

Grace Through Christ

20 Lessons to
help you learn
more about your
Loving Savior



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Lessons 1—2: God loves you as His child. His love is undeserved and knows no bounds.

Lessons 3—6: God’s love gives you merciful forgiveness and peace. In turn, you forgive the “unforgivable.”

Lessons 7—10: God’s love and forgiveness change your actions and life.

Lessons 11—14: God works in your life, provides you with everything you need, and daily cares for you.

Lessons 15—16: God offers you strength in situations where you seem to be weak.

Lessons 17—20: Faith in God offers you many blessings.

INTRODUCTION

This booklet consists of twenty lessons which explore the many aspects and implications of Christ’s love. It may be used for group or individual study. Ideally the group will be led by a facilitator whose main role is to initiate and encourage discussion. The goal of each lesson is to stimulate self—reflection and dialogue concerning how God loves us, works in our lives, and how His loves strengthens us to live in Him. May the Holy Spirit work through these lessons and studies that people may come to know God’s unsurpassing love and give peace which passes all understanding.

Points to Remember as a Facilitator

1. Keep the setting as informal as possible. When it works, sit where you are comfortable. Sitting in a circle or around a table is optimal.
2. Be friendly and show your Christian love. Begin with a few minutes of introductions to get to know one another.
3. Don't lecture! Try to foster discussion. Use comments or questions to encourage others to participate.
4. Remember that the lesson plan is to be flexible. Adapt the Bible study to fit the group. Questions may be skipped if time does not allow. New questions may be asked as the group discussion develops.
5. Appreciate all contributions and participation. Let each person read from the Bible if he/she wishes. Do not force anyone to do so. Simply acquiring the facts is not the purpose of these Bible studies; growing in faith is.
6. You do not need to know all the answers. If someone asks a question you are unable to answer, contact a chaplain who will in turn help you to find the answer for the next time you meet.
7. Attend all planning and debriefing meetings. These will allow you to be properly prepared for the next week's lesson, give constructive criticism and share new ideas.
8. Ask God to help you in your role as a facilitator Pray to the Lord, asking Him to bless your efforts.

FACILITATOR GUIDE

FOR “GRACE THROUGH CHRIST” LESSON SERIES

Lesson 1

Preparation Notes:

- **Tax Collector**— see Picture on Page 22, see Note 9:9 on Pages 735, 736
- **Pharisee**— see Note 3:7a on Page 731
- **Scribe**— see Note 2:4a on Page 729
- **In Jesus’ time, the act of eating with a person in his home was a very close act of friendship (Anderson, 797 and 771). It showed “acceptance and recognition” (Concordia, 1579).**

Jesus was speaking and associating with people who were considered to be “ungodly.” A group of people who were very religious and who looked down on everyone not in their group saw this. They thought that Jesus was wrong for doing this. Jesus then told them a story about a shepherd and His sheep. This story tells about how every one of God’s children is important to Him. He is especially concerned when one of them is lost. This story also expresses the great joy God has when the lost are found.

Lesson 2

Last lesson was about a lost lamb. We talked about the Shepherd’s joy at finding him. This story is also about someone who gets lost. A boy loses sight of the One who loves him and what is important to the boy. This story tells us about the forgiveness and love of God which are unlimited and remain no matter what we do.

Lesson 3

Preparation Notes

- **Dinar**— Worth a day’s wages (Anderson, 744)
- **Pharisee**— See Note 3:7a on Page 731

Last lesson we learned the story of a lost son who was welcomed home by his father with open arms. Today’s lesson is about a woman who was very lost. We also see her thankfulness to be found. The very religious people thought that Jesus was too good to be in the presence of such a sinful woman. Jesus then tells a story about the debt we all owe, how that was paid, and how this makes us feel. We are to remember that we all have sinned, are declared guilty and need Jesus.

Lesson 4

Preparation Notes

- In Jesus' day, people were expected to forgive an offense three times but did not need to forgive the fourth offense (Zondervan, 1269).
- 10,000 talents = trillions of dollars, 60 million day's wages (Anderson, 741)
- 100 dinar = four months wages (Anderson, 744)
- Putting one's forehead on the ground in front of a person was a sign of great respect

(Anderson, 729—730). See Picture on Page 4.

Last lesson we learned about a woman who truly knew what it meant and how it felt to be forgiven. She responded in love and humility toward her Savior. Today's story is also about forgiveness. This time we learn how having our debt canceled affects the way we treat others.

Lesson 5

Preparation Notes

- The manner of execution for a woman caught in adultery was not prescribed unless she was a betrothed virgin (Concordia, 1621).
- According to the law of the time, both parties caught in adultery were to be executed (Concordia, 1621).
- The word for woman that Jesus used to address this adulteress is the same word He used to address His own mother (Concordia, 1622).
- The Romans did not let the Jews carry out death sentences (Concordia, 1621).

Last lesson we learned how, because we have had our many sins forgiven by God, we in turn will forgive others continuously. This lesson deals with forgiveness for a specific sin— adultery— in a specific instance. We learn of the men's sinful unforgiving nature and the solution Jesus gives. Once again we see Jesus' love for us which offers forgiveness even for sins other find hard to forgive.

Lesson 6

Preparation Notes

- In Jesus' time, men were not supposed to speak with women in public. It was considered to be impolite and wrong (Anderson, 779).
- In Jesus' time, it was believed that if one drank from the same vessel as a Samaritan then he/she would be unclean (Concordia, 1610).
- To avoid having contact with Samaritans, Jews would very often take a long route around Samaria instead of traveling straight through it (Concordia, 1609).
- The well in this story was found to be 138 feet deep (Concordia, 1610).

Last lesson, we learned of men who made a public display of a woman caught in sin. This lesson is also about a sinful woman who is considered an outcast because of her nationality. Again, we will learn that Jesus is not bound by man's laws or prejudices. All people are precious in God's eyes and because of Jesus they are worthy of salvation.

Lesson 7

Preparation Notes

- Samaritans and Jews were bitter enemies (Anderson, 769).
- See John 4:9 (Anderson, 266).
- See Matthew 5:43—45 (Anderson, 13).
- Dinar = one day's wage. This could keep a person up to two months in an inn (Concordia, 1569).
- The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho was seventeen miles and ran through rocky, desert country in which very often robbers would pose as wounded people (Concordia, 1569 and Zondervan, 1355).
- Samaritans were viewed as half—breeds both physically and spiritually because they were said to have intermarried with the wrong people (Concordia, 1569 and Zondervan, 1355).

— The Old Testament said that if a person touched a dead body he/she was said to be unclean for several days (Zondervan, 1355).

In the last lesson, we learned about Jesus' love which passes prejudice. This lesson is about another man who showed this same sort of love. He risked his health and life to help a man that man's rules and common sense would say to ignore. Jesus tells this story to answer the question of, "Who is our neighbor?". Obviously, according to the example of the Samaritan and of our Savior, our neighbor is anyone who is God's creation.

Lesson 8

Last lesson was about a man who risked his life to help his neighbor. In this lesson, Peter, one of Jesus' disciples also takes a risk to walk to Jesus on the water. As long as Peter truly believed in God's power working in him he could do this act. As soon as he began to doubt and fear, however, he started sinking. God wants us to give our fives and talents to Him, trusting that He will use us and care for us always. As God's children we are willing to give up the things that we want in order that God's will be done. With God as our strength we can do anything.

Lesson 9

Preparation Notes

– Usually the older brother gets two times more inheritance than the younger. It is usually rabbis who settle these matters (Concordia, 1573).

In the last lesson, we learned what we can do when we put our strength and life in God's hands. Through the story of a rich man, we learn what happens when we love and value our riches more than God. We see what happens when we do not admit that all that we have and all that we are, are gifts from God and are to be used for His purposes. We see that in the end all physical riches are taken away and all that truly lasts is the love and relationship we have with our God.

Lesson 10

Last lesson was about a man who relied on his riches to bring meaning to his life. He was forgetting that his riches came from God. He did not realize that his life would eventually end and that God could take all that he had away. We will learn in the lesson today that the rich man could be called a foolish builder. Christians have built their homes and lives on a firm foundation. The only stable, true and unmovable foundation is our Rock, our God. Anything else which we put hope or trust in, just like sand will crumble and ultimately ruin and disappoint us.

Lesson 11

Preparation Notes:

- **There was no door in a sheep's pen. The keeper stood in the way of the opening (Anderson, 784).**

In our last lesson, we learned about what it means to be a wise builder. In **essence** we give control of our lives to God and depend on Him to care for us, all that we have and all that we need. In this lesson, we will learn that sheep have the same qualities as a wise builder. They are dependence and trust. It is their Good Shepherd who carefully leads them, cares for them and is willing to give His life up for them.

Lesson 12

Preparation Note

- **200 Dinar = Eight months wages (Anderson, 744)**

Last lesson we learned how Jesus is our Good Shepherd and how we as sheep can depend and rely on Him. In this lesson we are told of a specific incidence when Jesus cared for the needs of 5,000 of His followers with five bread loaves and two fish. This lesson gives us proof that God has powers beyond men to care for us in all circumstances. This gives us encouragement to pray to God for all of our needs.

Lesson 13

Preparation Notes

- **In Jesus' day, instead of beds like ours, people used little padded mats (Anderson, 753—754).**
- **Scribes— definition found on Page 729**

Last lesson gave us an example of how Jesus can and does care for His people. Too often, however, we don't go to God with our concerns, worries and needs. In this lesson, we learn of the great faith of a man who went out of his way because he knew Jesus would care for him. Jesus did heal this man. He can heal and help us too if we only go to Him. We know that He can do all things and will not turn us away.

Lesson 14

Preparation Notes

– Rabbi— Teacher, “the great one,” studied Bible thoroughly, able to recite the Old Testament by heart (Anderson, 734)

In the last lesson we met a very faithful man who risked injury and embarrassment to be healed. He truly trusted Jesus’ love and power. This lesson is also about a request. This request was made by two women who were friends of Jesus. Their brother had died and they wanted Jesus to raise him back to life. Although they knew that Jesus had the power, they may have still begun to question whether He really cared enough to answer their request. We learn that Jesus does care about us always and shares in our suffering. He raised the brother and didn’t desert His friends. In the same way, He never deserts us.

Lesson 15

In the last lesson we saw the part of Jesus that was man by the way in which he experienced emotion and cried. So we see in this lesson that He was part man by the way the devil tempted Him. Jesus truly experienced great hunger and human desires yet did not give into the devil’s temptations. Jesus used Scripture to refute temptation. So we can follow His perfect example and resist the Devil. We know that this is God’s will for us.

Lesson 16

In our last lesson we learned that Jesus was truly tempted by the devil. We also learned that the devil is cunning and smart and his temptations are strong. We know, however, that with God’s strength we can always resist. In this lesson, Paul, the author and disciple writes honestly about his weakness. We all have weaknesses and it is important to recognize them and realize that the devil also knows them. Paul informs us of the ways in which God uses our weaknesses and declares that we should not only accept them, but boast in our weaknesses.

Lesson 17

In the last lesson we learned of our weaknesses that we each have. These weaknesses can also be seen as strengths because God uses them for His glory. Knowing that we are needy of God’s help in our lives should help us to take note of others who are poor and needy. God wants us to invite them into our

lives as the Banquet Host of today's lesson does. We must be careful to not be like those who the host originally invited because they refused to go giving invalid excuses. Instead we should take God up on all of His offers to be close to Him.

Lesson 18

Preparation Notes

- **Temple—Yard— See Picture on Page 63.**
- **Pharisee— See Note 3:7a on Page 731.**
- **Tax Collector— See Note 9:9 on Page 735—736.**
- **Fasting— See Note 6:16 on Page 733.**

The last lesson was about a banquet prepared by a host. God invites us to the eternal banquet in heaven but also invites us to communicate with Him on earth. We can do this through Baptism, Holy Communion and Prayer. This lesson contains two men who pray very differently. The pharisee prays with pride and expects to be accepted because of all that he had done. The tax collector showed humility and respect for God and did not feel as if he deserved forgiveness at all. The prayer of the tax collector was very pleasing to God and is how we should pray.

Lesson 19

In the last lesson, we heard the prayers of a pharisee and tax collector. These were two very different prayers. The pharisee was full of pride, the tax collector was full of humility and submission. In this lesson, Jesus showed submission also by performing an act of a servant and washing His disciple's feet. We, also, are to be humble and are to serve others. Our role on earth is to help others and to serve God. Jesus knew that God had ultimate control of His life and all He needed to do is follow His will. So God has equal control over our lives. We merely need to follow Jesus' example and let His will be done in our lives.

Lesson 20

Last lesson we saw Jesus wash His disciples' feet. This was an example of how we should be submissive to God and others. Many times we lose our submission and question God. Thomas was one of Jesus' disciples yet he also doubted and did not believe that Jesus was truly alive after dying on the cross until he could

actually touch Him. Jesus was patient with Thomas and loving to His disciples even though they deserted Him the week before. Although we have never seen Jesus, He wants us to read His Word which is perfect and states the truth that He lived, died, and rose again for us. Therefore, we will live our lives in submission to God. As we pray in the Lord's Prayer, God's will be done.

Resources Used

- 1. The Bible in Counseling** _Waylon O. Ward _Moody Press _Chicago _1977
- 2. Chapters That Breathe From the Book of Life** _Paul Kelm
- 3. The NIV Serendipity Bible for Study Groups** _Zondervan Bible Publishers _ Littleton, CO _1989
- 4. Concordia Self—Study Bible—** Concordia Publishing House _St. Louis _1986
- 5. New Testament Into Simple Everyday American English** _Reverend Julian G. Anderson _Anderson Books _Naples _1984

Unless otherwise noted, the page numbers which are referenced throughout the lessons are to be used with the
New Testament Into Simple Everyday American English

Lesson One:

The Lost Sheep and His Good Shepherd: Luke 15:1—7

With whom do you hang around? Who are your friends?
Do you think that birds of a feather flock together?

Lesson Questions:

1. Who is the audience that Jesus is speaking to?
2. How do they feel about Him?
3. Who did Jesus associate with and why?
4. What are sheep like?
5. What is a shepherd's role?
6. What did the Shepherd do when he discovered one of His sheep was lost?
7. For what amount of time does the Shepherd look for the lost sheep?
8. What does He do when He finally finds the stray?
9. What would we expect him to do?
10. Who is the Shepherd?
11. Who are the sheep?
12. Who are the lost sheep?
13. To where does Jesus, our Good Shepherd wants to bring us?
14. How do we get there?

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you ever feel lost and alone?
2. How did you get lost?
3. Do you ever feel like others are looking down on you?
4. What do we learn from this parable about God and ourselves?

Next lesson we will learn of the lost again. This time it will not be about a lamb, but a son.

Prayer

Father in heaven, my Shepherd, my Friend. I thank and praise you! You have such strong love for me that you know all about me and want me to be safe and happy. Again, I thank and praise you! You have all power. That means that You can protect me against all potential dangers. I am so glad that I am one of Your sheep and I belong to You! Keep me forever close to You so that one day I will be with You in heaven because Jesus died for me.

Amen

Lesson Two:

The Lost Son: Luke 15:11—32 (P.220-222)

Have you ever run away from home? What happened?

Lesson Questions:

1. What is a parable?
2. Why do you think this boy left home?
3. Why didn't his father try to stop his son?
4. How do you think the father felt about his son after he left?
5. How did this boy's adventure go?
6. How did the father react to his son's return?
7. Who does the son represent?
8. Who does the father represent?
9. Did the father's love depend on what his son did?
10. What do we learn about God's love from this story?
11. How did the brother feel about this?
12. What does Luke 15:7 tell us about God's attitude on this subject?

Discussion Questions:

1. Do we ever deserve God's love?
2. Can we ever lose God's love? Read Romans 8:35, 38—39 (Pages 442-443). Also read Matthew 27:3-5 (Page 88).
3. What is your attitude toward such a God?
4. What makes a person want to move away from God?
5. Where are you on your journey?

Next lesson we will learn of a very sinful woman who was lost and then became found. We will see how she responded to Jesus and learn of Jesus' response to her. Jesus will also tell another story, this time about debt.

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Prayer

Forever-loving Father, I come to You as a lost child. I need You to direct my life and give me hope. I have often left Your side, where I am safe and happy, to live “on my own.” I don’t want to be alone. I need You. Thank you for Your promise that You will forgive and accept me no matter what. Thank you for loving me enough to have Your Son, Jesus, die for me. Thank you for being there for me always.

Lesson Three:

Jesus Eats Dinner At a Pharisee's House: Luke 7:36—50 (P.186-187)

Was there ever one special person who believed in you?
How did that make you feel?

Lesson Questions:

1. Why did the Pharisee invite Jesus into his home?
2. Why didn't he show the least bit of hospitality?
3. How must the Pharisees have felt when the "very sinful woman" came in?
4. What do you think they wanted to do?
6. Were the Pharisees any less guilty in God's eyes than the "very sinful woman?"
7. What did the story of the money—lender tell the Pharisees? What does it tell us?
8. What is our debt?
9. Who canceled our debt?
10. What is the natural response to such an act as this?
11. Why do you think the woman risked coming to the Pharisee's house to show such respect and love to Jesus?
12. What might have been some of the fears the woman had?
13. What were Jesus' final words to the woman?

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of your sins makes you feel particularly uncomfortable? How does knowing Jesus give you peace? What is true peace? When will it come to us?
See Matthew 11:28-30 (P.31), John 14:27 (P.306), Romans 5:1 (P.433).
2. How can we show our love toward Jesus in our lives?
3. Read Luke 1:79 (P.163). How does this verse relate to this story? How does it relate to you?

Next lesson we also will learn about debt and forgiveness. This time, however, the person whose debt was canceled goes to jail.

Prayer

Forgiving, loving Savior, we come to you with humble hearts like the sinful woman. We also have made choices which were wrong. We have sinned and hurt ourselves, others, and You. We feel guilty and ask for Your peace. We know that You have granted us forgiveness because You suffered our punishment for us on a cross. We are cleansed by Your blood and made clean. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we give our lives to you, dear Lord. We ask that we may forever serve You just as You were a servant.

Amen

Lesson Four:

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant: Matthew 18:21—35 *(P.54-55)*

Did you ever owe something to someone?
How would you have felt if that debt was just canceled?

Lesson Questions:

1. Why do you think the first servant canceled the large debt of his debtor?
2. Why should the unmerciful servant have been merciful to his debtor?
3. What does the Lord's Prayer have to say about forgiveness?
4. What debt did Jesus cancel for us and why?
5. Because of this, how does He expect us to act toward others?
6. Do you think the unmerciful servant fully understood the value of the canceled debt?
7. Did he deserve to go to jail?

Discussion Questions:

1. If each sin you have committed cost you a penny, how much money do you think you would owe? Would it be possible for you to pay your debt off?
2. Is there something that you have done which you think makes you worthy of the cancellation of such a debt?
3. Is there anyone in your life who you have a hard time forgiving? What insight does this story give us to help us forgive people with big debts?

In the next lesson we will also learn about forgiveness. This story will be about a woman who was caught in a sin that many find hard to forgive. Those who committed this sin, according to the law, deserved execution.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS.
2. YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD.
3. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY BY KEEPING IT HOLY.
4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY ENJOY LONG LIFE ON EARTH.
5. YOU SHALL NOT MURDER.
6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.
7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.
8. YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.
9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE.
10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE OR HIS WORKERS OR HIS ANIMALS OR ANYTHING THAT BELONGS TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.

Lesson Five:

Jesus and the Sinful Woman: John 8:1—11 (P. 327)

What sin would you have a hard time forgiving? Why?

Lesson Questions:

1. Into what trap did the teachers of the law try to catch Jesus?
2. Who was the other guilty party missing in this picture?
3. How did Jesus handle the sticky situation?
4. Did Jesus condone what the woman did? What did He tell her to do?
5. How do you think the woman felt after this all?

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of things that you have done that you have a hard time believing you can be forgiven for?
2. Does Jesus have limits to His forgiveness?
3. What is it about forgiveness that helps people turn their lives around?

As we learned, some people have the sinful attitude that others are beyond forgiveness. Yet, next lesson will teach again about Jesus love for the worst of sinners and those who men consider to be “untouchable.”

For the Ability to Forgive

Lord Jesus Christ,

You have taught me to pray:

**“Forgive us our trespasses as we
forgive those who trespass against us.” In Your name**

I am to repair the gap;

I am to mend the broken;

I am to welcome back the wanderer who returns. Lord

Jesus Christ,

**help me to understand that this power is Your power, to
be used for the sake of those for whom You died.**

Help me to understand

**that I cannot turn away from any who ask for forgiveness
or need my forgiveness.**

**Help me to overcome anything that would keep me from
sharing the fullness and the power of Your saving and
forgiving grace.**

I ask it in the power of Your name.

Amen

Lesson Six:

The Samaritan Woman: John 4:1—27, 39—42

Did anyone ever tell you not to be with certain people?
What reasons did they give?

Lesson Questions:

1. God's law said to not have anything to do with heathen people in and around Canaan (P.796—797). Did this mean, then, that all strangers in that area should be avoided?
2. Why do you think Jesus asked this woman for water? How must the woman have felt, being asked?
3. The Samaritan woman asked Jesus a question about where is the correct place to worship. Why did she change the subject? What was Jesus' answer?
4. Where are we to worship God?
5. What did Jesus know about the woman and how did that make her feel?
6. What does Jesus know about you? How does that make you feel?
7. Are there some people you have a difficult time relating to or getting along with? According to Jesus' example, how should you act towards them?
8. What water was the woman speaking of?
9. What water was Jesus speaking of?
10. Who did Jesus come to save?
11. What happened because of Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman? See verses 39—42

Discussion Questions:

1. What was Jesus' attitude and what should our attitude be toward others?
2. Is it hard to be a Christian in an ungodly world?

We learned in this lesson that Jesus sees us all as equally important and valuable. Next lesson will discuss a story of a man who was desperately in need of help. We will also learn of the one unlikely person who saw value in a hurt man as Jesus does and, risking his life, stopped to help.

Prayer

Dearest Jesus, You love us all. Whatever our color, education, whether we are male or female, you love us all equally, unconditionally, everlastingly. In a world full of hatred, anger and sin, we become used to sinfulness and we also become thirsty. We need your peace and salvation to satisfy us. Nothing lasts forever in this world. But Your promises, love and salvation will never fail. Thank you Lord for loving us and giving us hope.

AMEN

Lesson Seven:

The Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25—37

Can you think of a time you helped someone who was desperately in need?

Lesson Questions:

1. Were the priest and Levite justified for passing on the other side of the road? What if they had to hurry to do religious duties?
2. Why do you think the Samaritan stopped while the other's passed by?
3. How would you now answer the "expert's" question as to who is your neighbor?

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes a person seem to not be my neighbor?
2. How can you be a Good Samaritan to others? See Hebrews 13:2.

The Good Samaritan in this lesson truly took a risk in helping his neighbor on the side of the road. In the next lesson, one of Jesus' disciples will also take a risk.

Prayer

Dear Lord, Healer of the sick and Savior of the sinful, You are the perfect Good Samaritan. There was a time when we too, like the Jew in the story, were left helpless and hurting. You, however, like the Samaritan, did not pass on the other side. You did not give up on me despite my sinful, pitiful condition. Instead, You gave Your very life to pick me up and give me hope - especially the best hope of all - Heaven! I now want to serve you and to help others who are in need - no matter how they may be different from me. Help me to know that You accept me as Your child and will love me forever.

Lesson Eight:

Jesus Walks On Water: Matthew 14:22—32

Have you ever taken a big risk? How did it turn out?

Lesson Questions:

1. What had Jesus done directly before this story?
2. Why do you think Jesus went up into the mountains? Read John 6:15
3. If you were becoming increasingly popular and there was a demand for a king, how might you be tempted?
4. What kind of a person is Peter? Do you know anyone like him?
5. Why does Jesus invite Peter to step out onto the water?
6. Peter was doing fine until what happened?
7. Why did he sink then and not earlier?
8. What did the disciples conclude from this miracle?

Discussion Questions:

1. Is it good to be a risk-taker?
2. God has a purpose and intention for each one of us. That plan may be one in which we have to take a risk. In this case and in all of our life it is essential that we have faith in God. What does this mean?
3. Can you think of times in your life when it was difficult to have a faithful attitude?
4. What does God say we can do when we are strengthened by Him? See Matthew 19:26
Mark 9:23
Mark 10:27
Philippians 4:13
5. What does this story tell us about failure?

In this lesson, we learned about Peter and the miracle he performed when he was trusting in God. Next lesson we will learn what happens to a rich man who does not give his life and riches and trust to God but keeps them for himself.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, You are worthy of our respect and trust. You showed us through this lesson that it's not only O.K., but right to take risks when we're listening to Your will. You gave Peter the power to walk on water as long as he trusted in You. Likewise, You will give us the strength and power to do whatever You have in Your plan for us to do. During the stormy times of our lives, when we feel worried and discouraged, help us to never doubt Your love for us and Your power in our lives. You will never let us drown. Thank you, Lord, for being so powerful and for loving us. With Your power, all things are possible.

Lesson Nine:

The Story About the Rich Fool: Luke 12:13—21 (p.209)

What are your priorities in life?

Lesson Questions:

1. Who gave this man his crops?
2. For what did the man invest his entire time and life?
3. What did his riches get him?
4. For what should he have been preparing?
5. What is your goal in life?

Discussion Questions:

1. Does the way you use your time and talents center around your goal in life?
2. Read I Peter 1:3-5 (P.647, on back of sheet). What investment promises to pay off?
3. When are people truly rich?
4. How does owning riches make us feel?

This lesson speaks of a man who based his life on his riches. We also see how temporary these physical things are. Next week we will learn about what it means to be a foolish builder as the rich man who built his house on sand. Also we'll learn what it means to build your house on the Rock.

I PETER 1:3-5

WE MUST PRAISE OUR GOD, WHO IS ALSO THE
FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

BECAUSE BY HIS GREAT MERCY HE CAUSED US TO BE BORN
AGAIN AS HIS CHILDREN,

AND GAVE US A LIVING HOPE
BY RAISING JESUS CHRIST BACK TO LIFE AGAIN FROM THE
DEAD.

AND NOW WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TIME
WHEN WE SHALL INHERIT ALL THE GOOD THINGS
OUR FATHER HAS SET ASIDE TO GIVE US.

AND YOU KNOW THAT THIS INHERITANCE WILL
NEVER BE DESTROYED OR SOILED BY SIN,
OR LOSE ITS FRESHNESS AND VALUE, SINCE
GOD IS THE ONE KEEPING IT ALL FOR YOU IN HEAVEN.

AND AT THE SAME TIME HE IS GUARDING YOU AND KEEPING
YOU SAFE BY HIS POWER THROUGH YOUR FAITH,

SO THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE THIS SALVATION
THAT IS ALL READY TO BE SHOWN AND GIVEN TO YOU
ON THE LAST DAY.

Lesson Ten:

The Wise and Foolish Builders: Matthew 7:24—29

Did you ever try to take a shortcut? What happened?

Lesson Questions:

1. What does it mean to “build on the rock?”
2. Who is our Rock?
3. What do we know about rock?
4. Therefore, what do we know about God?
5. How can we build on the Rock?
6. What is our home?
7. How important is this house of ours? Think of flood victims. When their house is washed away, what is left?
8. Read Matthew 6:19-21 (on back of this sheet) and 6:31-34 (P.15-16). How does this relate to this lesson and also to that of the rich man?

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do people build on sand?
2. Think of your life and who you are. What parts do you think are built on sand and need to be more firmly founded?
3. Can this be changed? How?

Building our homes on the Rock means putting all that we have, our talents and life into God’s control. We depend on Him for all that we need. In the next lesson, we will learn how this dependence on God and reliance on His power in our lives makes us like sheep and God like our Good Shepherd.

MATTHEW 6:19-21

DO NOT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES
TREASURES ON EARTH,

WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY,
AND WHERE THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL.

BUT STORE UP FOR YOURSELVES
TREASURES IN HEAVEN
WHERE MOTH AND RUST DO NOT DESTROY
AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK IN AND
STEAL.

FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,
THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO.

Lesson Eleven:

Jesus is the Good Shepherd: John 10:11—21

Have you ever seen sheep on a farm, in a zoo, or heard about them?
What do you remember about them?

Lesson Questions:

1. What is the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep?
2. How do sheep respond to their shepherd?
3. How is Jesus like our shepherd?
4. How did Jesus' life prove Him to be our Good Shepherd?
5. What claim does Jesus make in verses 17—18?
6. Why the responses in verses 19—20?
7. Who are God's sheep?
8. Who are the "other sheep?"
9. Who are symbolized by the thieves and robbers?
10. What is their main interest in you?
11. How do they approach you?
12. How can you tell the difference between them and the Good Shepherd and respond accordingly?
13. What is the Good Shepherd's main interest in you?

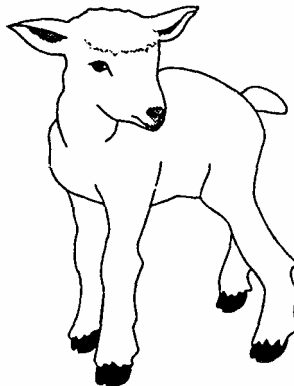
Discussion Questions:

1. As God's sheep, what are your qualities, roles?
2. As God's sheep, what is God's promise to you?

This lesson was about our Good Shepherd and how He cares for us. Next week we will learn of a specific incidence where Jesus showed his amazing power to feed and care for His people.

Psalm 23

1. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
2. He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
3. He restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of
righteousness
for his name's sake.
4. Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
5. You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6. Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.



Lesson Twelve:

Jesus Feeds the 5,000: Mark 6:30—44

Was there ever anything you really needed but couldn't get?

Lesson Questions:

1. Why did Jesus decide to take the disciples away?
2. Was Jesus angry with the followers?
3. Do you think that the disciples were angry with the followers?
4. How would you have felt if you were in their shoes?
5. What was the disciple saying in verse 37?
6. What was Jesus' solution to feeding the crowd?
7. What do you think the disciples must have thought of such an idea?
8. How would you feel as the disciple while gathering all the leftover food?
9. If God can feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish, can He take care of your needs?

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you go to Jesus with the great need mentioned at the beginning of this lesson? Would you go now?
2. Do you ever feel that you shouldn't waste your time or money helping certain people? Did Jesus ever think that?

If Jesus can feed 5,000 people with so little food, we know that He can always care for us. In the next lesson, we will learn of a man who risked injury and embarrassment because he knew that Jesus could help him.

Prayer

Almighty God, we come to you tired, discouraged, and needy in many areas of our lives. But we know that you can supply all that we need. You fed 5,000 with so little food. In the same way, fill our emptiness, whether physical hunger or emotional pain. Just like the 5,000 people in the lesson, we want to learn more about You and are hungry for Your words. Let nothing in this world be more important to us than You. Fill us with the knowledge of Christ through the Spirit. Then let us help to feed others with the Gospel truth.

Lesson Thirteen:

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man: Mark 2:1-12

Who is your favorite star?

How much trouble would you go through to see him/her?

Lesson Questions:

1. How do you think the paralyzed man felt being lowered through a roof by his friends?
2. What do you think the friends had to do so that the paralyzed man could see Jesus?
3. Why do you think the scribes were so defensive about Jesus' claim of being able to forgive?
4. How do you think the bystanders felt about this scene? Do you think they found it merely a big distraction? Maybe they thought that it was unfair for the paralyzed man to get a good seat since t'hey had been waiting longer?
5. Can you think of other people who went out of their way to see Jesus?
 - Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1—4. (P.232)
 - Magi: Matthew 2:1—2 (P.3)
 - 5,000 people: Matthew 14:13—14 (P.41-42)

Discussion Questions:

1. Does Jesus have power to heal us? Are we sick or paralyzed in some way? How do we daily need to be healed?
2. How can we go to be with Jesus in our lives today? How often do we go out of our way to hear His word?

The paralyzed man in this lesson knew that God could and would help him. In the next lesson we will learn of two women who were friends of Jesus and also came to Him with a need.

Prayer

Dearest Jesus, Healer of the sick, Savior of the sinful, You are the only true Doctor. Our sins have us crippled and helpless. We need Your forgiveness so that we can be healthy. Heal us also, if it's Your will, from any earthly illness. Help us to come to You every day for daily forgiveness and healing. Just as the paralyzed man went out of his way to come to You, let us take time and effort to read and hear Your word. Let us also take time to pray---to leave the distractions of life behind to be with You in Your perfect healing presence.

Lesson Fourteen:

Jesus Raises Lazarus: John 11:1—44

Did you ever see something done which seemed impossible?

Lesson Questions:

1. What is the purpose of sickness?
2. How did Lazarus death serve to glorify God?
3. List Jesus' feelings as described in this chapter.
4. What did Jesus pray for?
5. What should we realize about our power?
6. How do you think Jesus feels when we are hurting?
7. What did you learn about suffering from this story? About emotions and crying?
8. Jesus is stronger than the power of death. When else in His life did He demonstrate this?
9. How does Jesus give us new life?

Discussion Questions:

1. Put yourself in Mary and Martha's shoes before Jesus raised Lazarus back to life. What questions do you think they had about Jesus, their Friend?
2. Do you sometimes feel that God has deserted you?
3. Read the poem "Footprints" on the back of the sheet.

In this lesson we saw the side of Jesus which was man. In the next lesson we will also see Jesus as part man. He was tempted by the devil, just as we are tempted.

FOOTPRINTS

ONE NIGHT A MAN DREAMED HE WAS WALKING ALONG THE BEACH WITH THE LORD. AS SCENES OF HIS LIFE FLASHED BEFORE HIM, HE NOTICED THAT THERE WERE TWO SETS OF FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND. HE ALSO NOTICED AT HIS SADDEST, LOWEST TIMES THERE WAS BUT ONE SET OF FOOTPRINTS.

THIS BOTHERED THE MAN. HE ASKED THE LORD, “DID YOU NOT PROMISE THAT IF I GAVE MY HEART TO YOU THAT YOU’D BE WITH ME ALL THE WAY? THEN WHY IS THERE BUT ONE SET OF FOOTPRINTS DURING MY MOST TROUBLESOME TIMES?”

THE LORD REPLIED, “MY PRECIOUS CHILD, I LOVE YOU AND WOULD NEVER FORSAKE YOU. DURING THOSE TIMES OF TRIAL AND SUFFERING WHEN YOU SEE ONLY ONE SET OF FOOTPRINTS, IT WAS THEN I CARRIED YOU.

Lesson Fifteen:

The Temptation of Jesus: Luke 4:1—13

What is the longest you've ever gone without food?

Lesson Questions:

1. What sort of things did the devil tempt Jesus with?
2. Were these tempting things?
3. The devil sees and knows our weak spots and works on those. What temptations are the hardest things for you to resist?
4. Did Jesus give into temptation?
5. How did He resist?
6. Can we resist? How? Read I Corinthians 10:13 (P.481 or on back of sheet).
7. What do you learn about Satan from Luke 4:9-10? What knowledge do we know Satan has?

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you recognize when Satan is talking to you?
2. When are you most vulnerable to Satan's temptations?

The devil is cunning and smart. He knew Jesus was physically weak after fasting and attacked Him in His weakness. In our next lesson we will learn that Paul, one of Jesus' disciples was weak in a specific area and so are we all. We will also learn, however, how God uses our weaknesses

I CORINTHIANS

10:13

AND GOD IS FAITHFUL;

HE WILL NOT LET YOU BE

TEMPTED

BEYOND WHAT YOU CAN

BEAR.

BUT WHEN YOU ARE

TEMPTED,

HE WILL ALSO PROVIDE A

WAY OUT.

**SO THAT YOU CAN
STAND UP UNDER IT.**

Lesson Sixteen:

Paul's Thorn in the Flesh: II Corinthians 12:7-10

Can you think of an area in which you feel weak?

Lesson Questions:

1. What are reasons for troubles in our lives? Read I Peter 1:6,7 (P.647-648) and John 9:1-3 (P.286).
2. Through our human weakness, God can display His divine power. Not only do we accept and acknowledge our weaknesses but what do we also do?

Discussion Questions:

1. What are your thorns in the flesh?
2. Could God remove these thorns if He wanted to?
3. What may be His reasons for not removing them? Read Romans 8:28, I Corinthians 15:10, and James 1:2-4.
4. What is your attitude now about your thorn in the flesh?

When we recognize that we are not perfect, but actually weak and needy, we become more open and caring toward others who are in need. In the next lesson, we learn that Christians help others who are disadvantaged.

PSALM 13

HOW LONG, O LORD?

WILL YOU FORGET ME FOREVER?

HOW LONG WILL YOU HIDE YOUR FACE FROM ME?

HOW LONG MUST I WRESTLE WITH MY THOUGHTS AND EVERY
DAY

HAVE SORROW IN MY HEART?

HOW LONG WILL MY ENEMY TRIUMPH OVER ME?

LOOK ON ME AND ANSWER, O LORD MY GOD.

GIVE LIGHT TO MY EYES, OR I WILL SLEEP IN DEATH;

MY ENEMY WILL SAY, "I HAVE OVERCOME HIM," AND MY FOES
WILL REJOICE WHEN I FALL.

BUT I TRUST IN YOUR UNFAILING LOVE;

MY HEART REJOICES IN YOUR SALVATION.

I WILL SING TO THE LORD, FOR HE HAS BEEN GOOD TO ME.

Lesson Seventeen:

The Great Banquet: Luke 14:15—24

Did someone ever invite you to do something
and you made up an excuse so you didn't have to go?

Lesson Questions:

1. Why do you think this man is giving a banquet?
2. Why didn't the original people who were invited want to come?
3. What were some of the excuses? Were they valid?
5. What did the man do to fill his banquet table?
6. Were the others who refused asked again?
7. Who does the man who gave the banquet represent?
8. Who are the people who originally received Invitations?
9. Who are the remainder of the people who were invited?
10. What is the banquet?
11. Of what does this parable warn us?
12. In Luke 14:12-14 what guidelines does Jesus give for giving a banquet? Besides giving a banquet, to what also does this refer?

Discussion Questions:

1. What invitations does God give us?
2. What kind of excuses do we use for not keeping in contact with God by reading His Word, going to church and praying to Him?

In the lesson for today, people were invited to a banquet. God invites each one of us to pray to Him. Our next lesson will speak of two men who prayed in two very different ways.

Prayer

Dear God Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You have so much to offer me - so many blessings You want to give me. You offer peace, love, forgiveness, hope, baptism, prayer, communion. Thank you, Dear Lord, for all of these blessings. Unlike those in the lesson, let us never make an excuse for not hearing Your word or receiving Your blessings. Your gifts are free and offered to all. Thank You for being such a loving, forgiving Lord. We are needy, poor and sinful. Let us take every opportunity we have to be close to You. We finally look forward to enjoying the great blessing of being in heaven someday with You.

Lesson Eighteen:

The Pharisee and Tax Collector: Luke 18:9—14 (P.229)

Do you ever see people pray? How do they look?

Lesson Questions:

1. What is prayer?
2. How does God want us to pray? See Matthew 6:5—13. (Pages 13-14) and I Peter 5:6-7 (P. 657).
3. Why does the Pharisee think that God should accept him?
4. Why does the Tax Collector think that God should accept him?
5. Why is the Tax Collector described as perfectly holy? Read Acts 13:38—39 (P.372).
6. Who does God accept? Why?

Discussion Questions

1. Read verse 17 of this chapter. Why is the Tax Collector like a little child? How does he see God as his Father?
2. There is only one thing that we should be dependent on. What is it?

The tax collector showed humility, submission and dependence on God. In our next lesson, we will learn how Jesus showed these same attributes.

THE LORD'S PRAYER
MATTHEW 6:9-13

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALOWED BE YOUR NAME, YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN. GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US. AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER AND EVER.

AMEN.

Lesson Nineteen:

Jesus Washes the DiscipJes's Feet: John 13:1—17 (P.301-302)

Think of some people that you know who are definitely people you would follow. What are they like?

Lesson Questions:

1. Why did Jesus wash His disciple's feet?
2. Does Jesus expect us to get soap and water and go around washing people's feet?
3. What quality did Jesus show by doing this act?
4. What does it mean to be submissive? Read I Peter 2:21~23 (P.651—652).
5. Besides washing feet, what are ways in which we can follow Jesus's example of being a servant?
6. What did Jesus know, according to the first three verses of this story?
7. How would this knowledge cause someone to be submissive?

Discussion Questions

1. What are qualities that allow one to be a good leader?
Read Luke 14:8—11 (P.217), Ephesians 5:21 (P.548) and Matthew 20:25-28 (P.60).
2. What is the ultimate act of submission which Jesus would perform?
3. How will being humble and submissive to the Lord change your life?
4. What is Jesus' command to us in John 13:34 (P.304)?

Although God expects us to be submissive and Christ—like, it is not always easy. In our next lesson, we will see Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples wrestling with doubt and finding it hard to believe without seeing.

Lesson Twenty:

Jesus appears to Thomas: John 20:24—31 (P.323-324)

Do you consider yourself to be a skeptical person who needs to see something to believe it?

Lesson Questions:

1. Read John 18:15—18
John 18:25—27
Matthew 26:36-46
Matthew 26:56b

How do you think the disciples felt seeing Jesus, considering their actions the week before?

2. Did Jesus approach them in anger? How did He show that He was not angry? What greeting did He use three times? See John 14:27
3. To where, with what and for what did Jesus send his disciples?
4. Who only can forgive sins? What can we do, however?
5. In verse 31, what does John say was his purpose for writing this book?
6. How does believing give you life?

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus say about skepticism in this text?
2. We have not physically seen Jesus yet how can we believe in Him? Read Romans 10:17 (P. 447).

For Personal Dedication

Lord of my life, I know that my life is not my own. By Your death and resurrection You made me Your own. Help me to live under Your direction, always ready to hear the call, “Follow Me”; always aware of Your presence; always knowing that I have received the gift of Your Spirit; always living so that others may receive Your love and mercy through me.

It is not easy to ask for these things, Lord, because I know I have much to give up. I can no longer pretend that my life is my own. My prayer is my surrender to Your care and direction. I want to follow, Lord, but it is very hard. I will get very tired. I will make selfish mistakes. I will fail time and again. I will fall.

Show me again that there is love and forgiveness and mercy in Your hand. Use me in spite of my unwillingness, doubt, and disobedience.

Pour into me Your good Spirit, so that I am not afraid to follow and fall and follow again.

Amen