



Leaders' Guide

Following Jesus

Lessons from the
**Sermon on
the Mount**



**Scripture
Union** 读经会
SEMENANJUNG MALAYSIA

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Lesson 1: Introducing Jesus (Matthew 4:23-25)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: **Beautiful Saviour** ©Planetshakers, Song writer: Henry Seeley)

3. Just for starters question:

Get the students into groups and ask them to discuss or share about an important/powerful person they know of whose word has/had an impact on them. What makes this person important or powerful? Can they recall anything that this person has said before?

4. Game: Superheroes charades

Suitable for small/medium sized groups (8-20 persons)

Items needed:

- 2 deck of cards with names of superheroes written on them (e.g. Superman, Batman)
- Stopwatch/timer
- Pencil and paper to write down the scores.

Instructions:

- Divide the players into 2 teams.
- Each team is given a deck of cards with the names of different superheroes written on each card.
- Ask each team to choose a representative each.

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- At the start of the game, each representative draws a card from the deck.
- He/She must act out the description written on the card. (Speaking is prohibited).
- The team must try guessing what the answer is.
- If they guess correctly, the representative can proceed to draw a second card.
- If they are unable to guess the answer after a while, the representative can put the card aside and draw another one.
- The team will continue guessing until the time runs out.
- At the end of each round, scores are given based on the number of cards that the team has guessed correctly.
- A few rounds can be played with different members of each team taking turns to be representatives for their respective groups.

Objective of the game:

While superheroes can be identified by their superpowers, appearance and behaviour, Jesus’ identity can also be seen from His authority, His mission and His teachings.

5. Introduction:

- Ask the group to discuss the questions given in the box.
- This will help you gauge their level of knowledge and understanding of who they think Jesus is.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 4:23-25 together.

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Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What was Jesus doing as He went throughout all of Galilee (v. 23)?

He was:

- **Teaching** in their synagogues.
- Proclaiming the **Gospel** of the **kingdom**.
- **Healing** every disease and affliction among the people.

Q2. What was the result of this (v. 24)?

Jesus’ **fame** spread throughout all of Syria.

Q3. How did the people respond to Jesus (vv. 24-25)?

- They brought to Him those who were **sick** and **oppressed** and Jesus healed them.
- They **followed** Jesus wherever He went.

Extra notes:

- The synagogue is a place where the Jews came together for a time worship and learning from God’s Word.
- The word “Gospel” means good news.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss this question.
- In this short passage, we are introduced to Jesus and His ministry.
- Jesus was going around teaching in the synagogues. He was teaching the truth of God’s Word to those who were there.

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- Jesus was also proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom. This was an invitation to all who heard the Gospel to come and live as God’s people in God’s place under His rule and blessing.
- But how can we be sure that Jesus’ teachings and claims are trustworthy?
- We see it in His authority – Jesus also demonstrated His authority over evil spirits and sicknesses.
- There is more to Jesus than meets the eye!
- The beginning of Matthew’s Gospel (Mathew 1:1) introduces Jesus as the Christ (Christ is not Jesus’ surname!)
- This means Jesus is the anointed one, God’s chosen King who would come to save His people and enable them to live as people in God’s kingdom.
- Jesus showed His authority as the Christ.
- If Jesus is the Christ, what He teaches and proclaims is very important and demands our fullest attention.
- We need to listen and take to heart His words and teachings.
- We need to respond to Him rightly by trusting Him and following Him.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper:

Get the students to read Matthew 1:18-25.

- This passage tells us the events that took place before Jesus’ birth.
- Jesus is identified as the Christ; once again reminding us that He is God’s chosen King (v. 18).

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- The angel that appeared to Joseph, told him that the child will be called “Jesus” (which means “God saves”) as God’s mission is to save His people from their sins (v. 21).
- The birth of Jesus and the miraculous events surrounding His birth (i.e. Mary was a virgin when she conceived Jesus) all happened in fulfilment of prophecies, God’s Word given to His people from long ago (v. 23).
- In fact, the verse quoted from the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, tells us that Jesus is “Immanuel” – God with us! (Isaiah 7:14)
- Jesus is none other than God Himself, taking on human form to live as one of us in order to save us from our sins!

10. Closing song suggestion: Lord, I lift your name on high

Song writer: Rick Founds

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 2: True Blessedness - Part 1 (Matthew 5:1-6)

1. Opening prayer

2. **Opening song suggestion: The Beatitudes Song** © Brook Hills Music, Song writers: Matt Mason and Mandi Mapes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yxs5wFpnGg>)

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them how they would complete the following sentence: "I'd be happy if I..." (E.g. I'd be happy if I could eat all the ice-cream I wanted / I got all A's for my exams etc.).

4. Game: Never have I ever... (The bad fortune version)

- Suitable for small or medium groups.

Instructions:

- Students are seated in a circle and each person places their two hands in front of them with all ten fingers outstretched.
- Ask one student to start the game with the following statement: "Never have I ever..."
- This student must go on to say a bad experience he/she has never had before. E.g. "Never have I ever been bullied before."
- Anyone seated in the circle who has had that bad experience before has to put one finger down.

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- Everyone takes turns to state one bad experience they have never had before.
- The first person who puts all ten fingers down “loses” the game.

Objective of the game:

This activity helps students to warm up to one another whilst thinking about certain misfortunes which have befallen them before. This will help them get in the mindset for some of the surprising things they will be seeing when Jesus teaches His disciples about what true blessedness looks like!

5. Recap on Lesson 1 - Matthew 4:23-25.

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

Note: Remember to emphasise Jesus’ identity.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:1-12 together.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Looking into the passage:

Q1. Where did Jesus go when He saw the crowds and who came to Him (v1)?

He went up on the mountain and His disciples came to Him.

Q2. What did Jesus do when they came to Him (v.2)?

He began to teach His disciples.

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Q3. Based on Jesus’ teachings in vv. 3-12, fill in the table below:

Verses	Qualities commended	Blessings promised
3	<u>Poor</u> in spirit	Theirs is the kingdom of <u>heaven</u>
4	<u>Mourn</u>	They shall be <u>comforted</u>
5	<u>Meek</u>	They shall inherit the <u>earth</u>
6	<u>Hunger</u> and <u>thirst</u> for <u>righteousness</u>	They shall be <u>satisfied</u>

Extra notes:

- Jesus went up on a mountain to withdraw from the crowds and His disciples came to Him.
- He then began to teach His disciples about life as people of God’s kingdom.
- These teachings in Matthew 5:1-12 are known as “The Beatitudes”.
- The word “beatitudes” comes from the Latin word “beatus” which means “blessed” or “happy”.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to look through the first 4 qualities Jesus commended and the blessings promised to His disciples (and also to us as God’s people) and work out what each of these mean.

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- Jesus taught that those who are poor in spirit will inherit God’s kingdom. This actually means that those who recognise and acknowledge how spiritually poor or bankrupt they are as sinners and are in need of God’s help and salvation will be part of God’s kingdom. We need to recognise that we are sinners in need of God’s grace and forgiveness.
- None of us are right before God, and all of us deserve nothing but His wrath and judgment.
- The recognition of our sinfulness and our poverty of spirit will result in us mourning, longing for and crying out to God for His forgiveness. But here’s the wonderful news: Jesus reassures us that those who mourn will be comforted as God is a God who is willing to love and forgive those who come to Him through Jesus.
- Jesus also said that those who are meek will inherit the earth. The word “meekness” (which can be equated with gentleness) is often mistakenly linked to the idea of weakness or timidity. But this definitely isn’t the case.
- Meekness refers to those who do not forcefully assert their own rights but trust in God’s sovereignty to direct the outcome of the future.
- This may sound very surprising to us and to society in general. After all, “It’s a dog eats dog world,” they say. People are often told that they have to forcefully assert themselves at any cost in order to stay ahead of others.
- One would expect that those who are meek or gentle will be trampled on and taken advantage by others.
- And sometimes, being meek and gentle might result in us losing out on certain privileges. It might seem like we’re on the losing end.

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- However, here’s the surprising news: Jesus assures us that those who trust and rely on Him instead will live and reign with Christ! We shall inherit the earth!
- When Jesus comes again, all who trust in Him, who have lived their lives in meekness, following in His footsteps will rule and reign with Him! What awesome news that is!
- Next, Jesus told His disciples that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied. Jesus spoke of those who long for a right standing and relationship with God and promises that they will have their longing satisfied. God ultimately provided a way for sinners like us to be made righteous. And this is none other than through Jesus Himself. Jesus’ death on the cross, bearing the punishment in our place for our sins, results in us being forgiven and made people of God’s kingdom when we trust in Jesus! (To find out more about this, check out the notes on Romans 3:10-26 in the “Digging Deeper” section.)
- The merciful, God’s people who show compassion to those in need, will likewise receive mercy from God.
- Jesus taught that those who are pure in heart will see God. Whilst the Jews during Jesus’ time were preoccupied with external religious rituals that made them look “pure” on the outside, Jesus emphasised the need for inner purity - purity of mind, heart and soul.
- Jesus also spoke about the peacemakers being called sons of God. Indeed, God calls His people to actively pursue peace and to live in peace with all men. We should never actively seek or pursue conflict. However, there is another important aspect to being a peacemaker, which is the work of evangelism, sharing the Gospel with

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others, telling them that through Jesus’ death sinners like us can be reconciled and have peace with God.

- Finally, those who are persecuted and suffer for righteousness’ (Jesus’) sake, will inherit God’s kingdom, they will also receive their eternal reward in heaven.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper:

- Get the students to read Romans 3:10-26.
- The Apostle Paul was talking about the state of humanity from the start of Romans. Now, in Romans 3:10, he delivered some serious news: There is NO ONE righteous, NOT EVEN ONE.
- This actually means that there isn’t one person who is right with God in this world. There isn’t anyone who can call themselves good.
- We have all rebelled and sinned against God in thought, speech and action.
- God has given His law to His people, the Israelites, but they failed to obey it because of their sinfulness.
- Similarly, Paul tells us that none of us can keep God’s law or meet God’s standards either.
- All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.
- And if all of us who are spiritually bankrupt and corrupt are held accountable to God, we’d be in serious trouble as we would have to face God’s justice and wrath.
- However, here’s the great news. There is a way that we can be made righteous - and that is through Jesus.
- In His grace and mercy, God sent Jesus to die on the cross. Jesus provided the sacrifice for sins which takes

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away God's anger (that's what the word "propitiation", which is used in certain Bible translations, means).

- On the cross, Jesus bore our sins and the wrath of God upon Himself, so that we can justify and declared not guilty!
- All of this is a gift from God, which comes through trusting in Jesus, not by anything we've done.
- This leads us to ask ourselves the following questions, do we recognise our own sinfulness and our need for God?
- Are we looking to our own strength and to ourselves for salvation, or are we looking to Jesus instead?
- God's Word clearly tells us that it is only through faith in Jesus, that sinners like us can be made righteous before God.

10. Closing song suggestion: Calvary covers it all © Hillsong Music

Song writers: Jonas Myrin, Walter G Taylor and Reuben Morgan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbhmxsYRVrI>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 3: True Blessedness - Part 2 (Matthew 5:7-12)

1. Opening prayer

2. **Opening song suggestion: The Beatitudes Song (re-sing)** © Brook Hills Music, Song writers: Matt Mason and Mandi Mapes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yxs5wFpnGg>)

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to name the 3 traits of a happy and fortunate person (E.g. Has a lot of money, comes from a stable background and family, is extremely smart and gifted) and explain why they chose those 3 traits.

4. Activity: Origami crown

- Materials needed: Coloured paper and scissors.

Instructions:

- Students are each given a piece of coloured paper to make an origami crown.
- Students are to follow the instructor step by step in order to make this crown.
- For instructions on making a simple origami crown, visit: <http://www.origami-instructions.com/easy-origami-crown.html>

Objective of this activity:

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The instructor could remind the students what they have been learning from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, which tells us how life as God’s people, in His kingdom and under His kingship, is like. The crown can serve as a reminder of God’s kingship.

5. Recap on Lesson 2 - Matthew 5:1-6

Go through the questions with the students to help them remember where Jesus was, who was with Him and what He was doing.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:7-12 together.

Go through the questions from the passage.

Q1. Think back on the previous lesson and fill in the table below:

Verses	Qualities commended	Blessings promised
3	Poor in spirit	Theirs is the kingdom of heaven
4	Mourn	They shall be comforted
5	Meek	They shall inherit the earth

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6	Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	They shall be satisfied
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Can you recall what you’ve learnt about these 4 qualities and the promises that come with them as spoken of by Jesus?

Note to leader: At this point, feel free to discuss and recall, with your group members, what they have learnt from the previous lesson.

Q2. Now, based on Jesus’ teachings in vv. 7-12, fill in the second table below:

Verses	Qualities commended	Blessings promised
7	<u>Merciful</u>	They shall receive <u>mercy</u>
8	Pure in <u>heart</u>	They shall see <u>God</u>
9	<u>Peacemakers</u>	They shall be called <u>sons of God</u>
10-12	<u>Persecuted</u> and reviled for <u>righteousness</u> ’ sake	Theirs is the <u>kingdom</u> of heaven Great is their

		<u>reward</u> in heaven
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7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to look through the 4 qualities Jesus commends and the blessings promised to His disciples (and also to us as God’s people) from vv. 7-12 and work out what each of these mean.
- Jesus told His disciples that those who are merciful will likewise receive mercy from God.
- While we might ask what being merciful looks like, it basically means showing compassion to those who are in need.
- Think about God’s mercy towards us. How did He show us mercy? Well, we were all poor in spirit, unclean sinners with a great need to be cleansed and forgiven.
- What did God do? In His mercy, He sent Jesus to die for us so that we can indeed be cleansed and forgiven.
- And if we have truly experienced and understood God’s mercy, we would likewise show mercy to others as well.
- The immensity of God’s mercy towards us should drive us to help those in need.
- We would not be unmerciful or calculative in our service to others.
- Is there someone in need whom you could be showing mercy to today?
- Jesus also taught that those who are pure in heart will see God. Whilst the Jews during Jesus’ time were preoccupied with external religious rituals that made them look “pure” on the outside, Jesus emphasised the need for inner purity - purity of the mind, heart and soul.

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- Some of us might have the same way of thinking – While we may be conscious about how we act on the outside, if no one can see what's going on inside us, then it doesn't matter. But that's not true at all.
- Those of us who trust in Jesus have the Holy Spirit living inside us, and with His help, we can become more and more like Jesus, on the inside and on the outside.
- Jesus also spoke about the peacemakers being called sons of God.
- Indeed, God calls His people to actively pursue peace and to live in peace with all men in a godly way as far as it is possible. We should never actively seek or pursue conflict.
- We are to seek to live in peace at all levels within our communities, our families and our friends.
- We should seek to maintain relationships of love amongst our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- And if possible, we should also look for opportunities to help in reconciling estranged relationships especially those involving the people of God's kingdom for we all have been called to love and unity in Christ.
- However, there is another immensely important aspect to being a peacemaker, that is, the work of evangelism, sharing the Gospel with others, telling them that through Jesus' death, sinners like us can be reconciled and have peace with God.
- After all, the Bible tells us that it is through Jesus that God was pleased to reconcile to Himself all things by making peace through Jesus' blood on the cross (Colossians 1:20).
- We should therefore seek to bring this message of reconciliation – God reaching out to reconcile sinners to

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Himself through Jesus - to those who have yet to hear about it.

- Is there anyone whom you know who needs to hear the Gospel?
- Finally, those who are persecuted and suffer for righteousness’ (Jesus’) sake, will inherit God’s kingdom, and will receive their eternal reward in heaven.
- We live in a world which is hostile against God, and the Bible tells us that as God’s people, we should expect hostility and persecution for our faith in Jesus.
- Through the ages, Christians have suffered greatly for their faith; many have lost their homes, families, friends and even their lives for Jesus’ sake.
- The world may look at Christians and think that they have lost all things but Jesus’ words bring greater comfort than anything this world can afford – the promise that their reward in heaven will be great.
- Similarly, we too are to pray for strength and resilience, and the ability to rejoice when we are persecuted for Jesus’ sake, because we know the eternal blessings that God has in store for us!

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper:

- Get the students to read 1 Peter 1:1-12.
- When Peter writes to the Christians of his time, he calls them “elect exiles” (v. 1). This means God’s people are chosen by God, but are living as exiles in this world. They are looking forward to their true home.
- Life on this earth as elect exiles isn’t easy. They may suffer trials of various kinds because of their faith in Jesus

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(v6). But in these sufferings, they can rejoice even while they grieve as they look forward to the day Jesus returns. (v. 7).

- The hope of the eternal inheritance they will have when Jesus returns again is a living hope. This hope is living because Jesus rose again and lives forever (vv3-5).

10. Closing song suggestion: Live for the Kingdom © Rob Smith (Song writer: Rob Smith)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXWEMHiHmds>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 4: Being Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: Salt and Light

Song writer: Jami Smith

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRbWy8Rwha8>)

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to pick an object which they think best describes them. Ask them to give a reason(s) why. (E.g. A tree would best describe me because I am tall and strong.)

4. Game: True or False (Salt and Light Trivia)

Suitable for small, medium and large groups.

Items needed:

- A list of interesting true and false facts about salt and light. (*Use the internet to look up fun facts on salt and light. After you have found interesting facts on salt and light respectively, alter some of these facts to make them false, while keeping others as true.*)
 - *An example of a website with fun facts on salt:*
<http://listverse.com/2009/05/11/15-fascinating-facts-about-salt/>
 - *An example of a website with fun facts on light:*
<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/light.html>

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- Pencil and paper to write down group scores.

Instructions:

- Divide the students into groups.
- Explain to them that you have a list of fun facts about salt and light, some of which are true and others which are false.
- You will then proceed to read out one fact at a time and the groups will have to decide whether the fact they have just heard is true or false.
- The group(s) that guesses correctly gets a point.
- Repeat this until you have finished reading through the list of fun facts on salt and light.
 - *Hint: If the fact is false, it may be helpful to provide the correct information of the false statement after revealing it to the groups as false.*
- The group with the highest number of correct guesses wins.

Objective of the game:

This game is helpful in introducing the elements of salt and light which they will be looking at in the Bible passage. It will also be helpful in increasing their general knowledge on salt and light!

5. Recap on Lessons 2 and 3 - Matthew 5:1-12

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:13-17.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What did Jesus use to describe His disciples in this Bible passage (vv. 13, 14)?

He described them as being the **salt** of the **earth** and the **light** of the **world**.

Q2. When using salt to describe His disciples, what warning did Jesus give along with this description (v. 13)?

Jesus warned them that if salt loses its **saltiness**, it would no longer be **good** for anything but to be thrown out and trampled by people.

Q3. What did Jesus say when describing His disciples as the light of the world (vv. 14-15)?

- A **city** on a hill cannot be **hidden**.
- A **lamp** that is lighted is not put under a basket but on a **stand**, so it can give **light** to the whole house.

Q4. What else does did Jesus proceed to tell the disciples about being the light of the world (v. 16)?

Q5. Jesus told His disciples that in the same way, they were to let their **light** shine before men so that they can see their **good works** and **glorify** their **Father** who is in heaven.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss these questions.
- Jesus used the metaphors of salt and light to describe His disciples.
- These are very powerful metaphors indeed!
- Just as salt has lots of uses and is truly effective for various purposes, i.e. seasoning, preserving, those who follow Jesus are called to have the same effect on the world.
- Christian “saltiness” comes from the distinct Christ-likeness in our character. How does this look like? Look back at the previous lesson when Jesus spoke about the 8 qualities that the people of God’s kingdom are to have.
- However, Jesus gave a warning about salt losing its saltiness and therefore its effectiveness altogether. (This happens if salt gets mixed up with other chemicals and becomes impure). In the same way, those who follow Jesus will lose their influence and effectiveness on the community and world around them if they lose their distinctive Christ-like character and conform to the ways of the world.
- The pressure to conform to the world may come from peer and societal pressure, expectations and our inner selfish desires.
- Jesus also spoke about believers being the light of the world.
- Just like a city, which stands on a hill – all lit up - or a lamp put on a stand to light up a whole house, Jesus’ followers are to stand out for Him. But how?

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- Jesus gave a straight-forward answer: they are to abound in good works. They are to look for opportunities to do good wherever they are.
- The reason for doing good is not for self-recognition or for pride, but so that others will come to see and glorify the heavenly Father, God Himself!
- So, as those who trust in Jesus, we are to do good works to help others come to see and recognise God who deserves all glory and praise.
- Hence, we need to ask ourselves today, how can we be living “salty” lives, lives that shine for Jesus and point others to God? Jesus has called us to be the salt and light of the world, so we need to pray for God’s enablement and strength to help us to do so.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper:

Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

- For some of us as Christians, we may be tempted to make following Jesus a list of things we must do and mustn’t do. However, this Bible passage helps us to look back at what God has done for us in Jesus, and reminds us that what we do is in response and in gratitude for what God has done for us.
- We are reminded that we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus. This means God has shown undeserved kindness to us by sending Jesus to die on the cross, taking the full punishment for our sins and we are saved by trusting in what Jesus has done for us.

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- It is not by how much we do, or how “good” we can be, it is not our works that save us but God’s grace alone.
- Therefore, in response to God’s grace, we are called to do good works that God has prepared for us to do!
- What a privilege that is! Good works are not a requirement to be accepted by God, but a response to His wonderful grace!

10. Closing song suggestion: This is my desire ©1995

Hillsong Music Publishing Song writer: Reuben Morgan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XKxqqhOgVM>

11. Closing prayer



Lesson 5: Jesus and the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17-20)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: **Every Promise** © Thankyou Music, Song writers: Stuart Townend and Keith Getty

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to discuss or share about what they consider to be out-of-date, old-fashioned and not applicable to today's society anymore.

4. Game: **Blow wind blow (Old Testament quiz)**

- Suitable for small, medium and large groups.
- Items needed: Chairs and stack of cards with questions on the Old Testament written on them.

Instructions:

- Get the students to sit in a circle on chairs.
- Select one student to start off by standing in the middle of the circle.
- The student standing in the middle must begin by calling out "Blow wind blow". The rest of the group must respond "blow what?"
- Then the student standing in the middle should say a conditional statement like "everyone wearing shoes" or "everyone who has long hair".

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- All the students that fit into that category must get up and switch chairs with another student.
- This gives a chance for the student in the middle to sit on a chair also.
- Once everyone who fits that category has finished switching as quickly as possible, there will be one student left standing in the middle.
- The student left standing will have to draw 1 card out of the deck of cards. Each card should contain questions regarding the Old Testament. (E.g. “How many books are there in the Old Testament?”, “Name 3 Old Testament characters”, “Name the first 5 books in the Old Testament”)
- The student standing will have to answer the question written on the card.
- The process is repeated so that different students get to stand in the middle and answer questions.

Objective of the game: To get the students recall and familiarise themselves with certain aspects of the Old Testament.

5. Recap on Lesson 4 - Matthew 5:13-16

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:17-20.

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Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. Jesus spoke to His disciples about the “Law and the Prophets”. What was Jesus referring to (v. 17)?

Jesus was speaking about the **Old Testament**.

Q2. When speaking about the Law and the Prophets, what did Jesus say He had come to do (v. 17)?

Jesus said He had not come to **abolish** the Law and the prophets but to **fulfil** them.

Q3. Jesus said that “until heaven and earth pass away, not a single iota or dot from the Law will pass until it has been accomplished.” What did Jesus mean (v. 18)?

Everything written in the Old Testament will be **fulfilled**.

Q4. Jesus stated that no one should relax any of the commandments in the Law and the Prophets (v. 19). This shows us that the Old Testament has **authority** as **God’s Word**.

Q5. What did Jesus tell His disciples about entering the kingdom of heaven (God’s kingdom)?

Unless the **righteousness** of the disciples exceeded that of the **scribes** & **Pharisees** they would not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.

7. Extra notes:

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- The “Law” refers to the first 5 books of the Old Testament and the “Prophets” include the other books of the Old Testament, all of which were held to have been written by prophets. Hence, when Jesus referred to “the Law and the Prophets”, He was referring to the Old Testament.
- “iota”- is Greek for “yod” – the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. When Jesus said, “not an iota or a dot will pass from the Law until it is accomplished,” He was emphasising that everything written in the Old Testament will be fulfilled.

8. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss the following questions.
- Some of the Jews in Jesus’ day might have regarded Jesus as a radical religious teacher who would do away with the “Law and the Prophets” (the Old Testament).
- Here, Jesus told His disciples that this definitely wasn’t the case. In fact, Jesus came to fulfil the Old Testament.
- This tells us something really interesting about the Old Testament, doesn’t it?
- The Old Testament is God’s Word to His people.
- That’s why Jesus stated that God’s people are not to ignore or take lightly any of the commandments written in the Old Testament.
- However, the Old Testament doesn’t merely contain stories and writings about the history of Israel and its heroes; it doesn’t just contain a list of do’s and don’ts.
- The Old Testament is actually a book of promises. The promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus.

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- The Old Testament points to the promise of a Saviour who would come to save God’s people, and this Saviour is of course Jesus Himself!
- Jesus said that unless His disciples had righteousness that exceeded that of the Jewish religious leaders, they could not be part of God’s kingdom.
- The Jewish religious leaders may have appeared “righteous” and “holy” on the outside, but the truth is their righteousness was only an outward appearance which they kept through various rituals and religious practices.
- Jesus was speaking of true righteousness, one that was not just a show.
- But how could anyone be truly righteous?
- The answer, of course, is only through trusting in Jesus alone – the One who has fulfilled all of God’s promises in the Old Testament.

9. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

10. Digging deeper:

Get the students to read Luke 24:13-35.

- 3 days after Jesus died on the cross; He rose again and appeared to several people on different occasions.
- In this story, 2 men were walking on the road to Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them.
- These 2 men were followers of Jesus but at that moment when Jesus appeared to them, they were kept from recognising Him.
- They proceeded to tell Jesus all the things which had happened to Jesus, how many had hoped He would save

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and redeem God’s people in Israel but He was put to death. At the same time, they told Him how some women had claimed to have seen Him alive.

- Well, what did Jesus do then as He joined them in their walk? He actually explained to them how all that was written in “Moses and the Prophets” (the Old Testament) spoke about Him. Another way of putting it is that Jesus conducted a Bible study with them on the Old Testament, showing how the promises of the Old Testament were fulfilled by Him.
- Everything that happened to Jesus: His life, suffering, death and resurrection were actually foretold in the Old Testament.
- It wasn’t till dinner time when Jesus broke bread with them that the two disciples recognised Him and He disappeared from their sight!
- Their hearts were burning as Jesus explained the Old Testament Scriptures to them as they travelled together.
- They then proceeded to tell others what had happened!
- This passage shows us that Jesus Himself revealed how all of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Him.
- This should shape the way we read the Old Testament too. The Old Testament and New Testament aren’t 2 separate and unrelated parts of the Bible.
- While the Old Testament speaks of promises of a king who would come to save His people, the New Testament speaks of the fulfillment of these promises in Jesus.

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11. Closing song suggestion: Worthy of All Praise © Rob Smith
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEurB4o54M>

12. Closing prayer

Lesson 6: The Truth about Anger (Matthew 5:21-26)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: The Anger Management Song (by Lecrae) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jSHfxMYTqzc>

Note: This Christian song is in the form of a rap, depicting the sinful feelings of anger and providing a Christian/Gospel perspective of thinking about anger. This rap song can be played (rather than sung) to help students think about the issue of anger.

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to recall a time when they felt very angry. How did they act and what did they say?

4. Activity: The anger test

- Suitable for small, medium and large groups.
- Items needed: An “anger list”- List of scenarios that could make someone angry.

Instructions:

- Get the students to sit together.
- Read out the first scenario written on the “anger list” E.g. Someone shouted at you in public.
- Ask the students to rate how angry they would be in that scenario on a scale of 0-10 (“0” being not angry at all to

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“10” being most angry) by indicating their ratings with their fingers.

- Proceed by reading through the scenarios on the “anger list” one by one, each time getting the students to indicate how angry they would be till you get to the end of the list.

Objective of the activity:

To help the students think through the issue of anger.

5. Recap on Lesson 5 - Matthew 5:17-20

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:21-26.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What teaching did Jesus say the disciples of His day would have heard before (v. 21)?

They would have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not **murder**; and whoever **murders** will be liable to **judgment**.’

Q2. How did Jesus expand the understanding of this truth from the Old Testament law (v. 22)?

Jesus explained that anyone who is **angry** or **insults** his brother is also liable to **judgment**.

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Q3. According to Jesus, how should His disciple respond if his brother has something against him (vv. 23-24)?

He is to be **reconciled** to his brother first before offering a sacrifice to God at the temple.

Q4. What did Jesus say to His disciples about settling a debt with an accuser (vv. 25-26)?

Jesus called for His disciples to **settle** the debt as soon as possible before it is too **late**.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss these questions.
- The disciples during Jesus’ days would have been familiar with the teachings of the Jewish religious leaders who spoke out against murder (killing someone intentionally) resulting in judgment. The religious leaders were of course referring to various parts of the Old Testament law (i.e. Exodus 20:13). Under the Old Testament law, intentionally taking someone’s life resulted in the death penalty (Numbers 35:31).
- However, in the passage we read, Jesus revealed that it is not just the act of murder which usually comes as a result of anger, but anger, along with insults and the bad intentions that come with it, are wrong in God’s sight.
- Now, Jesus is not saying all anger is evil, as Scripture tells us that God who is pure and holy is also angered by sin and unrighteousness. The Gospels record instances in which Jesus gets angry too. (E.g. In Mark 3:1-6, Jesus was grieved and angered at the hardness of heart of the Jewish religious leaders).

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- Hence, there are times when we too, can be rightly angry.
- However, the Bible does tell us that it is how we conduct ourselves in our anger and how we deal with the feeling of anger that matters.
- Scripture tells us not to sin in our anger whether in our thoughts, speech or action, and not to let it fester, turning into bitterness and hatred (Ephesians 4: 26-27). (Read more about this in today’s “Digging Deeper” section).
- Jesus talks further about the need for His disciples to be reconciled as soon as possible to someone who might have grievances against them. In fact, any form of dispute should be settled as soon as possible.
- Jesus’ teaching applies to us too, who are His followers.
- Do we harbour anger, bitterness or hatred against anyone who may have hurt us or wronged us? We need to ask for God’s help to deal with our anger.
- Do we find ourselves getting angry easily? We need to ask God for patience and love in all situations.
- Is there anyone whom we need to reconcile with? We can ask God for wisdom and strength to take the first step to be reconciled with this person, especially if he or she is a fellow believer in Christ.
- Remember, all of us were sinners deserving of God’s rightful and just anger, and yet in His love, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so that we can be reconciled to Him (Romans 5:6-11).
- In the light of what God has done for us in Jesus, we should, therefore, respond rightly in our relationship with others and turn away from anger too.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time

9. Digging deeper: Ephesians 4:17-32

- The Apostle Paul wrote about the “new self” that those who trust in Jesus are to seek to put on, since we have been saved by God’s grace through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Paul talked about how putting on the “new self” and putting off the “old self” looks like when it comes to dealing with anger too.
- As followers of Christ, we are not to sin in our anger and we are not to harbour anger for a prolonged time. We should not be giving the devil the opportunity to cause us to sin because of our anger. (Ephesians 4:26-27).
- We should set aside any bitterness, wrath and anger which displeases God (Ephesians 4:31).
- Our speech should not be destructive, but we should seek to build each other up with the words we speak (Ephesians 4:29).
- As those who have been forgiven by God in Christ, we should seek to be kind towards one another and tender-hearted, forgiving one another.

10. Closing song suggestion: In Christ Alone (by Stuart Townend and Keith Getty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZYpjBeM0To>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 7: Dealing with Lust, Divorce and Oaths (Matthew 5:27-37)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: Refiner’s Fire (by Brian Doerksen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSlazjrA0Ls>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them if they agree with the statement, “It can’t be wrong if everyone is doing it.” Ask them why they agree or disagree. Get them to think of circumstances when this statement might be used.

4. Game: True or False

- Suitable for small, medium and large groups.
- Students are seated in a circle.
- Each person is asked to think of 2 statements about themselves – 1 statement which is true, and another which is false. E.g. I have fallen off a bicycle before (False statement). I have travelled to Europe before (True statement).
- After some time, one person starts by presenting his/her 2 statements to the group.
- Those in the group will then have to guess which statement they think is true and which is false.
- After the group members have guessed, the person then reveals if they have guessed correctly or not.

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- Each person in the group will take turns to present their statements and guesses are made.

Objective of the game:

This helps the students to warm up, get to know each other and to think through the concept of things which are true and false.

5. Recap on Lesson 6 - Mark 5:21-26

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:27-37.

Go through the questions in the passage:

Q1. What teaching on adultery would Jesus’ disciples have been familiar with (v. 27)?

They would have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit **adultery**.”

Q2. What did Jesus further reveal about the truth on adultery as taught in the Old Testament law (v. 28)?

Jesus taught that anyone who **looks** at a woman with **lustful** intent has committed **adultery** with her in his **heart**.

Q3. Along with speaking about lust, Jesus emphasised the seriousness of sin. How serious is the problem of sin (vv. 29-30)?

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Jesus stated that the problem is so serious that if it is a person’s right **eye** or **hand** that causes him to sin, he should get **rid** of it rather than suffer judgment in **hell**.

Q4. While the Jewish religious teachers emphasised “permission” given in the law for divorce, what was Jesus’ concern/focus (vv. 31-32)?

Jesus upheld the institution of **marriage** and that divorce should not be taken **lightly**.

**look at notes in the “think it through” session*

Q5. What was Jesus emphasising when He explained about why His disciples should not take any form of oaths (vv. 36-37)?

Jesus stated that His disciples should simply let their statements be **Yes** or **No**; emphasising **honesty** without the need for oaths.

7. Thinking it through:

- In this part of His sermon, Jesus spoke out on the issue of lust, divorce and oaths.
- While the Jewish religious leaders often emphasised the need to keep the Old Testament laws outwardly, Jesus also spoke about the need to uphold God’s law inwardly.
- The disciples would be familiar with the commandment “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14) but Jesus further explained that even looking at someone with

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lustful intentions or thoughts is equated to committing adultery.

- Similarly, the same principle applies regarding entertaining or indulging in lustful thoughts and “self-entertainment” (i.e. pornography).
- Are we indulging in these hidden and secret forms of sin? Do we take them lightly just because we think no one sees us, or because we think that “no one gets hurt”?
- Jesus further said that the problem of sin is so serious that if the cause of the sin was our right eye or hand, it would be better for us to get rid of it rather than face God’s ultimate judgment in hell.
- The Bible, however, teaches us that sin is an internal problem, it is a problem of the heart (Mark 7:14-23), and there can be only one solution to the problem of sin, and this solution lies with Jesus, who died, taking the penalty of our sins to save us, so that we can live Spirit-empowered lives which please God.
- On the issue of divorce, while the Jewish religious leaders looked for “loop-holes” in the law to justify these actions, Jesus upheld the institution of marriage.
- In fact, later in Matthew 19:1-9, when the Jewish religious leaders tested Jesus by questioning Him on the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed them back to the purpose of marriage that God had set right at the start of creation, and for God’s intention for marriage to be a life-long relationship between one man and one woman; divorce being permitted under the law due to the hardness of heart (sinfulness) of the Israelites.
- Divorce was not to be taken as a convenience, or an easy way out, and marriage was not to be taken lightly, according to Jesus.

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- While the issue of divorce is a complex one and a believer has to look into this issue in reference to all of Scripture to get a better understanding of it, as followers of Jesus, we are to seek to uphold the sanctity of marriage, being aware that Christian marriages are meant to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- Finally, while oaths involved invoking God’s name, or substitutes in order to guarantee the truth of one’s statements, (Numbers 30:2), Jesus’ disciples were not to swear or take oaths at all. Instead, they were to be honest in their character so that their words can be trusted even without an oath.
- The emphasis Jesus had on this was on the need for those who follow Him to have integrity and trustworthiness in their speech.
- Are we striving to be honest, keeping away from falsehood and lies as God’s people?

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time

9. Digging deeper: Hebrews 4:14-16

- In the earlier part of Hebrews 4:1-13, the writer of Hebrews draws on the example of the Israelites who did not heed God’s voice but hardened their hearts and persisted in sinfulness.
- The writer of Hebrews reminds believers that we too are not to harden our hearts when we hear God’s voice speak to us from His Word, which is a double-edged sword, living and active - discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

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- As believers, we will have to give an account for all of our actions before God.
- Will we heed what God’s Word has to say to us today?
- At the same time, there is comfort for those who trust in Christ, that we have a great High Priest, Jesus Himself.
- In the Old Testament, the high priest is the one who offered sacrifices and interceded on behalf of the Israelites to God.
- However, Jesus is the ultimate High Priest – who is able to sympathise with all of our weaknesses, being tempted in every way yet without sin.
- He offered Himself as a once-for-all sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10) and through Him, we have forgiveness.
- Through Him, we can approach God’s throne of grace to receive help in times of need, even in our struggle against sin and temptations, whatever they may be.

10. Closing song suggestion: Before the Throne of God Above

(Original Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft (1841-1892),
Alternate Words and Music by Vikki Cook)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fq4eObqVdX0>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 8: Responding to Hostility and Hatred (Matthew 5:38-48)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: Man of Sorrows (© 2013 Hillsong, Song writers: Brook Ligertwood & Matt Crocker)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlOJ5o8W4Lw>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to think about how they would respond or perhaps how they have responded to someone who dislikes them and who treats them badly. Ask them how they would feel towards this person too.

4. Activity: Acts of love

- Suitable for small, medium and large groups.

Instructions

- Gather the students together and tell them that they will be showing some “love” to one another.
- Ask each one of them to find 5 persons and give them a handshake, another 5 persons to give high five’s to and another 5 persons to hug (or give them a pat on the back) - that’s 15 people altogether.

Objective of the activity:

This is to help the students think about responding in love. While it is easy to show love to others in a loving

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environment, it would be much more challenging if a person was hostile towards them.

5. Recap on Lesson 7 - Matthew 5:27-37

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 5:38-48.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. While Jesus’ disciples were familiar with the law of retaliation, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”, how did Jesus challenge them to respond to those who do evil towards them (vv. 38-42)?

Jesus told them not to **resist** the one who is evil. Instead,

(Mis)treatment	Response
If someone slapped them on the right cheek.	They were to turn to him the other also.
If someone sued them and took their tunic* .	They were to let him have their cloak as well.
If someone forced them to go one mile.	They were to go with him for two miles.
If someone begged or asked to borrow from	They were to give and not refuse him.

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them.	
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*tunic: a loose garment, typically sleeveless and reaching to the wearer's knees, worn in Jesus’ day.

Q2. Jesus’ disciples would have heard the saying “Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” How did Jesus challenge His disciples to respond instead (v. 44)?

He told them to **love** their enemies and **pray** for those who persecute them.

Q3. Why were Jesus’ disciples to respond in this way (vv. 45-48)?

- This would show that they are **sons** of the Father who is in heaven.
- God Himself shows common grace and care on the **evil** and the **good**.
- They were to be **perfect** just as their heavenly **Father** is perfect.

7. Thinking it through:

- The disciples of Jesus were familiar with the Old Testament law which worked on the principle of “lex talionis” (the law of retaliation), by which punishment or retribution equalled to any offence committed had to be carried out as a means of upholding justice (Exodus 21:24, Deuteronomy 19:20-21).
- However, in this part of the passage, Jesus challenged His disciples in their individual responses to those who had

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done evil towards them. They were called not to retaliate, but rather, they were asked to respond in love.

- If someone were to slap them on the right cheek (this back-handed slap was considered an insult in Jesus’ day), they were to give the other cheek. They were also to give their cloak to someone who had taken their tunic. They were to go the extra mile with someone who forced them to go a mile. And they were to be generous to those in need.
- The main principle Jesus was trying to put across to His disciples was to respond in love to someone who mistreated them.
- In fact, Jesus Himself was the perfect example of one who suffered unjustly but responded in love. When Jesus was arrested, He was slapped, beaten and mocked by those guarding Him. As He hung on the cross, naked and ashamed, soldiers gambled for His clothes.
- Jesus didn’t go the extra mile for us, He went ALL the way by giving His life to save us at Calvary.
- Jesus’ call to His disciples to love their enemies, and pray for those who persecuted them was not an empty one, for on the cross as Jesus died, He prayed for those who had called for His death, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:24)
- Those who follow Jesus, who are sons of the Heavenly Father are called to be like the heavenly Father who is perfect – loving those who are against them.
- How have you responded to those who treat you badly?
- Are you seeking to love your enemies and to pray for those who mistreat you?
- Ask God for strength to do so, and remind yourself of what God has done for us in Jesus!

8. Responding to God's Word: Group prayer time

9. Digging deeper: Romans 5:6-11

- This passage tells us that God showed His love to us while we were still sinners!
- Paul described sinners as those who were weak, ungodly and God's enemies!
- God loved us even while we were His enemies and He showed His love to us by sending Jesus to die in our place for our sins.
- It is through Jesus' death that we are justified, declared not guilty, and we can be reconciled to God, enjoying a relationship with Him!
- It is through Jesus' life, His resurrection, that we have the assurance of being saved from God's coming wrath.
- God loved us when we were His enemies.
- How will we respond to those who are against us? Those who are our enemies?
- Will we not seek to walk in the footsteps of Jesus?

10. Closing song suggestion: The Servant King (Song writer: Graham Kendrick)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBd3ThCResI>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 9: Genuine Piety- Giving to Those in Need (Matthew 6:1-4)

1. Opening prayer
2. Opening song suggestion: **Lord, You Were Rich Beyond All Splendour** (Hymn writer: Frank Houghton)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLkQRzVOr8w>

3. Just for starters question

In groups, ask the students to share their experiences of giving to help someone in need. What motivated them to do so, and how did the person respond?

4. Game: “Counting Money”

- Suitable for medium and large groups.

Instructions:

- Divide students into 5 groups.
- Designate a monetary value for each group.
E.g. Group 1 - 5 cents
Group 2 - 10 cents
Group 3 - 20 cents
Group 4 - 50 cents
Group 5 - 1 dollar
- For this game, every student in group 1 is assigned a “value” of 5 cents whilst every student in group 2 is “worth” 10 cents etc.
- After each and every student has been assigned a monetary value according to groups, get them to mix and mingle in the room.

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- The game then begins with the game master shouting a certain amount of money e.g. 80 cents.
- Students of different monetary value will have to group together to form the total amount given by the game master.
- The game is repeated several times with the game master stating different amounts of money for each round.

Objective of the game:

The students will be learning on what Jesus has to say on the topic of giving to those in need, so this game would be a good and fun introduction to the topic.

5. Recap on Lesson 8 - Matthew 5:38-48

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 6:1-4.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What did Jesus warn His disciples against (v. 1)?

He warned them to **beware** of practising their **righteousness** before other people to be **seen** by them.

Q2. Jesus criticised those who were “hypocrites”. What did He say of them (v. 2)?

When they gave to the needy, they did this so that they may be **praised** by others.

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Q3. How did Jesus say His disciples should behave when giving to the needy (vv. 3-4)?

They were not to let their **left** hand know what their **right** hand was doing. They were to do this in **secret** and not to attract the praise or attention of others.

Q4. Whose approval/reward should Jesus’ disciples be seeking when they give to the needy (vv. 1-4)?

They should be looking to the heavenly **Father** and not to **men**.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have learnt from today’s passage.
- Jesus warned His disciples against practising their righteousness so that they would be seen by others.
- Most of the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus’ time tried to make their religious practices – such as giving to the needy, prayer or fasting as public as possible.
- In fact, Jesus called them hypocrites for sounding the trumpets in the streets and synagogues whenever they gave to the poor (literally!) so that people would praise them.
- Jesus told His disciples that they should not seek to draw attention to themselves when giving to others in need.
- The religious leaders of Jesus’ day gave with the motive to receive praise from others - and that was their reward.
- Their outward “good works” was driven by the wrong motive, and this was not pleasing to God.
- On the other hand, followers of Jesus who seek to give to those in need without expecting the applause of men will

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receive their reward and approval from their heavenly Father.

- Of course, this didn’t mean that the disciples were to expect God to give them more money if they gave to the needy – the reward that the Father has promised those who trust in Him is a heavenly and eternal one!
- So, think back on the times when you have been given the privilege to help someone in need.
- Did you see this as a God-given privilege to help someone?
- What were your motives for giving to that person in need? Was it out of compassion, to please God, or was it out of compulsion? Was it to gain recognition or just a sense of obligation?
- The next time you give to someone in need, stop to think of how God has been so kind and generous to you in so many ways in your life!
- Think especially that God has lavished His love upon us through Jesus, so that we can be called His children!
- And seek to give with a willing heart, a heart that seeks to please the Heavenly Father, in a quiet and meaningful way.
- After all, in the words of Jesus Himself as recalled by the Apostle Paul, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time

9. Digging deeper: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

- When Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth, he appealed to them to give towards the believers in Jerusalem who were in great need.

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- Paul drew their attention to the godly example of the churches in Macedonia, who gave generously, even beyond their means though they were poor.
- Paul called on the Corinthians to participate in this act of grace – noting that it was actually a privilege for them to be able to give towards others because of God’s undeserved kindness towards them!
- Paul then reminded them of this grace in that Jesus, being God who is rich beyond all measure, made Himself poor by being born as a man, forsaking all His glory and splendour. Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, we become rich for when we become children of God, we are heirs to every spiritual blessing that God has for us in Christ.
- Hence, the Christians in Corinth were encouraged to respond to their brothers and sisters who were in need with love by being ready to give.
- Is there someone whom God has brought along your way who may be in need?
- If yes, would you be willing to help him or her in response to what God has done for you in Jesus?
- Giving doesn’t always have to be in monetary form, it can be the giving of your time and energy to help someone.
- Remember, it is a privilege and blessing to participate in this act of grace by giving, with a willing and thankful heart!

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10. Closing song suggestion: Change my heart, O God (Song writer: Eddie Espinosa)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEtshWFE6-w>

11. Closing prayer

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Lesson 10: Genuine Piety – Prayer and Fasting (Matthew 6:5-8, 16-18)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion:

This is My Desire ©1995 Hillsong Music Publishing Song
writer: Reuben Morgan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XKxqqhOgVM>

Our Father (Song writer: Don Moen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lUkAzyDRL5E>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to think through and discuss some of the things that people do in public in order to be seen as “good” and to be praised and acknowledged. (E.g. Giving huge sums to charity, doing a one-off charity event)

4. Recap on Lesson 9 - Matthew 6:1-4

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Guess who is the leader?

- Suitable for small/ medium –sized groups (8-20 students).

Instructions:

- Get the students to sit in a circle.

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- One student can volunteer or be selected to be a guesser at the start of the game and has to leave the room.
- After the guesser has left the room, choose another student to be the secret “leader” of the group.
- The leader will have to do an action (e.g. clap his/her hands) and the rest will follow suit.
- The guesser will be asked to enter the room again.
- The leader will have to discreetly change his/her actions from time to time and the rest will follow suit.
- The guesser is given 3 chances at guessing who the leader is within a certain amount of time.
- This game can be played for several rounds with different students taking turns to be guessers and leaders.

Objective of the game:

This activity has a sense of “quietness” or “secrecy” which somewhat relates to Jesus’ teaching in today’s lesson with regards to prayer and fasting.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 6:5-18.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. Jesus taught His disciples about praying with the right motivation. What should their motivation be when it comes to prayer (vv. 1-4)?

They were not to stand and pray in the synagogues or streets in order to be **seen** by others.

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*Instead, they were to pray in their rooms in secret to the **Father** who will reward them.

Q2. What did Jesus teach His disciples about the manner of prayer (vv. 7-8)?

*They were not to pray by heaping up **empty** phrases like the Gentiles did as the heavenly Father **knows** what they need even before they ask Him.

Q3. What did Jesus teach about the right motivation and manner for fasting (vv. 16-18)?

Jesus taught His disciples not to look gloomy or disfigure themselves when fasting to be **seen** by others.

They were instead to anoint their heads and wash their faces for their deed to be seen only by the heavenly **Father**.

**refer to notes in the “Think it Through” section.*

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have learnt from Jesus’ teaching on prayer and fasting.
- When Jesus taught His disciples about prayer, He encouraged them to pray quietly and in secret. Now, this doesn’t mean that Jesus was saying that His disciples shouldn’t pray in public or before a crowd or in a group! Jesus Himself prayed in public on many occasions (Matthew 14:19, 15:36).
- Instead, Jesus was focusing on the motivation behind prayer. Many “pious” Jews during Jesus’ day would pray

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in public places, very loudly, so that they could be heard and seen by others, and praised for being “holy” or “religious”.

- Now, some of us might not have the desire or interest to talk to God through prayer. The only time we do so (or appear to be doing so) is when we think other people are watching us!
- Jesus reminded His disciples that the purpose of their prayers should not be to gain the attention of others, but rather, the focus of their prayers should be the Heavenly Father Himself who sees them.
- Jesus also told His disciples that prayer should not be a mechanical, mindless exercise. Many of the Gentiles (non-Jews) during Jesus’ day would pray repetitive prayers reciting the names of their “gods” or specific words again and again thinking that this would make their prayers more “effective” and that they would be heard.
- Jesus taught His disciples to pray in a thoughtful and meaningful way. We will learn more about this in our next lesson!
- Perhaps for some of us, prayer has turned into a mindless exercise. We do not find joy in talking to God, bringing our prayers and petitions to Him. Instead, we find ourselves rattling off the same things over and over again out of habit or a feeling of obligation. If that is you, ask God to help you rediscover the joy of speaking to Him!
- Some of us might be feel that our prayers are “inadequate” as we do not know the “right” Christian jargons to use or we lack eloquence.

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- Remember that we have confidence to pray to God, because He is our heavenly Father and we know He hears us! What a privilege it is to speak to the Creator Himself!
- On the issue of fasting, in Jesus’ day, the Jews would fast during certain religious festivals as a sign of being sorry and repenting of their sins.
- Jesus had the same thing to say to His disciples about fasting, that it should not be made into a public “show” for others to see by wearing a gloomy face or disfiguring one’s self.
- Jesus’ disciples were to recognise that fasting was as an act of penitence and faith was a matter of the heart between a believer and the Heavenly Father. The same principle applies to us as well.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: Colossians 3:12-4:1

- At the start of Colossians 3, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians telling them about their union in Christ. They have been united with Christ in His death and their life was hidden in Him, and they have also been raised with Christ.
- This resulted in a new way of living. They were to put off the old self - the sinful way of living and to put on the new self.
- The new self was reflected in the way they related to other Christians, in their church life and family life. In short, their union with Christ should have an impact on every aspect of their lives.
- What should be the motivation for them to live this way? Paul said it plainly that it was for God, not for men.

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- What does it mean for us then? Well, it is a reminder that in everything we do, say and think, we are to do so, not to gain the approval of men, but to please and glorify God.
- Whatever we do, whether in word or in deed, we are to do it in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.

10. Closing song suggestion: Before You I kneel © 2012 Getty Music Publishing (BMI) and Seek 1st Publishing & Townend Music

Song writers: Stuart Townend, Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Jeff Taylor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPVtx_HCpOo

(Note: Although this is meant to be a worker's prayer, the overarching principle of the song, which is asking for God to help us to glorify Him in all our actions, makes it a great song to end with!)

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 11: The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: Our Father (Song writer: Don Moen)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUkAzyDRL5E>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to answer the question on how often do they pray and what they usually pray about.

4. Recap on Lesson 10 - Matthew 6:5-8, 16-18

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Activity: Prayer list

Materials needed:

- Pieces of mah-jong paper
- Sticky notes
- Pencils

Instructions:

- Get the students to sit in one big circle.
- If the number of students is large, they can be divided into groups and made to sit circles according to their groups.
- Each group is given a piece of mah-jong paper with the words "prayer list" written on the top of it.
- Each student in the group is given a stick-on note.

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- He/She is asked to write down something or someone whom he/she usually prays for (E.g. Exams, family) on the sticky note. (If he/she has more prayer items, he/she can write them down on more sticky notes).
- After everyone has finished writing down their prayer items on the sticky notes, they can proceed to stick them on the mah-jong paper.

Objective of the activity:

This activity is aimed at helping the students think through the things and people they pray for in tandem with the lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 6:9-15.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. How did Jesus teach His disciples to pray? Fill in the answers in the table below (vv. 9-13).

Prayer points	Meaning/Implications
Our Father in heaven	Recognising the personal relationship that those who follow Jesus have with God , He is the heavenly Father.
Hallowed be your name	Acknowledging that God’s name (His person) should be treated with the

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	highest honour .
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven .	Asking for the continued advance of God’s rule on earth. That people will come to recognise Him as the rightful King and submit to His will.
Give us this day our daily bread	Asking God for the things that are needed for everyday life.
and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.	Saying sorry to God for our sins and asking for forgiveness , just as we who have been forgiven by God respond by forgiving others who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation , but deliver us from evil .	Asking God to keep us from and deliver us from temptations to sin .

Q2. What did Jesus emphasise to His disciples regarding their relationship with others (vv. 14-15)?

Jesus’ disciples were to **forgive** others of their trespasses.

7. Thinking it through:



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- Can you recall that when Jesus taught His disciples on the manner and motivation for prayer, He told His disciples that prayer should not be a mechanical, mindless exercise. Many of the Gentiles (non-Jews) during Jesus’ day would pray repetitive prayers reciting the names of their “gods” or specific words again and again thinking that this would make their prayers heard. (Matthew 6:7-8).
- In today’s Bible passage, Jesus taught His disciples to pray in a thoughtful and meaningful way. This prayer, also known as the Lord’s prayer is a great prayer and serves as an example for us in our daily prayers.
- Coming before God in prayer, we relate to Him as our loving heavenly Father – isn’t that amazing?! We have a personal relationship with the Creator of the universe through Jesus and therefore can come before Him in full confidence to speak to Him!
- He is not a God who is far away from us, but a God who is close to us, who loves and cares for us!
- And while we should pray for the things we need, we should always have God’s agenda as our priority, praying that His kingdom will come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- To pray for God’s kingdom to come is to pray that it will grow, as God’s people seek to be witnesses of Christ to the ends of the earth till Jesus comes again.
- Hence one example that we should pray for is that more people to come to hear the Gospel and trust in Jesus all over the world.
- We can pray for our families and friends who are not trusting in Jesus yet!

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- We should also take the time to say sorry to God for our sins, recognising Him as our heavenly Father, asking Him for forgiveness of sins.
- Just as we would say sorry to our parents if we have done wrong, we should come and acknowledge our wrongdoings before God, knowing that He will forgive us because of what Jesus has done on the cross for us.
- Scripture tells us that if we confess our sins before God, He is just and faithful and will forgive us of our sins! (1 John 1:8-9).
- At the same time, in response to what God has done for us, we should be ready to forgive others who have sinned against us too!
- This is the right response of a child of God. Having received forgiveness from God, we show forgiveness to others. In fact, in vv. 14-15, Jesus told them that they ought to forgive others of their trespasses.
- If we truly appreciate and understand the immensity and grace God has shown to us by forgiving us and cleansing us of our sins, we too will likewise forgive others for their wrongdoings against us. For deeper insight on this, do read Jesus' parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35).
- Is there someone we are holding a grudge against or whom we find difficult to forgive? We need to ask for strength from God to be able to do so.
- We should also pray for God to keep us from sin and help us walk in a way that is pleasing to Him.
- In this fallen world, we are faced with many temptations and schemes from the evil one who seeks to lead God's people astray.

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- Hence, we have to come to God for strength to live godly lives as people who have been saved, redeemed and ransomed by Jesus’ work on the cross.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: Philippians 4:6-7

- When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, he told them that the remedy for anxiety and worry was none other than prayer!
- Believers are encouraged to pray about everything, coming before God with an attitude of thanksgiving when we pray!
- We can pray with confidence, knowing that our Heavenly Father hears each and every one of our prayers.
- There is nothing too small or insignificant, or too big and difficult, that we cannot bring to God in prayer.
- Prayer expresses our dependence of God, who is all-loving, all-wise and all-powerful.
- The Apostle Paul reminds us that as we pray, God’s peace, the peace that we have in Jesus will guard our hearts and our minds in Christ so that we will keep trusting and standing firm in Jesus!

10. Closing song suggestion: Our Father ©2014 Hillsong (Song writers: Brooke Ligertwood, Jonas Myrin, Scott Ligertwood)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t01Zn-DrHwc>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 12: Storing Up Treasures that Last (Matthew 6:19-24)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: **Christ is Enough** ©2012 Hillsong Music (Song writers: Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan)

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to think about an item which they consider their “treasured possession”. Ask them to talk about why this item is so precious to them, who gave it to them and how long they think this item will last for.

4. Recap on Lessons 10 and 11 - **Matthew 6:5-18**

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

5. Game: **Guess the value!**

Materials needed:

- A list of expensive items which people will consider modern day “treasures” together with how much they are worth (E.g. The latest Nike sports shoes, Prada handbag, Mobile phone).

Note: You could look up the prices of these items from the internet.

- Blank pieces of A4 papers.
- Marker pens.

Instructions:

- Divide the students into groups.
- Each group is given several pieces of A4 paper and a marker pen.
- At the start of the game, read out the first item on the modern day “treasures” list you have made. (If you have power point slides with pictures of these items, which would be good as well!)
- Ask the groups to discuss and write down how much they think that item is worth on a piece of A4 paper.
- After a few minutes, each group must display the price answers they have written on the A4 paper.
- The group with the closest estimate to the real value of this item scores a point.
- The above steps are repeated for several rounds until you have finished the list.
- The group with the highest score wins.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 6:19-24.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. Jesus spoke to His disciples about what they should be seeking for in life. What were His words to them (vv. 19-20)?

They were not to lay up treasures on **earth** which can be **destroyed** or **stolen**.

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Instead, they were to lay up treasures in **heaven** which could not be destroyed or stolen.

Q2. What do you think Jesus meant when He said this?

Jesus’ disciples were not to seek to gain **earthly** treasures which would not last **forever**.

They were to seek to gain **heavenly** treasures that are **eternal**.

Q3. What did Jesus say could be the determining factor of the state of the heart (v. 21)?

Jesus stated that where a person’s **treasure** is, there his **heart** will be also.

Q4. Jesus uses the human eye as a metaphor. What did Jesus say about this (vv. 22-23)?

The eye is a **lamp** to the body.

If the eye is **healthy** the body will be full of **light**.

But if the eye is **bad** the body will be full of **darkness**.

Q5. What did Jesus mean by this?

Note: The “eye” similar to the “heart” in Jewish literature

If a person’s **heart** is set on the right ambition to live for **God** then his life will reflect this truth.

However, if a person’s **heart** is set on living for the **world**, his life is plunged into moral darkness.

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Q6. Jesus also told His disciples about whom or what runs their lives. What were His words to them (v. 24)?

No one can serve 2 **masters**.

They will either:

- **Hate** one and **love** the other.
- Be **devoted** to one and **despise** the other.

It is not possible to have and serve 2 masters: **God** or **money**.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have just learnt from the Bible passage.
- Jesus was speaking to His disciples about their focus and goal in life and He told them that they were to focus on laying up treasures in heaven, instead of earthly treasures.
- These treasures are eternal, whereas the treasures on earth will fade away.
- Now, Jesus of course didn’t mean that His disciples should go on a quest looking for “heavenly treasure”, rather, what He meant was for them (and for us) to be thinking through our daily activities in life and our long-term goals.
- Jesus’ disciples were to keep their “eyes” (heart) from being focused on gaining worldly wealth in terms of money, etc.
- Their goal in life was not to gain people’s approval, praise or recognition (as seen in the previous lessons).
- These things might have seemed glamorous and desirable for the disciples, but they would all fade away.

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- Instead, they were to focus on doing things that last for eternity.
- After all, Jesus said it was not possible to have 2 masters – God and money.
- There could only be one – and of course, God is the rightful Master of all!
- How about you? What are you living for at the moment?
- Could it be your school grades or achievements?
- Being accepted and recognised by your peers?
- Securing a better future in terms of your education and getting a good job?
- All these things aren’t bad in and of themselves, but if you think a little deeper, these things are only earthly treasures – they may only last a while, or at most, for this earthly lifetime.
- Ask God to help you cultivate a “heavenly” mindset. A mind that is set on doing things with everlasting value, for example, sharing the Good News to someone who has yet to trust in Jesus and making your service to God and His people a priority.
- In doing so, you are storing up treasures in heaven, which can never ever be destroyed or stolen!

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: 1 Timothy 6:11-18

- In the verses before this, the Apostle Paul told Timothy (a young pastor leading a church in Ephesus) of many who, for the love of money, had wandered away from the faith.

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- Paul urged Timothy that in the midst of all these things, Timothy was to pursue righteousness, godliness and faith, love, gentleness and steadfastness. Timothy was to continue fighting the good fight of faith until Jesus returned again.
- Paul also told Timothy to remind the believers who were rich not to be proud.
- The rich were not to set their hopes on their wealth but on God, who richly provides for His people to enjoy.
- They were to be generous and abounding in good works instead, storing up treasures that last for eternity.
- Paul's reminder to Timothy is also a reminder to us. In a world of materialistic pursuit, we should instead strive to be godly, to live lives that are pleasing to God and to fight the good fight until we see Jesus again.
- We are not to hold on to our worldly possessions but instead, be generous to share and serve others, storing up treasures in heaven!

10. Closing song suggestion: To Honour You (Song writer: Bob Fitts)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8KgMUZo1Qc>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 13: The Worry Remedy (Matthew 6:25-34)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: To Honour You (re-sing) (Song writer: Bob Fitts)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8KgMUZo1Qc>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to talk to one another regarding how worried they think they are on a scale of 0-10. (10 mean they worry all the time, 0 means they don't worry at all). What happens to them when they are worried? (E.g. they can't sleep, feel restless)

4. Activity: The “worry scale”

- This game is suitable for small, medium and large groups.
- Items needed: A list of scenarios that could possibly make a person worried. (E.g. Forgot to bring a book to school, sitting for a major exam, going for a competition, getting scolded by a teacher)

Instruction:

- Everyone is asked to stand in the middle of the room.
- The left end of the room is designated the value “10” (extremely worried) and the right end of the room is designated the value “0” (not worried at all).
- Anything between these 2 ends is the values 1-9.

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- This will work as a temporary “worry scale”.
- Read out one of the scenarios on your list.
- Ask the students to move and stand anywhere from 0-10 on the “worry scale” in the room.
- Read through the worry scenario list one by one, each time, getting the students to move and arrange themselves according to the level of anxiety they feel for each scenario.

Objective of the activity:

This activity gets the students to assess the things and situations in life which worry them in line with today’s lesson.

5. Recap on Lesson 12 - Matthew 6:19-24

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 6:25-34.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. Which word in today’s Bible passage shows that Jesus’ words are linked with what He had just taught His disciples in the previous Bible passage (v. 25)?

The word is “**therefore.**”

Q2. What did Jesus tell His disciples about anxiety or being worried (v. 25)?

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He told them that they were not to be anxious about their life, what they will **eat** or **drink** or about the **clothing** they will wear.

Q3. What examples did Jesus use to show His disciples that there was no reason to be worried (vv. 26-30)?

Jesus told them about:

- The **birds** of the air that do not sow or reap or gather in **barns** but are **fed** by the Heavenly Father.
- The **lilies** of the field that do not toil or spin but are **clothed** more splendidly than Solomon himself.

Q4. What reasons did Jesus give to His disciples that they need not worry but trust in the heavenly Father (vv. 26-32)?

- The heavenly Father who **feeds** and **clothes** the birds of the air and lilies of the field will much more surely take **care** of His people.
- Worrying is **useless**, as it doesn’t add a single hour to one’s span of life.
- The heavenly Father **knows** the needs of His people.

Q5. What did Jesus say should be His disciples’ focus instead of worrying (v. 33)?

They should **seek** first the **kingdom** of God, and His **righteousness**, and all these things will be added unto them.

7. Thinking it through:

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- Get the students into groups to discuss the questions.
- Remember that Jesus told His disciples to have their hearts focused on laying up heavenly treasures?
- This week, Jesus continued saying how this heavenly mindset should impact the way His followers deal with worry.
- Jesus told them that they should not be anxious about the necessities of life – the food they were to eat and the clothes they were to wear.
- He drew 2 examples from life – the birds of the air that do not work, but are fed by God and the lilies of the field that don’t toil or spin but are dressed in great beauty and splendour by the Heavenly Father.
- Jesus asked a very valid question, if God takes care of these, how much more would He look after those who are His own!
- In fact, worrying is a symptom of lack of trust and dependence on God – the all-powerful, all-wise and loving Creator of the universe!
- After all, the habit of worrying is a useless one, Jesus pointed out.
- Instead of wasting time worrying, Jesus told His disciples that they should seek God’s kingdom and His righteousness first, with the assurance that He will provide for their needs.
- Yes, they were to seek to serve God and to grow in godliness all their lives! That should be their priority.
- And it’s the same for us! Now, this doesn’t mean that we will be rolling in cash or driving sports cars, but there is an assurance that God will care for our basic needs in life.
- So, what do you worry about? Why do these things make you so anxious?

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- Are these things too big for God to handle? Or have they become the “main focus” of your life?
- Ask God for the ability to hand your worries over to Him as He is the God who cares for you!
- More than that, ask Him enable you to put His kingdom and righteousness first in your life!

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: 1 Peter 5:6-11

- When the Apostle Peter wrote to the Christians in his day, many of them were suffering for their faith in Jesus.
- Many of them would have appeared to have good reasons to be anxious.
- However, Peter told them to cast all their anxieties upon God, for He is a God who cares for all His people.
- They were to humble themselves before God, as He would exalt them in the proper time. When Jesus returned, they would reign with Him in His kingdom!
- They were to resist the devil, standing firm in the faith.
- And they were never to lose sight of the hope they had in Jesus - which He would return to rule over the world!
- The same goes for us! What a joy it is to know that our God who is faithful and unchanging is a God that we can cast all our worries and anxieties on. He is a God who cares for us!

10. Closing song suggestion: Seek ye first the kingdom of God
(Song writer: Karen Lafferty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1Y8Naj3RFk>

11. Closing prayer



Lesson 14: Judging Others (Matthew 7:1-6)

1. Opening prayer

- 2. Opening song suggestion: Before the Throne of God Above (re-sing)** © 1997 Sovereign Grace Music (Original Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft (1841-1892), Alternate Words and Music by Vikki Cook)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXHXFhJA4SY>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to recall and discuss a time or situation when they felt “judged” by someone else. Did they think that the judgment was fair? How did they feel and respond in that situation?

4. Game: The “change”

- This game is suitable for small, medium and large groups.

Instructions:

- Ask each student to pair up with another student for this game.
- Once all the students are in pairs, ask them to take a good look at each other before turning back-to-back, facing away from each other.
- At the start of the game, the game master will shout, “change”! Each student (who are standing back-to-back with their partners) must proceed to change something

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- about his/her appearance in a short amount of time. (E.g. Take off his/her own glasses, remove his/her name tag.)
- When the game master shouts “Stop, and turn around!”, all the pairs must turn to face each other and see if they can spot the change in each other’s appearances.
 - The students can then switch partners and the game can be repeated for a few more rounds, each time with different partners.

Objective of the game:

The concept of “spotting” the differences in others, leading to what Jesus speaks of in being quick to notice the sins of others rather than our own in this lesson.

5. Recap on Lesson 13 - Matthew 6:25-34

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 7:1-6.
Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What did Jesus teach His disciples about judging others (vv. 1-2)?

He told them that they should **not** judge others so they would not be **judged**.

This is because the same judgment or **measure** they used on others will be used on them.

Q2. What else did Jesus teach His disciples when it comes to recognising one's own faults and sins as compared to that of others (vv. 3-4)?

Jesus said that very often, one can see the **speck** in his brother's eye, but not the **log** in his own eye.

This means, that very often, one is quick to see the small fault or **sin** of another brother, but not the **big** fault or sin in his own life.

Q3. What did Jesus say His disciples should do first (v. 5)?

One should first take the **log** out of his own **eye**, so that he can **see** clearly to remove the speck from his **brother's** eye.

A disciple of Jesus should seek to **deal** with his own fault or sin first before **helping** his brother to overcome his sin or fault.

Q4. Jesus gave a warning in verse 6. What did He say and what did He mean by this saying?

“Do not give **dogs** what is **holy** and do not throw your **pearls** before **pigs**, lest they **trample** them underfoot and turn to **attack** you.”

Jesus was saying that they should be wise and **discerning** with the people whom they share the message of the **kingdom** of heaven with. *

7. Thinking it through:

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- Get the students into groups to discuss the questions.
- In this Bible passage, we see Jesus warning his followers against being quick to judge others.
- Jesus pointed out how as sinful humans we are quick to spot even the smallest fault in another person, but fail to see our own sins and faults!
- Jesus may have been drawing from his background as a carpenter when he used the metaphor about being able to see the speck (of dust) in a brother's eye but not the log in one's own eye!
- Before attempting to help someone else with their sin, Jesus said that one must first identify, acknowledge and deal with his own sin first.
- A harsh, critical and judgmental spirit shouldn't be something that a follower of Christ should have.
- Just as God has shown us mercy, we should be merciful to others (Think of the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:21-35).
- We should recognise that all of us are unworthy sinners who have been shown forgiveness and grace by God Himself through Jesus.
- Now, this doesn't mean that we are never to correct or admonish our brothers or sisters in Christ when they are wrong – but it means that we are to refrain from being quick and harsh to judge others in an ungodly manner.
- Any form of correction or admonishment should be done in love, not to tear down someone, but to build them up and help them to grow to be more like Jesus.
- Jesus also warned his disciples about giving what is holy to dogs or casting their pearls before pigs. Why would Jesus say this?

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- Well, during Jesus’ days, dogs and pigs were considered ritually unclean animals. Jesus was using this example to refer to people who may have had ample opportunity to hear the Gospel, the precious message of the Kingdom of heaven, but adamantly keep rejecting it.
- While Jesus’ disciples were not to be judgmental in nature, Jesus was also telling them (and us!) that we should still be discerning of people whom we share the Good News of Christ with.
- Think about your life so far. Is there anyone whom you may have been quick to judge?
- Is there something in your attitude or mindset which needs to change as well?
- Remember Jesus’ words to us today. Ask Him for forgiveness if you have been quick to judge others, for humility to acknowledge and deal with your own shortcomings and then for wisdom in helping others overcome theirs.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-21

- Towards the end of his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul wrote to remind them about how they are to act as people of God in light of Jesus’ 2nd coming.
- The Apostle Paul reminded them to respect and love the spiritual leaders who served them and had the task of admonishing (rebuking and correcting) them so that they could grow in faith!

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- In the same way, He told them that they too are to admonish those who are idle or lazy, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
- In all things and in all circumstances, they are to rejoice always and be filled with thanksgiving as this is pleasing to God!
- So, while there are definitely times that we should be admonishing others to build them up in the faith, let us do so in an encouraging manner, being patient and doing all things in love!

10. Closing song suggestion: Brother, Let Me Be Your Servant

©1977 Maranatha Music (Song writer: Richard Gillard)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMCaPGozu90>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 15: Relating to the Heavenly Father and our fellow men Our Fellow Men (Matthew 7:7-12)

1. Opening prayer

2. Opening song suggestion: Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God (re-sing) (Song writer: Karen Lafferty)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1Y8Naj3RFk>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them how they would complete the sentence “I will never give up...”. What would they persist and persevere in doing and why? What would be their greatest motivation in persevering in that particular endeavour?

4. Game: Ask, Seek and Find!

- This game is suitable for small, medium and large groups.
- Items needed:

A list of items for the students to look/hunt/ask for (at least 10 items should be on the list):

E.g. 3 name tags, 2 blue ribbons, 5 pairs of glasses, 6 flowers etc.

Instructions:

- Students are divided into different groups.
- Each group is given a list of items which they need to ask and look for.

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- The groups are allowed to go out and search the premises they are in, and even ask others for the items that are on the list.
- The group that finds all the items on the list in the shortest time wins.

Objective of the game:

This is to help set the mood for the students as they look into the lesson about persistent prayer (asking, seeking and knocking).

5. Recap on Lesson 14 - Matthew 7:1-6

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 7:7-12.

Go through the questions in the passage.

Q1. What did Jesus tell His disciples when relating to the heavenly Father (vv. 7-8)?

They were to:

- **ask** and it will be **given**
- **seek** and they will **find**
- **knock** and the **door** shall be **opened**.

This meant that they were to come to God in **humility**, expressing their **dependence** on Him and to **persist/persevere** in prayer, according to His will.

Q2. What assurance did Jesus give to His disciples as they come to the Father in persistent prayer (vv. 9-11)?

If human parents who are **evil** (sinful) know how to give good **gifts** to their **children**, how much more would the heavenly Father give **good** things to those who **ask** Him.

Q3. How should followers of Jesus relate to other people (v. 12)?

They should do unto **others**, what they **wish** for others to do unto **them** for this is a principle from God's Word, in the **Law** and the **Prophets**.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have learnt from the lesson.
- In His sermon on the Mount, Jesus had taught His disciples quite a lot on prayer. This time, He focused on the importance of persisting in prayer.
- Those who follow Jesus are told to ask – they are to come to God in humility, expressing their dependence on Him.
- They are also to seek – even as they come to God asking Him, they are to ask according to His will.
- They are to knock – this seems to imply being persistent and not giving up in prayer.
- After all, Jesus assured His disciples that the Heavenly Father hears and answers prayers!
- Jesus gave the example of human parents, who although they are sinful know how to give their children good gifts. For example, if a child asked his parent for bread, they wouldn't give him a stone, or if he asked for a fish, they wouldn't give him a snake instead. That's because parents love their children!

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- How much more then, Jesus adds, will the Heavenly Father who is perfect, all-wise and all-loving give good things to those who ask Him!
- Now, this doesn’t mean that we treat God as our personal Santa Claus, or our genie in a magic lamp – who is obliged to do all our biddings and commands – this is definitely not the case!
- However, we can persist in talking to God about everything because He hears and answers us, giving us only the things which are good for us!
- Jesus also talked about how His disciples were to relate to their fellow men. They were to do unto others what they wished others to do unto them. This was a principle that was spelt out in the Law and the Prophets (which you may recall refers to the Old Testament) – God’s Word.
- At first, this may sound a little strange to us, but if we think a bit deeper, none of us would wish anyone to do ill towards us!
- Indeed, self-love is a powerful force! We want others to treat us well, always. And if that’s the case, Jesus tells us to treat others well too; the same way we would desire others to do good to us. We are to seek to do good and not harm towards them.
- Is there any way in which you can seek to do good to those around you?

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: Luke 18:1-14

- Jesus told 2 parables to illustrate 2 different points pertaining to approaching God.

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- The first parable was about a widow who kept persistently going before an unrighteous judge to seek justice. Because of her persistence, the wicked judge gave in and she was granted justice.
- Jesus used this parable to highlight to His disciples the importance of praying without losing heart, especially with the knowledge that God hears the cry of His elect (his chosen ones) and will answer them.
- The second parable was about a Pharisee and tax collector who went up to the temple to pray.
- The Pharisee was full of self-righteous pride and confidence, and in his prayer, he boasted about how “holy” he was compared to the tax collector and other sinners.
- The tax collector however, humbly acknowledged his sinfulness and pleaded for mercy in his prayer.
- At the end of the day, Jesus asked, who stood right before God – surely not the Pharisee, who failed to see his own sinfulness, but the tax collector who acknowledge his wretchedness and unworthiness before God.
- As we come before God in prayer, we know that He hears us, only because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross.
- We humbly come to Him asking Him for mercy and help in times of need, and yet with full confidence that He hears us through His Son, Jesus!

10. Closing song suggestion: Before the Throne of God Above (re-sing) © 1997 Sovereign Grace Music (Original Words by Charitie Lees Bancroft (1841-1892), Alternate Words and Music by Vikki Cook)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXHXFhJA4SY>

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 16: The Way to Life (Matthew 7:13-20)

1. Opening prayer

2. **Opening song suggestion: Don't waste your life** Lyrics © Kobalt Music Publishing Ltd (Song writers: Cameron Durand Dukes, Dion Burroughs, Dwayne Triumph, Le Crae Devaughn Moore)

Note: This song is a rap, you can play the music video for the students to listen to the song and its lyrics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QfYNyELufA>

3. Just for starters question

Get the students into groups and ask them to think about a particular item and a few well-known brand names of this item. (E.g. Sports shoes – Nike, Reebok. Watches – Rolex, Swatch. Handbags – Prada, Gucci). Do they think they can tell the difference between the originals and imitations? If yes, what would the differences be? This is to help the students think about how to identify the way of truth as oppose to the way which leads to destruction and also, to be able to identify false teachers.

4. Game: Wolf, shepherd and sheep

- This game is suitable for small and medium sized groups.

Instructions:

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- One student volunteers or is chosen to be the “wolf” and another can be the “shepherd”. The rest of the students are “sheep”.
- All the “sheep” are to line up behind the “shepherd”.
- The “wolf” stands facing the shepherd at the start of the game, with the rest of the “sheep” lining up behind the “shepherd”.
- When the game begins, the wolf must try to tag as many sheep as possible whilst the shepherd tries to prevent him from doing so.
- Any “sheep” that gets tagged is out of the game.

Objective of the game:

To get the students thinking about the concept of false teachers who come as wolves to lead people astray.

5. Recap on Lesson 15 - Matthew 7:7-12

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 7:13-20.

Go through the questions in the passage:

Q1. Jesus used another metaphor when speaking to His disciples on the 2 paths of life. What did He say (vv. 13-14)?

Enter by the **narrow** gate and the way that is **hard** for it leads to **life**. Those who find it are **few**.

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The gate is **wide** and the way is **easy** that leads to **destruction**.

This means that the **right** way to eternal **life** through **Jesus** is **hard** and not easy to follow, where else, the **wrong** way may seem **easy** to follow but leads to eternal **judgment**.

Q2. Who did Jesus warn His disciples to beware of (v. 15)?

He warned them to beware of **false prophets**.

Q3. How did Jesus describe these false prophets (v. 15)?

They may come in **sheep** clothing but inwardly they were ravenous **wolves**.

This means that the false prophets may appear **good** on the outside, but inwardly they sought to do God’s people **harm**.

Q4. What example did Jesus give in identifying false prophets (vv. 16-20)?

Jesus gave an example using **trees**.

A **healthy** tree bears **good** fruit, but a bad tree bears **bad** fruit. Every tree which doesn’t bear good fruit is cut down and **thrown** into the **fire**.

This means that Jesus’ disciples could tell if a prophet is **true** or **false** based on his fruit.*

7. Thinking it through:

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- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have learnt from today’s Bible passage.
- Jesus basically highlighted to His disciples that there are 2 ways to live.
- The way that leads to life is portrayed as a narrow gate, where the way may seem hard to follow where else the wide gate with an easy road to travel on leads to destruction.
- Elsewhere in Scripture, Jesus clearly described Himself as being the way, the truth and the life – He is the only way that leads to the Father (John 14:6).
- There is no other way to live, except living under Jesus as Saviour and King. Any other way leads to eternal judgment.
- This truth is not easy to take, as compared to many other popular notions that tell us that there are many ways to heaven.
- The way to eternal life through Jesus is not an easy one, but it is the only way that leads to life.
- The question you need to ask yourself today is, do you trust in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord? If no, then why not?
- Jesus also told His followers to beware of false prophets or teachers.
- They may appear good on the outside, but they were wolves in sheep’s clothing - seeking to lead people away from the truth.
- But Jesus said, just as you can tell a tree by its fruit, you can also tell a false prophet/teacher by his fruit too.
- A good tree can’t bear bad fruit, and vice versa.
- What kind of “fruit” are we to look out for in identifying false teachers?

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- Well, there is the fruit of their character and conduct - are they seeking to live godly and upright lives?
- And then there’s the fruit of their teaching. Is what they are teaching in accordance with Scripture?
- There are many false teachers amongst us today – many who teach that coming to Jesus will make us rich and successful. There are others who tell us that there is more than one way to get to heaven. There are those who teach that the Bible is not of the utmost authority in discerning God’s will.
- We need to be on our guard against these false teachers and stand firm in our faith in Christ.

8. Responding to God’s Word: Group prayer time.

9. Digging deeper: 2 Timothy 3:12-17

- The Apostle Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy about godly leadership. He also warned Timothy that in these last days (the days after Jesus ascended into heaven and before His return), people would become more and more ungodly.
- False teachers will increase, and go around deceiving others and being deceived. Many will be led astray.
- But amidst all these things, Paul told Timothy to continue in what he had learnt – that is Scripture itself, which Timothy had been taught since childhood.
- Paul told Timothy that it is through “the sacred writings” or Scripture, which we are made wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Scripture points us to Jesus and tells us of His life and sacrificial works on the cross

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for our sins, and of course His glorious resurrection, so that we may believe in Him and have salvation.

- All of Scripture is breathed out by God! This means that everything written in the Bible is God’s very word, and it is therefore useful for teaching, reproof, correcting and training in righteousness, so that we can all be equipped to do the good work that God has prepared for His people to do!
- So, what does this mean for us? We are to seek to understand God, by reading, knowing and understanding His Word.
- This will help us to continue to hold fast to the salvation we have in Christ, to discern false teachings and to keep growing in the faith.

10. Closing song suggestion: Good Shepherd of My Soul © 2014

Townend Songs and Getty Music Publishing (BMI)

(Song writers: Fionan de Barra, Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty & Stuart Townend)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW_4uubLypA

11. Closing prayer

Lesson 17: The Firmest Foundation (Matthew 7:21-29)

1. **Opening prayer**
2. **Opening song suggestion: Firm Foundation** (Song writers: Jamie Havill and Nancy Gordon)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bf5DetN1_4
3. **Just for starters question:** In groups, ask the students to imagine that they have been tasked to build a building. Get them to discuss the various aspects which they think are important in order for the building to be strong and firm.
4. **Game: Building a “building”**
 - This game is suitable for small, medium and large sized groups.

Items needed:

- Packets of drinking straw (at least 2 packets per group)
- Cellophane tape (at least 1 per group)
- Scissors (at least 2 pairs per group)

Instructions:

- Students are divided into different groups.
- Each group is given at least 2 packets of straw, cellophane tape and scissors and are tasked with using these materials to “build” a strong and firm “structure”.

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- Each team needs to work together to do so within a given amount of time.
- At the end of the game, the game master will test the strength of the structure of each team (E.g. by blowing the structure, shaking it a little).
- The team whose structure can withstand the test wins.

Objective of the game:

To get the students thinking about the importance of having a firm foundation.

5. Recap on Lesson 16 - Matthew 7:13-20

Go through the questions with the students to get them to remember what they have learnt in the previous lesson.

6. Looking into the passage:

Get the students to read Matthew 7:13-20.

Go through the questions in the passage:

Q1. Jesus had some surprising things to say about those who profess to follow Him. What did He teach His disciples about this (vv. 21-23)?

- Not **everyone** who claims that Jesus is their **Lord** will enter the kingdom of **heaven**, but those who do the **will** of the heavenly **Father**.
- Even many who have claimed to **prophecy**, cast out **demons** and do **mighty** works in Jesus' name will not be recognised by Him as Jesus calls them workers of **lawlessness**.

This means that not everyone who **claims** to follow Jesus or does **miracles** and works in His name will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do the **will** of the Father are true followers of Jesus.

Q2. Jesus gave an example of those who truly belong to Him. What did He say (vv. 24-27)?

- Everyone who **hears** Jesus' **words** and **does** them will be like a **wise** man who built his house on the **rock**. His house remained **firm** and could withstand harsh weather.
- However, everyone who hears Jesus' words and does **not** do them will be like a **foolish** man who built his house on the **sand**. His house **fell** during harsh weather.

Q3. How did the crowds respond to Jesus' teachings (vv. 28-29)?

They were **astonished** because Jesus taught like one who had **authority**, unlike the scribes and the Pharisees.

7. Thinking it through:

- Get the students into groups to discuss what they have learnt from today's Bible passage.
- Jesus had some surprising things to say about those who claimed to follow Him, didn't He?
- In fact, Jesus said that not everyone who claims that He is their Lord, or even does miracles and mighty works in His name will enter God's kingdom!

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- What does this mean? Well, it shows us that outward proclamation and impressive works do not earn us a place in God’s kingdom.
- A true follower of Jesus is keen to know and obey the Father’s will. And of course, from all of Scripture, we know that the Father’s will is for us to trust and have faith in Jesus Himself, and as a result of that, respond in obedience to Jesus’ words.
- Jesus also gave the example of the wise and foolish builders.
- He likened those who hear and respond in obedience to His Word as the wise builder who built his house upon the rock. Those who hear and do not respond to Jesus’ words are likened to the foolish man who built his house upon the sand.
- Whose house stood firm in the end? – Of course the one whose foundation was built on the rock.
- In the same way, those who truly trust in Jesus will build their lives upon His Word. They will take Jesus’ words seriously and seek to obey them.
- Now, Jesus had finished teaching His disciples, but the crowds who were there heard His teachings too and were astonished!
- Who was this man who could teach with His very own authority, unlike the Jewish religious leaders, who relied on traditions and teachings from their predecessors?
- How would the crowds respond to His teachings?
- The question comes to us as well, how will we respond to Jesus’ teachings?
- Jesus’ teachings have given us a clear picture of who He is and how life in God’s kingdom should be like.

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- Will we be like the wise or foolish builder? What will we build our lives upon?
- May Jesus be our surest and firmest foundation.

8. **Digging deeper:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

- The Apostle Paul wrote to remind the Christians in Corinth of the message of first importance – the message that is the foundation of the Christian faith.
- This message is none other than the Gospel. And the Gospel or Good News is centred on one person – Jesus Christ Himself.
- Paul reminded them about the message of the Gospel, Jesus death for sins, His burial and resurrection (proved by His appearance to many) all in fulfillment of the Scriptures.
- And it is by trusting in the Gospel, by trusting in Jesus, having received, holding fast and standing firm in it that salvation comes.
- The Gospel which speaks of Christ is the bedrock of the Christian faith and it is the message that all who follow Jesus stake their lives upon.
- How will you respond to this message? How will you respond to Jesus?

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- 9. Closing song suggestion: Cornerstone** © 2011 Hillsong Music Publishing (Song writers: Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin, Reuben Morgan, William Batchelder Bradbury)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02uI>

- 10. Closing prayer**