

GROWING IN THE GROVE

FOLLOW ME

A 90-DAY JOURNEY THROUGH THE LIFE OF JESUS FOR STUDENTS



PLEASANT GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH · RONDA, NORTH CAROLINA



FOLLOW ME

A 90-Day Journey Through the Life of Jesus for Students

*I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me
will never walk in the darkness but will have the light
of life.*

John 8:12

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WELCOME TO FOLLOW ME



When Jesus called His first followers, He did not hand them a rulebook. He invited them: “Follow me.” Now that you have trusted Jesus, that invitation is yours too.

You cannot follow someone you do not know. Over the next 90 days you will walk through the life of Jesus, from the promises God made long before He was born to the empty tomb and beyond. Each week is a stop on the trail. Bring your Bible, your questions, and about fifteen minutes a day.

HOW THIS JOURNAL WORKS



Week Kickoff — Each week starts here. Read it on your own, learn the memory verse, and talk it over with a parent, youth leader, or mentor.



Read — Find the passage in your own Bible and read it first. The key verse in the box comes from that reading. Want more? Try the “Go further” reading.



Think — A short devotion that connects the passage to your life.



Your Move — Write, list, sketch, or plan what you will do with what you read.



Take This With You — One truth to carry with you all day.



Pray — Talk to God about it, in your own words or the ones on the page.



Talk It Out — Twice a week, a question to take to a parent, youth leader, or mentor.



Extra — A page at the end of each week to go further.



MAKE IT STICK

Pick a time and a place, like before school or before bed. Keep your Bible and a pen with this journal. Missed a day? Don’t start over. Just pick up where you stopped, and bring your questions to someone you trust.

FOR PARENTS AND MENTORS



Thank you for walking alongside a student who is following Jesus. Follow Me takes a teenager through the life of Jesus in the Gospels, so they can get to know the One they are following: who He is, what He did, and what it means to follow Him.

HOW IT WORKS

- Each of the 15 weeks is a stop on a trail through Jesus' life, and each begins with a Week Kickoff page. Students read it on their own, then talk it over with you. The three Talk It Over questions are written for that conversation.
- Six daily pages follow, two to a page, about 15 minutes each. Students work through them on their own with a Bible.
- Twice a week, a Talk It Out question sends them to a trusted adult. Make yourself easy to find.
- Each week ends with an extra page. The back of the book has memory verse cards, sermon notes, Bible study pages, and a short gospel summary they can use to share their faith.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Pray for them by name, and tell them you are doing it.
- Ask what surprised them about Jesus this week, and listen.
- Welcome their doubts and hard questions. Look for answers together.
- Let them see your own Bible reading and prayer, including when it is hard.
- Missed days are normal. Help them pick back up without guilt.
- If they have not been baptized, talk with Pastor James about next steps.

If you have questions about your own faith as you walk through this with them, we would love to talk with you too. Call the church at (336) 984-3360 or email pastor@pgbcronda.com. We would love to hear from you.

THIS IS ME



Write down how your story with Jesus started, so you can look back on it.

My name: _____

My grade: _____

I trusted Jesus on: _____

Where I was: _____

People who helped me know Jesus: _____

I was baptized on: _____

My church: **Pleasant Grove Baptist Church**

I started this journal on: _____

How I came to trust Jesus, in my own words:

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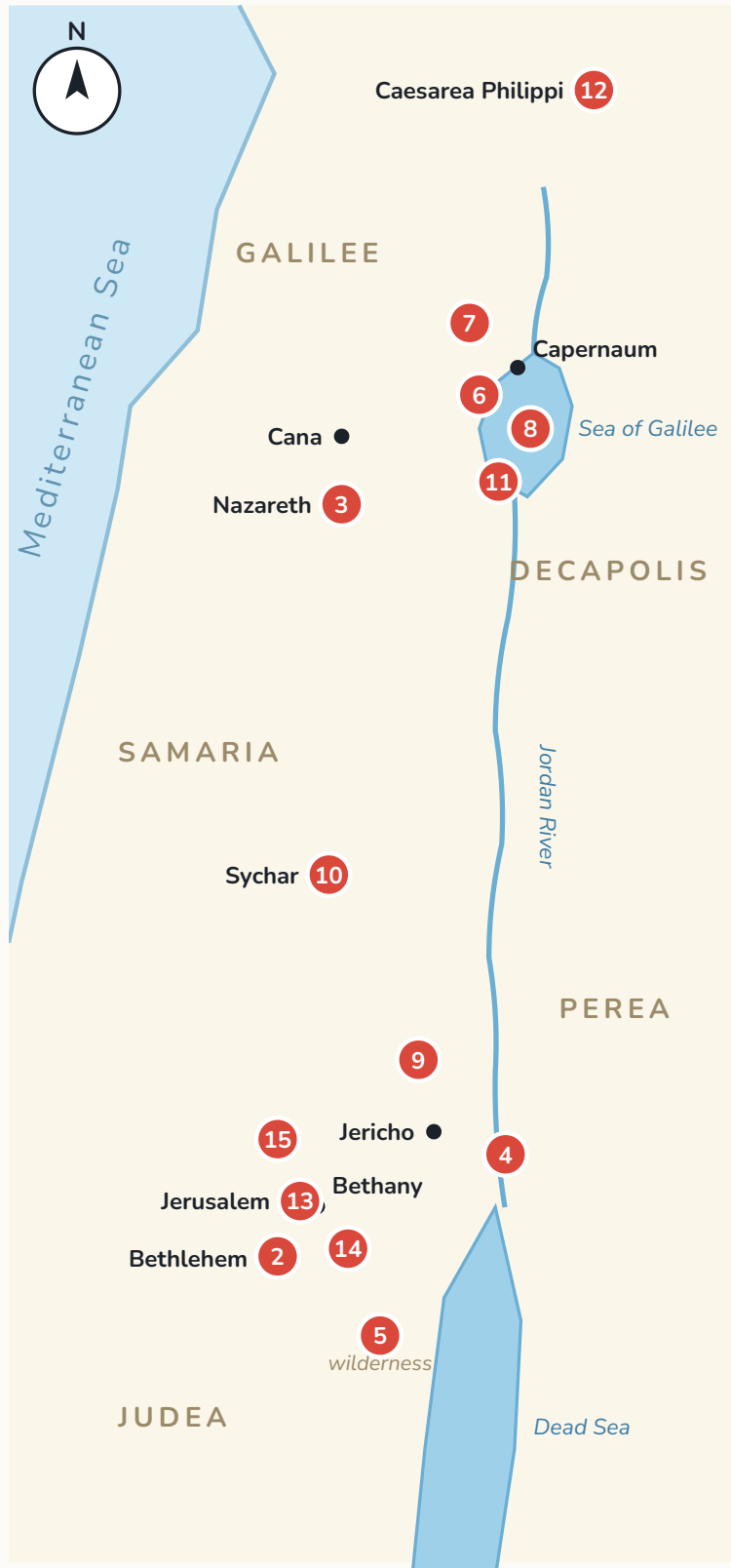
90-DAY TRACKER

Check off each page when you finish it. Missed a day? Do not start over. Just pick up where you left off.

	WEEK KICKOFF	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	EXTRA
1 Promised from the Start	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 Born for You	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3 The Hidden Years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4 The Voice and the Lamb	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5 Forty Days, Three Tests	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6 Leave the Nets Behind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7 A Life That Stands	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8 Who Then Is This?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9 He Stops for the Hurting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10 A Seat at His Table	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11 Stories That Find You	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12 Who Do You Say He Is?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13 A Different Kind of King	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14 Love That Chose the Cross	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15 He Goes Ahead of You	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

WHERE JESUS WALKED

Jesus grew up and served in a small land beside the Mediterranean Sea. The numbered circles mark the stops on your trail, one for each week. (Stop 1 isn't on any map. Before the world began, Jesus was already with the Father.)



- 1 **Long Before Bethlehem**
Promised from the Start
- 2 **Bethlehem**
Born for You
- 3 **Nazareth**
The Hidden Years
- 4 **The Jordan River**
The Voice and the Lamb
- 5 **The Wilderness**
Forty Days, Three Tests
- 6 **The Sea of Galilee**
Leave the Nets Behind
- 7 **The Mountainside**
A Life That Stands
- 8 **A Boat on the Lake**
Who Then Is This?
- 9 **Village Roads**
He Stops for the Hurting
- 10 **Around the Table**
A Seat at His Table
- 11 **Along the Lakeshore**
Stories That Find You
- 12 **Caesarea Philippi**
Who Do You Say He Is?
- 13 **Jerusalem**
A Different Kind of King
- 14 **The Garden and the Cross**
Love That Chose the Cross
- 15 **The Empty Tomb and Beyond**
He Goes Ahead of You

PROMISED FROM THE START



✦ *Every promise God made about a Savior, from Eden to Bethlehem, comes true in Jesus.*

WEEK KICKOFF

LIGHT IN A DARK TIME

Read first: **Isaiah 9:2, 6-7**

This is the first stop on a 90-day trail through the life of Jesus. You'll visit the towns He walked through, meet the people He met, and hear what He said, right up to His empty tomb. But this first stop isn't on any map. It's long before Bethlehem, in promises God made centuries ahead of time.

Seven centuries before Jesus, the prophet Isaiah spoke to a nation in trouble. (A prophet is someone God sends to speak His message.) Many people had turned their backs on God, and enemy armies were closing in. Into that darkness God announced a light. A son would be given, and He would carry names no ordinary king could claim: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace. David's throne would be His, and His reign would never end.

Centuries later, Jesus would call Himself the light of the world. Isaiah had been looking ahead to Him. And Isaiah wasn't the only one. All through the Old Testament, God kept adding details: the family line the Savior would come from, the town where He'd be born, even the suffering He'd go through. This week you'll trace them from Eden to Bethlehem.

The memory verse puts it simply: in Jesus, every promise God has made gets its yes. That matters for more than history. If God kept His word across thousands of years, you can count on Him to keep His word to you: to forgive you, to stay with you, to finish what He started in you. Bring Him your questions, your future, and your worst days.

TRY THIS WEEK

Pick one promise from this week's readings. Write it on a card or in your phone and read it every morning. By the weekend, explain to a friend or family member how Jesus kept that promise.

MEMORY VERSE

For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him.

2 Corinthians 1:20

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This journal takes students through Jesus' life in 90 days, starting this week with Old Testament promises about Him. Many students have never seen how the Bible fits together, so ask what surprised them. If they question whether prophecy is real, take that seriously and look into it together.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 Isaiah spoke to people living in a dark time. What does darkness look like for people your age?
- 2 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, or Prince of Peace: which do you most need Jesus to be right now? Why?
- 3 Has someone ever broken a promise to you? How does that affect the way you trust God's promises?

PRAY

God, You have never broken a promise. Thank You for Jesus, the light You promised long ago. As I start this trail, help me get to know Him, trust Him, and follow Him. Amen.

DAY

1

OLDER THAN ABRAHAM



Read: John 8:56-59 **Go further:** John 17:1-5

“ Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” **John 8:58**

The argument in the temple had been heating up for a while. Jesus told the crowd that Abraham, who had died some two thousand years before, had looked forward to His day and was glad. They scoffed. He wasn't even fifty! Then Jesus said the words printed above, and they picked up stones to throw at Him. Why? When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He called Himself I AM. They knew exactly what Jesus meant. He wasn't claiming to be old. He was claiming to be God, and He is.

YOUR MOVE

Before you trusted Jesus, who did you think He was? Who do you believe He is now?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

*The Jesus I follow has no beginning.
He is the eternal God.*



Pray: Jesus, You existed before Abraham, before the stars, before anything. I don't fully understand that, but I believe it. Help me know You as You really are. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: How would you answer a friend who says Jesus was just a good teacher?

DAY

2

A PROMISE IN THE WRECKAGE



Read: Genesis 3:8-15 **Go further:** Romans 5:18-19

“ I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. **Genesis 3:15**

Adam and Eve had just done the one thing God had forbidden. They hid, and then they passed the blame. Shame still works that way. But God went looking for them, and before He named the cost of their sin, He made the promise above. One of Eve's descendants would be wounded by the serpent but would deal it a death blow. That descendant is Jesus, and the serpent is the devil. At the cross Jesus was wounded, and at the cross He won. Because of Him, you never have to hide from God.

YOUR MOVE

Circle the ways people hide from God or from guilt. Star the one you reach for most.

Going quiet

Skipping church

Lying about it

Scrolling for hours

Acting extra good

Staying busy

Blaming someone else

Joking it off

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God came looking for sinners with a rescue plan. He still does.



Pray: God, when I sin, my first instinct is to hide. Thank You for coming after me, and for sending Jesus to win the fight I couldn't. Amen.

DAY
3

ONE FAMILY FOR EVERY NATION



Read: Genesis 12:1-3 Go further: Galatians 3:7-9

“...all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you. **Genesis 12:3**

God's directions to Abram (later renamed Abraham) were short on details. Leave home, leave your relatives, and head for a land I'll show you later. No map, no address. Abram went anyway. Then God attached promises to that move that reached far past one family, all the way to the whole world. About 2,000 years later, Jesus arrived as one of Abraham's descendants, and through Him the way to God opened to every nation. So when you trusted Jesus, you became part of a promise God made about 4,000 years ago.

YOUR MOVE *Abram obeyed without seeing the whole map. Where are you trusting God without knowing how things will turn out?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I'm part of a promise God made to Abraham 4,000 years ago.



Pray: God, You keep promises for thousands of years. Thank You for including me in the blessing You promised Abraham. Help me trust You when I can't see the map. Amen.

DAY
4

A THRONE THAT LASTS FOREVER



Read: 2 Samuel 7:12-16 Go further: Luke 1:32-33

“Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever. **2 Samuel 7:16**

King David lived in a fine palace, and he wanted to build a house for God, a temple. God turned the idea around. He would build David a house: a family line of kings. Solomon, David's son, built the temple, but he died, and the kingdom split. Centuries later, Babylon swept David's family off the throne, and the promise looked dead. Then an angel told a young woman named Mary that her son would reign on David's throne forever. Every kingdom in history has ended or will. Jesus' kingdom won't. That's who you're following.

YOUR MOVE *Where do you most need Jesus to be King right now? Check any that fit.*

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ My phone and what I watch | ☐ My friendships |
| ☐ My plans for the future | ☐ The way I talk |
| ☐ My time and weekends | ☐ How I treat my family |
| ☐ _____ | |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Every kingdom ends except one. Jesus is King forever, and He's my King.



Pray: Jesus, You're the King God promised David, and Your reign will never end. Be King over every part of my life, even the parts I'd rather keep to myself. Amen.

DAY
5

SMALL TOWN, BIG PROMISE



Read: Micah 5:2 **Go further:** John 7:40-43

“Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; one will come from you to be ruler over Israel for me. His origin is from antiquity, from ancient times. **Micah 5:2**”

Bethlehem was the kind of town people pass through without slowing down. Even Micah calls it small. But seven centuries ahead of time, God picked it as the birthplace of Israel's true ruler. His roots, though, reach back to ancient times, because He has always existed. Centuries later, the scholars King Herod consulted knew exactly where the promised King would be born, because Micah had told them. God doesn't need big places or impressive people to do His biggest work. If you come from a small town, you're in good company.

YOUR MOVE

Where do you feel small or overlooked right now? What does God's choice of Bethlehem say to you?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God does His biggest work through small places and ordinary people like me.



Pray: God, You chose a small town for the birth of Your Son. When I feel overlooked, remind me that You see me and have a plan. Amen.

DAY
6

HE TOOK OUR PLACE



Read: Isaiah 53:4-6 **Go further:** 1 Peter 2:24

“We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished him for the iniquity of us all. **Isaiah 53:6**”

If you read Isaiah 53 with no idea when it was written, you might guess it came from someone standing at the cross. It was written about 700 years earlier. People watching this Servant suffer assumed God was punishing Him for something He had done. They had it backward. He was crushed for what they had done. Some people run from God on purpose. More of us just drift, like sheep nibbling one more patch of grass until we look up and we're lost. Either way, Jesus took the punishment for all of it, including yours.

YOUR MOVE

Isaiah 53:4-6 goes back and forth between us and Him. Fill in what we did and what He did.

What we did	What He did for us

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I wandered off. Jesus took the punishment and brought me home.



Pray: Jesus, I've gone my own way more times than I can count. Thank You for taking the punishment I deserved. I'm Yours. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader, mentor, or parent who follows Jesus: When did the cross start to feel personal to you?

THE LONG ROAD TO BETHLEHEM



God didn't reveal His rescue plan all at once. He unfolded it over thousands of years, one promise at a time. Look up each reference and notice how the picture gets sharper. The dates are approximate. Then circle the promise that means the most to you right now.

EDEN



Right after the first sin, God promises that a son of Eve will crush the serpent's head.
Genesis 3:15

ABRAHAM



About 2,000 years before Jesus, God promises that Abraham's family will bring blessing to every nation.
Genesis 12:3

DAVID



About 1,000 years before Jesus, God promises King David a descendant whose kingdom will never end.
2 Samuel 7:16

ISAIAH



About 700 years before Jesus, Isaiah announces a child who will be called Mighty God.
Isaiah 9:6-7

MICAH



Around the same time, Micah names little Bethlehem as the birthplace of the coming ruler.
Micah 5:2

THE SERVANT



Isaiah also describes a Servant who will be crushed for the sins of others and punished in their place.
Isaiah 53:5-6

MALACHI



About 400 years before Jesus, the last Old Testament prophet promises a messenger who will prepare the way.
Malachi 3:1

BETHLEHEM



After centuries of waiting, a baby is born in Bethlehem. In Him, every promise God made finds its yes.
Luke 2:11

BORN FOR YOU



★ *The promised Savior arrived in the least expected way, as a baby announced to night-shift shepherds.*

👥 WEEK KICKOFF

GOOD NEWS ON THE NIGHT SHIFT

Read first: **Luke 2:8-14**

The trail's second stop is Bethlehem, the small town Micah named 700 years earlier. The promise is finally coming true, and almost nobody notices. The Roman emperor wants everyone counted. There's no guest room to be found. A young couple from Nazareth ends up laying their newborn in a feeding trough.

Out in the fields, shepherds are working the night shift. Shepherds did rough, dirty work, and most people didn't think of them as important. Without warning, an angel appears, and the glory of the Lord blazes around them. They are terrified. But the angel says, "Don't be afraid." He brings "good news of great joy," meant for everyone: in David's town, a Savior has been born. Then a huge army of angels joins him, praising God.

Three titles in the angel's announcement are worth slowing down for. Savior means rescuer. Messiah means God's chosen King, the one He had promised for centuries. Lord is a title for God Himself. All three belong to the baby in the manger. And notice who heard first. Not the emperor, not the priests in Jerusalem, but shepherds in a field. That tells you who this news is for.

Look closely at the memory verse. The angel told the shepherds this Savior was born "for you." That includes you, not just people who grew up in church. It's true right now, whatever this week looks like. This week you'll see how different people responded to that news. Pay attention to how you respond too.

🏠 TRY THIS WEEK

Read Luke 2:1-20 in one sitting, as if you had never heard it. Write down one detail you never noticed before. Then tell a friend or family member what you found and why it matters to you.

📖 MEMORY VERSE

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:11

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone

🍷 FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

The Christmas story can feel too familiar to teenagers. Help them hear it fresh: God chose a feeding trough, a small town, and shepherds. Ask what that says about who Jesus came for. If your student feels like an outsider, point out that shepherds were the first to hear.

🗨️ TALK IT OVER

- 1 Why do you think God announced Jesus' birth to shepherds instead of to rulers or religious leaders?
- 2 Do you ever feel too ordinary, or too far outside, for God to notice? What does this story say to that?
- 3 The angel said this news was for all the people. Who in your life most needs to hear it?

🙏 PRAY

God, You didn't send Jesus to impress the powerful. You sent Him for ordinary people like me. Thank You that this good news includes me. Help me not keep it to myself. Amen.

DAY

1

MARY'S YES



Read: Luke 1:26-38 **Go further:** Luke 1:46-49

“ For nothing will be impossible with God. **Luke 1:37**

Mary was probably a teenager, engaged to Joseph and living in a town nobody talked about. Then the angel Gabriel arrived with news that turned her life upside down: she would give birth to God's own Son. Mary asked an honest question. How could she have a baby when she was a virgin? Gabriel didn't scold her. He explained that God's Spirit would do it. Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant." She didn't know what it would cost her. She said yes anyway. Questions aren't the opposite of faith. Mary had both.

YOUR MOVE

Mary brought God an honest question. What question would you bring Him right now?

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

I can bring God my honest questions and still say yes to Him.



Pray: God, You can do what no one else can. I don't always understand Your plans, but I want to answer You the way Mary did: yes. Amen.

DAY

2

JOSEPH'S HARD CHOICE

zzz

Read: Matthew 1:18-25 **Go further:** Isaiah 7:14

“ See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which is translated “God is with us.” **Matthew 1:23**

Imagine Joseph's side of this story. The woman he was engaged to was pregnant, and he knew the baby wasn't his. Back then, an engagement was almost as binding as marriage. Joseph could have shamed Mary publicly. Instead he decided to end things quietly. Then an angel explained in a dream: the child was from the Holy Spirit, and His name would be Jesus, meaning the Lord saves. Joseph woke up and obeyed, even though people might talk. Doing the right thing can cost you your reputation. Joseph decided God was worth it.

YOUR MOVE

Obeying God could cost Joseph his reputation. What might obeying cost you, and what would you gain?

What it might cost me	What I gain by obeying

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Obeying God is worth more than what people think of me.



Pray: Jesus, You came to rescue me from my sin, and You're with me right now. Give me Joseph's courage to obey You when it costs me something. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: When has doing the right thing cost you something? Was it worth it?

DAY
3

A KING IN A FEEDING TROUGH



Read: Luke 2:1-7 **Go further:** Philippians 2:5-8

“ Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. **Luke 2:7** ”

Caesar Augustus, the most powerful man on earth, ordered a census. He had no idea he was helping God keep a promise. His order sent Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, the town Micah had named. Notice how plainly Luke tells the birth of God's Son. No crowds, no palace, just a feeding trough. Jesus could have arrived with power and status. He chose to come low. In a world that measures people by followers and who they know, that matters. The King of everything wasn't too proud to start at the bottom.

YOUR MOVE *Sketch the scene as a quick doodle. Label what a king would normally have that Jesus didn't.*

draw here

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus came low on purpose. I don't need status to matter to God.



Pray: Jesus, You left heaven's glory to be laid in a feeding trough. When I'm hungry to be noticed, teach me to come low like You. Amen.

DAY
4

GO AND SEE, THEN TELL



Read: Luke 2:15-20 **Go further:** 1 John 1:1-3

“ After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **Luke 2:17-18** ”

The shepherds didn't wait until morning or form a committee. They went straight to Bethlehem and found everything exactly the way the angel described it. Then they couldn't stop talking about it. They had no training and no script. They simply shared what they had seen and heard. That's all a witness does. Afterward they went back to their sheep, still praising God. You don't need all the answers to tell someone about Jesus. Start with what you know and what He has done for you.

YOUR MOVE *In two or three sentences, what has Jesus done for you? That's your story, worth telling.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I don't need every answer to share what Jesus has done for me.



Pray: God, the shepherds couldn't keep quiet about Jesus. Make me brave enough to share what I've seen You do, even when I'm nervous. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader, mentor, or parent who follows Jesus: How did you come to trust Him?

DAY
5

TWO WHO WAITED

 **Read:** Luke 2:25-38 Go further: Galatians 4:4-5

“ Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. For my eyes have seen your salvation. **Luke 2:29-30**

Simeon had been waiting a long time. The Holy Spirit had told him he would see the Messiah before he died. One ordinary day, the Spirit led him into the temple just as Mary and Joseph walked in with their baby. Simeon lifted the baby into his arms and praised God. Anna, a widow who had prayed in the temple for decades, began telling others about Him. Maybe you're waiting too: to grow up, to feel settled, to hear an answer. God keeps every promise He makes, and time spent waiting on Him is never wasted.

YOUR MOVE *What are you waiting on right now? How could you keep praying and watching while you wait?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Time spent waiting on God is never wasted.



Pray: Father, I'm not good at waiting. While I wait, keep me praying and watching the way Simeon and Anna did. Help me trust Your timing. Amen.

DAY
6

THREE WAYS TO RESPOND

 **Read:** Matthew 2:1-12 Go further: Psalm 72:10-11

“ ...falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. **Matthew 2:11**

The wise men made a long journey to find the child born to be king. Watch how three groups responded. King Herod felt threatened and started scheming. The chief priests and scholars knew exactly where the Messiah would be born, but there's no sign any of them made the six-mile trip. The wise men, outsiders from a faraway country, went all the way and fell to their knees. People still respond to Jesus in those three ways: fighting Him, ignoring Him, or worshiping Him. Knowing facts about Jesus isn't the same as bowing to Him.

YOUR MOVE *The wise men brought their best. What could you give Jesus this week?*

My time: _____

My talents: _____

My treasure: _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

*Knowing about Jesus isn't enough.
He's worth my worship.*



Pray: Jesus, I don't want to just know facts about You. I want to bow before You. Take my time, my talents, and my best. Amen.



Christmas cards, plays, and songs have added details to the story over the centuries. Most are harmless, but it's worth knowing what the Bible actually says. Reading carefully is a skill that will help you with every passage, not just this one.

◆ HOW MANY WISE MEN?

Matthew never says. Tradition settled on three because of the three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Bible calls them wise men, not kings. They were probably scholars who studied the stars, and they came from somewhere east of Israel.

◆ WAS THERE AN INNKEEPER?

Luke never mentions an innkeeper or a stable. He says only that there was no guest room, so Mary laid Jesus in a manger, a feeding trough for animals. It may have been in a stable, a cave, or the lower room of a crowded house. Either way, the King of the universe started life in a feeding trough.

◆ WHEN DID THE WISE MEN ARRIVE?

Probably not on the night Jesus was born. When they arrived, they found the family in a house (Matthew 2:11). Herod later targeted boys up to two years old, based on when the wise men first saw the star (Matthew 2:16). Jesus may have been a toddler by then.

◆ WAS JESUS BORN ON DECEMBER 25?

The Bible doesn't give a date. Christians began celebrating His birth on December 25 centuries later. The date isn't the point. The event is.

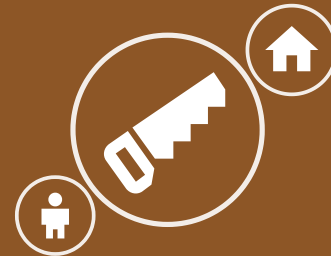
◆ WHAT THE BIBLE IS CLEAR ABOUT

- Jesus was born to a virgin, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- He was born in Bethlehem, just as Micah promised.
- He came from King David's family line.
- Angels announced Him as Savior, Messiah, and Lord.
- He was born for you.

◆ YOUR TURN

Write one detail from Luke 2 or Matthew 2 that you noticed for the first time this week.

THE HIDDEN YEARS



✦ *In an ordinary town, Jesus grew up fully God and fully human, without ever sinning.*

👥 WEEK KICKOFF

GOD UP CLOSE

Read first: **John 1:14-18**

Next stop: Nazareth, a farming village tucked into the hills of Galilee. Jesus spent most of His life here, and the Gospels say almost nothing about those years. His neighbors saw a carpenter. They had no idea who was living down the street.

The apostle John, who knew Jesus as well as anyone, explains who that carpenter really was. He calls Jesus the Word. Your words let people know what's going on inside you. Jesus does the same for God: He makes God known. Then John writes the line in this week's memory verse: "The Word became flesh." The eternal Son took on a real human body and a real human life. The word John uses for dwelt means to pitch a tent. God set up camp among His people.

Becoming human didn't make Jesus any less God. He's fully God and fully human, a truth bigger than our minds. He grew up for real. He learned, worked, got tired, and went through every age you're going through. Yet He never sinned. Not once, not even in His thoughts.

Why does it matter? Because Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn't, He could take our place. And because He became one of us, He understands you from the inside. John and his friends watched His glory up close, "full of grace and truth." John also says no one has ever seen God, but the Son has made Him known. Want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus.



TRY THIS WEEK

Pick one ordinary job this week, like a chore, a work shift, practice, or homework, and do it all the way, as work for Jesus. No shortcuts, no complaining. At the end of the week, notice what changed in your attitude.



PRAY

Jesus, You were once my age. You know growing pains, hard work, and tired days, and You never sinned. Thank You for coming close. Help me grow like You. Amen.



MEMORY VERSE

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week covers Jesus' growing-up years, which the Bible mostly leaves quiet. Day 1 includes Herod's killing of Bethlehem's boys, and students may ask why God allowed it. You don't need a neat answer. Listen, admit it's hard, and point them to the God who entered our suffering in Jesus.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 Jesus was once your age. What part of being a teenager are you glad He understands?
- 2 According to John 1:18, the Son makes the Father known. What has Jesus shown you about God so far?
- 3 Most of Jesus' life was ordinary and unseen. How does that change the way you see your ordinary days?

DAY

1

ESCAPE BY NIGHT



Read: Matthew 2:13-23 **Go further:** Jeremiah 31:15-17

“ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt.
Matthew 2:14

This part of the Christmas story never makes it onto greeting cards. After the angel's warning, Joseph didn't wait for morning. Herod, furious that the wise men had tricked him, ordered the killing of Bethlehem's little boys. Matthew doesn't hide the grief. Why did God allow it? The Bible doesn't hand us a tidy answer, and you don't have to pretend it makes sense. But it does show that Jesus was born into a world where evil is real, and He came to defeat it. You can bring your hardest questions to Him.

YOUR MOVE What has happened in your life or your world that made no sense? Write what you'd say to God about it.

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Evil is real, but so is Jesus, and He came to defeat it.



Pray: God, some things make no sense to me. Thank You that Jesus came into our broken world to defeat evil. Hold on to me when I don't understand. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader, mentor, or parent who follows Jesus: What helps you trust God when something terrible happens?

DAY

2

HE GREW UP FOR REAL



Read: Luke 2:39-40 **Go further:** Hebrews 2:17-18

“ The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him. Luke 2:40

Luke covers about twelve years of Jesus' life in a single verse. It's easy to skim, but don't. It means the eternal Son of God actually grew up. He almost certainly lost baby teeth, learned Scripture by heart, and had growth spurts like any kid in Nazareth. He wasn't pretending to be human. He was fully human while staying fully God. Hebrews says He became like us in every way so He could help us. Jesus knows what growing up feels like. He just did it without sinning.

YOUR MOVE Circle what Jesus experienced growing up. Cross out the one thing He never did.

Growing taller

Tension at home

Getting tired

Temptation

Giving in to sin

Learning a trade

Hunger

Being misunderstood

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

*Jesus knows what growing up is like.
I'm not following a distant God.*



Pray: Jesus, You grew up in a real family in a real town. You get what my life feels like. Help me grow the way You did. Amen.

DAY
3

TWELVE AND ASKING QUESTIONS



Read: Luke 2:41-50 **Go further:** Psalm 84:1-2, 10

“ After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **Luke 2:46**

Picture being Mary and Joseph. A full day into the trip home from Jerusalem, they realize their twelve-year-old isn't with the group. It takes three frantic days to find Him. Mary asks why He has put them through this. Jesus' answer is simple: where else would He be but His Father's house? These are the first words of Jesus that the Bible records, and they're about His Father. At twelve He already knew who He was and where He belonged. Because of Him, you can know God as your Father too.

✂ YOUR MOVE *List three questions about God or the Bible you'd like to explore. Bring one to someone you trust.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

*Jesus knew where He belonged.
Because of Him, I belong to God too.*



Pray: Father, thank You that because of Jesus I can call You Father. Give me a hunger to learn from You and a heart that wants to be near You. Amen.

DAY
4

GROWING IN FOUR DIRECTIONS



Read: Luke 2:51-52 **Go further:** 1 Timothy 4:12

“ And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. **Luke 2:52**

Jesus had just held His own with the best teachers in Jerusalem. Then He went home to Nazareth and obeyed His parents. He really did understand more than they did, and He honored them anyway. Remember that the next time you're sure you know better. Luke then covers the next eighteen years in one verse. Look at the four areas where Jesus grew: His mind, His body, His relationship with God, and His relationships with people. None of that happened overnight. God cares about every part of you, and He is patient with the process.

✂ YOUR MOVE *Jesus grew in four areas. Where are you growing, and where do you want to grow next?*

	Where I'm growing	Where I want to grow
Mind		
Body		
With God		
With people		

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God cares about all of me: my mind, body, faith, and friendships.



Pray: Jesus, You grew one day at a time. Help me grow in wisdom, take care of my body, know You better, and treat people well. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: In which of these four areas have you seen me grow this year?

DAY
5

JUST THE CARPENTER?



Read: Mark 6:1-3 **Go further:** Colossians 3:23-24

“ Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary... **Mark 6:3**

When Jesus returned to Nazareth as a teacher, the hometown crowd was impressed for about a minute. Wasn’t He the local carpenter? Didn’t they know His mother and His brothers and sisters? They couldn’t get past the Jesus they thought they knew, and they took offense. Two things stand out. First, the Son of God spent most of His adult life doing ordinary work with His hands, so ordinary work done for Him matters. Second, if the people who know you best struggle to see the new you, Jesus understands exactly how that feels.

YOUR MOVE

Check two ordinary jobs you’ll do this week as work for Jesus. Add your own.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Finish homework without cutting corners | ☐ Show up on time for work or practice |
| ☐ Do a chore before anyone asks | ☐ Help a teacher or coach without being noticed |
| ☐ Take care of the animals or the yard | ☐ Practice my instrument or skill |
| ☐ _____ | |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

*Jesus spent years at a workbench.
My everyday work matters to God too.*



Pray: Jesus, You worked with Your hands for years before anyone called You Teacher. Help me do my ordinary work well, as work for You. Amen.

DAY
6

THE HOMETOWN SERMON



Read: Luke 4:16-21 **Go further:** Isaiah 61:1-2

“ He began by saying to them, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled.”
Luke 4:21

Jesus grew up going to this synagogue, where the town gathered each Sabbath for Scripture. Now about thirty, He stood up to read. Handed the scroll of Isaiah, He found the passage about the One the Spirit would send with good news for the poor, freedom for captives, and sight for the blind. He rolled up the scroll, sat down, and every eye locked on Him. Isaiah’s words weren’t about someday anymore. They were about Him. Jesus came for people who are stuck, hurting, and overlooked. His followers get to join that mission.

YOUR MOVE

Who around you is hurting or overlooked? What’s one way you could show them Jesus’ good news this week?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus came for the stuck and the hurting, starting with me.



Pray: Jesus, You came to set people free, starting with me. Open my eyes to the hurting people around me, and help me show them Your good news. Amen.



Jesus is not part God and part human. He is fully both at the same time. We can believe that even when we can't fully explain it. The Gospels keep showing both sides, sometimes in the same story. Look up each reference, then write what that moment shows you about Jesus.

BORN AS A BABY

Luke 2:7

The Son of God entered the world the way every person does: as a newborn who needed His mother.

OLDER THAN ABRAHAM

John 8:58

Jesus used God's own name, I AM, and claimed He existed before Abraham was born.

HE WEPT

John 11:35

Standing near the tomb of His friend Lazarus, Jesus cried real tears.

HE CALLED THE DEAD OUT

John 11:43-44

Soon after, He commanded Lazarus to come out of the grave, and Lazarus came out alive.

HE FELL ASLEEP

Mark 4:38

Worn out after a long day, Jesus slept in the back of a boat during a storm.

HE STOPPED THE STORM

Mark 4:39

Then He got up and spoke to the wind and the waves, and everything went completely calm.

THE VOICE AND THE LAMB



✦ *At the Jordan, John pointed away from himself to Jesus, the Lamb who takes away sin.*

WEEK KICKOFF

JUST A VOICE

Read first: [John 1:19-28](#)

The trail now drops into the Jordan River valley. Crowds hiked out into the wilderness to hear a preacher unlike anyone else: John, dressed in camel hair and living on locusts and wild honey. His message was blunt. Turn back to God. People who did were baptized in the river as a public sign of their new direction.

The religious authorities in Jerusalem sent a team to question him. Was he the Messiah? He said no. Elijah? No again. The Prophet Moses had promised? Still no. So who was he? John borrowed Isaiah's words: he was only a voice in the wilderness, calling people to prepare the way for the Lord. Someone greater was already standing among them, and John said he wasn't worthy to untie that Man's sandals, a job for the lowest servant.

Think about how rare that is. John had crowds, influence, and a following. He could have built a platform around himself. Instead he spent all of it pointing to someone else. The next day, as Jesus approached, John announced Him with the words in this week's memory verse.

This week you'll discover what John meant by calling Jesus a lamb, what happened when heaven opened at Jesus' baptism, and what it looks like to live the way John did. In a world that tells you to make yourself the headline, John shows a better way: point past yourself to Jesus.



TRY THIS WEEK

Write a thank-you note or message to someone who pointed you toward Jesus: a parent, teacher, coach, friend, or church member. Tell them specifically what they did and how it helped. Then send it or hand it to them.

MEMORY VERSE

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

[John 1:29](#)

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week introduces John the Baptist and Jesus' baptism, so your student may ask about being baptized. Be clear that baptism doesn't save; it's a step of obedience for people who have already trusted Christ. If they haven't been baptized, don't pressure them, but do invite a conversation with Pastor James.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 John could have built a following around himself. Why do you think he kept pointing people to Jesus instead?
- 2 Who has pointed you toward Jesus? What did they say or do that made a difference?
- 3 What would it look like for you to point past yourself this week, at school, online, or at home?



PRAY

Jesus, thank You for carrying my sin away. Thank You for the people who pointed me to You. Now make my life a signpost pointing to You. Amen.

DAY
1

CLEAR THE ROAD

 **Read:** Luke 3:2-6  Go further: Isaiah 40:3-5



“ A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight! **Luke 3:4**

Luke pins down the date by naming the rulers and high priests of the time. Then God's word came to John in the wilderness. His message came down to one word: repent. Repenting means turning from your sin and toward God. It's not just feeling bad; it's a change of direction. Isaiah had pictured a road being cleared for a king, with valleys filled in and rough places smoothed out. What's cluttering the road in your own heart? Pride, a habit, a grudge? Turning from it is what repentance looks like.

 **YOUR MOVE**

What's one thing you need to turn from this week? What would turning toward God look like?

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Repenting isn't just feeling sorry. It's turning around and heading toward God.



Pray: God, show me what's cluttering my heart. I don't want to just feel bad about my sin. I want to turn from it and turn to You. Amen.

DAY
2

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

 **Read:** Luke 3:7-14  Go further: 1 John 3:17-18



“ He replied to them, “The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same.” **Luke 3:11**

John didn't ease into his sermon. “Brood of vipers!” he called the crowd. Being born into the right family, he warned, didn't make anyone right with God. If they had truly turned to God, it would show, like fruit on a healthy tree. Fruit doesn't make a tree alive. It shows that it is. The crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers each asked what that looked like. John's answers were practical: share your stuff, don't cheat, don't bully, be content. Real change shows up in how you treat people, handle money, and use your influence.

 **YOUR MOVE**

Fill in John's answer to each group. Then write what it might sound like for people today.

	What John told them	What it sounds like today
The crowds		
Tax collectors		
Soldiers		

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

My good works don't save me. They show the new life Jesus gave me.



Pray: God, I don't want a faith that's only talk. Let my turning to You show up in how I share, speak, and treat people today. Amen.

DAY
3

WHY WOULD JESUS BE BAPTIZED?



Read: Matthew 3:13-15 **Go further:** John 8:29

“ Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John allowed him to be baptized. **Matthew 3:15**

John was baptizing people who were turning from their sins. Then Jesus stepped into line. John tried to stop Him. He knew Jesus had no sin to turn from. If anything, John needed what Jesus had. But Jesus insisted. The Bible doesn't explain every reason, but this much is clear: Jesus came to do everything His Father asked, completely. He also stepped into the same water as the people He came to save. If you've trusted Him but haven't been baptized, His example is worth a conversation with Pastor James.

YOUR MOVE Circle *T* for true or *F* for false.

Jesus was baptized because He had sins to confess.

T F

John felt unworthy to baptize Jesus.

T F

Being baptized is what saves a person.

T F

Baptism is for people who have already trusted Jesus.

T F

Jesus obeyed His Father completely, even in this.

T F

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus didn't settle for halfway obedience. He obeyed His Father all the way.



Pray: Jesus, You did everything Your Father asked, even when no one expected You to. Show me any area where I'm settling for halfway obedience. Amen.

DAY
4

BEFORE A SINGLE MIRACLE



Read: Matthew 3:16-17 **Go further:** Mark 1:9-11

“ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.” **Matthew 3:17**

As Jesus came up from the water, the sky opened. God's Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven. All three persons of the one true God show up in a single scene. That's a truth bigger than our minds, and you can worship Him even where you can't explain Him. Notice when the Father spoke, too. Jesus hadn't preached a sermon or performed a miracle yet. If you belong to Jesus, God's love for you doesn't rise and fall with your performance either. You are His.

YOUR MOVE *Where do you feel like you have to perform to be accepted? What does God say about you?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God's love for me doesn't rise and fall with my performance.



Pray: Father, Son, and Spirit, You're greater than I can understand. Thank You that I'm loved because I belong to Jesus, not because I perform. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader, mentor, or parent who follows Jesus: When you feel like a failure, how do you remember God's love?

DAY
5

THE LAMB WHO TAKES SIN AWAY



Read: John 1:29-34 **Go further:** 1 Peter 1:18-19

“ I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God. **John 1:34**

Everyone listening to John knew about lambs. Every Passover, families remembered the lamb whose blood protected God's people in Egypt. At the temple, lambs were sacrificed every morning and evening. For centuries, animals died in the place of sinners, but the sacrifices never ended because sin never did. Then John pointed at a man and called Him the Lamb of God. Not just for one family or nation, but for the whole world. Jesus would be the final sacrifice. When you trusted Him, your sin wasn't just covered up. It was carried away for good.

YOUR MOVE *Number these in the order they happen in the Bible's big story.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Jesus dies at Passover time | ☐ Isaiah describes a Servant led like a lamb |
| ☐ Priests offer lambs every morning and evening | ☐ John points out Jesus as God's Lamb |
| ☐ Lamb's blood marks doorframes in Egypt | |

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Jesus, the Lamb, didn't just cover my sin. He carried it away.



Pray: Jesus, Lamb of God, You were the one sacrifice that finished the job. Because of You, my sin is gone. Thank You. Amen.

DAY
6

MORE OF HIM, LESS OF ME



Read: John 3:26-30 **Go further:** Colossians 1:18

“ He must increase, but I must decrease. **John 3:30**

John's followers were worried. The crowds that used to come to John were now going to Jesus. It was the perfect moment for jealousy. Instead John said nobody receives anything unless heaven gives it. He compared himself to the best man at a wedding. The best man isn't jealous of the groom. He's thrilled for him. John's joy was complete because Jesus was getting the attention. In a world built on followers, comparison, and building your own brand, that's a radical way to live. Your gifts are real. Use them to point to Him.

YOUR MOVE *Where could you point to Jesus instead of yourself this week?*

At school or work: _____

Online: _____

When I do well: _____

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

My joy isn't in being noticed. It's in seeing Jesus get the glory.



Pray: Jesus, You must increase and I must decrease. When I want the spotlight, help me find my joy in pointing people to You. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: How do you handle it when someone else gets the credit you wanted?



WHY THE LAMB MATTERS

When John pointed to Jesus as “the Lamb of God,” his listeners didn’t need an explanation. Lambs run through the whole Old Testament. Follow them, and you’ll see why John’s words were such good news. If you’re thinking about being baptized, read the last section too.

◆ A LAMB IN EGYPT

On the night God freed Israel from slavery, each family sacrificed a young lamb with no defects and painted its blood on their doorframe. When judgment came that night, it passed over every house marked by the blood (Exodus 12:1-13). A life was given so the family could live. Jewish families still remember that night at Passover.

◆ LAMBS EVERY DAY

Exodus 29:38-39 describes the daily routine: once Israel had a place of worship, a lamb was offered every morning and every evening. Other sacrifices were brought for sin. They taught a hard truth: sin is serious enough to cost a life. But the sacrifices never stopped, because animal blood was never able to remove sin (Hebrews 10:4, 11).

◆ THE LAST LAMB

Every one of those lambs pointed ahead to Jesus. Peter describes Him as a lamb without defect or blemish (1 Peter 1:18-19), because He never sinned. He was crucified during Passover, and Paul calls Him our Passover lamb in 1 Corinthians 5:7. And unlike the priests, who stood and offered sacrifices day after day, He offered Himself once and sat down. The work was finished (Hebrews 10:11-12).

◆ THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM?

If you’ve trusted Jesus, baptism is the natural next step in following Him. At PGBC, baptism is by immersion: going all the way under the water and rising back up. It pictures Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, and your new life in Him (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism doesn’t save you. Jesus already did that. Talk it over with a parent or mentor, and with Pastor James.

◆ YOUR RESPONSE

Write a few sentences to Jesus, the Lamb who took your place. Thank Him for what He carried away.

FORTY DAYS, THREE TESTS



✦ *Jesus stood firm against real temptation by trusting God's Word, and He will help you stand too.*

WEEK KICKOFF

WHAT HUNGER TEACHES

Read first: **Deuteronomy 8:2-3**

Stop five is the wilderness: dry hills, rock, heat, and almost nothing to eat. This is where Jesus faced the devil, and where His identity as God's beloved Son was put to the test. It's also where you'll learn to fight your own battles.

Centuries earlier, Israel wandered for forty years through country like this. In this week's reading, Moses reminds them why. God let them go hungry, then fed them manna, a strange new food that covered the ground each morning. He was teaching them that people need more than bread; they need everything God says. The wilderness showed what was really in their hearts, and too often it was grumbling and doubt.

Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness, echoing Israel's forty years. The devil came at Him three times, and every time Jesus answered with Scripture from Deuteronomy, the same book Moses wrote to Israel. Israel had complained and caved; Jesus held on to every word from His Father. He won the battle they lost, and He won it for us.

Temptation is a pull toward sin. Feeling the pull isn't sin; giving in is. And everyone feels it: in the group chat, on a test, alone with a screen, when someone hurts you. You don't have to fight alone. Jesus won, He understands, and He showed you what to fight with: God's Word. This week's memory verse is a good place to start.

TRY THIS WEEK

Pick a verse that speaks to your biggest temptation. Write it where you'll see it when that temptation usually hits: on your mirror, in your backpack, or on your phone's lock screen. Say it, even under your breath, when the pull comes, and see what changes.

MEMORY VERSE

It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:4

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week is about temptation, a fight students often keep private. Make it clear that being tempted isn't sinning. Share a verse that has helped you. If a student confides a struggle, respond with grace, not shock, and get help right away if anyone is being hurt.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 Why do you think God let Israel get hungry before He fed them? What was He teaching them?
- 2 What makes it hard to admit you're struggling with temptation? What would make it easier?
- 3 Which verse will you memorize this week to use when temptation hits?

PRAY

Jesus, You faced temptation and never gave in. When temptation tugs at me, bring Your Word to mind and give me strength to choose You. Amen.

DAY

1

SPIRIT-LED, THEN TESTED



Read: Luke 4:1-2 **Go further:** Mark 1:12-13

“ Then Jesus left the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days to be tempted by the devil. **Luke 4:1-2**

Look at the order of events. Jesus had just come up from the Jordan and heard His Father’s voice. The very next stop was forty days of hunger and temptation, and the Spirit led Him there. Being led by God doesn’t guarantee an easy road. A hard season doesn’t automatically mean you’ve done something wrong, and it never means God has left. Your fiercest temptations often come right after a spiritual high, like camp or a great Sunday. And remember: being tempted isn’t sinning. Jesus was tempted for forty days and never once gave in.

YOUR MOVE *When does temptation usually hit you hardest? Check any that fit.*

- ☐ When I’m tired
 ☐ When I’m alone
- ☐ When I’m bored or stressed
 ☐ Late at night with my phone
- ☐ Around certain people
 ☐ Right after a spiritual high
- ☐ _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Being tempted isn’t sinning, and hard seasons don’t mean God has left me.



Pray: God, lead me even when the road gets hard. When temptation comes, remind me that Your Spirit is with me and I don’t have to give in. Amen.

DAY

2

STONES INTO BREAD



Read: Matthew 4:1-4 **Go further:** John 4:34

“ It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. **Matthew 4:4**

After forty days without food, Jesus was starving. Then the tempter showed up with a challenge that began, “If you are the Son of God.” The Father had just called Jesus His beloved Son. Now the devil wanted Him to prove it. Eating isn’t wrong. But using His power to serve Himself, instead of trusting His Father to provide, would have been. Temptation often works like that. It targets a real need and offers a shortcut around God. The need isn’t the problem. The shortcut is. Jesus answered with Scripture, and you can too.

YOUR MOVE *Name a real need you have, the shortcut temptation offers, and God’s better way to meet it.*

A real need	The shortcut	God’s way

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

My needs are real, but God’s way is better than the devil’s shortcut.



Pray: Father, You know what I need before I ask. When temptation offers me a shortcut, help me trust You to provide in Your way and Your time. Amen.

DAY
3

WHEN THE DEVIL QUOTES SCRIPTURE



Read: Matthew 4:5-7 **Go further:** Psalm 91:11-12

“ Jesus told him, “It is also written: Do not test the Lord your God.” **Matthew 4:7**

For the second test, the devil stood Jesus on the temple’s highest point and dared Him to jump. This time he quoted the Bible, promising angels would catch Him. It sounded spiritual. But he had ripped Psalm 91 out of context. That psalm celebrates God’s care for people who trust Him. It isn’t a dare to force God’s hand. Jesus answered one Scripture with another. People still twist verses to excuse what they want, and so can your own heart. The best protection is knowing the whole Bible, not just a few lines.

YOUR MOVE *Circle T for true or F for false.*

The devil can quote the Bible.

T F

A verse pulled out of context can mislead people.

T F

Trusting God means demanding that He prove Himself.

T F

Jesus answered Scripture with more Scripture.

T F

Psalm 91 promises God will rescue me from any risk I choose.

T F

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Trusting God means taking Him at His Word, not testing Him.



Pray: God, I don’t want to twist Your Word to get my way. Teach me to read the whole Bible and to trust You without needing proof. Amen.

DAY
4

THE SHORTCUT TO THE CROWN



Read: Matthew 4:8-11 **Go further:** Deuteronomy 6:13

“ Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” **Matthew 4:10**

Last, the devil showed Jesus every kingdom in the world and all their glory. All He had to do was bow down once. It was an offer of a crown without a cross. Jesus would be given all authority one day, but by obeying His Father all the way to the cross, not by taking a shortcut. The devil’s offers still sound similar: get what you want right now, just compromise a little. Cheat once. Lie once. Go along with the group once. Every shortcut asks you to bow to something other than God.

YOUR MOVE *Which shortcut tempts you most right now? What would God’s way look like instead?*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Every shortcut around God means bowing to something else. I’ll worship God alone.



Pray: Jesus, You turned down every shortcut and chose the cross for me. When I’m offered an easy way that isn’t God’s way, help me say no. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: What shortcut were you tempted to take at my age? What happened?

DAY
5

A HIGH PRIEST WHO GETS IT

 **Read:** Hebrews 4:14-16 **Go further:** 1 Corinthians 10:13

“ Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need. **Hebrews 4:16** ”

In Israel, the high priest stood between the people and God. Hebrews says Jesus is our great high priest, and He is not distant. He faced every kind of temptation we face, “yet without sin.” Some think that means He can’t understand temptation. It’s the opposite. Someone who never gives in feels the full pressure of temptation, all the way to the end. Jesus knows exactly how hard it is. So when you’re tempted, or when you’ve already failed, don’t hide from God. Go straight to Him. You’ll find mercy and help, not rejection.

YOUR MOVE

After you mess up, is it easier to run to God or hide from Him? Why?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus understands temptation better than I do. I can run to Him.



Pray: Jesus, You know exactly how hard temptation is. When I fail, help me run to You instead of hiding. Thank You for Your mercy. Amen.

DAY
6

YOUR BATTLE PLAN

 **Read:** James 4:7-8 **Go further:** Ephesians 6:10-17

“ Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. **James 4:7-8** ”

James packs a whole battle plan into two verses. Start with surrender. Submitting to God means you stop trying to beat temptation in your own strength. Then resist. Say no the way Jesus did, with God’s Word, and the devil doesn’t stick around. Then move toward God. Temptation grows strongest when you’re isolated, and it weakens in the light. Pray honestly, stay in Scripture, and let a trusted adult or Christian friend know what you’re fighting. Every verse you memorize is one more weapon within reach. You don’t fight alone.

YOUR MOVE

Pick two temptations you face and a verse to fight each one. The bonus page can help.

Temptation: _____

My verse: _____

Temptation: _____

My verse: _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Submit, resist, draw near. With God’s Word and God’s people, I don’t fight alone.



Pray: God, I submit to You. Give me strength to resist the devil and a heart that keeps drawing near to You. Thank You for drawing near to me. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: Would you be willing to check in with me about something I’m fighting?



Jesus answered every temptation with Scripture He knew by heart. Build your own set of verses. Look up each one, write the temptation it helps you fight, and check it off when you can say it from memory. Add your own verses in the empty rows.

- Read the verse in context first, so you know what it means.
- Write it out by hand three times.
- Learn it one phrase at a time, then put the phrases together.
- Say it before bed and again when you wake up.
- Practice with a friend and quiz each other.

Verse	The temptation it fights	Memorized?
Matthew 4:4		
1 Corinthians 10:13		
James 4:7-8		
Psalms 119:9-11		
1 John 1:9		
Philippians 4:6-7		
Galatians 1:10		
Ephesians 4:29		

LEAVE THE NETS BEHIND



★ *Jesus calls ordinary people, not impressive ones, to leave everything behind and follow Him.*

WEEK KICKOFF

IF YOU SAY SO

Read first: **Luke 5:1-11**

Trail stop six is the Sea of Galilee, a freshwater lake ringed by hills and fishing towns. Luke calls it Lake Gennesaret. For the people along its shore, the lake meant work: boats, nets, long nights, and a living that depended on the catch. It's also where Jesus called His first followers.

One day the crowd pushing in to hear Jesus got so big that He stepped into Simon's fishing boat and taught from the water. Then He told Simon to go out into deep water and let down the nets. Simon knew fishing. He and his partners had worked hard all night and caught nothing. But he did it anyway, because Jesus said so.

The nets filled so fast they began to tear, and soon both boats were so full they started to sink. Then Simon fell at Jesus' knees and said, "I'm a sinful man." Up close to Jesus' power, he saw himself clearly. But Jesus didn't send him away. "Don't be afraid," He said. "From now on you will be catching people." So they brought the boats to shore, left everything, and followed Him.

Look at who Jesus chose: not scholars or celebrities, but working men who smelled like fish. He still calls ordinary people, including you. Following Jesus doesn't start with being impressive. It starts with trusting Him enough to do what He says, even when you're tired or it doesn't make sense yet. This week you'll meet more of the people He called.



TRY THIS WEEK

For seven days, put down one of your nets: an app, a show, a game, or a habit that crowds out time with Jesus. Use that time to read and pray instead. At the end of the week, write down what changed.

MEMORY VERSE

"Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."

Matthew 4:19

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week your student meets Jesus' first followers: fishermen and a tax collector. Many teens assume God only uses people who have it all together. If you follow Jesus, tell them how that began for you, messy parts included, and what it has cost and given you.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 Simon knew fishing, but he obeyed Jesus anyway. Where is it hardest for you to take Jesus at His word?
- 2 Why do you think seeing Jesus' power made Simon so aware of his sin? Why didn't Jesus send him away?
- 3 Who helped you start following Jesus? If the adult you're talking with follows Jesus, ask who helped them.



PRAY

Jesus, You called ordinary fishermen, and You called me. Help me trust Your word even when it doesn't make sense yet. Use me to point others to You. Amen.

DAY

1

WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND



Read: Mark 1:16-20 **Go further:** Matthew 4:18-22

““Follow me,” Jesus told them, “and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. **Mark 1:17-18**

Mark tells this story fast, and one word keeps showing up: immediately. Simon and Andrew dropped their nets in the middle of a workday. James and John left their father in the boat with the hired men. Those nets were their paycheck, and that boat was the family business. Why walk away from all that? Because of who was calling. Notice who does the work in His promise: “I will make you.” You don’t have to turn yourself into a strong Christian by trying harder. Your part is to follow. Jesus does the making.

YOUR MOVE *Jesus promised to make these fishermen into something new. Where in your life do you most want Him to change you?*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
My part is to follow. Jesus does the making.

Pray: Jesus, You’ve called me to follow You. Show me what I need to put down, and make me into the person You want me to be. Amen.

DAY

2

DOUBTERS WELCOME



Read: John 1:43-51 **Go further:** John 1:35-42

““Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Nathanael asked him. “Come and see,” Philip answered. **John 1:46**

Nathanael didn’t hide his opinion. When Philip said they had found the One the Scriptures promised, a man from Nazareth, Nathanael scoffed. Nazareth was a nowhere town. Philip didn’t argue. He just invited Nathanael to meet Jesus. Jesus already knew him, and before the conversation was over, the skeptic was calling Him the Son of God. You’ll have friends who roll their eyes at your faith. You don’t have to win every argument. Your job is to point them to Jesus and let them see Him for themselves.

YOUR MOVE *Think of three friends. What do they think of Jesus right now? What’s one low-pressure way to invite them to see Him?*

Friend’s initials	What they think of Jesus	One way to invite them

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
I don’t have to win the argument. I can point people to Jesus.

Pray: Jesus, You knew Nathanael before he ever met You, and You know my friends too. Give me courage to invite them to see You for themselves. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: How do you talk about Jesus with someone who thinks faith is foolish?

DAY
3

NOBODY IS TOO FAR GONE



Read: Luke 5:27-32 **Go further:** 1 Timothy 1:15

“ I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. **Luke 5:32**

Everybody knew what Levi was. Tax collectors worked for the government, and many took extra for themselves, so people saw them as traitors and thieves. Then Jesus stopped at Levi's tax office and said, "Follow me." Levi left everything behind and threw a banquet for Jesus, packing his house with tax collectors and other outsiders. The religious leaders complained. Jesus answered that doctors are for sick people, not healthy ones. He came for people who know they need Him. Nobody is too far gone for Jesus, not you and not the person you've written off.

✍ YOUR MOVE *Who gets written off at your school or in your town? What would it look like to treat one of them the way Jesus treated Levi?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Nobody is too far gone for Jesus, including me.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for coming for sinners like me. Help me see the people others write off the way You see them, and show me how to love them. Amen.

DAY
4

WITH HIM FIRST



Read: Mark 3:13-19 **Go further:** Luke 6:12-16

“ He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, to send them out to preach... **Mark 3:14**

Jesus had crowds following Him everywhere, but He chose twelve men for something closer. Luke says He spent the whole night praying before He named them. Now look at the order in Mark's list. Preaching and power are there, but they come second. First, Jesus chose them to be with Him. Everything they would do for Him would flow out of time spent with Him. It works the same way for you. Following Jesus isn't mainly about performing for Him. It starts with being with Him: reading His words, talking to Him, and spending time with His people.

✍ YOUR MOVE *Make a simple plan for spending time with Jesus each day this week.*

When _____

Where _____

What I'll read _____

Who I'll pray for _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Before Jesus sends me out, He wants me with Him.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for wanting me close to You. Before I try to do things for You, help me spend time with You. Amen.

DAY
5

FRIENDS, NOT SERVANTS



Read: John 15:12-15 **Go further:** Proverbs 18:24

“ No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. **John 15:13**”

Jesus said these words to His closest followers the night before He died. A servant, He explained, doesn't know what his master is doing. He just takes orders. But Jesus had told them everything He heard from His Father, because they were His friends. The next day He proved His love by laying down His life. Maybe your friendships feel shaky right now, or you feel like an outsider. If you've trusted Jesus, you have a Friend who has already given everything for you. And He asks you to love others the way He loves you.

✎ YOUR MOVE *Jesus loves His friends by giving, not taking. Check two ways you'll love a friend like that this week.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Listen without looking at my phone | ☐ Stand up for them when they're not around |
| ☐ Tell them the truth, even when it's hard | ☐ Show up when they're going through something |
| ☐ Forgive them without holding it over them | ☐ Pray for them by name |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus calls me His friend, and He proved it at the cross.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for calling me Your friend and for giving Your life for me. Teach me to love my friends the way You love me. Amen.

DAY
6

TOO MUCH TO LET GO



Read: Mark 10:17-27 **Go further:** Matthew 13:44

“ Looking at them, Jesus said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God.” **Mark 10:27**”

The man who ran up to Jesus seemed to have it all: money, manners, and a clean record, at least in his own eyes. He asked what he had to do to get eternal life. Mark says Jesus looked at him and loved him. Then Jesus named the one thing the man couldn't let go of. He walked away grieving, because his wealth held first place. Jesus wasn't teaching that you can buy your way into heaven by giving everything away. Nobody earns eternal life. But Jesus does ask for first place, with nothing held back.

✎ YOUR MOVE *Be honest: if Jesus named the one thing you'd struggle most to let go of, what would it be? Why?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I can't earn eternal life, but I can give Jesus first place.



Pray: Jesus, You look at me with love, even when You see what I'm holding on to. Help me loosen my grip and give You first place. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a mentor: What competed with Jesus for first place when you were my age? What helped?

AN UNLIKELY TWELVE



Jesus could have picked anyone. He chose fishermen, a tax collector, a man called the Zealot, and a few we know almost nothing about. Look up the references on each card. Which one are you most like? Star that card and tell a mentor why.

PETER

**Mark 3:16; Luke 22:54-62;
John 21:15-17**

A fisherman named Simon until Jesus renamed him. Bold, quick to speak, and sometimes quick to fail. He denied knowing Jesus three times, and Jesus restored him.

ANDREW

John 1:40-42; John 6:8-9

Peter's brother, also a fisherman. He introduced Simon to Jesus, and he's the one who pointed out a boy's lunch of loaves and fish.

JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE

Mark 3:17; Acts 12:1-2

A fisherman Jesus nicknamed a Son of Thunder, along with his brother John. He was the first of the Twelve to die for following Jesus.

JOHN

Mark 1:19-20; Acts 4:13

James's brother, the other Son of Thunder. After Jesus rose, he and Peter faced powerful leaders so boldly that the leaders realized they had been with Jesus.

PHILIP

John 1:43-46; John 14:8-9

From Bethsaida, like Andrew and Peter. He brought Nathanael to meet Jesus. The night before Jesus died, he asked Jesus to show them the Father.

BARTHOLOMEW

Mark 3:18; John 1:45-49

Scripture tells us very little about him. Many Bible teachers believe he's the same person as Nathanael, whom Jesus saw under the fig tree.

THOMAS

John 11:16; John 20:24-28

Called the Twin. He once said he'd go and die with Jesus. Later he doubted Jesus had risen, until he saw Him and called Him his Lord and God.

MATTHEW (LEVI)

Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-29

The tax collector from this week's reading, where Luke calls him Levi. He left his tax office behind and threw a banquet for Jesus.

JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS

Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13-14

One of the quiet ones. The Bible tells us almost nothing about him, but Jesus chose him, and he was praying with the others after Jesus returned to heaven.

THADDAEUS

Mark 3:18; Luke 6:16; John 14:22

Luke's list seems to use another name for him: Judas son of James. That's not Judas Iscariot. He asked Jesus a question the night before the cross.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Mark 3:18; Acts 1:13

Not to be confused with Simon Peter. His nickname, the Zealot, follows him through every list of the Twelve. Jesus put him on the same team as a tax collector.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

**Mark 3:19; John 12:4-6;
Matthew 26:14-16**

He spent years close to Jesus, yet he stole from the money bag and sold Jesus out for thirty pieces of silver. Being near Jesus isn't the same as trusting Him.

A LIFE THAT STANDS



★ *A life built on hearing and doing what Jesus says will still be standing when the storms hit.*

WEEK KICKOFF

ROCK OR SAND?

Read first: **Matthew 7:24-29**

Trail stop seven is a hillside in Galilee. When Jesus saw the crowds following Him, He went up the mountain, sat down, and began to teach. His disciples gathered close, and the crowds listened in. Matthew records that teaching in chapters 5 through 7. It's called the Sermon on the Mount, and it may be the most famous talk ever given.

Jesus ended the sermon with a story about two builders. One built his house on rock. The other built on sand. Then the same storm hit both houses: rain pounding, rivers rising, wind slamming the walls. The house on the rock stood. The house on the sand collapsed "with a great crash."

Here's what surprises people. Both builders heard Jesus' words. The difference was that one acted on them and the other didn't. You can know a lot about Jesus, sit through a hundred sermons, and still be building on sand if you never do what He says. And notice that both houses got hit. Following Jesus doesn't mean you'll dodge every storm. It means you'll still be standing when it passes.

When Jesus finished, the crowds were astonished. He didn't lean on other teachers the way their scribes did. He taught like someone with authority, because He had it. This week you'll read some of His most challenging words. Don't just highlight them. Try them. You don't obey Jesus to earn God's love. You obey because you trust that His way is the rock.

TRY THIS WEEK

Each day this week, choose one thing Jesus said in Matthew 5-7 and actually do it before bedtime. Track it on this week's Hear It, Do It page. Ask a friend or mentor to check in with you midweek.

MEMORY VERSE

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Matthew 6:33

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week's readings come from the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says things that cut against our instincts. Teens spot hypocrisy fast, so be honest about where you're still learning to obey. Remind them we obey because God already loves us, not to earn His love.



TALK IT OVER

- Both houses faced the same storm. What storms are you or people your age facing right now?
- What's one thing Jesus said that you believe is true but find hard to actually do?
- What does it look like for someone to build their life on Jesus' words? Who have you seen do that well?



PRAY

Jesus, You speak with real authority. Help me stop just hearing Your words and start doing them, so my life is built on You. Amen.

DAY
1

THE UPSIDE-DOWN LIST

 **Read:** Matthew 5:1-12 **Go further:** Luke 6:20-23 Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. **Matthew 5:5**

Scroll through any feed and you'll see who the world calls blessed: the rich, the attractive, the popular, the winners. Jesus' list sounds almost backward. He calls blessed the people who know they're spiritually poor, the grieving, the humble, the merciful, the peacemakers, and even those insulted for following Him.

Blessed means more than happy. It means God's favor rests on you. The kingdom of heaven doesn't belong to people who have it all together. It belongs to people who know they need God.

YOUR MOVE *Circle the one that's hardest for you right now. Then talk to God about it today.*

Humble

Peacemaker

Pure in heart

Poor in spirit

Merciful

Hungry for righteousness

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus calls blessed the people who know they need God.



Pray: Jesus, Your list isn't like the world's list. Make me humble, merciful, and pure in heart, and help me be a peacemaker where I live. Amen.

DAY
2

HARD TO MISS

 **Read:** Matthew 5:13-16 **Go further:** Philippians 2:14-15 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:16**

Notice the words Jesus used: "You are the salt of the earth." He didn't say to try to become salt. He said you already are. In Jesus' day, salt kept meat from spoiling and brought out flavor. Light shows people the way. A city on a hill can't hide, and nobody lights a lamp just to stick it under a basket. You might be tempted to keep your faith quiet so nobody thinks you're weird. But hiding isn't humility. Let people see how you live, not so they'll praise you, but so they'll see God.

YOUR MOVE *Sketch a lamp on a stand. Around it, jot the places where you're most tempted to hide your faith.*

draw here

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Because I belong to Jesus, I'm already salt and light.



Pray: Father, I don't want to hide what You've done in me. Help me live so openly for You that people see You, not me. Amen.

DAY
3

THE HARDEST COMMAND

 **Read:** Matthew 5:43-48 Go further: Romans 12:17-21

“ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:44-45**

Loving people who love you back is easy. Jesus said even tax collectors managed that. Then He raised the bar and pointed to God. Your Father sends sunshine and rain on good and evil people alike. When you pray for the classmate who mocks you or the friend who turned on you, you start to look like Him. Loving an enemy means refusing to get even and asking God to do them good. It doesn't mean pretending it's fine or letting someone keep hurting you. If that's happening, tell a trusted adult.

YOUR MOVE *Write the initials of someone who's hard to love right now. Pray for them by name, then write one way to do them good this week.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

When I pray for people who hurt me, I look like my Father.



Pray: Father, You're kind even to people who reject You. I don't feel like loving some people right now. Give me Your love for them, and help me pray for them. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a mentor: What's the difference between loving someone who hurts you and letting them keep doing it?

DAY
4

KEEP KNOCKING

 **Read:** Matthew 7:7-12 Go further: Luke 11:5-10

“ 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**

Prayer isn't a vending machine where you punch in a request and get exactly what you picked. Jesus compares it to asking a parent. Most parents, even flawed ones, wouldn't hand a hungry child a stone instead of bread. Your Father in heaven is better than the best parent you can imagine. So keep asking, seeking, and knocking. Sometimes His answer is yes, sometimes wait, and sometimes no, because He sees what you can't. Then Jesus adds a rule for all of life: treat others the way you want to be treated.

YOUR MOVE *True or false? Base your answers on today's reading.*

Jesus tells us to keep asking, seeking, and knocking.

T F

Prayer works like a vending machine.

T F

God gives good things to those who ask Him.

T F

If God doesn't say yes, He isn't listening.

T F

Jesus sums up the Law and the Prophets with how we treat others.

T F

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

My Father only gives good gifts, even when His answer isn't yes.



Pray: Father, thank You for hearing me every time I pray. Help me keep asking, trust You with the answer, and treat others the way I want to be treated. Amen.

DAY
5

WHAT WORRY CAN'T DO



Read: Matthew 6:25-34 **Go further:** Philippians 4:6-7

“ Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? **Matthew 6:26**

You probably have plenty to worry about: grades, money at home, how you look, what people are saying, what comes after graduation. Jesus doesn't brush those off. He points you to the birds and the wildflowers. Wildflowers don't sew, yet they're dressed better than King Solomon. Worry can't add a single moment to your life. So seek God's kingdom first, like this week's memory verse says, and trust your Father with the rest. He knows exactly what you need. If worry is overwhelming you, tell a trusted adult.

YOUR MOVE *Name your worries honestly. Next to each one, write something true about God from today's reading.*

What I'm worried about	What's true about my Father

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

My Father knows what I need, so I can seek Him first.



Pray: Father, You feed the birds and dress the wildflowers. I'm handing You what I'm worried about. Help me seek Your kingdom first and trust You with the rest. Amen.

DAY
6

NOT WHERE THE CROWD GOES



Read: Matthew 7:13-14 **Go further:** John 10:7-10

“ How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it. **Matthew 7:14**

Jesus describes two gates. The wide one opens onto a broad, crowded road. It feels safe because everybody's on it, but it leads to destruction. The other gate is narrow. Later in John's Gospel, Jesus says He Himself is the gate. So the narrow way isn't a tougher rulebook for earning your way in. It's Jesus. Following Him will sometimes take you in a different direction than your friends, and that can feel lonely. But you won't walk it alone, and it ends in life.

YOUR MOVE *Where does following Jesus take you in a different direction than the crowd right now? What makes that hard?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

The narrow gate is Jesus, and the road with Him leads to life.



Pray: Jesus, You are the gate that leads to life. When the crowd goes the other way, give me the courage to keep following You. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader or mentor: When has following Jesus meant going against the crowd for you? Was it worth it?

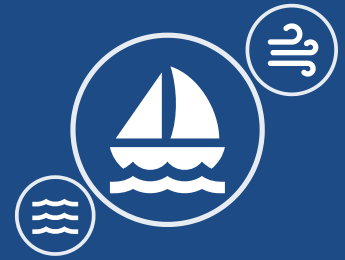


The wise builder didn't just hear Jesus' words. He acted on them. Pick one teaching a day from the Sermon on the Mount. Read it, write what obeying it would look like at school, at home, or online, then come back and write what happened.

- Read the verses, then say in your own words what Jesus is asking.
- Make it specific: who, where, and when.
- Come back later and write what happened, even if it didn't go well.
- Missed a day? Don't quit. Pick up with the next one.

Read	What obeying looks like for me	What happened
Matthew 5:9		
Matthew 5:23-24		
Matthew 5:37		
Matthew 5:44		
Matthew 6:3-4		
Matthew 6:6		
Matthew 6:34		
Matthew 7:1-5		
Matthew 7:12		

WHO THEN IS THIS?



★ *Jesus' miracles are signs, and they all point to the same truth: He is God the Son.*

👥 WEEK KICKOFF

DON'T YOU CARE?

Read first: **Mark 4:35-41**

Trail stop eight isn't a town or a hillside. It's a boat out on the Sea of Galilee as evening falls. Jesus had spent the day teaching the crowds. Now He told His disciples, "Let's cross over to the other side," and they pushed off with Him on board. Other boats came along too.

Then a violent windstorm hit. Waves broke over the sides, and the boat began filling with water. Several of these men were experienced fishermen, and they were sure they were about to drown. Where was Jesus? Asleep in the back of the boat, on a cushion. They woke Him with a question that sounds almost like an accusation: "Don't you care that we're going to die?"

Jesus got up and rebuked the wind. To the sea He said, "Silence! Be still!" The wind stopped, and the lake went completely calm. Then He asked them why they were afraid. Now they were more terrified than they had been in the storm. They asked each other, "Who then is this?"

That's the question this whole week is about. Wind and waves answer to the One who made them, and to nobody else. Over the next six days you'll watch Jesus turn water into wine, feed thousands with one lunch, and walk on the sea. Each sign points to the same answer: Jesus is God the Son. And notice what Jesus didn't do. He didn't keep His followers out of the storm. He was in the boat with them the whole time.

🏠 TRY THIS WEEK

Pick one storm in your life right now, big or small. Each night this week, pray about it specifically and read Mark 4:35-41 again. At the end of the week, write down what you've noticed about Jesus in it.

📖 MEMORY VERSE

And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Mark 4:41

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone

🍷 FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

Miracle stories raise honest questions for teens: Did this really happen? If Jesus can calm storms, why not mine? Don't rush to tidy answers. Take the questions seriously, admit what you don't know, and keep pointing to the disciples' question: Who is this?

🗨️ TALK IT OVER

- 1 The disciples asked Jesus if He cared. Have you ever felt like asking God that? What was going on?
- 2 Why do you think the disciples were more afraid after the storm stopped than during it?
- 3 What honest questions do you have about miracles? Pick one and talk it through together.

🙏 PRAY

Jesus, the wind and waves obey You. When my life feels like a storm, remind me that You're in the boat with me. Help me trust You more than I fear the waves. Amen.

DAY
1

WHEN THE WINE RAN OUT



Read: John 2:1-11 **Go further:** John 1:14

“ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. **John 2:11** ”

Running out of wine at a wedding sounds minor, but for the family it was a real embarrassment. Jesus' mother told the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” That's still the best advice anyone could give you. Jesus had them fill six huge stone jars with water. When the headwaiter tasted it, it had become wine, better than anything served that night. Only the servants knew where it came from. Jesus' first sign wasn't in a temple or a palace. It was at a wedding, and it shows He cares about ordinary moments.

YOUR MOVE *What is one thing you're pretty sure Jesus wants you to do, but you haven't done yet? What's holding you back?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus cares about my ordinary days, and I'll do whatever He tells me.



Pray: Jesus, You showed Your glory at a wedding, in an ordinary moment. Help me trust You with my ordinary days and do whatever You tell me. Amen.

DAY
2

NOT ENOUGH, UNTIL JESUS



Read: John 6:1-14 **Go further:** Mark 6:34-44

“ Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks he distributed them to those who were seated—so also with the fish, as much as they wanted. **John 6:11** ”

Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread for the huge crowd. John says it was a test, since Jesus already knew what He would do. Philip ran the numbers: even months of wages wouldn't buy enough. Andrew found a boy with five barley loaves and two fish, but wondered what good that was for so many. Both of them left Jesus out of the math. In His hands, that small lunch fed thousands, with twelve baskets left over. When what you have feels too small, don't leave Jesus out of the math.

YOUR MOVE *What small things could you put in Jesus' hands this week? Be specific.*

My time _____

My skills _____

My money _____

My words _____

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

What I have may look small, but it isn't small in Jesus' hands.



Pray: Jesus, what I have often feels like too little. I'm putting it in Your hands anyway. Use my time, my gifts, and my faith however You want. Amen.

DAY
3

OUT OF THE BOAT



Read: Matthew 14:22-33 **Go further:** Psalm 46:1-3

“Immediately Jesus spoke to them. ‘Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’” **Matthew 14:27**

Jesus sent the disciples across the lake while He prayed alone. Hours later they were still fighting the wind when they saw Him walking toward them on the water. Peter asked Jesus to call him out, and Jesus said, “Come.” And Peter walked on water. Then he looked at the wind, panicked, and started to sink. “Lord, save me!” he cried. Jesus caught him immediately. Peter’s faith wobbled, but his rescue didn’t depend on how strong his faith was. It depended on how strong Jesus is. Keep your eyes on Him.

YOUR MOVE *What wind are you staring at right now? What would it look like to keep your eyes on Jesus instead?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

My rescue depends on how strong Jesus is, not how strong I am.



Pray: Jesus, when I start to sink, I’ll call out to You. Thank You that You hear me. Help me keep my eyes on You instead of the waves. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent or mentor: When have you felt like you were sinking? How did Jesus meet you there?

DAY
4

THE TAX JESUS DIDN’T OWE



Read: Matthew 17:24-27 **Go further:** Romans 13:7

“...go to the sea, cast in a fishhook, and take the first fish that you catch. When you open its mouth you’ll find a coin.” **Matthew 17:27**

The collectors of the temple tax, a yearly payment for God’s house, asked Peter if Jesus paid it. Jesus asked Peter whether kings tax their own sons. They don’t. And Jesus is God’s Son, so He didn’t owe a tax for His Father’s house. He paid it anyway, so He wouldn’t offend them, and He paid it the way only God could, with a coin in a fish’s mouth. Jesus never backed down from the truth, but He didn’t pick fights He didn’t need. Sometimes following Him means giving up your rights for someone else’s sake.

YOUR MOVE *Check the rights you tend to insist on. Circle one you could give up this week for someone else’s sake.*

- ☐ Getting the last word
- ☐ Being right in every argument
- ☐ Choosing what my friends and I do

- ☐ Getting credit for what I do
- ☐ Having things my way at home
- ☐ Spending my time on my plans

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Like Jesus, I can give up my rights for someone else’s sake.



Pray: Jesus, You’re the Son of God, and You still paid what You didn’t owe. Show me when to let go of my rights so I can love people well. Amen.

DAY
5

WHY JOHN WROTE IT DOWN



Read: John 20:30-31 **Go further:** Luke 1:1-4

“ But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. **John 20:31** ”

Near the end of his Gospel, John steps out from behind the story and talks straight to you. Jesus did far more signs than John had room for. John chose these on purpose, and today's verse tells you why. A sign points past itself. Every miracle you read this week points to who Jesus is: the Messiah, God's promised King, and the Son of God. If you still have questions, that's okay. John wrote for people who wanted good reasons to believe. Keep reading, and bring your questions to Jesus.

YOUR MOVE *If a friend asked why you believe Jesus is the Son of God, what would you say? Write two or three sentences.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Every sign points to Jesus, and my questions are welcome on the way.



Pray: Jesus, I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God. When doubts come, help me bring them to You and keep reading. Thank You for life in Your name. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader or mentor: What doubts about Jesus have you wrestled with? What helped you keep believing?

DAY
6

WHEN ALL YOUR SKILL RUNS OUT



Read: Psalm 107:23-31 **Go further:** Isaiah 43:1-2

“ He stilled the storm to a whisper, and the waves of the sea were hushed. **Psalm 107:29** ”

Long before Jesus was born, a psalm described sailors caught in a storm. Their ship rose to the sky and dropped into the depths, and all their skill was useless. So they cried out to the Lord, and He brought them to the harbor they longed for. Sound familiar? When Jesus hushed the storm on Galilee, His disciples were watching the God of this psalm at work. Some storms don't involve water: a diagnosis, a divorce, a friendship falling apart. Jesus may not stop every one, but He will be with you in it.

YOUR MOVE *Name a storm you or someone you love is in. Be honest about what you're asking God for and where you've seen Him.*

The storm	What I'm asking God for	Where I've seen Him

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus may not stop every storm, but He's with me in every one.



Pray: Lord, You can hush any storm with a word. When I'm out of strength and ideas, I'll cry out to You. Thank You for being with me in every storm. Amen.

EXTRA

HONEST QUESTIONS ABOUT MIRACLES



Maybe you've wondered whether miracles really happen, or why God calms some storms and not others. Good questions don't scare God, and they shouldn't scare you. Here are a few honest questions and some places to start. Look up the references, then write your own question at the bottom and bring it to a mentor.

◆ DID THESE THINGS REALLY HAPPEN?

The Gospel writers didn't present miracles as legends. They named real places and real people, and they relied on eyewitnesses (Luke 1:1-4). Some of those witnesses were beaten for refusing to stop talking about Jesus (Acts 5:40-42). And if God made the wind and the sea, calming them isn't hard for Him. The biggest miracle of all is that Jesus rose from the dead. If that happened, the rest makes sense.

◆ WHY DOESN'T GOD CALM EVERY STORM?

Honestly, we don't always know. Jesus told His followers they would have trouble in this world (John 16:33), and He didn't remove every hard thing from their lives. What He promised was His presence (Matthew 28:20). His miracles were signs of who He is and previews of the day He will make everything new (Revelation 21:4-5). Until then, some storms stop and some don't. He's with you in both.

◆ WHAT IF I STILL HAVE DOUBTS?

Having doubts doesn't mean you have no faith. Thomas refused to believe Jesus had risen until he saw Him, and Jesus came to him (John 20:24-29). A desperate father once told Jesus he believed, then asked Him to help his unbelief (Mark 9:24). You can pray that too. Keep reading, keep asking, and keep bringing your questions to Jesus and to people who love Him.

◆ MY QUESTION

Write one question about Jesus or His miracles that you want to talk through. Then bring it to a parent, youth leader, or mentor.

HE STOPS FOR THE HURTING



✦ *Jesus has power over sickness, sorrow, and even death, and He stops for people who are hurting.*

WEEK KICKOFF

LOUDER THAN THE CROWD

Read first: **Mark 10:46-52**

Trail stop nine follows the dusty roads Jesus walked from village to village. Everywhere He went, sick and hurting people found Him. Some came on their own. Others had to be carried. This week's story happens on the road out of Jericho, where a large crowd was traveling with Jesus toward Jerusalem.

A blind man named Bartimaeus sat beside the road, begging. When he heard Jesus was passing by, he started shouting, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Son of David was a title for the King God had promised. Bartimaeus couldn't see Jesus, but he saw who Jesus was more clearly than most people in that crowd. People told him to be quiet. He shouted louder.

Jesus stopped. "Call him," He said. Bartimaeus threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus. Then Jesus asked him what he wanted. It seems like an obvious question, but Jesus was inviting him to name his need out loud. "I want to see," he said. Jesus told him his faith had saved him, and immediately he could see.

Look at what Bartimaeus did next. He followed Jesus down the road. This week you'll see Jesus heal, forgive, weep with grieving friends, and raise the dead. He doesn't heal every sickness right now, and some prayers won't be answered the way we hope. But Jesus never ignores a hurting person who calls out to Him. And one day He will make everything new.

TRY THIS WEEK

Find one person who's hurting: sick, grieving, or lonely. Stop for them this week the way Jesus stopped for Bartimaeus. Send a note, sit with them, help bring a meal, or just ask how they're really doing. Then pray for them daily.

MEMORY VERSE

Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has saved you." Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

Mark 10:52

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week's healing stories may stir up real pain: a sick grandparent, a loss, prayers that seemed unanswered. Don't hurry past it. Listen first. Be honest that God doesn't heal every sickness in this life, and point to Jesus' compassion and His promise to make all things new.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 People told Bartimaeus to be quiet, and he got louder. What voices tell you not to bother Jesus with your needs?
- 2 If Jesus asked what you want Him to do for you, how would you honestly answer?
- 3 Does anything in your life make this week's healing stories hard to read? Talk about it honestly.

PRAY

Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Thank You for stopping for people who call out to You. Help me stop for hurting people the way You stopped for me. Amen.

DAY
1

FRIENDS WHO DIG THROUGH ROOFS

Read: Mark 2:1-12 **Go further:** Psalm 103:2-3

“ Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” **Mark 2:5**

The house was packed, even the doorway. So four men carried their paralyzed friend onto the roof, dug through it, and lowered him down in front of Jesus. Jesus forgave the man's sins before He did anything else. Some scribes were offended. Only God can forgive sins, they thought. They were right, and Jesus had just done it. To prove His authority, Jesus told the man to take his mat and go home, and he walked out. His deepest need was forgiveness. And he reached Jesus because his friends refused to give up.

YOUR MOVE

The man got to Jesus because of his friends. Who does that for you? Who could you do it for?

People who carry me to Jesus	People I can carry to Jesus

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Only God can forgive sins, and Jesus does. My friends need Him too.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for forgiving my sins. Give me friends who carry me to You, and make me that kind of friend for someone else. Amen.

DAY
2

NOTICED IN THE CROWD

Read: Mark 5:25-34 **Go further:** Psalm 34:18

“ “Daughter,” he said to her, “your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be healed from your affliction.” **Mark 5:34**

For twelve years this woman had been bleeding. She had spent everything on doctors and only gotten worse. Her condition also made her unclean under the law, which meant years of being kept at a distance. So she slipped up behind Jesus in the crowd and touched His clothes, and instantly she was healed. Jesus stopped everything to find her. When she fell at His feet, trembling, He didn't scold her. He called her “Daughter” in front of everyone. Jesus sees the people everyone else overlooks, and that includes you.

YOUR MOVE

Where do you feel unseen right now? What does today's story tell you about how Jesus sees you?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus notices the people everyone else overlooks, and He notices me.



Pray: Jesus, You stopped for a woman everyone else kept at a distance. Thank You for seeing me. Help me see the people around me who feel invisible. Amen.

DAY
3

TOO LATE FOR JESUS?



Read: Mark 5:35-43 **Go further:** Mark 5:21-24

“When Jesus overheard what was said, he told the synagogue leader, ‘Don’t be afraid. Only believe.’” **Mark 5:36**

Jairus had begged Jesus to heal his dying daughter. Then Jesus stopped for the woman in the crowd, and the delay must have been agonizing. While Jesus was still speaking to her, messengers arrived with the worst news. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” But Jesus spoke straight to Jairus’s fear. At the house, mourners laughed when He said the girl was only asleep. He took her hand and told her to get up, and she did. Everyone else said it was too late. With Jesus, death doesn’t get the last word.

✎ YOUR MOVE *When you’ve prayed and it felt like Jesus was too late, how did you feel? Circle any that fit.*

Trusting anyway

Frustrated

Still hopeful

Angry

Numb

Afraid

Forgotten

Confused

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Even when it looks too late, I can trust Jesus.



Pray: Jesus, when it feels like You’ve come too late, help me trust You instead of my fear. I’m handing You the things I can’t fix. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Ask a youth leader or mentor: How does hope in Jesus change the way Christians grieve?

DAY
4

GOD IN TEARS



Read: John 11:32-37 **Go further:** John 11:17-27

“Jesus wept. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’” **John 11:35-36**

Jesus knew He was about to raise Lazarus. He had said so. So why cry? Because love grieves. When Mary fell at His feet and said her brother wouldn’t have died if He had been there, Jesus didn’t correct her or hurry her along. He saw her crying and was deeply moved, and then He wept too. Some people think strong Christians shouldn’t cry, or that sadness means weak faith. Jesus proves otherwise. You can bring Him your grief, your questions, even your if-onlys. He understands, and He cares.

✎ YOUR MOVE *Write to Jesus about something that makes you sad right now, if-onlys included. Then consider sharing it with a trusted adult.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Grief isn’t weak faith. Jesus cares about what breaks my heart.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for weeping with Your friends. I’m bringing You what makes me sad, if-onlys and all. Thank You for caring and staying close. Amen.

DAY
5

FOUR DAYS DEAD



Read: John 11:38-44 **Go further:** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

“ After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” **John 11:43**

Lazarus had been in the tomb four days when Jesus told them to move the stone. Martha objected. By now there would be a stench. Jesus reminded her that if she believed, she would see God’s glory. So they moved it. Jesus thanked His Father out loud, for the crowd’s sake. Then He called into the tomb, and the dead man came out, still wrapped in linen strips. Jesus doesn’t just teach about life after death. He has power over death. One day He will call every believer out of the grave too.

YOUR MOVE *True or false? Check your answers against today’s reading.*

Lazarus had been dead for four days.

T F

Martha was eager to open the tomb.

T F

Jesus prayed so the crowd would believe the Father sent Him.

T F

Lazarus came out still wrapped in linen strips.

T F

Death is stronger than Jesus.

T F

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus is stronger than death, and everyone who trusts Him will live.



Pray: Jesus, You called Lazarus out of the grave. You are the resurrection and the life. I trust You with my life, and with the people I love. Amen.

DAY
6

WHERE ARE THE NINE?



Read: Luke 17:11-19 **Go further:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“ But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice, gave glory to God. **Luke 17:15**

Ten men with leprosy, a disease that forced them to live apart, called out for mercy from a distance. Jesus sent them to show themselves to the priests, who could declare them clean. On the way, all ten were healed. Only one turned around, fell at Jesus’ feet, and thanked Him. And he was a Samaritan, an outsider. Nine got what they wanted and moved on. One came back for Jesus Himself. It’s easy to pray hard when you need something, then forget to come back when God answers. Gratitude keeps you close to the Giver.

YOUR MOVE *Be the one who comes back. Write one thing for each, then thank God for them out loud.*

A prayer He answered

A person He gave me

Something ordinary

Something about Jesus

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I want to come back to Jesus with thanks, not just requests.



Pray: Jesus, I’m quick to ask and slow to thank. Thank You for all You’ve done for me, most of all for saving me. Keep me coming back to You. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor: What’s one prayer God answered for you that you almost forgot to thank Him for?

EXTRA

WHEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS HURTING



Jesus stopped for hurting people. You can too. You don't need perfect words or answers. Most of the time, showing up matters more than anything you say. Check off the ones you try this month, and add your own ideas in the notes.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Text them to say you're thinking about them and praying. | ☐ Pray for them by name every day this week. |
| ☐ Sit with them, even if neither of you says much. | ☐ Listen more than you talk. |
| ☐ Skip easy answers. It's okay not to know what to say. | ☐ Help bring a meal, run an errand, or do a chore. |
| ☐ Remember hard dates, like a birthday or anniversary after a loss. | ☐ Invite them along to youth group, a game, or lunch. |
| ☐ Keep checking in after everyone else has moved on. | ☐ Write a note with a verse that has helped you. |
| ☐ Ask a parent or youth leader how you can help. | |

MY NOTES

i If a friend talks about hurting themselves or someone else, don't keep it secret. Tell a trusted adult right away. That's not betraying them. It's loving them. If you're the one hurting, tell someone too.

A SEAT AT HIS TABLE



✦ *Jesus went looking for the people everyone else avoided, because He came to seek and save the lost.*

WEEK KICKOFF

OUT ON A LIMB

Read first: **Luke 19:1-10**

Trail stop ten is a table. Some of the most important moments in Jesus' life happened over a meal. He ate with religious leaders, with close friends, and with people nobody else wanted to be seen with. The religious crowd noticed, and they didn't like it. This week's story starts in Jericho.

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, and he was rich, probably from overcharging his neighbors for years. When Jesus came through town, Zacchaeus wanted to see Him, but he was short and couldn't see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree, which is not a normal thing for a wealthy, important man to do.

Jesus stopped under the tree, looked up, and called him by name. "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down," He said. Jesus was inviting Himself over for the day. Zacchaeus scrambled down and welcomed Him joyfully. But the crowd grumbled that Jesus had gone to stay with a sinner. Nobody in Jericho would have picked Zacchaeus. Jesus picked him before he changed a thing.

Then the change came. Zacchaeus promised to give half of everything he owned to the poor and to pay back four times what he had cheated anyone out of. He wasn't trying to earn Jesus' welcome. He already had it. Grace changed him from the inside. Jesus said salvation had come to that house, and He summed up His whole mission in this week's memory verse. Jesus is still looking for lost people. He found you, and He's sending you to the people others overlook.



TRY THIS WEEK

Save a seat this week. Sit with someone who usually eats alone, invite a new student into your group, or welcome a visitor at church. Learn one real thing about them. Then pray for them by name.

MEMORY VERSE

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week Jesus eats with people others avoided. Teens notice who sits where and who gets left out, and some feel like outsiders themselves. Ask who is on the edges at their school, and share how Jesus' welcome has changed who you make room for.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus, but Jesus was already looking for him. What does that tell you about Jesus?
- 2 Why do you think the crowd was so bothered by who Jesus ate with? Who would they grumble about today?
- 3 Who sits alone or gets left out where you are? What would it take to make room for them?



PRAY

Jesus, You came to seek and save the lost, and You found me. Give me eyes for the people others overlook, and the courage to make room for them. Amen.

DAY

1

NICODEMUS AFTER DARK



Read: John 3:9-17 **Go further:** Numbers 21:4-9

“ For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. **John 3:16**

Nicodemus was a respected teacher, but Jesus’ words about new birth left him asking, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered with a story he knew. When poisonous snakes struck Israel in the wilderness, God had Moses lift a bronze snake on a pole, and anyone who looked at it lived. Jesus said He must be lifted up the same way. He meant the cross. Then look at verse 17. God didn’t send His Son to condemn the world, but to save it. If you’ve pictured God as mostly angry with you, read that again.

YOUR MOVE *Rewrite John 3:16 in your own words, as if you were explaining it to a friend who has never heard it.*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
God sent His Son to save me, not to condemn me.

Pray: Father, thank You for loving the world enough to give Your one and only Son. I believe in Him. Help me live like someone who is loved, not condemned. Amen.

DAY

2

THIRSTY AT NOON



Read: John 4:5-15 **Go further:** Isaiah 55:1-2

“ But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. **John 4:14**

Jesus was worn out from walking, so He sat down by a well at noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. She was stunned. Jews and Samaritans didn’t associate, and Jewish teachers didn’t usually talk with women in public. Jesus crossed both lines. Then He told her that anyone who drinks well water gets thirsty again, but He offers living water. Everybody’s thirsty for something: attention, approval, love, escape. The things we chase satisfy for a while. Only Jesus fills the thirst underneath.

YOUR MOVE *Be honest. When you feel empty, where do you go to fill up? How does it leave you feeling afterward?*

Where I go when I’m empty	How it leaves me feeling

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
Everything else leaves me thirsty again. Jesus gives water that lasts.

Pray: Jesus, You know what I’m really thirsty for. When I run to other things to fill me up, bring me back to You. Only You can satisfy me. Amen.

DAY

3

SHE LEFT HER WATER JAR



Read: John 4:27-30, 39-42 **Go further:** John 4:34-38

“ Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, ‘He told me everything I ever did.’ ” **John 4:39**

The woman left her water jar at the well and hurried back into town. Her message was simple: come meet a man who told her everything she ever did. She wasn't an expert. She even ended with a question: “Could this be the Messiah?” But her honest story brought people streaming out to Jesus. He stayed two days, and many more believed, not just because of her words but because they heard Him for themselves. You don't need all the answers to tell people what Jesus has done for you.

YOUR MOVE

Got your story in three parts: life before Jesus, how you met Him, and what's different now.

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I don't need every answer to tell people what Jesus has done.



Pray: Jesus, You changed this woman's life, and she couldn't keep quiet. Give me the courage to tell my story simply and point people to You. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Practice telling your story to a parent, youth leader, or mentor. Ask what was clearest.

DAY

4

LIKE A LITTLE CHILD



Read: Mark 10:13-16 **Go further:** Matthew 18:1-4

“ Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ” **Mark 10:14**

People brought little children to Jesus so He could touch them, and the disciples tried to send them away. They figured Jesus had more important people to see. Jesus was indignant. He took the children in His arms and blessed them. Then He said the kingdom of God has to be received “like a little child.” Little kids don't earn gifts. They just receive them. As you get older and more independent, don't outgrow that. You'll never be too grown-up, too good, or too busy to need Jesus, and He's never too busy for you.

YOUR MOVE

Which of these make it hard for you to receive God's love like a gift? Check any that fit.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Feeling like I have to earn it | ☐ Pride: I want to do it myself |
| ☐ Thinking I'm too far gone | ☐ Being too busy to slow down |
| ☐ Worrying what others will think | ☐ Feeling like I've outgrown it |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

God's kingdom is a gift I receive, not a prize I earn.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for welcoming the ones others pushed aside. Keep me from trying to earn Your love. Help me receive it like a child, with empty hands. Amen.

DAY
5

THE UNINVITED GUEST

 **Read:** Luke 7:36-50 Go further: Psalm 32:1-5

“ Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little. **Luke 7:47**

A Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to dinner. Then a woman known as a sinner came in, stood at Jesus’ feet weeping, washed them with her tears, and poured perfume on them. Simon silently judged them both, and Jesus knew it. So He told a story about two debtors, one forgiven a huge debt and one a small one. Which would love more? Simon thought he owed God very little. The woman knew how much she’d been forgiven. The more you see your need for grace, the more you’ll love Jesus.

YOUR MOVE *Without writing details, how does knowing you’re forgiven change how you feel about Jesus? How could you show Him love this week?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Knowing how much I’ve been forgiven makes me love Jesus more.



Pray: Jesus, You forgave every one of my sins, not just the small ones. I love You. Keep me from judging others, and help me show my love for You today. Amen.

DAY
6

REST FOR THE WORN OUT

 **Read:** Matthew 11:28-30 Go further: Isaiah 40:28-31

“ Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **Matthew 11:28**

Maybe you feel tired all the time: early alarms, practice, homework past midnight, drama in the group chat. Jesus’ invitation is for that kind of tired. He also mentions a yoke, the wooden beam that let two animals share a load. Following Jesus doesn’t mean you’ll never carry anything heavy. It means you don’t carry it alone, and the One beside you is gentle and humble in heart. Some burdens aren’t about being busy: guilt, shame, trying to be good enough. He carries those too. Rest starts when you stop carrying what only He can.

YOUR MOVE *List what you’re carrying right now, busy stuff and heart stuff. Then pray through the list, handing each one to Jesus.*

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I don’t have to carry it alone. Jesus gives me rest.



Pray: Jesus, I’m tired, and some of what I’m carrying isn’t mine to carry. I’m coming to You. Teach me Your gentle way, and give my soul rest. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a mentor: What do you do when you’re worn out, physically or spiritually? How does Jesus give you rest?



Jesus ate with people everyone else avoided. His critics complained that He welcomed sinners and ate with them (Luke 15:1-2). It was supposed to be an insult. If you've ever felt like an outsider, it's the best news you could hear. Look up the stories below, then think about who needs a seat at your table.

◆ WHO JESUS MADE ROOM FOR

- Levi and a houseful of tax collectors (Luke 5:27-32)
- Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector nobody trusted (Luke 19:1-10)
- Nicodemus, a religious leader with questions, at night (John 3:1-17)
- A Samaritan woman drawing water at a well (John 4:5-42)
- A woman known as a sinner, at a Pharisee's dinner (Luke 7:36-50)
- Little children the disciples tried to send away (Mark 10:13-16)

◆ WHERE ARE THE EMPTY SEATS?

Think about the places you go: the lunch table, the bus, practice, youth group, your group chats. Who sits on the edges? Who never gets invited? Write their initials here.

◆ WHY IT'S HARD

Making room costs something. You might lose a little status, or people might wonder why you're hanging out with them. That's exactly what happened to Jesus. He decided people were worth it. Being friendly doesn't mean going along with what's wrong. Jesus welcomed sinners and still called them to turn to God.

◆ MY PLAN

Pick one person from your list. Write one thing you'll do this week to make room for them. Then pray for them by name every day.

STORIES THAT FIND YOU



★ *Jesus told everyday stories that reveal God's heart and show us where we stand.*

WEEK KICKOFF

STILL A LONG WAY OFF

Read first: **Luke 15:11-24**

This stop is the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Once the crowd grew so big that Jesus taught from a boat. He taught in parables: short stories about ordinary things like farming, money, and family, each carrying a truth about God. Jesus' parables are easy to remember and hard to shake.

Take the one about a man and his two sons. The younger demanded his share of the family estate early, a huge insult to his father. He moved away and wasted it all. When famine hit, he ended up feeding pigs and wishing he could eat their food. Finally he came to his senses and started home with a speech ready: he had sinned, and he only hoped to be hired as a worker.

But his father spotted him far down the road, and his heart went out to him. He ran, hugged his son, and kissed him. The son started his speech, but he never got to the part about being a hired worker. His father was already calling for the best robe, a ring, sandals, and a feast. The son came home hoping to be a servant. He was welcomed as a son.

This is what God is like. He doesn't wait with His arms crossed for you to earn your way back. He runs to meet anyone who turns toward Him. Our memory verse says God blesses those who "hear the word of God and keep it." So don't just read Jesus' stories this week. Let them read you.

TRY THIS WEEK

Rewrite one of this week's parables as if it happened in your town today. Keep Jesus' point, but change the details. Then tell your version to a friend, parent, or mentor, and ask them what they think it means.

MEMORY VERSE

...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Luke 11:28

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

Jesus' parables are short, but they go deep. Many teens see themselves in the younger son, the older son, or both. Ask which brother they relate to, and listen before you correct. If you have your own story of coming home to God, tell it this week.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 The younger son planned a speech to earn his way back. Why do we try to earn God's love?
- 2 The father ran before hearing any apology. What does that tell you about God?
- 3 Have you ever felt too far gone for God? What would you tell a friend who feels that way?

PRAY

Father, thank You for running to meet me when I turned toward You. Help me hear Your Word and keep it, and welcome others the way You welcomed me. Amen.

DAY
1

WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU?



Read: Matthew 13:3-9 **Go further:** Matthew 13:18-23

“ Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown. **Matthew 13:8**

Farmers in Jesus' day scattered seed by hand, so it landed everywhere. Some hit a hard path, and birds grabbed it. Some shot up in shallow, rocky soil, then withered because it had no root. Some got choked out by thorns. When Jesus explained the story later, the seed stood for God's word and the soils for different kinds of listeners. Notice that the seed never changed. The ground did. Stress, busyness, and a phone that never stops buzzing can crowd out what God says. Good soil isn't a perfect heart. It's an open one.

YOUR MOVE *Which kind of ground sounds most like you lately? What tends to crowd out God's word for you?*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

The seed is always good. I want my heart to be open ground.



Pray: Lord, break up the hard places in my heart and pull out the thorns. Let Your word sink in deep and bear fruit in me. Amen.

DAY
2

IT STARTS SMALL



Read: Matthew 13:31-33 **Go further:** Mark 4:26-29

“ It's the smallest of all the seeds, but when grown, it's taller than the garden plants and becomes a tree... **Matthew 13:32**

Jesus compared God's kingdom, His rule in people's lives, to two tiny things. A mustard seed starts almost too small to see. A little yeast disappears into a huge batch of dough, then works through all of it. The kingdom started the same way, with Jesus and a handful of ordinary followers. Now His followers fill churches in nearly every nation on earth. So don't write off small things, like a quick prayer, one honest conversation, or a quiet choice to do right. God loves to grow big things from small beginnings.

YOUR MOVE *Plant a few small seeds this week. Check the ones you'll try, and add your own.*

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Pray for a friend by name | ☐ Text someone who seems left out |
| ☐ Read a chapter of John | ☐ Thank a teacher or coach |
| ☐ Invite someone to church or youth group | ☐ Tell someone one thing Jesus has done for me |
| ☐ _____ | |

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

God can grow something big from one small, faithful step.



Pray: Jesus, my King, Your kingdom is still growing. Use my small words and quiet choices this week to show Your love where I live. Amen.

DAY
3

WORTH EVERYTHING



Read: Matthew 13:44-46 **Go further:** Philippians 3:7-8

“ The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.
Matthew 13:44

Picture a merchant who has spent years hunting for fine pearls. One day he finds the one, a pearl worth more than everything he owns. He sells it all to buy that pearl, and he's glad to do it. These stories aren't about buying your way into God's kingdom. Salvation is a free gift. They're about value. Once you see who Jesus really is, everything else starts to look small next to Him. Following Him may cost you something: popularity, comfort, a plan you had. He is worth it.

YOUR MOVE *Circle anything you'd find hard to put second to Jesus. Be honest.*

Free time

A relationship

Money

My phone

Grades

Sports

Popularity

My plans

Comfort

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

*Jesus isn't one good thing among many.
He's the treasure.*



Pray: Jesus, nothing I own or want compares to You. When something else starts taking Your place, pull my heart back to You. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor what following Jesus has cost them, and whether He has been worth it.

DAY
4

WORTH GOING AFTER



Read: Luke 15:3-7 **Go further:** Ezekiel 34:11-12

“ When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders... **Luke 15:5**

Jesus told this story because religious leaders were complaining that He spent time with sinners. If you had a hundred sheep and lost one, He asked, wouldn't you go after it? By the numbers, one out of a hundred isn't much. But the shepherd doesn't think in numbers. He searches until he finds it, then invites the neighbors over to celebrate. Jesus said there's joy like that in heaven whenever one sinner repents, which means turning from sin back to God. You are not a number to God. He came looking for you.

YOUR MOVE *Who do you know who seems far from God? Write their first names or initials, and pray for them this week.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

I'm not a number to God. He came looking for me.



Pray: Good Shepherd, thank You for coming after me when I was lost. Go after my friends who are far from You, and use me to help bring them home. Amen.

DAY
5

THE OTHER LOST SON



Read: Luke 15:25-32 **Go further:** Luke 15:1-2

“ But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. **Luke 15:32** ”

The younger son's story ends with a party. The older son's ends with a question. He came in from the field, heard music, and learned it was for his brother. Furious, he refused to go in. He had slaved for years, he complained, and never even gotten a goat to party with his friends. He was keeping score. Grace is kindness no one can earn, and to him it felt unfair. Still, his father went out and pleaded with him too. Jesus never says whether he went in. That question is left for us.

YOUR MOVE *Whose good news or second chance is hard for you to celebrate? Why?*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Grace isn't earned, so I'll stop keeping score.



Pray: Father, forgive me for the times I keep score and act like I've earned Your love. Give me a heart that celebrates when anyone comes home. Amen.

DAY
6

THE ONE WHO STOPPED



Read: Luke 10:25-37 **Go further:** Micah 6:8

“ The one who showed mercy to him,” he said. Then Jesus told him, “Go and do the same.” **Luke 10:37** ”

A scholar of God's law asked Jesus to define the word neighbor. He was looking for a limit, a line where his love could stop. Jesus answered with a story. Robbers beat a man and left him half dead. Two religious leaders saw him and crossed to the other side of the road. Then came a Samaritan, someone most Jews looked down on. He stopped, bandaged the man's wounds, and paid for his care. Jesus turned the question around. The real question isn't who counts as your neighbor. It's whether you will be one.

YOUR MOVE *Who do you tend to pass by? Think about school, work, church, and online.*

People I tend to pass by	One way I could stop

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

My neighbor is anyone God puts in my path.



Pray: Lord, You stopped for me when I was helpless. Open my eyes to the people I usually walk past, and give me the courage to stop. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: With a parent, youth leader, or mentor, name someone in your community who gets passed by. What could you do together?



Jesus’ parables are windows and mirrors. Look through them and you see what God is like. Look into them and you see yourself. Fill in a row for each story from this week. Use the tips if you get stuck.

- Ask who Jesus was talking to. The audience often explains the story.
- Look for the surprise. Something in each story would have shocked the first listeners.
- Ask what the story shows about God before you ask what it asks of you.
- Find the character you’re most like. Be honest.

The story	What it shows about God	Where I see myself
The four soils		
Mustard seed and yeast		
Treasure and pearl		
The lost sheep		
The younger son		
The older son		
The Good Samaritan		

WEEK
12WHO DO YOU SAY
HE IS?

★ *Everyone must decide who Jesus is, and in John's Gospel He tells us Himself.*

WEEK KICKOFF

MORE THAN A GOOD TEACHER

Read first: **Matthew 16:13-17**

Our trail heads north to Caesarea Philippi (sez-uh-REE-uh fih-LIP-eye), a city near the foot of Mount Hermon. It was named to honor Caesar, the Roman emperor, and the area was known for shrines to false gods. Of all places, this is where Jesus asked His disciples who people thought He was.

The answers sounded flattering. Some said John the Baptist, back from the dead. Others said Elijah, Jeremiah, or another prophet. Those are big names, but they all made Jesus a great man and nothing more. People still do that. They call Him a good teacher or a wise example. Then Jesus made it personal: But what about you? Who do you say I am?

Peter answered for the group. Jesus is the Messiah, he said, "the Son of the living God." Messiah means the Anointed One, the King God had promised to send. And as God's Son, Jesus shares His Father's very nature. Jesus told Peter he hadn't figured that out on his own. God the Father had shown him.

This week, Jesus answers the question Himself. In John's Gospel, He describes Himself with seven "I am" statements, echoing the name God revealed to Moses at the burning bush. Bread, light, a shepherd, a vine: each one shows you something about who He is. Everyone answers Jesus' question eventually, even if the answer is silence. What's yours?

TRY THIS WEEK

Each day this week, write that day's "I am" saying on a card and put it where you'll see it often, like your mirror, locker, or bedroom door. By the end of the week, you'll have six reminders of who Jesus is.

MEMORY VERSE

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

- ☐ I can say it from memory
- ☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week asks the biggest question in the Gospels: who is Jesus? Students hear many answers, from classmates, online, and sometimes at home. Ask what they've heard people say about Jesus, and what they believe now. Then share your own answer and why you hold it.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 What have you heard people say about who Jesus is, at school, online, or at home?
- 2 Why isn't calling Jesus a good teacher enough? What else did He claim to be?
- 3 How would you answer Jesus' question in your own words right now?

PRAY

Jesus, Peter was right. You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. I don't want to just know facts about You. I want to know You and make You known. Amen.

DAY

1

STILL HUNGRY?



Read: John 6:32-35 **Go further:** John 6:47-51

“I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.” **John 6:35**

The day after Jesus fed thousands with a boy’s lunch, the crowd tracked Him down, hoping for more. They brought up the manna, the bread God sent from heaven in Moses’ day. Jesus said His Father now offers the true bread from heaven. Their reply sounded almost right: “Sir, give us this bread always.” They were still thinking about food, but Jesus meant Himself. Everyone tries to fill the ache inside with something: attention, success, a relationship, one more scroll. None of it lasts. Only Jesus satisfies the hunger underneath.

YOUR MOVE *Be honest: what do you reach for when you feel empty? How long does it actually help?*

What I reach for	How long it helps

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
Nothing else can fill the hunger only Jesus can satisfy.

Pray: Jesus, only You can satisfy me. When I feel restless or empty, turn me toward You before I reach for anything else. Amen.

DAY

2

LIGHT FOR THE TRAIL



Read: John 8:12 **Go further:** John 9:1-7

“I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.” **John 8:12**

This verse is the theme of our whole trail. Jesus said it in the temple courts, where giant lamps lit up the night during the Festival of Shelters. In the Bible, darkness often stands for sin, confusion, and being lost. Following Jesus doesn’t mean you’ll never have hard days. It means you’ll never have to find your way alone. When you don’t know what’s right, where you fit, or what’s next, He lights the next step. You don’t need the whole trail lit. You need to stay close to Him.

YOUR MOVE *Where do you need Jesus to light the next step? Write one thing for each.*

A decision: _____

A relationship: _____

A worry: _____

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**
I don’t need the whole trail lit. I need to follow Jesus.

Pray: Jesus, Light of the World, I don’t always know which way to go. Light my next step, and help me follow You closely. Amen.

DAY
3

NOT A HIRED HAND



Read: John 10:11-15 **Go further:** John 10:7-9

“ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **John 10:11** ”

Some people care about you only as long as it's easy. A hired hand watching sheep was like that. When a wolf showed up, he ran, because the sheep weren't his. Jesus is the opposite. He stays when things get dangerous. He also knows His sheep, as closely as He and the Father know each other. That means Jesus knows you completely, including the parts you hide, and He still chose to lay down His life for you. Nobody pays Him to love you. He just does.

YOUR MOVE *Jesus knows you completely and loves you anyway. Which part of that is hardest for you to believe? Why?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus knows everything about me and loves me anyway.



Pray: Good Shepherd, You know me better than anyone, and You gave Your life for me. Teach me to trust Your love and recognize Your voice. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor to tell you about a time Jesus cared for them like a good shepherd.

DAY
4

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?



Read: John 11:23-27 **Go further:** 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

“ I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. **John 11:25** ”

Martha's brother had been dead four days when Jesus arrived. She believed Lazarus would rise again at the resurrection, when God raises the dead at the end of time. That was true, but it felt far away. Jesus brought that hope close. Resurrection isn't only a future event. It's a Person, and He was standing in front of her. Then He asked, "Do you believe this?" Martha was still grieving and didn't have everything figured out. But she said yes to Him. Faith isn't pretending you don't hurt. It's trusting Jesus while you do.

YOUR MOVE *Martha told Jesus what she believed. Check the ones you can say too. Circle any you have questions about.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God | ☐ He died to pay for my sins |
| ☐ He rose from the dead | ☐ He gives eternal life to all who trust Him |
| ☐ He is with me right now | ☐ He is coming back |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Because Jesus is the resurrection, death doesn't get the last word.



Pray: Jesus, You have power over death. When I grieve or fear dying, remind me that You have the final word. Amen.

DAY
5

THE WAY, NOT A WAY

A

Read: John 14:1-6 **Go further:** Acts 4:12

“ In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? **John 14:2**

It was Jesus’ last night with His disciples, and His talk of leaving had them rattled. Thomas admitted what the others were probably thinking. They had no idea where Jesus was going, let alone how to get there. Jesus didn’t hand him a map. He said He is the way. Some people call that narrow. But if only one bridge crosses a flooded river, telling people where it is isn’t mean. It’s the most loving thing you can do. Jesus doesn’t just point the way to the Father. He is the way.

YOUR MOVE

A friend says all religions lead to God. How could you answer with both truth and kindness?

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Jesus isn’t one way among many. He is the way to the Father.



Pray: Jesus, You are the only way to the Father, and You opened it for me. Give me courage and kindness when I talk about You with friends who believe differently. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor how they talk about Jesus being the only way with friends who believe differently.

DAY
6

STAY CONNECTED



Read: John 15:1-8 **Go further:** John 15:9-11

“ I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. **John 15:5**

Branches don’t strain to make grapes. They stay attached, and the fruit comes from the life flowing through the vine. The fruit Jesus is talking about is a life that looks more like His: love, patience, honesty, courage. You don’t produce that by gritting your teeth. You remain in Him, which means staying close through His Word, prayer, obedience, and time with His people. Jesus also said the Father prunes fruitful branches. Sometimes a hard season is God cutting away what’s in the way, so something better can grow.

YOUR MOVE

Sketch a vine with your name on one branch. Label what keeps you connected and what fruit you hope for.

draw here

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

My job isn’t to strain. It’s to stay close to Jesus.



Pray: Jesus, keep me connected to You like a branch to the vine. Grow Your love, patience, and courage in me, so my life brings the Father glory. Amen.



At the burning bush, God gave Moses His name: I AM (Exodus 3:14), the One who always has been and always will be. In John's Gospel, Jesus used "I am" to tell us who He is. On each card, write what that saying means for you right now.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:35

Jesus is what my soul is really hungry for. Everything else I chase wears off. He satisfies.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12

When I follow Jesus, I don't walk through the dark alone. He lights the next step, even when I can't see the whole trail.

THE GATE

John 10:7-9

Jesus is the way into God's flock. Through Him I'm brought in, kept safe, and cared for.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:11

Jesus knows me completely, leads me faithfully, and laid down His life for me.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

John 11:25

Death isn't stronger than Jesus. All who trust Him will live, even after they die.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

John 14:6

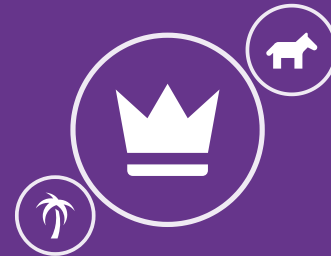
Jesus doesn't just show the way to the Father. He is the way, and everything He says is true.

THE TRUE VINE

John 15:1-5

Apart from Jesus I can't produce real fruit. Staying connected to Him is how my life grows.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF KING



✦ *Jesus is a King unlike any other, one who rides a donkey and washes feet.*

WEEK KICKOFF

THE KING ON A BORROWED COLT

Read first: **Luke 19:28-40**

Our trail climbs to Jerusalem now. It was almost Passover, the feast remembering how God freed Israel from slavery in Egypt, and the roads were packed with pilgrims. Near the Mount of Olives, just east of the city, Jesus sent two disciples to borrow a young donkey no one had ever ridden. If anyone asked, they were to say the Lord needed it.

What happened next looked like a royal parade. The disciples threw their coats on the colt, Jesus climbed on, and others laid coats down on the road ahead of Him. As He started down the hill, the whole crowd of His followers began shouting praise to God for every miracle they had witnessed. They called Him the King who comes in the Lord's name.

Some Pharisees, strict religious leaders, told Jesus to quiet His followers. He said that if they kept silent, the stones would shout instead. Jesus really is the King. But notice how He came: not on a warhorse leading troops, but on a borrowed donkey. He came to make peace with God possible, and He knew it would cost Him His life.

This week follows Jesus' final days in Jerusalem. You'll watch Him clear the temple, answer His critics, accept a costly gift, kneel to wash His disciples' feet, and eat one last meal with them. Through it all, He loved His own to the end. Our memory verse is His command to love each other the way He loved us.

TRY THIS WEEK

Do one humble, behind-the-scenes job this week that no one asked you to do and no one will thank you for. Don't post about it or mention it. Just do it for Jesus, the King who served.

MEMORY VERSE

I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.

John 13:34

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone

FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This week and next follow Jesus' last days. Students may wonder how Jesus went from cheering crowds to a cross in less than a week. Talk honestly about how quickly people change, including us. Questions about the Lord's Supper at PGBC are good ones to bring to Pastor James.

TALK IT OVER

- 1 If you'd been in that crowd, would you have cheered, stayed quiet, or sided with the critics? Why?
- 2 Why do you think Jesus chose a donkey instead of a war horse?
- 3 What kind of king do people expect Jesus to be today? What kind of King is He?

PRAY

King Jesus, You came humbly to serve and to save. I want You to be King of my whole life. Teach me to love others the way You have loved me. Amen.

DAY
1

NOT ON A WAR HORSE

 **Read:** Zechariah 9:9 Go further: Matthew 21:4-5

“ Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey...
Zechariah 9:9

Around 500 years before Jesus' birth, the prophet Zechariah told Jerusalem to celebrate, because its King was coming. He would be righteous and victorious, words that sound like a conqueror. Then came the twist: He would arrive humble, riding a donkey's colt. Conquering kings rode war horses. A donkey was a working animal, a ride that signaled peace, not war. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt, He was fulfilling that promise on purpose. He was claiming to be the King and showing what kind of King He is.

YOUR MOVE *Where do you have some influence? How could you use it to serve instead of to impress?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus is a King who uses His power to serve.



Pray: King Jesus, You could have come with an army, but You came in peace. Rule my life, and teach me to use whatever power I have to serve. Amen.

DAY
2

OVERTURNED TABLES

 **Read:** Mark 11:15-18 Go further: Isaiah 56:6-7

“ He was teaching them: “Is it not written, My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of thieves!” **Mark 11:17**

The temple's outer court was the one place where people from other nations could come to pray to Israel's God. Now it was a crowded, noisy market, full of money changers and dove sellers taking advantage of worshipers. Jesus overturned their tables and shut it down. This wasn't a temper tantrum. It was holy anger at people being kept from God. The religious leaders began looking for a way to kill Him. Jesus still cares about true worship. Is anything crowding it out of your life, or making it harder for others to find God?

YOUR MOVE *What crowds out real worship for you? Circle any that fit.*

Rushing in late

A grudge

Worrying what others think

Being tired

My phone

Daydreaming

Distractions around me

Going through the motions

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus wants real worship, with nothing crowding Him out.



Pray: Lord Jesus, overturn anything in my life that crowds You out. Make my worship real, and never let me stand in the way of someone finding You. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor what helps them really worship, not just show up.

DAY
3

A BEAUTIFUL WASTE



Read: Mark 14:3-9 **Go further:** Romans 12:1

“Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble thing for me.” **Mark 14:6**

Days before the cross, Jesus was at dinner in Bethany when a woman broke open a jar of expensive perfume and poured it on His head. John's Gospel tells us she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. The perfume was worth about a year's wages, and some guests were indignant about the waste. But Jesus said she had prepared His body for burial, and that her story would be told wherever the gospel went. Here you are, reading it. Love poured out on Jesus can look wasteful to others. It never is.

✍ YOUR MOVE *What could you give Jesus this week that might look like a waste to others: time, money, reputation, sleep?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Nothing I pour out for Jesus is wasted.



Pray: Jesus, nothing I could give You is too much. Help me love You with everything I have, even when others don't understand. Amen.

DAY
4

WHOSE IMAGE IS ON YOU?



Read: Mark 12:13-17 **Go further:** Genesis 1:27

“Jesus told them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they were utterly amazed at him. **Mark 12:17**

The questioners opened with flattery, but it was a trap. Was it right for God's people to pay Rome's taxes? If Jesus said yes, the crowd would see Him as a traitor. If He said no, Rome could arrest Him as a rebel. Jesus asked for a coin, then asked whose image was stamped on it. Caesar's, they said. His answer slipped the trap completely. But don't miss the deeper point. The coin carried Caesar's image. You carry God's, because He made you to reflect Him. Give the government what it's owed. Give God yourself.

✍ YOUR MOVE *You belong to God. What could giving Him each of these look like this week?*

	What that could look like
My time	
My money	
My body	
My words	

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I carry God's image, so all of me belongs to Him.



Pray: God, I carry Your image. I don't want to give You leftovers. Take all of me: my time, my money, my body, and my words. Amen.

DAY
5

THE KING WITH A TOWEL



Read: John 13:1-15 **Go further:** Mark 10:45

“ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you.
John 13:15

John says Jesus knew the Father had put everything into His hands. So what did He do with all that authority? He wrapped a towel around His waist and washed His disciples' dirty feet, a servant's job. He even washed the feet of Judas, who would betray Him that night. Peter refused at first, but Jesus said Peter had no part with Him unless he let Jesus wash him. Before we can serve like Jesus, we have to let Him serve us, cleaning what we can't clean ourselves. Then we pass it on.

YOUR MOVE *Pick one way to serve like Jesus this week, somewhere it won't get you noticed.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Help at home without being asked | ☐ Clean up after practice or an event |
| ☐ Sit with someone who eats alone | ☐ Help a classmate who's struggling |
| ☐ Serve someone who's hard to like | ☐ Do a job nobody else wants |
| ☐ _____ | |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus served me first. Now I get to serve others.



Pray: Jesus, You washed feet with the whole universe in Your hands. Wash me clean, then make me humble enough to serve anyone, even people who are hard to love. Amen.

DAY
6

A MEAL TO REMEMBER



Read: Luke 22:14-20 **Go further:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

“ And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **Luke 22:19**

Passover was the meal where Israel remembered how God rescued them from Egypt. A lamb died, and its blood marked the doors of the families God spared. Jesus took that meal and gave it new meaning. After supper He lifted the cup and called it the new covenant in His blood, God's binding promise to His people. Jesus was about to become the Lamb whose death rescues His people from sin. Each time our church takes the Lord's Supper, we look back at His death and forward to His return.

YOUR MOVE *Jesus asked His followers to remember Him. What about His sacrifice do you never want to forget?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

At His table, I remember that Jesus gave Himself for me.



Pray: Lord Jesus, Your body was given and Your blood poured out for me. Keep my heart grateful and never casual about the cross. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor what the Lord's Supper means to them. Bring questions about taking part to Pastor James.

HOLY WEEK, DAY BY DAY



Walk through Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. The Gospels don't label every event with a day, so these placements follow a common understanding. Read each passage, then circle the moment you most need to remember right now.

**PALM
SUNDAY**

Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a borrowed colt while His followers praise Him as King.
Luke 19:28-40

MONDAY

Jesus clears the temple's outer court so it can be a house of prayer again. The leaders start plotting.
Mark 11:15-18

TUESDAY

Leaders try to trap Jesus with hard questions. His answers leave them amazed.
Mark 12:13-17

WEDNESDAY

Judas makes a deal with the chief priests to hand Jesus over for money.
Mark 14:10-11

THURSDAY

Jesus shares the Passover meal with His disciples, then prays in the garden as His arrest draws near.
Luke 22:14-20, 39-46

FRIDAY

Jesus is crucified between two criminals. He prays for His enemies and dies for our sins.
Luke 23:33-46

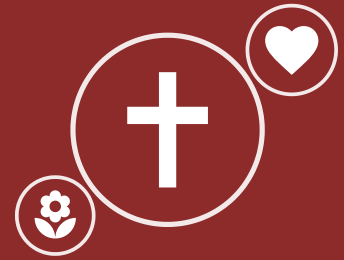
SATURDAY

Jesus' body lies in a new tomb cut into rock while His followers rest on the Sabbath.
Luke 23:50-56

**EASTER
SUNDAY**

Women find the stone moved and the tomb empty. Angels announce that Jesus has risen.
Luke 24:1-7

LOVE THAT CHOSE THE CROSS



★ *Jesus willingly died on the cross in our place, proving how much God loves sinners.*

WEEK KICKOFF

FROM ENEMIES TO FRIENDS

Read first: **Romans 5:6-11**

This is the hardest stop on the trail. First comes Gethsemane, the olive grove where Jesus prayed before His arrest. Then comes The Skull, the execution site outside Jerusalem where He was crucified. The Gospel writers tell it plainly, without looking away. Neither should we. But before we walk through what happened, our reading from Romans explains why.

Paul says Christ died for us when we were helpless, ungodly, and even God's enemies. Hardly anyone would die even for a good person. Jesus died for people who had turned their backs on God. God proved His love for us "while we were still sinners," not after we got our act together.

Why did it take a cross? Sin is our rebellion against God in thoughts, words, and actions, and it cuts us off from Him. God is just, so sin can't simply be ignored. It deserves judgment. Jesus is the only person who never sinned, so He had no penalty of His own to pay. He stood in for us and bore the judgment our sin deserved. Because of that, we can be forgiven and brought back to God. Paul calls this being reconciled: enemies made friends.

Jesus wasn't trapped into dying. This week you'll watch Him choose the cross again and again: in the garden, at His arrest, before Pilate. It's a heavy week, and it's okay to feel the weight of it. His friends did. Keep going anyway. The trail doesn't end at the cross.

TRY THIS WEEK

Write Jesus a letter this week. Tell Him what you understand about the cross, what you still wonder about, and what you want to say in response. Keep it in your Bible, and read it again next Easter.

MEMORY VERSE

But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

This is the heaviest week in the journal: Jesus' arrest, trials, and death. Let students sit with the weight of the cross without rushing to Sunday, but make sure they hear why He died: love. Be ready for questions about guilt, suffering, and forgiveness.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 Why does it matter that Jesus died for us before we cleaned up our lives?
- 2 Why couldn't God just overlook sin? Why did it take the cross?
- 3 What questions or feelings does the cross stir up in you right now?



PRAY

Jesus, You died for me while I was still a sinner. I can't repay that, and I don't have to. Help me live every day grateful for Your love. Amen.

DAY
1

THE HARDEST PRAYER

 **Read:** Matthew 26:36-46 **Go further:** Hebrews 5:7-8

“ Going a little farther, he fell facedown and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” **Matthew 26:39**

In the garden, Jesus told His closest friends His grief was crushing Him. The cup He prayed about was the suffering ahead, including the full weight of God’s judgment against sin. Jesus was fully human. He felt dread, and He told His Father honestly. He prayed three times, and each time His friends were asleep. The cup was not taken away, and Jesus accepted His Father’s will. Then He got up and went to meet His betrayer. You can bring your honest fears to God too, even when His answer isn’t the one you hoped for.

YOUR MOVE *What fear or request do you need to bring to God honestly? Write it as a prayer.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I can tell God exactly how I feel and still trust His will.



Pray: Father, thank You that Jesus chose Your will even when it meant the cross. Help me be honest with You about my fears, and trust You anyway. Amen.

DAY
2

HE STEPPED FORWARD

 **Read:** John 18:1-11 **Go further:** John 10:17-18

“ At that, Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?” **John 18:11**

Judas knew where to find Jesus, so he led soldiers and temple officials into the garden with torches and weapons. Jesus didn’t hide. He walked out to meet them and asked who they were after. At His answer, “I am he,” the whole group drew back and fell to the ground. He told them to let His friends go. When Peter swung his sword at a servant, Jesus told him to put it away. Jesus was in control the whole time. The soldiers didn’t take His life. He was laying it down.

YOUR MOVE *When you feel threatened or out of control, what do you reach for? Circle any that fit.*

A trusted friend

Prayer

Running away

Sarcasm

Shutting down

Anger

Getting even

Taking control

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus wasn’t trapped. He chose the cross for me.



Pray: Jesus, You had every power to escape, and You stayed for me. When I want to fight or run, help me trust You instead. Amen.

DAY
3

BY THE FIRE



Read: Luke 22:54-62 **Go further:** Luke 22:31-32

“ Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter. ... And he went outside and wept bitterly.
Luke 22:61-62

That same night, Peter had promised to follow Jesus to prison and to death. Now he sat by a fire in the high priest's courtyard, trying to blend in. Three different people recognized him, and three times Peter insisted he didn't know Jesus. Most of us know that feeling: staying quiet or laughing along when faith would cost us something. Yet before any of it happened, Jesus had prayed for Peter and told him to strengthen the others once he turned back. Peter's failure was real. It wasn't the end of his story.

YOUR MOVE *We rarely deny Jesus out loud like Peter. Check the quieter ways you have been tempted to.*

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Stayed silent when faith came up | ☐ Laughed along when Jesus was mocked |
| ☐ Hid that I go to church | ☐ Acted different around certain friends |
| ☐ Posted or said things just to fit in | |

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus prays for me even when I let Him down.



Pray: Jesus, I've been like Peter, quiet when I should have spoken up. Forgive me. Thank You for praying for me and never giving up on me. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor about a time they let Jesus down and how He brought them back.

DAY
4

WHAT IS TRUTH?



Read: John 18:33-38 **Go further:** John 19:1-11

“ “My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. **John 18:36**

Pilate, the Roman governor, wanted to know if Jesus was a threat. Are you a king? he asked. Jesus said yes, but His kingdom doesn't come from this world. He came to bear witness to the truth, and everyone who belongs to the truth listens to Him. Pilate brushed it off: “What is truth?” He was staring right at it. He even admitted Jesus was innocent, yet he handed Him over to keep the crowd happy. Knowing the truth isn't enough. Following Jesus means standing with the truth when it isn't popular.

YOUR MOVE *Compare some messages you hear every day with what Jesus says is true.*

What I keep hearing	What Jesus says

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus is the truth, even when the crowd disagrees.



Pray: King Jesus, Your kingdom isn't built on force or popularity. Give me courage to stand with Your truth when going along with the crowd would be easier. Amen.

DAY
5

GRACE AT THE LAST HOUR



Read: Luke 23:32-43 Go further: Isaiah 53:12

“ Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.” **Luke 23:42-43**

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. Even there, He prayed, “Father, forgive them,” for the people putting Him to death. The leaders scoffed, the soldiers mocked, and one criminal joined in. But the other saw what everyone else missed. He admitted he deserved his punishment and that Jesus had done nothing wrong. He had no time to be baptized, join a church, or make up for his past. All he could do was trust Jesus, and that was enough. People are saved by grace through faith, not by their record.

YOUR MOVE

Do you ever feel like you have to earn your place with God? What does this story say to that?

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

I can't earn my way to Jesus. I can only trust Him.



Pray: Jesus, I have nothing to offer You but my trust. Thank You for saving me by grace, and for Your promise that I will be with You. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor how they came to trust Jesus, and what they understood at the time.

DAY
6

FINISHED, NOT DEFEATED



Read: John 19:28-30 Go further: Mark 15:37-39

“ When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. **John 19:30**

John says Jesus knew His work was done. In John's Greek, “It is finished” is a single word that means complete. It wasn't a cry of defeat. It was a declaration of victory. The price for the sins of everyone who trusts Him was paid in full. Mark adds that when Jesus died, the temple curtain that blocked the way into the Most Holy Place, the room of God's presence, tore from top to bottom. God had opened the way. So stop trying to pay for what Jesus already paid for.

YOUR MOVE

What guilt or shame are you still carrying? Write a word or two, then write PAID IN FULL across it.

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Nothing is left to pay. Jesus paid it all.



Pray: Jesus, You finished what I never could. When guilt tells me I still owe, remind me that You paid it all. Amen.

WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO DIE?



It's one of the biggest questions anyone asks about Christianity. The Bible doesn't give just one picture of what happened at the cross. It gives several, and together they show how serious sin is and how great God's love is. Read each section with your Bible open.

◆ A SUBSTITUTE

Sin isn't just breaking rules. It's rebellion against a holy God, and Romans 6:23 says it earns death. Because God is just, He can't shrug sin off. But 1 Peter 3:18 says Christ suffered for sins once for all, the One who did right for those who do wrong, to bring us to God. Jesus took the penalty we deserved. He died in your place.

◆ A DEBT CANCELED

Colossians 2:13-14 pictures our sin as a debt we could never repay, no matter how hard we worked. God canceled it, nailing it to the cross. Jesus' words "It is finished" meant there was nothing left to pay. Nothing you do could add to it. Your part is to receive it as a gift.

◆ ENEMIES MADE FRIENDS

Our reading from Romans 5 says we were God's enemies, yet we were "reconciled to God" through His Son's death. To reconcile means to bring two sides back together. The cross didn't talk God into loving us. He already loved us; that's why Jesus came. The cross removed what stood between us, so now you can come to God as His child.

◆ THE WAY IN IS OPEN

A thick curtain kept everyone out of the temple's Most Holy Place except the high priest, once a year (Hebrews 9:7). When Jesus died, it split from top to bottom, torn from above. Now, Hebrews 10:19-22 says, you can approach God through Jesus with confidence, not fear.

◆ YOUR RESPONSE

The cross calls for an answer. If you have trusted Jesus, thank Him in your own words below. If you're not sure you have, or you have questions, talk with a parent, youth leader, mentor, or Pastor James this week.

HE GOES AHEAD OF YOU



★ *The risen Jesus sends His followers into the world and promises to come back.*

WEEK KICKOFF

LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACE

Read first: **Luke 24:1-12**

Our last stop begins in the dark. Before sunrise on Sunday, several women made their way to Jesus' tomb with spices for His body. They had watched Him die on Friday. They weren't coming to see a miracle. They were coming to grieve.

But the stone was rolled away, and the body was gone. Two angels in dazzling clothes appeared, and the terrified women bowed to the ground. The angels' question stopped them cold: why search a graveyard for someone who is alive? Then came the best news ever spoken: "He is not here, but he has risen!" They reminded the women that Jesus had said He would be crucified and rise on the third day. And the women remembered.

The women hurried to tell the apostles, who thought their report sounded like nonsense. That's worth noticing. Jesus' followers weren't gullible people eager to believe. They were grieving skeptics who had to be convinced. Peter ran to the tomb, saw only the linen cloths, and left amazed. Soon Jesus would appear to them again and again, alive in a real body that could walk, talk, and eat.

This is the last stop in this journal, but not the end of the trail. Because Jesus is alive, death is not the end for anyone who trusts Him. Jesus Himself promised it in this week's memory verse. This week you'll meet the risen Jesus on a road, in a locked room, and on a beach, and you'll hear the job He gives His followers. He still goes ahead of His people, and He is inviting you to follow.



TRY THIS WEEK

This week, tell one person in your own words what happened on the first Easter morning and why it matters to you. It could be a friend, a teammate, a coworker, or someone in your family. Keep it short and real.

MEMORY VERSE

*I am the resurrection and the life.
The one who believes in me, even if
he dies, will live.*

John 11:25

- ☐ I can say it from memory
☐ I said it to someone



FOR PARENTS & MENTORS

You've reached the last stop. Celebrate the finish with your student, then help them choose a next step, like reading the Gospel of John, starting Deep Roots, or talking with Pastor James about baptism if they haven't been baptized. Keep asking what Jesus is teaching them.



TALK IT OVER

- 1 The apostles first thought the women's news was nonsense. Why does it matter that they were hard to convince?
- 2 If Jesus really rose from the dead, what changes for you, both today and forever?
- 3 Looking back over this journal, which stop on the trail changed you most? Why?



PRAY

Risen Jesus, death couldn't hold You, and You are alive today. Thank You for walking with me this far. Help me follow You every day until I see You face to face. Amen.

DAY
1

JUST AS HE SAID



Read: Matthew 28:1-10 **Go further:** 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

“ He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.
Matthew 28:6

The ground shook as an angel rolled the stone away and sat on it. The guards froze in terror. Notice that the stone wasn't moved to let Jesus out. It was moved to let witnesses in. The angel invited the women to see for themselves, then sent them running to the disciples. Before they got there, Jesus Himself met them, and they took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Christianity stands or falls on this event. If Jesus rose, He is who He said He is, and He keeps His word.

YOUR MOVE *Why does it matter that Jesus actually rose? List three ways it changes things for you.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

An empty tomb means every promise Jesus made still stands.



Pray: Risen Jesus, You are alive and You keep Your word. Make that more than a fact I know. Let it change how I live today. Amen.

DAY
2

A STRANGER ON THE ROAD



Read: Luke 24:13-32 **Go further:** Luke 24:44-45

“ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. **Luke 24:27**

That Sunday, two of Jesus' followers trudged toward a village called Emmaus, heartbroken. We were hoping He was the one, they told the stranger who joined them. Their hope had died on Friday. It was Jesus, though something kept them from recognizing Him. He told them they had been slow to believe the prophets. At supper, when He broke the bread, their eyes were opened. Later they said their hearts had burned as He explained the Bible. Jesus still meets discouraged people on the road and points them to His Word.

YOUR MOVE *The Old Testament pointed to Jesus. Look up each promise and match it to how it came true.*

- | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Isaiah 7:14 | ● | ● A. A King riding a donkey |
| 2. Micah 5:2 | ● | ● B. Born to a virgin |
| 3. Zechariah 9:9 | ● | ● C. Pierced for our sins |
| 4. Isaiah 53:5 | ● | ● D. Born in Bethlehem |

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

When my hope feels dead, Jesus meets me on the road.



Pray: Jesus, when I'm discouraged, walk with me like You walked with them. Open the Scriptures to me, and let my heart burn as I read. Amen.

DAY
3

ROOM FOR DOUBTERS

 **Read:** John 20:24-29 **Go further:** John 20:30-31

“ Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” **John 20:29**

Thomas missed the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples, and he refused to take their word for it. Unless he could touch the nail marks himself, he would never believe. A week later, Jesus came back and stood in front of him. He didn't shame Thomas or send him away. He offered exactly what Thomas needed. Thomas's answer is one of the clearest statements in the Bible about who Jesus is: “My Lord and my God!” Doubts don't disqualify you. Bring them to Jesus honestly, the way Thomas did.

YOUR MOVE *What question or doubt do you want to bring to Jesus? Write it to Him as honestly as Thomas would.*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

My doubts don't scare Jesus. I can bring them straight to Him.



Pray: Lord Jesus, You are my Lord and my God. When I have doubts, help me bring them to You instead of running from You. Amen.



TALK IT OUT: Ask a parent, youth leader, or mentor which questions about faith they've wrestled with, and where they found answers.

DAY
4

A SECOND FIRE

 **Read:** John 21:15-19 **Go further:** John 21:1-14

“ He said, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” “Feed my sheep,” Jesus said. **John 21:17**

Remember the courtyard fire where Peter denied Jesus? Now there was a charcoal fire on the beach, and three times Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” Three denials, three questions. Jesus wasn't rubbing it in. He was restoring Peter, and each answer came with a job: take care of My people. Jesus even told Peter that following Him would one day cost him his life. Then He said the words He had said when He first called Peter: “Follow me.” Your worst failure doesn't have to end your story with Jesus.

YOUR MOVE *Is there a failure you're afraid disqualifies you from serving Jesus? What does this story say to you?*

★ TAKE THIS WITH YOU

Jesus doesn't just forgive my failures. He gives me work to do.



Pray: Jesus, You know everything, and You know I love You. Thank You for second chances. Use me to care for Your people, and help me follow You. Amen.

DAY
5

SENT, NOT ALONE



Read: Matthew 28:16-20 **Go further:** Acts 1:8

“ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. **Matthew 28:19-20**

The eleven disciples met Jesus on a mountain in Galilee. Matthew says they worshiped Him, but some doubted. Jesus didn't wait for perfect faith. He claimed all authority in heaven and on earth, then handed ordinary, unsure people the biggest job in history. A disciple is a follower who is learning to live like Jesus. Making disciples means helping others do that too: sharing the good news, baptizing new believers, and teaching them to obey Jesus. You may not feel ready. That's okay. Jesus never sends His followers anywhere alone.

YOUR MOVE *Your mission field is where you already are. Write three places and one person in each to pray for.*

Where I go each week	Someone there I can pray for

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Jesus sends me where I already am, and He goes with me.



Pray: Jesus, all authority belongs to You. Give me courage to talk about You with the people in my everyday life, and remind me You are always with me. Amen.

DAY
6

EYES UP, FEET MOVING



Read: Acts 1:6-11 **Go further:** John 14:1-3

“ This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you have seen him going into heaven. **Acts 1:11**

The disciples still wanted a timeline. Was Jesus about to set up His kingdom now? He told them the timing belonged to the Father. Their job was to be His witnesses everywhere, in the Holy Spirit's power. Then Jesus was taken up, and a cloud hid Him. They stood staring at the sky until two men in white asked why. He is coming back, but nobody knows the day. So don't just stand there. Keep your eyes up and your feet moving. This journal ends here. Following Jesus doesn't.

YOUR MOVE *How will you keep following Jesus after this? Be specific: when, where, with whom.*

★ **TAKE THIS WITH YOU**

Jesus is coming back. Until then, I keep following Him.



Pray: Jesus, thank You for every step of this trail. By Your Spirit's power, keep my eyes fixed on You and my feet on the trail until You come back. Amen.

TALK IT OUT: With a parent, youth leader, or mentor, plan how you'll keep meeting after this.

LOOKING BACK, WALKING ON



Fifteen stops, ninety days, one Person at the center of it all. You've traced Jesus' life from the ancient promises to the empty tomb. Take a few minutes to look back at where you've been, then look ahead. The trail keeps going, and Jesus is leading it.

◆ THE STOP THAT STAYED WITH ME

Which stop on the trail changed how you see Jesus the most? Why?

◆ WHAT I KNOW ABOUT JESUS NOW

Finish these: Before this journal, I thought Jesus was... Now I know He is...

◆ A VERSE I'M KEEPING

Which memory verse from these fifteen weeks do you most need to hold on to? Write it from memory.

◆ MY NEXT STEPS

Circle the ones you'll commit to, and tell someone which ones you chose.

- Read the Gospel of John, one chapter a day.
- Start the Deep Roots journal.
- Make church a habit: Sunday School, worship, and Wednesday night Bible study.
- Tell one friend your story of following Jesus.
- Trusted Jesus but not baptized yet, or still have questions? Talk with Pastor James.

◆ A LETTER TO FUTURE ME

Write to yourself a year from now. What do you hope will be true of you and Jesus by then?

MEMORY VERSE CHALLENGE



Check a box each time you can say a verse without looking: **1** to a parent or friend, **2** to your youth leader or Pastor James, and **3** a month later. Do you still know it?

		1	2	3
1	2 Corinthians 1:20 — For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him.	☐	☐	☐
2	Luke 2:11 — Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.	☐	☐	☐
3	John 1:14 — The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.	☐	☐	☐
4	John 1:29 — Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!	☐	☐	☐
5	Matthew 4:4 — It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.	☐	☐	☐
6	Matthew 4:19 — "Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."	☐	☐	☐
7	Matthew 6:33 — But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.	☐	☐	☐
8	Mark 4:41 — And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"	☐	☐	☐
9	Mark 10:52 — Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has saved you." Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.	☐	☐	☐
10	Luke 19:10 — For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.	☐	☐	☐
11	Luke 11:28 — ...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.	☐	☐	☐
12	John 14:6 — I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.	☐	☐	☐
13	John 13:34 — I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.	☐	☐	☐
14	Romans 5:8 — But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.	☐	☐	☐
15	John 11:25 — I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.	☐	☐	☐

MEMORY VERSE CARDS

Cut these out. Keep one in your Bible, tape one to your mirror, or snap a photo for your lock screen.

WEEK 1

For every one of God's promises is "Yes" in him.

2 Corinthians 1:20

WEEK 2

Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:11

WEEK 3

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

WEEK 4

Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

WEEK 5

It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Matthew 4:4

WEEK 6

"Follow me," he told them, "and I will make you fish for people."

Matthew 4:19

WEEK 7

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Matthew 6:33

WEEK 8

And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Mark 4:41

MEMORY VERSE CARDS

Cut these out. Keep one in your Bible, tape one to your mirror, or snap a photo for your lock screen.

WEEK 9

Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has saved you." Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

Mark 10:52

WEEK 10

For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

WEEK 11

...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.

Luke 11:28

WEEK 12

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:6

WEEK 13

I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another.

John 13:34

WEEK 14

But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

WEEK 15

I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.

John 11:25

MY FAVORITE VERSE

Preacher: _____

Sermon title: _____

Preacher:

Sermon title:

Preacher:

Sermon title:

Preacher:

Sermon title:

ROOT BIBLE STUDY



Use these four steps with any passage. Print more copies of this page anytime.

Date: _____ I read: _____

R

READ IT

Read the passage slowly, twice. What words, people, or questions stand out?

O

OBSERVE

What happens? What does it show you about God, about Jesus, or about people?

O

OWN IT

What does God want you to believe, change, or do because of this passage?

T

TALK TO GOD

Write a short prayer about what you read. Thank Him, confess, and ask for help.

ROOT BIBLE STUDY



Use these four steps with any passage. Print more copies of this page anytime.

Date: _____ I read: _____

R

READ IT

Read the passage slowly, twice. What words, people, or questions stand out?

O

OBSERVE

What happens? What does it show you about God, about Jesus, or about people?

O

OWN IT

What does God want you to believe, change, or do because of this passage?

T

TALK TO GOD

Write a short prayer about what you read. Thank Him, confess, and ask for help.

THE GOOD NEWS



Five truths you can share with anyone, each with a verse. Learn them well enough to explain them in your own words.

- 1 GOD LOVES YOU.**
God made you, knows you completely, and loves you more than you can imagine.
"For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." [John 3:16](#)
- 2 SIN SEPARATES.**
Everyone has sinned. We choose our own way instead of God's, and sin cuts us off from Him.
"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." [Romans 3:23](#)
- 3 JESUS SAVES.**
Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross to pay for our sin, and He rose from the dead.
"But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." [Romans 5:8](#)
- 4 TRUST HIM.**
Turn from your sin and trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Salvation is a gift you receive, not something you earn.
"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." [Romans 10:9](#)
- 5 FOLLOW HIM.**
Following Jesus is a new life, lived one day at a time, with His Spirit and His people.
"So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him." [Colossians 2:6](#)

YOUR STORY IN THREE PARTS

Before I knew Jesus...

How I came to trust Him...

What's different now...



HAVE YOU TRUSTED JESUS?

If you're not sure, or you want to talk about it, talk with a parent, your youth leader, or Pastor James Safrit. We would love to talk with you.

WHAT'S NEXT?



You made it through 90 days. Here's how to keep going:



KEEP MEETING WITH GOD EVERY DAY.

Read the Gospel of John, one chapter a day. John wrote his Gospel so that readers would believe Jesus is the Son of God and have life in His name. Check off each chapter:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21



TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP: BAPTISM.

If you haven't been baptized since you trusted Jesus, talk with a parent or youth leader, and then with Pastor James Safrit.



SHOW UP.

Your church family needs you, and you need them. Sunday School: Sundays, 9:45 AM · Worship: Sundays, 11:00 AM · Bible Study: Wednesdays, 6:00 PM.



TRY DEEP ROOTS NEXT.

It's a 90-day journal for students who are new in Christ. Download it free at pgbcronda.com/resources.



KEEP STUDYING.

Use the ROOT Bible Study and Sermon Notes pages again and again. Print more copies anytime.



TELL YOUR STORY.

Use The Good News page to tell a friend what Jesus has done for you.

ANSWER KEY

WEEK 3: THE HIDDEN YEARS

Day 2: Circle: Hunger, Getting tired, Growing taller, Tension at home, Learning a trade, Being misunderstood, Temptation

WEEK 4: THE VOICE AND THE LAMB

Day 3: 1 F, 2 T, 3 F, 4 T, 5 T

Day 5: 5, 3, 2, 4, 1 (top to bottom)

WEEK 5: FORTY DAYS, THREE TESTS

Day 3: 1 T, 2 T, 3 F, 4 T, 5 F

WEEK 7: A LIFE THAT STANDS

Day 4: 1 T, 2 F, 3 T, 4 F, 5 T

WEEK 9: HE STOPS FOR THE HURTING

Day 5: 1 T, 2 F, 3 T, 4 T, 5 F

WEEK 15: HE GOES AHEAD OF YOU

Day 2: 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C



Follow Me is one of the **Growing in the Grove** journals—free resources from Pleasant Grove Baptist Church for students who are new in Christ.

Sunday School · Sundays, 9:45 AM

Worship · Sundays, 11:00 AM

Bible Study · Wednesdays, 6:00 PM

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