

of Following Jesus

772
were walking along the road, a
to him, "I will follow you
you go." "Foxes have holes and
air have nests, but the Son of
place to lay his head."
to another man, "Follow me."
replied, "Lord, I will follow you
wherever you go, but first let me
go home and bury my father."

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who rejects you rejects me; but he who re-
jects me rejects him who sent me."
The seventy-two returned with joy and
said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us
in your name." "I saw Satan fall like light-
ning from heaven. ¹⁹I have given you au-
thority to trample on snakes and scorpions
and to overcome all the power of the ene-
my; nothing will harm you. ²⁰However, do

of him to every town and place
was about to go. ²He told them,
est is plentiful, but the workers
ask the Lord of the harvest, there-
and out workers into his harvest
I am sending you out like lambs
sheep. ⁴Do not take a purse or bag
and do not greet anyone on the

you enter a house, first say,
his house.' ⁶If a man of peace is
peace will rest on him; if not, it
to you. ⁷Stay in that house, eat-
inking whatever they give you,
ker deserves his wages. Do not
and from house to house.

you enter a town and are wel-
what is set before you. ⁹Heal the
there and tell them, 'The king-
d is near you.' ¹⁰But when you
n and are not welcomed, go into
and say, ¹¹'Even the dust of your
sticks to our feet we wipe off
u. Yet be sure of this: The king-
d is near.' ¹²I tell you, it will be
able on that day for Sodom than
wn.

to you, Korazin! Woe to you,
For if the miracles that were
in you had been performed in
Sidon, they would have repented
sitting in sackcloth and ashes.
I be more bearable for Tyre and
be judgment than for you. ¹⁵And
maum, will you be lifted up to the
you will go down to the depths.
who listens to you listens to me; he

²¹Then he turned to his disciples and said
privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see
what you see. ²²For I tell you that many
prophets and kings wanted to see what you
see but did not see it, and to hear what you
hear but did not hear it."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²³On one occasion an expert in the law
stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he
asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal
life?"

²⁴"What is written in the Law?" he re-
plied. "How do you read it?"

²⁵He answered: "Love the Lord your
God with all your heart and with all your
soul and with all your strength and with all
your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as
yourself."

²⁶"You have answered correctly," Jesus
replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁷But he wanted to justify himself, so he
asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

²⁸In reply Jesus said: "A man was going
down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he
fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped
him of his clothes, beat him and went away,
leaving him half dead. ²⁹A priest happened
to be going down the same road, and when
he saw the man, he passed by on the other
side. ³⁰So too, a Levite, when he came to
the place and saw him, passed by on the
other side. ³¹But a Samaritan, as he trav-
eled, came where the man was; and when
he saw him, he took pity on him. ³²He went
up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring
on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his
own donkey, took him to an inn and took

2017 STARTER KIT WEEK 14 FROM MOCKER TO LEADER

FOR YOUR YOUTH GROUP OR SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

HERE IS WHAT WE PROVIDE IN EACH SESSION:

1. A brief reading on the topic. This can be read, but of course should be shared instead in the leader's own words, adding or subtracting details that fit your group. Usually, there are Bible readings and questions worked into the text.
2. A short devotion that brings home the principles of the topic of the week. This is intended to be shared with the whole group.
3. An activity suggestion. These are simple, requiring few, if any, materials, but we all learn and retain better if we do something physical with what we've heard and seen.
4. A short skit. If you have time to rehearse and learn, these can be done on different weeks, or even for other meetings such as church services. But they can also be and done in impromptu fashion, each person reading his/her part expressively. Always allow time to discuss people's reactions after skits.
5. Very important: Each week's starter kit includes a page called "7 Days of Soul Food." Print these out and give copies to each person, or give each person the link if they have online access. These are personal applications that will carry the devotion through the whole week. It is highly recommended that each person begin some sort of prayer journal and use it all year. We general think of journals as being full of writing, but if you don't like to write, you can draw, doodle, paste in pictures that bring the lessons of the week to mind — anything that helps you draw closer to God.

THE STORY

FROM MOCKER TO LEADER

We know very little about the childhood and youth of Jesus and His brothers and sisters. If we only had the Bible for information, we could still assume that His siblings must not have been believers, because they are never mentioned as being among His followers. Yet in Acts 1:14, His mother and brothers are listed as being in the Upper Room with those who are “all of one mind.” Clearly, an important reformation has happened.

Jesus’ sisters are not mentioned at this point, but that doesn’t necessarily mean they did not believe; they could have had young children at home. There were thousands of people who had been following Jesus and either were believers already or were poised to become believers at Pentecost, and they were not gathered in the Upper Room. That 120 were most likely His closest followers, and most, if not all, would become leaders, whether officially or not, in the new church.

However we do have other information on Jesus’ boyhood. In *The Desire of Ages* there is a chapter tellingly called “Days of Conflict,” which goes into the difficulties the boy Jesus faced during childhood and youth. A large part of that problem is His family. Page 86 says that his brothers sided with the Pharisees on the side of trying to get Jesus to follow Jewish traditions, whether they went along with God’s Word or not. Page 87 tells of Jesus’ gentleness and tact, especially with people who were poor or suffering, and that the brothers not only didn’t have that tact, they spoke harshly to the suffering ones and were angry with Jesus for denying Himself to give to those who were in need. They threatened and intimidated Him—or tried to; it didn’t budge Jesus. On page 88, his unselfishness and integrity are sneered at, and forbearance and kindness are called cowardice.

Have you ever had that happen to you? You refuse to get into a fight, and then are called a coward? You are in good company.

In this lesson we are going to concentrate on the one of Jesus’ brothers that we know the most about, though it isn’t much: James. The SDA Bible Commentary on the book of James (Vol. 7; pp. 497-500) goes into great detail on what we do and don’t know or can guess or speculate. We think James was the oldest because he is always listed first. And we know he reformed

and became a leader in the church. We are fairly sure he is the one listed as the leader of the church in Jerusalem, though the commentary makes it clear that we can't know for sure.

Read or have read Galatians 1:19. Paul is telling the story of his early call to ministry, and it seems clear that he is here meeting with two highly-regarded leaders. Here he clearly identifies "the Lord's brother." In 2:9 he mentions a James as a "pillar" of the church, which implies that it's the same James, but we can't know. (BC7: 498-9)

Now read Acts 12:17. This James is not identified as Jesus' brother, but some early church writers from the first two centuries after Christ say it was. Finally, read Acts 15:13-21. This chapter tells of the very important Jerusalem Council in which the young church made a decision concerning how many Jewish laws the Gentile converts would have to follow. (Another kind of reformation can be seen at work here.) James is clearly presiding over this council, and early writings indicate that this was Jesus' brother, but again, we cannot be certain (until we meet him in heaven and ask!)

As for whether he is the one who wrote the book of James, again we are not sure, but we think so.

The important facts are these:

James not only did not believe in his Brother as Messiah, he mocked and criticized and made Jesus' life difficult.

He later reformed, and probably became a leader in the church, perhaps the top official in Jerusalem.

Put yourself in James' place for a minute. How would you feel if you had the incredible blessing of growing up as Jesus' brother or sister, but you made his life miserable? How, then, would it feel to come to believe—after He dies a cruel death and it's too late to tell Him how sorry you are!

In closing, read this paragraph from DA 325.

"What a support Christ would have found in His earthly relatives if they had believed in Him as one from heaven, and had co-operated with Him in doing the work of God! Their unbelief cast a shadow over the earthly life of Jesus. It was a part of the bitterness of that cup of woe which He drained for us."

It is definitely true that Jesus is very glad His family finally came to Him. But it would have been so much better if they'd done it sooner. As younger brothers and sisters of Jesus, let's make a different choice.

DEVOTION

Do we have the same troubles in our families that Jesus had in His? Do we argue and fight when we disagree? How about in our church families? Let's take a look at some instructions the Word of God gives for these situations.

Our first text is right in the story we have been studying: Acts 1:14. Read this together. Do you think "of one mind" meant they all thought alike about everything? Do you think God even wants that? Why or why not? What action does the text specifically say they were doing with one mind?

Now let's look at Romans 12. This whole chapter is about getting along in home and church families. What does the first two verses tell us to do first?

The next several verses talk about the imagery of the body, where each part has an important part to play, and the rest of the chapter lists much advice for getting along in love. Particularly note verse 18. What does this verse say? Why does it begin with "if possible" and "so far as it depends on you"? What should we do if someone else refuses to be at peace with us, as Jesus' brothers refused to be at peace with Him?

Take a minute to let people say what they think Jesus did in that situation.

Then read the last verses: 19-21. What does Paul say to do? Is it easy?

There are many passages in the Bible that give counsel to us on how to live lovingly with each other. Another is in Colossians 3. First glance over verses 5-11 and note that Paul is saying that first we have to put off the sinful things from our natures. In other words, make a choice. We can't purify ourselves, but we can make a definite choice to put away those ugly things.

Now have someone read verses 12 through 17. What do you think are some of the most essential things to living together with each other when we disagree? Which are the hardest and easiest? Where do we get the power for these attitudes? (Hint: See the first four verses.)

We can choose to live in peace, without neglecting to stand up for right. Jesus did it, and if we watch Him and talk to Him and cling to Him and turn to Him in every difficulty, He will do in us what He modeled for us while He was here.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION

Leader: In advance, write on small cards or slips of paper different ways people could disagree. Make some unimportant, such as “You disagree over what foods to make for dinner,” or “You disagree over what color the new curtains should be.” Have some more important, such as “You disagree on where to live,” or “You disagree on whether or not higher education is important.” Make some very important, such as “You disagree on the importance of the Sabbath,” or “You disagree on whether God exists.”

Divide the group into pairs or small groups and pass out the slips randomly. Have the pairs or groups model good ways to discuss and perhaps “agree to disagree.” What can you do if someone disagrees with you on something essential?

SEVEN DAYS OF SOUL FOOD

SEVEN DAYS' WORTH OF DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind (Luke 10:27). To put it another way, body+heart+mind=one living soul.

We can't divide ourselves into different sections, but it's useful to look at these different aspects of ourselves and be sure we have a well-balanced faith that uses all the avenues of a soul. Each of these starter kits will include a week's worth of food for your soul in each of these four methods of understanding and expression.

Write about each of the following in your prayer journal this week. Each day strive to use language of emotions, thought, physical health and strength, or spirit on the given days.

DAY 1: We have seen how painfully Jesus' birth family treated Him. Do you face some of the same things, or know someone who does? You probably already pray hard about this situation. Commit to keep on doing that, and ask God to keep you gentle and loving in the meantime.

DAY 2: Heart. Spend a few moments trying to imagine the feelings in the heart of Jesus when He was your age. What do you think He did to help Himself find comfort and stay strong? Notice Luke 6: 11-12. Prayerfully connect with these emotional themes and consider how God wants to work in your heart this week.

DAY 3: Mind. James may have been a thinker. He may have seen the importance of God's written law and thought that doing every little ritual "right" was the way to be righteous, and he must not have had a heart connection with God (or with his Brother!) How would you explain to someone like that how to keep God's law from your heart? Deut. 6:4-5 may help you.

DAY 4: Strength/body. One of the things Ellen White speaks of in connection with Jesus' childhood is that He was from a poor family, so He had simple food and hard work to do. How do you think this helped Him? How can you imitate that? What are the ways God wants to strengthen your body this week?

DAY 5: Soul/spirit. As you prayerfully ponder the heart/mind/body insights God has given you so far this week, reread Colossians 3:5-17 and item by item, put off the things listed in the first verses and put on the things listed in the last ones. Give your spirit entirely into God's keeping for today.

DAY 6: This lesson has had a great deal to do with how you live in your family, community, and church. Make a list of the things God has shown you that you need to reform, and pray for them to be formed into something beautiful that will draw yourself and others closer to God.

DAY 7: Use day 7 to create something beautiful that reflects what you have learned.

- Write a poem or song or story.
- Create a poster.
- Write a letter.
- Paint or draw a picture.
- Make a sign.
- Do some sidewalk chalk art or writings.
- Build something.
- Create a podcast or blog post or Twitter post(s).
- Make food and give it to someone in need.

Use whatever creativity God has given you. We all have something. Share the love!

a short skit

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Skit

10-15 minutes

CHARACTERS

1. As children or youth: Mary, Jesus, James plus three brothers, at least two sisters. We don't know how many sisters He had, only that they were plural. Fewer people can play these roles if necessary.
2. As adults (could be the same people or others, depending on how many you have that want to be involved): all the above plus a group as congregation in the synagogue at Nazareth
3. Paul
4. Barnabas
5. Peter

PROPS

1. None for Act 1
2. For Act 2, a lectern or desk and a Bible open to Isaiah 61, facing some rows of chairs. A covering for Jesus' head.
3. Some chairs in front for leaders for Act 3.

Act 1

1. No script: just have the group role play Jesus' brothers and sisters making life difficult for Him; Jesus being
2. patient and loving no matter what, and Mary trying to calm things down.
3. Spend 2-3 minutes on this.
4. Then have group disperse.

Act 2

- Congregation:** Sits as if in synagogue. Jesus' family is there. All are very excited, pointing and whispering as **Jesus** puts his head covering on (a Jewish custom) and goes to the lectern to read the Bible. His family look proud.
- Jesus:** (reads verse 1 and the first line of verse 2, then closes the Bible, sits down) Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.
- Congregation:** (murmuring, especially the family) Doesn't He speak wonderfully? What gracious words! Yes, but isn't this just Joseph's son? His family is right here. Who does He think He is?
- Jesus:** I suppose you want Me to do here what I did in Capernaum, but I tell you, no prophet is honored in his home town.
- Congregation:** Grows angrier and angrier as Jesus continues to speak.
- Jesus:** There were plenty of widows in Israel during Elijah's days, but God sent him out to a widow in Sidon. And there were plenty of lepers in Israel in Elisha's day, but only Naaman the Syrian was healed.
- Congregation:** Shouting, calling him a false prophet, "Kill Him!" "Get Him out of here!" Grabs Jesus (His family, especially His mother, protesting) and tries to drag him away. Jesus moves away quietly and others act astonished and bewildered, as if He has disappeared out of their hands. All sit down.

Act 3

(Set up something like a courtroom, with Peter, James, and other elders in chairs at the front, Paul, Barnabas (can have others if desired, since Bible mentions "and some others") are standing before them.

Others are around as audience.

Elders have Bibles.

Paul: (as if he's at end of longer speech) So you see, brothers, how the Holy Spirit is doing miraculous things among the Gentiles.

Audience and elders Praise God! That's wonderful!

One of the elders: Yes, that is great, but they have to be circumcised and taught to follow all the Jewish regulations!

(A minute of back and forth "No they don't, it's too burdensome," "Yes, they do, it's the law of God" and so on. Not unruly, just people trying to figure it out. They look in Bibles and murmur together.)

James: Brothers, brothers. (All quiet.) We must pray about this. (They pray together.)

Peter: (stands) "Brothers, you know God sent me to the Gentiles. Remember that vision I had about the animals, and the visit to Cornelius? (All nod.) Well, God is the one who knows their hearts, and He gave them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us. He didn't make any distinction. He cleansed their hearts by faith, just like ours. Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the new disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? We believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, and so are they."

(Many are nodding.)

James: Brothers Paul and Barnabas, tell us more.

Barbabas: We've seen healings, we've seen families reconciled, we've seen wonders of salvation!

Paul: Believe me, I find just as much faith among our Gentile brothers and sisters as I do here in Jerusalem, if not more.

Peter: Remember, God first began by taking our own forefathers out from the Gentiles.

James: (looks around at the others, then stands)
Brothers, listen to me. Peter has reminded us of our own beginnings. The Scriptures agree with this, telling us that God will call all humankind to Himself, including Gentiles. Now, here is my judgment. We shouldn't trouble our new converts with all the rules and regulations, but we should write and tell them not to eat strangled meat, because those animals do not have the blood drained as God commands, not to offer their food to idols, but only to God, and to abstain from fornication and from blood. After all, Moses is preached in every city from ancient times, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath. (He looks around again, and all agree.)

Paul and Barnabas bow and thank them, and they send them off to continue their work for God.