothing with them and relying on the goodness of those to whom they ministered by driving out demons, preaching, raising the dead, and healing the sick. On the other hand, they were to be careful and alert, for they would meet with strong and powerful opposition and antagonism everywhere they traveled. According to verse 16, they were to be as innocent as doves but as shrewd as snakes. They were, after all, sheep among wolves--two interesting metaphors that bear further interpretation.

Doves, of course, are associated today with peace; in Jesus' culture the dove symbolized the grace of God. Note the descent of the dove at Jesus' baptism. Snakes have a long tradition of symbolism. The Jewish attributed a sly sort of wisdom to snakes, reflected clearly in the story of the Fall in chapter four of Genesis. The other metaphor was less theological and more practical, as the wild and natural wolf was the primary predator of the sheep, an animal often associ-

ated with sacrificial offering, helplessness, and innocence.

How would you like it if your job description included certainty of persecution and arrest? The disciples, though they may have appreciated Jesus' forthright honesty, probably looked at each other and thought, “Wow, I could've just stayed home, tended my nets, and had supper with my family tonight.” At the same time, they must have shivered with excitement of doing something that would make an eternal difference in the history of humankind.

Jesus assures them that even in their persecution, they need not worry or fear (10:19-20), echoing His sermon admonition (6:25-34). The Spirit of their Father would provide them with the right words to say. The message they would be carrying was inherently volatile enough to cause division among the ranks, even within the same household. Nevertheless, they were to be comforted that no persecution they would face would be able to fully and publicly silence them. They would persevere by faith. Even should they be martyred for the message they proclaimed, the eternal reward of heaven awaited those who obeyed His teaching and commands. Those who accept the disciples, accept Him; and all those who acknowledge Jesus will be acknowledged to God by Christ at the Judgment.

It must be noted here that many Bible scholars have difficulty with the unity of this commissioning discourse. It is found in this fashion only in Matthew, though parts of it are found in different places in the other synoptic gospels. The theory is that Matthew compiled the instructions of Jesus that were given at various times in various places into one single discourse here. Some scholars contend, however, that Matthew's version of the chronology and unity

is correct as it stands. Whichever the case, readers can be assured these instructions and teachings came from Jesus to His disciples.

Chapters 11 and 12 focus on the public establishment of Jesus' Messiahship. The healing of the sick and the casting out of demons demonstrate this. The dispute He has with the Pharisees about appropriate and inappropriate activity on the Sabbath establish His Lordship over the Sabbath. His gentle spirit and unassuming demeanor are further manifestations of Messianic prophecy. Sure, He was the one true Son of God, but that also made Him the Servant of man, as told about in Isaiah. Tasker writes, "His sympathy for the weak and the afflicted, the sinful and the oppressed, would, as the prophet had predicted, render the knowledge that one day He would discharge His messianic function as the victorious Judge, a message not of terror but of hope for mankind" (p. 111).

Christ's defense for His actions on the Sabbath bring up some interesting questions, many of which He anticipates and addresses. We find that today, many of the practices we have for Sunday behavior were deemed unacceptable

in preceding generations, not all that long ago. Reading newspapers, going to the store, going out to eat, watching television, pulling weeds in the garden are done by many on the Sabbath, whereas just a generation or two ago, most of those things were frowned upon. Is this generation desecrating the Sabbath by doing so? Is going to church twice on Sunday, sleeping most of the time in between those two services what God meant when He instructed us to "keep it holy"? If saving a fallen sheep is OK, then is giving your only car a much-needed oil change wrong? These are dilemmas that face your teens and will continue to grow in number, so this is a good chance for you to help them address "holy behavior."

Finally, in verses 34-37 of chapter 12, Jesus uses John the Baptist's term, "brood of vipers" to describe the Pharisee's who were calling good, evil, and light, darkness. He tells them that the mouth says only what the heart feels, and for them to speak such evil means that their hearts must be filled with such evil. It will be not only by our deeds, but also by our thoughts as expressed by our words, that we will be judged.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Imagine that you've been named to a church committee that is going to make a list of "Dos" and "Don'ts" for keeping the Sabbath day holy, which your congregation is to follow. Your pastor has given you a few suggestions to consider, but she'd like for you to come up with some of your own as well.

Fill in the chart below, placing each of the following items under one of the headings (and write down any conditions that may have entered into your decision). Then add to the chart some items that your pastor may have omitted.

- Eating out in a restaurant
- Working in the yard
- Homework
- Watching sports on television
- Reading the newspaper
- Going to the mall
- Playing an organized sport
- Napping
- Getting your cat down from a tree

Do

Don't

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. What a job description! (10:1-42)

The 10th chapter of Matthew is a powerful and exciting chapter. Jesus gives the first 12 disciples specific instructions about what He expects them to do and accomplish when He is no longer with them to show them.

As your group reads this passage, they must say to themselves, “Information Overload! Information Overload!” While it may have sounded overwhelming to mere mortals, it must have also been exhilarating to realize that God was among them, living and breathing right next to

them. Can you imagine the thrill of waking up each morning next to the Son of the Creator?

We often call Matthew 28:20 “The Great Commission,” but it is actually the second of two commissions in Matthew. Chapter 10 contains Jesus’ first commission to His disciples. After you have studied it, ponder the following items and write down what you think.

• Jesus uses four animals in verse 10 to illustrate His point. List each one here and write down the meaning that each symbol suggests to you. 4.

a. 5.

b. 6.

c. 7.

d. 8.

• Jesus called 12 men to be His disciples; Matthew lists them in 10:2-4. Write down their names here. If you know anything about one of them, write it down. If you don't, write down a question you'd like to ask him directly. 9.

1. 10.

2. 11.

3. 12.

- Jesus has been called “The Prince of Peace” because He was seen to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6. However, in Matthew 10:34, He seems to defy that description. What do you make of that?

- Verse 37 is a tough pill to swallow. Read it in the context of what Jesus has been saying (Luke 14:26 develops it further) and write down what you think He meant.

2. Woe to you (11:1-30)

This chapter begins with a description of Jesus’ earthly ministry in which He modeled what we have heard a million times like this—“Practice what you preach,” or more recently, “Walk the talk.” That is precisely what the Master was telling those people around Him—and He was not only describing His own ministry, He was directing the lifestyle to them.

When the followers of John the Baptist ask Him in verse 3, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?” Jesus simply tells them (vv. 4-5), “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor.” That’s 5 to 1 in favor of “Things Seen” over “Things Heard.” A Blowout!

Jesus condemns entire cities in verses 20-24, saying, “Woe to you.”

- Why do you suppose Jesus said that?

Read the entire chapter now, and answer all of the following questions:

- What is the exact context in which Jesus invites His followers to rest (vv. 25-30)?

- When in your own life do you find great comfort and solace in that invitation?

- Jesus used children to illustrate many things--the kingdom of God, the immature Christian, the deaf audiences. In verses 16-19, He uses children to illustrate something--what is it? Do you find it clear?

3. Remember this Sabbath (12:1-21)

Most of us remember the fourth commandment from Exodus 20:8: “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” The trouble seemed to be in Jesus’ day, however, that holiness and the law seemed to get thrown into the same pot. The scribes and Pharisees turned God’s command into their own little words, and then they had

the audacity to force their narrow interpretations onto everyone else.

Read about this and the rest of the passage in chapter 12, then answer the following:

- Are there other things in the Bible that you see government or the Church trying to “legislate” today?

- What does it mean to “keep the Sabbath day holy”?

- How would you define “holiness”?

- Here again we see “the letter of the law” being upheld by man over “the spirit of the law” (vv. 1-13). Do you find that in other places of Scripture? How about right now in your country?

minds. He knows what they’re up to and He lets them have it with both barrels.

They have accused Him of being in consort with the devil. They were afraid that they might be wrong about Him, so they tried to convince everyone that He was wrong about them. Isn’t that all too typical of people who are wrong and know they are wrong, but are too proud or frightened to admit it?

In verse 37, Jesus makes words very important. You’ve heard little kids sing out when someone calls them a bad name, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” (What they don’t know, right?) Well, Jesus answers that: “For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Read the last half of chapter 12, then answer the following questions:

- What does Jesus mean in verse 25 when He says that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand?

- Did you know that Abraham Lincoln quoted this verse in his second inaugural speech? What was his context?

4. Sticks and stones (12:22-50)

This must have been very scary for Jesus’ critics, for in these verses we see Him reading their

- You've heard it said, "If you're not part of the solution, then you're part of the problem." Jesus says it a bit differently in verse 30. What does it mean?
- Emmanuel

- Christ
- Savior

- The tongue can be our bitterest enemy (vv. 34-37). Why is that?
- Teacher

- Son of God

APPLY THE WORD

The names, nicknames, and labels the Jews had given the Messiah and those that He called himself are numerous. Each one carries connotations that bring a separate meaning to Him and His ministry.

This activity gets your students to thinking about such labels as they apply to themselves and as they apply to Jesus. With each label, they are asked to give the meaning and the "job description" that goes with it. You might offer them some of yours to get them started in this activity.

Jesus also was known by many more names than the one Joseph and Mary gave to Him. Next to each one below, write down what you know about that name: who called Him that, what that name means, etc. (You may want or need to use your concordance for this.)

- Master
- Messiah

- Son of Man

- Lamb of God

LIVE THE WORD

Each one of us carries at least one burden, but more than likely we bear many, most of them secretly and privately. You can be sure that your teens feel overwhelmed at times with the ones they shoulder every day of the week.

Jesus promises us rest if we lay our worries, fears, and pressures at His feet. That is one of the most comforting promise of the New Covenant.

Close this lesson by praying with your students, recognizing they carry burdens such as perfectionism, physical appearances, fitting in, family dysfunction, among others. Help them be open and honest by creating an atmosphere of acceptance and warmth. Discourage putdowns or snickering among the group. Encourage them to keep a diary this week, concluding each daily entry with a prayer.

7 THE PARABLES

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:1-58

KEY VERSE: “Have you understood all these things?” (Matthew 13:51).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Catch a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven.
2. Understand the genre of parables.
3. Identify with both those who often hear but don't understand and those who do understand.

PERSPECTIVE

The world is looking at the Church with as much scrutiny as the Jewish religious establishment analyzed Jesus. And you and your students are the Church. Non-Christians will understand what the kingdom of heaven is like by observing you or they will miss it entirely. For many people, you may be the only contact they will ever have with the Kingdom.

Therefore, it is imperative to understand our roles in the Kingdom as well as the Kingdom itself. Is God a god of confusion and deception? Is God a god of discipline and judgment? Is God a god of forgiveness and compassion? Is God a servant or one to be served? Does He always say “yes” or always say “no”? Does He

sometimes say one but not the other? How can you manipulate Him?

The life of Jesus helps to answer most of our questions about the nature and character of God, but as good as that is, instruction is also necessary. Jesus himself provided a great deal of that revealing instruction through seven parables in chapter 13. From the familiar seeds and fields of the farmer to the fish and the sea of the fisherman, Jesus weaves truth into stories that catch the attention of all of us. If we have ears, let us hear.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Two of the parables in this chapter are also in Mark and Luke: the sower and seed (Mark 4:1-9 and Luke 8:5-15) and the mustard seed (Mark 4:30-32 and Luke 13:18-19). The yeast parable is found in Luke 13:20-21, but the other four parables are recorded only by Matthew. The gospel of John, interestingly, contains no parables.

Verses 10-15 really separate the Matthean account from its synoptic brothers, for they contain Jesus' rationale for teaching in parables (compare with Mark 4:10-12, 33-34; and Luke 8:9-10). Jesus says He has adopted this method in order to withhold from the “deaf” crowds that seemed to ignore His teachings, any more truth about God, His kingdom, or His Son. Jesus quoted Isaiah to describe the crowds as people who

“will be ever hearing but never understanding, ever seeing but never perceiving. Their hearts have become calloused” (vv. 14-15). Indeed, from chapter 13 on, Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables only, explaining the meanings later only to His disciples. The disciples, on the other hand, were receptive to His divinity and sovereignty and were, therefore, capable (because of their willingness) of understanding the truth of the Kingdom revealed through parables.

These parables reveal the character of God himself as much as they explain the kingdom of God, by describing the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Without the presence of the Messiah, after all, there would be no sower, no reaper, no pearl, no net, nothing that initiates the truth in the parables.

The first parable speaks of four different types of soil that have been planted with the seed of the gospel. The soils represent the varying condition of human hearts. The Kingdom can take root and thrive only in hearts that are open and vulnerable, committed and receptive.

The second parable, regarding wheat and weeds, describes the reign of God in conflict with evil. This evil, symbolized by the weeds in verses 24-30, will make every attempt to snuff out the goodness of God’s kingdom by spreading rumors, discounting miracles, and overpowering the weak and vacillating. The final victory, however, will belong to God’s kingdom.

Until that time, though, faith will be crucial for members of God’s kingdom. Even the smallest bit of faith, that as small as the mustard seed, will grow to unbelievable size if and when it is nurtured and tended. But it must be protected and it must be resolute to survive and thrive in an environment set against it.

Until the Judgment takes place, there will always be found the faithful and true as well as the faithless and false. The parable of the fish in the net shows a consummation that gathers all who are living and separates at that point the “good fish” from the “bad fish.” To be among the “good fish” is much more desirable because the Kingdom is like a precious jewel to be bought at whatever price or a buried treasure in the field. This Kingdom will be the only thing that lasts forever, and that truth alone qualifies it as the most desired and valuable thing ever to exist. All else is temporary and worthless.

After telling these stories, Jesus left and went back to Nazareth to teach in the synagogue. Peterson paraphrases, “He made a real hit, impressing everyone. ‘We had no idea he was this good!’ they said. ‘How did He get so wise, get such ability?’ But in the next breath they were cutting him down: ‘We’ve known him since he was a kid; he’s the carpenter’s son. We know his mother, Mary. We know his brothers James and Joseph, Simon and Judas. All his sisters live here. Who does he think he is?’ They got their noses all out of joint. But Jesus said, ‘A prophet is taken for granted in his hometown and his family.’ He didn’t do many miracles there because of their hostile indifference” (44).

This anecdote attached to the end of a series of parables really humanizes Jesus. What He experienced in His hometown is the same thing many men and women experience when they return home after making their mark elsewhere. Once you’ve been watched as a child growing up somewhere, that place will always and forever see you as a child. A grown and successful child, perhaps, but still a child.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

This activity is aimed at getting your students to see the parables as conveyers of deep truths rather than as simply being “nice stories.” Even secular stories convey moral themes and this activity uses 10 or so of the more familiar ones. If you have time, you might ask your students to mention one of their favorites. Ask them what the lesson to be taken from the story is.

- The thorns–
- The good soil–
- This parable describes four kinds of “soil.” Can you think of another kind of soil that might accept or reject the gospel?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. A time to harvest (13:1-23)

This parable illustrates the urgency of spreading the gospel of Christ and salvation. It also explains the difference between the wise listener and the foolish one who refuses to heed the warnings. After you finish reading this section of chapter 13, have your students answer the following:

- First read the parable (vv. 3-9) then read Jesus’ explanation (vv. 19-23). Write down the explanation of each of the symbols He uses in the story.

- The birds–
- The farmer–
- The seed–
- The rocky soil–

2. Wheat or weed? (13:24-30, 36-43)

You may have noticed that the explanation of the parable about the weeds sown among the wheat is interrupted in the text by a third parable, which we will study later. The parable of the wheat and weeds logically flows out of the preceding parable, for it too is about seeds and sowing. However, this parable is not so much about the hearers of the gospel as it is about the enemies of the gospel.

As you read this parable, look again at the details Jesus used to illustrate His point. Then, look at His explanation and draw some parallels between the symbol and its meaning.

- The sower–
- The field–
- The weeds–
- The enemy–

- The harvest–
- The harvesters–
- Why do you suppose Jesus used the field and the seed to provide the backdrop for His stories?
- Where was Jesus when He told these first two parables in chapter 13?
- How do you think His listeners responded to these two stories?
- Yeast permeates dough and makes it expand. How is the kingdom of God like yeast?
- Why was the man who found the treasure in the field so happy that he sold everything he owned?
- The merchant does the same thing as the man in the field. What makes this parable different from that other one?
- The final parable uses the sea as the setting—how appropriate for Jesus’ fishers of men. Let’s analyze its meaning as we did the first two parables, shall we? What do you think the symbols mean?

3. Four snapshots (13:31-35, 44-46)

These two passages contain four very brief, yet powerfully clear, pictures of the kingdom of heaven.

Read them now, then answer the following questions:

- The mustard seed was the smallest seed used by farmers then, but its plant could reach 10 feet in height eventually. What makes that a powerful picture?
- The lake–
- The good fish–
- The bad fish–
- The fishermen–

4. You can’t go home again (13:53-58)

Think about this: What if Jesus had grown up

as a little boy in your neighborhood--nothing outstanding about Him, really. Then He had gone away for some time, and returned spouting mammoth ideas about who He is and who God is. Wouldn't you wonder a little bit?

Read this passage then answer the following:

- It says in verse 57 that they took offense at Him. What do you think they said?

- Where is Jesus' hometown?

- Did you know Jesus had brothers? What were their names? Were they also Sons of God?

- He also had sisters. Why aren't they mentioned by individual names, like the brothers? Why was Mary named but not Joseph?

the "Beach Heaven" folks on one team, the "Mountain Heaven" folks on another team, etc. Then they could divide up the tasks. In order to prepare, you might go through the Bible and come up with as many characteristics of heaven as you can find to balance their creativity with biblical truth.

Jesus told seven stories to describe the kingdom of heaven in chapter 13. Most of us have individual visions of what heaven is like (like John did in Revelation). Some of us picture long white beaches with crystal blue seas, and lots of free time. Others of us imagine ourselves skiing down evergreen-lined slopes at 40 mph until we collapse by the fire and drink hot chocolate.

Whatever you picture heaven being like, write down as many of those visions here as you can think of. (Hint: think of heaven as a combination of all of your favorite things.)

APPLY THE WORD

This activity takes some creativity on both your part as leaders and your students as writers. Its purpose is for them to get a grasp, albeit arbitrary and completely subjective, of what heaven will be like.

Some of your students may prefer to draw and/or paint while others write, while yet others would like to act out their ideas. Or they might team up according to commonly-held conceptions of heaven: have

LIVE THE WORLD

Have each student share or write an objective definition of God (the kind of thing you might read in a dictionary or an encyclopedia). Then have them share or write a subjective or personal definition, much like a testimony might sound.

It's really too easy for us in church to say the word, "God," without really taking time to consider what it means. This is an opportunity you have as a group to share how your concepts of God has changed or evolved as you've grown up. You might point out that often our idea of who God is is tied to our perceptions of our parents. If we have loving parents, we tend to view God that way, but if we have legalistic or abusive or manipulative parents, it's harder to see God as a loving, compassionate kind of God. Be sensitive to the family situations of your students as you discuss these issues.

8 WALKING ON WATER

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14:1-15:39

KEY VERSE: “But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid’ (Matthew 14:27).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Understand both the value and the limit of rules in the Church.
2. Trust that the same God who can feed thousands on a basketful of food, walk on water, and cast out demons will comfort them when they are frightened.
3. Take courage!

PERSPECTIVE

Youth have a hard time with rules. They’ve been given a list of rules to live by at home, rules to live by at church, rules to live by at school, rules to live by from the government, rules to live by in their relationships. Life must seem like one giant list of “can’t’s” and “don’t’s.”

Jesus knew that some rules for behavior were necessary in society, but He was totally opposed to rules for rules’ sake. When rules supersede the purpose or motive behind them--when there are rules simply to catch people breaking them--then there is a problem. One of the pur-

poses of this lesson, then, is to allow your teens an opportunity to study some of the rules of the Church and to evaluate both the merits and the pitfalls of some of them.

The other purpose of the lesson is to focus on the importance of food in our culture, and in some ways in evangelism. After all, it’s harder to hear the message of Christ when your stomach is grumbling with horrible hunger pangs. Jesus obviously recognized this when He fed over 9,000 people with two meager meals.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Chapter 14 begins with a parenthetical mention of the death of the John the Baptist. The beheading of the Baptizer had occurred some time earlier and it was not his death that “Jesus heard about” before boarding a boat. Rather, it was Herod’s judgment of Jesus that He heard about, thus causing Him to seek a solitary place. The verb tenses in verses 1 or 2 indicate that Herod considered Jesus to be John risen from the dead, which explained Jesus’ miraculous power. The actual report of John’s death, then, verses 3-12, are a “flashback,” meant to provide historical background.

Jesus escaped Herod’s reach in the solitary place, where He took the opportunity to continue His instructions to His disciples. But when He arrived, He was met by crowds of people. This

seemed to move Him greatly, so He continued to touch them, healing their illnesses and casting out their demons. After a while, the disciples, probably feeling some growling emptiness in their own stomachs, remark that the hour is getting late and suggest they'd better get to the market if they hoped to eat that night.

It is interesting to note that 2 Kings 4:42-44 records Elisha feeding a large number of people with meager resources: 100 men with 20 loaves of barley. Not in the same league as 5,000 with five loaves, but nonetheless a possible prophetic foreshadowing of the Messiah's power. Note also that the disciples acknowledged Jesus' Messiahship solely on the basis of His ability to meet their physical needs. That may have been the reason He sent them ahead while He went to the mountains to pray alone. Perhaps He sensed the superficiality of their belief. See John 6 for further indications of this.

Only Matthew records that the 5,000 did not include women and children. It was Jewish tradition that men were separated from women and children in public, so they were in a different place. Whether they were among a second crowd fed by Jesus is purely speculative.

Between 3:00 A.M. and 6:00 A.M. Jesus started for the boat containing the disciples. The weather had changed for the worse, threatening the disciples as they struggled to reach land. Mark writes that Jesus fully intended to just show up, let them know He was there, but not to get in the boat with them. This, most suppose, was to be His way of telling them that even though he would not always be with them physically, He would always be with them spiritually.

Only Matthew recounts why Jesus got into the boat with them--on account of Peter. Peter, hearing the voice of His Master, calls out to

Jesus, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus told him to come, but Peter's fear overruled his faith and he began to go under. "Help!" he cried. "Save me." Jesus did, of course, but not without chiding him for his inability to see Jesus for who He was. As soon as Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the winds cease and the seas calm, and the disciples acknowledge Him as the Son of God, the Lord of wind and water.

Scholars are quick to point out that in the original Greek language, the verbs indicate nothing about Peter actually walking on the water. "Began to walk" would be a more accurate translation, meaning Peter more than likely stood up, perhaps even on the upper edge of the boat's side, and called out or reached out to Jesus. One step off the edge, he sank into the churning waves.

The plot now thickens (as if escaping the wrath of Herod, feeding thousands, and a near drowning weren't drama enough). Next, the Pharisees show up (15:1-20). "Why do your disciples play fast and loose with the rules?" they say, according to Peterson's paraphrase. Jesus was quick to respond: "Why do you use your rules to play fast and loose with God's commands? God clearly says, 'Respect your father and mother,' and 'Anyone denouncing father or mother should be killed.' But you weasel around that by saying, 'Whoever wants to, can say to father and mother, 'What I owed to you I've given to God.' That can hardly be called respecting a parent. You cancel God's command by your rules. Frauds!'" (also Peterson's paraphrase).

The historical background to this conversation is important. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews had started laying down all kinds of nit-picky laws concerning behavior, making it near-

ly impossible to keep all of them. Because they were oral in origin, not being written until A.D. 200, they were often amended to fit the occasion to the advantage of the lawgiver and had the effect of keeping the masses in their place and the rabbis in theirs--on top.

Youth need to understand that rules and regulations have a legitimate function. Without traffic laws, for instance, roads would be concrete slabs of carnage and mayhem. Without school rules, little learning would occur. In the church, rules need to come from internal values, not as external modifications. They must come from a sincere commitment to Jesus as Lord and God as sovereign. God saw laws as important—He did give us 10 pretty good ones through Moses. But for humans to misrepresent and misinterpret those laws into a series of meaningless rules that are motivated out of narrow minds and hard hearts is wrong. Unequivocally wrong. Not to mention hypocritical.

Jesus reminded the religious leaders of His day (and us today) that to dictate that what a holy person should eat is ignorant. It's not what we eat that separates us from each other and God—it's what comes out of the heart that digs that chasm. Encourage your teens to consider eat as a generic verb and substitute other verbs: read, watch, listen to, etc. Do those interpretations bring new meaning to the verses? Are those interpretations accurate? How so? How not?

The scene with the Canaanite woman is unique for two reasons. First, note that the disciples seem to have lost all patience with people chasing after them, begging for a healing touch. "Send her away," they say, "for she keeps crying out after us." Perhaps they saw that she was a Canaanite and therefore unworthy. Even Jesus seems to support the idea initially when He

says, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." His point, upon more careful study, however, was that the gospel was intended first for the Jews, the chosen "children" of God. She seems to have understood His point and says, "OK, I'm not a Jew, but I'd settle even for a 'crumb' of your power and mercy." Jesus immediately honored her faith.

What seems to distinguish this second miraculous feeding (15:29-39) from the first is that it was initiated by Jesus. In verse 32 He says, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." Some critics and scholars have suggested that the two recorded mass-feedings were really one episode recorded twice. On the other hand, it is improbable that both Mark and Matthew would "waste" so much valuable papyrus space to a duplicate story. Also, so much of each episode was unique: number of people, number of loaves, number of baskets left over, even types of baskets used.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

You and your students will notice that this test about Jesus is full of "correct answers," so assure them that if they mark two or three, even all four responses in some cases, they are not wrong. The purpose is not to test one's scholarship. It is to spark discussion, so allow them to talk among themselves and see if there is any agreement to be reached on some of these.

Let's take a few minutes to try our hand at answering the following multiple-choice questions about this passage. Choose the best answer for each question below.

1. Which person shows the most faith in these two chapters?

- A. Peter
- B. The Canaanite woman
- C. The Pharisees
- D. The crowds

2. Which of the following vices that come from the heart do you think is the worst?

- A. Evil arguments
- B. Lies
- C. Cussing
- D. Fornications

3. Who is Jesus most like?

- A. A genie in a bottle
- B. A faith healer
- C. A Supreme Court Justice
- D. An emergency room doctor

4. What does Jesus think about the Pharisees?

- A. "Give me a break!"
- B. "They'll come around. Give 'em time."
- C. "The worst sinners of all."
- D. "If this is the Church, I want no part of it."

5. Which word best describes the heart of the Lord?

- A. Mercy
- B. Justice
- C. Judgment
- D. Patience

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Let's eat (14:1-21)

This passage contains the stories of two feasts—one an orgy of sensual pleasure and decadence, the other a miracle of loving provision and intervention.

As you read about these two stories, contrast their details and their meanings, then answer the following:

- Who was at the first feast? (vv. 14:1-12)

- Who was at the second feast? (vv. 14:13-20)

- Why was Herod afraid of John the Baptist?

- Jesus seems to be so calm during what we might consider crises, isn't He? Here, He's been healing the sick all day long. The disciples suggest that Jesus send the crowds of needy people away so they can eat. He simply asks what the disciples have to eat so that the crowds can stay a while longer. What does His calm response tell you about Him?"

2. Storm surfing (14:22-36)

As soon as the disciples had collected all the leftovers from the miraculous feast—about 12 boxes full—He told them to leave and get some rest, sending them off in a boat. He decided to stay behind for a while.

Read the details of this famous miracle, then answer the following:

- What did Jesus do after the disciples left in the boat?

- While they were sailing across the water they soon encountered resistance. They were going one way but the wind and the waves were knocking them back the other way. In what ways might this image be a symbol of the Christian experience?

- What great words of comfort does Jesus give His men? What crisis are you going through today for which those words might be fitting?

- What is Peter's response to seeing Christ?

- Why did Peter start to go under?

- When everybody was safe in the boat, the disciples recognized something. What did they say? Why was this sign so revealing to them?

3. Don't let your words become air pollution (15:1-20)

After feeding the masses, walking on water, and healing more sick people, Jesus is once again attacked by the Pharisees, who were still bent on finding fault with what He is doing. They set out to trick Him at His own "game."

Read this exchange and answer the following:

- What are the Pharisees asking Jesus about? What is their sole ("soul") motive?

- Jesus rebukes them, calling them a name (v. 7). What does that label mean?

- As Jesus often does, He quotes from the Scriptures, the Word of His Father, to answer hostile inquiries. Here He quotes from Isaiah. In your own words, what is He saying?

- If you could apply to your own life and your own situation what Jesus says about being “unclean” and what goes into a person and what comes out of a person, how would you make that application?
- The second miraculous feeding story has some similarities, of course, to the first, but it is what’s different that makes it more interesting to look at. What are some of those distinctions?

4. It’s a dog eat dog world (15:21-39)

Faith seems to be a key element in Matthew’s gospel. This passage begins with the emotional pleas of a Canaanite woman for “crumbs” from the Master’s side, and ends with collecting seven basketfuls of more crumbs.

As you read, try to consider the following questions:

- Why are the disciples seemingly so dense? Just a few days earlier, hours perhaps, they had claimed, “This is it—this guy is truly the Son of God!” Now they’re telling Him to send this screaming woman away. Are they being selfish or protective?
- The screaming woman wants Jesus to exorcise the demons in her daughter and He says something very interesting: “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” Does your Bible explain that? If not, what do you think it means?

- Read about this same story in Mark 7:31–8:10. Do you note any differences in that account of this same feast?

APPLY THE WORD

This activity will bring out motives behind the writing of rules and the adherence to rules, particularly rules in the Church. It ought to be a lively discussion.

Read the words of Jesus as they are paraphrased by Eugene Peterson in The Message: “Listen, it’s not what you swallow that pollutes your life, but what you vomit up. Don’t you know that anything that is swallowed works its way through the intestines and is finally defecated? But what comes out of the mouth gets its start in the heart. It’s from the heart that we vomit up evil arguments, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, lies, and cussing. That’s what pollutes” (v. 48).

Now, write in your own words the same passage:

LIVE THE WORD

Offer your feelings and thoughts on the following things that come out of the mouth. You might even rank them from worst to least worst.

- Cussing
- Lying
- Gossip
- Criticism
- Arguing/Bickering
- Working on Sunday
- Smoking
- Others

You know that the Church does have standards of behavior for its members. Some of them you may agree with wholeheartedly; some others you may question. What is your personal stance on the following issues, keeping in mind that “what goes into a man’s mouth [read “heart”] does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of the mouth [heart] that is what makes him ‘unclean’” (15:11).

- Dancing
- Movies
- Drinking alcohol

9 SIGNS! SIGNS! EVERYWHERE ARE SIGNS!

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 16:1-18:35

KEY VERSE: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Discover what the promised keys to the Kingdom are.
2. Understand that in order to keep the forgiveness and mercy shown to them it must be shared.
3. Look to God to move the obstacles in their lives that keep them from reaching their full potential in Him.

PERSPECTIVE

Within these chapters Jesus unlocks the five “Fs” of the Church: the foundation, the formation, the fellowship, the future, and the function. Through signs, demonstrations, instruction, and response, He shows that the Kingdom is for those who come as little children, wide-eyed faith-givers. Those who want to be great in the Kingdom had better be prepared to take a large dose of humility.

It’s a given fact of life that we all bump up against

“mountains” (obstacles to be overcome) at one time or another. If it’s not one thing, it’s another. In this lesson, not only will we be learning more about the kingdom of God, but we will also learn that He is interested in our well-being here on earth. We only need faith the size of a tiny seed to say to the mountain, “MOVE,” and it will be gone!

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Chapter 16 opens with the Pharisees and Sadducees requesting a sign, something Jesus was quite adept at performing. However, Jesus refused and instead repeated what He had said in chapter 12 about the sign of Jonah. He also refers to the sky’s changing colors, which these cynics see everyday and have no trouble understanding. Why is it, He asks, that they have so much trouble with the obvious standing right in front of them?

At this point Jesus quizzed His disciples about His identity. First, who did others think He was, and second, who did they think He was? They responded to the first question with the names they had heard murmured in the crowds as Jesus taught and healed: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah. All of these names implied that Jesus was merely the reincarnation of a dead prophet, not the holder of the unique title, Son of God. Neither was Jesus merely the latest in a long line of great prophets.

“Well, who do you think I am?” He asked. Peter was the representative voice of the group: “You are the Christ; the Son of the living God.” This was obviously not a haphazard, top-of-the-head response that had come spontaneously to Peter. This was the same Peter who had dropped everything to follow Jesus, witnessing acts that could not have come from any other source than the Father. This Man of knowledge, this Man of sorrows, this Man of power, this Man of patience and mercy and grace was no mere man. He was “the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

In response to Peter’s confession, Jesus bestows on him the “keys of the kingdom.” What does this phrase mean? Peterson’s paraphrase of 16:19 sheds some light: “You will have complete and free access to God’s kingdom, keys to open any and every door; no more barriers between heaven and earth, earth and heaven. A yes on earth is a yes in heaven. A no on earth is no in heaven.” Another source comments, “Perhaps Peter used the keys (v. 19) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) when he announced that the door of the kingdom was unlocked to Jews and proselytes and later when he acknowledged that it was also opened to Gentiles.”

Is it any wonder that the disciples reacted so vehemently to Jesus’ announcement that soon He would be killed (vv. 21-28)? The passage indicates that Jesus began to focus His ministry more and more on His disciples. “From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem . . .” It was as if their recognition of Him as the Son of God was a signal to universalize His atonement and personalize His mission. Maybe He knew that now that these men recognized Him as God’s Son, His message was safe--it would not be dropped and left in the dust of history.

After He informed them of what was to come, He went up on a mountain with Peter, James, and John to “meet” with Moses and Elijah. Was He wanting them to see Him with “other prophets” in order to affirm even more so that He was different? The Transfiguration was a revelation and confirmation, indeed, but it also served to encourage them that earthly death was not the final end they thought. To see these two men from centuries before must have proven that to them without question. Death was no more than a gateway from earthly life to eternal life.

After teaching about the appropriateness of sons and subjects both paying taxes, and performing two more miracles (chapter 17), Jesus is asked by the disciples to list the greatest people in heaven (18:1). What do you suppose they were thinking? Were they hoping to be mentioned by name? Would they hear the names of Elijah and Moses and Abraham? Matthew includes here in chapter 18 teachings about the disciples’ participation in the Messianic community. Verse one, then, serves as a bridge of sorts--mortals posing a mortal question which was answered by instructions about the final days and the reversal of many earthly values. Innocent babes will be the greatest in heaven because they are the least on earth. Humility is great in heaven--earthly greatness is nothing.

The Kingdom is the kingdom of the reconciled, the forgiven, the reclaimed, made possible by the sacrifice of the Cross and the victory of the Resurrection. The Cross represents the extent to which we all are called to forgive others for wrongs they commit against us. Vengeance is easy. Mercy is of the Lord. So when Peter asks how often we should forgive our brothers and sisters, Jesus simply responds that “how often” applies only to the number of times we are asked. In other words, there is no limit. We are

to assume that we are the chief of sinners who have been shown eternal mercy by God himself. How can we possibly do any less for our brothers and sisters? Even those who take the lives of a loved one? Yes. Even those who sue us unjustly? Yes. Even those who assassinate our character and slander our integrity? Yes, them too. No wrong is too great to receive the mercy of the Master; therefore, no wrong is too great for us to forgive as well.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Jesus admonishes us in 16:24 that to follow Him is to deny ourselves, to pick up our cross, and to follow Him. This activity will help your students understand what that means in a practical way in their lives.

They have been asked to list as many things—five seems an acceptable number—as they can that they should deny (not can deny) in order to call themselves a follower of Jesus. Then they are to list what “cross” they will pick up as part of that denial and how they think they can find ways to follow God’s will.

You might consider using 3” x 5” cards or even smaller versions (cut them in half). Have your students write each denial/pickup/follow on a separate card and place them where they will see them every day, such as in their purses, wallets, locker doors, bathroom mirrors, or car visors.

In the chart below, offer as many examples of denying, taking up, and following as you can think of. An example is printed to help start your thinking.

Deny...

That great jacket at the mall

Take Up...

\$100 saved

Follow...

Buy jackets for the girls next door

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. The mark of the yeast (16:1-28)

This chapter opens with another question from the hypocritical cynics that plagued Jesus' ministry. The narrative then heads into more revelation as to the nature of God and His Son, the Messiah, Jesus—first from himself then from Peter, the Rock. The chapter concludes with Jesus' prediction of His arrest and death. As your group read each of these four stories, have them answer the following questions:

- Look at 12:39-40 and any notes your Bible might include to discover what Jesus meant by “the sign of Jonah.” What is the sign?
- What is the yeast Jesus warns His disciples about in verses 5-12?
- The keys mentioned in our Key Verse (get it?) are alluded to in Acts 2. Read that story, concentrating on Peter's role, until you get an idea of what these “keys” are, then write down your findings here.
- Matthew 16:21 marks a second change in the focus of Jesus' ministry (the first was in 4:17). Look at the verb, “began.” What was He beginning?

2. The summit meeting (17:1-23)

Most Bible versions call the first 13 verses of chapter 17 “The Transfiguration” because it includes visages of Elijah and Moses, making this one of the biggest Spiritual Summit Meetings that have ever taken place. If that weren't enough to make it one of the most memorable days in the lives of the disciples, who else should show up but God, himself. No wonder they wanted to erect monuments. Instead, Jesus wants them to keep it hush-hush.

- Why do you think Jesus is so insistent that no word gets out about this Summit Meeting?
- Why do Peter, James, and John get to see this? Is there something special about those three?
- Why do you suppose Peter suggests the three shelters (monuments, really) idea?
- Was it Elijah there on the mountain or John the Baptist?
- In verse 20 Jesus once again brings up the mustard seed illustration. Where have you seen that before and what was its meaning? What does it mean here? Are there any differences?

3. May I be the greatest? (17:24-18:9)

Jesus performs a minor miracle that may seem to us more like a magic trick. He pulls a coin out of a fish—rather, He has Peter do it. But as usual, it is to teach us a lesson:

- What do you think that lesson was? What do the king, sons, and subjects mean?

The first nine verses of chapter 18 contain one of the great lessons we need to hear over and over again, especially when we start to get a little pious and proud about our “saintly” behavior. Doesn’t it sound just like us to ask, “Hey, Master, who’s the greatest in your kingdom?”

- Who is the greatest in His kingdom?

- What is it about children that makes them the greatest in God’s eyes?

- What is a millstone?

4. ... as we forgive our debtors (18:10-35)

Are there limits to how far God will go to rescue us? Are there limits on what we can ask God to do for us? Are there limits to our forgiveness of others? No. No. No.

Read these verses, note the familiar verses you may have heard before, then answer these questions:

- Who are represented by the lost sheep? Who are the 99 other sheep?

- What does Jesus really mean when He says that we need to forgive each other 490 (or in some versions 77) times?

- The Sermon on the Mount talks about forgiving someone who sues you. Matthew 18:21-35 also seems to indicate that we are to forgive anyone who owes us. Are these two principles practical in this day and age?

10 TICKETS PLEASE

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 19:1-20:34

KEY VERSE: “So the last will be first, and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:16).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Catch the contrast between what the world teaches about success and what the Bible teaches.
2. Recognize that power and wealth are more hindrances than helps to the Christian walk.
3. Put into perspective the mistreatment they might be facing in their lives.

PERSPECTIVE

Leo Tolstoy wrote a story called “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” in which a young family man, a servant, gets an opportunity to win some land. He can win as much land as he can walk around in one day; the catch is he must return to the original spot before the sun goes behind the horizon, or he loses everything. In his attempt to grab as much as he can, he exhausts himself--to the point of death--trying to get back to the starting point and is buried on the spot. Tolstoy ends the story by answering the question of his title: “How much land does a man need? About six feet.”

This message: Man doesn't need that much on earth, is in agreement with Jesus' teachings. These two chapters include the theme statement of the Kingdom three separate times: “The last will be first and the first last.”

BIBLE BACKGROUND

This passage opens with the cynics attacking Jesus once again. It seems that every miracle He performs is preceded and followed by hypocrites trying to catch Him at His own “game.” Much as the world does today with its backward values (“Get, Get, Get”), trying to convince us that God's way is the wrong way (Who would choose to be poor?), Jesus' message is met with strong opposition. No wonder He said the way to the Kingdom is the harder path to follow and the narrow gate the more difficult to pass through. The question asked by the hypocrites this time is about divorce.

A difficult issue then, divorce seems to be more of a problem today than ever. Half of the marriages in America have ended in divorce, a rate that is not limited to non-Christians. The reasons for this may be the sexual liberties society takes for granted as “normal” or perhaps it is the “fast fix” mentality of today's hurry-up lifestyle--no social scientist knows for certain.

In chapter 19, Jesus knows the Pharisees, as usual, intend to trick Him, but He wants to

communicate God's point as clearly as He can. Their initial question is a two-point question, containing two indefinite adjectives: "any" and "every." That means His response must also be two-fold. First, however, He reminds them that God's intent from the beginning was for man and woman to be united in happy and productive marriage to insure the perpetuation of the human species. The Pharisees ask a follow-up question intended to put Him in direct opposition to Moses. "Why then did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus reminds them that Moses' law was less than ideal, because human "hearts were hard." It really was motivated by grace, for allowing certificates of divorce served to protect women, who before might have been executed or otherwise abused.

Next, Jesus answers their first question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" the answer is "yes," there is a reason for which divorce is allowable. To the question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every reason?" the answer is "no." Adultery, as He had said on the Mount in His Great Sermon, is the only allowable reason to divorce.

Upon hearing this, the disciples said to their Master what amounted to a question, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus knew they needed an answer and told them that not everyone is cut out for marriage. Some never even consider marriage. Some are never asked, at least by the right kind of person. Some never hear "yes." Some are too busy working for the Kingdom. If marriage is something they can handle, then do it.

The interlude between this exchange and the one with the rich, young man is really a refrain

from 18:2-6--the Kingdom is populated only by those who become as little children: trusting and unpretentious.

It is in this next encounter (vv. 16-30) that the world hears some awfully bad news. Jesus is unequivocal on this point: materialism is antithetical to spiritual growth. He has said already that man cannot serve two masters--God and money, which is illustrated by the rich man.

Although it is often quoted out of context, verse 21 is the crux of the matter. Is Jesus suggesting that perfection in this life is possible if one simply sells everything and follows Him? In view of the entire story, it seems doubtful that He meant it literally for all Christians. Luke 18:18 refers to this young man as a ruler, and that lends credibility to his line of questioning, for he seems to think that a single act of heroism will enable him to find eternal life. The fact that he was rich might also have entered into his mindset that this security of God's kingdom might be "bought" by his benevolence.

Jesus' response points clearly toward the idea that the Kingdom has but one price tag--total lifetime lifestyle commitment to obeying commandments concerning holiness (commandments 1-4 of the Ten Commandments) and righteousness (commandments 5-10). Isn't it interesting that in indexing these commandments (vv. 18-19), Jesus omits the 10th commandment, regarding covetousness, the one commandment with which the rich man seems to have the most trouble? Jesus senses the man's empty feeling, his troubled heart, and allows him to ask, "I've kept all those. What else do I need to do?" Jesus basically asks him to deal with his greatest weakness: "Take what is dearest to you--your stuff--and sell it so you can be free to follow me. Untethered. Unanchored. Unburdened." You

see, Jesus saw this man's riches not as a blessing but as a curse.

The follow-up parable (20:1-16) takes this idea one step further by focusing on being content with what we have rather than resenting what others have. This parable also touches on the underlying issues of spirituality and the kingdom of heaven. Remember that Peter had responded to Jesus' encounter with the rich man by asking, "Hey, so what's in it for us?" (19:27). Peter wasn't asking about wealth as much as he was asking about his place in heaven.

Jesus replies with this parable about the kingdom of God, by which He says that it won't matter how long someone has served God. The benefit package is the same for those whose lives are dedicated late as it is for those who became disciples early in their lives. That's why God dislikes it when we try to hoard our material goods: He doesn't hold onto His eternal bounty for himself or for a select few. He gives freely to whomever asks.

Well, James, John, and their mother can't take this much longer. They ask Jesus if they, who have sacrificed so much (they just don't get it, do they?), might accompany Him to His throne and sit to His right and left. Like Peter, they want to know what's in it for them. (Don't we often ask the same thing about our service to the church?) Jesus knows what's in it for them (martyrdom), and that's why He acknowledges that indeed they will drink from the same cup as He will, and that the final decision lies in the sovereignty of His Father.

Then, when the other 10 (and we can assume that included Peter who had been nearly as audacious earlier) got all over James and John, Jesus explained that they should watch Him if they weren't going to listen to Him. He came

to serve, not be served. He was trying to model the Kingdom for them. Great leaders pull—never push. To drive His point home, Jesus heals two blind men. Could this be a metaphor of the spiritual blindness suffered by the two sons of Zebedee?

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

This activity puts your student right into the current questions and philosophies of how to balance wealth with more benevolent ways of handling money.

Each of the six students in the "Ethics and Economics" class voices a different Christian attitude toward affluence that will in one way or another probably represent the majority of your group. You might ask them to respond to each sample student and to offer their points of agreement or disagreement.

In a recent class meeting of the "Ethics and Economics" course at the nearby college, the professor led a discussion about the values that separate the Christian view of success from the world's view. Let's hear what some of the students are saying.

Lora: I'm so sick and tired of people getting on the case of people who have earned a respectable place in life. My mom and dad work really hard in their jobs—my mom's a lawyer and my dad's a doctor—and we have just about everything we want or need. Is there anything wrong with that? I think God rewards those who work hard. Besides, we're some of the biggest contributors to our church. I'd even go so far as to say that if we pulled out our tithe checks, that place would fold in a month.

Jeff: I tend to agree with that, Lora, except

it seems you might be a little proud of your church support. My hope is that one day I can earn \$5,000,000 so that I can give \$1,000,000 away. That's twice what the Bible says I should give in tithe. I think it'd be so cool to see the face of somebody who's been handed 1,000,000 bucks, don't you?

Hank: I just want to be comfortable. I'd like to have a car that runs—and one for my wife if I'm lucky enough to get married before I die—a warm home, not too big but roomy enough so I don't have to step over stuff to get to my bed, lots of friends, and nice clothes to wear to work. Oh, and great dinners. Steaks! I don't need a whole lot of the nice things I see on television, but I don't want to have to worry about paying the bills, either.

Susan: You know, I've heard all of you talking about all that you can get and have and still be Christian. Maybe I'm way off, but when I read about people who have very little, some have nothing, I can barely stand to talk about it . . . or think about it. And it's not just in some third world country, either. There are people in this city who scrounge in garbage cans and sleep in downtown doorways. I want to make sure that happens to one less person because I was on earth. Whatever it takes to do that, that's what I'm gonna do. Anything else I get or have will be the proverbial icing on the cake.

Sharon: I think our government needs to do more to help those people, Susan. We need more assistance programs to get those people on their feet. Sure it would take more tax dollars in that direction, but we probably have a lot of programs being funded in Washington that don't need to be around anymore.

Doug: Whoa, Sharon and Susan and the rest of you bleeding hearts. Those people you describe scrounging in garbage cans are there because they put themselves there. Somewhere along the line they chose to climb off the train to success and take the easy way out and now they're paying for their laziness. The last thing government needs to do is support these people any more. What we need to do is stop those kinds of welfare programs because they encourage laziness and promiscuity and the other evils Jesus condemns in His Word.

The discussion will continue for several more minutes, but you tune it out because you've started thinking about what you believe when it comes to money and Christianity. Why don't you write down some of your initial thoughts and reactions to this class discussion here? Who's right and wrong? What is right and wrong?

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. Just do it (19:1-15)

The pattern we've become accustomed to in Matthew's account repeats itself here in chapter 19. Jesus has just performed some miracles and is teaching the crowds when the Pharisees show up again.

“Hey, Jesus,” they ask, “when can a man divorce his wife without committing a sin?” They were trying to trick him with one of their legal questions (although it makes you wonder if some of

them are looking for a way to escape their own bad marriages). However, their trick was bound to fail because they didn't realize that as the Son of God, *Jesus created the law of Moses!*

Note what He says, then answer the following items:

- Jesus referred to Genesis for God's original design for marriage. What is that ideal?

- What is the one exception for staying married?

- Marriage is not for everybody, according to Jesus (vv. 11-12). What three groups does He mention specifically?

- Jesus then says that if we don't fit into any of those groups, we should go for it. Why do you think He states it so strongly?

2. Threading the needle (19:16-30)

Modern Christians often live a double life that presents ethical dilemmas. On the one hand, our economic system tells us to strive for prosperity and wealth. On the other hand, our Master tells us to give it all away.

Read this passage and see what you come up with in response to these questions.

- How would you personally define success and prosperity?

- What does Jesus tell the rich young man his ticket into the Kingdom is (vv. 17-22)?

- Why does the rich young man turn on a dime and leave so disappointed?

- If you could summarize what Jesus is telling you in this story, what would it be?

3. Coming in last (20:1-19)

The last thing Jesus says in the preceding story about the rich, young man is, “many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.” Glance ahead if you dare, but doesn’t He say that very same thing in verse 16 of this chapter? And if you want to see it one more time, He says basically the same thing in verses 26-27. That’s three times.

Read the first 19 verses of chapter 20, then answer the following questions:

- What exactly does it mean—the first will be last and the last first?
- How many groups of men does the landowner hire and at what times?
- What does the landowner want these men to do? Where will they be working? How significant is that? (Read John 15 before you answer that last question.)

- How would you have responded if you had been in that first group of employees? How would you have reacted if you had been in the last group hired? What makes the difference in your “feelings”?

4. Surrounding the throne (20:20-34)

Unlike Mark’s version of this story (he writes in Mark 10:35-37 that James and John themselves asked the question), the mother of the two disciples who had accompanied Jesus up the mountain of Transfiguration (the summit meeting He has with Elijah and Moses) asks Jesus if her sons can surround Him when He ascends to the throne.

Note His lengthy response, the other disciples’ reaction, and His final entreaty before He heals two rather persistent blind men. Then answer the following questions.:

- Why would the Zebedee boys’ mother make such a request?
- What does Jesus mean when He forecasts that they indeed will drink from His cup? (Hint: He’s not simply talking about the Last Supper communion cup.)

- Notice that the other disciples get pretty upset with James and John and their request. Why were they so uptight?
- Jesus says one of the greatest lines ever uttered about himself in verse 28. What exactly is He saying about himself and therefore us?

APPLY THE WORD

Encourage your students to consider what is most important in their relationships with each other: loyalty, trust, accountability, etc. And then, spiritually, what has Jesus been teaching them about the priorities of the Kingdom?

Your students may dramatize any of these sections or have them role play any of the attributes and characteristics they include. Whether it's material wealth, relational wealth, or spiritual wealth, you have a pretty good idea what this means to you.

In the chart below, offer 5-10 traits of each.

Relationally

Wealthy

Poor

Spiritually

Wealthy

Poor

LIVE THE WORD

As much as anything else, this activity may be seen by your students as an opportunity to vent some of the injustice they've suffered recently. That's not its primary purpose, but if it does nothing else, getting those things "out into the open" might help your group.

The last part is where the value truly lies, for it is here that your students will be asked to compare their (comparatively petty) mistreatment with that of Jesus and how He handled all of that. After all, most of your students will not be whipped, humiliated, and killed on a cross for what they believe in.

*"Life is not always fair." Has your father or your mother ever said this to you when you've been griping about things not going your way at school or at home? Probably so. **Think of as many occasions/situations as you can where you've thought you received a bum deal . . . first at home, then at school.***

Home

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

School

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

Now take a look at one of the more "painful" entries you've just made and explain the circumstances here. What happened? What should have happened in your opinion?

(Here's the hard part) What do you think Jesus would advise you to do with this problem you've just described?

11 HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 21:1-25:46

KEY VERSE: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. See that Jesus never, ever gave up on completing His life’s mission.
2. Visualize the traumas of Passion Week and the faces of those involved.
3. Recognize Jesus’ sacrifice as the example of how we are to love each other.

PERSPECTIVE

Next to Christmas, the most celebrated Christian holiday is Easter, celebrating the miraculous resurrection of the crucified Lord. But like so many spiritual things, the world has brought in its own set of rituals, from the baskets of candy carried by stuffed rabbits to the afternoon egg hunt. That is not to say that these are necessarily or inherently evil practices that should be avoided by all Christians. But they must be put into perspective.

Easter Week, or Passion Week, was a week of triumph to tragedy . . . to triumph again. It con-

tained both the highlights and the low lights of Jesus’ mission, culminating in the most painful of deaths and the most amazing of miracles. Jesus really did suffer tremendous hurt physically, matched by the severe emotional and spiritual strain of those days. Almost everyone who had heard Him began to doubt Him, including the disciples. Certainly the religious leaders who should have recognized Him first and foremost never did seem to “get it.”

Chapters 21-25 of Matthew’s Gospel depict probably the first three days of Passion Week—Sunday through Tuesday. Most scholars place the plotting against Jesus (chapter 26) on Wednesday. This week is of tremendous interest even to the most jaded of teens. It should be studied carefully, slowly, and deliberately. It is the longest lesson of the series since the first one, but time—two sessions perhaps—should be given to it.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Before looking into the specifics of Passion Week, Days I, II and III, it might be a good idea to briefly review the life of Jesus. According to Luke’s Gospel, Jesus was born about 6 B.C., making His visit to the temple at the age of 12 about A.D. 6. We don’t know much more about Him from any of the gospels until Jesus is approximately 30 years old. That first year of His ministry is usually called the Year of Inauguration.

Year two is the Year of Popularity. Year three is the Year of Opposition. In the winter of His last year on earth He took His last trip to Jerusalem, healing and teaching the people, blessing the little children, and talking to the rich young man. By the spring of His 33rd year, most of the powers of the world had turned their wrath against Him and He was arrested, tried, and executed.

This final week is full of Jesus' final instructions, more miracles, triumph and despair (that is until Sunday morning). Encourage your students to contemplate each day of Jesus' week during each day of their week. Meditate about the triumphal entry on Sunday, the temple despair on Monday, etc. That way they might not hurry through the study unaffected.

Jesus entered the Holy City on the back of a donkey; not the most royal of entries, but the most holy . . . and the most reflective of Zechariah 9:9, which says, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." Jesus arranged for the donkey because He didn't want people to mistake Him for one of the earthly powers, ushered into the city on a chariot drawn by four regal thoroughbreds, rich and self-possessed. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth," He had once said. Now He was about to make himself a living, dying, and resurrected proof of that.

The meaning of Zechariah's prophecy seemed to have been missed by the adoring crowds, who saw Jesus as someone worthy—at least that day—of attention. But not all the city was in agreement. Note the question in 21:10, "Who is this?" Perhaps they were confused, perplexed, mad, anticipating. The answer of the crowd was

honest and true, without much dispute, and certainly without enough bite in it to cause themselves any danger: "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

When Jesus entered that temple He became indignant at the cheating of the merchants against those who came to buy the animals necessary for offerings, as well as by the empty and superficial attitudes of the worshipers toward their offerings and sacrifices. That's what commercialization does to most things, doesn't it? Without a change of heart or a re-direction of lifestyles and priorities, no amount of sacrificing and offering would bring the forgiveness of the Lord and the presence of the Holy Spirit. In that way, they had transformed "the house of prayer" into a "den of robbers."

The parable of the Two Sons reflects those sinners who first denied the life of righteousness but later repented, probably under the ministry of John the Baptist (see v. 32). The second son, then, represents the Pharisees and other religious people whose own self-righteousness prevents them from responding. How this must have "irked" those very people who needed to hear it most. No wonder they wanted Him out of their hair—He was taking the foundation of comfort right from under their feet.

The parable of the Tenants (vv. 33-46) continues in the seeing of Israel, this time represented not by a dead fig tree but by a vineyard that is owned by God. The owners are the religious leaders, the servants are the prophets, and the son of the owner is, of course, Jesus, himself. Not only does this parable reveal what Jesus thought himself to be, but it also forecasts His death at the hands of those who mistook Him for someone else. Jesus as the capstone or cornerstone (vv. 41-46) refers to Psalm 118, in which Israel was

the nation restored by God to honor, but now David's words have come to mean Jesus himself, restored through His resurrection.

The parable of the wedding feast (22:1-14) is about the God's offer to join His kingdom, given first to the Jewish people. After they rejected Jesus, the offer was extended to "good and bad" people alike from the surrounding "street corners," that is, the Gentiles--one of the primary themes throughout the book of Matthew.

The balance of the chapter is filled with questions motivated by hostility as much as by curiosity. Each question is followed by a revelatory response: first about taxes, and about marriage at the resurrection, then about the greatest commandment, and finally the Sonship of Jesus. Your teens should be encouraged to interpret each of Christ's answers in their own words for in that way they become a part of the response rather than just memorizing sponges. Let them know that the Pharisees were adamantly opposed to Roman rule--and therefore despised the Roman-backed Herodians--but collaborated with them here (vv. 15-22) to trap Jesus. If Jesus said "no" to paying taxes, He could be arrested and executed for treason. If He said "yes," His Messiahship would be denied by the Pharisees.

The seven woes of chapter 23 are directed primarily at the four main sects of Judaism: the Pharisee, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots. Study their tenets here (from the *NIV Study Bible*, 1476) in order to understand Jesus' condemnations. **Pharisees** emphasized ethics over theology, regarded the law highly, believed in the immortality of the soul, and in reward and retribution after death. The **Sadducees** rejected the idea of a spiritual world, angels and demons alike, and therefore did not believe in resurrection or a future life. The **Essenes** were

a group of strict Jews who followed careful observation of the laws (Torah) and owned communally rather than personally. They believed that fate ruled their lives. Finally, the **Zealots** opposed any taxes be paid to an earthly (pagan) ruler and were exclusively loyal to Jewish traditions, including ironically, the prophecy of the coming of salvation.

Chapters 24 and 25 are what is now known as "the Olivet Discourse," the fifth and final discourse of Jesus in the gospel of Matthew (taken from the Mount of Olives reference in verse 3). This is prompted by two questions: "What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age; and when will this happen?" He addresses the "end of the age" question first (vv. 4-14), the destruction of Jerusalem next (vv. 15-22), and finally His return (vv. 23-31). You might ask your students about what they've heard about these ideas. There are entire television channels dedicated to this apocalyptic material, making all kinds of predictions, most of them rather outlandish but effective, at least in frightening their viewers. Many evangelists have gone on record with predictions. Books have been written and sold. For what purpose?

Finally, there are three more parables, all about the kingdom and judgment in chapter 25. The 10 virgins were bridesmaids whose responsibilities included preparing the bride to meet her husband-to-be, as well as checking the oil in the torches every 15 minutes or so. In the next parable, a talent was originally a weight (75 pounds or so) of coined money--today worth about \$1.00. Its modern day interpretation of a special ability or skill is an appropriate derivative of the parable but certainly not one of its original intentions. The third parable presents an interpretation of the Judgment: It will determine who gets into heaven and who doesn't based on

how one has treated anyone in need.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

You might begin this activity any number of ways: by having students bring their own journals or diaries that they have kept, reading from your own (assuming you keep one), or checking out any of the famous diaries in the local library.

Having familiarized themselves with the occurrences of the first few days of Passion Week, your students ought to be able to climb into the heart and mind of Jesus by using their imaginations. Have them write down some of what He must have thought when He went to bed each night.

Part of the fun of writing, of course, is reading and sharing, so allow some time for your teens to do that. Let the non-writers in your group know that this is not writing at school for a grade . . . that may remove some of the pressure they feel at such an activity.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. "This took place to fulfill . . ." (21:1-46)

It's interesting that this week seems to capsule the entire life of Christ: the triumphal entry, various trials and inquiries, rejection. His patience with human beings, alone, let's us know that He is different.

As you read His words of instruction and compassion, think about His suffering, His humanity. Then consider the following items:

- Why did He ride a baby donkey into Jerusalem? Doesn't that seem like an odd mode of transportation for a man, much less The Son of Man?
- Jesus enters the temple (vv. 12-17) and seems to "snap." This section is often used to show His human side, but it is more than just a temper tantrum, isn't it? He is showing us something much more important than that He had a "mean streak." What is it?
- After demonstrating His power and His truth through the withering fig tree, Jesus is once again questioned by the chief priests: "Who gave you this authority?" Don't you know how frustrated He must have been that they insisted on this line of inquiry rather than opening their eyes and seeing? How did Jesus respond?

- What do the two parables (vv. 28-32 and 33-46) say to you about the Kingdom?
- What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself? Is it possible without obeying the commandment that precedes it?

2. Love your neighbor (22:1-46)

Always the teacher, Jesus continues what He alone knows is His last week by offering pictures of His kingdom and what one must do to inherit it. Instead of running and hiding as any other person would have done (note the disciples' reaction to the hostility later), Jesus keeps trying. Chapter 22 contains more of His parables and more examples of rejection.

Read these stories, some of them more familiar than others, and then answer the following questions:

- The wedding banquet parable is as direct as any He has told (vv. 1-14). In your own words, draw as many parallels to the real situation that you can. (Who represents the servants? the invited guests? the “anyone you find”? the wedding banquet itself?)

- What does Jesus' response to the question about taxes tell you that you can apply to your own life?

- At the end of this chapter it says “from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.” Why not?

3. Whoa, woe, and wow (23:1-24:51)

If chapter 23 doesn't get your attention with “woe” after “woe” after “woe,” you might want to check your pulse. Then in chapter 24 we get His prophecies of the end of the age: the apocalypse. These are fascinating chapters to read, even though they're a bit difficult to understand.

Read them slowly, then respond to the following questions:

- If you had been the target of Jesus' strong words in chapter 23, which of the “woes” might have seemed to be the most frightening and negative?
- Which of His warnings in chapter 24 is the most difficult for you to understand?

- So-called modern prophets have tried to predict the Lord’s return for the past 2,000 years and all of them have been wrong. What does Jesus say about His return (vv. 36-51)?
- Which verse from these two chapters is the one you want most to remember?
- What does the “talent” represent in the parable of the three servants (vv. 14-30)?
- Verse 25:40 has one of the great truths of the entire New Covenant, particularly as it pertains to compassionate ministry. What does it mean to you?

4. SHEEP AND GOATS (25:1-46)

In this final bit of instruction to the crowds before He is turned over to His executioners, Jesus offers us three more parables—the 10 virgins, the talents, and the sheep and goats.

Read each one and answer the next four questions:

- What is the “bottom line” truth of the story about the 10 virgins (vv. 1-13)?
- Did you know “virgins” referred to “bridesmaids”? Does that help? How does this new information affect your interpretation of the story?

APPLY THE WORD

Here is an opportunity for your students to reflect on the many personal ways God has manifested His love for them. Some of the descriptions will probably be from the Bible but encourage your group to be subjective and everyday with their responses.

In a brief paragraph, or list of sentences or even just a bunch of phrases and words, write down at least five ways God shows His love for you. Some of you may want to write 10. Some may want to write even more.

LIVE THE WORD

The chapters we have studied in this lesson contain seven powerful stories, allegories, and parables that reveal much of what we know about the kingdom and judgment. Each is listed here so that your students can reflect on the meaning of each one.

Take time to have them share the themes they discover, taking the chance to interject what you have learned about the meaning of each.

These four chapters contain seven stories, most of which are labeled as parables in your Bibles. Each is listed below with its reference. You should write next to each the truth that it teaches you. Try to make it as personal as you can.

Taxes (22:15-22):

Ten Virgins (25:1-13):

Talents (25:14-30):

Two Sons (21:28-32):

Sheep and Goats (25:31-46):

Tenants (21:33-46):

Wedding Banquet (22:1-14):

12 THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26:1-27:31

KEY VERSE: “He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done’ (Matthew 26:42).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Feel the pain the Master must have felt when He was betrayed and denied by His closest friends.
2. See how Jesus handled such a tremendous trial with patience and long-vision.
3. Recognize the sacrifice Jesus made to ensure our eternal salvation.

PERSPECTIVE

Unless you’ve been accused of some crime and been placed in front of a judge and jury who have the power to tell you how you will spend the next few weeks, months, or years of your life, you cannot comprehend the panic such a person would feel. To be completely out of control over your own future is the worst nightmare come to life.

This lesson will get your students into such a scenario by allowing them to identify with the plight of Jesus as He was lied about, denied, be-

trayed, and tortured to death. Not only will they feel the hurt of Jesus, but they will begin to understand the value of loyalty in their own friendships and the benefit they have received solely by God’s grace. It was nothing they earned: what they earned was condemnation and death. But His mercy saved them from that and His grace gave them forgiveness and life. Has there ever been a better gift given?

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The true *ministry* of Jesus is now completed; it is time now for His mission. It would be good for you and your group to come up with some definitive differences between those two terms. Also, discuss “goals” and “ambitions,” placing each in proper perspective. Chapters 26 and 27 include more of the passion of Jesus during this last week of His life.

Apparently by the beginning of chapter 26--probably late Wednesday afternoon by most chronological accounts--the chief priests had reached the end of their patience. They could no longer tolerate what Jesus was saying to them and about them. It was time for action. Notice how Matthew reveals the cunning of their group, cloistering themselves at the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, and plotting to arrest Jesus in “some sly way and kill him.” Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 18-36 and was the son of Annas, another high priest who had served

in that position from A.D. 6-15. By now they didn't really care about the repercussions of their actions; they just knew that to let Jesus continue His influence meant the total loss of their own influence and power with the people.

The primary goal of the Sanhedrin was to get rid of Jesus, but a secondary goal was to do it with as little upheaval as necessary. Hundreds of thousands of Jews had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration and riots were not uncommon. To incite one by publicly arresting the man so many had followed into the city would be political suicide. No, they must do it as underhandedly and quietly as possible. Unfortunately for them and their purposes, the chance to do the deed came prematurely by means of Judas' offer to provide information during Passover. However, it was an offer they could not refuse.

There has been much debate over the centuries as to the motive Judas had for betraying Jesus. Many have suggested that Judas basically was a dishonest and greedy guy, shown primarily in the parallel passage in John 12:6 of the woman who anointed Jesus with perfume in Simon the Leper's house in Bethany (Matthew 26:6-13). It may have been that Judas had seen the anointing as a waste of money, for if she had given the perfume directly to Jesus, then Judas, as treasurer, would have been able to sell it at whatever price he could get for it and keep some of the profit for himself, lying about the amount to whoever asked. Therefore, according to some scholars, he saw that the world owed him that money and he sought whatever means available to procure the funds--even if it meant selling information to their "enemies."

The positioning of these two stories contrasts the behavior of one who had been with Jesus

throughout His ministry with the behavior of Mary (the sister of Martha and Lazarus), a woman with uncommon revelation. It makes Judas' act seem even more devious: He knew Jesus. Mary's sacrificial gift is symbolic of Christ's supreme sacrifice. It is little wonder, then, that when He is raised from the grave three days later, He reveals himself first to Mary. It is more immediately symbolic, as well, of the anointment of His body for burial.

The "first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread" (v. 17) is on the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan (March/April), so we have a clear picture as to the time of year this week's activity took place. The Passover meal, Seder Feast, was eaten after sunset on Thursday ("Maundy Thursday"), the 14th, which to the Jews meant Friday, for the day ended at sunset. The Feast was officially to last an entire week (Nisan 15-21) but in Jesus' time it began a day early. (Much of this is described in Leviticus 23:5-6.) How fitting that the sacrifice of the New Covenant should coincide with the calendar of the Old Testament. God's "overlooking" the sin of humans that is celebrated by the Passover, itself, is made manifest by His Son, Jesus Christ.

It is interesting that right as the meal was coming to an end, Jesus says seemingly out of the blue, "One of you will betray me." How shocking the timing. How upsetting the news. Notice that the disciples are dumbfounded, looking at each other in accusing ways, looking at the Master with defensive eyes. One after the other, they asked, "Is it I?" "Me?" "Who is it? Not me?" Judas is the only one who uses the salutation, "Rabbi" (or "Master"). The others had addressed Jesus, "Lord." Jesus uses a sign of friendship to identify the traitor. It was Jewish custom that dining with someone indicated a loyal friendship (note Jesus' going to the home

of Levi/Matthew for supper) that would never be broken. It is still practiced in Arab culture today. That, too, made Judas' act more distasteful and hateful.

They are on their way to Gethsemane (literally "oil press"), called "The Mount of Olives," when Jesus makes things even more confusing. He has already predicted His betrayal by one of the disciples. He is now about to predict the denial of another, this time Peter, the Rock. Remember that in 16:18, Jesus had already appointed Peter as the foundation of the Church, but now He's telling him that the foundation is going to chip away for one night. "Even if everybody else leaves you," Peter promises, "I will never, ever, ever deny you" (26:33). A promise that, as we know, he is unable to keep.

It is in the garden that Jesus' humanity is seen as clearly as anywhere else in the narrative. He knows the pain His body is about to suffer, the alienation He will feel, and He cries out to His Heavenly Father for some help. Isn't that what makes Him so accessible to teens? Don't we all fall on our knees and beg for divine intervention when we have reached the end of our ropes? Is it not in the deepest valleys that we yell our loudest in order to get our voices up to the throne in heaven? Three times Jesus knelt and prayed for God to get Him out of this mess, and three times he understood that in order to fulfill His unique mission He must be the sacrificial Lamb, the atoning blood, the crucified Lord.

The number three is mentioned throughout the gospels. Ask your teens to think of as many references to it as they can. The Trinity. The three nights Jonah was in the whale. The three "Lost" parables (coin, sheep, son). The three denials of Peter. The three prayers of Jesus. Peter's three affirmations of his love for Jesus in John 21. The

three crosses. The three days between death and resurrection.

As Jesus ends His prayers, an armed posse arrests Him as a criminal. He reminds the one who takes sword to answer sword that if He chose to release himself from what was about to happen, He could simply call 12 legions of angels (6,000 per legion). That's 72,000 angels against a few small arms. No contest. But His love and grace overcame His fear.

Unlike Jesus, the disciples ran away when He was captured. Most scholars presume that they were spontaneously dissolving the fellowship in order to save their own lives. Not a flattering view of human loyalty, is it?

Jesus' first trial was in front of the religious leaders, the Sanhedrin to be more specific. This was the high court of the Jews with three levels of membership: chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law--70 in all, plus the high priest. This "church board/city council" wielded quite a bit of power, except for the judgment of the death penalty. Only the Roman governor had that much authority. In order to convict in the Sanhedrin, only two corroborating testimonies were necessary. One witness lied by misrepresenting Christ's words (v. 61) from what He truly said, reported in John 2:19: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

At Jesus' response, Caiaphas tore his robe from top to bottom (forecasting the veil of the temple being torn in two at the Crucifixion): a sign of unusual circumstances. He has heard the blasphemy. The others blindfold him, hit him, and jeer: "Prophesy that! Predict this! Who hit you?"

Little did they know that one of Jesus' predictions was coming true right then. Peter's curi-

osity drove him to hang close to what was going on. Three times accused, Peter denies ever knowing Jesus. The crow of the rooster reminds him of his promise to stand firm and of his failure to fulfill that promise. This is a story that helps all of us understand the pressures of calling ourselves Christians and really, truly following His footsteps. Each of your teens has or will suffer such, and you'd be wise to encourage them with this story and a story of your own to remind them of the mercies of God.

Judas, on the other hand, never sought such mercy and hanged himself in despair. He would be the first disciple to suffer premature death and the only to die at his own hand. According to tradition, each of the other 11 would eventually be martyred.

Because the Sanhedrin lacked the power to sentence Jesus to death, they sent Him to one who could: Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26-36. (In 1961, archaeologists dug up a rock at Caesarea that was inscribed with Pilate's name and was dated from that time.) Anytime he came to Jerusalem he stayed at the "Praetorium," a palace built by Herod the Great and situated near the Temple. Here is where he tried Jesus.

The custom of releasing one prisoner during the Jewish Passover celebration is not documented anywhere else besides the gospels. The crowd, probably disillusioned and embarrassed that they had pinned their hopes on a man so obviously unable to free himself from mere shackles, called for the freedom of a convicted murderer. In response, Pilate bathes himself in innocence and turns Jesus over to be crucified. You might take this opportunity to ask your students about capital punishment today. What would Jesus say about execution?

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

Haven't we all cried out at one time or another, "Why me?" This activity offers five examples of the typical trials youth face as they try to get through each day. In a humorous way, Jessica's friends show us all how trivial some of our complaints truly are when we sound them out to each other. Point out that some questioning of "why me?" is valid and normal, but when done all the time, it can become quite unhealthy.

What occasions do we face when such a question is valid? Which things in life just happen and we'd better learn how to cope with them? You might follow up this activity with a visit to a nursing home or a hospital ward where there is true suffering.

You've been invited to a Pity Party tomorrow night after school at Jessica's. You have to bring one dish of Self-Pity but you don't want to bring what everybody else is bringing--you take pride, after all, in being original. You decide to make a few phone calls to find out what others are bringing.

Mark: I'm bringing "Chips on the Shoulder." It's easy and there's always enough around at my house. My mom hates her job and lets the world know about it when she gets home. "I wish I didn't have to work," she complains. My dad loves his job, so he thinks my mom complains too much. He comes to ask me advice all the time about what he should do. My sister thinks she is the ugliest person on earth. (She is.) I feel like I'm the only one on the planet who doesn't have a bike. Yep, that's plenty for Jessica's party.

Marilyn: What to bring? That's a tough one because I don't know if I'm going to go to the

party at all. I was really excited when I heard about it because I know the people who are going and it should be one of the pitiest of pity parties ever held, but now I'm depressed about what I should bring. They'll laugh at me, I know, so I don't know what to do. Hey, maybe I'll bring "Dip in Mood."

Blake: I hadn't planned anything for tomorrow night because I really need some time to myself. I haven't caught up on last semester's homework yet, not to mention last week's; I haven't slept well in so long I can barely walk; I've been running here and there and, frankly, I think I should pull back a little and say no to things for awhile. But now I feel so much pressure to go to that party. I just hate spontaneous setbacks like that: I've planned to rest and relax by myself and I get thrown right back into the fray. Maybe I'll bring Mom's "Surprise Snack."

Jane: I'm taking some "Humble Pie." It's what everybody expects of meek, little Jane, now isn't it? Come to the party . . . get laughed at . . . get made fun of . . . get put down. That's our Jane. If one person in this world would appreciate me for one split second of my life, I think I might explode with joy. Nobody at school likes me. My so-called friends at church talk about me behind my back. Even my parents are starting to look at me funny. I may not go to the party at all. I'd just hate to miss it, though.

Now you have decided what you'll be bringing to Jessica's party. Write it down here and explain why that seems appropriate for you.

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. The payoff (26:1-16)

You've heard the adage, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Now you've read a story in which this saying comes alive. The going is about to get really tough for Jesus, but it is at this point that He stands firm, tall, and strong.

As you read about the plot to betray and kill Jesus, consider these questions:

- What is Judas' motive for turning Jesus over to the chief priests?
- Why did they want to avoid any trouble during the Passover Feast?
- Why did the disciples turn so vehemently against the woman who anointed Christ with perfume?
- Do you think this episode with the woman and the perfume was a foreshadow of the anointing of His body for burial? Why or why not?

2. The Holy Communion (26:17-35)

Known both as the Lord's Supper and the Last Supper, Christ's celebration of the Passover Feast ("The Feast of Unleavened Bread") transformed the Jewish tradition from a symbolic ritual to a true sacrifice of himself. It's no accident that the Lord's Supper is called a "sacrament," which comes from the same Latin word that "sacrifice" does. (Bet you already knew that.)

At the end of the meal, Jesus makes a startling prediction that is simply too hard to believe... especially for one of the disciples.

Read these verses then answer the following:

- The disciples know things are beginning to "unravel" for them, but sitting there with the Master, eating and celebrating together, they must have been relatively relaxed. Suddenly He pops up with one of the truly ear-opening statements of all banquets in history. What does He say?

- What is their immediate reaction?

- In that culture, having supper with someone meant "I'm your friend—I will never hurt you." Judas knew that. Does that make his act seem worse?

- Read Exodus 12 and write down the meaning of the original Passover.

3. Hands up (26:36-75)

Jesus now does something that most of us probably would have done in that situation--He goes to pray. Pray hard! When faced with something horrible or frightening, the first thing we Christians tend to do is cry out (some of us more loudly than others), "WHY ME?"

Read these verses and then answer these questions:

- In verse 42, Jesus uses the metaphor of the "cup" passing from Him. Does that mean anything significant?

- This whole week is full of threes. There is a set of threes in verses 38-44: He goes away three times to pray. What other threes can you think of or find in this last week of His life?

- Why do you think Jesus calls Judas “Friend”? scribe Jesus’ Messiahship as a political claim to be “King of the Jews.”
- One of the Twelve pulls a sword to defend Jesus, but is rebuked. What does Jesus tell him?

Read about this trial and Christ’s scourging, then answer the following:

- Who is Barabbas? What has he done to get himself thrown on the same platform as Jesus?
- The trial is a mockery—both of the truth and of Jesus’ divinity. First He remains silent, then when confronted directly with the question, “Are you the Son of God?” Jesus says simply and humbly, “I am.” What is the reaction to that?
- Pilate sees that his only escape is to fall back on a custom that is so little used that it is found only in the Gospels (no other historical documents). What is that custom?

- How many times does Peter deny Jesus? Next, read John 21 and count how many times Peter affirms his love for Jesus. Does that seem significant for any reason?

- Only Matthew records the incident with Pilate’s wife (v. 19). What does she say?

- Do you remember the Beatitudes in chapter 5? Which ones come to mind as you read these verses about the trial and the whipping and the mocking?

4. “Give us Barabbas!” (27:12-31)

By now it is Friday and Jesus faces one last trial, this one before the political governor, Pilate. Pilate is completely unprepared for what hits him. Jesus is brought before him as a religious prisoner accused of blasphemy, not a capital offense at all. That is why the Jewish leaders try to de-

APPLY THE WORD

This simulated trial could be a lot of fun for the students as they consider the grossest violations of friendship they have ever suffered. By venting in a court, they will satisfy some of the inherent desire to spout off and get things off their chests.

Of course, most of them will be arguing out of a sense of revenge. After they have come to their first verdict, you may wish to ask them to judge as Jesus would judge, not as the world might condemn.

Try setting up the room in the shape of a courtroom for this, even inviting someone outside the group (but someone the teens would be comfortable speaking openly in front of) to sit as judge. Black robes might also lend a sense of credibility. Your teen jury could come up with a chart of “punishments” to match the “offenses” listed.

Maybe you think there’s no way you could forgive that person for what he/she did to you. Instead, you think it can only be resolved by taking him/her to court and having a judge and jury decide this person’s fate. Here is your chance to do that.

Appoint the most objective and impartial person in your group to be judge. Maybe it will be your group leader. It could be a fellow student. How about your pastor? Next, appoint a defense lawyer, someone who will stand by the accused and defend him/her with whatever means he or she can come up with. You, of course, will be the prosecutor, bringing to the court all the grisly details of the offense.

The rest of your study group can function as the jury—listening and deciding what can be done to atone for such a horrible thing, should they find the person guilty, of course.

LIVE THE WORD

Your group is going to participate in communion as a group. This is sacred and would happen best at the end of the session together. By using community bread, each student will make eye contact with the other students one-on-one. By acknowledging appreciation, your group will be bound more closely together.

You will have to be the judge about the readiness of your group to participate in this kind of communion because it is much different in feeling from the typical church service where the sacraments are served and everything is rather private and individual.

13 SO SEND I YOU

STUDY SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27:32-28:20

KEY VERSES: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

TEACHING AIMS

To help the learners:

1. Commit their lives to Someone who committed His completely to theirs.
2. Overcome the fear of death as the end.
3. Understand that Jesus’ message will continue to the extent that they carry out His commission to evangelize the world.

PERSPECTIVE

Along with the fears of speaking in public, going to the dentist, falling, and the fear of dying is on everybody’s Top Ten Fears. Teens are too young to spend a whole lot of time pondering death, but they will one day begin to consider their own mortality.

Christ’s death and resurrection help the Christian to understand that death is a beginning, not an end. It doesn’t by any means prevent us from mourning and feeling a true sense of loss at the

death of a loved one, but it does give us a hope that the world does not have and, therefore, cannot give.

Jesus died for you. Jesus died for your teens. They must understand that by the time they conclude this 13-lesson series. It’s not just an interesting story with conflict, interesting characters, and a climax; it’s the moment history changed. And if accepted in a personal commitment, it is the moment their lives changed.

In this lesson your teens will learn that God committed himself to their salvation the day He created the heavens and earth. Everything in the Old Covenant and the New Covenant points to their redemption. There is no better hope than that promise!

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Depending on what movie version of the Crucifixion you have seen, the cross will look like all kinds of things. Many depict a cross that looks like the one atop the steeple at the local church, but more likely it was a cross-bar that was hoisted by means of ropes and primitive pulleys onto the vertical posts already planted on the Place of the Skulls.

If you would like to show a movie version of Jesus’ life and death and resurrection, there is a four-part series (two hours each) called “Jesus of Nazareth” available from NBC. Call your local

affiliate for more information. You might also find it available at your local video rental store.

Simon of Cyrene, a visitor to Jerusalem, was drafted to carry this cross-bar after Jesus had exhausted himself doing so. Because his sons are mentioned by name in Mark's gospel, many assume that Simon became a Christian as a result of this experience. Some scholars believe that it was Simon who reported the events of the crucifixion to at least one of the writers of the gospels.

Jesus was offered the customary drink of wine mixed with gall as an anesthetic during the nailing process. As inhumane as crucifixion was, it was common practice to offer the gall in order to ease the pain. Jesus refused it for He wanted this to be the supreme sacrifice—totally conscious and feeling. (You might discuss with your teens the practice today of lethal injection, a supposedly more humane method of execution than hanging, electrocution, or gas.)

A sign meant for derision was attached to the cross: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. On either side of Him were two criminals: “bandits” according to Matthew; “malefactors” to Luke. Although none of the gospels refer to it, the prophecy of Isaiah seems appropriate to cite: “He was numbered with the transgressors” (53:12).

Matthew does not mention the repentance of one of these “bandits”: that may be read in Luke 23:39-43. This scene shows the reader that the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20) is true: the Kingdom of God is for anyone who repents, no matter the hour.

Note that Jesus is verbally attacked by three groups of people. First the casual observers chide Him: “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself!

Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God!” (27:39-40). Then the chief priests from the Sanhedrin came by to mock Him: “He saved others, but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God'” (vv. 42-44). Finally the sinners on the crosses next to Him join in the jeering and jibes.

It is because Jesus took upon himself the sin of all humanity that He is separated from His Father and cries out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” However, when He finally surrenders His spirit (v. 50), the curtain in the temple that keeps the sinner from reaching the mercy seat is torn in half—from top to bottom. This symbolizes the access now offered to the sinner to reach out and up to God and find His love awaiting. The fact that it was torn from the top proves that it was not of man but a miraculous sign of God.

The opening of the graves and tombs in verses 52-53 is found only in Matthew's gospel, but it does foreshadow the opening of Jesus' own tomb and the eventual resurrection of all saints at the Final Judgment and His Return. By this time, the inner circle of the 12 disciples had been hopelessly fragmented (until Easter Sunday at least), but another circle seemed to be intact. Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James (the younger) and Joses, and Mary the mother of James and John were all waiting nearby when Jesus died. It was they, not the Eleven, who took care of anointing and burying the body of Jesus in Joseph's tomb. The tomb was borrowed--no need for a permanent grave for the Master. Most of what Jesus had in life was either borrowed or given to Him. His life was not one of accumulation or burdened

with earthly things. His treasures were stored in heaven, and now He was reunited with those things there.

The Pharisees and chief priests knew full well that Jesus was potentially much more dangerous to them dead than He had been alive. In order to insure the suppression of the rumor that He had indeed been raised from the dead, they sought further help from the governor, Pontius Pilate. They asked him to place a unit of soldiers to guard the tomb, which he did.

On Sunday morning the women came to anoint the body again, a task made improbable by the heavy stone and unit of soldiers posted nearby. However, traditions are strong and this ritual needed to be completed. As they neared the tomb, the earth shook and the stone was budged, then rolled away. Then the most amazing second of all history took place. Think about this: the single most influential moment of all time. An angel first and then Jesus, himself, appeared. “Do not be afraid,” the angel tells the women, “for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here: he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples . . .” Then they see Jesus. “Greetings,” he says.

Then He says, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” This is the first time He refers to the disciples as “brothers.” Some believe that the term was used to mean more than the Eleven; that all Christians were meant by the term. Whichever the case, clearly the relationship had changed through His sacrifice. He had been a man; now He had overcome death’s grip. By accepting Him, we now share in the relationship of being “joint heirs” with Him.

So frightened of the consequences were they that the chief priests and elders bribed the guards to lie. If word got out that this resurrection were legitimate, their influence in the Jewish community would be terminated.

Whereas earlier in His ministry, Jesus had sent out the disciples to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” now He expands that to the entire world, to all peoples. It has been used so often in sermons by visiting missionaries that your teens may be a bit unmoved by the “Great Commission” statement in 28:19-20, but you should encourage them to ponder what it directs them to do, personally, one-on-one. Most of Jesus’ great ministry was one-on-one and that fact should not be lost on us as we model our ministries and missions after His.

SESSION ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE THE WORD

This activity is geared to foster a positive outlook on life—everyday and long term. The first section focuses on those daily things we hope for, usually because we’re lazy or greedy. The other two sections, however, lend themselves a little more to serious and more benevolent wishes.

Close this activity with those hopes afforded us by the death and resurrection of Jesus. What distinguishes the Christian from unbelievers? The hope of eternal life in Christ, primarily.

Few days go by that you do not utter at least one sentence that begins with “I hope . . . “ It may be “I hope he asks me out for Friday night.” Or “I hope Mr. Johnson cancels the test today.” Or “I hope I don’t get in trouble in Mrs. Smith’s class today.” We also say sentences like that for the year: we call them New Year’s Resolutions. And then there are those hopes that are for a lifetime. Using all three of these ideas, complete the following sentences as honestly as you can.

Everyday hopes

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

Resolutions for the year

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

Lifetime hopes

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

I hope . . .

EXPLORE THE WORD

1. On the Cross (27:32-44)

Jesus has reached the point of no return: actually He had reached this point the day He was born. Now Jesus was nailed to a cross He had been forced to drag through the streets until He collapsed from exhaustion on the outskirts of town.

Read these verses then respond to the following:

- Who was Simon of Cyrene, the man who bore the cross of Jesus after He could carry it no longer?
- How do you suppose Golgotha got its rather descriptive name?
- Does your Bible include any explanation of what “gall” is? If so, write what you think Jesus’ refusal to drink it meant. If not, be sure to ask your fellow students what they came up with.
- Neither Mark nor Matthew includes the request of the crucified thief to be remembered by Jesus when He entered His kingdom. For that, read Luke 23:32-43. What does that exchange tell you about Jesus and His kingdom?

2. “Eloi, Eloi, Lama Sabachthani” (27:45-56)

The last three hours of Jesus’ life must have seemed eerie and surreal to those standing around the cross. Although it was only noon, the skies became black. As we read, we see His pain, His courage, and His love. After you have finished this brief section, answer these questions:

- What does “Eloi, Eloi lama sabachthani” mean? What did those standing nearby think Jesus was saying?
- As soon as Jesus surrenders His Spirit, the curtain that separated common people from the inner courts of the Temple was torn down the middle. What does this symbolize?
- Only Matthew records the mass opening of tombs and the resurrection of holy people (vv. 52-53). What does this scene signify?
- Note what the centurion says in verse 54. Finally he seems to understand who Jesus is. Do you think it takes this kind of event for some to get it? Why might that be?

3. Laid to rest... temporarily (27:57-66)

After Jesus had died, several of His associates, including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Mary the mother of James and John, came to retrieve His body and give it a proper burial in the borrowed grave of Joseph of Arimathea.

After you read this account, answer the following:

- It seems significant that the tomb was borrowed. How does that fact help you to understand what was happening and going to happen?
- The skeptics, cynics, and critics were out in force, scared to death they might be proven wrong by this “dead man.” What did they ask Pilate to provide?
- What is the irony in the phrase, “made the tomb secure”?
- What was the purpose of the seal on the stone?

4. It all begins (28:1-20)

It had been a dark, dismal Friday and a long fearful Saturday. But Sunday has come. This is the single most important day in all of Christian history. Prophecy had been fulfilled. Death had been conquered. Provision had been made for eternal life. Atonement, Redemption, Reconciliation, Salvation. As you complete your study of this great gospel of hope, answer the following:

- Describe the appearance of the angel at the tomb. What happened there?
- Note that Jesus then appeared to the two women who had anointed Him in life, attended Him as He died, cared for His body after He had died, and sat nearby as He lay in the tomb. What does this tell you?
- Jesus calls His disciples “brothers.” This is the first time He does this. What does this label mean about their relationship?
- Describe how you feel when reading the last words of Jesus recorded here (vv. 19-20).

APPLY THE WORD

This activity will be intriguing for your students to objectify this passage in the gospel and write it as it might appear in their hometown newspapers.

The first part of the exercise is much like a beginning news writing class exercise, outlining the ingredients to a story. As they locate and index these items, help them to focus on the most important elements.

Those items will then go in what is called the “lead,” or opening paragraph. It’s not necessarily a chronological repetition but a logical ordering of events. Here is an example:

A 33-year-old prophet from Nazareth was executed by crucifixion on Golgotha after being convicted for treason in the higher court earlier in the day.

LIVE THE WORD

To bring closure to this study, it’s a good idea to thank your students for being willing to venture into a new sense of the truth. It acts as both a summary and as a catalyst of appreciation in their lives. You might write each one of them a note along with your notes to Matthew and Jesus.

BIBLE QUIZZING

A PERSPECTIVE

WHAT IS BIBLE QUIZZING?

Bible Quizzing is a program that helps youth study and learn about the Scriptures. About once a month, youth from different churches gather for a time of fellowship and competition. In each competition, there are questions about a specific pre-announced portion of Scripture and the teams compete in order to correctly answer those questions.

The official slogan of the Nazarene Youth International is quoted from I Timothy 4:12 - *“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity”*. The purpose of Bible Quizzing is to help cultivate the actions, attitudes, and the lifestyle that are necessary to accomplish this slogan. The Bible Quiz program intends to reach this goal through a tactic that is divided in these different areas:

- An avenue of meaningful **Bible study** for youth to attain a deep and intimate knowledge of Scripture.
- A means of increasing **fellowship and interaction** among youth around the world.
- An integral part of the **outreach and discipleship** aspects of local church youth ministry.
- A medium for the **training and mentoring** of youth leadership.

- A catalyst for encouraging active participation in **ministry and mission** projects.
- A **bridge** for building relationships between youth from different world regions.
- An arena for exciting Christian **competition**.

Rules alone can never prevent unfair tactics or unsportsmanlike attitudes. However, these rules are necessary in order for the competition aspect of Bible quizzing to be clear and consistent. It is the duty of every individual associated with Bible quizzing to uphold the integrity and intent of these rules and guidelines. Any attempt to gain an advantage by circumvention, disregard, or manipulation is un-ethical and detrimental to the mission and purpose of Bible quizzing. The pursuit of success must never dominate the commitment to exhibit a Christ-like example.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A BIBLE QUIZZING MINISTRY

1. Bible Quizzes are intended to be for youth between 12 and 25 years old. You may want to divide the competition into two categories: 12-18, and 19-25.
2. The Bible Quizzing year starts in August and goes through May or June of the following year, or January 1st and continues until November or

December (whichever works better for your district). Decide how much Scripture to be covered at each weekly meeting (e.g. one chapter or one story) and plan a calendar study chart.

3. During the year a tournament will be planned for every one or two months, generally on a Saturday or a Sunday afternoon.

4. Every local church can have one or more teams that meet together for Bible study and competition practice. Each team is composed of 4 or more people in a small group setting.

5. The location for the competition events (tournaments) must be rotated amongst all the churches participating in the District.

6. For every year, there is a book (or books) from the New Testament that is used as a resource material for the questions of the competition.

Following is the 8 year cycle that is used around the world for Quizzing.

- a. Hebrews and 1 & 2 Peter
- b. Matthew
- c. Romans and James
- d. Acts
- e. Galatians, Ephesians Philippians, Colossians, Philemon
- f. Luke
- g. Corinthians
- h. John

Then the cycle begins again.

7. Every church must have someone who is the Bible Quiz chairman and two or three more mature helpers to help train the teams and lead

them in a weekly Bible study over the Scripture. (e.g. If meeting twice a week, spend time in Bible study, discussion, devotion and make an effort to understand the material together in one meeting. In a second meeting spend time practicing for competition. If meeting once a week divide the time between Bible Study and Competition practice.)

8. The District must have an elected or nominated Bible Quiz chairman, to plan and organize the calendar of the competition and also coordinate the different tournaments.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY BIBLE TEAM MEETING

1. Before the meeting, the leader should read and study the material to be covered during the meeting. Pray for the Lord's guidance.

2. The leader should arrive at the church where the Bible Study will take place before the time in order to prepare.

3. The group can play a game that helps the group begin thinking about the Scripture being covered.

4. Pray together.

5. Read the material out loud together. Spend time asking and answering questions regarding the passage. Help everyone in the group understand what the Scripture means.

6. Allow God to speak through the message of the text. Share a story or a personal experience that relates to the Scripture.

7. Allow time for more questions or input regarding the understanding.

8. Talk about what kind of response the Scrip-

ture calls for in the life of the church or in individual lives.

9. Close with prayer.

10. Encourage the study of material for the next meeting. Hand out a paper with the material to be covered in the next meeting, the time, the place, and some study questions.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WEEKLY COMPETITION PRACTICE

1. After the Bible Study or at a separate time during the week, practice for competition.

2. Encourage the memorization of important verses; spend time memorizing and quoting to each other.

3. Play a learning game to familiarize the group with the material being covered (ex. Hangman or Pictionary or charades).

4. Ask quizzing questions from the material being covered. (see examples)

5. Divide the group and compete against each other.

6. Keep the focus on knowing and understanding the Word and not on winning and losing.

7. Give out study “homework” for next practice.

2. Arrange for personnel at practice and quizzes

3. Arrange trips to district invitationals and coach a team

4. Plan and participate on trips to off district tournaments

5. Contact quizzers on a weekly basis using notes (maybe an email) and phone calls

6. Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all quizzing events

7. Demonstrate and facilitate interest in God’s Word

8. Plan quiz parties at least twice during the quiz year

9. Recruit new quizzers and coaches

10. Plan a demonstration quiz with local pastors

11. Mentor assistant coaches

12. Organize and lead weekly devotionals (at practice or maybe during Sunday School)

13. Keep statistical records from quizzes

14. Manage a quiz budget if available from the local NYI

15. Keep an organized quiz schedule and keep parents of quizzing up to date

16. Keep local pastors updated on the state of quizzing. Encourage announcements, make sure events are on the church and NYI calendars and interact with the pastors on a regular basis

17. Produce a newsletter to keep everyone, especially parents, up to date

18. Attend non-quizzing activities that the quizzers may be involved in. For example, a

COACHING

COACH’S JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Plan and attend practices

band concert or play at school

19. Integrate with the rest of the youth group. Be involved in other activities with the youth and work together with the NYI president or youth pastor. They will feel more comfortable with you when that occurs.

ASSISTANT COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Attend practices and assist with the quiz activities – be a quizmaster or scorekeeper
2. Coach at district invitationals and off district tournaments
3. Call quizzers during the week to encourage them to study and see how things are going
4. Check quizzers' memory verse recall at practice
5. Fill in during the coach's absence
6. Help lead devotionals
7. Assist in team formation – give opinions about how quizzers are doing and share with the coach

HOW TO MOTIVATE

Every individual has a personal agenda, the "Real Reason" he or she wants to be on the team. That personal agenda is the key to motivating each person.

It has been said that the only true motivation is self-motivation. If that is true, then our responsibility is to remove the barriers that demotivate an individual. Some factors that can limit a quizzers motivation is the fear of failure, not being successful, lack of excitement, lack of challenges and not seeing what they are capable of

achieving in quizzing.

A quizzer may become less motivated because they do not realize what they are capable of accomplishing. When a quizzer experiences success or sees what they might accomplish, they become excited. Our goal should be to help them have big dreams or the desire to do better.

Quizzers like to be involved in things that provide them a sense of success. If they do not perceive that they have been successful, then they will not give more than the minimum effort required or they will drop out altogether. They must also have a sense of security and safety within the group. If they do not feel safe or accepted, many quizzers will not risk failure.

The biggest thing that makes quizzing different from any other Bible study is the competition factor. This factor is also a key to motivating most quizzers. Most people like to win and will often go to great lengths to win as long as the correct environment is there. Most quizzers are naturally motivated by the competition, but lack the safety from failure, and the vision to push themselves.

Seeing and knowing that there is more to achieve can be just the challenge needed to motivate. Help your quizzers see what they can accomplish if they work hard enough. Let them see really good teams quiz, great individual quizzers and award ceremonies. Discuss what it will take to accomplish what they have seen. It may take a while to convince them that they can accomplish the same thing.

Help them to create individual and group goals. Make some of them easily attainable and others require a great stretch to achieve. Most quizzers also need to see how they have been successful before they will dare try to accomplish more.

Each of us is normally our harshest critic. Take every opportunity to point out the successes, no matter how small they may be. Look hard to find things to compliment every quizzers on.

True motivation is internal, but external factors can play an important role in motivation. Consider these ideas when motivating.

- Set a good example – your enthusiasm will rub off on them
- Set appropriate goals – create multiple goals including some that will challenge them
- Give lots of feedback – praise first and then improvement
- Help quizzers measure success against themselves not others
- Provide incentives for reaching goals
- Keep track of personal scores and awards
- Make trips to tournaments
- Allow quizzers the opportunity to quizmaster when they reach certain goals like quizzing out or studying a certain amount
- Provide public recognition in church

Another effective way to help motivate is to create some yearly awards. Feel free to make up some unique ones of your own. Make sure the quizzers know exactly how to earn them and try to keep them updated on how they are doing.

ORGANIZING A QUIZ COMPETITION TOURNAMENT

WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

1. Announce, clearly, to all the participants, coaches, and officials the details of the Quiz (date, time and place, what to study, etc.)
2. Prepare the questions
 - a. Write down the questions or use prepared questions.
 - b. Divide the questions into groups of 22 or 23 (That would be 20 questions, plus extras for bonus questions or challenges.) You will need enough groups of questions for all the rounds.
3. Choose a format for the Quiz (Each team quiz each team; Round-robin style with each team quizzing within a group of 4-5, and the winner of each group quizzing against each other for the championship, etc.)
4. Arrange for people to serve as Quiz Chairman (he or she reads the questions and rules on the correctness of the answer) and scorekeepers/jump judges (He or she keeps score and determines who jumped first for each question. Jump judges are not used if electronic jump seats are used.) If you have enough teams, you might have 3, 4, or more competitions going on at the same time in different rooms. If that is the case, you will need a Quiz Chairman and a scorekeeper for each competition.
5. Organize with someone to provide something to eat and drink. You may charge a fee for lunch, or have each person bring their own lunch.
6. Make or buy the prizes

- a. Choose some special prizes (Bibles, books, trophies, etc.)
 - b. Make strips or ribbons (for individuals and for teams)
7. Make copies of points sheets
 8. Make a list of the announcements for the beginning of the competition
 9. Choose someone to lead a short devotional time before the tournament begins.

- f. Prizes
4. Begin the quiz with the devotion and the announcements
 5. After the quiz
 - a. Sum up the points and organize the contestants according to their points
 - b. Give the prizes
 - c. Pray
 - d. Clean the church

WHAT TO DO ON THE TOURNAMENT DAY

1. Arrive at the church where the tournament will take place at least one hour before the time in order to prepare the venue.
2. Items to take to the tournament
 - a. Points sheets
 - b. Groups of questions (hidden from the participants)
 - c. Pencils or pens for the quizzing officials
 - d. Prizes
 - e. Tape recorder and music tapes (optional)
3. Organize the venue
 - a. A table and chairs for the quizzing officials. (One set needed for each competition location.)
 - b. 2 benches or 8 chairs for the contestants
 - c. Seats for the quiz officials
 - d. Microphones (optional) - 1 for the quiz chairman and 1 for the contestants
 - e. Tape recorder and music tapes

RULES FOR YOUTH BIBLE QUIZZING FOR THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

These rules are necessary to run a program whose purposes are clear and solid. Every member of the Bible Quizzing program must make sure that the rules and the program are respected. However, these rules cannot prevent unfair acts or attitudes that are not fair play. The actions and attitudes of those who are involved (teams members, coaches, competition officials, etc) must reflect the purposes and objectives of the program and of NYI. The pursuit of success must not dominate the goal of exhibiting a Christ-like attitude.

METHODS OF COMPETITION - Before any competition, the chairman should choose the quizzing method (electronic jump seats or jump judges) for all the teams. The methods that are going to be used must be clearly indicated to the officials, coaches, and captains of the team before the beginning of the competition.

THE TEAM

1. The Team is composed of four or more contestants who regularly attend the Church of the

Nazarene and are members of the local NYI. More than five contestants can be used on a team during a competition, but only five can be included in the team in each round. No one can be a member of the team if he or she has attended any university, college, Bible school, or any other educational training beyond high school.

2. The coach can talk with or assist his team only during the breaks between the questions.

3. Only four contestants per team can be competing. The fifth one is substitute.

4. Specific members of each team must be designated by the coach before the competition as the captain, and another as co-captain.

5. Only the captain can talk with the quiz chairman after a decision, either to challenge a decision, to protest, or to correct.

THE OFFICIALS OF THE QUIZ

A. The Quiz Director - the person who organizes the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:

1. Prepare the study and tournament calendar in advance
2. Obtain all the officials necessary for the competition.
3. Provide all necessary materials for the competition: seats, groups of questions, score sheets, copy of biblical material, a stopwatch, pencil, etc.
4. Prepare enough groups of questions for the competition.
5. Prepare or buy the prizes for the quiz: certificates, trophies, or others

6. Advertise the time, place and date of the tournament in all local churches and to all the people involved.

B. The Quiz Chairman - the person who leads and controls the rounds in the tournament. His or her responsibilities include:

1. A good knowledge of the rules and of the material in the competition. During a competition, the interpretation of the Quiz Chairman is final.
2. Be unbiased and consistent.
3. Read each question during the round
4. Recognize the first contestant and ask for the answer.
5. Judge the correctness of each answer
6. Consult, if necessary and wanted, with the scorekeeper when judging answers, challenges, or appeals.
7. Note faults when they take place

C. The Scorekeeper - the person who maintains the official scoring sheet during the tournament rounds. His or her responsibilities include:

1. A good knowledge of the rules of Bible Quizzing
2. Register each member of the competing teams onto the scoring sheet.
3. Register points obtained and/or lost by each team and individual contestant.
4. Notify the Quiz Chairman when a contestant:
 - a. Has correctly answered four questions
 - b. Has committed three errors

5. Regularly notify the Quiz Chairman of the running score
6. Register the final team and individual results
7. Serve as timekeeper.

tions he has to answer, or makes all the faults and/or errors he is allowed to make.

- b. Only a substitute can take the place of a contestant - two contestants who already are competing cannot exchange places.

THE TOURNAMENT

1. Duration of the tournament.

- a. There are 20 questions in a round
- b. If there is a draw after twenty questions, there will be play-off questions until the draw is broken. Only one question is necessary to break the draw, unless no one answers it.

2. Composition of the teams

- a. Each team's coach must give the names of his or her team to the scorekeeper before the first question is read.
- b. The captain and the co-captain of the team must be designated before the first question is read.

3. Breaks.

- a. A break lasts for one minute and can only be asked between questions.
- b. Each team can ask for two breaks per round, and only the captain, the coach, or one of the officials can ask for a break.

4. Substitutions

- a. The coach can only change an active member during a break. The contestant that leaves a round is a substitute and can come back in the competition later. The substitute comes back automatically to the competition when one of the contestants answers all the ques-

5. Questions

- a. All the questions will be based on the same version of the Bible (announced ahead of time).
- b. A question for all can be read only once.
- c. If no contestant stands to answer a question within five seconds after it has been read, it will be considered closed. The Quiz Chairman must read the answer, and go on. No points will be given for that question.
- d. At any time before beginning to read the next question, the Quiz Chairman can throw out a question that contains incorrect information or has not been well read.
- e. A captain may appeal to the Quiz Chairman if there is incorrect information in a question, if the question was not well read, or if the question could not be understood because of interference.

6. Electronic Seats

- a. The equipment used for a Bible Quizzing competition is called "jump seats". The cushions are plugged in to a box at the officials' table. Each cushion functions as a switch that shows with a light who stood up first.
- b. When all the lights are off (all the contestants are seated) the Quiz Chairman can start reading a question.
- c. When the question is being read, the first

contestant to stand must answer the question

d. The Quiz Chairman observes the lights while reading the questions.

e. When a light is on, the Quiz Chairman stops reading, and calls the name of the contestant whose light is on.

N.B. Most quizzing programs will not have access to jump seats to begin with. In that case, a Jump Judge (or scorekeeper) will determine who jumped first.

7. Answers

a. A contestant cannot answer before being recognized by name by the Quiz Chairman.

b. The time limit of 30 seconds starts immediately after the contestant is recognized by the Quiz Chairman.

c. The contestant must finish the question (if he interrupted the reading of the question) and give the correct and complete answer during the 30 seconds time limit.

d. The Quiz Chairman cannot repeat the question or give any information to the contestant. The contestant must answer without any help.

e. If the correct question and answer are given in the correct time limit, without any errors in information, the answer will be considered as correct.

DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

The Quiz Chairman must judge if the answers are correct this way:

1. When the contestant gives all the necessary information for the question and the answer,

and sits back down, the Quiz Chairman will judge if the answer is correct.

2. The Quiz Chairman must not interrupt the contestant. The only exception is when the contestant gives enough incorrect information to eliminate any possibility to give a correct answer. If more information is necessary, the Quiz Chairman will not say anything until the contestant sits down or the 30 seconds time limit has ended.

3. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “correct” the points will be given to the team and the contestant.

4. If the Quiz Chairman considers that an answer is “incorrect”, the points will be deducted from the score of the team and/or contestant (if after question 16), and a bonus question will be read.

5. The Quiz Chairman will not judge an answer “incorrect” because of a pronunciation error.

ERRORS AND BONUS QUESTIONS

1. If an incorrect answer is given, the contestant with the corresponding seat on the opposite team can answer that question as a bonus.

2. The Quiz Chairman must read the question completely before the contestant answers the bonus question.

3. The contestant must answer the bonus question within 30 seconds.

4. A correct answer to a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team of the contestant who answered the question. Individual points are not given for bonus questions.

5. Points will not be deducted for incorrect answers given to bonus questions.

CHALLENGE AND APPEALS OF THE DECISIONS OF THE OFFICIALS

1. Only the acting team captain can challenge or appeal the decisions of the officials.

2. The captain may not challenge or appeal before the question and the bonus question (if necessary) are asked, answered and judged. All the challenges or appeals must be done before the beginning of the next question.

3. There may be no communication between the coach & captain, between two contestants, or the contestants and the audience.

4. Each captain can challenge a question only once.

5. Challenge

a. A captain may challenge a decision of the Quiz Chairman if he thinks an incorrect decision has been taken.

b. The captain can ask the Quiz Chairman to read the correct question and answer before challenging.

c. The captain of the other team can refute the challenge, once it is complete.

d. After hearing the challenge and the refutation, the Quiz Chairman will judge the validity of the challenge.

e. The challenge will be invalidated if it contains incorrect information, or if the argument does not justify a different decision than the first one.

f. The challenge will be accepted when the ar-

gument justifies the modification of the previous decision. When a challenge is accepted and the previous decision is reversed. The points will be adjusted as if the error happened in the beginning.

6. Appeals

a. The captain can appeal to the Quiz Chairman to invalidate the answer due to an incorrect reading, incorrect information in the question, or visual/audio interference.

b. After hearing the appeal, the Quiz Chairman may consult the scorekeeper for the final decision.

c. The appeal will be upheld if the argument justifies the change of the first decision.

d. When an appeal is upheld, the question appealed will be invalidated, and another question will be asked.

e. The official point sheet must be changed as if the appealed question was not asked. The points given after the first decision will be deducted and the points deducted after the first decision are given again.

FAULTS

1. There is a fault when:

a. There is communication (verbal or non-verbal) after the Quiz Chairman asks the Question and before the points are given.

b. A contestant begins answering a question before being recognized by the Quiz Chairman.

2. Any contestant who does three faults in a round must leave the round. He may be substi-

tuted.

POINTS

1. A correct answer to a question is worth 20 points for the team and the individual contestant.
2. A correct answer for a bonus question is worth 10 points for the team.
3. Four correct answers (not including bonus questions) by any one contestant is worth 10 bonus points for the team and the contestant who answered the four questions. This is called a “quiz out”. When a contestant has quizzed out, he or she must step down from the quizzing seat and may be substituted for if there is a substitute.
4. When 3 members from the same team answer at least one question correctly, there is a 10 point bonus for the team.
 - a. The fourth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 points for the team
 - b. The fifth contestant who answers correctly gains 10 more bonus points
5. Beginning with question #16, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team for each error.
6. At the third error of a contestant, 10 points are deducted from the points of the team and of the contestant. This is called an “error out” and the contestant may no longer answer questions for that round. The contestant may be substituted for.
7. For the fifth error of the team (and each subsequent error) 10 points will be deducted from the points of the team.

8. The points for the play-off questions after the time limit are not part of the individual or team points.

STUDY TIPS: MEMORIZATION

MEMORY VERSES

If your quizzers plan to learn all the memory verses this year, you’ll want to pay special attention to the prejump list in the back of Book 1. The purpose of having a prejump list is to show them where the earliest “safe” place to jump on each memory verse is, and to help you learn to complete the verse with the fewest possible beginning words. Use it to perfect their skills in jumping on memory verses. Also, download the free memory verse flash cards from www.youthquiz.com or from the Power Tools CD.

“15” METHOD

1. Read the verse through a couple of times.
2. Have them say it without looking. If they get stuck, check the Scripture, and then go on.
3. When they can say the verse through without looking, they’re ready to start memorizing. (You thought you were through, didn’t you?)
4. Have them say the verse through as fast as they can, five times, without a mistake. If they make a mistake, start over.
5. Read the verse again to make sure they are saying it right. If not, do it over.
6. Have them say the verse five more times without a mistake. Then five more times. (That makes 15.) If at any time they make a mistake, start over with that group of five.

7. Do the next verse the same way, then return to the first verse memorized to make sure they still know it.

8. Continue the process until they are done memorizing.

WRITING QUESTIONS

It's a proven fact that the more you deal with a subject, the better you learn and remember it. It is a great idea to have your quizzers write their own questions as they study the material. Make sure they have a solid knowledge of the material before they begin to write questions. Once they do, they will find that practicing forming questions and answers will really test their knowledge of the material. Once they learn this method, you might find they don't need to actually write the questions and answers down on paper; it may be enough to simply form questions mentally and answer them in their mind. Those written questions could be used in practice and compared to the questions in this book.

PHRASE METHOD

1. Read the verse carefully, making sure they understand its meaning.

2. Break the verse into phrases (punctuation marks do this pretty well) and say each phrase several times, emphasizing words that are difficult to remember.

3. Read the entire verse again, concentrating on difficult parts.

4. Quote the verse 5 or 6 times, or until they can say it smoothly without error.

5. Review the verse about 10 times the same day they learn it.

6. Review the verse at least once a day for three or four days after they learn it.

3-5-7 PLAN

Assume that you've just studied 1 Corinthians 8. Now have the quizzers review the chapter three chapters before this chapter—chapter 5. Then review the chapter five before—chapter 3. Then review the chapter seven before your original chapter—chapter 1. Hence, the name 3-5-7 Plan. When the total number of chapters gets high enough, it will need to become the 3-5-7-9 Plan.

INDEX CARDS

A great way to help quizzers learn the memory verses (or all of the material) is to create a catalog of the verses they want (or you want them) to memorize. Write or type each verse on one side of an index card and put its reference on the back. Computer programs have made this a somewhat simple task, especially with the ability to purchase the NIV for that computer. (It's important that they do this step themselves (regardless of the method); try not to have their parents or you as coach do this for them. The cards will mean much more to them—and they'll remember the verse better as well—if they take the time to mentally process each verse as they prepare the catalog.) Once they have all the verses on cards, they're now ready to begin. They'll probably want to memorize the verses in the order as they appear in the Scripture. Have them use any of the memorization methods already mentioned to actually learn the verse. The big advantage of this method is being able to separate those verses that they're having difficulty learning. They will also be able to review the verses by looking at the reference or review the references by looking at the verses.

STUDY TIP: COMPREHENSION

UNDERLINE METHOD

Have the quizzers read the chapter enough times that they know most of it, starting at the beginning of the chapter and underlining every fact in the chapter that they are not sure they would remember in a quiz without further study. Then, beginning with the first verse, have them study all the underlined phrases. To fully complete the study method, have them continue working on all these phrases until they know each of them well enough to recall details in a quiz.

STUDY TIP: READING

CD/CASSETTE METHOD/MP3/PODCAST

Learning comes easier when one can not only see the words but hear them as well. You can purchase a pre-made audio recording of the book to help your quizzers read and memorize. You might consider making your own recording using a blank recordable CD, (you will need a computer with a microphone and appropriate recording software) or a cassette tape and record your own voice reading each chapter for study purposes. (Remember that it is illegal to make copies of pre-made Bible recordings, or to distribute or sell copies of your own voice recording of Bible passages without permission.) This may take some time, but you'll find it worth your while in the long run. Remember to read clearly and loudly. You might want to identify each chapter and/or verse with its reference as you come to it. Recorded CD's should be available at www.youthquiz.com.

There are several ways you can use a recording like this in your study. Here are a couple:

- **Straight Reading**—Read along in the Bible or scripture portion, and listen carefully to the recording at the same time while reading. In this way, they will not only see the words on the page but hear the words as well. This combination will help them remember the material better. A variation is to try to quote the material along with the recording.
- **Pantomime Reading**—Turn on the CD/Tape player/MP3 player. As the verses are read, pantomime (act out) everything that is happening. Exaggerate! Do fun, crazy things to act out the passages. If they are not too self-conscious, have your quizzers act out the passages together. You'll be surprised to see how well this method helps them remember the material.

STRAIGHT READING METHOD

Simply have them read through the chapter carefully and thoughtfully five times. The more they read something, the better they will know it. Also, have them read the related scripture or commentary if they have some type of reference Bible. Be careful to use only the NIV for memory work but other versions can be helpful when trying to understand what the author is trying to convey.

REPETITION METHOD

1. Read verse 1 (of the chapter they are studying) three times.
2. Read verse 2 three times, verse 3 three times, verse 4 three times, and verse 5 three times.

3. Now read verses 1 through 5 all together at once.
4. Read verses 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 three times each.
5. Now read verses 6 through 10 all together at once.
6. Now go back to verse 1 and read straight through to verse 10.
7. Read verses 11 through 15, each three times; then read them together once; then go back to verse 1 and read through to verse 15.
8. Read verses 16 through 20 three times each; then 16 to 20 once all together; then 1 to 20 all together.
9. Keep doing this until they finish the chapter.

PARAPHRASE METHOD

Have you ever stopped to think that if you were writing some of the Scriptures you're studying; it would sound a lot different from what you are reading?

Before you suggest this method to your quizzers, they'll need about three or four pieces of notebook paper. At the top of the first page they should write the number of the chapter they'll be reading. Have them read the chapter, through a couple of times. Now the goal is for them to rewrite the chapter, verse by verse, in their own words.

They can make it serious or funny, creative or normal—however they usually talk. They should paraphrase (explain how to accomplish paraphrasing) at least 10 verses of a chapter just to find out if they like this method. They do not even have to use it all the time. They should try it once in a while to lend variety to their studying.

STUDY TIP: PREJUMPING

QUESTION WRITING

In order to fine tune your quizzers prejumping ability it is really not as important for them to write hundreds of questions as it is for them to learn how to write questions. You will eventually have them move from actually writing questions and answers to simply forming them mentally. The key to good prejumping is not simply winning the jump but being able to correctly complete the question from the point where they jumped. Learning to recognize questions and answers in their mind will be of tremendous advantage as they begin to prejump.

In the average verse, there are four or five possible quiz questions. Even though several questions may cover the same information, the way a quizzer prejumps on each question is different. So, it is helpful to be able to look at a verse and see the different questions that can come from it. To write a question, have them begin by finding the answer in the verse and then decide how to ask a question about it. Beginning at the first verse and have them look at each phrase, each noun, each action verb, each adjective, and each adverb, to see if any could be an answer to questions. Then, have them write the questions.

KEY WORD SPOTTING

Key word spotting is to help a quizzer be able to jump faster. It is very difficult to improve their jump reaction time without learning to spot key words.

What is a key word? The key word is the word that comes at that place in the question where, for the first time, one can tell what the rest of the

question is. In other words, if they hear a question and the quizmaster stops reading just before the key word, they won't know for certain what the rest of the question is. There may be only a few possibilities, and they may make an educated (or lucky!) guess, but they won't be for certain. However, if they were to hear one more word—the key word—they would know without a doubt what the correct question is.

Your job as a coach is to help the quizzer learn to locate that key word so that they can jump at that place in the question. In a quiz, that means faster decision-making under pressure. To get started, though, have them practice with a few questions and take all the time they need to decide what is the key word.

Here is an important point to remember: the key word will not always be the same for everyone! The better they know the chapter, the sooner they will be able to jump. Right now the key word for questions may be the last word; but by the end of the year, the key word on some of the very same questions could possibly be the third or fourth word. The key word changes as their knowledge of the material improves.

ANTICIPATING THE KEY WORD

Anticipation is accurately predicting that the next word of the question will be the key word. Why anticipate you ask? If a quizzer can tell that the next word of a question will be the key word, then they can jump just as the quizmaster begins to say it, but late enough that he or she does not have time to stop before he or she says at least the first syllable of the key word. The quizzer can then identify the key word by watching the quizmaster's mouth as a clue to the remainder of the word. This means that they will actually jump before they hear the complete question! If

they can learn to anticipate accurately, they will obviously win many more jumps than a quizzer who does not anticipate. Remember, though, that anticipating is taking a definite risk; they will want to be sure that they know the material well enough to take this risk before you jump! Prejumping is a major hurdle for most quizzers to overcome, but when they do, they will find competition much easier.

RECORDING JUMPING

To practice their jumping and to improve anticipation of the key word, you may want to try this method. In order to use this method they will need computer recording equipment and a CD/DVD/MP3 burner, or a simple cassette recorder. To prepare for the study, record some of the questions and the answers to the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette. Start the CD/DVD/MP3 or cassette and have them “jump” (either physically or mentally), and stop the recording at the point where they jump. Now have them try to complete the question and give the correct answer. To check yourself simply restart the cassette and then listen to the correct question and answer. They'll find that as their knowledge of the material increases, their ability to prejump earlier also improves.

STUDY TIP: GENERAL REVIEW

After studying one-fourth of the chapters, take time out for a general review of all the chapters they've covered. Test them in each of the following areas:

1. Have them read through each chapter again. If there is time, they may even want to use a repetition method (Read chapter 1, then read chapters 1 and 2, then read chap-

ters 1, 2, and 3, etc.)

2. Have them write out either a chapter-by-chapter outline, or a list of what events are in each chapter.

3. Have them review all the underlined phrases that they thought they might not remember in a quiz. Test them to see how well they still remember those verses. If they've forgotten any of the phrases, spend some more time studying with them.

4. Work with the prejump list of memory verses, and test their ability to complete each verse and give the reference.

Repeat this general review after completing one-half, then three-fourths, then all of the chapters. In each case, review all the chapters they've covered.

STUDY TIP: USING A CONCORDANCE

Have you ever noticed how some quizzers always seem to be able to jump way before your quizzers do? And how you could say almost any word in the material and they can tell you exactly what verse it's in? Chances are that those quizzers have been using a concordance.

What is a concordance? A concordance is a type of index—you know, those lists in the back of books that tell you where a certain subject is mentioned. A biblical concordance will tell you where and how many times any word is used in the Scripture. (Would it surprise you to know that the word “the” is used 55,728 times throughout the Bible?!) There are several types of these concordances: entire Bible, Old Testament, New Testament, and individual book concordances.

How can you use a concordance to help your

quizzers in their study? Each year, youthquiz.com makes available a Quizzer's concordance that covers only the material being covered during that quiz year. This resource will tell you where and how many times each word is used in this book. Of special help to a quizzer is the list of “Unique Words.” These are words that are used only once in the material.

Being familiar with these words can be invaluable to a quizzer. A quizzer knowing that a particular word is used only once throughout an entire year's material will more quickly direct them toward the right passage when answering a question. Once they've acquired a concordance, find the unique word list, or go through the entire list of words and note those that are used only once. Have them mark these words with a certain color of marker or colored pencil—blue, perhaps. Then have them take their Scripture portion or Bible and locate each of these “blue” words and mark them. Now as they read and study the Scripture, they will be able to note when they come across a “blue” word. Many quizzers use the same approach with words used two or three times throughout the material, marking them with a different color, such as red and green.

Now, as soon as they hear one of these unique words, they should be able to recognize it as a key word, remember the reference, and quickly go there mentally to form their question and answer. You will find that knowing these key words will greatly enhance your quizzer's ability to prejump. (You can also tailor this system as it suits their study style).

However you decide to have your quizzers use a concordance, be sure they have a good understanding of the material, as well as of the individual words. The concordance should supple-

ment a good study plan—don't let them rely on it to solve all of their study problems.

Knowing the Scripture in this way will also help them in the future. It may help them find a verse that they need when speaking to a person seeking God. The Holy Spirit will bring that verse they learned years ago to memory at the appropriate time.

STUDY TIP: VARIETY IN YOUR STUDY

Throughout this book the quizzers will find many different study methods for use in individual study times. Chances are no one study method is right for everyone. What works best for one may not work for teammates. Just as important, however, is that their knowledge and recollection of the material will improve if they vary the study methods they use. Have them try a new method every now and then so they don't get bored and frustrated using the same technique over and over.

PRE-ANNOUNCING KEY

Remember that all questions will be “preannounced” in actual quizzing competition. In order to prepare your quizzers for this practice (and in case your team decides to use these questions in practice), we've included the preannouncing codes in this book as well.

PRE-ANNOUNCING KEY

(Code=Question Type)

G = General

X = Context

A = According to

S = Situation

I = In What Book and Chapter

Memory:

Q = Quote;

V = Finish this (these) verse(s) (no reference);

R = Finish this (these) verses and give the reference

QUIZZING STUDY

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

MATTHEW 1

Q. Whose genealogy does Matthew record in chapter 1?

A. *The genealogy of Jesus Christ (the son of David, the son of Abraham) (M 1:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 1: verse 2, who was the father of Jacob?

A. *Isaac (M 1:2)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 1: verse 12, to where was the exile?

A. *Babylon (M 1:12)*

Q. Who was the father of Eliud?

A. *Akim (M 1:14)*

Q. Who was the husband of Mary?

A. *Joseph (M 1:16)*

Q. How many generations were there from Abraham to David?

A. *Fourteen (M 1:17)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 1: verse 18, how did the birth of Jesus Christ come about?

A. *His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit (M 1:18)*

Q. Who was pledged to be married to Joseph?

A. *Mary (Jesus' mother) (M 1:18)*

Q. What did Joseph have in mind?

A. *To divorce Mary quietly (M 1:19)*

Q. Who appeared to Joseph in a dream after he had considered divorcing Mary quietly?

A. *An angel of the Lord (M 1:20)*

Q. From what will Jesus save his people?

A. *Their sins (M 1:21)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 1: verse 22, why did all this take place?

A. *To fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet (M 1:22)*

Q. What does "Immanuel" mean?

A. *"God with us" (M 1:23)*

Q. Who took Mary home as his wife?

A. *Joseph (M 1:24)*

Q. Until when did Joseph have no union with Mary?

A. *Until she gave birth to a son (M 1:25)*

MATTHEW 2

Q Where was Jesus born?

A. *Bethlehem in Judea (M 2:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 3, when was King Herod disturbed?

A. *When he heard this (M 2:3)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 5, what did they reply?

A. *“In Bethlehem in Judea, for this is what the prophet has written” (M 2:5)*

Q. Who will come out of Bethlehem?

A. *A ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel (M 2:6)*

Q. Whom did Herod send to Bethlehem?

A. *The Magi (M 2:8)*

Q. What stopped over the place where the child was?

A. *The star (the Magi had seen in the east) (M 2:9)*

Q. Who were overjoyed when they saw the star?

A. *The Magi (M 2:10)*

Q. Two-part question: How had the Magi been warned not to go back to Herod, and how did they return to their country?

A. *1) In a dream 2) By another route (M 2:12)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 13, who appeared to Joseph in a dream?

A. *An angel of the Lord (M 2:13)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 14, who got up?

A. *Joseph (M 2:14)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 15, what was fulfilled?

A. *What the Lord said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son” (M 2:15)*

Q. Who is weeping for her children?

A. *Rachel (M 2:18)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 2: verse 20, what did an angel of the Lord say?

A. *“Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead” (M 2:20)*

Q. Who went and lived in a town called Nazareth?

A. *Joseph (M 2:23)*

MATTHEW 3

Q. Who came, preaching in the Desert of Judea?

A. *John the Baptist (M 3:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 3: verse 3, what is a voice calling in the desert?

A. *Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him (M 3:3)*

Q. What were made of camel’s hair?

A. *John’s clothes (M 3:4)*

Q. Who were baptized by John in the Jordan River?

A. *People from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan (M 3:5-6)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”

A. *John (the Baptist) said it to many of the Pharisees and Sadducees when he saw them coming to where he was baptizing (M 3:7)*

Q. In keeping with what should you produce fruit?

A. *Repentance (M 3:8)*

Q. What will be cut down and thrown into the fire?

A. *Every tree that does not produce good fruit (M 3:10)*

Q. Who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire?

A. *One who will come after John (who is more powerful than John, whose sandals John is not fit to carry) (M 3:11)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 3: verse 12, where will he gather his wheat?

A. *Into the barn (M 3:12)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 3: verse 14, what did John try to do?

A. *Deter Jesus (M 3:14)*

Q. When did Jesus come up out of the water?

A. *As soon as he was baptized (M 3:16)*

Q. Three-part answer: What happened as soon as Jesus was baptized and went up out of the water?

A. *1) Heaven was opened 2) Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighted on him 3) A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom*

I love; with him I am well pleased” (M 3:16-17)

MATTHEW 4

Q. By whom was Jesus led into the desert to be tempted by the devil?

A. *The Spirit (M 4:1)*

Q. How long did Jesus fast?

A. *Forty days and forty nights (M 4:2)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in response to what: “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

A. *Jesus said it to the tempter (the devil) in response to, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” (M 4:3-4)*

Q. Why will God’s angels lift Jesus up in their hands?

A. *So that Jesus will not strike his foot against a stone (M 4:6)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 4: verse 8, where did the devil take Jesus?

A. *To a very high mountain (M 4:8)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 4: verse 10, what did Jesus say to the devil?

A. *“Away from me Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” (M 4:10)*

Q. Who came and attended Jesus?

A. *Angels (M 4:11)*

MATTHEW 5

Q. Where was Capernaum?

A. *By the lake in the area of Zebulum and Naphtali (M 4:13)*

Q. What has dawned?

A. *A light (M 4:16)*

Q. Who began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ?

A. *Jesus (M 4:17)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 4: verse 20, when did they leave their nets and follow Jesus?

A. *At once (M 4:20)*

Q. Who immediately left the boat and their father and followed Jesus?

A. *James son of Zebedee and his brother John (M 4:22)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 4: verse 24, where did news about Jesus spread?

A. *All over Syria (M 4:24)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 5: verse 1, who came to Jesus?

A. *His disciples (M 5:1)*

Q. Why are the poor in spirit blessed?

A. *For theirs is the kingdom of heaven (M 5:3)*

Q. Why are those who mourn blessed?

A. *For they will be comforted (M 5:4)*

Q. What are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

A. *Blessed (M 5:6)*

Q. What are the pure in heart?

A. *Blessed (M 5:8)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 5: verse 10, whose is the kingdom of heaven?

A. *Those who are persecuted because of righteousness (M 5:10)*

Q. Why should you rejoice and be glad?

A. *Because great is your reward in heaven (M 5:12)*

Q. What can a city on a hill not be?

A. *Hidden (M 5:14)*

Q. What has Jesus not come to abolish?

A. *The Law or the Prophets (M 5:17)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 5: verse 21, who will be subject to judgment?

A. *Anyone who murders (M 5:21)*

Q. What if anyone says, "You fool!"?

A. *He will be in danger of the fire of hell (M 5:22)*

Q. When should you leave your gift there in front of the altar?

A. *If you are offering your gift and there remember that your brother has something against you (M 5:23)*

Q. Who has already committed adultery with her in his heart?

A. *Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully (M 5:28)*

Q. What if your right hand causes you to sin?

A. *Cut it off and throw it away (M 5:30)*

Q. Four part answer: by what should you not swear?

A. *1) Heaven, 2) The earth 3) Jerusalem 4) Your head (M 5:34)*

Q. What if someone strikes you on the right cheek?

A. *Turn to him the other also (M 5:39)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 5: verse 40, when should you let him have your cloak as well?

A. *If someone wants to sue you and take your tunic (M 5:40)*

Q. Why should you pray for those who persecute you?

A. *That you may be sons of your Father in heaven (M 5:44)*

Q. Whom do pagans even greet?

A. *Their brothers (M 5:7)*

Q. Who is perfect?

A. *Your heavenly Father (M 5:48)*

MATTHEW 6

Q. What if you do your “acts of righteousness” before men to be seen by them?

A. *You will have no reward from your Father in heaven (M 6:1)*

Q. Why should your left hand not know what your right hand is doing?

A. *So that your giving may be in secret (M 6:3)*

Q. Like whom should you not be when you pray?

A. *The hypocrites (M 6:5)*

Q. Who think they will be heard when they pray because of their many words?

A. *Pagans (M 6:7)*

Q. Why should you not be like pagans?

A. *For your Father knows what you need before you ask him (M 6:8)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 6: verse 12, whom have we also forgiven?

A. *Our debtors (M 6:12)*

Q. When will your Father not forgive your sins?

A. *If you do not forgive men their sins (M 6:15)*

Q. Two part question: like whom should you not look sombre, and when?

A. *1) The hypocrites 2) When you fast (M 6:16)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 6: verse 18, who will reward you?

A. *Your Father (M 6:18)*

Q. Where should you store up treasures for yourselves?

A. *In heaven (M 6:20)*

Q. What if your eyes are good?

A. *Your whole body will be full of light (M 6:22)*

Q. What will be full of darkness if your eyes are bad?

A. *Your whole body (M 6:23)*

Q. What is more important than clothes?

A. *The body (M 6:25)*

Q. What do not labour or spin?

A. *The lilies of the field (M 6:28)*

Q. Who run after all these things?

A. *The pagans (M 6:32)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 6: verse 34, about what should you not worry?

A. *Tomorrow (M 6:34)*

MATTHEW 7

Q. Why should you not judge?

A. *You too will be judged (M 7:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 7: verse 3, what is in your brother's eye?

A. *The speck of sawdust (M 7:3)*

Q. What should you not throw to pigs?

A. *Your pearls (M 7:6)*

Q. To whom is the door opened?

A. *To him who knocks (M 7:8)*

Q. What do you know how to give to your children?

A. *Good gifts (M 7:11)*

Q. What should you do to others?

A. *What you would have them do to you (M 7:12)*

Q. What is broad?

A. *The road that leads to destruction (M 7:13)*

Q. How do false prophets come to you?

A. *In sheep's clothing (M 7:15)*

Q. From what do people not pick grapes?

A. *Thornbushes (M 7:16)*

Q. What does a bad tree bear?

A. *Bad fruit (M 7:17)*

Q. Whom will Jesus tell plainly, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"?

A. *Many who will say to Jesus on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles" (M 7:22-23)*

Q. Who built his house on sand?

A. *The foolish man (M 7:26)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 7: verse 29, how did Jesus teach?

A. *As one who had authority (not as their teachers of the law) (M 7:29)*

MATTHEW 8

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the result: "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

A. *A man with leprosy said it to Jesus, and Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man, and immediately the man was cured of his leprosy (M 8:2)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 8: verse 4, to whom should the man show himself?

A. *The priest (M 8:4)*

Q. When did a centurion come to Jesus, asking for help?

A. *When he had entered Capernaum (M 8:5)*

Q. Who lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering?

A. *The centurion's servant (M 8:6)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 8: verse 8, who does not deserve to have Jesus come under his roof?

A. *The centurion (M 8:8)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 8: verse 10, who was astonished?

A. *Jesus (M 8:10)*

Q. Where has Jesus not found anyone with such great faith?

A. *In Israel (M 8:10)*

Q. Who will be thrown outside into the darkness?

A. *The subjects of the kingdom (M 8:12)*

Q. Who came into Peter's house and saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever?

A. *Jesus (M 8:14)*

Q. Who drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick?

A. *Jesus (M 8:16)*

Q. When did Jesus give orders to cross to the other side of the lake?

A. *When Jesus saw the crowd around him (M 8:18)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 8: verse 19, what did a teacher of the law say?

A. *"Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go" (M 8:19)*

Q. Who said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father"?

A. *Another disciple (M 8:21)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 8: verse 24, what was Jesus doing?

A. *Sleeping (M 8:24)*

Q. Who rebuked the winds and the waves?

A. *Jesus (M 8:26)*

Q. Where did two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs meet Jesus?

A. *In the region of the Gadarenes (M 8:28)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in response to what: "Go!"

A. *Jesus said it to the demons after they begged him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs" (M 8:31)*

Q. Who pleaded with Jesus to leave their region?

A. *The whole town (M 8:34)*

MATTHEW 9

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in response to what: "This fellow is blaspheming!"

A. *Some of the teachers of the law said it to themselves when Jesus told the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven" (M 9:2)*

Q. To whom did Jesus say, “Get up, take your mat and go home?”

A. *The paralytic (M 9:6)*

Q. When was the crowd filled with awe?

A. *When they saw the paralytic get up and go home (M 9:8)*

Q. With whom did many tax collectors and “sinners” come and eat?

A. *Jesus and his disciples (M 9:10)*

Q. When did the Pharisees ask Jesus’ disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners”?

A. *When the Pharisees saw that many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with Jesus and his disciples at Matthew’s house (M 9:10)*

Q. Who has not come to call the righteous, but sinners?

A. *Jesus (M 9:13)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 9: verse 15, what time will come?

A. *The time when the bridegroom will be taken from the guests (M 9:15)*

Q. What will run out?

A. *The wine (M 9:17)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the response: “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live”?

A. *A ruler said it to Jesus, and Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples (M 9:18)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 9: verse 21, what did the woman say to herself?

A. *“If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed” (M 9:21)*

Q. When did Jesus see the flute players and the noisy crowd?

A. *When he entered the ruler’s house (M 9:23)*

Q. When did Jesus go in and take the girl by the hand?

A. *After the crowd had been put outside (M 9:25)*

Q. What spread through all that region?

A. *News of Jesus healing the ruler’s daughter (M 9:26)*

Q. When did the blind men come to Jesus?

A. *When he had gone indoors (M 9:28)*

Q. Who warned the blind men sternly?

A. *Jesus (M 9:30)*

Q. Where has nothing like this ever been seen?

A. *In Israel (M 9:33)*

Q. What is the harvest?

A. *Plentiful (M 9:37)*

Q. What should you ask the Lord of the harvest?

A. *To send out workers into his harvest field (M 9:38)*

MATTHEW 10

Q. What are the names of the twelve apostles?

A. Simon (who is called Peter), Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the Zealot), and Judas Iscariot (M 10:2)

Q. Who should not go among the Gentiles?

A. The twelve apostles (M 10:5)

Q. How have these twelve received?

A. Freely (M 10:8)

Q. What should these twelve not take along with them?

A. Any gold or silver or copper (in their belts), nor any bag for the journey or extra tunic or sandals or a staff (M 10:9)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 10: verse 12, when should the twelve give the home their greeting?

A. As the twelve enter it (M 10:12)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 10: verse 15, for whom will it be more bearable on the day of judgment than for that town?

A. Sodom and Gomorrah (M 10:15)

Q. Why should the twelve be on their guard against men?

A. Men will hand the twelve over to the local councils and flog them in their synagogues (M 10:17)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 10: verse 19, when should the twelve not worry about what to say or how to say it?

A. When they arrest them (M 10:19)

Q. What will he who stands firm to the end be?

A. Saved (M 10:22)

Q. For whom is it enough to be like his teacher?

A. The student (M 10:25)

Q. What should the twelve proclaim from the roofs?

A. What is whispered in their ear (M 10:27)

Q. Apart from what will not one of the sparrows fall to the ground?

A. The will of your Father (M 10:29)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 10: verse 31, what should the twelve not be?

A. Afraid (M 10:31)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 10: verse 34, what should the twelve not suppose?

A. That Jesus has come to bring peace to the earth (M 10:34)

Q. What will whoever loses his life for Jesus' sake find?

A. His life (M 10:39)

Q. Who will certainly not lose his reward?

A. Anyone who gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is Jesus' disciple (M 10:42)

MATTHEW 11

Q. Whom had Jesus finished instructing?

A. *His twelve disciples (M 11:1)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

A. *John’s disciples said it to Jesus when John heard in prison what Christ was doing and sent his disciples to ask Jesus (M 11:2)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 11: verse 5, what is preached to the poor?

A. *The good news (M 11:5)*

Q. Who began to speak to the crowd about John?

A. *Jesus (M 11:7)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 11: verse 10, what is written?

A. *“I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.” (M 11:10)*

Q. Until whom did all the Prophets and the Law prophesy?

A. *Until John (M 11:13)*

Q. Complete in essence the following: “He who has ears,”

A. *“let him hear” (M 11:15)*

Q. When did this generation say, “He has a demon”?

A. *When John came neither eating or drinking (M 11:18)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 11: verse 20, what did Jesus begin to denounce?

A. *The cities in which most of his miracles had been performed (M 11:20)*

Q. When will it be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon than for Korazin and Bethsaida?

A. *On the day of judgment (M 11:22)*

Q. Who has hidden these things from the wise and learned?

A. *The Father (M 11:25)*

Q. From whom has the Father hidden these things?

A. *The wise and learned (M 11:25)*

Q. Who knows the Son?

A. *No one except the Father (God) (M 11:27)*

Q. Who is gentle and humble in heart?

A. *Jesus (M 11:29)*

MATTHEW 12

Q. According to Matthew chapter 12: verse 1, who were hungry?

A. *Jesus’ disciples (M 12:1)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the situation: “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

A. *The Pharisees said it to Jesus when Jesus and his disciples were going through the grain fields on the Sabbath and his disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them (M 12:1)*

Q. When did David enter the house of God?

A. *When he and his companions were hungry (M 12:3)*

Q. Who is Lord of the Sabbath?

A. *The Son of Man (M 12:8)*

Q. Where was there a man with a shrivelled hand?

A. *In the Pharisees' synagogue (M 12:9)*

Q. What was just as sound as the other?

A. *The man's (shrivelled) hand that was completely restored (M 12:13)*

Q. Who was aware that the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus?

A. *Jesus (M 12:14)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 12: verse 18, what will he proclaim to the nations?

A. *Justice (M 12:18)*

Q. Till when will he not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smouldering wick?

A. *Till he leads justice to victory (M 12:20)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 12: verse 22, whom did they bring Jesus?

A. *A demon-possessed man who was blind and mute (M 12:22)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 12: verse 24, what did the Pharisees say?

A. *"It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons" (M 12:24)*

Q. What kingdom will be ruined?

A. *Every kingdom divided against itself (M 12:25)*

Q. What if you make a tree good?

A. *Its fruit will be good (M 12:33)*

Q. Out of what does the mouth speak?

A. *The overflow of the heart (M 12:24)*

Q. Out of what does the evil man bring evil things?

A. *Out of the evil stored up in him (M 12:35)*

Q. For what will men have to give account on the day of judgment?

A. *For every careless word they have spoken (M 12:36)*

Q. How many nights will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth?

A. *Three (M 12:40)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 12: verse 41, who is here now?

A. *One greater than Jonah (M 12:41)*

Q. Who will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it?

A. *The Queen of the South (M 12:42)*

Q. What does an evil spirit take with it to the house it left?

A. *Seven other spirits more wicked than itself (M 12:45)*

Q. Where did Jesus' mother and brothers stand?

A. *Outside (M 12:46)*

Q. Who is Jesus' brother and sister and mother?

A. *Whoever does the will of Jesus' Father in heaven (M 12:50)*

MATTHEW 13

Q. According to Matthew chapter 13: verse 1, who sat by the lake?

A. *Jesus (M 13:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 13: verse 3, how did Jesus tell them many things?

A. *In parables (M 13:3)*

Q. What was shallow?

A. *The soil in rocky places (M 13:5)*

Q. What grew up and choked the plants?

A. *Thorns (M 13:7)*

Q. Complete in essence the following: "He who has ears,..."

A. *...let him hear (M 13:9)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the response: "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

A. *The disciples said it to Jesus and he replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them" (M 13:10)*

Q. Who will be given more?

A. *Whoever has (M 13:12)*

Q. Who hardly hear with their ears?

A. *This people (M 13:15)*

Q. What are the disciples' ears because they hear?

A. *Blessed (M 13:16)*

Q. When does the evil one come and snatch away what was sown in his heart?

A. *When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it (M 13:19)*

Q. Who is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy?

A. *The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places (M 13:20)*

Q. What does he do when trouble or persecution comes because of the word?

A. *He quickly falls away (M 13:21)*

Q. Who produces a crop?

A. *The man who hears the word and understands it (M 13:23)*

Q. What sprouted and formed heads?

A. *The wheat (M 13:26)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 13: verse 26, what also appeared?

A. *The weeds (M 13:26)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

A. *The owner's servants said it to the owner of the field and he replied, "An enemy did this" (M 13:27)*

Q. What may you root up with the weeds?

A. *The wheat (M 13:29)*

Q. What is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked through all the dough?

A. *The kingdom of heaven (M 13:33)*

Q. What did a woman take and mix into a large amount of flour until it worked through all the dough?

A. *Yeast (M 13:33)*

Q. What stands for the sons of the kingdom?

A. *The good seed (M 13:38)*

Q. Whom will the angels weed out of the Son of Man's kingdom?

A. *All who do evil (M 13:41)*

Q. Where will the righteous shine like the sun?

A. *In the kingdom of their Father (M 13:43)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 13: verse 46, what did a merchant find?

A. *A pearl of great value (M 13:46)*

Q. Who pulled the net up on shore when it was full?

A. *The fishermen (M 13:48)*

Q. Where will the angels throw the wicked?

A. *Into the fiery furnace (M 13:50)*

Q. Like whom is every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven?

A. *The owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old (M 13:52)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 13: verse 55, who are Jesus' brothers?

A. *James, Joseph, Simon and Judas (M 13:55)*

Matthew 14

Q. According to Matthew chapter 14: verse 1, who heard the reports about Jesus?

A. *Herod the tetrarch (M 14:1)*

Q. Situation question: who had been saying it, to whom, and about whom: "It is not lawful for you to have her."

A. *John (the Baptist) had been saying it to Herod (the tetrarch) about Herodias (his brother Philip's wife) (M 14:3)*

Q. What did Herod promise with an oath?

A. *To give the daughter of Herodias whatever she asked (M 14:6)*

Q. Who asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter?

A. *The daughter of Herodias (M 14:8)*

Q. To whom did the girl carry the platter?

A. *Her mother (Herodias) (M 14:11)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 14: verse 14, whom did Jesus heal?

A. *Their sick (M 14:14)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 14: verse 14, on whom did Jesus have compassion?

A. *A large crowd (M 14:14)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the response: “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

A. Jesus said it to his disciples, and they answered, “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish” (M 14:16)

Q. Who directed the people to sit down on the grass?

A. Jesus (M 14:19)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 14: verse 20, what did the disciples pick up?

A. Twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over (M 14:20)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 14: verse 22, whom did Jesus dismiss?

A. The crowd (M 14:22)

Q. When was the boat already a considerable distance from land?

A. When evening came (M 14:23)

Q. Situation question: who said it, about whom, and when: “It’s a ghost.”

A. The disciples said it about Jesus, when they saw him walking on the lake (during the fourth watch of the night) (M 14:25)

Q. In Matthew chapter 14, why did Jesus’ disciples cry out in fear?

A. They saw Jesus walking on the lake (M 14:26)

Q. When was Peter afraid?

A. When he saw the wind (M 14:30)

Q. Who immediately reached out his hand and caught Peter?

A. Jesus (M 14:31)

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom and when: “Truly you are the Son of God.”

A. Those who were in the boat said it to Jesus when he climbed into the boat and the wind died down (M 14:32)

Q. When did the men of that place send word to all the surrounding country?

A. When they recognized Jesus (M 14:35)

Q. What did people beg Jesus to let their sick touch?

A. The edge of his cloak (M 14:36)

MATTHEW 15

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom: “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat.”

A. Some Pharisees and teachers of the law from Jerusalem said it to Jesus (M 15:1)

Q. Who break the command of God for the sake of their tradition?

A. The Pharisees and teachers of the law (M 15:3)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 15: verse 7, who was right?

A. Isaiah (M 15:7)

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom: “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

A. *Jesus’ disciples said it to Jesus (M 15:12)*

Q. Who are blind guides?

A. *The Pharisees (M 15:14)*

Q. What goes into the stomach and then out of the body?

A. *Whatever enters the mouth (M 15:17)*

Q. Out of what does theft come?

A. *The heart (M 15:19)*

Q. Who withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon?

A. *Jesus (M 15:21)*

Q. Who came to Jesus, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession”?

A. *A Canaanite woman from that vicinity (M 15:22)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 15: verse 25, what did the Canaanite woman say?

A. *“Lord, help me!” (M 15:25)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 15: verse 28, who was healed from that very hour?

A. *The Canaanite woman’s daughter (M 15:28)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 15: verse 31, who were made well?

A. *The crippled (M 15:31)*

Q. When may the people collapse on the way?

A. *If Jesus sends them away hungry (M 15:32)*

Q. Who picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over?

A. *The disciples (M 15:37)*

Q. When did Jesus get into the boat and go to the vicinity of Magadan?

A. *After he had sent the crowd away (M 15:39)*

MATTHEW 16

Q. What did the Pharisees and Sadducees ask Jesus to show them?

A. *A sign from heaven (M 16:1)*

Q. What do the Pharisees and Sadducees say in the morning?

A. *“Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast” (M 16:3)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

A. *Jesus said it to his disciples (M 16:6)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 16: verse 8, of what was Jesus aware?

A. *The disciples’ discussion (M 16:8)*

Q. When did Jesus ask his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

A. *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi (M 16:13)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

A. *The disciples said it to Jesus, who replied, “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” (M 16:14)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 16: verse 17, by whom was this not revealed to Simon?

A. *By man (M 16:17)*

Q. On what will Jesus build his church?

A. *This rock (M 16:18)*

Q. What will not overcome Jesus’ church?

A. *The gates of Hades (M 16:18)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 16: verse 21, when will Jesus be raised to life?

A. *On the third day (M 16:21)*

Q. Two-part question: what does Peter not have in mind, and what does Peter have in mind?

A. *1) The things of God 2) The things of man (M 16:23)*

Q. Who will find his life?

A. *Whoever loses his life for Jesus (M 16:25)*

Q. What will some who are standing here not taste before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom?

A. *Death (M 16:28)*

MATTHEW 17

Q. Where did Jesus lead Peter, James and John?

A. *Up a high mountain (M 17:1)*

Q. What shone like the sun?

A. *Jesus’ face (M 17:2)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 17: verse 4, when will Peter put up three shelters?

A. *If Jesus wishes (M 17:4)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 17: verse 7, who came and touched the disciples?

A. *Jesus (M 17:7)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 17: verse 8, whom did the disciples see?

A. *No one except Jesus (M 17:8)*

Q. When did Jesus instruct Peter, James and John?

A. *As they were coming down from the mountain (M 17:9)*

Q. To whom have the teachers of the law done everything they wished?

A. *Elijah (M 17:12)*

Q. Into what does the man’s son often fall?

A. *The fire or the water (M 17:15)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 17: verse 16, to whom did the man bring his son?

A. *Jesus’ disciples (M 17:16)*

Q. Who came to Jesus in private?

A. *The disciples (M 17:19)*

Q. What if the disciples have faith as small as a mustard seed?

A. *They can say to this mountain, "Move from here to there" and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for them (M 17:20)*

Q. Who were filled with grief?

A. *The disciples (M 17:23)*

Q. Who came to Peter after Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum?

A. *The collectors of the two-drachma tax (M 17:24)*

Q. What did the collectors of the two-drachma tax ask Peter?

A. *"Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?" (M 17:24)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "Doesn't you teacher pay the temple tax?"

A. *The collectors of the two-drachma tax said it to Peter, who replied, "Yes, he does." (M 17:24)*

Q. From whom do the kings of the earth collect taxes?

A. *From others (M 17:25)*

Q. What should Peter give the collectors of the two-drachma tax?

A. *The four-drachma coin (M 17:27)*

MATTHEW 18

Q. According to Matthew chapter 18: verse 1, what did the disciples ask?

A. *"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (M 18:1)*

Q. Whom did Jesus call and have stand among them?

A. *A little child (M 18:2)*

Q. Who welcomes Jesus?

A. *Whoever welcomes a little child like this in Jesus' name (M 18:5)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 18: verse 7, what must come?

A. *The things that cause people to sing (M 18:7)*

Q. What if your hand causes you to sin?

A. *Cut it off and throw it away (M 18:8)*

Q. Than what is it better to enter life with one eye?

A. *Than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell (M 18:9)*

Q. What if a man owns a hundred sheep and one of them wanders away?

A. *Will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? (M 18:12)*

Q. What if your brother sins against you?

A. *Go and show him his fault, just between the two of you (M 18:15)*

Q. What if your brother refuses to listen even to the church?

A. *Treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (M 18:17)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 18: verse 18, what will be bound in heaven?

A. *Whatever you bind on earth (M 18:18)*

Q. Who asked Jesus, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?”

A. *Peter (M 18:21)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in reply to what: “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

A. *Jesus said it to Peter, in response to Peter asking, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” (M 18:21)*

Q. Who wanted to settle accounts with his servants?,

A. *A king (M 18:23)*

Q. Who was not able to pay?

A. *The man who owed the king ten thousand talents (M 18:24)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the result: “Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything.”

A. *The servant said it to the master (the king); the master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go (M 18:26)*

Q. What did the servant’s fellow servant beg him?

A. *“Be patient with me, and I will pay you back” (M 18:29)*

Q. Why had the master cancelled all that debt of the servant’s?

A. *Because the servant begged the master to (M 18:32)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 18: verse 35, how should you forgive your brother?

A. *From your heart (M 18:35)*

MATTHEW 19

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 1, where did Jesus leave?

A. *Galilee (M 19:1)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and why: “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”

A. *Some Pharisees said it to Jesus to test him (M 19:3)*

Q. Who will leave his father and mother?

A. *A man (M 19:5)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 7, what did Moses command?

A. *That a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away (M 19:7)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 11, who can accept this word?

A. *Only those to whom it has been given (M 19:11)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 12, who should accept this?

A. *The one who can accept this (M 19:12)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 13, whom did the disciples rebuke?

A. *Those who brought little children to Jesus (M 19:13)*

Q. What should you obey if you want to enter life?

A. *The commandments (M 19:17)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 19: verse 18, what should you not commit?

A. *Adultery (M 19:18)*

Q. When will you have treasure in heaven?

A. *If you sell your possessions and give to the poor (M 19:21)*

Q. Why did the young man go away sad?

A. *Because he had great wealth (M 19:22)*

Q. What is it hard for a rich man to do?

A. *Enter the kingdom of heaven (M 19:23)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "Who then can be saved?"

A. *The disciples said it to Jesus, and he replied, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (M 19:25)*

Q. On what will those who have followed Jesus sit at the renewal of all things?

A. *One twelve thrones (M 19:28)*

Q. What will everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for Jesus' sake receive?

A. *A hundred times as much (M 19:29)*

Q. What will many who are last be?

A. *First (M 19:30)*

MATTHEW 20

Q. Who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard?

A. *A landowner (M 20:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 20: verse 5, when did the landowner go out again and do the same thing?

A. *About the sixth hour and the ninth hour (M 20:5)*

Q. What did the owner of the vineyard say to his foreman?

A. *"Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first" (M 20:8)*

Q. What did those who were hired first expect?

A. *To receive more (M 20:10)*

Q. To whom is the landowner not being unfair?

A. *Those who were hired first (M 20:13)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 20: verse 17, where was Jesus going?

A. *Up to Jerusalem (M 20:17)*

Q. To whom did the mother of Zebedee's sons come?

A. *Jesus (M 20:20)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and in response to what: “You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”

A. *Jesus said it to the mother of Zebedee’s sons and her sons, in response to her asking Jesus, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom” (M 20:21)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 20: verse 24, who were indignant?

A. *The ten (M 20:24)*

Q. Who lord it over the Gentiles?

A. *The rulers of the Gentiles (M 20:25)*

Q. What must whoever wants to become great among you be?

A. *Your servant (M 20:26)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 20: verse 29, when did a large crowd follow Jesus?

A. *As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho (M 20:29)*

Q. Whom did the crowd rebuke and tell to be quiet?

A. *The two blind men sitting by the roadside shouting, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us” (M 20:30)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 20: verse 34, what did Jesus have?

A. *Compassion on the two blind men (M 20:34)*

MATTHEW 21

Q. Where was Bethphage?

A. *On the Mount of Olives (M 21:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 21: verse 3, what if anyone says anything to the two disciples?

A. *Tell him that the Lord needs them (the donkey and her colt), and he will send them right away (M 21:3)*

Q. Who placed their cloaks on the donkey and the colt?

A. *The disciples (M 21:7)*

Q. From where did others cut branches?

A. *From the trees (M 21:8)*

Q. When was the whole city stirred?

A. *When Jesus entered Jerusalem (M 21:10)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 21: verse 13, what is written?

A. *“My house will be called a house of prayer” (M 21:13)*

Q. From what have you ordained praise?

A. *From the lips of children and infants (M 21:16)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to what, and what was the result: “May you never bear fruit again.”

A. *Jesus said it to the fig tree and the tree immediately withered (M 21:19)*

Q. What will you receive if you believe?

A. *Whatever you ask for in prayer (M 21:22)*

Q. What will Jesus also ask the chief priests and the elders of the people?

A. *One question (M 21:24)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 21: verse 27, what did the chief priests and the elders of the people answer Jesus?

A. *“We don’t know” (M 21:27)*

Q. What did the first son do later?

A. *Changed his mind and went (to work in the vineyard) (M 21:29)*

Q. Who believed John when he came to show them the way of righteousness?

A. *The tax collectors and prostitutes (M 21:32)*

Q. How did the tenants treat the first servants the landowner sent to them?

A. *They beat one, killed another, and stoned a third (M 21:35)*

Q. When did the tenants say to each other, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance”?

A. *When they saw the landowner’s son (M 21:38)*

Q. To whom will the owner of the vineyard rent the vineyard when he comes?

A. *To other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time (M 21:41)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 21: verse 45, what did the chief priests and the Pharisees know?

A. *That Jesus was talking about them (M 21:45)*

Q. Who looked for a way to arrest Jesus?

A. *The chief priests and the Pharisees (M 21:46)*

MATTHEW 22

Q. According to Matthew chapter 22: verse 1, how did Jesus speak to them again?

A. *In parables (M 22:1)*

Q. What have been butchered?

A. *The king’s oxen and fattened cattle (M 22:4)*

Q. Whom did the rest of those who had been invited to the banquet seize, mistreat and kill?

A. *The king’s servants (M 22:6)*

Q. Whom did the servants go out into the streets and gather?

A. *All the people they could find, both good and bad (M 22:10)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the response: “Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?”

A. *The king (who planned a wedding banquet) said it to the man who was not wearing wedding clothes, and the man was speechless (M 22:12)*

Q. Complete, in essence, the following: “For many are invited...”

A. *“...but few are chosen” (M 22:14)*

Q. Who laid plans to trap Jesus in his words?

A. *The Pharisees (M 22:15)*

Q. Who is a man of integrity?

A. *Jesus (M 22:16)*

Q. What should you give to Caesar?

A. *What is Caesar's (M 22:51)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 22: verse 25, who died?

A. *The first brother (M 22:25)*

Q. What are the Sadducees because they do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?

A. *In error (M 22:29)*

Q. When did the Pharisees get together?

A. *When they heard Jesus had silenced the Sadducees (M 22:34)*

Q. How should you love the Lord your God?

A. *With all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind (M 22:37)*

Q. What is, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind"?

A. *The first and greatest commandment (M 22:37)*

Q. What does David call the Christ?

A. *"Lord" (M 22:43)*

Q. Who dared to ask Jesus any more questions from that day on?

A. *No one (M 22:46)*

MATTHEW 23

Q. In whose seat do the teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit?

A. *In Moses' seat (M 23:2)*

Q. Who do not practice what they preach?

A. *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees (M 23:3)*

Q. What do the teachers of the law and the Pharisees put on men's shoulders?

A. *Heavy loads (M 23:4)*

Q. Who make their phylacteries wide?

A. *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees (M 23:5)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 23: verse 7, what do the teachers of the law and the Pharisees love?

A. *To be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them "Rabbi" (M 23:7)*

Q. Who will be humbled?

A. *Whoever exalts himself (M 23:12)*

Q. Who devour widows' houses and for show make lengthy prayers?

A. *The teachers of the law and Pharisees (M 23:14)*

Q. What if anyone swears by the gold of the temple?

A. *He is bound by his oath (M 23:16)*

Q. Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?

A. *The altar (M 23:19)*

Q. Who have neglected the more important matters of the law?

A. *The teachers of the law and Pharisees (M 23:23)*

Q. Who strain out a gnat but swallow a camel?

A. *The teachers of the law and Pharisees (M 23:24)*

Q. What are the cup and dish full of inside?

A. *Greed and self-indulgence (M 23:25)*

Q. Who are like whitewashed tombs?

A. *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees (M 23:27)*

Q. Who build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous?

A. *The teachers of the law and Pharisees (M 23:29)*

Q. Of whom are the teachers of the law and Pharisees the descendants?

A. *Those who murdered the prophets (M 23:31)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 23: verse 35, who is righteous?

A. *Abel (M 23:35)*

Q. What does a hen gather under her wings?

A. *Her chicks (M 23:37)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 23: verse 39, who is blessed?

A. *He who comes in the name of the Lord (M 23:39)*

MATTHEW 24

Q. To what did Jesus' disciples call his attention?

A. *The temple's buildings (M 24:1)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and when: "Do you see all these things?"

A. *Jesus said it to his disciples when they came up to him to call his attention to the temple's buildings (M 24:1)*

Q. In whose name will many come claiming 'I am the Christ'?

A. *In Jesus' name (M 24:5)*

Q. What will rise against kingdom?

A. *Kingdom (M 24:7)*

Q. Two part question: what will rise against nation, and what will rise against kingdom?

A. *1) Nation 2) Kingdom (M 24:7)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 10, from what will many turn away?

A. *From the faith (M 24:10)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 11, what will many false prophets do?

A. *Appear and deceive many people (M 24:11)*

Q. What will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations?

A. *This gospel of the kingdom (M 24:14)*

Q. Who should you to let flee into the mountains?

A. *Those who are in Judea (M 24:16)*

Q. When should you let no one in the field go back to get his cloak?

A. *When you see “the abomination that causes desolation” standing in the holy place (M 24:18)*

Q. Why will those days be shortened?

A. *For the sake of the elect (M 24:22)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 23, when should you not believe it?

A. *If anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There he is” (M 24:23)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 26, when should you not go out?

A. *If anyone tells you, “There he is, out in the desert” (M 24:26)*

Q. What is visible even in the west?

A. *Lightning that comes from the east (M 24:27)*

Q. What will not give its light?

A. *The moon (M 24:29)*

Q. What will be shaken?

A. *The heavenly bodies (M 24:29)*

Q. How will all nations see the Son of Man coming with power and great glory?

A. *On the clouds of the sky (M 24:30)*

Q. Who will all nations see coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory?

A. *The Son of Man (M 24:30)*

Q. When do you know that summer is near?

A. *As soon as the fig tree’s twigs get tender and its leaves come out (M 24:32)*

Q. What will pass away?

A. *Heaven and earth (M 24:35)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 37, how will it be at the coming of the Son of Man?

A. *As it was in the days of Noah (M 24:37)*

Q. About what did they know nothing until the flood came and took them all away?

A. *About what would happen (M 24:39)*

Q. When will two men be in the field?

A. *At the coming of the Son of Man (M 24:40)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 41, what will two women be doing?

A. *Grinding with a hand mill (M 24:41)*

Q. Who will come at an hour when you do not expect him?

A. *The Son of Man (M 24:44)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 24: verse 47, of what will that servant’s master put him in charge?

A. *Of all his possessions (M 24:47)*

Q. What will the master assign that servant?

A. *A place with the hypocrites (M 24:51)*

MATTHEW 25

Q. What will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom?

A. *The kingdom of heaven (M 25:1)*

Q. Two part question: what did the foolish virgins take with them, and what did they not take with them?

A. 1) *Their lamps* 2) *Any oil* (M 25:3)

Q. When did the virgins wake up and trim their lamps?

A. *At midnight when the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him'* (M 25:6)

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: "Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out."

A. *The foolish virgins said it to the wise virgins, who replied, "No, there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves"* (M 25:8)

Q. What will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his property to them?

A. *The kingdom of heaven* (M 25:14)

Q. Who gained two more talents?

A. *The one with the two talents* (M 25:17)

Q. When did the master of those servants return and settle accounts with them?

A. *After a long time* (M 25:19)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 23, of what will the master put the servant in charge?

A. *Many things* (M 25:23)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 26, where does the master gather?

A. *Where he has not scattered seed* (M 25:26)

Q. When would the master have received his money back with interest?

A. *If his servant had put the money on deposit with the bankers* (M 25:27)

Q. Who will come with the Son of Man when he comes in his glory?

A. *All the angels* (M 25:31)

Q. What does a shepherd separate?

A. *The sheep from the goats* (M 25:32)

Q. What will the King say to those on his right?

A. *"Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world"* (M 25:34)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 35, when did you invite me in?

A. *When I was a stranger* (M 25:35)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 36, when did you look after me?

A. *When I was sick* (M 25:36)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 41, what is prepared for the devil and his angels?

A. *The eternal fire* (M 25:41)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 44, what will those on the King's left also answer?

A. *"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you"* (M 25:44)

Q. According to Matthew chapter 25: verse 45, what did you not do for me?

A. *Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these (brothers of mine) (M 25:45)*

MATTHEW 26

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 2, who will be handed over to be crucified?

A. *The Son of Man (M 26:2)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 5, what may there be among the people?

A. *A riot (M 26:5)*

Q. When did a woman with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume come to Jesus?

A. *As he was reclining at the table (while he was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper) (M 26:6)*

Q. Situation question: who said it and in response to what: “Why this waste?”

A. *The disciples said it when they saw the woman pour the very expensive perfume on Jesus’ head (M 26:7)*

Q. Who will the disciples always have with them?

A. *The poor (M 26:11)*

Q. What will also be told in memory of this woman?

A. *What she has done (poured perfume on Jesus’ body) (M 26:13)*

Q. What did the chief priests count out for Judas Iscariot?

A. *Thirty silver coins (M 26:15)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 20, with whom was Jesus reclining at the table?

A. *The Twelve (M 26:20)*

Q. Who will go just as it is written about him?

A. *The Son of Man (M 26:24)*

Q. When did Jesus take bread, give thanks and break it, and give it to his disciples?

A. *While they were eating (M 26:26)*

Q. What is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins?

A. *Jesus’ blood of the covenant (M 26:28)*

Q. Where did Jesus and his disciples go after they had sung a hymn?

A. *Out to the Mount of Olives (M 26:30)*

Q. When will Peter disown Jesus three times?

A. *This very night, before the rooster crows (M 26:34)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 36, where did Jesus and his disciples go?

A. *To a place called Gethsemane (M 26:36)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom, and where: “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

A. *Jesus said it to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee at a place called Gethsemane (M 26:38)*

Q. With what is Jesus’ soul overwhelmed to the point of death?

A. *Sorrow (M 26:38)*

Q. What is weak?

A. *The body (M 26:41)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 45, what is near?

A. *The hour (M 26:45)*

Q. What was the signal Judas had arranged with the crowd?

A. *“The one I kiss is the man; arrest him” (M 26:48)*

Q. How will all who draw the sword die?

A. *By the sword (M 26:52)*

Q. Who deserted Jesus and fled?

A. *All the disciples (M 26:56)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 58, why did Peter sit down with the guards?

A. *To see the outcome (M 26:58)*

Q. What did the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin not find, though many false witnesses came forward?

A. *False evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death (M 26:60)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 64, how will you see the Son of Man coming in the future?

A. *On the clouds of heaven (M 26:64)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 26: verse 68, what did others say?

A. *“Prophesy to us, Christ. Who hit you?” (M 26:68)*

Q. What immediately crowed?

A. *A rooster (M 26:74)*

Q. What did Peter remember?

A. *The word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times” (M 26:75)*

MATTHEW 27

Q. Who came to the decision to put Jesus to death?

A. *All the chief priests and the elders of the people (M 27:1)*

Q. When was Judas seized with remorse?

A. *When he saw the Jesus was condemned (M 27:3)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, to whom, and what was the reply: “I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood.”

A. *Judas said it to the chief priests and elders, who replied, “What is that to us? That’s your responsibility” (M 27:3)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 27: verse 7, what did the chief priests decide?

A. *To use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners (M 27:7)*

Q. When did Jesus give no answer?

A. *When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders (M 27:12)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 27: verse 14, what did Jesus make?

A. *No reply, not even to a single charge (M 27:14)*

Q. Who is called Christ?

A. *Jesus (M 27:17)*

Q. What did the chief priests and the elders persuade the crowd to do?

A. *Ask for Barabbas and have Jesus executed (M 27:20)*

Q. What did Pilate do when he saw that he was getting nowhere?

A. *He took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd (M 27:24)*

Q. Where did Pilate take some water and wash his hands?

A. *In front of the crowd (M 27:24)*

Q. Who twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on Jesus' head?

A. *The soldiers (M 27:29)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 27: verse 31, whom did the soldiers lead away?

A. *Jesus (M 27:31)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 27: verse 33, to where did they come?

A. *A place called Golgotha (M 27:33)*

Q. How did the soldiers divide up Jesus' clothes?

A. *By casting lots (M 27:35)*

Q. With whom were two robbers crucified?

A. *Jesus (M 27:38)*

Q. Who also heaped insults on Jesus?

A. *The robbers who were crucified with him (M 27:44)*

Q. What means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

A. *'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' (M 27:46)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 27: verse 50, what did Jesus give up?

A. *His spirit (M 27:50)*

Q. What happened at the moment that Jesus gave up his spirit?

A. *The curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom (M 27:51)*

Q. Who went into the holy city and appeared to many people?

A. *The many holy people who were raised to life (M 27:52)*

Q. What did the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus see?

A. *The earthquake and all that had happened (M 27:54)*

Q. Who exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"?

A. *The centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus (M 27:54)*

Q. Why had many women followed Jesus from Galilee?

A. *To care for his needs (M 27:55)*

Q. Who was from Arimathea?

A. *A rich man named Joseph (M 27:57)*

Q. Who placed Jesus' body in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock?

A. *Joseph (M 27:60)*

Q. Who made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard?

A. *The chief priests and the Pharisees (M 27:66)*

MATTHEW 28

Q. Who went to look at the tomb after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week?

A. *Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (M 28:1)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 28: verse 4, what were the guards?

A. *So afraid of the angel of the Lord that they shook and became like dead men (M 28:4)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom: “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.”

A. *The angel of the Lord said it to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (M 28:5)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 28: verse 7, where will Jesus’ disciples see him?

A. *In Galilee (M 28:7)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 28: verse 8, what were the women?

A. *Afraid, yet filled with joy (M 28:8)*

Q. What did the women clasp?

A. *Jesus’ feet (M 28:9)*

Q. Situation question: who said it, and to whom: “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

A. *Jesus said it to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (M 28:10)*

Q. To whom did some of the guards report everything that had happened?

A. *The chief priests (M 28:11)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 28: verse 12, with whom had the chief priests met?

A. *The elders (M 28:12)*

Q. Who took the money and did as they were instructed?

A. *The soldiers (M 28:15)*

Q. According to Matthew chapter 28: verse 17, when did the eleven disciples worship Jesus?

A. *When they saw him (M 28:17)*

Q. What should the eleven disciples teach all nations to obey?

A. *Everything that Jesus has commanded them (M 28:20)*

MEMORY VERSE LIST FOR MATTHEW

<i>Book</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>-Verse</i>	<i>Book</i>	<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Verse</i>	<i>-Verse</i>
Matthew	1	21		Matthew	9	37	-38
Matthew	1	23		Matthew	10	22	
Matthew	2	6		Matthew	10	28	
Matthew	2	11		Matthew	10	40	
Matthew	3	10		Matthew	10	42	
Matthew	3	11		Matthew	11	28	-30
Matthew	3	16	-17	Matthew	12	8	
Matthew	4	4		Matthew	12	25	
Matthew	4	7		Matthew	12	35	-36
Matthew	4	10		Matthew	12	50	
Matthew	4	19		Matthew	13	12	
Matthew	5	3		Matthew	13	44	
Matthew	5	4		Matthew	15	18	
Matthew	5	5		Matthew	15	30	
Matthew	5	6		Matthew	16	16	
Matthew	5	7		Matthew	16	21	
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Matthew	5	10		Matthew	17	5	
Matthew	5	11	-12	Matthew	17	20	
Matthew	5	13		Matthew	18	3	
Matthew	5	14		Matthew	18	10	
Matthew	5	16		Matthew	18	20	
Matthew	5	48		Matthew	19	6	
Matthew	6	1		Matthew	19	14	
Matthew	6	14		Matthew	19	24	
Matthew	6	20	-21	Matthew	19	26	
Matthew	6	24		Matthew	19	29	
Matthew	6	26		Matthew	20	16	
Matthew	6	33		Matthew	20	26	-28
Matthew	6	34		Matthew	21	9	
Matthew	7	1	-2	Matthew	21	21	
Matthew	7	7	-8	Matthew	22	37	-39
Matthew	7	12		Matthew	23	12	
Matthew	7	13	-14	Matthew	23	37	
Matthew	7	21		Matthew	24	12	
Matthew	9	12		Matthew	24	13	
Matthew	9	36		Matthew	24	27	
				Matthew	24	35	

Matthew	24	42	
Matthew	25	31	-32
Matthew	25	34	
Matthew	25	35	-36
Matthew	25	40	
Matthew	26	11	
Matthew	26	26	
Matthew	26	27	-28
Matthew	27	50	
Matthew	27	51	
Matthew	28	6	
Matthew	28	18	
Matthew	28	19	-20

JUMP LIST

Single Verses	Book	Chapter	Verse
Again	Matthew	19	24
All	Matthew	10	22
And everyone	Matthew	19	29
And he	Matthew	18	3
And if	Matthew	10	42
And when	Matthew	27	50
At	Matthew	27	51
Be careful	Matthew	6	1
Be perfect	Matthew	5	48
Because	Matthew	24	12
Blessed are the meek	Matthew	5	5
Blessed are the merciful	Matthew	5	7
Blessed are the peacemakers	Matthew	5	9
Blessed are the poor	Matthew	5	3
Blessed are the pure	Matthew	5	8
Blessed are those who are	Matthew	5	10
Blessed are those who hunger	Matthew	5	6
Blessed are those who mourn	Matthew	5	4
But he	Matthew	24	13
But seek	Matthew	6	33
But the	Matthew	15	18
But you	Matthew	2	6
Come	Matthew	4	19

Single Verses	Book	Chapter	Verse
Do	Matthew	10	28
For as	Matthew	24	27
For if	Matthew	6	14
For the	Matthew	12	8
For where	Matthew	18	20
For whoever does	Matthew	12	50
For whoever exalts	Matthew	23	12
From	Matthew	16	21
Great	Matthew	15	30
He is	Matthew	28	6
He replied	Matthew	17	20
He who	Matthew	10	40
Heaven	Matthew	24	35
I	Matthew	3	11
In	Matthew	5	16
Jesus answered him,	Matthew	4	7
Jesus answered, "It	Matthew	4	4
Jesus knew	Matthew	12	25
Jesus looked	Matthew	19	26
Jesus replied	Matthew	21	21
Jesus said to	Matthew	4	10
Jesus said, "Let	Matthew	19	14
Look	Matthew	6	26
No	Matthew	6	24
Not	Matthew	7	21
O	Matthew	23	37
On coming	Matthew	2	11
On hearing	Matthew	9	12
See	Matthew	18	10
She	Matthew	1	21
Simon	Matthew	16	16
So in	Matthew	7	12
So the	Matthew	20	16
So they	Matthew	19	6
The axe	Matthew	3	10
The crowds	Matthew	21	9
The King	Matthew	25	40
The kingdom	Matthew	13	44
The poor	Matthew	26	11
The virgin	Matthew	1	23

Single Verses	Book	Chapter	Verse
Then Jesus	Matthew	28	18
Then the	Matthew	25	34
Therefore keep	Matthew	24	42
Therefore, do	Matthew	6	34
What	Matthew	16	26
When he saw	Matthew	9	36
While he	Matthew	17	5
While they	Matthew	26	26
Whoever	Matthew	13	12
You are the light	Matthew	5	14
You are the salt	Matthew	5	13

MULTIPLE VERSES

	Book	Chapter	Verse	-Verse
As	Matthew	3	16	-17
Ask	Matthew	7	7	-8
Blessed	Matthew	5	11	-12
But	Matthew	6	20	-21
Come	Matthew	11	28	-30
Do	Matthew	7	1	-2
Enter	Matthew	7	13	-14
For	Matthew	25	35	-36
Jesus	Matthew	22	37	-39
Not	Matthew	20	26	-28
The	Matthew	12	35	-36
Then he said	Matthew	9	37	-38
Then he took	Matthew	26	27	-28
Then Jesus	Matthew	16	24	-25
Therefore	Matthew	28	19	-20
When	Matthew	25	31	-32

NAZARENE YOUTH BIBLE QUIZZING SCORE SHEET

ROUND _____ DATE _____ Winner _____

TEAM:																								
NO.	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERRORS
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

TEAM:																								
NO.	NAME OF QUIZZER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	OT	TOTAL POINTS	TOTAL ERRORS
1																								
2																								
3																								
4																								
S																								
BONUS AND PENALTY POINTS																								
RUNNING SCORE																								

20pts for each correct "jump" answer 10pts bonus for 3rd, 4th, 5th quizzer correct "jump" answer 10pt penalty for error-out
 10pts for each correct bonus answer 10pts bonus for quiz-out with no error 10pt penalty on errors after question 15

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GUIDE TO DISCOVERING GROUPS

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