

TEACHER NOTECARDS LEVEL 3, QUARTER B— AMAZING WORDS

Use these Teacher Notecards as a reference when teaching *Explore Scripture*. Choose the outline form or narrative form based on your teaching style and preference.*

Print on paper or cardstock. Fold in half, then fold again along the gray line. This will create a two-sided, notecard-sized piece for you to hold in your hand.

*The narrative form has been edited to fit on these cards. Please see the full *Explore Scripture* sections of each lesson for more interactivity, application, and content.

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Big Idea: **Jesus blesses everyone who lives to honor God.**

Matthew 5 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus taught about attitudes and actions that please God.*

Ask: *Why does God value how we think and what we do?*

1. On a mountainside, Jesus taught about four principles for relating well with God (picture 3B.1). We call these principles “Beatitudes.”

- *The poor in spirit will receive the kingdom of heaven* Matthew 5:3
- *Mourners will be comforted* 5:4
- *The meek will rule the earth* 5:5
- *Those who seek righteousness will find it* 5:6

2. Jesus then named four principles for relating well to other people.

- *The merciful will be shown mercy* 5:7
- *The pure in heart will see God* 5:8
- *Peacemakers will be called sons of God* 5:9
- *The persecuted will receive the kingdom of heaven* 5:10

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3. Jesus described His disciples’ role in the world (picture 3B.2).

- *We are the salt of the earth* 5:13
- *We are a light to the world* 5:14
- *We shine so that people will see and praise God* 5:16

4. Jesus spoke about the fulfillment of the Law.

- *Jesus came to fulfill the Law* 5:17
- *The Law is still God’s standard of righteousness* 5:20
- *God requires perfection to enter the kingdom of heaven* 5:48
- *Jesus was perfect for all of us* Hebrews 10:14

Conclusion: *Jesus’ amazing words are full of truth about the best way to live. Think about ways you can honor God with your attitudes and actions.*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus blesses everyone who lives to honor God.**

Matthew 5 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus taught about attitudes and actions that please God.*

Ask: *Why does God value how we think and what we do?*

One day Jesus talked with people on a mountainside for a long time, telling them the best ways to live (picture 3B.1). One thing Jesus talked about is something we call the Beatitudes—beautiful attitudes. These Beatitudes are God’s way of giving us the answer key to true happiness and eternal life with Him! And, He expects us to use this answer key every day!

Read Matthew 5:1-10. The Beatitudes are beautiful attitudes or actions that God expects us to have and do. They are also a way for us to be truly happy. Jesus said that God gives great rewards to people who show these “beautiful attitudes.” The first four Beatitudes could fit under a category called “How to be happy in our relationship with God.” The last four could be in a category titled “How to have happy friendships with others.” The kind of happiness Jesus talked about is called blessing, or joy. It means that deep down inside you are happy about life, no matter

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what is happening to you right now. That’s different from being happy during your birthday or because you won a game. Jesus’ true happiness stays inside you.

Read verses 13-16 (picture 3B.2). *Why do we use salt?* (Food, heal sores, melt ice, preservative, ocean life, etc.) *Why do we need light?* (To see, to brighten up something, to help show something, for life, etc.) Ask your kids to think of ways Jesus wants them to be like salt or light. Record their answers on the board. *What is the most important thing Jesus wants us to remember from these ideas about salt and light?*

Read verses 17-48. Next, just to make sure Jesus’ disciples really understood, He gave examples of behaviors that come from a pure heart, and not from a desire to keep the rules only while people watch. Using examples from the Ten Commandments and other Jewish laws, Jesus showed that keeping the law isn’t enough. God actually wants us to be perfect! *Is this really possible?* Jesus wanted people to understand they could never measure up to God’s standards without help.

Jesus said that He would bless everyone who lives to honor God. Following the Beatitudes and Jesus’ other amazing words will help us honor God. Those beautiful attitudes will also help us be salt and light to the world, and the world will praise Him! Think about ways you can honor God with your attitudes and actions.

2

Big Idea: **Jesus rewards people who do the right things for the right reasons.**

Matthew 6 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus explained that God wants our hearts to be right with Him.*

Ask: *How can we be sure we are doing the right things for the right reasons?*

1. Jesus taught us to do our good deeds only to honor God (picture 3B.3).

- *Hypocrites give to the poor in public to be honored by men Matthew 6:2*
- *God wants us to give to the needy anonymously 6:3-4*
- *Hypocrites pray in public to appear righteous or humble 6:5*
- *God wants us to pray in private—He is our only audience 6:6*

2. Jesus gave His disciples an example of how to pray (picture 3B.4).

- *Worship—bless God's name 6:9*
- *Surrender—ask for God's will to be done 6:10*
- *Asking—give our needs to God 6:11*
- *Confession—ask God to forgive our sins 6:12*
- *Protection—ask God to deliver us from evil 6:13*

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3. Jesus explained that this earthly life is not as important as eternal life.

- *We are to earn heavenly treasures—not earthly ones 6:21*
- *We should not worry about food—God will provide our needs 6:26*
- *We should not worry about clothes—God loves us and will clothe us 6:30*
- *Seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness above all else 6:33*

Conclusion: *Jesus wanted people to know that God and His kingdom should be the focus of our lives. Rejoice that God will take care of all our needs!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus rewards people who do the right things for the right reasons.**

Matthew 6 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus explained that God wants our hearts to be right with Him.*

Ask: *How can we be sure we are doing the right things for the right reasons?*

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus talks about people he calls hypocrites (picture 3B.3). These people want others to think they are giving God great gifts, but because their reasons are selfish, they are really only giving God something like a smelly sock. *Why does Jesus say they do this?* Encourage responses A hypocrite doesn't do things for the right reasons. *Is it harder to do the right thing when people are looking or when nobody is around?* When Jesus came, He wanted people to know their hearts were more important to God than their actions.

Read Matthew 6:5-15 (picture 3B.4). Read or recite the Lord's Prayer together. Discuss the different parts of this prayer with the following questions.

- *Worship—Why is worship important? How can you worship God?*
- *Surrender—Do you care about doing what God wants? How can you show God you want to serve Him?*

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- *Asking—What needs can you ask for? How are needs different from wants?*
- *Confession—Why is forgiveness important to God? How can sin be forgiven?*
- *Protection—What kinds of things do we need God's protection from? How can God protect us from temptation?*

Read verses 19-21. Jesus also wants us to learn the right way to think about money and possessions. He used the word "treasures." *What do you think Jesus meant by treasures in heaven? How can you earn these treasures?* Lead children to think about how doing the right things for the right reasons leads to heavenly rewards.

Read verses 25-34. Our memory verse is in there. Did you notice it? Reinforce that seeking God's Kingdom means doing what is important to God and following Jesus' example. *How can we not worry as much as we do? What does Jesus say to do?* (Seek God's Kingdom and trust Him.)

Jesus rewards us when we do the right things for the right reasons. When our hearts are "in the right place," we will pray the right way, earn treasures that wait for us in heaven, and will not have to worry about any of our needs.

2

Big Idea: **Jesus teaches people the best way to live.**

Matthew 7 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus stressed the importance of putting His words into practice.*

Ask: *How does God give us a strong foundation?*

1. Jesus used parables and metaphors to show people the best way to live (picture 3B.5). He wanted people to think of others before themselves.

- *We are not to judge others or we will also be judged* Matthew 7:1
- *Until we acknowledge our own sins, we can't help others* 7:4-5
- *People will reject the Good News—leave them alone when they do* 7:6
- *Ask good things of God and seek His will.* 7:7-8
- *God loves us more than a father loves his child.* 7:11
- *Do to others as you would have them do to you* 7:12

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2. Jesus spoke about pleasing God by doing His will—this leads to security in this life and in the next.

- *Only a few find the way to eternal life.* 7:14
- *What we do shows what is truly in our hearts* 7:17
- *Doing God's will is just as important as acknowledging Jesus* 7:21
- *A wise man hears Jesus' words and applies them.* 7:24
- *He cannot be shaken when trouble comes* (picture 3B.6) 7:25
- *A person who ignores Jesus' words has nothing to stand on.* 7:26-27

Conclusion: *If you give Jesus authority over your life, He will always help you make the right choices. You will always be ready to choose God's way!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus teaches people the best way to live.**

Matthew 7 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus stressed the importance of putting His words into practice.*

Ask: *How does God give us a strong foundation?*

We've been reading Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount. His message was filled with words that show the best way to live (picture 3B.5). Many people struggled with Jesus' teaching because it was different from what the religious leaders had taught for hundreds of years. How do you feel when you have to learn and follow a new rule? Why do you think this was so hard for the people listening to Jesus to understand?

Read Matthew 7:1-29 and let the students follow along in their Bibles. After reading together, assign one portion of the passage to partners. Have the groups investigate their assigned portion and have them explain the passage in their own words, giving a modern-day example to illustrate (picture 3B.6).

What is the same about all the rewards God promises us if we choose His way? What is true about all the consequences? What will be better for us on earth if we follow

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God's way? Remind the children that we must follow all God's rules all the time. Unfortunately, we are all tempted and frequently fail to do this. Fortunately, God forgives us, and we can keep trying!

Jesus wants to show us the best way to live. He wants us to make good choices about how we act and live. Read verses 28-29 while your students follow along. The people who heard Jesus teach said to themselves, "Jesus talks like someone who knows about life! He isn't just reading the Law and trying to figure it out—He sounds like He was the one who made the Law in the first place!" They recognized that Jesus had authority over them.

If you give Jesus authority over your own life, He will always help you make the right choices. Read His Word, pray about your decisions, and put His Word into practice! Then your "house" (your life) will be safe if trouble comes. Then you will always be ready to choose God's way.

2

Big Idea: **Jesus challenges everyone to respond to Him.**

Luke 7 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus never ignored a person in need.*

Ask: *Why do some people reject Jesus while others embrace Him?*

1. A Roman army officer was desperate. His trusted servant was about to die!
 - *Even the Jewish people respected this centurion (picture 3B.7) . . . Luke 7:4-5*
 - *The centurion humbled himself before Jesus 7:6-7*
 - *The man believed in Jesus' authority over all things 7:8*
 - *His faith amazed Jesus, and Jesus healed his servant. 7:9-10*
2. Jesus helped a woman who did not even ask. He cares about our needs.
 - *Jesus encountered a funeral procession in Nain. 7:12*
 - *The mother's grief moved Jesus. 7:13*
 - *He raised the widow's son back to life 7:15*

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3. While in prison, John the Baptist needed Jesus' reassurance.
 - *John sent two men to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah 7:21*
 - *Jesus told John to examine the fruits of His ministry 7:22-23*
 - *Jesus praised John's faithfulness and condemned the people's skepticism . . 7:24-35*
4. Jesus was dining with a Pharisee. A woman arrived who had made bad choices and desperately needed Jesus' forgiveness.
 - *The woman wept at Jesus' feet (picture 3B.8). 7:38*
 - *She wiped His feet with her hair and poured perfume on them 7:38*
 - *Jesus taught the Pharisee about forgiveness 7:41-43*
 - *Jesus forgave the woman's sins 7:48*

Conclusion: *Jesus helped each of these four people, who all responded in different ways. How does your heart respond to Jesus' message?*

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Big Idea: **Jesus challenges everyone to respond to Him.**

Luke 7 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus never ignored a person in need.*

Ask: *Why do some people reject Jesus while others embrace Him?*

Centurion's Servant (Luke 7:1-10)—Some people believe in Jesus (picture 3B.7). A Roman army officer was desperate. His trusted servant was about to die! The officer heard that a Jew named Jesus had healed many people already. The centurion realized that Jesus had command over evil and sickness. He spoke the word, and sickness—or anything—had to obey. The centurion realized that Jesus' power came from God. Most Jews, however, hated Roman soldiers who lived in Israel. Would Jesus help him? The centurion responded to Jesus by completely believing in His incredible power, and Jesus healed the officer's servant!

The Widow's Son (Luke 7:11-17)—Some people praise God for the blessings He gives. Jesus also helped people who did not ask. A widow's only son had just died. In Jesus' time, this was a very difficult situation for a woman because she had no one providing for her. Jesus felt great compassion for this woman and wanted to

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help her because of His great love.

John the Baptist (Luke 7:18-29)—Some people ask Jesus questions. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin! He was also a prophet who lived humbly in the desert, baptizing many people. The king, however, put John in prison, sentenced to die. John desperately wanted to ask Jesus some questions. Since he was in prison, he sent some of his own disciples to find Jesus and ask the questions for him. Many people heard Jesus' answers—and were amazed.

The Sinful Woman (Luke 7:36-50)—Some people humbly worship Jesus (picture 3B.8). Jesus spent time with all kinds of people. The woman in this story was an embarrassment to others because she had committed many sins. But, she loved Jesus and truly wanted forgiveness. She also wanted to worship Him. She knew Jesus was having dinner in a Pharisee's home, so she went there to see Jesus. She was so moved when she saw Him that she cried and cried! Then, she washed Jesus' feet with her tears! She dried his feet with her hair! Finally, she poured perfume on his feet. She didn't even care what others thought.

Like these people, we all respond to Jesus in different ways. You can make Jesus your closest friend by responding to Him in the way that means the most to you.

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Big Idea: **Jesus welcomes people into His family and confronts those who oppose Him.**

Matthew 11:20-30, 12:15-50 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus wants everyone to choose a side—God or Satan.*

Ask: *What can you do to show you are a part of Jesus' family?*

1. Jesus urged everyone to repent and believe in Him.

- *Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have believed* (picture 3B.9) . . . *Matthew 11:21, 23*
- *Jesus can show us His Father* *11:27*
- *Jesus provides rest for the weary* *11:28*

2. Jesus used the Pharisees accusation against them, explaining that any who were not for Him were against Him. (picture 3B.10)

- *The Pharisees accused Jesus of using Satan's power* *12:24*
- *Jesus explained that Satan cannot drive out Satan* *12:26*
- *Jesus declared that everyone chooses sides* *12:30*
- *Jesus reiterated that good and evil come from the heart* *12:35*

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3. Being on Jesus' side includes being part of His family.

- *Those who do not repent will be condemned* *12:41-42*
- *Jesus' earthly family wanted to speak with Him* *12:46*
- *Jesus said that everyone who does God's will are His brothers and sisters* *12:50*

Conclusion: *Someday everyone will have to account for the choices they made. Choose Jesus and you become part of His family!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus welcomes people into His family and confronts those who oppose Him.**

Matthew 11:20-30, 12:15-50 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus wants everyone to choose a side—God or Satan.*

Ask: *What can you do to show you are a part of Jesus' family?*

In today's Bible lesson, Jesus asked people to choose sides. He wanted them to know that Satan was real and that anyone who did not choose Jesus' side was choosing Satan's side, whether they meant to or not. These were very strong words!

Jesus Condemns Cities (Matthew 11:20-24) Jesus traveled all around Israel performing miracles. Many people believed in God because of what they saw, but there were cities full of people who did not believe. Everyone understood Jesus' reference to Tyre and Sidon and the horrible destruction they suffered (picture 3B.9). Jesus said that as evil as those cities were, others would suffer even greater devastation because of their refusal to accept Christ. Today you and I can learn about Jesus because we have the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and other Christians to help us.

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Beelzebul (Matthew 12:22-32) Jesus cast a demon out of a man who could neither speak nor see (picture 3B.10). No one could deny the fact that Jesus had great power! Most people believed that Jesus' power came from God. The Pharisees did not want to admit Jesus was from God, so they tried to convince others that Jesus received His power from Satan.

Sign of Jonah (Matthew 12:38-42) The Pharisees kept pushing Jesus to prove who He was. They asked Him to do a special miracle just for them. But He refused and told them to consider the sign of Jonah instead. He reminded them of the details of Jonah's story—three days in the whale, preaching to Nineveh, and the people repenting. Jesus hoped the Pharisees would soften their hearts like the Ninevites. But they refused and began to plot to kill Jesus. True believers see the resurrection of Jesus after being dead for three days as the greatest proof that Jesus is God.

Read Matthew 12:46-50. Discuss Jesus' definition of family. What examples does He give to define who belongs to His family, or His Kingdom?

Jesus welcomes everyone who wants to be a part of His family, but He's not afraid to confront people who oppose Him.

2

Big Idea: **Jesus discloses secrets about the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Matthew 13 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus told parables to help His followers understand God's Kingdom.*

Ask: *How do parables help you understand God's truth?*

1. Jesus told an important parable about how people receive His message (picture 3B.12). The story was about a sower whose seed fell on four types of soil.
 - *Satan takes the Word away from some people (path/shallow soil) Matthew 13:19*
 - *Other people fall away when trouble comes (rocky soil) 13:21*
 - *Some people let the worries of the world "choke" the Word (thorny soil) . . . 13:22*
 - *Some hear the Word, accept it, and produce a crop (good soil) 13:23*
2. Jesus' parables explain the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven (picture 3B.11).
 - *Good and evil people will mingle until God separates them. 13:41*
 - *God's Kingdom will start out very small and will grow to become very large . . 13:31-32*
 - *God's Kingdom will be invisible at first, but will permeate the earth. 13:33*

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3. Jesus' parables highlight the value and joy of God's Kingdom.
 - *God's Kingdom brings great joy to the one who finds it 13:44*
 - *God's Kingdom is worth giving up everything to possess. 13:46*
 - *God's Word contains many treasures 13:52*

Conclusion: *Jesus wants all His followers to know these secrets about the Kingdom of Heaven. We can find great truths every time we return to Jesus' parables!*

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Big Idea: **Jesus discloses secrets about the Kingdom of Heaven.**

Matthew 13 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus told parables to help His followers understand God's Kingdom.*

Ask: *How do parables help you understand God's truth?*

Before class, write the title of each parable on eight different notecards. Then, on eight new cards, write the Truth and Lesson (in the Teacher Guide) on one card per story.

Even though Jesus was King, His people were not yet ready for Him to rule over them. So, Jesus explained to His followers what would happen now that many Jews had rejected Him. Jesus began teaching truths about God's Kingdom—a Kingdom for all people who let Jesus reign in their hearts.

Jesus used parables to teach (picture 3B.11). Parables are stories about everyday life that teach a spiritual truth. Jesus told parables about familiar items that everyone recognizes. Each one teaches a basic truth to help us understand the Kingdom that Jesus rules over. The parables are some of Jesus' most amazing words.

Storytelling is best when the teller uses great facial expressions, body language, and

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voice intonations. Model this form of storytelling for the children by beginning the lesson today with the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23) (picture 3B.12).

These cards state the main truth and lesson to learn from each of Jesus' parables. Look for the one that best fits the parable of the Sower. Have a volunteer match up The Sower to its truth card on the board. Read the truth and lesson aloud and discuss how they apply to our lives.

Divide the children into seven groups and assign each group a parable to tell. Let them read the story from the Bible at least four times and then practice telling it in their own words several more times. They can add their own interesting details to the story, as long as they don't change the central truth in any way. Take turns sharing stories and matching the Truth Cards after each parable is finished.

What a great job you did telling Jesus' parables! Jesus wanted all His followers to know these secrets about the Kingdom of Heaven. Every time you read them you will probably learn something new. I learned new things even today! Discuss any of your own thoughts. Be sure to share your favorite parables with your family and friends this week!

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Big Idea: **Jesus inspires faith that conquers every fear.**

Luke 8:22—9:9 [outline form]

Intro: *The Holy Spirit gives us courage when we believe in Jesus Christ.*

Ask: *How can faith help you overcome fear?*

1. Jesus' miracles saved the disciples and a man in torment (picture 3B.13).
 - *Jesus calmed a raging storm* Luke 8:24
 - *Jesus rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith.* 8:25
 - *Jesus cast demons from a man they had tormented for years.* 8:29
 - *The man told everyone how Jesus had save him* 8:39
2. Jesus healed people in response to their faith (picture 3B.14).
 - *A woman secretly touched Jesus and was healed* 8:44
 - *Jesus told her that her faith had healed her* 8:48
 - *A man's daughter died, but Jesus told the man to believe in Him.* 8:50
 - *While people laughed at Him, Jesus raised the girl to life* 8:53-55

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3. Jesus sent His twelve disciples among the people, asking them to have faith in His power.
 - *Jesus gave them power and authority in His name* 9:1
 - *He sent the disciples out to preach and heal the sick* 9:2
 - *He told them to take nothing on their journey—to rely on God* 9:3-4
 - *The disciples preached and healed the sick* 9:6

Conclusion: *Jesus showed the power of faith—to overcome fear, heal the sick, and even raise the dead to life! What an amazing gift from God!*

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Big Idea: **Jesus inspires faith that conquers every fear.**

Luke 8:22—9:9 [narrative form]

Intro: *The Holy Spirit gives us courage when we believe in Jesus Christ.*

Ask: *How can faith help you overcome fear?*

Today children will answer questions from corresponding Bible passages. The questions are written in graduated difficulty; the easier questions are worth fewer points than the questions that require higher-level thinking (see Teacher Guide).

Jesus came to tell us that when we have faith in Him, He will calm all our fears.

Jesus Calms the Storm (Luke 8:22-25) (picture 3B.13) *Who was in the boat with Jesus? Summarize this story in two sentences. If you could interview the disciples, what two questions would you ask? Why were the disciples filled with amazement at what Jesus had done? Describe a real-life fear that makes you feel like the disciples did on the boat. Explain how your fear is similar and how Jesus might help “calm your storm.”*

Jesus Heals the Demon-Possessed Man (Luke 8:26-39) *What was wrong with the man who met Jesus? Explain what Jesus did with the demons He cast out of the man.*

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Why was the crowd that gathered around Jesus afraid? Who did the demons recognize Jesus to be? If you were in the crowd this day, what judgment would you make about Jesus? Explain your answer.

Jesus Heals in Response to Faith (Luke 8:40-56) (picture 3B.14) *Where does this story take place? How did the crowd receive Jesus? Why was Peter confused as to how Jesus knew someone touched His robe? Why did the woman become afraid after touching Jesus' robe? Why do you think Jesus raised the girl from the dead?*

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve (Luke 9:1-9) *What spiritual power did Jesus give His disciples? What were the disciples supposed to take with them as they traveled around sharing the Good News? What were the disciples supposed to do if they were not received in a village? Imagine you were one of the disciples. What two questions would you ask Jesus before going out to share His Word in the villages? Why was Herod confused?*

Jesus told people many times to not be afraid. He knew His Father in heaven was in control of everything. *How can Jesus help you when you are afraid? How does having faith in Jesus help with our fear? Never forget—when your faith is in the right place, there is nothing to fear!*

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Big Idea: **Jesus shows that right attitudes lead to right actions.**

Matthew 15 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus wants us to make sure our hearts are right with God.*

Ask: *Why is it important to start with a clean heart?*

1. Jesus taught about what truly makes a person clean or unclean.
 - *The Pharisees were upset at the disciples' "unclean" hands Matthew 15:2*
 - *Jesus exposed the Pharisees' hypocrisy (picture 3B.15) 15:3-7*
 - *Jesus said that only our hearts can make us unclean before God. 15:19-20*
2. Jesus knew the heart of a Gentile woman. He helped her while teaching His disciples a valuable lesson about faith.
 - *The Gentile woman begged for Jesus to heal her daughter 15:22*
 - *The disciples wanted her to leave them alone 15:23*
 - *Jesus tested her faith in front of His disciples (picture 3B.16) 15:24-26*
 - *Jesus rewarded her faith by healing her daughter 15:28*

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3. Jesus tested His disciples' faith—and found them wanting.
 - *A great crowd of more than 4,000 people followed Jesus for healing 15:30, 38*
 - *Jesus asked His disciples to feed the people 15:32*
 - *The disciples did not see how they could feed so many 15:33*
 - *Jesus fed the crowd in a similar way that He'd fed the 5,000 15:36-38*

Conclusion: *Jesus shows that our hearts—our attitudes and thoughts—need to be right with God before we can pursue godly deeds. Pray that God will clean your hearts with His perfect love and forgiveness!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus shows that right attitudes lead to right actions.**

Matthew 15 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus wants us to make sure our hearts are right with God.*

Ask: *Why is it important to start with a clean heart?*

Read Matthew 15:1-20 (picture 3B.15). *What is the biggest difference between man-made rules and God's rules? Are all man-made rules bad?* The people were confused. They had been taught that dirty hands were a sin against God. But Jesus told them that dirty hands would not keep them from heaven. A dirty heart, however—a heart full of lies and wicked thoughts—is not acceptable to God. God will clean our hearts when we sin and ask forgiveness, but we should also do all we can to keep our hearts clean before God.

Now read Matthew 15:21-28 (picture 3B.16). Most Jews thought that Gentile (non-Jewish) people were unclean. This was based on tradition, not the Bible. Jews believed that God loved only them. All other people were no better than the dogs that roamed the streets. Because of this tradition, Jewish people did not become friends with Gentiles. They were prejudiced.

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When Jesus met the Canaanite woman, He tested her faith. Jesus pretended that He was just like one of the other Jewish teachers. He acted as if He did not care about her. Jesus pretended that she was not important.

Was Jesus prejudiced? No! He knew that Gentiles were just as important to God as the Jews. He spoke with the woman that way to teach His disciples a lesson. He wanted them to see that this man-made tradition was wrong.

What did Jesus' lesson show about her heart? Although He seemed to treat her harshly compared to His usual gentle ways, He had a purpose. He wanted to show the disciples how ugly this tradition really was. He also wanted her to see what was in her heart. Faith was hiding there. *Is faith important to God? Why did the woman think a "crumb" of Jesus' power was enough to heal her daughter?*

Finally, read Matthew 15:29-39. After a day of teaching, Jesus pointed out to His disciples that the people were hungry. *Why do you think Jesus repeated this miracle?*

In all these cases, Jesus was showing us that right attitudes lead to right actions. He always wants us to start with what is inside—the things we think and feel—and make sure those are right with God before we act out our faith.

2

Big Idea: **Jesus reveals His true identity and plan.**

Matthew 16 [outline form]

Intro: *It was time for Jesus to reveal who He was and why He had come.*

Ask: *How important was the Messiah to the Jewish people?*

1. The Pharisees pressed Jesus for a sign, but He refused (picture 3B.17).
 - *Jesus said they could not read the signs of the times Matthew 16:3*
 - *They would be given only the sign of Jonah (His death and resurrection). . . . 16:4*
 - *Jesus warned His disciples about the teaching of the Pharisees 16:12*
2. God revealed an amazing truth through Peter (picture 3B.18).
 - *Jesus asked His disciples who people were saying He was 16:13*
 - *They replied—John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah 16:14*
 - *Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” 16:15*
 - *Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of God.” 16:16*
 - *Jesus blessed Peter and foretold of his role in the Church 16:17-18*

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3. Jesus predicted His end on earth. He explained the costs and rewards of following Him.

- *Jesus prophesied how He would be killed and raised to life 16:21*
- *Peter balked, and Jesus reprimanded him 16:22-23*
- *Jesus explained that following Him costs all that we have 16:24*
- *Following Jesus brings eternal life and heavenly reward 16:25-27*

Conclusion: *Jesus was the King that the Jews had been waiting for—He is our eternal King, also! Respond with reverence, enthusiasm, and awe!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus reveals His true identity and plan.**

Matthew 16 [narrative form]

Intro: *It was time for Jesus to reveal who He was and why He had come.*

Ask: *How important was the Messiah to the Jewish people?*

The Jewish people were expecting the Messiah—a King/Ruler who had been promised since early in Israel’s history. Moses mentioned Him. David prophesied about Him. The prophets predicted He would come. But the wait had been long. When this person came, the Jews wanted a sign from God that He was the Promised One.

By this time in Jesus’ ministry, many people wondered about Him. Most knew Jesus was someone special from God, but no one really understood how special He was.

Question #1: You are the president of a club at school. You realize a new student wants to be the leader of the group instead of you. You are determined to keep him out. *What would you say and do to keep him out of the group?* Now read Matthew 16:1-4. (picture 3B.17) *Why did the religious leaders treat Jesus this way? Why did He remind them of the sign of Jonah? What makes these two scenarios similar?*

1

Question #2: *If you knew you had a really bad teacher, what would you do?* Read Matthew 16:5-12. Explain how a little yeast causes a lot of bread to rise and change. *How is a bad teacher like yeast? Why did Jesus warn the disciples about false teachers? What makes these two scenarios similar?*

Question #3: Describe something that you know well but you cannot remember learning. Read Matthew 16:13-20. (picture 3B.18) *Is it easy or hard to just know something without any teaching? Why? How did Peter know Jesus was the Son of God? What makes these two scenarios similar?*

Question #4: You show up for a karate class and everyone is goofing off. *Would you learn any karate? Would your karate teacher be happy?* Read Matthew 16:21-28. *Why does Jesus say we must take up our cross to follow Him? Why can’t we be disciples by just having fun all the time? Is following Jesus more important than doing things the easy way?*

Jesus challenges all of us to deny ourselves and follow Him. That means dying to our selfish desires and trading them in for God’s desires. But the rewards in heaven will be great. Following Jesus is worth more than anything in the whole world!

2

Big Idea: **Jesus displays His greatness and knowledge to His disciples.**

Matthew 17 [outline form]

Intro: *Jesus showed His glory to a few of His closest friends.*

Ask: *What does the Transfiguration tell us about Jesus?*

1. Jesus took Peter, John, and James to a solitary place, where He confirmed a special secret.

- *Jesus' body changed—His face and clothes shone with light Matthew 17:2*
- *Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke with Jesus (picture 3B.19) 17:3*
- *Peter wanted to stay there and worship 17:4*
- *The Father spoke from heaven, calling Jesus His Son 17:5*
- *Jesus warned them not to say anything until later. 17:9*

2. Jesus healed a demon-possessed boy.

- *The disciples had been unable to cast out the spirit. 17:16*
- *Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy. 17:18*
- *Jesus illustrates the power of true faith. 17:20*

1

3. Jesus submitted to humanity's authority while showing He had authority over all creation (picture 3B.20).

- *The tax collectors asked Peter for the annual Temple tax 17:24*
- *Jesus chose to pay the tax, even though He was exempt 17:25-27*
- *Jesus instructed Peter to catch a fish with both their taxes inside it. 17:27*

Conclusion: *Jesus is more than just the Christ—He is God's Son with all of God's power and authority! Worship His majesty!*

2

Big Idea: **Jesus displays His greatness and knowledge to His disciples.**

Matthew 17 [narrative form]

Intro: *Jesus showed His glory to a few of His closest friends.*

Ask: *What does the Transfiguration tell us about Jesus?*

Invite the children to get comfortable and close their eyes so they can concentrate on what you will tell them to imagine. Pretend you are a beautiful bush sitting almost near the top of a mountain. Would you have flowers or fruit? Look around and notice all the colors and details of the mountain's peak. Now look down the mountainside. You see four men hiking up the path. They stop to rest in the shade you provide. One of the men walks on up to the peak while the others wait near you. The man's face suddenly shines brightly. Take a moment to stare in wonder at the sight. What does it look like? What do the men sitting in your shade do or say? Now look and you see two more men standing with the first. They just appeared! Can you imagine that? What does the rest of the mountaintop look like now? A cloud suddenly covers everything, and a loud voice is heard all over the mountain peak. Now open your eyes. Read Matthew 17:1-13 (picture 3B.19). "Transfigured" means transformed or changed.

The three disciples saw the true Jesus for the first time.

1

Now close your eyes again and pretend you are a little bird. You have landed on a tree, and there is a great crowd of people below you. One of the men is kneeling. He is begging for something. People bring a young boy who is struggling and shouting! They have to hold his arms so that he won't hit them! A man with authority speaks to the boy, and he calms down instantly! The crowd is amazed. Now, open your eyes. Read Matthew 17:14-23. Jesus rebuked the disciples as well as the crowd for their lack of faith, and then He immediately drove the demons out of the boy.

Close your eyes one more time, and this time imagine you are a fish! You are swimming with your school in the cool, dark waters of the Sea of Galilee. Many thousands of other fish like you swim the whole lake! You see your schoolmate swim over to a worm moving through the water. That fish will eat anything! Miles away from here he even ate a shiny round coin as it flipped through the water. Suddenly that fish is pulled up and out of the water. You peek your head in the air to look. A man is standing near the shore, with your schoolmate in his hands. The man opens the fish's mouth and pulls out the shiny coin! He raises his head to heaven as he places your schoolmate back in the water and lets him swim away. Now, open your eyes. Read Matthew 17:24-27 (picture 3B.20). The odds that the first fish Peter caught would have a coin in its mouth, and not just any coin—a four-drachma coin—were a million-to-one!

2

Big Idea: **Jesus measures greatness by a person's humility, caring, and forgiveness.**

Matthew 18 [outline form]

Intro: *God's view of greatness is very different from the world's view.*

Ask: *How can you be great in God's eyes?*

1. Jesus surprised His disciples when they asked Him who would be greatest in God's Kingdom (picture 3B.21).

- *Jesus explained that we must become humble like children . . . Matthew 18:3-4*
- *Welcoming children in Jesus' name pleases God 18:5*
- *Causing a child to stray is a great offense to God 18:6*
- *Children are protected by God's angels. 18:10*

2. Jesus told a moving parable about the love God has for humanity.

- *A shepherd will leave ninety-nine sheep to find one that is lost 18:12*
- *He rejoices at finding the one lost sheep (picture 3B.22). 18:13*
- *This is the same way God cares for His children. 18:14*

1

3. Jesus explained how His disciples should resolve conflicts.

- *Go first to the person who has wronged you 18:15*
- *If he will not listen, bring one or two others to speak to him 18:16*
- *If he still will not listen, bring your grievance to the church. 18:17*

4. Jesus taught Peter how God commands us to forgive.

- *A servant owed a great debt, but his master forgave it. 18:25-27*
- *This same servant refuse to forgive the debt of his peer. 18:30*
- *The master heard of his servant's hard heart and punished him 18:33-34*
- *We are to forgive others, because God has forgiven us 18:35*

Conclusion: *Jesus measures greatness by our humility, caring, and forgiveness of others. We can all be great in God's eyes—the only eyes that really matter!*

2

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Intro: *God's view of greatness is very different from the world's view.*

Ask: *How can you be great in God's eyes?*

Read Matthew 18:1-4 (picture 3B.21). Jesus taught that unless people change and become like little children, they would never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Children who are humble are great in God's eyes. *What does humble mean?* Greatness comes when we humble ourselves and trust God for everything.

Read Matthew 18:5-9. Welcoming a little child is like welcoming Jesus. According to Jewish law, children had no rights. Children were not very important. Jesus did not agree. He told His disciples how much God really cares for children. Great people take sin very seriously both in their own lives and in the lives of others. People who care about the lost want to be good examples to honor God.

Read Matthew 18:10-14 (picture 3B.22). *What does the parable teach us about*

1

God? God rejoices greatly when someone repents sincerely. Great people seek out those who need God, just like the Good Shepherd did.

Read Matthew 18:15-20. When a Christian sins in a way that hurts you, what should you do? Jesus told His followers how to help another Christian who has sinned. See Teacher Guide for steps.

Jesus told His disciples a story to help them understand the importance of forgiveness. Read Matthew 18:21-35. The master in this story is like God. The first servant represents a person who had committed 10,000 major sins. Yet God forgave every one. The next servant represents a person who had sinned in 100 minor ways. In spite of the great forgiveness shown by the master to the first servant, he was not willing to forgive his fellow servant even a small amount. Why is forgiveness so important to God?

This chapter is all about greatness in people. How are children great? (Humility, simple faith) *What does the parable about the sheep tell us about greatness?* (Great people care about others who need God.) *How can we find greatness through forgiveness?* (We must forgive others as God forgives us.) Jesus measures greatness by our humility, caring, and forgiveness of others. We can all be great in God's eyes—the only eyes that really matter!

2

Big Idea: **Jesus invites people to believe in Him and to receive living water (the Holy Spirit).**

John 7 [outline form]

Intro: *As the Jewish people prayed for salvation, Jesus offered Himself.*

Ask: *How is the Holy Spirit like “living water?”*

1. It was the Feast of Tabernacles, when God’s people celebrated His protection, care, and deliverance in the desert (picture 3B.23).

- *Jesus’ brothers wanted Him to perform miracles* John 7:3
- *They did not believe in Him* (picture 3B.24) 7:5
- *Jesus was waiting for the right time to offer Himself* 7:6

2. Jesus’ teaching stirred up the crowd during the celebration.

- *Everyone was talking about Him among themselves* 7:12-13
- *Jesus explained that His teaching was God’s teaching* 7:16
- *Many people debated whether Jesus was the Messiah* 7:20, 26, 31

①

3. On the greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and made a startling proclamation.

- *Jesus offered Himself to anyone who was thirsty* 7:37
- *Anyone who believes in Jesus receives living water.* 7:38
- *This living water is the Holy Spirit* 7:39
- *Jesus’ words amazed some and angered others* 7:43-44

Conclusion: *Jesus is our salvation—He offers us living water by the power of His Spirit. Praise God that we have the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us!*

②

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John 7 [narrative form]

Intro: *As the Jewish people prayed for salvation, Jesus offered Himself.*

Ask: *How is the Holy Spirit like “living water?”*

Here I am at the Feast of the Tabernacles (picture 3B.23). This is my favorite time of year! We are celebrating the harvest and praising God for the many times He has provided all we needed. Have you heard about Jesus coming to the festival? Everyone has a different opinion about who He is and why He is here. Let’s look at some of the stories.

We know that Jesus’ words were the truth. Let’s see what people thought. Read John 7:1-9 (picture 3B.24). What was Jesus’ brothers’ point of view about Him and the festival? What was Jesus’ point of view about His brothers and the festival? Read John 7:10-36. Let’s find examples of Jesus’ and Jewish leaders’ points of view. Now let’s go back over this same passage and find the crowd’s differing views.

①

Now it is time for my favorite ritual. The priest is carrying the golden pitcher from the Pool of Siloam. He is taking it to the Temple. It is full of water. Water is very important to us. During this feast, we remember how my people, the Israelites, wandered in a desert for 40 years! God miraculously provided water for them to drink whenever they needed it! Now, many years later, during the Feast of Tabernacles, we have a special tradition using water to celebrate the time when God helped the Israelites in the desert. The priest comes through the water gate, and we all shout the words of Isaiah: “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation!” (Isaiah 12:3.)

Every day the priest has poured the water from the pitcher into a silver basin on the altar. We shout and sing praises to God about His salvation. Hey, wait a minute. That man Jesus is standing up and shouting. What is He saying?

Read John 7:37-38. Wow. Jesus promised to give the crowd living water, the kind where they would never be thirsty again. And right in the middle of the water ritual! What do you think Jesus meant by living water?

Read John 7:37-52. People back then were confused and didn’t “do their homework.” They didn’t know Jesus was really born in Bethlehem. Jesus was declaring himself their Savior right when they were thinking and singing about salvation!

②