LESSON 1/December 28–January 3, 2014

Disciples and Scripture

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course

The students will:
▶ Discuss the role of Scripture in the life of Jesus.
▶ Discuss the role of Scripture in their own lives—not only the ideal, but the way they live right now.
▶ Set tangible goals for daily Bible study and for accountability within the group.

Preparing to Lead

When Jesus came to Earth, there was no denying His passion and excitement for God’s Word. Not only had He come to fulfill Scripture, but He came to explain it further and to live its truth in His daily life.

As disciples of Jesus, we cannot neglect to dive deep into the Bible. Doing so is an integral part of our daily walk with Him. Through studying the Word, we learn more about the nature of God and draw ever closer to Him.

Getting Started

A. After opening prayer, hand out the reproducible activity (p. 31). Give students several minutes to begin filling out the Know and Want to Learn columns of the chart.

Ask the students to share aloud the things they already know about the Bible. Then ask them to share things they want to learn.

Discuss this week’s texts with the class, and ask if they learned anything this week that is in their Know column.

B. After opening prayer, have different class members read through the verses from this week’s Logos section (Matt. 5:17–40; Luke 4:1–12; John 10:34–37; Eph. 6:10–18; 2 Pet. 3:11–13).

On the whiteboard, list characteristics of Scripture and/or those people who spend time devoted to Scripture.

Discuss other places in Scripture/other biblical characters who displayed the same characteristics.

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “Understanding Christ’s approach to Scripture will help us realize its place in our own lives.” Next, have the class read aloud Matthew 5:17–40, Luke 4:1–12, and John 10:34–37. Then lead the class in a discussion of the value Jesus placed on Scripture during His time on earth.

Make a list with two columns on the whiteboard. In the first column, list ways Jesus showed the importance of Scripture with specific references from the texts. In the second column, write practical ways we can apply these lessons to our lives.

Materials
whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart, and appropriate markers; pens or pencils; paper; Bible; Bible concordances
Have members copy the lists on either a blank piece of paper or on the back of this week’s reproducible activity (p. 31).

This chart will be a good way to remember the importance of God’s Word, as exemplified by Jesus.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What lessons can we learn from studying about how Jesus lived and treated Scripture?
2. Using the list of characteristics from Section B in this week’s Getting Started section, decide what characteristic(s) you see in yourself. In what area(s) do you desire to see more growth?
3. During which specific times each day could you incorporate Bible reading? How can you rearrange your day to make time?
4. In what specific ways have you been putting on the whole armor of God each day (Eph. 6:10–18)? If this is not something you have been doing, how can you make some changes so it is a priority?
5. What are some resources you can use if you need help clarifying and understanding what you read in the Bible? Who are some people you can turn to?
6. Once you have a stronger knowledge of the Bible, how will you react when you hear others using verses out of context or teaching from it incorrectly?

**Closing the Activity**

*Ask/Discuss:* “Now that you have all of this good news from Scripture, what are you going to do with it?”

Have the class share ways how adding Scripture to their lives will not only impact themselves, but others.

Encourage the class to pray for each other through the coming weeks that when an opportunity arises to share Jesus and/or Scripture with someone, they will be bold!

Close with prayer.

**Allison Sauceda, Centerville, Ohio, U.S.A.**
Learning More About the Bible—KWL Chart

Use the KWL (Know, Want to Learn, Learned) chart below for your Bible studies. Chart what you already know through previous study (Know column), set some tangible learning goals for yourself (Want to Learn column), and be sure to chart your progress (Learned column). Enjoy diving into the Word!

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Discipling Through Metaphor

Surveying the Source
Gal. 3:28; Ephesians 1.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Know how to use metaphors and stories to draw others into a closer relationship with Jesus.
► Be able to witness to their faith even in unfriendly environments.
► Learn to think of creative ways to draw the minds of others to God.

Preparing to Lead
The human mind thinks in story form. When we communicate with others, we tell stories. The Wizard of Oz is a story, but so in some sense is the theory of relativity. Some stories may be true. Some may not really have happened in quite the way they are told, but they nevertheless teach us deeper truths or lessons.

Even the most inconsequential stories aim at motivating us toward certain actions or emotional responses.

Jesus was well aware of the power of stories. His parables tended to force His listeners to think and then to act on those thoughts. Today, His parables continue to teach the truths of His kingdom and what we should expect from ourselves as His disciples.

Getting Started
A. Say: “A simile is to say that something is like something else, while a metaphor describes something as being something else. Everyday language depends on similes and metaphors.”

Ask for some examples of metaphors used in daily speech or communication.

Ask: “Why are these metaphors and similes so effective in getting us to think in new ways, or in helping us to communicate thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and truths to others?”

B. Find a story in which the characters or objects represent specific concepts, ideas, or attitudes (see Getting Started, Part B)

Delving Into the Word
A. Ask your class to look up these texts: Matthew 5:13–16; 13:1–9; 10–17; 21:23–45; Mark 4:2–22; John 6:1–4. If it is too cumbersome to have each member look up each of the texts, assign one text to each student. Pass out the reproducible
activity (p. 32) for the students to record their thoughts and impressions about these texts as you explore them.

Jesus spoke in parables to all of these different audiences and groups. Ask your class to note the differences in approach He used for these diverse segments of society. For example, He didn’t speak to random crowds of people in the same way He spoke to His own disciples. And both approaches differed from His efforts to engage opponents, as in Matthew 21:23–45.

Ask: ●“Why did Jesus sometimes unpack the meanings of His parables, and other times leave the audience to absorb them on their own?” ●“What are the lessons for us as we try to reach the world with Christ’s message?”

B. Look at the texts mentioned in the previous option. Have class members look them up. Pass out the reproducible activity (p. 32) for students to record their thoughts and impressions.

Read each of the parables in context. Ask: ●“In what ways are they similar?” ●“In what ways are they different? ●“How does each parable explore different aspects of the same message?”

Emphasize that even though the gospel is the same for all, we each view it in different ways based upon our background, experiences, etc.

Have class members share which parable or story in the Bible they find most meaningful and why.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why are truths and principles often more memorable when delivered as parables than when presented as declarative statements or pronouncements?
2. Where else in the Bible have prophets or servants of God used object lessons to express the messages He wanted them to bring to His people? (Some possible examples: Ezek. 4:3–13; Hos.1:1–2:1.)
3. Jesus sometimes used parables to hide the plain meaning of His teachings (Matt. 13:11–15). Why would He do this?
4. Why is it sometimes beneficial to force people to do the work of interpreting parables? Why do we sometimes appreciate truth more when we have to struggle for it a bit?
5. Even the most compelling images and narratives can become clichés. How can we keep the truths of the kingdom of heaven fresh, both for ourselves and for those to whom we present them?
6. If Jesus’ message can be described as many stories with one lesson, how would you summarize that lesson?
7. Do you understand some of Jesus’ parables differently or more deeply than you did as a child? If so, how?

Closing the Activity

Emphasize that Jesus’ parables and stories, and those found elsewhere in the Bible, are meant to help us better understand the truths of God’s kingdom in ways that might not be possible with straightforward exposition of facts and doctrines. If we pay attention, we will not only have one “aha! moment,” but many such moments over the course of our lives.

Encourage the students to continue to prayerfully reread and think about the parables of Jesus as they move through the coming week, and to take note of—and even record—the new insights and thoughts that come to them.

Alan Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.
EXPLORING JESUS’ PARABLES

Record your thoughts and impressions about the following texts as you explore them.

Matthew 5:13‒16

Matthew 13:1–9

Matthew 13:10–17

Matthew 21:23‒45

Mark 4:2–22

John 6:1–4
Discipleship and Prayer

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
  The students will:
  ► Explore the connections between prayer and discipleship as well as the practical applications of using prayer in the discipleship process.
  ► Gain a deeper understanding of the intercessory prayers given as examples in the lesson and be able to use them as models in their own personal prayers.
  ► Become inspired to be more intentional about their own spiritual discipleship process as well as the value of mentoring others in that process.

Preparing to Lead
  Contemplate for your own study (and to share with the class if you wish) the following comment by Ellen White about intercessory prayer:
  “Today it is still His purpose to sanctify and cleanse His church ’. . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing’ . . . (Ephesians 5:26, 27). No greater gift than the character that He revealed, can Christ ask His Father to bestow upon those who believe on Him. . . . What fullness of grace every follower of Christ has the privilege of receiving! . . . By wearing His yoke and learning of Him, we become like Him in aspiration, in meekness and lowliness, in fragrance of character.”

Getting Started
  A. Either assign or let each class member choose from one of two quotes at the top of the reproducible sheet (p. 33). For quote #1, ask, “How does this relate to the discipleship process?” For quote #2, ask, “How does this relate to prayer?” Allow everyone some time to think about their answers. Then have them discuss their answers in groups of two or three.
  Next, allow time for them to share the responses with the rest of the class.

  B. Divide the class into small groups of three to six. Give each group time to brainstorm and write down at least three answers to this question, “Why is prayer important in the discipleship process?” After each team has a list, have someone go up to the whiteboard and draw the answers on their list. Have the other teams guess what the person is drawing. See which team can guess the most answers.

Delving Into the Word
  A. Choose one of the intercessory prayers discussed in Sunday’s lesson: Daniel 9:1–19; John 17; Eph. 1:15–21. Read the Bible passage/s aloud and then discuss the following: ●“Who is praying and why is he praying?” ●“What are the specifics...
of the request(s)?” ●“What might be the motivation of the prayer?” ●“In what specific ways can we use this prayer as a model for our own intercessory prayers?”

B. Choose one of the intercessory prayers discussed in Sunday’s lesson: Daniel 9:1–19; John 17; Eph. 1:15–21. Read the Bible passage aloud.

Divide the class into groups of two or three and spend time in intercessory prayer using the model you have chosen.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why are some people uncomfortable with prayer? What are some of the distractions that keep us from more frequent and focused prayer? What are some other reasons why we don’t pray more?

2. Have someone read Matthew 14:22, 23 aloud. Discuss how Jesus’ prayer life is relevant to us today.

3. Why is intercessory prayer important?

4. How can we know what to pray for when we pray for others?

5. What are some creative ways to have more focused, meaningful prayers? (See Friday’s lesson for some additional ideas.)

6. What advice can you give someone who feels his or her prayer life is dead?

7. Without criticizing, discuss how you feel about prayer meeting. What are some ideas to make it even more meaningful? What would make you want to invite your friends? How can you get involved?

8. Share with the class some resources about prayer that might be helpful—books, magazine articles, Web sites, etc.

**Closing the Activity**

Summarize for the class the connections between prayer and discipleship—for each of us in our own spiritual walk as well as in mentoring others in the discipleship process. Pass out the reproducible activity (p. 33). Allow some time for anyone who feels comfortable to share. Start with one or two of your own answers.

Close with prayer.

**Christy Gusse, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.**

Quotes About Prayer and Discipleship

**Quote #1:** “Prayer is the answer to every problem in life. It puts us in tune with divine wisdom which knows how to adjust everything perfectly. So often we do not pray in certain situations, because from our standpoint the outlook is hopeless. But, nothing is impossible with God. Nothing is so entangled that it cannot be remedied; no human relationship is too strained for God to bring about reconciliation and understanding; no habit so deep rooted that it cannot be overcome; no one is so weak that he cannot be strong; no one is so ill that he cannot be healed. No mind is so dull it cannot be made brilliant. Whatever we need, if we trust God, He will supply it. If anything is causing worry or anxiety, let us stop rehearsing the difficulty and trust God for healing, love, and power.” (Review and Herald, October 7, 1965; author unknown).

**Quote #2:** “Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned. More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.” (Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ, “The Test of Discipleship,” pp. 62, 63).

Personal Prayer Evaluation

Write answers to the following questions about prayer, being as honest as possible. This is for your eyes only unless you choose to share.

1. How often do you pray?

2. How often do you pray for others?

3. Does your mind tend to wander when you pray? If so, why do you think that is?

4. What practical applications can you take into your own prayer life from the prayers we studied in the lesson?

5. As a result of studying this lesson, what else is the Holy Spirit trying to teach you about your prayer life?

6. How is God leading you right now in the discipleship process, and how can prayer help you currently in your spiritual journey?
Discipling Children

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Appreciate the Bible’s inclusiveness of children and young people in the big story of God.
► Explore biblical examples and instructions regarding discipleship in the lives and training of children.
► Consider how they can encourage and support children in their church and community.

Preparing to Lead

When Jesus announced that “‘the Kingdom of Heaven is near’” (Matt. 10:7, NLT), He was indicating a different kind of kingdom—a kingdom in which often the smallest and the weakest were actually the most important and valued (see Matt. 13:31, 32 and 18:1–4). In Jesus’ view, this included valuing children in ways that surprised and challenged both His disciples and critics. Children were often undervalued in the ancient world. However, the Bible is consistent in its respect for their faith and humility, and for their potential as disciples of God.

Getting Started

A. Ask students to think about a person they regard as the most important or most positive influence in their lives. It might be a parent, teacher, youth leader, pastor or some other significant adult in their lives when they were younger. What do they admire or respect about that person or see in them that encourages them?

B. The Bible tells us only a little about Jesus’ childhood, most of which is summarized in Luke 2:40–52. However, we have additional insights in Chapter 7 of The Desire of Ages or Messiah. Have copies of these books or photocopies of this chapter available for the students to review. Focus on the three or four paragraphs of the chapter which summarize the foundational aspects of Jesus’ childhood that would be expressed in His ministry. (Or ask one or two students to read this chapter before the class and share the highlights they discovered.) Ask: “Is this only about Jesus, or what we can learn for our lives today?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Ask the students to think of stories about children or young people in the Bible. (Remember to include stories of Bible heroes, who began serving God...
while still young, such as Samuel, David, Josiah, or Jesus. Other suggestions could include the little maid in Naaman’s story and the little boy who provided his lunch for feeding 5,000 people.)

List the suggestions on a whiteboard. Have a Bible concordance or Bible dictionary available to help students locate the specific stories in the Bible so they can pinpoint the specifics of the stories.

For each of the stories, ask the students the following: ●“What made the child or young person in the story want to make a difference?” ●“Who or what were influences in that child’s life (if known)?” ●“How did God use the child?” ●“What was the result of the child’s faithfulness?” ●“Why do you think God used a child or young person in each situation rather than an older person?”

B. Have members of the class read Deuteronomy 6:1–9. Explain how this is a foundational text for faithful Jews even today and, if possible, show pictures of orthodox Jews literally wearing the text on their foreheads and writing them on their doorposts. Ask: ●“These instructions are meant to be taken literally. What are the benefits of something literal and physical such as this? What might be the disadvantages or distractions that come with literal practice of these verses? Point out that the practices described have a particular focus on children and teaching them to follow God in their lives, primarily by the example of their parents and other mentors. Using the reproducible activity (p. 34), encourage students to write a prayer for a child in their church and to give it to that child. (Perhaps you could plan to have a list of children from a primary or junior Sabbath School class and ask students to choose one child or more to write to, so as many children are included as possible). Pray as a group for these children and then arrange to deliver these written prayers to them.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why is it easy to overlook children when we think about faith and the church? How might we sometimes unwittingly stand between children and Jesus?
2. Why do you think Jesus seemed to enjoy being with children?
3. What do you think is the most important aspect of teaching children about our faith and what we believe?
4. How would you explain the relationship between love and discipline in the parent–child relationship? How is this similar to God’s relationship with us?
5. Read Proverbs 22:6. How does this promise fit with a young person’s freedom to choose?
6. How can those of us who are not parents be positive influences in the lives of children and young adults?
7. How does your church include children and young people in its worship services, community outreach, and decision-making? How might it be able to include more of its youngest members?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “Reaching children was a part of Jesus’ earthly ministry. And so it should be for us as a church and as individuals.

“In recent years, much research has emphasized the importance of discipleship for children. This research highlights the significant life-long impact that instructing them in discipleship can have. This means we should prioritize ministry resources for children, both in the church and in the wider community.

“Ministering to children should be a priority for us as a church and for us as individuals. Let us creatively and caringly bring children to Jesus. He insisted that it be so, even despite His disciples’ objections.”

**Nathan Brown, Warburton, Victoria, Australia**
Dear _______________________,

You matter to God and you matter to your church family. I am praying that you . . .

God loves you and has a plan for your life. May you grow to know more and more that “the Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength” (Deut. 6:4, 5, NLT).

Thank you for being part of our church family.

Signed:
The CQ Class
Discipling the Sick

Surveying the Source
Matt. 8:1–14.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Discover ways to engage people spiritually during an illness.
► Identify ways in which experiencing illness can bring us closer to God.
► Recognize their role in their own physical and spiritual health.

Preparing to Lead
Recently I learned of a friend who was diagnosed with cancer. At the same time, he was struggling with issues of self-worth and doubt, wondering if he was of any value to his family and to God.
Have you ever wondered whether it is worse to be physically sick or spiritually sick? There are examples of both in this week’s lesson. Perhaps one could even lead to the other. There’s an old children’s song that talks about a Christian being just like a sermon in shoes. Is it possible that we can not only disciple the sick in our good health, but from our sick bed as well?

Getting Started
A. Ask for a show of hands of those who have ever been involved in a singing band that visited the sick in a hospital or nursing home.
   Create a list of the different ways they ministered/witnessed to the patients (for example: singing, prayer, greeting cards, etc.).
   Ask: “Which ways were more effective, and why?”
B. Ask the group if they have witnessed any healing miracles for themselves or for other people they know.
   Invite them to share their experiences. Make a list on the flip chart of the number and different types of situations. Ask if the miracle was considered a physical or spiritual one, or both.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “So many Bible characters were drawn closer to God through their infirmities. Some were impacted by experiencing illness themselves and some by witnessing the healing of others.”
   Using a print concordance or Bible app, have class members fill in the reproducible chart (p. 35). Invite them to list any other names they might think of.
B. Say: “When Jesus was on Earth, He empowered His disciples to heal and even to raise people from the dead.”
   Ask: ●“Do you think we have access to the same power today?” ●“What does the Bible say about our abilities to affect the sick?” Discuss the following texts:
   ●Proverbs 17:22; ●Matthew 6:25–33; ●Matthew 10:1; ●Mark 16:17, 18.
Discussing the Ideas

1. Should ethnicity or culture be a factor when witnessing to people who are ill? Why or why not?
2. Do you believe that God causes illness or lets it happen to fulfill His purpose? Explain your answer.
3. Do you need to believe in God to be healed? If so, what can you do about it?
4. Explain how good health habits can lead to spiritual outcomes.
5. Are you more open to God when you are sick or well? Explain.
6. Is your attitude toward God different if the illness impacts you or someone else? Explain.
7. How can we contribute positively or negatively to someone else’s health?
8. Is worry a sickness, a sin, or both? Explain.
9. What part does gratitude and praise play in healing?

Closing the Activity

Discuss the following two scenarios:

1. Imagine that Christ came to you one morning and said, “I want to spend the day with you visiting the sick.”
   What kind of places would you take Him to and how would you introduce Him to the people there?
   Would you hang back and observe, or would you be at His side participating?
2. What if Jesus inspired someone who needed help to ask you for it. How would you respond?

Kathy Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.
<table>
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<th>Physical/Spiritual Ailment</th>
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<td>2 Kings 5:1‒19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>2 Kings 20</td>
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<td>Widow of Nain’s son</td>
<td>Luke 7:11‒17</td>
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<td>Grateful leper</td>
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<td>Lazarus</td>
<td>John 11:1‒45</td>
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Discipling the Ordinary

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:
- Appreciate that to become a disciple of Christ they must first become ordinary by making the decision to follow Jesus.
- Learn that the essential formula to becoming Christ’s disciple is to form a partnership between one’s self and the Holy Spirit.
- Understand that discipling the ordinary is a continuous process.

Preparing to Lead

Whatever your status, obedience is necessary in becoming a disciple. Simon and Andrew were uneducated, while Saul was an intellectual academic. Yet they all became disciples.

“[Jesus] saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the lake because they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, ‘Come follow me, and I will make you fish for people.’ So Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him” (Mark 1:16–18, NCV).

“Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?’ Saul said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ The voice answered, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do’ ” (Acts 9:4–6, NCV).

Getting Started

A. Relate the following true story to your class: “LeAnn thought she knew it all. During her high school years, she and her boyfriend became part of the “in” crowd. They failed high school, married at 18, and had their first child at 19. But LeAnn was unfulfilled. Her brothers and sisters all had a university education.

So she migrated to a new environment where she was influenced to study. At 30, she had an MA in educational administration and was a high school teacher while pursuing a part-time course as a head teacher. Also, LeAnn and her family became active in church.”

Ask: “What brought about the transformation?”

B. Read Acts 16:27–31 to the class. Or have the students take turns reading the verses.

Ask: “Why would Paul and Silas minister to those who jailed them?”

Delving Into the Word

Regardless of whether you choose Option A or B, read the Preparing to Lead section to the class. Then say:

“Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. And Saul asked, ‘Lord, what do You want me to...”
do?"  

Ask: “How are these two responses to Jesus the same?” Accept a few answers. Then say: “Both the educated and uneducated became disciples.”

A. Divide the class into two groups. Each group should select one person to read and another to take notes. Give each note-taker paper and a pen and each reader a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 36).

Allocate even numbers to one group and odd numbers to the other. Instruct them to discuss the statements (with help from the associated texts) in 20 minutes, and write down: (1) a definition of what is ordinary that facilitates the transformation to discipleship, and (2) who, if anyone, has an advantage to becoming a disciple.

Bring the groups together and write a few responses on the board to their assignments. Ask: “What was it that demonstrated that Simon, Andrew, and Saul had started to become disciples?” Say: “In both situations, the disciples and Saul took a personal decision to leave what they were doing to follow Jesus.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why is personal decision the basis of entering the road to discipleship?

2. What advantages, if any, do educated people have over the uneducated in becoming disciples of Christ? Explain your response.

3. Once the decision is taken to follow Jesus, what roles do prayer, learning, and sharing play in developing/maintaining discipleship?

4. Which comes first in discipling the ordinary: responding to the Holy Spirit or making the decision to be discipled? Explain your response.

5. What does it take to accept that the Holy Spirit is always working for our good (Deut. 31:6; Matt. 6:33)?

6. Comment on the following statement: The power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that is available to transform the ordinary person into a disciple.

**Closing the Activity**

Read 1 John 2:15–17: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If you love the world, the love of the Father is not in you. These are the ways of the world: wanting to please our sinful selves, wanting the sinful things we see, and being too proud of what we have. None of these come from the Father, but all of them come from the world. The world and everything that people want in it are passing away, but the person who does what God wants lives forever” (NCV). Then have two people close with prayer.

Albert A. C. Waite, Berkshire, United Kingdom
Read each statement reflectively, without the Bible reference(s). Then read each statement again along with the given text(s). What effect do the text(s) have on your initial reflection?

1. To follow Jesus requires an active choice (Josh. 24:15).

2. Choosing to be Jesus’ disciple means having greater love for Him than for anything or anyone else (Luke 14:26).

3. A person wanting to be a disciple will put Jesus first because s/he believes things will be better for him/her and for all those who do likewise (Matt. 6:33).

4. Willingness to be transformed requires submission, searching, yearning, and implementation to affect the change (Acts 17:11).

5. To be a disciple, one must come to the full realization of one’s true sinful situation and be prepared to take up one’s own cross (including the invisible ones), forsake all, and follow Jesus (Ps. 51:10; Mark 8:34).

6. God will provide all the necessary resources for people to bear any cost it takes to become a disciple (Gen. 22:8; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Thess. 3:3).

7. God keeps His promise to never leave us nor forsake us (Deut. 31:6).

8. The power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that is available to transform anyone into a disciple.
Jesus and the Social Outcasts

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Recognize the potential of every human being as a child of God.
► Respond to people who are social outcasts as Christ would.
► Accept the shame and suffering that may come to them as followers of Christ.

Preparing to Lead
Christ’s summary proof to the disciples of John the Baptist, who were wondering if Jesus really was the Messiah, was a demonstration of His work for the hurt and the broken, those whom most of society had abandoned as unworthy of God’s love and favor. It was Christ’s special joy to bring healing, love, and salvation back to these people. It is His favorite work today, and if we will be coworkers with Him, this work will be close to our hearts as well.

Getting Started
A. Collect pictures of a variety of people who have been considered outcasts in various circles: the handicapped, the homeless, the poor, the divorced, the unemployed, and prostitutes or others with demeaning jobs or lifestyles.

B. Come to class with unwashed hair, and dressed in smelly, dingy clothing. Ask your class to create several scenarios of what might have happened to bring you to such a state. Discuss the following questions.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into six groups, and assign one of the following stories to each group: the Canaanite woman (Matt. 15:21–28); anointing Jesus’ feet (Luke 7:36–50); Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–9); the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4); the adulterous woman (John 8:1–11); the man born blind (John 9).
Ask each group to answer the following questions about the story assigned to them: (1) What made the main character of this story so distasteful to the rest of society? (2) Give examples of people in similar situations today whom we tend to look down on. (3) How do we still segregate social groups and castes today? (4) How did Jesus respond to these outcasts? (5) How did His disciples respond?

Call the groups back together and compare their answers using a whiteboard. Conclude with a discussion on how Jesus’ love for the most desperate sinner melts our hearts.

Ask members of your class to relate their favorite story of how Jesus treated a person of low standing, and how that story has affected their relationship to Jesus and their relationships with others.

Using a whiteboard to document their answers, ask your class to list the different shameful terms and humiliating circumstances in which Jesus voluntarily put Himself or endured at the hands of the people He came to save.

Ask: ● “Is there any type of shame that any person on earth has suffered that Jesus has not suffered?” ● “Why did He undertake this suffering and shame?” ● “What lessons can we learn from Jesus’ experiences with shame?” ● “How do these lessons instruct us as we relate to others who seem too sinful and degraded to keep company with?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. When does shame in society fulfill a good function? When does shame become destructive?

2. Different nations and ethnic groups have perpetrated devastation on various segments of society. What have been the challenges in the history of your national or ethnic background? What lessons were learned? What lessons still need to be learned, both personally and nationally?

3. What types of discrimination still exist in the church where you worship? What can you as a class do to improve the way you love and accept all classes of people?

4. What shame, discrimination, and rejection have you experienced? What can you share from this experience? Have you despised or rejected some individual or class of individuals? What does it take to change prejudices toward others? What part does forgiveness play in our histories of suffering shame and segregation?

5. Jesus suffered the shame and rejection that we deserve. What is the end result of His suffering?

6. How might we share in the shame and rejection that Christ suffered? How should we respond to this suffering?

Closing the Activity

Give each member of the class a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 37). Take time to read the quote quietly, and fill in the responses. Ask for a few volunteers to pray.
Read the following description of Christ’s final coronation.

“Far above the city [of God], upon a foundation of burnished gold, is a throne, high and lifted up. Upon this throne sits the Son of God, and around Him are the subjects of His kingdom. The power and majesty of Christ no language can describe, no pen portray. The glory of the Eternal Father is enshrouding His Son. The brightness of His presence fills the City of God, and flows out beyond the gates, flooding the whole earth with its radiance.

“Nearest the throne are those who were once zealous in the cause of Satan, but who, plucked as brands from the burning, have followed their Savior with deep, intense devotion. Next are those who perfected Christian characters in the midst of falsehood and infidelity, those who honored the law of God when the Christian world declared it void, and the millions, of all ages, who were martyred for their faith. And beyond is the ‘great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, . . . before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.’ Revelation 7:9.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 665.

What kind of people are so valued that they are closest to the throne of God? How does your heart respond to this demonstration of God’s grace?
With the Rich and Famous

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Explore biblical references to wealth and money.
► Receive a deeper understanding of the need to trust God in all areas of life.
► Be reminded of the importance of God’s spiritual realm.

Preparing to Lead
“And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it . . . But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well” (Luke 12:29, 31, NIV).
“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18, NIV).
“Satisfy your longings with substitutes, and you get only continuing emptiness. Satisfy them by loving God, and you get not only him but all his gifts as well.”

Getting Started
A. Pass out a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 38) to each class member. Allow them a few minutes to complete the exercise.

Write these three column headings on a board: Negative, Neutral, Positive. In the “Unseen” category, ask which marked words or phrases should go in which column, and why. Write the words or phrases on the board as mentioned.

Discuss any insights that come to mind.

B. Bring a supply of small edible items (veggie sticks, cookies, crackers, etc.) to class. Say that you are putting out enough so each person—including you—can have just one.

Ask: “If I get greedy and take two or three pieces, what is the result for some of you?”

Conclude by having someone read Acts 17:28.

Delving Into the Word
A. Have class members read aloud the Bible verses in the reproducible activity (p. 38). Then have the class determine a central theme for those texts. Write the theme on a board. If resources are available, invite the class to add additional verses to the groups.
B. Two stories about David provide valuable insights into the topic of wealth and money for Christians. Have someone read aloud 1 Samuel 17:38–47 and 1 Chronicles 29:9–20.

Discuss the ideas and concepts that are found in both stories. Especially discuss how these ideas and concepts apply to one’s relationship with money.
Discussing the Ideas

1. What appears to be the top three concepts about money in the Bible verses studied in this lesson? Explain why you believe that to be the case.
2. What matters more to God—things we can see, or things we can’t (1 Sam. 16:7)? Why?
3. In 2 Corinthians 4:7–18, Paul describes a tough life for Christians, and then has the nerve to call these troubles “light and momentary” (NIV). Consider your own financial circumstances.
   What changes would you like to see?
   What reasons might you have for making those changes?
   Have you thought about your motivation behind those reasons?
   What could help make the challenging circumstances in your life more “light and momentary”?
4. God knows “the big picture” (Isa. 55:8, 9), which includes what is happening in your life right now.
   What might be some of His reasons for allowing what you are going through?
   In light of Proverbs 2:1–11, how much might God be willing to actually help you understand His purposes for your circumstances?
   Why is God wanting to help you important to Him?
5. What is the purpose of money in this life?
6. How much of a coincidence is there between your life today and the topic of this week’s lesson?
   What is that coincidence?
   How can you receive hope from Christ?

Closing the Activity

Read Matthew 6:21: “‘For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also’” (NIV). Pray aloud to specifically invite the Holy Spirit to reveal where, or what, each student’s treasure is.

Allow some time for the Holy Spirit to answer that prayer. Then ask, “Without telling us any specifics, did the Spirit show you anything? Did He show you anything He wants you to do now?”

The specific answers people receive are private, but sharing that someone did learn something new about his or her heart could be encouraging to all present.
Reproducible Activity for the Getting Started Section

In the texts below,* draw a box around the italicized words and phrases that refer to things that are “seen.” Draw a circle around the “unseen” ones.

1. “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:10).

2. “Life is more than food! The body is more than clothing! Think about the ravens: they don’t sow seed, they don’t gather harvests, they don’t have storehouses or barns; and God feeds them. How much more will he feed you! Think of the difference between yourselves and the birds! Which of you by being anxious can add a day to your lifetime? So if you can’t even do a little thing like that, why worry about anything else” (Luke 12:23–26)?


Reproducible Activity for the Delving Into the Word Section

Determine a central theme for each set of texts.

1. Deuteronomy 15:5, 6; Psalm 34:10; Psalm 37; Habakkuk 2:4, 5

2. Psalm 49:5‒7; Psalm 49:19, 20; Proverbs 11:28; Ecclesiastes 5:13–15; Jeremiah 48:7; Jeremiah 49:4, 5; James 5:2, 3

3. Psalm 119:35‒37; Isaiah 55

4. Proverbs 1:18, 19, Ezekiel 7:18–20

5. Proverbs 10:15, 16, Ecclesiastes 7:1–12

Discipling the Powerful

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand that God loves and wants to save all people, including the “important” people of this world.
► Know that it is possible for anyone to become Jesus’ disciple.
► Understand that in addition to saving people, Jesus wants to use us as His ambassadors to testify about Him.

Preparing to Lead
People who are truly committed to God will be His disciples. That means they stand ready to do whatever He asks of them—even to be a witness to the rich, famous, and powerful people of this world. Their fame, fortune, and power will not save them (Mark 10:25).

Getting Started
A. Give each class member a 3x5 index card and a pen. Ask them to write down the characteristics a person needs to become Jesus’ disciple.

B. Write the names below on 3x5 index cards and fold the cards in half. Put the cards into a basket. Ask class members to draw one.

Say: “God had many disciples and each disciple witnessed in his or her own way. Pretend you are the person you drew. Tell us one thing you did and to whom you witnessed with what result.”

The names are as follows: Joseph, Moses, Hannah, Samuel, Esther, David, Elijah, Elisha, Peter, Stephen, Paul, the widow who gave her all, the widow who asked for crumbs.

Delving Into the Word
A. Have class members use their Bibles to pick out the characteristics of a disciple. Have different class members read them one at a time. Write them on a whiteboard or flip chart. Discuss how we obtain these characteristics. The Bible texts and characteristics are: (1) Luke 14:26—supreme love for Jesus; (2) Luke...
14:27—totally committing one’s life and will to Jesus; (3) Luke 14:33—a willingness to give up all one owns; (4) John 8:31—total obedience to God’s commands; (5) John 13:35—unconditional love; (6) John 15:8—developing the fruit of the spirit.

Afterward, say: “Jesus’ disciples did not always find it easy to have all these characteristics in their lives. Before Pentecost their interests and desires were too often selfish. Even after Pentecost they argued and at times tried to do things their own way. The desire was there but their humanity often got mixed in with their desire.

“The most important thing to remember is that they didn’t give up and God didn’t give up on them. God has a work for each of us to do. He will not force us to do it, but there may be a special someone God wants us to reach. Surely, we don’t want to miss out on the blessing we will receive when we obey His will.”

B. Give each student a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 39). Say: “There are many pathways and stages to discipleship. Jesus does not expect everyone to be at the same place at the same time in their spiritual journey. [Have two students read 2 Cor. 3:1, 2 and 1 John 2:12-14.] Jesus expects us to continue growing in Him for as long as we live.”

Have class members do the activity individually. Then go over it together.

Close by saying: “At each stage of our growth Jesus has provided all that we need to be His disciples. He is not sending us out alone. [Have someone read Matt. 28:19, 20.] We have His promise. He will be there with us. We are to go. He will provide the results.”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Jesus?
2. How could your own personal story about your relationship with Jesus help someone else?
3. What should we do or say differently to rich, famous, and powerful people to interest them in Jesus?
4. What is our work in this regard and what work belongs to God?
5. What major challenges does the church face today that it did not face in the past when it comes to discipling the powerful?
6. How can we know whom God is calling us to witness to?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “What if Jesus came to you today, either in a dream or through your devotions, and told you to go to one of the following: the mayor of your town, a government official, a popular movie star or singer you had never met, or even the president of your country, and tell that person what Peter told the people at Pentecost—‘repent, and be baptized for your sins?’ What would be your reaction? Would this be the best way to witness?

“God has many ways and many plans. If we do it ‘His way,’ He will open opportunities to reach people in ways that are not offensive.”

Close with prayer.

**Barbara Manspeaker, Luray, Virginia, U.S.A.**
How do we grow from one stage to another?
In each section below, cross out the phrase that does not apply.

**Intellectually:** (1) Study the Bible daily; (2) Study once a week at church on Sabbath.

**Relationally:** (1) Associate only with people who believe as I do; (2) Exhibit unconditional love to everyone.

**Serving:** (1) Help only people who show they deserve it; (2) Help anyone in need with no restrictions regarding gender, race, or ethnicity.

**Worship:** (1) Attendance at church services regularly; (2) Attendance at church when it is convenient.

**Contemplative:** (1) Daily personal devotions; (2) Too busy during the week to spend time with God.
Discipling the Nations

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Discuss what qualifies a person to be God’s messenger.

► Realize that God is willing to use them in spite of their flaws and that He will give them strength to do what He asks them to do.

Propagating the Course

Prophet or not, we, too, are called by God for a task or mission. He has prepared us and equipped us for the job. Yet, often we try to get out of it, delay it, or are willing to do just about anything but that which He has directed us to do.

So, why is it that we run from God? Why do we fight Him? Why are we afraid to go forward when we know He is with us and will not leave us?

Preparing to Lead

Preparing to Lead

Preparatory to Lead

Getting Started

A. Distribute copies of the “King’s Highway” to all class members (p. 40). Allow them to complete it. Then ask volunteers to share their responses.

Ask: ● “Was this assignment easy or difficult? Why?” ● “How do you know there is hope for you?”

B. Ask: ● “When you receive your mail or a package through a delivery service, what might you remember about the delivery person?” ● “Why do these particular things stand out in your mind?”

● “What makes a package delivery person a good worker?” ● “Is there any difference between a package delivery person and a person who delivers a verbal message? Explain your answer.” ● “What qualities might the two people share?”

On a whiteboard, compare and contrast these qualities.

Delving Into the Word

A. Separate your class into two to four groups depending on the number of students you have. Assign each group one of the following topics. Have them read the verses and discuss their findings.


Have each group assign a leader to discuss their findings to the class. List these
findings on the board to compare and contrast them.

**B.** Arrange for a few class members to share in the reading of Jonah 2. *Then ask the following questions:* ●“Why did God send the big fish?” ●“What was the significance of the three days?” ●“When has God sent you a ‘big fish?’ ” ●“Does God always send a fish to help out His wayward people? Why or why not?”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How would you describe your walk with God?
2. Where are you in your “Jonah” experience?
3. When God calls you, is it a win-win or lose-lose situation? Explain your answer.
4. Do you have a fear factor? Explain.
5. What is holding you back from traveling to a distance land knowing time is short?
6. Are you in tune with how God speaks to you? Explain.
7. Why don’t you have to move to distant lands to be a missionary?

**Closing the Activity**

Give each student an index card. Have someone read aloud Matthew 28:18–20. Then have each person write on the card today’s date and what they feel God has called them to do—perhaps a task, a job, attend a certain school, or even start a particular ministry. Ask them to write down if anything is holding them back from answering the call.

Close with prayer.

*Alden J. Ho, Jefferson, Texas, U.S.A.*
In the first column, write the names of people in the Bible who did not delay when God called them to do a task. In the second column, write the names of people in the Bible who did delay when God called them to do a task. In the third column, write the method God used to get the people who delayed back on target.

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Discipling Spiritual Leaders

Surveying the Source

Isa. 57:15; Jer. 50:31; Zeph. 2:3; Matt. 11:29; Luke 6:12–16, 20–49; John 16:7–14; Acts 1; 1 Cor. 9:19; Phil. 2:3.

Plotting the Course

A. Ask: ●“What are the qualities that define a spiritual leader in your eyes? Do they need to be kind? Compassionate? Fair? Merciful?”

B. Say: “Music often expresses what we hope to become. It embodies our goals and dreams.

“Spiritual leaders are people who teach the little kids’ Sabbath School, and who lead song service, Pathfinders, or Wednesday night prayer meetings. But is that all spiritual leaders do? John Piper—teacher, pastor, and author—defines spiritual leadership as “knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power.”

Now that’s much more difficult!

Preparing to Lead

Spiritual leaders are people who teach the little kids’ Sabbath School, and who lead song service, Pathfinders, or Wednesday night prayer meetings.

Getting Started

A. Ask: ●“What are the qualities that define a spiritual leader in your eyes? Do they need to be kind? Compassionate? Fair? Merciful?”

B. Say: “Music often expresses what we hope to become. It embodies our goals and dreams.

“A spiritual leader often possesses the qualities we desire to obtain along our Christian journey.”

Play (or pass out printed lyrics) of some contemporary Christian songs found on YouTube. Discuss the qualities the writers and performers are hoping to obtain. Have the class sing (or read) the verses together.

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “Being a spiritual leader isn’t easy no matter how you look at it. It takes special qualities, determination, and it’s wanting what is best for another person in relation to what God wants for them.

“The following people and their stories show us God’s love, guidance, and personality throughout the entire Bible:

“Noah devoted himself to preaching for 120 years so that his friends and community would be saved.

“Jeremiah changed his entire life so that his actions would be a message to the people.

Materials

whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart, and appropriate markers; pens or pencils; paper; Bibles; Bible dictionaries; Bible concordances; laptop; Internet
“Moses was a spiritual and political leader as well as a revolutionary.”

Next, let the class divide themselves into groups of two or three. Hand out pens and paper to each group. Using their Bibles and Bible dictionaries or concordances, have each group write down the names of biblical spiritual leaders and the qualities they had.

When they are finished or out of time, discuss as a class what the teams came up with.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How does a person become a spiritual leader?
2. Can a leader (political candidate, student body president, or Sabbath School teacher, etc.) be considered good if she or he is not a good spiritual leader? Why or why not?
3. In what ways can you be a spiritual leader even if you don’t hold a church office (e.g. pastor, elder)?
4. How perfect does a spiritual leader’s life need to be? Explain your answer.
5. Why are spiritual leaders so looked up to?
6. What happens when someone is placed in the role of spiritual leader but doesn’t have the qualifications?

**Closing the Activity**

*Say:* “While some people are blessed with all the qualities of a good spiritual leader, at least one of those qualities, if not more, are present in everyone.”

Give a piece of paper and pen to each class member. Let the students think about their own personalities and the qualities they have that are related to being a spiritual leader. Have them write on the paper those characteristics and ways in which they can use them to be a spiritual leader right now.

Tell them to keep the papers in their Bibles or someplace else where they will see them often.

**Kristi Rich, Bozeman, Montana, U.S.A.**

**Spiritual Leadership Qualities**

Write the spiritual leadership qualities listed within the Bible texts on the lines beside them.

Josh. 1:9

Isa. 6:8

Isa. 57:15

Joel 2:28, 29

Mic. 6:8

Zeph. 2:3

Matt. 5:39

Matt. 20:26

Luke 6:37, 38

Rom. 8:9

Rom. 12:10

1 Cor. 7:17

2 Tim. 3:17

James 1:25
The Harvest and the Harvesters

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify the context and meaning of our call to discipleship.
► Explore the importance of using Christ’s method in growing disciples.
► Reflect upon and respond to Jesus’ call to fulfill the Great Commission.

Preparing to Lead
It’s no secret that apart from developing a unique and meaningful relationship with Christ, we are all involved in the work of harvesting souls. Christ’s final words of both encouragement and commissioning leave no doubt about the importance of this work. But why is it sometimes so difficult? Are we “trying” too hard to change people into the kingdom? Have we left something out?

This week’s lesson brings us back to our roots and the work of bringing people to Christ—to daily submit to His call and the Holy Spirit’s leading for effective discipleship and evangelism efforts.

Getting Started
A. Divide the class into two groups to read the texts and discuss the questions:
Group 1—Matthew 9:36–38. What do you think may be the reasons why so few Christians are involved in the harvest?
Group 2—Matthew 28:18–20. What is the significance of this text in relationship to our call to be involved in Christ’s harvest and preparing for His soon return?
Have the groups share their thoughts.
B. Write the word “Discipleship” in the middle of a flip chart. Have the group brainstorm definitions, examples, feelings, and any other ideas associated with this word. Write their responses around the word “Discipleship.” Encourage answers that involve the perspective of the church and individual followers of Christ.
Have the group agree on the top four responses and share personal reflections on each. Then introduce the lesson for the week.

Delving Into the Word
A. Have class members turn to John 4:1–40 and take turns reading these verses aloud. Then have them discuss the following questions:
● “What did the Pharisees knowing about Jesus’ baptizing so many people have to do with Him leaving?”
● “What can we learn about Jesus’ attitude toward the woman?”
● “What does His approach teach us about evangelistic methodology?”
● “What does this story teach us about how to deal with people when we are sharing Jesus with
them?” ●“How would you describe the life of the Samaritan woman after her conversion?”

B. Divide the class into two groups. Have each group read their assigned texts, discuss the questions, and then share their findings with the whole class.

Group 1—Luke 15:1‒10: ●In what ways are these parables significant in relationship to how God sees humanity? ●How do these parables help us to be better equipped for discipleship in our churches? ●How can we interpret the idea of “searching” for the lost in our church’s mission and evangelism ideals? ●Why is joy so significant in both parables? ●What does the coin have to do with salvation?

Group 2—Luke 15:11‒32: (Consider the following questions in the context of discipleship and evangelism.) ●How does Jesus portray both sons? ●What is significant in light of Christ’s call to share His message of love, forgiveness, and discipleship? ●In what ways can this parable help us to understand how God sees humanity? ●Discipleship calls for us to be on the “lookout” for those coming back to God. How can we model that characteristic with people who are far from the Savior? ●What cautions can we learn from the older brother’s reaction to His brother’s return?

Discussing the Ideas

1. How can we help members in our church feel more equipped to engage in daily discipleship?
2. What can you do today to build evangelistic bridges with non-believers?
3. How should Jesus’ call to go, baptize, disciple, love, and serve others affect our relationships, family, work, and church life?
4. What area of church life can we contribute to toward bringing in a harvest for Jesus? (Examples might include praying, leading Bible study groups, non-membership visitation, outreach initiatives, evangelism, neighborhood, and city-wide service projects.)

Closing the Activity

Distribute the reproducible activity for this lesson (p. 42). Have each class member complete it. Then ask them to share their thoughts and observations regarding our need to imitate Christ’s method for discipleship and evangelism. Urge them to be accountable for how they are choosing to be a part of Christ’s harvest. Close with prayer.

Jean-Pierre Martinez, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
“Christ’s Method Alone”

Read the following statement. Then answer the questions that follow it.

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”—Ellen White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p 143.

What stands out to you from Jesus’ methodology for reaching others?

How can you mingle with others?

What does it mean to show sympathy like Jesus?

How can you engage in ministering to others’ needs?

How comfortable are you with calling people to follow Jesus?

How can the church help strengthen and prepare you to respond to the Great Commission?
The Cost of Discipleship

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Understand Christ’s warnings about the sacrifices His followers need to make.
► Determine the principles of contemporary Christians who have faced challenges because of their loyalty to God.
► Reflect on the changes they need to make so they can act upon Christ’s teachings.

Preparing to Lead
Discipleship? Two dictionaries didn’t list it. Wikipedia? Nope. Google? Yes! “People can be disciples of all sorts of people and ideas including religious, political, scientific and economic.” Then, “Discipleship is the process of learning about the teachings of another, internalizing them and then acting upon them.”¹ So that’s the crucible . . . acting upon those teachings.

“. . . [Our] lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are.”²

Getting Started
A. Ask professionals in your church to share with your class about their career path: ● What changes did they have to make? ● What sacrifices did they have to make? ● Was it worth it? What do they wish they had done differently? ● Have there been times when they had to choose between career demands and their choice to follow Christ? Take time for questions from class members.
B. Provide hymnals and sing one or two songs about serving God (“So Send I You,” No. 578; “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” No. 573). In your church, are there people who are missionaries? What life changes did they have to make? Or is there someone in your church or someone you know who was drafted into military service and now serves as a noncombatant? What challenges to his/her religious beliefs did this person face during military service? If possible, Skype with a missionary currently stationed overseas.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “Doctors study biology, anatomy and physiology, pharmacology—and many other weighty subjects—to learn the ‘practice of medicine.’ Sports professionals have playbooks to learn, along with incessant drills. Pilots study navigation, aircraft systems and performances, rules and regulations, the weather, plus

Materials
whiteboard, chalkboard, or flip chart, and appropriate markers; pen or pencils; paper; Bibles; several copies of the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal; laptop computer
Twyla Geraci, Belgrade, Montana, U.S.A.

2. Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ, p. 57.
4. Ibid.

The independent U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom categorizes offenders. ‘Tier 1’ nations are designated as ‘countries of particular concern,’ where ongoing religious liberty violations . . . include torture, prolonged detention without charges, disappearances and ‘other flagrant denials of life, liberty or the security of persons.’”

“ ‘The same spirit that in ages past led men to persecute the true church, will in the future lead to the pursuance of a similar course toward those who maintain their loyalty to God. . . .’”

Ask class members for examples of people they know, or know about, who have made sacrifices to remain true to God’s Word.

B. Say: “Speaking at a May 2013 religious liberty event at the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C., Dwayne Leslie, director of Legislative Affairs for the Seventh-day Adventist world church, expressed concern about increasing ‘state-sponsored or condoned intolerance toward minority faith groups worldwide.’”

Discuss the Ideas

1. Is the prize at the end of a race always worth its cost? Explain your answer.
2. In your daily relationship with Christ, what gives you the most hope and encouragement?
3. How do you live in the world without being part of the world?
4. What can you do in your community to be a witness for Christ?
5. How do you encourage and help someone who is going through trials because of his/her choice to be a Christian?
6. Rather than just doing the right thing, how can we reflect Christ’s character and be the right person?

Closing the Activity

Encourage the students to read the chapter “The Test of Discipleship” in Steps to Christ during their personal time of prayer and study this next week. Also encourage them to follow God’s leading in making changes in their characters and lives so that they can be better witnesses. Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 43) and lead the class members in reading it responsively. Close with prayer.
**Find Us Faithful**

**MEN**
We’re pilgrims on the journey  
Of the narrow road  
And those who’ve gone before line the way  
Cheering on the faithful,  
Encouraging the weary  
Their lives a stirring testament to God’s sustaining grace

**WOMEN**
Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses  
Let us run the race not only for the prize  
But as those who’ve gone before us  
Let us leave to those behind us  
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

**EVERYONE (Chorus)**
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave  
Lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey  
O may all who come behind us find us faithful

**MEN**
After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone  
And our children sift through all we’ve left behind  
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover  
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

**EVERYONE (Chorus)**
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave  
Lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey

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