
**FOLLOWING
JESUS**

**BECOMING DISCIPLES
WHO MAKE DISCIPLES**

JO GRAHAM

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*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching
them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

*And surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age.*

Matthew 28.19-20

FOREWORD

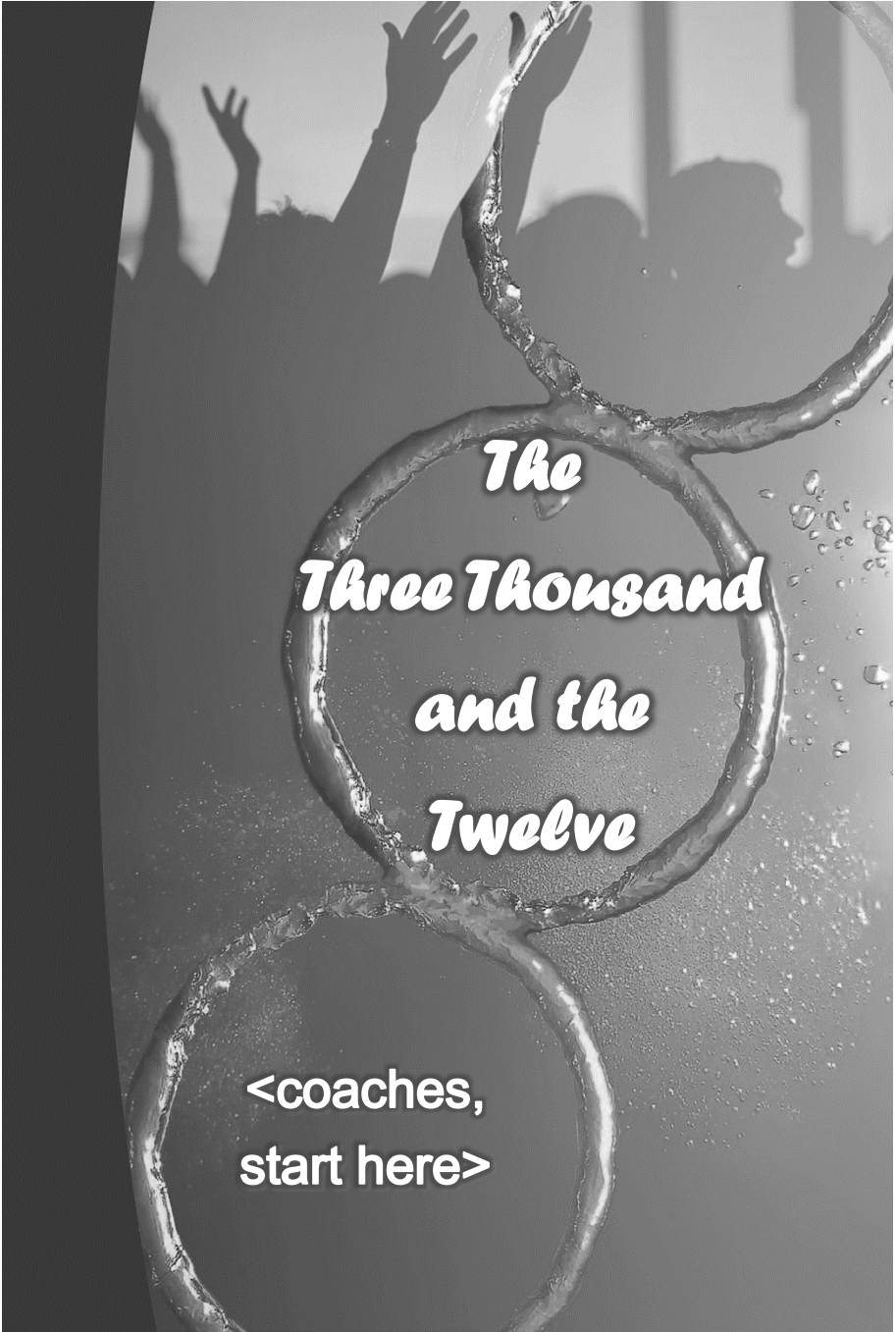
We wrote the first version of these studies more than 40 years ago while nurturing new Christians in Malaysia, where we worked with a team pioneering churches in a regional city as well as jungle villages. From there, we moved to Japan, making disciples in a crowded, energetic mega-city, raising up a new church - and three wonderful children - and rewrote the lessons a few more times.

The next step was a rural, Muslim people group in Mozambique. The same truths needed to be adapted - discipling illiterate fishermen and farmers, mainly using simple booklets. Thousands of them have become followers of Jesus and are vigorously spreading the gospel and making many disciples, teaching these 10 steps of how to follow Jesus.

Now we are back in Japan, still deeply involved on the front-line, helping people to walk with Jesus, grow in His amazing love and then pass it on. We continue to adapt the lessons for children and for whatever situations we find. We hope you will feel free to adapt the material for your situation, too, for smart phones and for You Tube.

With joy and prayer, we dedicate this book to everyone who is looking for encouragement and help in becoming a disciple and discipling others. We wrote it for YOU!

Jo and Jenny Graham



*The
Three Thousand
and the
Twelve*

<coaches,
start here>

The 3000 in Jerusalem, what they learned

Jerusalem was bustling with people. A few weeks after Jesus was crucified, thousands had gathered in Jerusalem for a huge feast. Of course many were local people. Some were from Galilee – from places like Cana or Capernaum, where Jesus did so much of his ministry. And some had come from far away in Africa, Asia and Europe. Imagine that you were there amongst them.

Many already knew about Jesus. Some had been healed by him, like the blind man that He sent to the pool to wash the mud from his eyes. Maybe Simon, who carried His cross, was there, and Nicodemus who came to Jesus at night. They knew how Jesus died but they didn't know why. And they had heard rumors that He rose from the dead and had been seen by many of his friends.

In fact, a group of those friends, 120 in all, were also in Jerusalem, gathered in a big upstairs room. Jesus had spent 40 days meeting with them. He explained to them the meaning of his death and resurrection. He told them He was sending them out to preach the gospel and make disciples. And then, after reminding them that they must wait to receive the Holy Spirit, He went back to heaven. They didn't understand exactly what they were waiting for, but they prayed and prepared their hearts.

Suddenly there was a huge commotion. It sounded like the roaring of a tornado coming from heaven and filling that upstairs room. Inside the room, the 120 believers saw something like fire on each other's heads. They began praising God loudly in languages they had never learned. They moved downstairs into the marketplace, and thousands of people heard the noise and came to see what was going on. What did it all mean?

“What should we do?”

Then one of Jesus' disciples, called Simon Peter, stood up and began to explain what had happened. Peter told them that the rumors that Jesus had risen from the dead were true. And he explained what all this meant, that God had sent Jesus to be their Lord and Savior! He told them that the dramatic events of that day were the fulfilment of God's promise to pour His Spirit on everyone – to give them a new heart and a new spirit.

Many people were deeply impacted by Peter's message. If you and I had been

there, we would have been impressed too! Some of them called out to Peter, “Brothers, what should we do?” That was a great question. Listen very carefully for his answer. This is what he said (Acts 2.38):

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That same day, three thousand people opened their hearts and decided to do exactly what Peter said, to repent and follow Jesus. Together they went down to the water to be baptized and no doubt received the Holy Spirit just as the ones in the upper room had done a few hours earlier. Imagine that you and I had been among them! We would have been so excited!

The 12 pass the baton – Jesus’ commands - to the 3000

It was the beginning of a new journey. The new believers didn’t scatter to their homes after being baptized. They began to meet together and learn from the first twelve disciples – and from the 120 who had been with them in the upper room. Sometimes they met in a big crowd in the temple court. Sometimes they met in their homes. And Jesus was right there with them, not physically, but in their hearts, just as He had promised.

Jesus had instructed the twelve in Matthew 28.20 (NLT), to pass it on...

*Teach these new disciples to obey **all the commands I have given you.**
And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*

Now they began to do exactly what He had told them, to pass on the baton of faith. They probably told lots of wonderful stories. Bartimaeus might have been there telling everyone how he got healed – and Zacchaeus telling how Jesus called him down from the tree. Maybe Barnabas was sitting there taking notes – and passing his notes on to Luke a few months later. And I’m sure people were asking Mary about the first Christmas. But what were the key commands, the baton, that the twelve passed on from Jesus to the new believers? Exactly what Jesus had taught them!

We have already seen the first three commands in the verse above (Acts 2.38).

Repent – That was the first thing Jesus had commanded them when they

met Him by the sea (Mark 1.15).

Be Baptized – That was part of His last command, to go and make disciples (Matthew 28.19).

Receive the Holy Spirit – Jesus had taught them so many things about the Holy Spirit coming, in John 7.37-38, 14.16-17, for example.

Then a few verses later, we see 5 more things the new believers began to learn together – all lessons that the twelve had learned from Jesus.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2.42*

Listen and obey – The apostles' teaching was Jesus' teaching.

Love each other – That was the foundation of their “fellowship.”

Break bread – “Do this in remembrance of Me.” Worship together.

Pray – “When you pray, say ‘Father...’”

Give – “Whatever you do for the least of these my brothers...” Acts 2.44-45

The 3000 new believers were so full of joy and the power of the Spirit that they told their friends about Jesus and every day new people joined them (Acts 2.47).

Make disciples. What do you think the 3000 taught to this next wave of believers? The same things they had just learned – to repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit and... the key commands of Jesus. That is how this new community in Jerusalem grew and spread. And that is how we make disciples too.

If I had been there, there are 2 questions I would have asked the twelve who had lived so close to Jesus. First, “Peter, what was Jesus like? If you could tell me one story that describes Him, what would that story be?” The answer to that question will be our Introduction.

And my next question: “Of all the things that Jesus taught His followers to do, what do you think was the most important lesson?” The answer to that question will become Step One for us.

A relay began, taking the gospel to every tribe and nation!

- First generation: Jesus taught the twelve.
- Second generation: The twelve apostles and the 120 taught the 3000 new believers baptized on the day of Pentecost.
- Third generation: the 3000 taught their friends and families as every day new people joined them.
- Fourth generation: Then, after persecution began, they spread out from Jerusalem, making disciples wherever they went. Barnabas coached Paul and together they discipled many new people in Antioch. Philip taught the Samaritans as well as a man from Ethiopia!
- Fifth generation: Paul coached Timothy and many others!
- Sixth generation: Timothy taught faithful men in Ephesus (2 Tim 2.2).
- Seventh generation: Those faithful men taught others...who taught others...who taught others...all the way down to us!

This is a relay, a chain reaction of disciples making disciples, taking the Gospel into every ethnic group on earth.

Jesus told US to make disciples and said that HE would build the church. If we obey His commands – love each other, break bread together, pray together, forgive each other and wash each other’s feet – we will be joined together. We will become the church. Not just people meeting together on a Sunday but the church of Jesus, the light of the world, the salt of the earth.

The 12 in Galilee, how they learned

Now we know WHAT Jesus taught. But what did His school look like? Did He give them a manual like this with lessons? Let’s go on a short journey with Him starting in Galilee and observe HOW He taught.

First, we are amazed at His wonderful love for them. Secondly, He taught them clearly not just to listen but to obey. But these points are well covered in the Ten Steps. So, let’s take 7 other snapshots of His coaching!

- **Around the table:** He spends so much time eating with people – in the coffee shops or tea houses of His time. And we see that in the new Jerusalem church too. They “*shared their meals with great joy and generosity*” Acts 2.46 (NLT). You will probably have a class with your students once or twice a week. But plan to have meals or coffee together as much as possible, not to do the lesson but for “spontaneous coaching.”

- **In the boat:** They had so many adventures in boats. You may not ride in boats so much. But you can arrange camping trips, train trips, mission trips or fun trips. It's another chance for "spontaneous coaching," especially when you get caught in storms!
- **Beside the well:** Wow! Look, He's sitting down beside a well, talking to a Samaritan woman! There are many lessons in this story, but the point for us to notice here is this: asking her for a drink was the first step in discipling her, and from that simple beginning, her whole town came to believe in Jesus. Some people think that evangelism is bringing the lost to salvation and after that discipleship starts, helping baby Christians to grow. But when Jesus sat with her, He began discipling her – by treating her with respect and asking her for water.

Making disciples is not just helping baby Christians to grow. It is the whole process of bringing lost people to Jesus and then teaching them to walk with them. Every relationship is important.

When He sent the twelve to make disciples, did He send them to train baby Christians? No, there were no baby Christians. He sent them to bring the lost to Christ and then to train them, to build relationships with ordinary people, beside a well or on a train. Discipling includes evangelism; they are one on-going process.

Imagine that process as a scale like this:

‡

-50 _____ 0 _____ 10 _____ +50

The person at -50 is far away, maybe hostile; zero is the point of salvation; +50 is a mature Christian. This manual is focused on the first steps of a new Christian, from zero to ten. But every step from -50 to +50 is part of the continuous process of growing as disciples. The way we interact with a hostile relative or the staff in a coffee shop shows Christ to them – and also to the new Christian who is with us. Treat everyone with love and respect, just as Jesus did. Everything we do should be stepping people closer to Christ and helping them grow in Him, even from -50 to -40!

- **"Hurry down from that tree."** Well, that is an unusual way to say,

“Repent and believe!” That’s not in any training manual on evangelism!

Everyone is unique. Jesus told Zacchaeus to hurry down from the tree; He told another man that he needed to be “born again”; and to someone else, “Son, your sins are forgiven!” The words are different for each person, but the love and care are the same. Jesus never taught methods or formulae, like how to evangelize or how long to pray each day.

He loved His Father and did what the Father showed Him to do. And He loved the twelve and wanted them to grow into all God had prepared for them. As coaches, we care for each student in a unique way that fits who they are.

- **“What were you arguing about?”** When Jesus heard the twelve arguing about who was the greatest, He gave them life-changing lessons about humility. He often turned people’s failures into “spontaneous coaching.” When you correct people with love and grace, they will learn to know Jesus better. Conflict is a great moment for learning!
- **He gave the bread to the disciples, who gave it to the people:** (Matt 14.19) Jesus was always preparing the twelve to do the ministry. He didn’t do it all Himself. First, He healed the sick and they watched. Then He sent them out to do it. Always, after time with the crowds, they debriefed about what had happened. Finally, He entrusted the entire work to them and went back to His Father.

A student can learn himself and immediately begin to teach someone else, keeping just a week or two ahead. Wow!

He **trusted** them to take what they learned from Him, put it into practice and then teach someone else. On the field training, rather than classroom lecturing, was His strategy to take the Gospel to every nation on earth.

When that process is completed and every ethnic group has been discipled, then He will come again. Prepare your students and trust them to make disciples of others.

- **Small is beautiful**
 - # Jesus taught the Word of God to **large groups** of people.
 - # He also spent time with **individuals** like Nicodemus and the

Samaritan woman, and that was a vital part of discipling them.

But the core part of His coaching was in conversations with a **small group** of twelve.

This manual works best in a small group. When 2 or 3 new believers study together, they encourage each other. They grow and learn to care for each other as they pray and share together.

As we study together, we share our lives and begin to care for each other.

If you have only one student ready to study, ask some other young Christians to join you. It is good revision for them, and their example will help the new believer.

A football coach can give some individual tips to help a player with dribbling or shooting, but most of the training is going to be done in a team context. The same is true of *Following Jesus*; we learn to pray when we pray together. We learn to love each other when we have meals together or go on trips together.

Jesus' many conversations with Peter give us wonderful insights into the need to walk with each student individually. People need time to ask questions – and also the freedom to say things that may not seem very smart – like Peter did! We may teach a lesson on baptism, for example. But the lesson is not enough; we will have to ask each one separately about their own situation, discuss their options and pray for them.

That was a very insightful journey through Galilee. He lived with the disciples 24/7 for three years and most of the lessons came out of real-life

Making disciples is not just a classroom activity but sharing our lives 24/7.

situations. They became curious when they saw Him praying and asked Him to teach them to pray. They watched how He related to Samaritans, to the rejects of the society, and to women and children, and they learned of His amazing love. They went with Him to heal the sick, discovered the power that flowed from Him and eventually He sent them out to

heal the sick in His name.

You ARE going to use a manual and you WILL normally fix a time each week for the lesson. And you probably won't live with your students like Jesus did with the twelve – unless it's someone in your family! But try to share your lives with them (meals, boats); be there when they have crises in their lives and do fun things together as well. That is where most learning takes place.

Teaching *Following Jesus*

First, the mistake coaches most often make! We skip the part of the lesson teaching the Lord's Prayer. The section on Learning to Pray comes at the end of each lesson, and we often run out of time! But be sure to prioritize coaching your student to pray.

For each lesson, there is the Student's Text and the Coach's Guide.

- The Coach's Guide is for your lesson preparation. When you are preparing, refer to it carefully and use it to make your own personal notes on your copy of the Student's Text. Prepare well!
- Each lesson is built around a story. The story will be very familiar to you. But when you prepare, think how you can make the story in each lesson come alive for students who have never heard it before. Jesus taught with stories because they reflect real life, and He knew that people learn well from stories. Share from your own life too.
- When you teach, you and your student have the manual open at the Student's Text.
- Explain some sections in your own words. This symbol ✂ indicates that there is a story for you to tell or something to explain. You can get your students to read some paragraphs aloud. Other times, they can follow in their text while you explain; encourage them fill in the blanks in their text - if they want to. Ask them questions – keep them engaged!
- Make sure you yourself are obeying! If we teach on prayer but we do not pray, they will pick up the reality in our hearts rather than the theory of our fine words.
- But you don't need to be perfect to be a coach. Share your own struggles



What mistake do coaches most often make?

humbly and let Christ work within you as you teach your students. We are all growing as we coach others.

- If you do a lesson thoroughly, it will probably take about 60-90 minutes. Feel free to adapt the material into 2 lessons or shorten it.
- Be flexible. If your student has just failed a big exam or lost a relative, you need to put aside your lesson to pray with them and encourage them. If a question about the offerings at your church comes up naturally, don't leave it till Lesson 9 but answer it in the context of real life.
- Daily fellowship with God. We want to help our students to connect personally with Jesus and to hear Him speaking to them. One tool for that is a daily time of "devotions." We take time in each lesson to read a passage of scripture and pray together to help our students to develop this habit of daily devotions. Don't neglect this vital section!

This manual is designed both to help you make disciples, and also to help you become a great coach!

- Training for you and your student. The whole course is designed to coach you to coach others, and then your student in turn will disciple someone else. The quicker he passes on what he is learning, the better he will learn and grow himself. Think together about opportunities for your student to teach his younger brother or a friend!

Skills to practice

The commands of Christ are not merely ten lessons which we complete each week. They are the curriculum of our lives as disciples. Each one is a subject or skill, like Science or History at school. We don't learn Science in one just lesson at school. We keep studying for many years. In the same way, Step 8 is only an introduction to prayer. We will keep learning all our lives about prayer and praise, about intercession and spiritual warfare. In Step 9, we will begin to learn to give. And then we will continue to learn more about how to handle finance with integrity, to be free from greed and covetousness and to share our possessions. Each step is a topic for us to learn and a skill for us to grow in throughout our lives.

Skills need to be practiced. The difference between a school football team and a professional team is not different skills. The skills – passing, dribbling, shooting, etc. – are the same. The difference is the hours of practice.

Professional players have isolated the skills and drilled them thousands of times to reach that level of proficiency. As we coach our friends through these lessons many times, we will become more and more skillful.

Jesus never stops working

Jesus taught the twelve for 3 years on earth and then He continued to walk with them afterwards by the Holy Spirit. Some students will finish this manual in 12 weeks; some will take a year to finish. But all of us take many years to change and put these lessons into practice. It is wonderful to have a friend and coach who keeps walking with us long after the 12 lessons in the manual are completed. Paul coached Timothy right up to the time of his death! I still walk closely with people I began discipling more than 40 years ago. Some people seem to have walked away. But we keep our hearts open to them, and eventually many come back. His love triumphs over every barrier and hurt. He never stops working!

Intro

***The Heart
of God***



What is God like? Before we learn about following Him, let's hear a story that describes vividly what God is like – what Jesus is like!

The Father's welcome

✧ **The son left home**, v.11-16 ✕ (This mark ✕ indicates that your coach will share something OR there is something for you to discuss.)

- This is a picture of us. Most of us didn't consciously leave the father's house like this son. We started life in that far country, with very little awareness of God. When things are going well and we have money and friends, we don't think too deeply, but when things turn sour, what happens?

✧ **He started thinking of going home**, v.17-19 ✕

- He recognized that he had done wrong and prepared a speech asking forgiveness. How will his father receive him – with anger, a curse, or refuse to meet him? Or at best, give him a job as a servant – if he shows that he has reformed?
- We also need to turn back to God. How will He receive us?

✧ **His father's welcome**, v.20-24 ✕

- Imagine the amazing love of the father, waiting and watching all that time, and then running to hug and kiss his son. See the gifts and then the party.
- THAT is how God receives you, too. He never stopped loving you while you were far away. And now that you have come back to Him, He forgives you completely and makes you His son or daughter, not His servant. Amazing love!
- There are 5 wonderful things that happen to you the moment you come back to God. Try to memorize them together.

- ① You become a child of God (John 1.12).
- ② Jesus comes to live in your heart (Revelation 3.20).
- ③ Your sins are completely forgiven (Colossians 1.14).
- ④ You receive eternal life, a place in heaven (John 5.24).

- ⑤ You start a new life here on earth. God has prepared an awesome adventure for you (2 Corinthians 5.17, John 10.10).

✧ **The older brother**, v.25-32

- He thought his father would love him if worked hard and never did anything wrong. He didn't understand that the father's love, joy and provision were always there for him because he was a son, not because of what he did.
- All of us have done wrong – even “good” people like this older brother. None of us can save ourselves.



Wow! Me? A child of God? Awesome!

You can find this story in Luke 15.11-32. Write down what you think it tells us about God? _____

Tell the story: Now, can you tell the story in your words to your coach or someone else in your study group? Don't worry if you don't get all the details correct!

God loves you only if you are good.

Yes / No

God loves you always, because He is God and God is love.

Yes / No

God's beloved Son

God shouts His love to Jesus at His baptism. He loves His Son so much.

Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1.10-11)

He loves you just as much as He loves Jesus. Some of us had good fathers and we thank God for them. Some of us were hurt by our fathers and it is not easy to think of God as a wonderful father. But He wants to heal that hurt and become your perfect father. He pours His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

- Jesus taught us to call God by the same word a Jewish child used to call his father – “Abba”. (Romans 8.15)
- In English, how does a little child call his father? _____
That’s who God is – your loving Dad!
- And Jesus loved the twelve and He loves us just as much as His Father loved Him. Wow! That is a lot!

As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you. John 15.9

He makes His love clear

- 1) Through creation. Right from the beginning, in the Garden of Eden, God had an intimate friendship with Adam and Eve. He blessed them



*Following Jesus is a journey
in discovering the
greatness of God’s love!*

by generously providing all that they needed.

2) *God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son.* (John 3.16). Jesus is the perfect expression of the love of the Father. Through the life of Jesus, through his teaching and miracles, and through the Cross, we see God’s love.

3) Through the Word of God. The Bible tells us repeatedly of God’s love for us.

4) Through the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts. This is a very important verse for us:

***God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
whom He has given us.*** Romans 5.5

- 5) Through other followers of Jesus.

The foundation

Everything Jesus did was because of his Father’s love for him and His love for His Father. It is **the foundation** of our lives as followers of Jesus. Every blessing comes to us because of God’s care for us. The more we receive His love, the more blessing we are going to enjoy.

✂ Let's take a moment now for your coach to pray simply for each student and ask God to pour His love into your heart – just as we read in Romans 5.5.

Build your friendship with Jesus

Finally, we are going to work on two habits that will become part of your daily lives. The twelve disciples had a physical relationship with Jesus. Every day they saw Him, ate with Him, listened to His words and helped Him to bless others. But now we cannot walk with Him like that. Instead, we will learn to have a spiritual relationship with Him. He lives in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and we will learn to communicate with Him in our hearts. These two habits will help you build your new relationship with Jesus.

① By reading His Word every day

We will practice together, beginning from Mark 1.1-18.

- First, we will pray very simply, asking the Lord to speak to us.
- Then, we will read the passage right through altogether.
- Next, we will read through slowly, on our own, asking ourselves (and writing down), just like Facebook:

(a) Like: which verse or expression we like best _____, and

(b) Comment: why we like it, or what we like about it _____

- Now share with others in your group the verse the verse you chose and why you like it.
- Finally, we thank God for His Word and ask for His help to obey it.

Each day, take a few minutes to do this, reading through Mark's Gospel little by little. Next week, we will each share one verse that we have read during the week and why we chose that verse. Set aside 10 minutes every day. Make it a habit.

② By praying every day and many times a day

Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11.1). He answered them with the Lord's Prayer. It is our pattern for prayer. It begins with these words: *Our Father in heaven*. Today we are going to think about those few words. We already talked about God as our loving father, our Dad. That's

what this word means. So let's imagine we are the lost son in the story and our father just ran to us and hugged us. What would you say to him?

Father, I'm so glad you ran to me and hugged me and welcomed me home as your son.

Papa, I was lost. I was like an orphan. But you took me back as your son. That is so amazing!

- Let's go round in a circle (in groups of 3 or 4) and each pray something like that.
- You can also share personal needs and pray for those needs briefly.
- Pray like this every day this week, and next week we'll learn a little more.

Every day read a little and pray a little. If possible, watch the *Jesus* film. And be sure to download a Bible onto your phone.

Pass it on

Is there anyone you could begin to teach these lessons to? A friend or someone in your family? We learn, then we do what we learned and then we begin to tell others what we just learned. You can start today!

Memory verse

A voice from heaven said, "You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy." Mark 1.11, NLT

The Lord's Prayer

Here is a summary of the suggestions presented in each lesson for using when you pray through the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father in heaven.

Imagine yourself as the lost son being welcomed home by his father.

"Father, I'm so glad you ran to me and welcomed me home as your son."

"Thank you so much for hugging me, even though I don't deserve it."

"Papa, I was lost. I was like an orphan. But you took me back as your son. That is so amazing."

Thanksgiving, something simple and specific

"Thank you for a good night's sleep and that I recovered from that cold."

"Thank you for helping me find that job or make that sale."

"Thank you that my friend me contacted after such a long time and that we could have a meal together and catch up."

"That test went better than I expected. Thank you for helping me."

We praise your holy name.

Use different names of the Lord to praise Him.

"I praise you, Jesus, my **Savior**. Thank you for setting me free from sin and giving me eternal life."

"I praise you, **our Healer**. Thank you for healing my child's sickness."

"I praise you, **Creator** of the heavens and the earth. When I see a sunset, a beautiful flower or a child's smile, I remember you."

"I praise your name, my **Shepherd**. When I'm lost or confused, you walk with me and show me the way."

Your kingdom, come! Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

This is where we change things that are not in line with God's will. In Jesus' name, we command things to come into line with God's will. Open the door to blessing and shut the door to evil! Be specific, ask for things that are clear enough that when we meet together next week, we can ask you if there has been any change.

“My sister is very depressed. I pray that she will open her heart and talk about it, and that I can pray with her for peace and freedom.”

“This week I’m meeting with a friend who has not been open to the gospel. Open her heart for me to share my testimony with her.”

“I close the door to gossip and bad language in my office, in Jesus’ name.”

Pray for a family member to be healed, or for God’s intervention in an exam or job interview. “I command the sickness to go, in Jesus’ name!”

Give us today the food we need.

“I have a lot of expenses this month. I ask for a miracle, so I can pay everything I need to.”

“Bless my farm work today. I pray for a great harvest this season.”

“Father, I’m looking for a job. Please lead me to the job you have prepared for me.”

“Papa, when I read the Bible today, please speak to my heart; feed my soul.”

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

“Father, search my heart. Show me if there is any sin that I haven’t dealt with... I confess it and receive your forgiveness.”

“If I have any anger in my heart towards someone else, show me. I repent of my bad attitude and I forgive their sin. I surrender them to you. I bless them in Jesus’ name.”

“Help us all to walk today in love for each other!”

Help us not to give in to temptation and rescue us from evil.

In the name of Jesus, we put a stop to every attack of the enemy that would otherwise come against us.

“In Jesus’ name, I pray for protection from 1) accidents, 2) sickness and 3) temptation, for me and all my family. Let no evil come near us.”

For the kingdom, the power and the glory belong to you forever. Amen!

“The kingdom – we declare that everything is under YOUR rule.

“The power – we ask for the power of your Holy Spirit in all we do today.

“The glory – Jesus, be the center of everything I do today! It’s all for you.”

Intro, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: We aim that our students build their lives as followers of Jesus on the foundation of His love. We love Him because He first loved us. Everything we will ever learn or do comes out of His gift of love to us.

The Father's welcome

After welcoming your students, begin with the story of the lost son from Luke 15.

- ✧ **The son leaves home.** Tell the story up from v.11-16.
 - For students who already have some background knowledge of the Bible, you can explain that this is a picture of what happened to Adam and Eve when they turned away from God's wonderful plan. They had been blessed with a garden full of the most delicious food imaginable. However, they chose to eat the one fruit they had been forbidden to touch (because it would kill them).
 - It is also a picture of us.
- ✧ **He starts thinking of going home,** v.17-19. You know the story very well, but your student doesn't.
 - Be dramatic about the question of how the father will receive the son. What is the son thinking as he begins his journey home?
 - Explain repentance, turning back to God, like this son. How will God receive us?
- ✧ **His father's welcome,** v.20-24
 - Dramatize this amazing scene – prepare it well. If possible, get someone to be the father and someone else be the son; get the father to run to the son and embrace him.
 - Compassion is a very strong word. It means gut-wrenching love.
 - That is how much God loves US.
 - Go through those 5 wonderful promises (You don't need to look up the scriptures. They are listed so your student can check them out later.) If your student gets these promises into his heart, he will have

assurance of his salvation.

- ✧ **The older brother**, v.25-32. You don't need to spend much time on this, but it forms a helpful contrast with the younger brother. The older son demonstrates a relationship with God based on works; the younger son shows a relationship based on being a son or daughter.

So, what is God like? What is the heart of God?

Tell the story: Have your students tell the story in their own words in groups of 2 or 3.

God's beloved son

Just as the Father declares His love for Jesus, He says the same about us as well.

- ✓ Papa, Dad or Daddy

Explain that Jesus' use of a Jewish child's word 'Abba,' meaning Dad or Daddy, was new and amazing to His disciples! He really is our dad!

He makes His love clear

How can we be sure of His love for us? There are five wonderful points to go through briefly.

The foundation

Explain, with passion, that God's love is the foundation of everything else that we are going to learn and do. Then pray for each student to be filled with the love of God by the Holy Spirit. Expect it to happen.

Build your friendship with Jesus

1) by reading His Word every day

Explain that this is NOT a religious obligation that you are going to be judged for. It is a very important part of having a friendship with Jesus – like a regular date with your wife or taking time over dinner with your children each

evening to catch up with them. That is how we express love.

Your student may notice that we are sometimes quite confusing about whether we are praying to God the Father or to Jesus. You may need to point out that God is one, that praying to the Father or to the Son is basically the same thing. But of course, when Jesus was on earth and gave us the Lord's prayer, He directed us to pray to the Father, not to Himself.

Do the Bible reading together from Mark 1.1-18. Encourage each person to share something.

- Don't explain what the passage means.
- Try not to ask trivial questions (about camel's hair or wild animals)!
- Share something entirely personal, why you like it or what you like about it. Some students will try to explain or teach. Gently steer them to sharing something personal.
- Set an example by sharing something that is fresh and meaningful for you, but that is simple enough for your student to connect with.
- Encourage them to write it down and to continue to do so each day, in a notebook or diary. It is best for you to do it, too, in addition to whatever reading you are doing normally. It will encourage the students if you are doing it with them.
- Next week, we will ask them to share something they have written during the week. You be ready, too.

2) **by praying every day and many times a day**

Most students think of prayer as asking God for things. So the first few lessons (where we come to God as our father, and then learn to bring thanksgiving and to praise His name) may not be easy to grasp. But keep practicing every week and slowly they will learn. There is no hurry. (The version of the Lord's Prayer that we are using here is our own mixture of several modern translations).

- Help them to imagine the father of the lost son running to them. But you don't need to teach a lot. You just need to model it well.
- As an appendix to the Student's Text, you will find the Lord's Prayer, with many of the suggestions that are presented in each lesson. If possible, photocopy this page onto A5 paper and give it to your student

to file in his Bible as a reference as he learns to pray. *Learning the Joy of Prayer*, Larry Lea (Kingsway, 1987) is a wonderful resource, both for yourself and your student.

Does your student have any urgent personal prayer needs? Don't forget to ask him and then pray simply for those needs. This is not just a theoretical study but a time to receive the love of God and to express it for each another. By praying for genuine needs and following up on them next week, we express our love for our students, and we connect heart to heart.

- Encourage them to watch the *Jesus* film. It is a wonderful introduction to the story of Jesus. If possible, prepare a small library of testimony books and books on basic Christianity for your students to borrow.
- Help them to download an easy-to-read Bible on their cell phone.
- If you have time, learn the memory verse together. People are renewed when they store up verses like this in their minds.

Step One

The Greatest Command



A Jewish leader came to Jesus with a great question that all of us want to ask! “Which is the first commandment of all?” That question is so important...

- ✧ Because it **defines the core** of our faith. First things first!
- ✧ Because **we want to please our Father**. In the last lesson we talked about the amazing love of the Father for us. In response to His love, we ask, “What can we do to please You?”
- ✧ Because **we want to obey our Master**. Jesus calls us to follow. So we say, “Lord, what do you want me to do? What is your will for me?”

There are four points to think about as we explore this question.

1. Jesus’ reply

What will Jesus say? Everyone’s eyes were fixed on Jesus as they waited for His answer.

- There are many commandments in the Old Testament that He might choose, about sacrificing lambs or bringing grain offerings or wearing the right clothes.
- There were many rules that the Jewish leaders had invented about how far you could travel on the holy days and how many times you had to wash your plates or hands. These leaders were always condemning people for not keeping these regulations and attacking Jesus when they thought He did not emphasize their rules.
- Some religions say, “You must not cut your hair.” or “You must not eat some kind of meat.” or “You must pray so many times a day, facing in this direction,” or “You must attend church attend every Sunday – or Saturday.”

What will Jesus say? Look up the answer in Mark 12.29-31 and fill in the blanks below.

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your _____ and with all your mind and with _____.”

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

THAT is the most important commandment for followers of Jesus. He tells

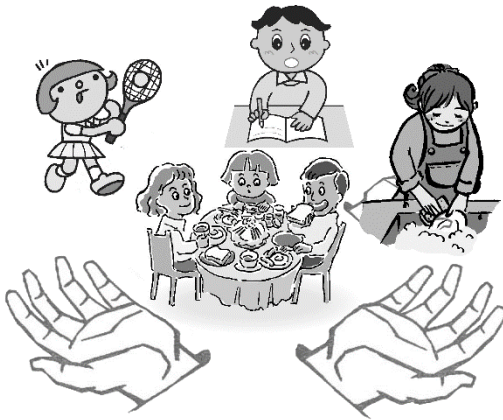
us to love God with all our hearts – to worship Him! We will learn more about loving our neighbor and loving one another in later lessons. Today we will focus on loving God and worshiping Him.

2. How do we love God?

Love is a motive; it comes from our hearts. The same action (washing the dishes, doing our homework, visiting a client, reading our Bibles) can be done for different motives. What would be some OTHER (not so good) motives we might have for doing these things? Discuss it and write down your thoughts. _____

So how do we love God?

- 1) **Worship Him, offer to Him** everything we do (our studies, our home life and work, our friendships and play, and also our church life) as an act of worship.



We can picture loving God as hands offering different activities like study, farming, cooking or play, etc. to the Lord. We offer up to Him everything we do. That is what worship means. Not just Sunday meetings but loving God and offering up everything to Him.

- 2) **Obey Him enthusiastically** in everything. We love Him so want to do His will, not like robots or soldiers, but with joy! With ALL our hearts!
- 3) Do everything **in His presence**. That means we invite Him into every area of our lives and are conscious that He is with us.
- 4) **Lean on Him** or depend on Him. By ourselves we are weak. But we know He cares for us so we talk to Him about these areas of our lives and ask Him for wisdom and help.
- 5) **Love others**. We want to make sure that our way of studying or working or playing is kind and sensitive to others, not self-centered. This is a life-

long challenge. And we will look at it more in Step 6 and Step 10.

- 6) **Tell Him!** In your prayer and songs, be sure to tell Him you love Him, every day. The words we speak Him are a huge part of our worship too.

Try to apply some of this to your own life, putting it into your own words. Think about doing your schoolwork or job out of love for God. How would you put it into practice? Talk it over and write down a couple of points:

- Day by day, we ask the Holy Spirit (we will learn more about Him later too) to come and fill us with the best motive, love for God. We can pray, “Lord, fill me with Your love. Help me to love You and worship You more and more.”
- We pray that He will take away the bad motives – fear or competition or a religious spirit. We can shut them out of our hearts in Jesus’ name. “Lord, I don’t want to do things out of fear like a slave anymore. I don’t want to do things to make me look good in front of others. I refuse these attitudes in Jesus’ name. I am not going to live like that. I’m going to do this out of love for You.”
- Paul explains this love a little more (in 1 Corinthians 13.1-3), saying that if we have faith to move mountains, give all our property to the poor, give our lives as martyrs or speak in tongues and prophesy – all good things – and don’t do it with love, it is meaningless. Religion without love does NOT make Him happy.

3. Three loves

Jesus actually gave us three commands about love.

- ✧ Love the Lord with all your heart. That’s today’s lesson.
- ✧ Love your neighbor as yourself. The second greatest commandment, in Mark 12.31, is the foundation of how Jesus wants us to relate to people who don’t yet know him. We will learn more about it in Step 10.
- ✧ Love each other. Just before Jesus went to the cross, He told the disciples that He was going to give them a new commandment. This love is the foundation of the family of God, the church. We will examine it more in Step 6.

*Now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other.
Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. John 13.34 (NLT)*

These three loves are the heartbeat of Christian life. We will learn in the coming weeks to do the things that Jesus commands His followers to do – to pray and give, to be baptized and celebrate Holy Communion, to tell others about Jesus – and we will learn to hear Him speak to us personally. But if the reason we do His will is not love, then it is just empty religion.

- Because we love Him, we joyfully follow Him. (Psalm 40.8)
- Because we love Him, we joyfully keep His word. (John 14.23)
- Because we love Him, we joyfully put Him first. (Matthew 6.33)
- Because we love Him, we joyfully stop doing what's wrong or going our own way.
- Because we love Him, we joyfully read the Bible, pray and worship; we joyfully come together to worship. So it goes on—you have the idea by now.



*Christian life is not
about rules or
ceremonies; it is not
outward appearances or
obligations. It is a
fellowship of love.*

4. Growing in love

Maybe you are thinking, “But I don’t have such a strong love for God.” Perhaps you don’t yet. But our Christian life is all about growing in love. These are life-long issues, not just a lesson that we will master in one day. We will keep praying for Him to fill us each day with His love and help us to worship Him with all our hearts. Let’s pray for that right now.

Reading God’s Word

First, let’s each share one of the verses from Mark that we chose during the week, saying why we like that verse.

Secondly, let’s read another passage together, Luke 17.11-19, just as we did last time, choosing the verse we like best and thinking about why we like it. ✕

In your “devotions” at home (that’s the word that we use for a daily time of prayer and Bible reading), continue on with Mark, and when you have finished, go on to one of the other Gospels. If possible, read through the first 3 chapters of Genesis. It will give you good background for next week’s lesson.

Prayer

This week we are going to begin to thank God for all He has given us. Share some examples of things you can thank Him for. Not “thank you for loving me” but concrete things, like this:

“Thank you for helping me find that job or make that sale.”

“Thank you for a beautiful sunny day.”

“That test went better than I expected. Thank you for helping me.”

Now, let’s pray round in a circle as we did last week.

- First, say together, “Our Father in heaven.” Then pray, imagining the father running to you as in the story of the lost son.
“Papa, I’m so amazed that you run to me and adopt me as your beloved son.”
- Then, go round a second time, thanking Him for one of His blessings.
“Thank you for a beautiful sunny day.”

Easy, isn’t it? Keep praying like that each day.

Memory verse

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12.30

Step One, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim:

- ✧ to give your students a life-long vision to grow in the love of God as the absolute priority of their lives.
- ✧ to give them an understanding that loving God is not about religious duties but offering every part of their lives to God, worshipping and obeying Him in everything.
- ✧ People will often ask, "Now that I am a Christian, is it OK for me to do this?" We want to answer with wisdom.

Begin every lesson with a catch-up time. You might

- ✧ Ask them about the last week, their studies, work or an issue they have asked for prayer for. If they asked for prayer for an exam or a business appointment or healing, you should ask about it.
- ✧ Ask if they have had an opportunity to share about their new faith with family or friends. Are they facing any difficulty in this area?
- ✧ You may ask your students how they got on with their daily prayer and Bible reading in Mark's Gospel during the week. But we will cover this carefully at the end of the lesson.

1. Jesus' reply – telling the story

Today's lesson begins with the question that a teacher of the law put to Jesus: *Of all the commandments, which is the most important?* You will find the story in Mark 12.28-34. Try to tell it **as a story**, with as much suspense as you can put into it.

- "Why is the question so important?"
- "How will Jesus reply?"
- ✓ soul, all your strength

The essence of a good story is suspense or the unexpected twist. The people who first heard Jesus teaching were surprised at what he said. For us, the Bible stories are so familiar that we have lost that sense of surprise. But your students are hearing the stories for the first time. So tell the stories as though

you are excited! Then your students will love to listen, and they will be excited too.

Here are the elements of a good story.

- 1) Setting the scene, painting the picture
- 2) Introducing the problem, building the suspense
- 3) The unexpected twist
- 4) The solution, working it out

The Gospel has these elements and you will be able to introduce these elements into many Bible stories.

- 1) The scene – the Garden, the blessing.
- 2) Sin brings destruction; how can we be saved?
- 3) The Savior comes – but He is crucified; hope seems lost.
- 4) He rises from the dead; He gives life out of death.

In the story of the Lost Son, we can see the same elements of a good story.

- 1) The scene – the father’s house, the boy goes away.
- 2) He gets desperate; begins to go home; but will the father receive him?
- 3) The father’s amazing welcome.
- 4) His new life, new clothes, the party, etc.

Today’s story is very simple, but we can still put in these elements.

- 1) The background of Jesus’ ministry, people trying to understand His teaching. There were the religious people (the Pharisees) on the one hand, and “the sinners,” on the other hand, who had given up on “the temple stuff” because they knew they would never make it.
- 2) One man dares to come to Jesus with his burning question; what will Jesus’ answer be? Think of all the possible answers! Which one will He pick? His answer will determine how we live. What will the answer be?
- 3) Jesus’ answer.
- 4) The possible reaction of other listeners and what it means for us.

2. How do we love God?

Explain the picture of hands raised.

“Loving God” seems quite abstract or vague. When we are discipling people, it is always tempting to teach the things we must do – pray, read the Bible,

go to church, stop doing this or that. Especially with children or people who are not so well educated, we tend to think that we must give them concrete things to do and not to do. As a result, it is easy to present rules and legalism.

What did Jesus do? Do what Jesus did and make the first thing the first thing. Trust the Holy Spirit to apply it to your students. The section on “How do we love God?” seeks to make this first commandment as practical and relevant as possible. Try to teach those 6 points with passion, from your own experience.

So how do we answer someone who says, “Now that I am a Christian, is it OK for me to do this!”

- It is very important to point them to what Jesus says. He is Lord and we follow Him. Tell them to pray, read the Bible, and see what He shows them. Ask them to come next week and tell you what they think He is saying to them. Be very cautious about giving them your answer. We can easily say, “No, we shouldn’t do this,” and show them a verse in the Bible. But trust the Holy Spirit to speak to them.

3. Three loves

Introduce the 2nd and 3rd love briefly. We will study them more carefully in later lessons.

4. Growing in love

We want to be careful that this teaching does not become too heavy. Most new people will not yet be conscious of such a great love for God. We are laying out a vision for the rest of our lives – to grow in love. It doesn’t all have to happen today.

Reading God’s Word

Today, as you begin to read from Mark’s Gospel, explain about the four Gospels, how they each tell the story of Jesus from a different perspective. After your students have finished Mark’s Gospel, they can go on to read another of the Gospels.

When they share the verse they like best, give them lots of encouragement. If they try to explain the verse, guide them to share something more personal: “Why did you choose that verse? What do you like about it?”

Prayer

Giving thanks is a simple step to help people begin to open their mouths and pray. Almost anyone can think of something to thank the Lord for – the food they eat, their family or friends, the opportunity to learn together. But for some who are just too shy, give them the freedom to say, “Pass,” and move on to the next person. Don’t be too pushy.

Memory verse

Younger students are good at memorizing Bible verses and many people will love the challenge. It is a great foundation for our walk with Jesus to store up these verses in our minds and hearts. It brings more blessing than you may realize. Children with learning difficulties have been completely transformed into excellent students through memorizing scripture.

Step Two

***Repent &
Believe***



Review: What is the most important commandment for us?

A visitor in Jerusalem: Imagine you are one of the thousands of visitors to Jerusalem listening to Peter preach just after Jesus rose from the dead. You are deeply impacted by what he is saying. And then someone calls out, “So what should we do?” That is exactly what you wanted to know. You listen carefully to Peter’s answer (Acts 2.38):

“Repent and be baptized ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Repent? That was Jesus’ first command when He called the disciples to follow Him. We read about it in Mark 1.15 in our first lesson.

“ _____ the good news!”

Imagine Peter and Andrew, James and John, leaving their nets and boats to follow Jesus. And at the end of this lesson, we will read a story about a man who climbed a tree to see Jesus! He was so touched by how Jesus loved and accepted him that he repented from going his own way and began to follow Him.

What exactly does “repent” mean? To begin with, it means:

- ✧ _____ your mind (that is the literal meaning of the Greek word for repent, *metanoia*.)
- ✧ _____ from sin (and what, exactly, is sin? That’s our next topic.)
- ✧ Go in a _____.

Now let’s dig deeper by looking at the ABC of “Repent and believe.”

(A) Sin

When you hear the word “sin,” what comes to your mind? There is no correct answer. Just say what immediately comes into your mind. ✧

Now, let’s search out the fundamental meaning of “sin.” Let’s go back to the beginning, in the Garden of Eden. Have you read the story of Creation in Genesis 1-2? Let’s look at the next and saddest part of the story. ✧

➤ **Paradise**

- # His wonderful provision for Adam and Eve
- # His visits to the garden to spend time with them – God’s love – and His desire that they would love Him in return.
- # His great gift to us of freedom. In that way, we are like God; we are different from plants and animals. How will we use that freedom?

➤ **The tree**

➤ **The choice**

Eve and then Adam ate the fruit, choosing not to trust God and go His way, but rather to go their own way – or, in fact, Satan’s way.

➤ **The consequences**

What were the many serious consequences of their choice? _____

What was the most damaging result of their sin?

They began to die!

➤ **The fig leaves**

First, they tried to hide. How easy do you think it is to hide from God?

Then, they tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. That is a picture of how we try to save ourselves instead of coming humbly to God.

(By contrast with their feeble attempt to cover their nakedness, God made garments with the skins of animals in order to cover their sin).

So, let us summarize! Sin is...

- ① Disobeying God and choosing to go _____ way.
- ② Trying to _____ with religion or our own good works.

This verse gives us a good understanding of sin: *All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way.* (Isaiah 53.6, GNT)

That is the ROOT of sin. And what about the FRUIT? _____. We can pull off the fruit but if the root doesn’t change, they will grow back again.

Repentance: what does it mean?

- ① Turning from disobeying God to _____ God, from going our own way to going His way. Disobedience >> obedience!
- ② Instead of trying to _____ ourselves, we accept his free gift of salvation by faith. Works >> faith!

Tell the story: Now tell the story of Adam and Eve in your own words in groups of 2 or 3.

(C) Believe/trust

We believe in our minds: There are important truths that we believe.

- that Jesus is the Son of God, our Savior and Lord.
- that He died for us on the cross to save us.
- and rose from the dead.
- We call on Him to save us.

We also **trust** from our hearts: Jesus is not only saying, “Believe in your minds.” He is saying, “Trust me! Trust that I love you and that I know what is best for you. Follow me!” We trust Him to save us, and we trust Him to lead us and change us. We trust in His love and care for us!

How will He change us?

- From the inside out! He lives in us and helps us to change.
- As we talk to Him and read His Word, He will show us things in our lives that need to change.
- Sometimes a friend will talk to you about something in your life – “Now that you are a Christian, it is not right for you to do that.” Be careful! It is OK to listen to them – it may be Jesus speaking to you, because He does talk to us through other people. But don’t let them hassle you. Some well-meaning people try to change us before we are ready and before God is really speaking to us. If it is Jesus talking to you through them, you will find the strength to change and it won’t seem that they are troubling you. But if it is not Jesus speaking to you, don’t be hassled.



*The root of sin is **disobedience?**
Hmm...that makes sense! So repenting means beginning a new life of **obeying Jesus!***

He will speak to you in your heart. Follow Him.

Have you repented and trusted in Jesus to save you? If you have not yet done so, and you want to, let's pray together right now.

Reading God's Word

- Let's read Luke 19.1-10 about a man who repented and trusted in Jesus. What verse do you like best? Why do you like it?
- Have you settled on a regular daily time for your devotions? Early morning before work is the best, but just before you sleep is not bad.
- Take time to read the Bible or pray when you are waiting for something. When you have finished reading Mark's Gospel, go on to Luke or go back to Matthew. Try to write down the verse you like best and why you like it in a notebook or in the margin of your Bible.
- Share a verse you have read in the last week and why you liked it.

Prayer

Last week, we added thanksgiving to our range of prayers: "Thank You, Jesus, for a good night's sleep, for helping me find a job, for my family, etc. Today, we want to go onto the next part of the Lord's Prayer, which says,

We praise your holy name.

There are many different names for God that are used in the Bible. Here are some examples: Savior, Creator, my Shepherd, my Provider, my Healer, my Peace. We take some of those names and turn them into expressions of praise. For example,

- ✧ I praise you, Jesus, my **Savior**. Thank you for setting me free from sin and giving me eternal life.
 - ✧ I praise you, **Creator** of the heavens and the earth. When I see a sunset, a beautiful flower or a child's smile, I remember you.
 - ✧ I praise you, Jesus, my **Healer**. You heal all my sickness and keep me in health. How wonderful!
 - ✧ I praise you, Lord, my **Peace**. When I get anxious and upset, you say, 'Peace, be still' and calm the storm in my heart.
- OK? First, let each person choose one of the names of God.
 - Now let's go round and pray very simply, praising or thanking God for

who He is as expressed in that name. ✨

Start doing that in your own prayer times. You will find it really helpful in bringing God into every part of your day and learning to know Him better.

Have you told your friends about what has happened in your life? You might be surprised how interested they are. You could arrange to do something with them AND your new friends from church. Eat together, watch football together, invite them to your home to watch a movie; lend them an interesting testimony book or a New Testament. Then, when you think they are ready, you could suggest that they learn more about Jesus by studying with you or joining a meeting that has helped you.

Memory verse:

“Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today!” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. Luke 19.5-6

Step Two, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim:

- ✧ We want to teach the meaning of sin and repentance clearly.
- ✧ It is easy to be too focused on the fruit of sin (drinking, smoking or immorality) and unclear on the root of sin (disobedience and “work” – trying to save ourselves). Some people think repentance means stopping those bad things and trying to be good. They easily slip into empty religious observance and the condemnation or pride that goes with it.
- ✧ We want to help our students to stop going their own way (disobeying God) and begin to follow Jesus.
- ✧ We also turn from trying to save ourselves by our good works to accepting Jesus' free gift of salvation.

Review last week's lesson a little.

Imagine you are in the crowds: Paint the picture of the crowds listening to Peter on the Day of Pentecost. What did he tell them to do?

- ✓ Repent and believe

And then imagine what it was like for the first disciples to leave their boats and workplace to follow Jesus!

Fill in the blanks with the meaning of repent:

1) Change your mind 2) Turn away from sin 3) Go in a new direction

(A) Sin: Tell the story of the Fall with some drama. Is there a tree nearby that you can use? Do you have a sock you can put on your hand for the snake?

➤ **Paradise:**

Emphasize that God had provided many trees and all kinds of fabulous food for Adam and Eve. He was not being stingy when He told them not to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He was telling them the truth when He said that it would bring death to them. He was protecting them from danger. As parents, we might show our children a huge park with all kinds of places to play, but we warn them not to play in the river so that they won't drown. That is fair and loving advice.

God's love and friendship was even more amazing than the good fruit and provision. And that was lost in the drama that follows.

God created us with huge freedom. We are free to love, free to choose how we will live. He never forces us to love Him, because then it wouldn't be love. But our freedom brings great responsibility.

If one of your students asks,

"Where did Satan come from?" reply simply that he was a fallen angel, who had been cast out of heaven because he rebelled against God.

"Why did God put the tree in the garden, knowing that it would lead to man's sin?"

>Because He was actually giving man a choice to trust and obey, to choose to love, or alternatively, to choose to turn away.

"Did He know that man would turn away?"

>Yes, He did. And He knew that He would send a Savior to bring us back. It was always in His plan."

If they don't ask, don't raise these questions (about the origin of Satan). If they DO ask, answer simply but don't get side-tracked. They are valid questions, but now is not the time to pursue them in depth.

- **The tree.** Satan questioned God's motives and set Eve against Him. He provoked her to distrust God and doubt that God really loved her.
- **The choice.** Eve chose to believe Satan and reject what God had clearly said, in spite of His great love and care for them. She and Adam chose to go their own way and to disobey God's word to them. THAT is the essence of sin – disbelieving/distrusting God's Word and disobeying that word.
- **The consequences.** What entered the world as a result?
 - # Sin, sickness and suffering, conflict in the family, famine, earthquakes and weeds (curse on the earth) and ultimately death.
 - # The greatest damage: man's friendship with God was broken!
 - # Did they die immediately? A flower cut from a plant may look beautiful for a week or two but has definitely started to die. In the same way, man began to die when he was separated from God by disobedience. If possible, take a flowering pot plant along to your class to illustrate this very important point.
- **The fig leaves.**

Hiding from God. Since God is everywhere, it is impossible for us to hide from him!

Then they tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. That is the main point here, contrasting their efforts to cover their sin with God's gift to cover their sin.

The animal skins meant an animal had to be killed and blood had to be shed. Many people think that is a picture to us of the blood of Jesus that was shed on the Cross for our salvation.

In summary, sin is:

- ① Going our own way, and
- ② Trying to save ourselves with religion or our own good works.

That is the ROOT of sin, going our own way and trying to save ourselves. What is the FRUIT of the tree of sin? Lying, stealing, adultery, broken relationships, lust, anger – all those things that first come to our minds when we think of sin.

(B) Repentance

- ① Turning from going our own way and disobeying God to obeying God and going His way.
- ② Instead of trying to save ourselves...

If we understand the meaning of sin, the meaning of turning away from sin becomes obvious. Remember, we want to get across that repentance is not just about giving up lying, drinking and swearing. We can lay a foundation here that will help people deal with legalism and condemnation later. If you get to the root of sin, you will get to the root of repentance.

- If anyone in your class has not yet repented and received Jesus, now is the time to pray with them.

Tell the story: Tell the story of Adam and Eve in groups of 2 or 3.

(C) Believe/trust

There is very important objective truth that we **believe** in our minds. We also **trust** Him with our hearts. He loves us and knows best what is good for

us, so we follow Him in childlike trust.

How will He change us? Read through this paragraph and explain it.

- How has the Lord changed you?
- Have you experienced people trying to change you before you were ready for it?

Are there any students in your class who have not repented and given their lives to Jesus? If so, ask if they want to pray and give their lives to Christ!

Reading God's Word

- Read the story of Zacchaeus together. It is a good illustration of "Repent and believe." Because of Jesus' love, Zacchaeus decided to stop going his own way and follow Him.
- Take time to check how your student is doing in his daily reading. Give him some helpful hints if necessary.

Prayer

This is an important section so make sure you take time to go through it carefully.

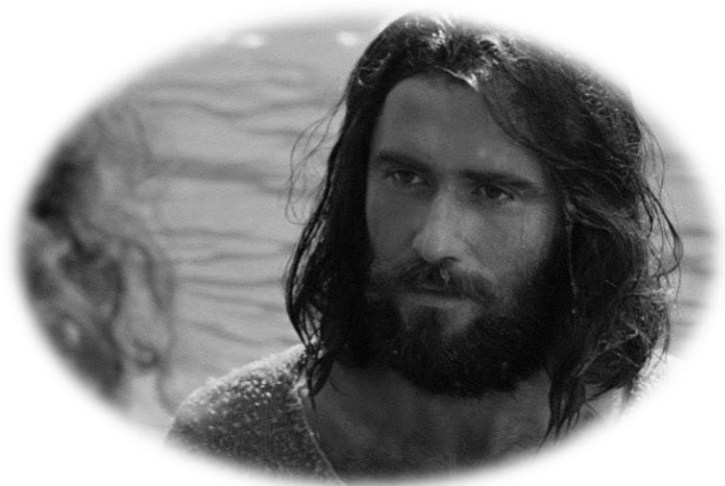
We will learn to praise the name of the Lord together. We are moving from, "Thank you for my food," to "I praise you that you are my Provider!" From, "Thank you for healing my child," to "I praise you that you are my Healer!" But don't be too fussy about the difference between thanksgiving and praise. The most important thing is to encourage your student to open his mouth and begin. Some are very shy and will take some weeks to do so. Breaking up into groups of two or three will help most people begin to pray aloud.

Coaching Hint

Remember we are trying to set up our students to be able to coach someone else as soon as possible. Ask them if they have a younger brother, a friend, a wife or grandad that they could immediately start doing the lessons with - go home and go over the lesson with them the same day! Then you teach them simply, with that in mind, showing them how to use the Coaches' Guide.

Step Three

Be Baptized



A visitor in Jerusalem: You are in that crowd of people listening to Peter preach. You want to know how to follow Jesus. “Repent,” Peter said. And what next? “*Repent and be baptized...*” And 3000 people that day decided to be baptized! Today we will go to another story from the early church to learn what it means to be baptized.

1. Repent ... and then what's next?

Philip was a wonderful servant of God. He had preached the Gospel with amazing results in the region of Samaria. Suddenly, God told him to leave all these new believers and go to the southern highway that went through the desert to Egypt and Africa. Philip didn't understand why but he obeyed. Let's read the story (Acts 8.26-40) and choose the verse we like best and share why we like it. Verse 37 might be in the footnotes of the Bible and not in the main text. But it is an important verse to read together.

When the Ethiopian heard the message of Jesus, he wanted to respond. He thought in his heart, “Yes, I believe. I want to become a follower of this Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” So what did he say? Circle the correct answer.

Let me get on my knees and pray a prayer after you.	Yes / No
Can I join your church?	Yes / No
Here is water. What stops me from being baptized?	Yes / No

How did he know that he should be baptized? Simple. When Philip told him about Jesus, he also told him how to respond. Repent and believe. Then, the next step is to be baptized.

2. Jesus' command

Was this Ethiopian the first person to be immersed? Let's check back to what Jesus said to His first group of followers, just before He went back to His Father in heaven, in Matthew 28.19-20.

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

When Peter preached that first public message after Jesus had ascended into

heaven, this is what he said:

*Repent and **be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.** And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2.38)*

Repent! Then, be baptized. And what happened when a household of Gentiles (non-Jews) believed in Jesus and were filled with the Holy Spirit?

*Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people **from being baptized with water?** They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” **So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.** (Acts 10.47-48)*

The first thing that Jesus requires of us when we begin to follow Him is to be baptized. It is the way we demonstrate our decision to repent, believe and follow.

3. What does baptism mean?

Baptizô is a Greek word, meaning _____ or submerge – to plunge under water. The word was used for immersing a garment in a dye to color it. Over many years, the church developed a tradition of sprinkling water on babies and calling that baptism. But that is not what we see in Acts of the Apostles. But what does baptism actually mean?

Sprinkle babies / Immerse those who repent and follow Jesus

The important thing is not the amount of water but the faith of the person being baptized. Baptism is a drama, portraying what has happened to us through Jesus. There are three things it demonstrates, all linked with the symbol of water. Memorize these three points.

- ① **A ceremony of _____.** By the blood of Jesus, we are cleansed of our sins. We are washed and made just as though we had never sinned – so clean! Isaiah 1.18 says God will make our sins “as white as snow.” The water symbolizes this cleansing from sin.

*“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, **be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.**” (Ananias’ words to Paul in Acts 22.16.)*

- ② **A ceremony of _____** from one country to another. Do you know the story of the Ten Commandments, how God's people, the Israelites, were set free from slavery in Egypt? Your coach is going to tell you so listen well. ✂ Paul uses the idea of baptism in describing what happened to them.

In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses.
1 Corinthians 10.2, NLT

Baptism is:

- A picture of crossing from one country to another, from the kingdom of darkness (where Satan and sin rule) to the kingdom of God, where Jesus rules. Many people cannot pinpoint the day that they decided to repent or received Jesus into their hearts. But baptism is a clear marker where we can say, "On this day, I passed from Satan's kingdom to God's kingdom." An unmistakable point of transition.
- A point of cutting off ties to the old ways. Many have been involved in the occult or sexual sin or other sin that has left scars. Everyone carries the effects of the sins of previous generations. So baptism is a time to confess those sins and break the spiritual chains that link you to your ancestors' sins. We'll pray together like this:

I confess as sin and rebellion every involvement in the occult or spiritism, of me or my ancestors, and I cut it off from me, in Jesus' name. I confess every sexual sin and immorality and cut off the ties that bind me to my old way of living.

- ③ **A _____ ceremony – followed by a resurrection.** If we wanted to modernize this ceremony so that it is very clear what it means, we would use a coffin. We would have the new believer climb into the coffin and then close it. We would declare that the old Josh or Natasha (the one who always went his own way) was now dead and buried. Gone forever! Then after a little while, we would raise the lid of the coffin, and call forth the new Josh or the new Natasha. Burying them in a hole in the ground and then uncovering them would also convey the message clearly, but it is not very practical. So we do it in water, bury the old person and call forth the new one. It is not just your sin that is washed away in the water, but also your old sin-loving nature.

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. Rom 6.6

Through repenting, being baptized and being filled with the Holy Spirit (next week's lesson), you begin a totally new life. A brand-new person is born. It's all in Romans 6.3-8. We visualize the old Josh (or Natasha) actually hung on the cross with Jesus, buried with Him in the tomb, and then rising with Him from the grave, as a totally new person. Picture it! Awesome!

So in baptism, I celebrate that already (when I met Jesus, when the Father ran to me and embraced me)

- 1) I'm washed from sin
- 2) I've crossed into God's kingdom
- 3) I'm a new person on the inside

✂ Now explain the 3 points to each other in your group!

4. When should I be “immersed”?

In every case that we see in the Bible, people were baptized as soon as they made the decision to repent and believe. You have decided to follow Jesus. So let's be baptized at the next opportunity. Remember Ananias' words to Paul in Acts 22.16.

And now what are you waiting for?

Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

Let's look at Jesus' baptism. The story is in Matthew 3.13-17. Jesus was immersed not because He needed to be washed from His sin, but to fulfil the will of His father, to show us the right way. Let us follow Him. Now is the time to act.

Reading God's Word

We have already read Acts 8.26-40 together. So you can share verses that you have chosen from your readings over the last week.

Transforming the world by praying

Practice what we have done so far, phrase by phrase - and check out the video link. The next part of the Lord's Prayer is:

Your kingdom, come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

The verbs “come!” and “be done!” are imperatives, they are commands, not requests. We are not pleading with God, but we are working with Him to change things to be what He wants them to be. You can visualize God’s will (for your job, for your family, for your friend that is sick or doesn’t know Jesus) as something up in heaven that you can pull down to earth by your prayers. God actually wants to use our prayers to transform this world and bring His will in heaven down to earth. Sickness and suffering are not His will. He is waiting for us to command things to be in line with His will. Exciting! What will you start with?

Write down one or two things that right now are not according to God’s will, which you want to pray for each day this week, to change through your prayers. Not something huge, like for everyone in your city to be saved, but something you can expect to happen in the next week, that you can report back on next week.

That’s enough for today. Keep up your Bible reading. When you finish Mark’s Gospel, move on to another gospel, and then Acts.

Memory verse

Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Step Three, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: The aim of this lesson is simple – to prepare new disciples for baptism.

Our aim in all these lessons is to help our students to obey, to follow Jesus not just in their words but in their actions. It is very clear in this lesson. We will teach them the truth about salvation and about baptism, but our goal is that they respond by being baptized, not just understand the teaching and nod their heads. In fact, they will probably not understand all the teaching. Paul gives much of this teaching (in Romans 6) to people who have already been baptized. He sought to help them understand better what they had already done. They had been baptized when they made their initial confession of faith, not when they understood everything. The way your students handle this lesson will often become a pattern in their lives – hear and obey, or, hear and file it away for future reference. So our task is to help them gently to be baptized.

Baptism is, in a sense, the sinner's prayer of the Bible. The invitation of the apostles was not to come to the front of the meeting and pray a prayer – not that there is anything wrong with that. Their invitation was to repent and then come down to the water. We may not do it all in one day, but let us not delay more than necessary, so that our converts see very clearly the connection between hearing and obeying.

1. Repent ... and then what's next?

After a brief review of last week's lesson, we present the question, "OK, now that I have decided to follow Jesus, what does He tell me to do?" We find the answer in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. The story begins in Acts 8.26. Read the story together and ask the students to share their favorite verse, etc. In your sharing, you could emphasize these points:

- a) Philip's obedience to the Lord – he, too, is a follower of Jesus.
- b) Philip's message was about Jesus, the Savior who died for our sins, as in the prophesy of Isaiah.
- c) The Ethiopian's response – let your students mark the correct answer.
- d) The man's confession of faith.

Obviously, Philip told him **how** to respond. Otherwise, he would not have known about baptism.

2. Jesus' command

- We look at the clear command of Jesus to His disciples.
- Then we see how they apply that in Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost, and...
- Then later when the Holy Spirit falls on the family of Cornelius.

Point out the condition for baptism. First, people are called to repent and believe. Then they are commanded to be baptized.

3. What does baptism mean?

Make sure you are quite clear on these points yourself.

✓ immerse

Drill your student in these three points. Each point is connected to water!

- 1) A ceremony of **washing**. Just as we use water to wash our bodies, so the water of baptism is a symbol of the washing away of our sins through the blood of Jesus. You need to stress that it is not the water that washes us, but the blood of Jesus. It is not baptism that saves us. Rather, it is a celebration of what Jesus has already done. We are already saved because we repented of our sin and trusted Him to save us.
- 2) A ceremony of **crossing over** from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God. Going through the water from one side to the other is a symbol of passing from one country, where Satan rules, to a new land where Jesus is our King. If you can show a video clip of *The Ten Commandments* (Paramount Pictures, 1956, directed by Cecil B. DeMille), with the scene of the children of Israel crossing over the Red Sea, your students will be delighted.
- 3) A **funeral** ceremony. This is the most difficult of the three points. Paul taught this to established Christians, not to new converts. As they looked **back** to their baptism, they came to a greater understanding of what Jesus had done for them. The idea of water in this point is that we are buried in

the water. Of course, that is not how we bury people but that is how Paul makes the point of burial.

Some common questions

There are some questions that often come up when we are talking about baptism. Be prepared to answer them graciously.

➤ **I was baptized as a baby. Do I need to be baptized again?**

Our understanding of scripture is that infant baptism is not really baptism at all. It can be a meaningful ceremony and has roughly the same significance as the practice of dedicating babies to the Lord. But it does not correspond to Jesus' command to be baptized. So we would say, "Yes, you do need to be baptized." The important issue is not the amount of water, but the faith of the one being baptized. As a baby, you did not repent and believe. But we are glad to dedicate babies to the Lord – that is important in many cultures, but it is not the same as baptism.

➤ **I was baptized in another church, but I drifted away from the Lord. I have just come back to Him. Do I need to be baptized again?**

If you were baptized as a believing adult, it is not necessary to be baptized again. You need to stand firm in the conviction that you are a new person according to the Word of God. In a sense, you re-activate your previous baptism. Your new church will not require you to be re-baptized just because your earlier baptism was in another church. We recognize believer's baptism conducted in other churches. Sometimes, a person who has been baptized but fallen away feels deeply convicted to be baptized again, saying that their first baptism had been a religious ceremony without understanding or real faith. You will have to make a prayerful decision with them and your church leaders.

➤ **Do I have to be baptized in front of all those people? I am too shy!**

It is not an absolute condition. But even though it is a battle to stand in front of others, it is very helpful for you to share your faith in that way. It is also an opportunity for others to be blessed by seeing what God has done in your life.

You will be surprised how much your story blesses and encourages other people.

➤ **When should I be “immersed”?**

Gently encourage your students to move ahead as soon as they are ready. They do not need to understand everything or have every part of their lives in order. They need to **repent and believe** in Jesus and be willing to **start** the journey. At the same time, sometimes people are reluctant because there are problems in their lives that they are secretly not willing to deal with. So don't be pushy!

Reading God's Word

We already did our Bible reading at the beginning of the lesson. Ask your student to share verses from his Bible reading over the last week. If he hasn't been reading, encourage him to start.

Transforming the world by praying

Review what we have done so far. If you missed the prayer time in one of the last lessons, then go over the first lessons in prayer.

Our Father: approaching Him very simply as “Dad” like the Lost Son.
Thanking Him for what He's done: an easy way to start verbalizing prayers.
Praising His Name: using the names of the Lord to praise Him for who He is.

The next part of the Lord's Prayer is exciting. Encourage your students to believe that God will really change things as they pray. Some people, including Christians, think that everything that happens is somehow the will of God. That is fatalism. It is not Biblical. The Bible teaches that *you do not have, because you do not ask God* (James 4.2). Let's be bold to ask, and to call God's will down from heaven. Many will have problems that they need to ask God to help with – sickness, looking for a job, family issues, and friends who need to know Jesus, too. Help them to be specific and to expect God to answer.

If you are in a formal church situation, let your student know when they can be baptized and help them with the practical details. In an informal or pioneering situation, take the initiative to arrange a baptism as soon as possible.

Step Four A - Why

***Receive the
Holy Spirit***



That visitor in Jerusalem: Let's join the crowd of people listening to Peter preach. This is our chance to hear how to follow Jesus. What did Peter say? First, repent! Then, be baptized! And then what next? That is the subject of our lesson today!

*Peter replied, "**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" Acts 2.38*

- ☑ Repent. Yes, we have learned that one. But in fact, we will repent again and again. We often stumble, and when we do, we go back to Jesus, ask His forgiveness, we receive that forgiveness, and then we get up and move on.
- ☑ Be baptized. We only get baptized once. But in our minds, we go back to our baptism and remind ourselves of what Jesus has already done for us, especially if we are having doubts about whether we are really saved or not:
 - 1) He has **already** washed our sins away.
 - 2) He has **already** transferred us from Satan's control into God's kingdom.
 - 3) He has **already** buried our old sinful nature and raised us up with a new nature, which loves to do the will of God.
- ☐ Receive the Holy Spirit! That is something new. What's it all about?

Power from heaven

- After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to the disciples for 40 days and told them that after He went back to heaven, they should continue to wait. Wait for what? Wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for power from heaven!
- Then Jesus went up to heaven and about 120 believers gathered together in Jerusalem, praying and waiting for the Holy Spirit to come. They didn't know what to expect because it had never happened before.
- Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, suddenly it happened. Let's read **Acts 1.4-5, then verse 1.8 and then Acts 2.1-12**. Which verse do you like best? ✨
- After that, thousands of people gathered because of the excitement of what was happening to the 120 disciples. Peter stood up and preached to them; 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus and be baptized and receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit. The new church was born!

The key verse in this story is Acts 1.8 and the key word is _____ .

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

What kind of power was poured into the disciples? Before and after!

- ① Power to “be my witnesses.” Peter was transformed.
 - Before: he and the other disciples hid behind closed doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Just like us, they were very timid!
 - After the Holy Spirit filled them, they stood in front of thousands of people, proclaiming boldly that Jesus was risen from the dead as Lord and Savior. They prayed for the sick and they were healed (Acts 3). Wow! I want that Holy Spirit boldness to tell others that Jesus is alive and pray for them too, that Jesus will fill them with His love and heal them!
- ② Power to love
 - Before: we really only cared about ourselves and our own people. We learned about the three loves in Step One. But it is impossible to love God and love people in our own strength.
 - After: But the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into our hearts. Then we can really love Him and love others. And that love will change the world. Exciting!

God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. Romans 5.5

- ③ Power to pray in the Spirit and worship freely.
 - Before this, they learned wonderful lessons from Jesus about prayer, but they struggled to pray. They fell asleep at the most important time, in the garden with Jesus. Just like us. We repeat the prayers we learned in a prayer book. Or we pray nice words but without any freedom in our hearts. Praying doesn’t come naturally to anyone.
 - After the Holy Spirit came, they prayed with power. And the Holy Spirit gave them a completely new gift of praying in languages that they had never learned. In Acts 4 we see the new believers praying

with great power and boldness. Wow! Do you want the Holy Spirit to give you power to pray like that? And a new prayer language?

- ④ Power to understand the Word of God – revelation!
- Before...often the disciples didn't understand what Jesus was talking about. He said they were "slow to understand". Just like us! Our natural minds are not good at understanding the Word of God. We can read a lot without the words going into our hearts.
 - Immediately after receiving the Holy Spirit, Peter preached from a prophecy in Joel 2.28-32 that no one had understood until then. He saw things in the Word of God that he had never seen before. He talked about the Holy Spirit giving us prophecy, visions and dreams. The Holy Spirit shows us truths that we never saw before. I want the Holy Spirit to open the Bible to me and speak personally to me.
- ⑤ Power to DO the will of God. This is actually the most important point.
- Before: The lesson of the Old Testament (the Old Covenant) was that we cannot do the will of God in our own strength. After King David failed badly, he cried out to God, "Create in me a new heart and put a new spirit within me!" Psalms 51.10
 - After: Pentecost is God's answer to that cry. God promised a heart transplant – *I will put my Spirit in you and **make you eager to obey my laws and teachings.*** (Ezekiel 36:26-27, CEV). Through the cross (and baptism) our old sin-living nature is dead. And now we have a new engine inside of us to help us to do the will of God. Whatever He commands us to do, He empowers us to do!

✂ Can you repeat the 5 points to your friends or your coach? Try to memorize them.

Jesus IN US!

- Before: In the Gospels, we read how the disciples lived with Jesus. He was with them physically, eating, walking, sleeping with them. But He was limited by that physical body.

In what ways do you think Jesus' ministry was limited by His physical body? ✂

When Jesus told the disciples that He was going back to heaven, they were very upset. Imagine if Jesus was your pastor or your friend and He told you He was going away and you would never see Him again! You would be upset too.

- But in Acts (and now) He lives IN us, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is having JESUS LIVE IN US, doing His work in us and through us! That's what He promised the disciples before He left them. He told them it would be BETTER for them, because after He went back to heaven, He would send them the Holy Spirit. And that is what He has done for us too.

This means we don't just learn what is written in the Bible about Jesus and do what we think Jesus commands or what we think He would have done.



He is alive in us!

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father and Jesus are God; He (not "it") is a wonderful person who we will get to know. But the Bible doesn't introduce the Holy Spirit to us through a page of doctrinal explanations but through showing us the Holy Spirit in action. So that is what we are going to do now, too.

As followers of Jesus, we don't just study the Bible and try to copy Jesus. He lives in us. He gives us the same power He had when He was on earth!

- First, we meet the Holy Spirit in creation. God didn't create by waving a magic wand. He sent His Word – that is Jesus. He spoke, for example, *Let there be light!* He created by His Word. And as He spoke, the Spirit of God moved with the Word to create. (Genesis 1.2) The Holy Spirit is God working in creative power.
- In the Old Testament, we see the Holy Spirit coming on people suddenly and giving them supernatural power, to perform miracles or prophesy.
- Jesus, the Word of God, was conceived in Mary's womb, when the Holy Spirit covered her. The Word (Jesus) and the Spirit are always intimately connected.
- When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened and the Father called from heaven, *This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.*

(Matthew 3.16) As He said that, Jesus was filled with the Spirit and then began His public ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.

- When Jesus healed a sick woman, power went out from Him into the woman's body and she was healed. The Holy Spirit is God working in power to heal. When He cast out demons, He did it through the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus said that He could do nothing by Himself, but only as He obeyed the Father and allowed the Holy Spirit to work with Him.

Exciting! I am sure you can hardly wait. Next week, we will talk about **how to be baptized in the Holy Spirit** – and plan a time to pray together to do just that.

Bible reading and prayer

If you have finished one of the Gospels, start on Acts and see what the Holy Spirit did in the early church.

Review “Your kingdom, come!”

Memory verse

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1.8

Step Four Part A, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: to give every new disciple a hunger for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What were the first three steps we have learned?
And what were the 3 main points about baptism?

The Power of Pentecost

- First, tell the story from Jesus' words to the disciples in Acts 1.4-5, Acts 1.8 and then Acts 2.1-12. There is real suspense in the story. Imagine waiting for something when you actually have no idea what it will be like when it comes! And then the event in Acts 2 was so extraordinary that what started in an upstairs room spilled out onto the streets and thousands of people gathered! It must have been quite sensational!
- Then, you can read the story together.
- You can get your students to choose their favorite verse if you think it is necessary. It might help them concentrate on a story that is a bit strange and unfamiliar.
 - ✓ power
- Then go through the 5 points. Emphasize the change the Holy Spirit brought to the disciples and brings to us. Share your own testimony of those changes.
- The change isn't from zero to a hundred in a moment, from zero love to 100% love or from zero understanding of the Bible to a 100% revelation, zero obedience to perfect obedience. But when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, there is a big lead forward. The Holy Spirit works in us to change us!
- Now practice the 5 points together.

Jesus IN US!

This is a hugely important point. But it may be too much for some new believers to absorb. Present it and pray for a revelation in their hearts!

- ✓ There are many things you can talk about here. For example, Jesus became tired and slept, so He wasn't available all the time. When He was in Jerusalem, people in Galilee couldn't get hold of Him; when He

was with Peter, James and John, the other disciples had to wait till He came back.

There are different teachings among Bible-believing Christians about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some teach that it is the same as salvation and that when we “pray to receive Christ” we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit automatically. We believe that it is a distinct experience which normally we must specifically ask for. Certainly, the Holy Spirit is at work when we pray to receive Christ. But in Acts, we see that the apostles were not content just that people repented and were baptized in water. They expected them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The terminology varies from passage to passage, and some mistakenly try to make a big difference in theology for different expressions. However, the same Pentecost event is variously described as being baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.5), being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.4, see also Acts 9.17), being clothed with power from on high (Luke 24.49), the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.38, 11.17), or simply receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.47, see also Acts 8.15-17 and Acts 19.2-6). The same event in Cornelius’s home was variously referred to as “the Holy Spirit came on all,” as “the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out,” then “they have received the Holy Spirit” and they were “baptized with the Holy Spirit” (11.16). Different terminology, same experience.

As we continue to walk with Jesus, there are many possible experiences of the Holy Spirit, and the scripture exhorts us to be continually filled with the Spirit, in Ephesians 5.18. But for clarity, we tend to refer to an **initial experience**, usually accompanied with speaking in tongues or some other manifestation of the Spirit, as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After that, we encourage people to **continue day by day** to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

To summarize:

Baptism of the Holy Spirit – the initial experience, after repenting
Being filled with the Spirit – the ongoing experience, day by day

But is very important not to argue over terminology where the Bible does not argue, but to encourage people to move ahead and receive more and more of all that God has for them.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

We jumped this important question. Take as much time as you need, depending on how familiar your students are with the Bible. For those who want a more theological or more detailed approach to this (the Holy Spirit, the Trinity) and the earlier questions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there are books that we can recommend. Our emphasis here is on following or obeying. We want people to move ahead. We believe that is Jesus' approach. He did not give lectures on systematic theology. He called the disciples to follow Him, explaining as they went. Revelation and clarity of understanding come more to those who obey than to those who sit and theorize.

Bible reading and prayer

- You have already read the passages in Acts.
- Last week we prayed for the Lord's will to be done in specific situations your students are facing. Ask them if they have seen any answers to prayer. Then practice the Lord's Prayer again, up to "Your kingdom, come!"

Coaching Hint

Do you know your students' family or work situations, their life struggles? Have you visited their home or had a meal together? We are not just teaching a lesson but helping real people where they are at.

Step Four B - How

***Receive the
Holy Spirit***



Last week we learned about Jesus' promise to fill us with power. Power for what? Review the 5 main points from the last lesson. ✨

Our question today is this:

- How can I be baptized in the Holy Spirit? And our key verse is this:

On the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive." John 7:37-39

- Rivers of living waters – that is a wonderful picture of what God wants to do in us. We will use that image as we look at how we can prepare our hearts to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1) Repent

- We want to make sure our hearts are clean, so the Holy Spirit can fill us and then flow out of us like a river of life.
 - We learned the meaning of "repent" in Step Two. What does it mean? ✨
 - No doubt you have already repented. But it is a progressive thing. Jesus shows us areas of disobedience that we hadn't previously given any thought to and prompts us to change. When we ask Him to baptize us with the Holy Spirit, first, we pray:
 - # **general** prayer, affirming our repentance and faith towards Him for salvation. Then, we ask Him to show us any...
 - # **particular** areas of uncleanness that we need to deal with. There are three areas that God often draws our attention to. These things make our spirits unclean and need to be exposed to the light. As God reminds us of things we have done, we confess them and ask that the blood of Jesus cleanse us. He shows us these things not to make us feel bad but to set us free! The Holy Spirit is holy. He looks for a clean heart to fill.
- (a) Involvement with _____ , through occult practices, ancestor worship, horoscopes, etc.
- "Forgive me for ... I didn't know it was wrong! And in Jesus' name, I cut off every spiritual tie to those things. Cleanse my heart completely."

- (b) _____ . If you are bitter towards someone who has hurt you, you need to forgive them. That doesn't mean saying that it was OK for them to do what they did, nor saying that it doesn't hurt anymore. It doesn't even mean becoming close to them again. To forgive is to release them from the prison of your judgment into God's hands, and release yourself, too. When you refuse to forgive, you lock them in a spiritual prison – and lock yourself in with them.
- “Lord, I forgive ... and I give him into Your hands. I will not judge him anymore.”
- (c) _____, past or present, will block the work of the Spirit.
- “Lord, forgive me for ... and in Jesus name I cut off every spiritual tie to that person. I am free from them in my spirit, in Jesus' name!”

2) Ask – If anyone is thirsty

Jesus' invitation is to those who are thirsty. We need to ask, to seek – in some cases, for some time - and knock on the door with determination.

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink.”

When we think about the power that Jesus wants to pour into us, we will want it with all our hearts. We will be thirsty. Of course, the Holy Spirit has already touched us. He has been working in our hearts. But there is much more, and we cry out to Him for more!

What does it mean to be thirsty? It means to want something so much that we will not give up until we get it. Listen to the story of the men in the Sahara Desert. That is real thirst. ✨

Read Luke 11.9-13 together. ✨

*How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who **ask** him! Word for “ask” is a continuous tense. It means “ask and keep on asking.” Let us ask and keep on asking until we are completely filled and the river of the Spirit flows right out of our hearts. Every day!*



Wow! So the Father has promised to give me the Holy Spirit if I keep on asking, like the man who went to his friend at midnight?! Without giving up!!

3) Believe and receive...drink

- Believe: Look back at John 7.37-38. *Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said...* We can ask with confidence when we know what the scripture says. Peter said that the Father's promise to send the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.33) was for all of us:
The promise is for you and your children, and to all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call. (Acts 2.39) That includes you and me. Not just the apostles but us too!
- Receive, drink! There are 2 actions in this passage. First, drink! Then the river will flow out. First IN and then OUT! How do we do receive? It is difficult to put it into words because it is something in our hearts, in our innermost being.
 - # Jesus used the word "**drink**"! Maybe you can imagine yourself drinking in the Holy Spirit.
 - # Some people talk about **breathing in** the Holy Spirit. In Hebrew the Spirit of God is the Breath of God. Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, *Receive the Holy Spirit.* (John 20.22).
 - # We can begin to **thank the Lord** quietly, confident that He has already given what He has promised.
 - # **Wait quietly**, with your hearts open – and extend your hands as though you are receiving a gift. Relax, don't get tense! God gives us good gifts!
 - # When you are ready, when you sense God filling you up on the inside, then you are ready for the next step.

4) Let the rivers flow – OUTWARDS

What happened when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost?

*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to **speak in other tongues** as the Spirit enabled them.* Acts 2.4

What happened when the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius' household?

*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them **speaking in tongues and praising God.***

(Acts 10.44-46)

What happened when the Holy Spirit came on the Ephesian believers?

*When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they **spoke in tongues and prophesied.*** (Acts 19.6)

Can you see a pattern emerging? Is there any typical sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit? In each case, they _____.

What happened when Paul was filled with the Holy Spirit?

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized. (Acts 9.17-19)

Did he speak in tongues then? We don’t know but we do know that he says, *I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.*

(1 Corinthians 14.18)

There is one other case of the Holy Spirit coming powerfully on disciples in Samaria. (Acts 8.17-18) We don’t know for sure that they spoke in tongues, but something dramatic happened that surprised people who had already seen miracles and healings. Judging from the other examples, it would not be surprising if they, too, spoke in tongues. But we cannot be certain, and everyone’s experience is a little different.

- Tongues is a valuable gift. Some people ask, “Do I have to speak in tongues to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?” That is the wrong question. This is not about “what I have to do” but about my thirst for more of God in my life. Tongues is a good gift from God and more important than it seems on the surface. It is not the whole house, but it is like the door to get into the house. Why refuse it?
- This river comes out of our mouths. There is no way for the river to flow out unless we open our mouths! We receive (Point 3) – we drink IN the Holy Spirit. In other words, we are filled! Then we release the river of the Holy Spirit OUT of our hearts TO God, through our mouths – in praise and through a new language of prayer.
- Speak! Don’t analyze the babbling! It is not the babbling of our tongues

that is important but the release of our spirits in praise and prayer through our tongues. Almost everyone at some stage wonders if they are making up the new words themselves. In a sense, yes. We have to use our own mouth and tongue. But the strange new words are from God. Listen to the story of Peter stepping out on the water and also the story of a man who very much wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit but was afraid to step out. ✨

- The word for power in Greek is *dunamis*. What English word does that remind you of? _____

Sometimes the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an explosive experience, as it was on the day of Pentecost. Like dynamite! But just as often it is a quiet experience, as the Holy Spirit begins to flow through us gently. First a trickle, like a river beginning up in the mountains. As it keeps on flowing it gets deeper and stronger. The key is not how explosive your first experience is. The key is to keep on being filled every day!

The next thing is to arrange a time to meet together to pray that you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit. You can pray by yourself, but most people receive when someone lays hands on them and prays for them.

Time: _____ Place: _____

Prepare your heart for that time, asking the Lord to show you anything that you need to repent of, and asking Him to prepare you heart and make you really thirsty.

Learning to pray

There are two important aspects of prayer: 1) praying anywhere, anytime, all through the day, like texting prayers to God; AND 2) setting aside a special time, morning or night, to pray with more concentration. Work on both new habits.

As we walk through the Lord's Prayer, the next part is:

Give us today the food we need.

- ✧ We pray for physical food. For many people that comes through their salary, the income from their job. For some, they need to make sales to get money for food. Others are farming, some are fishing. But all of us

need the blessing of God on our work in order to be able to buy food and feed our families. So we ask God for that blessing in our work every day. If anyone is looking for work, this is a good time to pray for God to lead them to the job He has prepared for them. If someone is having difficulty at work, we can pray for them too.

- ✧ We can also pray for the poor who are in other places, for widows and orphans, that God will meet their needs today.
- ✧ We pray for spiritual food. We pray that when we read the Bible today, God will speak to our hearts. There is a story in the Old Testament (in Exodus) about the people of God gathering food from heaven, called manna, every day. That is like us receiving God's word into our hearts every day.

"I have a lot of expenses this month. I ask for a miracle, so I can pay everything I need to."

"Bless my farm work today. I pray for a great harvest this season."

"Bless my company today and help me do my work really well! Help me make enough sales!"

"Father, I'm looking for a job. Please lead me to the job you have prepared for me."

"Papa, when I read the Bible today, please speak to my heart; feed my soul."

Reading God's Word

If you have time read Luke 11.1-13. Now each choose a verse or phrase and ask how you can apply it to your life – and then share those verses together briefly.

Memory verse

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

John 7.37-38

Step Four Part B, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: to prepare your students to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If people are well prepared, then it is much easier for them to receive.

Review the 5 main points from the last lesson. Then, we move on to this week's lesson, introducing four steps to receiving the Holy Spirit. This is a vital lesson for the students, and it is a vital lesson for the coach, too! Many leaders are not comfortable with praying for young converts to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But as you work through this lesson step by step, you can become confident in this vital part of discipling new believers.

Normally we do the study and then arrange another time for prayer. But you can do the teaching and go straight into a prayer time if you think the students are ready and you have time.

Use the image of rivers of living water to tie the 4 points together.

1) Repent

- Explain if necessary, that repentance is an ongoing process. One man who comes to Christ may be very aware that his violent temper is wrong and repent of that and ask for God's help to change, but at the same time be quite casual about looking at pornography. Another man may have the opposite experience and be convicted of immorality right from the beginning but still have a problem with anger until a later time when the Lord shows him that it is not right. Each of them needs to grow little by little as the Holy Spirit shows them. Everyone deals with sin in a different order. There is no fixed pattern. The tendency of the church is to hit at outwardly visible sins – like excessive drinking or smoking – but it is not always the way God works.
 - ✓ other spirits
 - ✓ unforgiveness
 - ✓ sexual immorality

When we ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas of uncleanness to deal with, we do not need to try to uncover sin. Just present the teaching and then, when you actually pray for them to be baptized with the Spirit, ask the Holy Spirit

to show them anything they need to deal with.

2) Ask - If anyone is thirsty

You will find some students from a church background who are convinced that they were baptized in the Holy Spirit when they were saved. It never achieves anything to try to persuade someone that they haven't been baptized when they are sure they have been – even if you are sure they haven't been. Rather, we want to stir in their hearts a thirst for more. We can say to them, “Praise God for what you HAVE received, but perhaps there is more that God wants to give you. A thimble may be full! A cup may be full! And a bathtub may be full! I want to grow a bigger heart for God to fill, not a thimble-size heart, but a bathtub-size heart.” But give them time. And maybe lend them a good testimony book about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Years ago, some men tried to traverse the Sahara in their car. Unfortunately, they strayed off the correct road and got thoroughly lost. Eventually, they ran out of petrol and could only wait for help to arrive. They finished their food and finally they finished their water, but still no one came to their rescue. When help arrived, it was too late. The men had all died a terrible death in the desert. Amazingly, in their stomachs was found engine oil. Crazed by thirst, they were desperate enough to try even that.

A very sad story, but a powerful picture of thirst. Many people pray to receive the Holy Spirit with an attitude of, “Well, if I get something, that will be cool. And if I don't, never mind. It's no big deal.” That is not thirst. That is not what those men in the desert thought about getting a drink. If we are really thirsty and we pray once and don't receive, then what will we do? Forget about it? No, we will keep on praying, again and again, until we receive. Nothing can satisfy us except the Holy Spirit.

3) Believe and receive...drink!

Part of our aim in this lesson is to impart faith to our students that they will receive, because it IS God's will to give them this good gift. Luke 11.13 is a wonderful promise, as is John 7.37-38. As the Word goes into their hearts, of course it will lift their faith and expectation. It is God's will to fill us!

➤ Explain the 2 stages, drinking IN and then the river flowing OUT.

- Giving thanks is a way of loosening up the person who is very reluctant to open his mouth. It is also a way of expressing faith. If someone promises me a gift, then I will say thank you immediately. So, we ask for the Holy Spirit and immediately begin to give thanks.
- We want to help people to relax and not get tense. No pressure! If nothing happens today, it is OK. There will be other times for us to keep on asking – until we receive.

4) Let the rivers flow – OUTWARDS

Speaking in tongues is the normal Biblical sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

- ✓ In each case, they **spoke in tongues**.
- Speaking in tongues is a good gift. We don't want to be dogmatic and say that it is the only sign. We are aware that some people will be powerfully touched by the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues. His timetable for each person is different. But we are also aware that it is a good gift and that it is available to those who believe. So even for the person who has an entirely different first encounter – weeps, shakes, or is overwhelmed with peace or filled with praise – we want to encourage them to expect to speak in tongues sooner or later.
- This river comes out of our mouths! You have to use your mouth!
- Speak! Don't analyze the babbling. Tell the story of Peter walking on the water. The miracle was not in the walking. Peter could already walk. Jesus didn't do it all for him and pluck him out of the boat. Peter had to use his legs and muscles, etc., just as he always did when he walked on the land. The miracle was that the sea held him up. Peter didn't have to do anything about the sea. He just had to trust Jesus to deal with sea and do what he COULD do – and walk. Likewise, the miracle is not that we speak, but that the words we speak are the words that the Spirit is giving, even though they are not a language that we have learned.
- The Greek word reminds us of what English word?
 - ✓ dynamite

The dynamic, explosive experience of the Holy Spirit is so encouraging, but not everyone experiences the Holy Spirit like that. Others start quietly but go on to a vital experience of the Holy Spirit. The most important thing is to keep on asking every day to be filled with the Holy Spirit. More and more every day!

Normally, it is better to arrange another time to pray for people rather than doing it right there and then. You CAN do it immediately. It is totally Biblical to do so. But some people will respond better if they have time to think about it and come mentally prepared. It is also important to have an open-ended time, when you are not in a hurry to go to another meeting. If someone is having a particularly long encounter with the Holy Spirit, you can give them time to make the most of what He is doing.

Learning to pray

There are several applications of “the food we need.”

- ✧ We pray for our jobs – which are the source of the income which gives us our food. We pray for God’s blessing on our company or workplace.
- ✧ We can pray for those who are hungry in other parts of the world.
- ✧ We also pray for the bread of God’s Word, that He will speak to us today and every day.

Reading God’s Word

The passage in Luke will give them a chance to meditate on those very faith building promises. Do it if you have time!

Praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit

Here are some steps you can use when you meet together to pray for your students.

- 1) Sing/worship together a little.
- 2) Have a testimony from someone who has been baptized in the Spirit.
- 3) Go over one aspect of the teaching, especially if there are some attending who haven't joined in the earlier teaching sessions.
- 4) Explain what you are going to do next, which is to go through the four steps to receive.
- 5) Have someone playing and worshipping in the background or put on a worship tape.

#1 Repent: Lead in a general prayer of repentance and then take time for people to pray through personal issues of repentance.

#2 Ask: Encourage each one to pray out loud, "Fill me", etc.

#3 Receive: Take time to receive, breathe in, hands outstretched as though receiving a gift. Begin to say simple prayers of thanks. "Thank you, Jesus. I receive the Holy Spirit. Thank you for your gift. Thank you for your love."

#4 Speak out: Encourage them, as they are able, to stop praying in their own language and allow other words to come out. Go round and pray for each one. Work with what the Holy Spirit is doing.

- 6) Ask people what is happening. If someone is crying, you might ask them if there is some issue that you can pray for. You won't interrupt the Spirit by asking the person what is going on or what they are sensing. It will help you pray accurately.
- 7) Keep it moving. If they are beginning to pray quietly in tongues, encourage them to pray more loudly, and to lift their hands. Often people will start to pray in tongues and then stop after a short time. Tell them to keep going. The more they can pray today the better.
- 8) The Holy Spirit often gives people visions (pictures in their minds) or prophecy (words from the Bible or words of encouragement). Ask if anyone has such a picture or word to share with everyone. It may be for them personally or for someone else in the room.
- 9) Often, at the end, you can get everyone who has spoken in tongues to then sing in tongues. But you can leave this for another session if you

think they have had enough for one night.

- 10) Towards the end, quieten them down, and explain that you can speak in tongues anytime, that you can turn it on and off. It is under your control. Then get everyone to speak in tongues again briefly to demonstrate that.
 - Encourage them to pray some more in tongues when they get home before they sleep. You can pray quietly, with your head covered!
 - This is for every day, any time. Like Paul, keep on speaking in tongues as much as possible. It is a key to growing in your walk with God.

Appendix: “SPEAKING IN TONGUES”

The minister pointed to an elderly man kneeling by the front pew.

“See that man?” he said to me. “He’s seeking the baptism. Would you go over and pray with him?”

So I went over and sat down on the pew where the man was kneeling and gave him just a few words of instruction about how we receive the Holy Spirit by faith and then speak in tongues in faith. Then I said, “Now we’ll pray that God will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and enable you to praise Him in other tongues. After I pray, I want you to open your mouth in faith and begin to praise God in tongues.” We prayed and immediately the brother opened his mouth and began to speak in tongues, tears of joy streaming down his face. I returned to the minister and said, “Well, the brother received.” To my surprise the pastor began to jump up and down with excitement.

“He did? Are you sure?” And then he ran over to the brother and knelt down and listened to him praising God in tongues. Then the minister began to weep for joy.

I thought to myself, “This is an emotional bunch of Pentecostals I got mixed up with tonight.” Then the pastor came back to me wiping the tears from his face with his handkerchief and explained.

“This brother’s been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit for twenty-seven years!”

Do you see the point? For over a quarter of a century, that devoted Christian man had been waiting for God to do what God had been waiting for him to do. Earnest, sincere man that he was, he didn’t want to “fake anything.” So he had never taken that step of faith.

“I don’t want to open my mouth and speak – I want the Holy Spirit to speak through me!” I’ve heard many a chronic seeker wall himself off from the baptism in the Holy Spirit with that complaint. Let me say it again. The miracles of God are comprised of two parts: man’s part and God’s part. Speaking in tongues is that kind of miracle. And the miraculous part isn’t the act of speaking; it’s the language. You speak; the Holy Spirit provides “the

utterance,” the words, the syllables. You must speak the words the Holy Spirit provides. And if you don’t open your mouth and begin to speak, there will be no speaking in tongues.

Let me give you one more illustration.

A minister friend of mine was present when this incident took place and related it to me. The pastor of a small denominational church had been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit for several years without success. He was one of those “chronic seekers” we’ve been talking about, an earnest Christian brother who didn’t want to “fake anything.” Although he had been prayed over by many people many times, he still had not received. Nationally known evangelists had prayed for him, every charismatic speaker and evangelist who came to town had laid hands on him and prayed but with no results. Yet the man was determined; he kept seeking.

One night in a small church, following a revival service, ministry was offered for those seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit. My friend was present and saw this earnest pastor make his way to the front of the church. Reaching the altar, he flung himself down on the floor and began to pray. No one went to minister to him personally because it never did any good. All his friends had worn themselves out praying with him.

But after a few minutes everyone was amazed to hear him begin to pray aloud in tongues; in a beautiful clear language. All the people around began to rejoice that the brother had finally received his heart’s desire and listened gratefully as he continued to speak in tongues.

Then, to their surprise, the minister pushed himself up from the floor and said, “I don’t want you people to get the wrong impression; I still don’t have the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I’m not speaking in tongues; I’m just making up funny noises. I finally got so tired of waiting for the Holy Spirit to speak through me that I just decided to open my mouth and begin to babble out sounds. But that’s not the Holy Spirit, that’s me! I hate to disappoint all of you, but I still don’t have the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”

Then it was the minister’s turn to be surprised for there were three young Chinese college students sitting on the front pew of the church. They had been viewing the whole of the proceedings. One of them answered the minister.

“Brother, we hate to disappoint you, but you’ve been praising God in perfect Chinese for the last three minutes and we have understood every word you said!”

See the point? Because of a lack of understanding about his part in the miracle of speaking tongues, the minister had not only robbed himself of the experience for years, but when it finally happened, refused to accept it. All God had been wanting was for the man to step out in faith; to open his mouth and begin to praise God with the sound of his voice so the Holy Spirit could furnish him a new language of praise. This is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:4)

From *Ministering the Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, Don Basham, Whitaker Books, 1971, p. 47-51.

Step Five

***Listen &
Obey***



The new believers in Jerusalem: Remember the 3000 people who... # repented and were # baptized and # received the Holy Spirit just as the 120 disciples had received Him a few hours before. Have you taken those three steps yet?

And then what? Did they scatter to their homes? No, they began to meet together. We read in Acts 2.42, that “*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*”

- ✧ The apostles passed on to the new believers what they had learned in their three years from Jesus. This was first oral version of the Gospels. Later, these things would be written down and compiled into the four Gospels that we have today.
- ✧ The 3000 devoted themselves to the teaching. They listened and then obeyed. But Jesus was there too, not physically but in their hearts. So they were learning to listen to His voice too. That's what we will do too, listen and obey! We will not just listen to teaching from other believers. We will listen to Jesus speaking to us in our hearts and we will obey Him.

Because you say so

For sure, the 3000 heard the story that we are going to read today. It's in Luke 5.1-11. Let's pray for a moment and then read it together. Afterwards, we will share the part of the story that we like best. ✂

- You can watch the story in the *Jesus* film.
- Now, let's go through the story frame by frame. Picture each scene in your mind as we talk about it.

Scene One: Great crowds of people have come to hear Jesus preach, so many that they are almost pushing Him into the water. In my imagination, it is much more crowded than you see in the film. What an awesome thing that people were so hungry for God's Word – and what an amazing person Jesus was that people were so determined to come and hear Him teach. I hope that kind of hunger is in our hearts for God's Word.

Scene Two: It is so crowded that it is quite impossible for Jesus to teach so all can hear. He has an inspiration. There are some fishermen on the shore, cleaning their nets, and Jesus asks them if He can borrow their boat. They agree, and push Him just out from the shore, which gives Him enough room

to address the crowd without being pushed into the water. His voice carries extra well over the water, too. Very clever!

Scene Three: After He finishes teaching, He turns to the fishermen who lent Him the boat. One was Simon Peter and one was Andrew, Peter's brother. They have been listening as they wash their nets, but it is probably not the first time they've heard Jesus. He says to Peter, *Now go out where it is deeper and let down your nets, and you will catch many fish.* (Luke 5.5, NLT) Peter gives Jesus a very strange look.

He is torn by his respect for Jesus and his certainty that what Jesus says is nonsense. Experienced fishermen, they have fished all night, but without result. There were no fish to be caught. Now, here is the challenge. Will he follow his own understanding or do what Jesus says? But Peter shrugs his head and replies, "*But _____, I will let down the nets.*"

Scene Four: They are DOING what Jesus said. They're out in the deep water; they're casting their nets and beginning to pull them in. As they feel the tug of many fish caught in the nets, their expressions change to wonder and excitement. They call their friends, James and John, in a second boat to come and help. They have caught so many fish that both boats are full and beginning to sink. That's a lot of fish – far more than you see in the film. The boat there is hardly sinking! We see graphically the blessing of putting aside our own ideas and obeying Jesus.

Scene Five:

- Now, we see Peter with Jesus. He falls to his knees in the piles of fish and cries out in repentance. He knows he is in the presence of someone very special, and he doesn't know whether to run and hide, or what to do.
- But Jesus says, "*Don't be afraid. From now on, you won't be catching fish but _____.*" In other words, this event is a prophecy in drama of how Peter is going to be used to turn many people to follow Christ. Thousands of them!
- In fact, after Peter's first sermon, on the Day of Pentecost (that we learned about in the last two lessons), 3000 people turned to Christ and then thousands more in the days following. That was a lot of "fish!"
- Some of you will hear Jesus saying the same thing to you. Is there someone who doesn't know Jesus, that you want to pray for and begin to share with? He wants to use you to call people to follow Him, like Peter.

Before we go on, let's check what we've learned, and circle the correct answers.

Listening to God's Word is	important/ unimportant
Obey Jesus only when what He says makes sense.	Yes / No
Obey Jesus, even when it doesn't make sense, and He will bless you.	Yes / No
If we follow Jesus, He will use us to help others be saved too	Yes / No

The scene changes

It is after the cross and Jesus has risen from the tomb. We are watching Him on a mountain in Galilee with His disciples not long before He ascends to heaven. He is giving them His last instructions (Matthew 28.18-20). Listen to what He says. He tells them to teach their converts *to obey all the things that I have commanded you*. Obedience to Jesus' commands.

Then, in Acts 2.42, immediately after 3000 people turn to Christ, we find them gathered together learning to obey the teaching of the Twelve. What were the Twelve teaching? All the things Jesus had taught them!

- Slaves or soldiers obey because they are afraid or because of their training. But we are not like that!
- We obey because we love God. He is our wonderful Father who loves us so much that we love Him in return.
- And because we obey, He blesses us – like Peter in our story. Just as Jesus delighted to do the will of His Father in heaven, so we love to please Him and obey His voice. Read together what Jesus says in John 14.23.

His love for us ⇒ our love for Him ⇒ we obey ⇒ we are blessed

How do we hear His voice?

Like the 3000 listening to the teaching from Peter and the others we listen to our coach and to the preaching in our meetings. But we also learn to hear God speak to us in our hearts. We all have ears in our hearts – but they need to be trained. Imagine, you go into the room of your teacher (or boss) and see \$20 on the desk. No one has seen you go in. You could take the money without being detected. (Or you see a pornographic magazine and are tempted to read it; you hear a rumor about a friend and have an impulse to

tell someone else.) One voice says, “Take it! No one will know.” But you hear another voice in your heart telling you “Don’t do it. It is wrong!” Do you hear that voice? Whose voice is it? Or, you are about to relax with a cup of coffee and you suddenly have an impulse to call or visit a sick friend. Whose voice is it? The voice of your conscience? Yes, but it is more than that. It is the voice of _____.

If you obey that voice, it becomes stronger and clearer. If you ignore it, it fades away. As you soak yourself in the Word of God and in prayer and praise, and as you speak in tongues as much as possible, you become more and more sensitive to Jesus speaking to you by His Spirit.

Often, we hear His voice...

- As we read the Bible
- As we pray
- As we listen to preaching or through a song
- Through the advice of a friend
- As we lie awake at night and all else is quiet.

Anywhere, anytime. If you keep your heart open, He can speak to you.

People who obey change and grow

As we obey, we are going to be blessed and filled with joy and grow spiritually. God loves us so much and He wants to change us and help us grow! He speaks to us and His love is poured into us by the Holy Spirit, then when we obey, WE WILL BE CHANGED!

Like Peter, we put aside our own ideas and do what Jesus tells us to do. That is the smartest way to live. You will see this over and over in the stories of the Gospels – Jesus calling people to do what seems foolish to them, but when they obey Him, they experience a miracle. Listen and obey and be changed!

Reading God’s Word – another question!

We already read Luke 5 together. By now, you have a good understanding of the importance of reading God’s Word not just for intellectual understanding but to hear His voice. Let’s add one more question to the way we read. 1) What verse do I like best? 2) Why do I like it? And 3) Is there something here that God is speaking to me about, something to obey?

Learning to Pray

Let's go through the Lord's Prayer, section by section:

Our Father in heaven: Our Abba, our Daddy – we thank Him that every day He runs to us and embraces us.

We praise Your holy name: We thank Him for His blessings and then we praise Him for who He is, using His names – Immanuel, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Good Shepherd, Savior, and more. When you pray by yourself at home, you could sing a song of praise at this point.

Your kingdom, come! Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven: Let His will be done in your family, your friends' lives, your job, in your city – and even in faraway situations that God reminds you of. Pray that you will have the opportunity to tell your friends and family about Jesus, lend them a good Jesus book or invite them to church. If you are having a hard time at work or school, ask Jesus to bring heaven down into your office or classroom. Pray for God's blessing on the workmates that are giving you a hard time.

*# Give us today the food we need: We pray for our material needs – and also for His Word in our hearts each day, and for the Holy Spirit to fill us. **Let's pray also that we will hear His voice more and more clearly this week.***

Now, let me encourage you to develop the habit of praying in tongues – if you can, that is. Just as an intravenous injection puts food directly into your bloodstream without going through your mouth, so speaking in tongues goes straight into your spirit, feeding your spirit, without going through your rational mind. It seems foolish just to speak in tongues all the time (and you certainly don't do it when you are with other people), but as part of your personal prayer it makes you much more sensitive to the Holy Spirit in your life and more conscious of God's presence with you. Like Paul said, *I thank my God I speak in tongues more than you all.* (1 Corinthians 14:18) Paul knew what was good for him.

Memory verse

If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. John 14:23

Step Five, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: To teach the importance of hearing the Word of God (not just teaching in meetings but God's voice in our hearts) AND obeying Him.

- ✧ We gently urge our students to keep moving ahead on the first three steps – repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. As we will learn in today's lesson, learning must lead to obedience.
- ✧ Many people spread the three parts out over many years, but in the New Testament we see people going through all three steps in just one day or within a very short time frame. Take time to understand, by all means, but don't let delay lead to disobedience.
- ✧ Picture the 3000 new believers gathering with the apostles and listening earnestly to the teaching in Acts 2.42! Jesus is in their midst and they are learning to hear His voice in their hearts too.

Because you say so

Today, we will do our Bible reading at the beginning, not the end, as the text for today's lesson. It is a good chance to practice doing it together. Then, if possible, watch the relevant section of the *Jesus* film. You will need to organize this in advance. And we will retell the story, as dramatically as possible.

Scene One

Hunger for God's Word, to hear. Hearing IS important. Everything begins with hearing the Word. Hearing is not enough but it IS necessary.

Scene Two

There is no particular teaching point. We are just setting the scene.

Scene Three

Jesus' unreasonable command. Will Peter obey?

- ✓ because you say so!

Scene Four

The miracle! That's what happens when we hear and obey!

Scene Five

- Peter's reaction; his repentance; Jesus' prediction that he will bring many people to faith.
- Talk about your student's friends or family. Is there anyone on their hearts that they can begin to pray for and begin to tell about Jesus?
 - ✓ men!

The scene changes

We move to the Great Commission and Jesus' words to teach the new disciples to obey His commands. Then we see that the new disciples in Acts 2.42 did just that. In the older versions, it says that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching." That doesn't mean that they just listened intently, but that they took the teaching seriously – they obeyed! The apostles passed on Jesus' commands – and we will do so too.

In these lessons, we stress **heart** obedience, obedience out of love. When we are putting such an emphasis on obedience, it is vital that we also emphasize...

- 1) the love that fuels our obedience, and
- 2) the power of the Holy Spirit.

Otherwise, we can slip quickly into legalism. But, with lots of love and the fullness of the Spirit, we can teach obedience without getting too "heavy."

How do we hear His voice?

The \$20 story is a key illustration to help your students connect with their spiritual ears. Everyone hears on the level of their conscience, even non-Christians. So that is the entry point for learning to hear the voice of God. Hearing God's voice is the same faculty or sense as hearing our conscience. As we obey, our hearing gets sharper!

- ✓ It is the voice of God

Practically speaking, how do we hear? There are five concrete ways in the notes. If you can help your students enter into this dynamic living relationship with Jesus, where they are hearing from Him in natural, everyday ways, you will give them an incredible gift!

That is what this Christian life is all about:

- ✓ relationship, friendship

People who obey change and grow

Jesus didn't teach the twelve about the Trinity. Instead, He coached them to know the Father and to receive the Holy Spirit. When we obey, we grow! We see many people who don't have a high level of education, who are even illiterate. But because they obey with open hearts, they mature fast and produce good fruit! Because of their open hearts, the Holy Spirit speaks to them and reveals things to them.

Reading God's Word – another question!

In our daily reading, we begin to ask more specifically if there is something in the passage that God is speaking to us personally, something He wants us to obey.

Learning to pray

Today's lesson is relatively short, so it is a good opportunity to review what we have learned so far about prayer by praying together through the Lord's Prayer. We learn to pray mainly by praying with others – just as we learned to talk as infants. Practice!

Step Six

Love Each Other



The 3000 in Jerusalem

*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.
They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and
sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.*

That's Acts 2.46-47. What a great picture of the new church, learning together to follow Jesus! Verse 42 says simply that they had "fellowship."

- ✧ So, what command of Jesus were the twelve apostles passing on here? We will look at that in a moment.
- ✧ If that was the first church, what do we mean by "church"? People often say, "Let's go to church," or "Church starts at 10am on Sunday." Is church a building? Is it a meeting that people have in the building? And is it important? Some people say they can follow Jesus by themselves, without being a part of a church. Is that true?



What is the church? Good question!! It's the people of God following Jesus together – joined by love for each other.

The raw material of the church

Picture the men that Jesus gathered around Him as His followers.

John sometimes seemed like a really nice guy, but he and his brother, James, were called the sons of thunder. They wanted to call down fire on a village of people that didn't welcome them in the way they expected. And one time, they sent their mother to Jesus to ask Him to reserve the best seats in heaven just for them. The other disciples did not like that.

Simon Peter? Well, he was impulsive and boastful, one minute having a great revelation, the next minute giving voice to the words of Satan, and finally denying he even knew the one he had promised to die for. Matthew had been a tax collector. In other words, he was serving the interests of the Roman occupiers at the expense of his own people to make money.

On the opposite side of the political spectrum was another Simon, a member

of a sect violently opposed to the Romans. We don't know too much about the others except that they quarreled about who was the greatest, chased away mothers who brought their children to Jesus, and ran away when He was arrested. They sound a lot like us, don't they? A diverse group who didn't always get along. They were the seed of the first church. And Jesus' plan was not just that they turn to God but that they learn to love each other.

A new command

Jesus called these twelve men to repent and follow Him. He taught them to love God with all their hearts. And He also taught them something new.

Picture in your mind the Last Supper, when Jesus gathered with His disciples for a final meal before His arrest and crucifixion. Suddenly, Jesus rose from the table and did what no one was expecting. Listen to the story. ✨

- Washing the feet of a guest was normally the job of a _____?
- How do you think the disciples felt? _____.
- *I have given you an example*, Jesus said. An example of what?

Then, in verse 34-35, Jesus explains clearly what this foot-washing means.

I'm giving you a new command. You must love each other just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples.

- How should we love each other? "Just as I have loved you." That is a lot!
- What will be the result of this love? All men will _____ that we are His followers!

It was not easy for the Twelve to learn to love each other; but it was essential. They had to learn to accept each other even though they were so different, to forgive each other and to stop arguing about who was the greatest. And together they became the foundation of the new church.

- ① Our love for each other is the foundation of the church.
- ② This love is the foundation of our witness to the world. If we love each other, people will believe in Jesus!
- ③ This love is what Jesus prayed for to His Father, "that they be one as we are one" (John 17.11).

- ④ In our own strength, it is impossible. But when the love of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, then it becomes possible.

Three ways to love each other

1. Accept each other

Peter had to learn to **appreciate** John, even though they were very different from each other. Matthew had to learn to **value** Simon the Zealot, even though they had been on the opposite side of the political divide. In the same way, we must learn to accept all those whom God has joined us to as brothers and sisters. The church is not a club of people who are all alike. We do not choose to fellowship only with people we like. We are thrown together with people who are very different from ourselves.

- What are some of the ways that we are different? ✨

Some of us have different ideas about how to please God.

- Can we eat meat or not? Paul explained in Romans 14 that some people of his time believed that it pleased God not to eat meat, to be vegetarian. Others believed they could eat anything.
- Must we worship on Saturday? Some believed it pleased God to worship on Saturday – the holy day of the Jews. To others, every day was a holy day. Paul told them strongly that it was OK to have your own convictions but don't criticize those who have different convictions from yours.
- Some people like certain kinds of music for worship. What about you?
- Some people like to meet in homes, others like special buildings for worship.

We must have hearts and minds big enough to maintain loving fellowship with people who have different opinions about quite important things.

Honor God by accepting each other, as Christ has accepted you. Romans 15:7

- Decide today that you will not criticize those who are different from you but ask God for His help to accept them as they are, and not to expect them to change to be like you or fit in with you!
- Listen and learn! We grow when we open our hearts to people who are

different from ourselves and try to know them and learn from them.

In the church we spend time only with people we like. Yes / Not necessarily

In the church diverse people are called to accept each another. Yes / No

2. Care for each other

The new believers in Jerusalem helped each other in practical ways. They shared their resources and helped those who were poor. Let's make that our way of life as followers of Jesus. Are you aware of concrete needs that others in the church have? Maybe God will show you a way to help them.

- You may give them a gift or a card thanking them for something they did for you.
- You may help them with some job they have to do or take them out for a drink.
- You could offer to babysit for them...or help them with their studies.
- We will learn more about helping financially in Step Nine.

There are so many things God might show you to do. Let's pray about it and then write down what you have decided to do.

I will _____ for my friend.

3. Forgive each other

Even though we love each other and try to accept each other, conflict will arise, and we must deal with it quickly. Peter was apparently having a problem with someone when he asked Jesus, *Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?* Peter thought he was being quite generous to suggest seven times because the religious teachers said that three times was enough. After that you could hit back!

In reply, Jesus said, *Not seven times but seventy times seven.* In other words, you must never stop forgiving! Then He told him a story. It's in Matthew 18.21-35. You can read it together and share the part that touches your heart.

Or your coach can tell you the story. ✂

What can we learn from the story?

- ① Our debt to God is like the debt of the first official who owed 50 million

silver coins. What does that mean? ✨

- ② Compared with that, the things that other people have done against us (even though they may be very hurtful to us!) are quite small, like the debt of the second man.
- ③ If we don't forgive those who sin against us, we bind them in a kind of spiritual prison – and surprisingly, we bind ourselves too. Many people live in a prison, bound by the memory of something done to them many years ago. What is the key that will release us from this prison? ✨
- ④ If we don't forgive others, we lose God's forgiveness. That's serious!
- ⑤ Forgiveness doesn't mean saying that the things done against us were all right after all, that it didn't hurt or that it doesn't still hurt. Nor are we saying that we want to be good friends with the person who hurt us. That may be possible, but in some cases, e.g., after serious abuse, it will not be possible. We are declaring that we will not judge the other person but will put them in the hands of the Lord. Only He knows how to judge justly.
- ⑥ Is there anyone you need to forgive? At the end of the lesson, we will learn to forgive using the Lord's Prayer.

Remember this: just having problems with someone else doesn't mean you are defeated and that you have no love for your brother (or sister). That is part of life! The key is to learn to **overcome** the problems – with acceptance, proactive caring, and forgiveness.

In the church, we will never be hurt.

True / Not true

Forgiving those who have hurt us is

Optional / Essential

As we love each another, people will see that Jesus is real.

True / Not true

Prayer

Continue with your Bible reading at home every day. But we will not read a passage together today. Let's look at the next phrase of the Lord's Prayer:

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

1) Every day, as we go through the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to show us if we have any broken relationships.

There may be deep hurts from the past that we need to bring to the Lord again and again until the hurt is gone.

#Little things happen every day that we need to forgive quickly.

You can pray a simple prayer like this: *“I bless him (or her) in Jesus’ name. I pray for God’s best in his life. I will not judge! I put him in God’s hands.”*

2) Then we ask the Holy Spirit to show us our own sins. We ask for God’s forgiveness for anything He reveals to us, and have the assurance that:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1.9

If we pray this each day, we will keep our hearts clean and keep our relationships right - and be so blessed. Let’s practice together right now before we finish. Is there anyone you need to forgive? ✨

So what is the church?

Is it a building – no, it’s not! Is it a worship meeting? No, it’s not! Worship meetings are part of being church, but “church” is much more than that!

The church is the people of God following Jesus together and loving each other!

We learn to accept and value each other; we learn to share our lives together in practical ways. And we learn to forgive each other because Christ forgave us. If we love Him, we will love each another!

Memory verse

I’m giving you a new command. You must love each other just as I have loved you. If you love each other, everyone will know that you are my disciples. John 13:34-35

Step Six, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: to give new disciples a vision to love other believers and to become part of the community of disciples called the church.

- ✧ Keep telling the unfolding story of the new church. Imagine those people who joined the crowd on the Day of Pentecost and heard Peter preach; they repented and went down to the water to be baptized. Now they are discovering, from the twelve apostles, what it means to follow Jesus. What is next?
- ✧ Fellowship! What command of Jesus created fellowship and created the church?
- ✧ What does church mean actually?
- ✧ This can become a very long lesson – too long. The first story of the foot-washing with Jesus' new command and the last story about forgiveness are the most important parts. So don't take too long over the 1) Accept each other and 2) Care for each other. Move on to 3) in time to present it carefully. Try reading the passage together (and sharing the verse that impacts you) and, at another time, try telling the story. Then you can decide which is better for you!

The raw material

The twelve disciples were so different from each other! This point sets the stage for "A new command" and also for "Accept each other."

A new command

This time don't read the story - tell the story. Many students haven't heard it before. So tell it with that "Wow! Amazing!" in your voice and expressions! You will find it in John 13.1-17.

Then go on to the questions in the text.

- ✓ Servant or slave.
- ✓ They felt embarrassed ("Perhaps I should have done this before, Jesus?!"), astonished that Jesus would do such a thing, or confused – like Peter ("Should I let him do it or should I refuse?").
- ✓ An example of serving, of humility, of thinking of others, of taking

the lowest place.

Then Jesus goes on to give them the new commandment.

- ✓ All men will know that we are His followers. Our witness will be effective.

“It was not easy...” – read this paragraph and then explain the next 4 bullet points.

Three ways to love each other

1. Accept each other

What are some of the ways that we are different? Personality, family background, the kind of clothes we wear, the sports we like, the kind of music we like (for pleasure and for worship), our education ... different in SO many ways. Are there any big divisions in your society, like the division between people like Matthew and Simon the Zealot? Or, in the church that would soon emerge, between Jews and Gentiles?

Different ideas about how to please God: You might need to read Romans 14.1-6 when you prepare, to make sure you understand the next part, about differences in the beliefs of Christians, both in Bible times and today.

Is it possible to worship and live together in spite of such differences? This is actually a very complicated question in some societies. Now is not the time to dig too deeply but normally the gospel spreads better when people are allowed to meet with those of a similar culture – so it is easy for family and friends to join you. But at the same time, we learn to accept and respect people of different cultures who are our family in Christ.

2. Care for each other

Help your student to pray and think of something practical. If you can get them to take this seriously and really begin to **do** these things, it will make a huge difference in their lives. They will come to see that Christian life is so much more than just coming to meetings. We share our lives and really care for each other.

3. Forgive each other

This teaching is very important. So plan your lesson well so you can take enough time here. Or, if necessary, teach it as an extra lesson.

✂ Tell the story or read it together.

- ① Our debt to God is like the debt of the first official who owed 50 million silver coins. What does that mean?
 - ✓ It means that our sin is so great that we can never repay it ourselves. Our only hope is that God will forgive us.
- ② Compared with that...
- ③ The prison:
 - ✓ The key to get out of the prison is in our mouths, **forgiveness!**
- ④ If we don't forgive others...
- ⑤ Forgiveness doesn't mean...
- ⑥ Is there anyone you need to forgive? At the end of the lesson we will take time to pray over this issue and to bless that person in prayer.

Prayer

Go straight into the section on prayer as part of our study on forgiveness. Pray through any forgiveness issues that your students have shared. And give your students a vision to pray this prayer each day to help them to keep their hearts free and build relationships of love.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

So what is the church?

This is a good place for a summary and conclusion. The church is not a building or organization; it is not just a meeting on Sunday. What is it?

Step Seven

Break

Bread



The new church worshipping together

We imagine ourselves among the 3000 new believers, learning from the twelve apostles how to follow Jesus. In the last lesson, we learned about their fellowship, how they learned to love each other. Next, we learn how they worshiped together. In Acts 2.42, we learned that:

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the **breaking of bread** and to prayer.*

Then, in verse 46-47:

*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They **broke bread** in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.*

What does “breaking of bread” mean? And why were they doing it? The simple answer is this: because Jesus had commanded them to do it.

Do this in remembrance of Me

Let’s go back in our minds to the scene of Jesus gathered with His 12 disciples around the table just before He was arrested and crucified. Picture it! We looked at it last week when we talked about Jesus washing His disciples’ feet. It was here, too, that He told them about the coming of the Holy Spirit. A crucial time of final instructions! During the meal, Jesus took a piece of bread – well, let’s read it in Matthew 26.26-30. Then, turn to 1 Corinthians 11.23-26 to read Paul’s retelling of the same event. A morsel of bread and a sip from the cup. What does it all mean?

- The bread is a symbol of _____
- The wine is a symbol of _____

What does the whole ceremony mean? We worship Jesus by looking...

- ① **Back!** To remember what Jesus did objectively, historically, on the cross and to remember that when we repented and were baptized, we were crucified with Him, died with Him and were raised with Him to a new life.

- ② **In!** The bread reminds us that He is the bread of _____ and that He lives **IN** us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because of the covenant He has made with us, He will never leave us. He is with us always.
- ③ **Forward!** He will _____ to this earth as the great king and judge over the entire world. Satan and evil will be brought to final defeat, and we will receive eternal life. We may struggle here for a while. We may even lose some battles. But we will win the final battle and be with Jesus forever in heaven!

There are other words that we commonly use for the breaking of bread – Holy Communion, The Lord’s Supper or The Table of the Lord. In our worship meetings, in our homes or in larger groups, we sing songs and we listen to the preaching of God’s Word, which is wonderful. But this is the central part of our worship, the part the Lord clearly commanded.

Two struggles

There are two things we sometimes struggle with.

- ✧ **We have a bad week.** We struggle with sin and fail a few times and then when we come to worship (in our own prayer times or together) we feel we have no right to come to God. We feel we will never make it. We may look at others in the same way and become offended or confused by their failures or weakness. But the truth is that our sin does not disqualify us from coming to Christ. He has paid for our sin with His blood and there is an open door for us any time, not because of what we have done but because of what Jesus has done. Don’t focus on sin – yours or others – but focus on Jesus.
- I really messed up this week. I don’t feel like I can just go along to church and pray and pretend everything is OK. What should I do?*

Question: What would you say to someone who said that they felt unworthy to come to God in prayer because they have done something wrong again? “Too right! I feel the same way”, OR “If you confess your sins, He will forgive you and the blood of Jesus purifies us from **all sin!**”

- ✧ **We have a good week.** We overcome temptation; we pray for a sick person who recovers; we share about the Lord with someone and they

turn to Christ. We begin to think that God is quite lucky to have us on His team. We come to worship with a sense of how good we really are. But the truth is that our good works do not qualify us to come to Christ. All our righteousness is no better than filthy rags, the Bible tells us. (Isaiah 64.6) Our qualification to come to Him in worship is the blood that Jesus has shed to wash us clean. Don't focus on how good you are. Focus on Jesus.

So, because we are ALL vulnerable to these misunderstandings, God has appointed a place of remembering each week. It is the breaking of bread.

Ephesians 2.8-9 says: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*

A table of grace

It is a place of **remembering**, and it is also a place of **grace**. We meet with Jesus in a special way and draw forgiveness and new strength and encouragement from Him. He shows Himself to us and speaks to us through the Holy Communion. There is a wonderful story in Luke's Gospel about two disciples who met with Jesus after He rose from the dead. Your coach will tell you the story. ✂

It has a beautiful climax. Often, we lose sight of Jesus in the routine or the troubles of our daily living. But at the Holy Communion, our eyes are opened again, and we see Him and know Him all over again.

Bible reading and prayer

Let's read together Matthew 26.36-46, Or, if you have time, read right through to verse 56. Remember that we added a third question to think about with our Bible Reading.

- 1) What verse do I like best?
- 2) Why do I like it?
- 3) **Is there something here that God is speaking to me about, something to obey?**

Then, we will learn a great prayer secret from the next part of the Lord's

Prayer:

Help us not to give in to temptation and rescue us from evil.

We call this **praying ahead**. Instead of waiting for problems to come and then asking God to help us overcome them, we pre-empt them; we pray for protection. We can pray for healing, but it is better to pray that we don't get sick. We can pray for forgiveness, but it is better to anticipate the problem and pray that we won't sin. In the passage we have just read, what happened to the disciples because they neglected to pray?

Each morning, let's pray through our day's schedule, asking for protection, wisdom and grace for all that may happen. Shall we practice now?

One last question: Are you using this pattern of the Lord's Prayer each day? It is easy for our prayers to be just a list of the things we want, like a shopping list. But if you use this pattern, you will grow in your prayer life. Jesus told us when we pray to pray like this.

Memory verse

If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1 John 1.7

Step Seven, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: To prepare the student to participate in Holy Communion. Jesus commanded us to observe two sacraments. These are symbols of spiritual truth, or truth in drama. The first is baptism, the sacrament of entering the family of God. The second is Holy Communion, the sacrament of ongoing participation in the family of God.

- Prepare to “break bread” together at the end of the lesson, if possible.

The new church worshipping together

This lesson is not very long, so it is a good opportunity to make sure you are connecting well with your student. Are they learning to read their Bibles and pray? Are you aware of issues they are struggling with at home or in their work or studies? Are they joining in church life well and making friends?

We are back in Acts 2, learning from Peter, John and the other disciples how to follow Jesus and how to worship Him together.

Do this in remembrance of Me

We move now to the Last Supper, where Jesus gave this command to His disciples. Describe the scene or perhaps use the *Jesus* video. Read the two passages in Matthew 26.26-30 and 1 Corinthians 11.23-26.

Ask your students what they think the symbols mean.

- ✓ the bread – the body of Jesus
- ✓ the wine – the blood of Jesus

There are three ways we can look at the breaking of bread. The past, present and future! Looking back, looking inwards, and looking forward!

- ✓ life
- ✓ come again

Two struggles

When we celebrate Holy Communion, we confront these misunderstandings.

We remind ourselves of the basis of our faith.

A table of grace

Many people understand the table of the Lord as a place of remembering. That is what Jesus said. “Do this in remembrance of me!” But it is also a place where we can meet with the Lord and receive a fresh touch of His grace and love, or of healing and encouragement.

Tell the story in Luke 24.13-35, culminating in Jesus revealing Himself to the two disciples as He broke bread and gave it to them. We want our students to receive strength and grace from the Lord each time they participate in the Holy Communion.

If possible, finish this lesson by celebrating the Lord’s Supper together.

Bible reading and prayer – praying ahead

Is there something from the Bible reading that the Lord is putting on your heart to obey? Not every passage has something to obey. And we all take time to understand what we are reading and to apply it to ourselves. So we don’t put pressure on our students. But we want them to move from just liking some passage to obeying it. Obedience is the key to growing!

Here is a wonderful story that you can share with your students if you have time. It will help them get the point of this kind of prayer.

An Armenian merchant was travelling for several days through the desert with a caravan of goods. Each night on the journey, he would camp with his camels and servants. A group of bandits were following him and looking for an opportunity to raid his camp and seize his goods.

But as they came down from the hills the first night, they found his camp entirely surrounded by a high wall. Puzzled, they withdrew into the hills to follow his caravan for another day and attack the next night. But on the second night, the same thing happened. The camp was surrounded by a high wall. How on earth could the merchant have arranged such a thing? They were baffled but decided to try again. Quite sure that the merchant couldn’t be carrying the wall with him, they decided to follow the trail for one last night.

But this time, when they approached the camp, they found the wall as usual, but there were gaps in the wall, and they were able to go through and seize the man. But by now, they were so intrigued by the wall that had stopped them the previous nights, that instead of just rampaging through the camp, they roused the merchant and demanded an explanation of the wall. He had no idea what they were talking about!

But as they explained about the last night, with the holes in the wall, he understood. He explained to them that he was a Christian and that each night before he slept, he prayed and asked God to watch over his caravan and protect him and all who travelled with him. That must account for the wall that they had seen. But on the last night, he had been so tired that he just prayed a careless, half-hearted prayer and fell asleep. That is why they found holes in the wall of protection!

The men were so astounded by his testimony and what they had seen that they gave their lives to Christ and were saved!

(Prayer that Moves Mountains, Gordon Lindsay, Christ for the Nations, 1988, p. 23.)

Step Eight

Pray



The new church praying together

The 3000 new believers in Jerusalem met together to learn the Word of God and to fellowship with each other. They also began to worship together. In the last lesson, we learned how they broke bread together, worshiping God and celebrating the cross of Jesus. They also began to pray and praise God together. Let's look at that again, in Acts 2.42 then 2.46-47

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to **prayer**... (42)*

*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **praising God** and enjoying the favor of all the people. (46-47)*

Their first prayer meeting in the upper room when they were filled with the Holy Spirit was dynamic. And Acts 4.31 tells about another powerful prayer meeting.

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The disciples hadn't always prayed like that. When they first started living close to Jesus, they didn't know how to pray. They saw how He prayed. Sometimes, they woke up in the morning to find Him already awake, out on a hillside praying. So, one day, they asked Him to teach them to pray. In answer, He taught them the Lord's Prayer. That is our key lesson in learning how to pray, too. There were more lessons on prayer after that. But when they received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, they began to pray like never before.

Today, we are going to look at three lessons about prayer. Then we will practice the Lord's Prayer again.

1. Pray all the time, everywhere

When Jesus died on the cross, we read in Matthew 27.51 that the veil in the temple was torn apart. Your coach will explain the background to that. ✨ But it means that the way was opened for anyone to come any time to God. No priest or go-between, no holy day, no holy time, no holy place, no holy posture. Freedom to meet with God anywhere, anytime. When the Holy

Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost

- Where did it happen? _____
- Who was filled? _____
- What did it signify? _____

God has invited us into this amazing relationship that is not based on ritual. It is 24/7. He wants to walk with you as He did with Adam and Eve in the garden. He is waiting for you. You can talk with Him throughout the day and include Him in all you do. Try to develop the habit of continuous prayer, in your car, while you do the dishes, while you wait for the bus or walk to the shop. Wherever you are, talk with Jesus and sing songs of praise.

Do you have some worship songs on your phone? There are wonderful worship songs on You Tube that you can listen to. That helps you to fill your life with prayer and worship.

Praying in tongues is another wonderful blessing:

- to make us conscious of His presence with us all day anywhere.
- to strengthen our spirits, the inner part of us, that connects us to God.
- to make us more sensitive to His voice.

2. Pray and praise the Lord together

When the new church in Jerusalem prayed together, miracles happened, people were healed, and the gospel spread. The Holy Spirit works especially when we pray and worship together.

Why do you think that is? There are two promises in Matthew 18.19-20 below. What are they?

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.



No priest or go-between, no holy day, no holy time, no holy place, no holy posture. Freedom to meet with God anywhere, anytime.

Small cell groups: It will help you so much to grow in your faith if you pray with someone else regularly. You can do that in a cell group, and in your families or with a friend. Amazing things happen when two people meet together and **agree in prayer** even for a short time. Praying for 10 minutes before school or work, or on the phone with a friend will change your day!

The whole church: Then there are times when the church meets together to worship and pray. That is a very special and powerful time. In Acts, we see the church coming together again and again to pray, in times of crisis and in ordinary times, too. It is a huge key to seeing the kingdom of God coming to earth, just as we have learned to pray in the Lord's Prayer. When the church is called together for special prayer, make sure you are there. Even if you don't feel confident in praying aloud, your agreement with what others are praying adds power to the prayers.

3. Pray persistently

Let's read the story Jesus told immediately after He gave the twelve the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11.5-10). Then we'll look at it in a new way!

Head: Tell the story in your own words to someone else in your group.

Heart: What touches your heart in the story?

Hand: Is there anything in the story for you to put into practice? ✂

Jesus taught that we should _____ give up praying. The word translated "boldness" in Luke 11.8 means "doggedness, persistence or being a pest."

Persistence is a kind of _____. We trust God. We believe He is our loving Father and He wants to answer our prayers and bless us. So we keep on knocking on the door until we get the answer. He likes us to do that!

He sent Jesus to bless us (Acts 3.26). He wants people to be saved and walk in His ways; He wants them to be in health and prosper; He wants them to love and serve one another. But since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, God's will is NOT always done on earth. Satan resists God's will. There is a spiritual battle going on to bring this world into submission to Jesus and into line with His will.

The greatest tool in that battle is our prayers. We don't understand this perfectly, but He uses our prayers to change the world. He waits for us to pray,

“Your kingdom, come! Will of God, be done on earth as it is in heaven.” When we pray, God works. In prayer, we shut the door to Satan working in people’s lives and we open the door to the will of God and the blessing of God to come from heaven.

Sometimes our prayers are answered immediately. That encourages us so much. But sometimes our prayers are hindered. Usually we don’t know why, but our part is to keep on praying UNTIL we receive the answer – for our family’s salvation, for healing, for a job or a breakthrough in our circumstances. Never give up!

Is there something on your heart that you are praying for? Is there a situation at work or in your family that needs to change? Are you asking God for the right words to share about Jesus with a friend (like the three loaves the man asked from his neighbor for his night-time visitor)? Share it with us so that we can pray together – and then keep on praying persistently until you get your answer.

Listen to a wonderful story from your coach. ✂

Let’s review what we have learned so far:

God will not hear you unless you use the right kind of language.	Yes / No
Agreeing in prayer with another believer is a key to blessing.	Yes / No
It is rude to ask God the same thing over and over.	Yes / No
The Lord’s Prayer is given:	to recite over and over/ as a pattern for prayer

We learn by practicing

Now let’s go through the Lord’s Prayer again, section by section, in groups of 3 or 4. Make it part of your daily prayer schedule. If you develop the habit of praying like this every day, your life will be transformed!

Memory verse

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them. Matthew 18.19-20

Step Eight, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: As in all these lessons, our aim is to help our students to obey rather than to do an abstract study. We hear so many sermons that are essentially saying, "You should pray more." But many Christians don't know how to pray and don't really pray very much.

The Lord's Prayer was Jesus' practical answer to the disciples' cry for help. I hope you are using it in your daily prayer. After many years, I still use this pattern for my daily prayer. It is not just for baby Christians. You can use it to pray for 10 minutes or for an hour. Use it and teach your students to use it.

The new church praying together

- We continue to learn from those first few verses about the new church in Jerusalem and then relate them back to Jesus' coaching of the twelve. Learning to pray is a good illustration of how it happened.
- For some new believers, prayer and worship in our meetings can give them some culture shock. It is unlike anything they have ever experienced before. Try to help them with anything they are finding hard to understand, or hard to join in. Remember what it was like when you first joined in such meetings.

1. Pray all the time, everywhere

In the Old Testament worship, there was a special room in the place of worship called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. This room was separated from the next room, the Holy Place, by a heavy curtain or veil that was very thick! In it was the Ark of the Covenant, a chest containing the Law that was given to Moses, in other words, the Ten Commandments and all the other ritual laws that went with it. Forming the lid of the chest was the mercy seat (or the "atonement cover" in the NIV), and it was there that God said He would meet with the children of Israel. But He would only meet there with the High Priest, and on only one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. He would not meet with any other Israelite and at any other time.

On this special day, the High Priest had to put on the correct garments and then offer sacrifices for his own sin and for the sins of the people. Then he would enter the Most Holy Place and sprinkle the blood from the sacrifice on the mercy seat in a carefully defined way. If he made a mistake in any of

the things he did – for example, accidentally flicking the blood of the sacrifice on himself instead of the mercy seat – he could die there. All this was to impress on the children of Israel how holy their God was, how seriously He regarded sin, and how He could not be approached lightly.

But when Jesus died on the cross, the veil that separated the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom by the hand of God! This signified dramatically that the way into the presence of God was opened by the blood of Jesus for anyone who believes to come at any time. The role of the priests, the role of the sacrifices and the role of the temple itself were all changed forever.

- ✓ in an ordinary room, not the temple
 - ✓ ordinary people, not Levites or priests
 - ✓ it signified that any believer, anywhere, could be filled with the Spirit and have a living relationship with Jesus
- Help your student to find good songs to download onto their phone.
 - Explain the blessing of praying in tongues.

2. Pray together

- ✓ He promised to do what we asked
 - ✓ He promised to be with us
- Encourage your student to pray with someone regularly, before school or work, and to expect God to do miracles through their prayers. Regular prayer with a friend will change their lives.
 - Some of our churches pray together every morning, some once a week. Explain how they can join in.
 - Do they have any questions about praying with others, or any questions about the praise and worship in the meetings?

3. Pray persistently

Read the story in Luke 11 about the man who went to his friend at midnight.

- ✧ We started “Reading God’s Word” with # What verse do you like and # Why do you like it? Then in Step Five, we added # Is there something here that God is speaking to me to obey. **Head, heart, hand** is another tool for learning the Bible together. We’ll practice it again in Step Ten.
- ✧ This story that helps us understand one of the most important lessons

about prayer that Jesus taught. In the words, *Ask and it will be given to you* (Luke 11.9), the word “ask” is in the continuous tense. So it could be translated, “ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking.” It is an opportunity to impart faith to your students that if they persist in prayer, they will see God do amazing things through their lives. We really can change the world and cause His will to be done on earth through our prayers.

- ✓ never
- ✓ faith

Tell this story:

A young believer asked his pastor to pray for him to find a new job because his workplace was so dark and evil. The pastor said, “No, you are the only light there. Why would I pray for the Lord to take the light out of the darkness? Call me on the phone every morning before you go to work. We will pray together and ask God to do a miracle in your workplace. The young man called the pastor every morning and they prayed together simply for a few minutes asking God to do a miracle. After a few weeks, the phone calls stopped coming. When the pastor saw the young man later, he asked him why he hadn’t been calling. The young man explained that since they started praying, people at work were opening their hearts to receive Jesus. He had to go to work early to do studies with them to teach them to follow Jesus!

God will do miracles in your family and your workplace if you pray with someone simply and persistently every day.

We learn by practicing

Finally, go through the Lord’s Prayer together. Make sure that you are doing it in an effective way.

- If you have a large group, divide into groups of two or three.
- Is there someone who is too shy to pray out loud in front of others? Pray with them one-on-one and gently help them get started.
- If you have long-time Christians in your group, insist that they pray briefly and keep their language simple. They can be very intimidating to your new believers.

Step Nine

Give



The 3000 sharing together

As the new believers worshiped together, they realized that while some people amongst them were very poor, others were more wealthy. So they began to share their possessions and give to those were in need (Acts 2.44-45). Their love for each other was not just in words but in actions – and in money and possessions. That is the lifestyle the twelve learned from Jesus.

Jesus taught His followers many things about money and possessions.

- He told them not to allow material things to be like a god in their lives.
- He told them not to worry about material needs, but to trust in God.
- He taught them to give freely to each other and to God and not to hoard for themselves.
- And He told an amazing story about caring for needy people, saying that whatever we do for poor people, we actually do for Jesus (Matt 25.31-45).

Today we look at the story of Jesus' encounter with a woman who was very poor but loved God with all her heart (Luke 21.1-4).

- ① **Giving is _____.** This lady knew that giving was part of her worship and she wanted to bring her offering to God.

What does worship mean to you? ✂ First, we give ourselves to the Lord; we worship Him with praise and prayer, and with the breaking of bread or Holy Communion. We also worship by bringing our offerings.

- ② **Giving shows what is in our _____.** As Jesus watched, many other people also brought their offerings, but NOT with a heart of worship. They had a lot and they gave a little. What do you think was in their hearts? ✂ But our offerings are not for men; they are for God.

Everything we have is from God. The strength to work and earn money is from God. Our property is His, on loan to us. It is right to give back to Him what belongs to Him.

- ③ **Giving sets us _____.** *The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.* (1 Timothy 6.10) What kinds of evil do you think come from the love of money? ✂

Many people are controlled by greed and love for material things. When we begin to follow Jesus, most of us think about receiving the love of God and being saved from our sins so we can have eternal life. We are not expecting Jesus to change our view of the world and of money. But little by little, He works in our hearts. As we learn to give freely as part of our worship, we break the power of the love of money and material things in our lives. That really does set us from free all kinds of evil and anxiety.

- ④ **Giving is sowing in _____ for the future.** This poor woman only had two small coins. But she gave everything she had in the offering. She knew that when she went home, she would have nothing. But she trusted God to meet her needs. She didn't buy what she needed and then give what was left over to the Lord. She gave first to the Lord. Think how much she trusted God for her next meal!

Our offerings are like sowing seed for our future. God wants to bless us, and our giving is the key to release that blessing. If we sow only a little, we will reap only a little. If we sow a lot, we will reap a lot.

- ⑤ **Giving is the _____ of God.** God is a generous giver. He loved us so much that He gave us His own Son. He continues to give more and more to us. When we give, we express our Father's heart. We do what God does. We bring our offerings to the Lord in worship. And we open our hearts to help needy people in the family of God.

How much should we give?

We give in faith, which means we give what God puts in our hearts and not what someone else tries to impose on us.

- In the early parts of the Old Testament, we see people like Abel and Noah giving spontaneous freewill offerings.
- Later, Abraham and Moses show us a pattern of giving one tenth of what we have, plus other freewill offerings.
- In Malachi, God's Word commands us to bring the tenth part of the harvest to the place of worship (Malachi 3.10-12). Then God will open the windows of heaven and pour out on us a huge blessing.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the LORD Almighty. “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for ours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

- The emphasis of Jesus’ teaching is that we give ourselves and **EVERYTHING** we have. It is much more than just a ritual tenth part. The widow gave everything she had, in worship and in faith.
- Jesus also said: *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold **all he had** and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold **everything he had** and bought it.* Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus told a rich young man who was searching for the truth: *You still lack one thing. Sell **everything you have** and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.* Luke 18:22



Giving the way Jesus taught is not just dropping some money in the offering box. It is a lifestyle of giving everything to Jesus, and then loving and caring for His people.

How are our offerings used?

- ⑥ **Giving is _____ in the work of the church.** Many people give one or two days a week to the Gospel while supporting themselves, but those who give most of their time to the Gospel need to be supported from offerings. That means the pastoral staff of the church and others who serve in overseas ministries and take the Gospel to unreached nations. The work of the local church also costs money – for rent, lighting, printing, etc., that are part of serving together. We give in worship to God, but we also give to support the work of the Gospel.
- ⑦ **Giving is _____ for others.** As we listen to Jesus and see the

way the Jerusalem church cared for each other in Acts 2, we will be clear that giving is much more than bringing our tithes and offerings on Sunday mornings. Giving is part of loving one another and Jesus is leading us into a radical new way of living. He calls us to be open to the needs of others and put our love into action by giving.

You will sense Him bring someone to mind and make you aware of a need in his life. Then, as you pray, He will put an amount of money into your mind. Give it to him, quietly and without embarrassing him, or put it in the offering with their name on it. Start living to give.

- Most of us start by putting our loose change in the offering!
- Then we begin to realize that the offering is part of our worship. We begin to pray about how much to give.
- At some stage as we grow, many of us feel that giving a tenth of our income is what the Lord wants for us.
- But we also discover that giving is much more than that – that everything we have belongs to God.
- The Lord also leads us to help needy people financially.

Pray that God would lead you in giving to Him and to the work of the church He has called you to be part of, and also to those in need around you. If you open your heart, He will lead you into an exciting new way of living.

Bible reading and prayer

Let's read Matthew 6.19-34, pray and share what the Lord speaks to our hearts from that passage. Then, let's break into groups of 3 or 4 and pray through the Lord's Prayer as we practiced last week.

The Lord's Prayer finishes with these words:

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

We thank the Lord for all His goodness. We remind ourselves that everything we have comes from Him, and everything we do is best done in His strength. Then we want to give everything we have received back to Him in praise.

Step Nine, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim:

- to teach Jesus' heart for giving and to inspire faith to begin to live a life of giving. This is an area where the values and attitudes of this world are very different from those of the Kingdom of God. It is an exciting area for you and your student to grow in. It is also an area where you may encounter some resistance and need time for the Holy Spirit to renew the mind of your student.
- We want to teach principles of giving and relate them to our total lifestyle.
- We also want to help our students to participate in the offerings in church meetings.

The three thousand sharing together

- ✧ the church in Jerusalem
- ✧ Jesus' teaching about money and possessions

① **Giving is worship.** What does worship mean to you? Get some ideas from your students. There are various possible answers. We want our students to understand that the offering is not paying your subscription or membership fees. We give our offerings first to God as part of our worship.

② **Giving shows what is in our hearts.**

What do you think was in the hearts of the rich people? They wanted to be seen by people and praised by people. Anything else?

Depending on the capacity of your student, you may be able to explain the concept of stewardship. We brought nothing into this world, and we will take nothing with us. Everything we have comes from God and is on loan to us to care for. We do not own what we have. We are stewards of these resources and gifts. A steward manages the resources for the owner, and he must account for what he does with them.

③ **Giving sets us free.** This verse doesn't mean that literally every sin is committed because of the love of money. In English we use the

expression “all kinds of...” to mean a “great variety of...” All kinds of people came to the meeting means “a great variety of people” came. That is what the Bible means by saying that the love of money is a root of all kinds of sin.

What kinds of evil come from the love of money?

Jealousy, envy, anger, betrayal, materialism, love of self, stealing, lying and no doubt many more evils can be related to the love of money or material things. Christians can be quite zealous in church participation without ever dealing with these areas of bondage. It is an important area for us to grow and change. We can break bondage to material things or to covetousness by praying in the name of Jesus, but we must follow through on such prayer by giving. That is how we are really set free.

- ④ **Giving is sowing in faith for the future.**
- ⑤ **Giving is the heart of God.** God wants to bless us and give to us. That is His heart! He doesn't want us to live in poverty. He wants us to unlock the blessing of heaven by our giving and to live like Him, as givers!

How much should we give?

Some people don't like any mention of offerings and money; some others see tithing as a mechanical answer to the question of how much to give. Our goal is to foster our students' relationship with the Lord and teach them that the fundamental answer to this is to walk with God and obey Him. If we are not sure what He requires us to do in any situation, we ask Him to show us and He does. As we have seen again and again, the key is

- love (for God and for others); and then
- obedience (to God).

Jesus repeatedly tells people to give **everything** that they have. It is not enough to say, “I pay my tithes.” We listen to Him and obey! And He wants to lead us into **a lifestyle of generous giving**, not a law of tithing.

Some people will find the very mention of tithing coercive. Don't be pushy! Trust the Holy Spirit to lead them at the pace that they are able to handle.

There is no hurry. We can trust Him to be their Lord and we don't need to be anxious to do His work for Him! We all take time to grow!

How are our offerings used?

- ⑥ Giving is sharing in the work of the church.

Explain as carefully as you can. There will be differences in every church, and your student may have questions that you can answer, about why the offering is taken in a certain way, or how it is used. We want them to grow in their sense of responsibility and understand that it is not only worship, but it is also a very practical part of church life.

- ⑦ Giving is caring for others. Giving is not just a matter of putting money into the offering bag in a church meeting. We have an individual responsibility to be open to the Lord and sensitive to the needs of the people around us, especially of the poor. Talk about this with your student and perhaps share some experience from your own life.

Finally, discuss or share the process we all go through of growing in this area! This will 1) put your student at rest, that there is no hurry to do what they are not ready to do, but also 2) give them a vision to learn and grow!

Bible reading and prayer

The passage in Matthew is a wonderful challenge to a new way of thinking. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your students and confirm some of the things that you have been sharing.

Practice the last 2 or 3 sections of the Lord's Prayer together!

Step Ten

***Make
Disciples***



Passing it on

That new community of believers in Jerusalem was so full of life as they worshiped and shared their lives that the gospel spread naturally to others. People passed on the message to their friends and new people joined them every day. These new people began to learn to follow Jesus, to repent and believe, be baptized, receive the Holy Spirit...and so on!

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2.46-47

In His final instructions to the Twelve, He told them to pass on what they had received. He told the disciples to go and...do what?

*“Go and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Matthew 28.19-20*

As we become Jesus’ disciples, He will teach us too to go and make more disciples. We pass on to others what we have learned.

Making friends with a lame man

Let’s read an inspiring story in Mark 2.1-12, then use Head, Heart, Hand to talk about it together.

Head: Tell the story in your own words to someone else in your group.

Heart: What touches your heart in the story?

Hand: Is there anything in the story for you to put into practice?

- “Head, heart, hand” is a great way to look at the gospel stories together.
- No doubt you have already shared some great lessons from the story. But let’s emphasize one important lesson – the friendship of the five men.

Lame people are often lonely but somehow these four guys had formed a friendship with this man, maybe playing checkers or mahjong, sitting with him on his mat. What do you do with your friends?

Jesus spent so much time “sitting on the mat” with people like this that He was criticized as *a friend of the worst sort of sinners* (Matthew 11.19 NLT). When Matthew began to follow Jesus, he threw a party for his old friends, and invited Jesus and the other disciples. We see Jesus spending time with hostile people, even enjoying a meal with them. He wasn't shy to ask a Samaritan lady for a drink when He was thirsty. That led to a conversation which resulted in her believing in Him. Then she became the key person to reach her village.



You and your household

In the Gospels and Acts, we often read that when one person came to Christ, their “**household**” was saved through them too. When Zacchaeus repented, Jesus said that salvation had come not just to him but to his household (Luke 19.9). Paul told a jailor who was opening his heart to the gospel (Acts 16.31):

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.

What does “household” mean? It refers not just to your immediate family but your network of relatives, workmates and friends. Is there anyone in your “household” that you want to pray for, someone who is “lame”? Someone at work or in your class who is struggling? Then you can begin to reach out to them, invite them for a meal and build trust with them.

So maybe the most important thing I can do to make disciples is to spend time with a lonely guy in my “household.” Lord, fill me with your love for him and help me to really listen to him.

- Spend time with them, like the four men did with their lame friend. Go for meals together. Do they need help with their work or studies or with caring for their children? In what sense are they “lame”?
- Listen to them! Most of us don't listen to other people enough to know what is in their hearts. What do you think “evangelism of the ears” means?
- There may be issues that you need to deal with in relation to your family. You may need to go back to people you have hurt and ask them for forgiveness. Talk it over and pray with a trusted friend before you do so – you will need wisdom and support.

- Write down the names of anyone you want to reach out to, and we can pray for them together today.
-

Love your neighbor – the heart of evangelism

Caring for people like that is not easy! In Step One, we learned about a Jewish leader who asked Jesus which command was the most important of all. What was Jesus' answer? ✂

Then Jesus added a second command: *The second is this: 'Love your _____ as much as you love yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these.* Mark 12.31

According to Luke 10.29, the Jewish leader then asked Him, "*Who is my neighbor?*" In answer, Jesus told this story. ✂

So who is your "neighbor"? Jesus doesn't actually answer the question. He turns it upside down and asks which of the three men, the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan, became a neighbor to the injured man.

Jesus' question is not "Who is your neighbor?" but "Are you willing to become a neighbor?" They may be our physical neighbors, people in our "household" or people like the man in the story, that we meet "along the way."

Jesus wants us to care for them in practical ways, being sensitive to their needs, but without forcing ourselves on them. Out of that will come opportunities to share about Jesus and call them to follow Him. But the priority is our loving care for those in need. A little like the four men spending time with their lame friend!

Will it be easy? Not in our own strength, but Jesus wants to pour His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Then we can do it.

So what are we going to do?

- Pray! Pray that this love will be poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, for His help to make disciples. Pray for the unsaved people around you, that God will prepare their hearts.

- Let's look for opportunities to be a neighbor to those we meet along the way. Pray that in the coming week, you will have a chance to put this into action.
- Tell your "household" about Jesus. They will not come to Him unless someone tells them. Your own experience, or "testimony", is very powerful. Share it sensitively when you can. Tell them how God has changed you. # Practice sharing your testimony in 3 minutes.
- Give people books, tapes or tracts, or a copy of the *Jesus* film.
- Offer to pray with your friends or family for their needs, especially healing. Most people are happy to receive prayer.
- Invite them to appropriate meetings or events at church...at the right time. Don't be in a hurry!
- When they decide to repent and believe in Jesus, use a simple tract to review their decision. Then pray with them just as someone prayed with you when you received Christ. Then begin to coach them through the same journey you are on – becoming a disciple – using these lessons and your own experience. That is the greatest way to live!

In conclusion

- ✧ You may need to set up an extra time for Step 10 Part B.
- ✧ Take a little time to look back through the 10 steps to see if you are really doing what Jesus commanded. We all move ahead at different paces from each other. So don't compare yourself with others nor feel bad that you are taking longer to deal with a certain area than someone else. Keep your eyes on Jesus and pray earnestly about anything that you are struggling with. Keep moving forward.
- ✧ Keep up your daily devotions. You may sometimes miss a few days because of some change in your schedule, but fight hard to maintain the habit, like your daily food. Don't let a few days become a few weeks.
- ✧ Are you attending worship meetings weekly, as well as some small group or cell? These are the two links that will help you keep growing in your faith.
- ✧ Now it is your turn to become a coach, to help someone else go take these 10 steps. Read "Becoming a coach" from page 3 of this manual. As you teach it, the truth will get deeper into your own heart.

*Jesus said, "You know these things - now do them!
That is the path of blessing." John 13.17 (NLT)*

Step Ten, Coach's Guide

Lesson aim: We are called to make disciples - to pass on what we are learning. Evangelism and discipling are one continuous process. In this lesson, we focus on building friendships and loving the people around us so they can come to Jesus.

Passing it on

As in every lesson, we look at how the new church in Jerusalem was learning to obey Jesus. Then we look back at how Jesus taught the first twelve disciples

Making friends with a lame man

Read the story together. Then introduce Head, heart, hand. This is a great tool for story-telling. We use it especially in churches where many people are illiterate.

- Someone reads the story 2 or 3 times, sometimes in 2 languages – and if the people are illiterate, we read phrase by phrase and ask people to repeat it after the reader.
 - Then someone who is fairly confident comes up to the front to tell the story to everyone in their own words, to give a clear model.
 - Then we tell it to each other two by two.
 - Then we pray for God to speak to us,
 - And someone reads the story again, while the others listen prayerfully.
 - Then we each share something that touched our hearts, first 2 or 3 people in front of everyone, as a model, and then two by two.
 - Finally we share how we can apply the story, anything the Lord wants us to obey.
-
- ✧ What games do people play in your community to make friends?
 - ✧ Are there lonely people or lame people around you?
 - ✧ Explain briefly about Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman and how her village came to faith as a result.

You and your household

Make sure 1) we understand the idea of “household” and 2) how a new

believer can be a bridge for their friends and family to come to faith. Explore together how we can...

- Spend time building our friendships. Often there are “lame” people in our “household” that we have never bothered to spend time with.
- “Evangelism of the ears”! What does that mean?
- Issues of forgiveness and healing broken relationships. Go carefully – this can take a very long time.
- Are there specific people we can begin to pray for?

Love your neighbor – the heart of evangelism

Now we go back to the most important commandment of all in Step One. You will find it in Mark 12.28-31. And the second commandment?

- ✓ neighbor

Luke’s version of the same conversation (Luke 10.25) brings us to the story of the Good Samaritan. Tell the story with drama and passion! Remember to tell a little of the story and then apply it, a little more story and then application, alternating narrative and application.

Application 1: The priest and Levite, even though they were religious men and would have said with their lips that they loved God, did not help the man in need. If we say we love God but do not help those who are in need, then our faith is empty.

Application 2: The Samaritan was of a different race and religion. The enmity between the two would be comparable to that between Palestinians and Jews today. He would have every reason to pass by without helping. But he was moved with compassion! It began in his heart. Then he helped in very practical ways. What were some of the ways he helped? We need to ask God to make our hearts soft and compassionate, and then to show love for our neighbors through practical help, not just through fine words.

Application 3: Notice how the Samaritan didn’t coerce or obligate the injured man. He paid what was necessary and then went on his way. What can we learn from that?

How does Jesus define “being a neighbor”? The 3 keys are:

- compassion in our hearts – genuine caring
- meeting the need in practical ways
- “along the way” – there is a seemingly random aspect, over and above the relationships in our households, where we are invited into an adventure of allowing the Lord to lead and use us in unexpected situations. Exciting!

So what are we going to do?

The practical points in the student’s text are helpful!

- Pray for the love of God.
- Pray for opportunities.
- Prepare to tell your household about Jesus. Prepare your testimony – write it out – and then practice it together.
- Practice using a simple tool to share the gospel. We use “Four Colors” – #Gold, for heaven and the love of God, #Black, for the brokenness and sin that separate us from the love of God, #Red, for the blood of Jesus and His salvation, and #White, for our hearts, ready to repent, invite Jesus in and be forgiven. You could teach the same steps with four fingers.

Step 10 Part B

- ✧ If you take time to prepare and practice your testimony and you also practice sharing the gospel with “Four Colors” or some other tool, you will need an extra lesson. In other words, Step 10 Part B!
- ✧ As part of Step 10B, go through “Coaches, start here” on page 3, especially the second section with snapshots of HOW Jesus made disciples.
- ✧ It is so important to equip our students to share the Gospel and lead people to Christ, not just to take people to church for the pastor or leaders to share with them.
- ✧ Stay in touch with them. Keep doing life with them, like Jesus did with the twelve, not just for 12 weeks.
- ✧ Make sure they are connected with a small group so that they can continue sharing together with others each week.
- ✧ Get them to help you next time you disciple a new believer.
- ✧ And help them to take the responsibility to coach someone else themselves - disciples making disciples!