



PART OF A **5**-YEAR CYCLE

following **JESUS**



12 READY-TO-USE LESSONS FOR TEENS, EASILY SPLIT INTO 24 LESSONS
PERFECT FOR TEACHING **11-15 YEAR OLDS** ADAPTABLE FOR **16-18 YEAR OLDS**



following JESUS



Since 1937

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CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

Reaching children worldwide™

following JESUS

Manual originally prepared by
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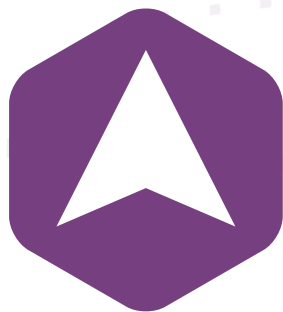
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
LESSON 1: Why Follow Jesus?	9
LESSON 2: Peter: Changed Forever	15
LESSON 3: Peter: Failures and Victories	21
LESSON 4: John: A Devoted Follower	27
LESSON 5: John: Looking Forward	33
LESSON 6: Judas: Pretending to Follow	39
LESSON 7: Judas: On the Road to Ruin	43
LESSON 8: Andrew: Bringing Others to Jesus	49
LESSON 9: Andrew: Sharing the Message	55
LESSON 10: Mary: Freed From Sin	59
LESSON 11: Mary: Empowered to Serve	63
LESSON 12: Being a True Believer	69



INTRODUCTION

HELPING TEENS TO FOLLOW JESUS

The manual *Following Jesus* was produced by Child Evangelism Fellowship of Europe for the Junior Youth Challenge ministry. It is part of a 5-year cycle and provides enough material for 12 to 24 sessions.

The lessons were written for the 11-15 year olds but can be adapted for an older age group. It can meet the needs of both saved and unsaved teens. Some lessons give a clear presentation of the Gospel, others help young Christians in their walk with God, but several are a combination of both.

AIMING AT HEADS, HEARTS & HANDS

Clear objectives are given at the beginning of each lesson, focusing on three aspects:



KNOWLEDGE



EMOTIONS



ACTIONS

It is vitally important to not only teach doctrine but also to apply it faithfully. Teens need to be encouraged to put the lessons into practice in their everyday life.



An additional objective is given to indicate how the unsaved should respond to the teaching.

USING A VARIETY OF METHODS

Notes for the teachers are inserted in italics in the lesson text. They provide a variety of methods that can facilitate the teens' involvement: case studies, role plays, sketches, interviews, workgroups, etc.

Some methods require a lot of time. It is recommended to divide the lessons into two parts in order to make full use of the methods.

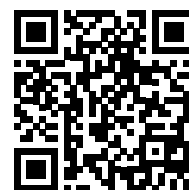
// LESSON BREAK //

This break indicates where to split the lesson. If the teacher needs to cover the lesson in one go, they will have to select the ideas that will be the most useful to his group and leave the rest aside.

PREPARING VISUALS & HANDOUTS

VISUALS and **HANDOUTS** have been created for all lessons. The lesson text indicates when to use them. Please note that they are protected by copyright and can be used only by the owner of the manual.

Visuals and handouts are available for download at cefireland.com/2FGE24



Please view the visuals and edit where necessary in order to effectively engage the young people.

The handouts should be photocopied or printed and given out to the teens. They include some creative ideas: wordsearches, crosswords, charts, questions, etc. Teens can fill them in during the programme or later at home. It will help them review the lessons and memorise the main points.

We trust this material will be a blessing to many teachers and teens.



LESSON 1

WHY FOLLOW JESUS?

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to understand who Jesus Christ is and why His life and teaching are still relevant for us today.



to grow in their understanding and love for their Saviour.



to thank God for His grace in calling them to be His followers.

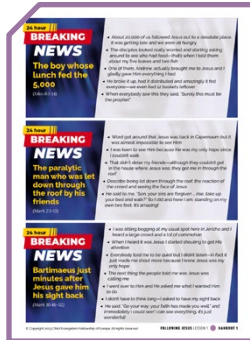


to respond positively to the call to follow Jesus.

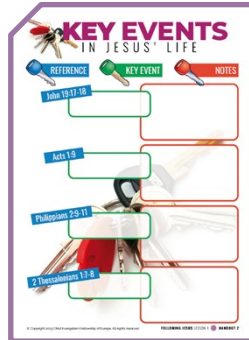
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 1



HANDOUT 1



HANDOUT 2



HANDOUT 3

INTRODUCTION: BREAKING NEWS

Ask three of the young people in advance to prepare to take part in a “television” interview. Use the scenarios provided in **HANDOUT 1**. Use the first interview here and the other two where indicated. Each time introduce this part by saying, “We are just receiving some breaking news from Israel. Our reporter (insert name) is on the scene now talking to an eyewitness. (Name), can you bring us up to speed on what has been happening?”

Who is Jesus?

[Show **VISUAL 1** with each heading appearing on transition.] Jesus really caused quite a stir when He began His public ministry. Yet up until that point, He was relatively unknown. He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He worked in a carpenter’s shop until He was 30. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never had a family or owned a house.

- He never wrote a book, yet more books have been written about Him than about any other person. The nearest thing we have to His biography has now been translated in whole or in part into well over 2,000 languages.
- He had no formal education, but thousands of universities, seminaries, colleges and schools have been founded in His name.
- He never raised an army or led an armed rebellion, yet millions of people have laid down their lives in His cause, and thousands still do so every year.
- The whole of history in the Western world is divided into the years before He was born and those which followed His birth. This is [add year] A.D., which stands for the Latin words Anno Domini which when translated means “in the year of our Lord”.

Jesus Christ has had a greater influence on history than any other person. Yet many people today have never heard of Him or are uncertain about who Jesus really is and what relevance His teachings really have for us today.

Over these next weeks we are going to look more closely at this most remarkable Person as we examine the lives of some of those who were closest to Him. We will discover why so many were willing to leave everything to follow Him and why He still calls people to follow Him today.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

[Read John 1:1-5 and ask the following questions.] Who was already there with God at the beginning of creation (verse 1-2)? The Word. Who is the Word? He is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. What things were made through Him (verse 3)? Everything.

It was difficult for the people of Jesus’ day to understand that Jesus existed before He was born in Bethlehem. Even though John the Baptist was born about six months before Jesus (Luke 1:26), he clearly taught that Jesus had existed before him (John 1:15).

JESUS’ BIRTH

Mary, a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), gave birth to a baby boy and called His name Jesus (Matthew 1:21,23).

What two “L”s are used to describe Him in John 1:4-5? Life and light. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). He came as the light into this dark sin-cursed world. He became one of us (John 1:14) so that He could die in our place in order that He might give us life—eternal life.

It’s difficult to understand, but we can say that Jesus is and always has been 100 percent God (John 1:18). At the same time, because He has been born into this world as a human, He is also 100 percent man (Galatians 4:4). He lived for 33 years on this Earth in bodily form (Philippians 2:7). Jesus only differed from us in that He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

JESUS’ YOUTH

We should not forget that the Lord Jesus was also once the age you are. We know very little from the Gospel writers about His youth. We know that He had brothers and sisters (Matthew 13:55-56) and that He was obedient to His parents (Luke 2:51). When He was 12 years

old, He first visited Jerusalem (Luke 2:40-52). On that occasion, when the rest of the family left, He stayed behind in the temple three days listening and asking questions to the teachers there. Even they realised that there was something special about Jesus, for they were amazed at His understanding and the answers He gave.

METHOD: "BREAKING NEWS" (PART 2)

JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

In John 1:29-31, John the Baptist announced to his followers that the One they should follow was now here. He said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Shortly after that, at around the age of 30 (Luke 3:23), Jesus began His public ministry. He began to do great miracles and to say things that really got people's attention. Look up Matthew 4:24 to find out some of the things He did. Many people realised that to be able to say and do those things, Jesus had to be the One sent by God, the promised Messiah (John 6:14). Those who received Him and His message were saved and became children of God (John 1:12).

METHOD: "BREAKING NEWS" (PART 3)

METHOD: KEY EVENTS IN JESUS' LIFE

Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 2**. As you continue to teach about who the Lord Jesus is and what He has done, ask the teens to look up the references listed on the chart and note in the second column the key events that took place. Then read the additional note provided and have them write it in the third column.



Handout 2 answers

Key events in Jesus' life

John 19:17-18—Jesus' death—Jesus died on the cross, taking the punishment our sins deserve.

Luke 24:5-6—Jesus' resurrection—After three days, Jesus arose from the dead. He is alive forever.

Why follow Him?

Some people might say, "What's so special about Jesus? Sure He did a lot of good things and helped a lot of sick people but there have been a lot of people who have lived good lives. Surely we can learn something from them all? Why follow Jesus and nobody else?"

Jesus Himself tells us why we should follow Him. Look up John 14:6. He is the only way to the Father. Many people today think that they can believe what they like and that it will be OK for them in the end. They say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere." This is a very dangerous thing to believe. Jesus didn't say that He was one of many ways. He said He was the **only** way to God, the **only** truth of God and He offers the **only** life that is worth living, both on Earth and in eternity. No religion, no system of belief, no political ideals will ever bring a person to Heaven. The **only** way to God is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Is He calling you to follow Him?

When He lived on this Earth, Jesus called various people to follow Him. In later lessons we will meet some of them. But it is important to realise that the Lord Jesus is still calling people to follow Him today—people like you!

He wants to be "Lord" in your life. The word means "owner, ruler, master" (Acts 10:36).

Acts 1:9—Jesus' ascension—As the disciples watched, Jesus ascended to His Father in Heaven.

Philippians 2:9-11—Jesus' exaltation—Jesus is now exalted at God's right hand in Heaven.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8—Jesus' return—One day Jesus will return as the Judge of all people.

The name "Jesus" simply means "God saves" (Matthew 1:21). He wants to be your Saviour. The word "Christ" means "anointed One" (Acts 9:22). He wants you to have confidence in Him, to trust Him as the One sent by God and the only One who can save you.

THE INVITATION

What sort of people does God call? He calls the humble and teachable. He calls those who realise that they are sinners and in a situation where they cannot help themselves. He calls people who realise they have rebelled and made mistakes (1 Corinthians 1:26-27).

METHOD: AN INVITATION

Photocopy **HANDOUT 3** containing the invitation and allow the young people to look up the verses and fill in the blanks.

John 3:16 says that whoever believes in Him will not perish. This is the greatest invitation of all time. He invites you to follow Him. Jesus came to Earth to call sinners like you and me to repentance (Luke 5:32).

Is Jesus speaking to you right now? Is He calling you to come and follow Him (John 6:44)? If He is then do not turn down this invitation. Don't harden your heart (Hebrews 3:15). God does not want anyone to perish, He wants all to repent (2 Peter 3:9). If He is calling you now and you accept His invitation to salvation, you will be saved (Romans 10:13). Do it now before it is too late.

CONSIDERING THE COST

An army general, who was about to lead his men into a battle which would probably end in their death, said, "Soldiers, all our efforts against superior forces have been unavailing. I have nothing to offer you but hunger and thirst, hardship and death. But I call on all who love their country to join with me."

Before accepting Christ's invitation to follow Him, you must first fully understand the cost involved. Some people teach that becoming a Christian will make your life much easier, that you will always be healthy, successful and always have lots of money. That is a lie from Satan! The Lord Jesus never taught that. In fact, He even stated the opposite (Matthew 24:9). He wanted to make sure that no-one who followed Him did so under false pretences. Look up Mark 8:34 to see what Jesus really said.

Before you follow Jesus, you have to consider the cost. Here are the three conditions He gave:

- "Deny himself"—you must surrender yourself completely to Him;
- "Take up his cross"—you must be prepared to identify with Him in His suffering and death; and
- "Follow Me"—you must follow Him obediently, wherever He leads.

When you are considering the cost, remember that Jesus never calls upon people to do or face anything that He was not prepared to do or face Himself. What He asks us to face, He has already faced. Jesus has a right to call on us to take up a cross, for He Himself first bore one for us.



Handout 3 answers

Invitation

From: God who gives the invitation (John 3:16).

To: anyone/you (John 3:16).

The invitation is to come and follow Him (Luke 9:23).

Entry requirements: through Jesus (John 14:6).

If you wish to attend then you must: repent (Acts 3:19).

Please respond by today (2 Corinthians 6:2b).

How can I become a follower of Jesus?

ACKNOWLEDGE YOU ARE A SINNER

Once you have been called and you have counted the cost then you need to acknowledge that you are a sinner. Sin separates us from God and it must be punished (Romans 6:23). When you acknowledge your sin, you confess it to God. You agree with God about how awful your sin is and you admit that there is nothing you can do by yourself to remedy the problem.

REPENT

"To repent" means "to change, to turn around, to stop going the way you are going". It is to be truly sorry for the wrong things you have done and to have a genuine desire to leave them behind and begin to go God's way instead. Has God spoken to you about your sin? Then be willing to turn from it (Acts 3:19).

RECEIVE JESUS AS YOUR SAVIOUR


By dying on the cross Jesus took the punishment which our sin deserves. But Jesus is not automatically the Saviour of everyone in the world. He is only the Saviour of true believers who really trust in Christ alone for salvation. You need to believe that when the Lord Jesus died

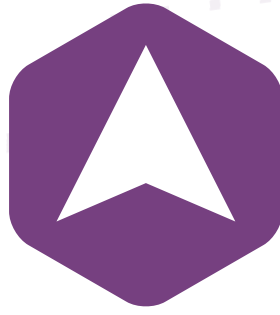
on the cross He was taking the punishment for your sin. Receive the Lord Jesus by crying out to Him for mercy and asking Him to save you.

CONCLUSION

There have been many famous people who have lived over the years, but no-one who can compare with the Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly unique. As the perfect Son of God who has always existed, He is the only One who can deal with the biggest problem this world faces today—the problem of sin!

One day you will have to give an account to God for your response to Jesus (Romans 14:12). What will you say? What excuse will you give? Who will you blame for keeping you from Christ? Eternity will be spent in one of two places—Heaven or Hell. If you do not accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour then you will take the punishment for your own sin in eternity. Are you willing to come and follow Him?

In the coming weeks we will be looking at the lives of those who did follow Him. We will discover a lot about what it means to live as a follower of the Lord Jesus. But we will also discover that there is much more to learn about the One they were following—the unique person of Jesus Christ. 



LESSON 2

PETER: CHANGED FOREVER

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to understand that even though there may be times when their faith is weak, the Christian life should be an upward progression of becoming more like the Lord Jesus Christ.



who are going through a difficult time to be encouraged.



to learn to exercise faith in every situation they face.



to realise their need of Jesus and to acknowledge Him as Saviour and Lord.

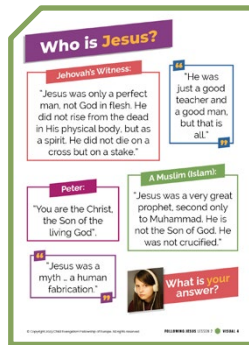
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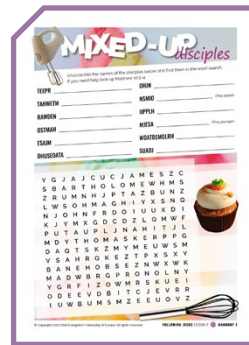
VISUAL 2



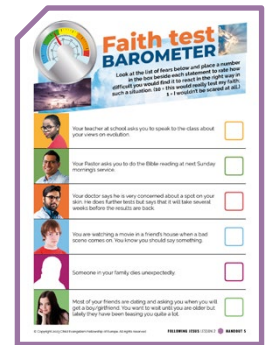
VISUAL 3



VISUAL 4



HANDOUT 4



HANDOUT 5

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes we are apt to think of Bible characters as people who were perfect, but that is completely untrue. This year we are going to discover that Bible characters were ordinary people just like you and me, but sometimes God chose to use them in special ways. As we look at them more closely, we will see their strengths and weaknesses, and we will find out more about what it means to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

During the three years of Jesus' earthly ministry, He had many people who followed Him, including women. But He chose a group of 12 men called the disciples (also referred to as the apostles). Can you remember their names?

METHOD: MIXED UP DISCIPLES

Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 4**. Tell them that it is a competition to see who can find and write down the names first.

While Jesus had 12 close followers, there were many other people who also followed Him. Over the next weeks, we are going to look at some of these followers and how they followed Jesus. Let us look at this first person to see if you can guess who we are going to talk about today.

METHOD: WHO AM I?

Show **VISUAL 2**. Read out the information below and give the teens the opportunity to suggest who it could be.

- **Name:** He had his name changed
- **Occupation:** Fisherman
- **Origin:** Bethsaida, moved to Capernaum (Galilee)



Handout 4 answers

Unscramble the words:

Peter; Andrew; James; John; Philip;
Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; Thaddaeus;
Simon (the zealot); James (the younger);
Judas.

- **What people said about him:** Outgoing, eager, bold
- **Famous for:** Having many ups and downs; being one of Jesus' three special friends; frequently "putting his foot in his mouth"
- **Where we read about him:** There is more written about him in the Gospels than anyone else
- **Writings:** Two letters
- **Memory verse:** Acts 4:12 *[Consider sending the words of the verse to your young people on a suitable social media platform. Encourage them to use their phone to memorise the verse throughout the day.]*

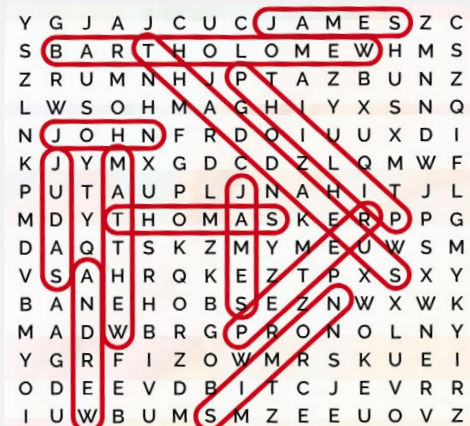
Do you know the identity of this man? Yes, it is Peter! Sometimes he is called Simon Peter. *[Show **VISUAL 3** with covers on the text, which you will remove as you progress through the lesson.]*

Today we want to begin to look at Peter's life and how he came to know and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. *[As you come to each point, have a young person ready to read the Bible verses.]* We will discover that, like a mountain biker, his journey through life had many ups and downs.

His birth: Psalm 51:5

The Bible doesn't tell us anything about Peter's birth or childhood. However, there is one thing we can be sure of—Peter, like all of us, was born a sinner (Psalm 51:5). This is something we all have in common.

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, they disobeyed God. As a result of their actions, sin and death entered



the world (Romans 5:12). The Bible says that all of us have sinned and failed to reach the standard God has set (Romans 3:23). The sin that we are born with separates us from God. That is why, when we are thinking of Peter's spiritual condition, we must start down here at the bottom.

Do you realise that, like Peter, you were born with this problem of sin in your life? It is a very serious problem, one that only the Lord Jesus can solve.

Little did Peter know, growing up and working as a fisherman, that one day, He would meet and become a follower of the Lord Jesus, the One who could solve his problem of sin.

Peter meets Jesus

From a very low start, being born in sin, suddenly Peter's life takes an amazing turn and reaches a high point. What happened? His brother Andrew personally introduced him to Jesus (John 1:41-42). Over the weeks and months that followed, Peter was to get to know the Lord Jesus really well. Following Jesus would bring about many changes for him. Notice three things that Jesus changed in Peter's life.

JESUS CHANGED HIS NAME: JOHN 1:41-42

The first thing the Lord did was to change Peter's name to "Cephas", which means "stone" or "rock". Jesus saw that he was a determined and tough character and God can use that type of person. Determination to go through with God is often missing from Christians today. Boldness to stand up for God and stand against sin is also often missing. God gives us the strength to be as firm as a rock and to really live for Him. The question is, are you willing to trust Him for it and to play your part? This will mean growing stronger in your faith through a regular daily quiet time, being willing to witness for the Lord even when it is hard, and refusing to give in to temptation even when it seems really attractive.

JESUS CHANGED HIS PRIORITIES: LUKE 5:1-9

Before meeting Jesus, probably the most important thing in Peter's life had been his job as

a commercial fisherman. Jesus knew everything about Peter. When He looked at Peter, He saw beyond merely his outward appearance. He saw the sin in his life. Peter needed to realise that the most important thing in his life was to find a solution to the greatest problem in his life—his sin!

On one occasion, Peter came to see this very clearly. After a night of fishing when he had caught nothing, Jesus came by and told him to launch his boat again. Peter did so, and was amazed to find that he made the biggest catch of fish he had ever had (Luke 5:1-7). This incident had a big impact on Peter's life, as he realised that he was in the presence of Someone really special. Peter came to realise that his life was full of sin (Luke 5:8-9). He desperately needed to have that sin problem dealt with.

It is the same with you. When God looks at you He sees your sin. But the Lord Jesus has made it possible for you to have your sin forgiven. The reason God sent Jesus into this world was so that He could be your Saviour. Jesus willingly gave His life. He died in your place on the cross to save you from the penalty of your sin. He wants you also to know the peace and joy of having your sins forgiven. For this to happen, you must first turn from your sin and ask Christ to be your Saviour. You must meet the Lord Jesus just as Peter did.

JESUS CHANGED HIS LIFE: MATTHEW 4:18-20

The third thing the Lord Jesus Christ did for Peter was to change his life. Peter left his nets and the family business behind to follow Jesus. He was going to continue to fish, but Jesus told Peter that He was now going to become a "fisher of men" (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17). Peter would never be the same again. Jesus had changed his name, his priorities and his life.

Again the question must be answered, have you responded yet to Jesus' invitation to come and follow Him? This is the most important decision you will ever make in your life. Jesus wants to forgive your sin. He wants to have a personal relationship with you. If you say "yes" and follow Him, He will change your life forever, just as He did with Peter.

METHOD: TESTIMONY

You may wish to give a short testimony of how your life has changed since you met Jesus. Alternatively you may ask one of the teens in advance to do this.

// LESSON BREAK //

HIS FAITH IS TESTED AND FOUND TO BE WEAK: MATTHEW 14:22-32

Peter certainly had his ups and downs! In Matthew 14:22-32 we read of a time when Peter initially displayed the strength of his faith, only to then show how very weak and afraid he really was. He trusted Jesus enough to step out of the boat onto the waves, but he was unable to keep trusting, and as a result began to sink. Because his faith was tested and found to be weak, we can see this was a low point in Peter's life.

As a Christian do you ever lack faith? Maybe you have a group of friends who say they are Christians too, yet they go to the school discos and say that there is nothing wrong with it. You decide not to go and explain your reasons and a whole "storm" erupts around you. You know you will probably be misunderstood and lose friends and you are afraid of going to school the next day. Our faith can be tested in many ways and spiritually we can feel so weak.

METHOD: FAITH TEST BAROMETER

The Bible says that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength (Philippians 4:13) but it also tells us that at times God will test our faith in order to make us stronger and better followers of Jesus (James 1:2-4). Can you think of situations you have faced where your faith was really put to the test?

*[Give time for the teens to share. Then distribute **HANDOUT 5**.]* Look at the list of fears below and place a number in the box beside each statement to rate how difficult you would find it to react in the right way in such a situation. (10 = this would really test my faith; 1 = I wouldn't be scared at all.)

- Your teacher at school asks you to speak to the class about your views on evolution.

- Your Pastor asks you to do the Bible reading at next Sunday morning's service.
- Your doctor says he is very concerned about a spot on your skin. He does further tests but says that it will take several weeks before the results are back.
- You are watching a movie in a friend's house when a bad scene comes on. You know you should say something.
- Someone in your family dies unexpectedly.
- Most of your friends are dating and asking you when you will get a boy/girlfriend. You want to wait until you are older but lately they have been teasing you quite a lot.

Take time to discuss the answers given by the teens. If you know of other relevant examples to your group you may wish to ask the teens to rate those situations.

Amazingly Peter was able to walk on the water, but at what point did things start to go wrong? *[Allow teens to answer.]* Do you think there is a lesson there for you? In all situations you must do what Peter didn't do—keep your eyes on the Lord! When Peter's eyes were on the Lord, his faith was strong. When he looked at the storm he began to sink. Perhaps you have taken your eyes off the Lord and you are sinking into fear and despair and doubt. You are looking at the problems instead of looking to the Lord in faith. You need to do what Peter did next. He cried to the Lord for help (Matthew 14:30). His faith was weak but the strong arm of the Lord reached down and rescued Peter.

No matter what situation you are facing, the Lord can do the same for you, if you will call to Him and believe that He is able to help you.

Even though this was one of the lower points in Peter's life, he still learned a very valuable lesson that we too should learn. There is no situation where the Lord Jesus cannot reach us, calm our fears and take away our doubts.

HIS GREAT PROFESSION OF FAITH: MATTHEW 16:13-17

In these verses the Lord Jesus asked Peter a very important question. What was it? *[Allow the young people to answer.]* This is still a very

important question. People today, just like people in the New Testament, have strange ideas as to who the Lord Jesus really is. If you were to do a survey in your school class, you would be amazed at the different answers you would receive. *[Ask the teens how they think people might answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" Allow them to respond with some suggestions, then show* **VISUAL 4.***]*

- Jehovah's Witness—"Jesus was only a perfect man, not God in flesh. He did not rise from the dead in His physical body, but as a spirit. He did not die on a cross but on a stake."
- A Muslim (Islam)—"Jesus was a very great prophet, second only to Muhammad. He is not the Son of God. He was not crucified."
- Maybe someone else would say, "He was just a good teacher and a good man, but that is all."
- Others would say, "The Lord Jesus was a myth ... a human fabrication."—What a tragedy!
- What is your answer?

Peter got the answer absolutely correct in verse 16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." He was learning. He was being changed. How wonderful it was for Peter to now make this great profession of faith. This was another real high point in Peter's walk with Jesus. Do you see the significance of what Peter said? It had been eighteen months since Peter first met the Lord. As he followed Jesus he had times when he was really close to the Lord and times when he let Him down and sinned. Peter knew that he was far from perfect, but now he had come to the conclusion that Jesus was perfect. Even more than that, he was acknowledging that Jesus is God the Son, the Messiah promised in the Old


Testament, the perfect One in whom we must trust in order to have our sins forgiven.

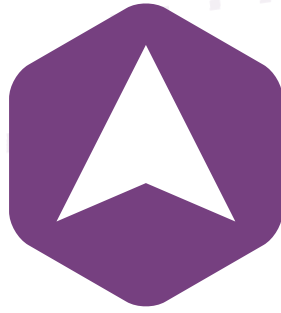
We have the advantage of being able to read the New Testament to discover more about Christ's life, teaching, death and resurrection but Peter did not have that full revelation. So how could Peter say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God"? How did he know that and how could he be sure that what he was saying was true? Verse 17 gives the answer—it was revealed to him by God the Father. This is very special. Here we have Peter, a fisherman, and God showed him something He had not revealed to the king of the land. He showed Peter that the Lord Jesus is God. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus really is God? God can reveal this to you just as He did with Peter. It is then necessary for you to act on what you know to be right.

CONCLUSION

The next time we meet, we will continue to look at Peter and we will see how he is progressing spiritually. Already we have seen that Peter's life had its high and low points. The initial high point was when he came to know the Lord as his Saviour.

Now you know who Jesus is, are you prepared to follow Him? Have you asked Him to forgive your sin? Have you placed your trust in Him?

Perhaps you are a follower of Jesus Christ but as you look back over the last few weeks or months, you know that you have not been following Jesus as closely as you should have. Just now you can ask God to forgive you for your failings. You could pray something like this, "Lord, I am sorry for the times when I have failed You and when I didn't follow You as closely as I should have. Help me Lord to learn to exercise faith, no matter what situations I might face. Help me to grow in my faith and to become more like You each day. Amen." 



LESSON 3

PETER: FAILURES AND VICTORIES

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to realise that when they let the Lord down they can be forgiven.



who are going through a spiritual low to experience the restoring love of Jesus.



to find courage to tell others about their faith in Jesus.



to be able to profess faith in Christ as Peter did.

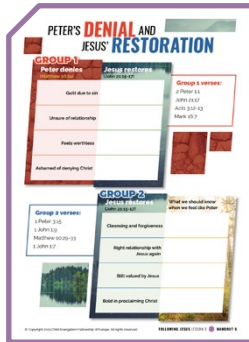
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 5



VISUAL 6



HANDOUT 6



HANDOUT 7

INTRODUCTION: “NO! IT WASN’T ME!”

Ask teens beforehand to prepare a little sketch in two parts, one for the introduction of the lesson and one for the conclusion.

- **Teacher:** *[Read the following text.]* Joel has been a Christian for just over two months now. He still finds it hard to tell people about it. It’s not that he is ashamed of his faith, he’s just scared of how people might react.
- **Teen 1:** “I saw you with a few others in McDonald’s last week. I wondered what you were doing just before you began to eat. Did you pray?” *[Joel laughs off the suggestion, saying he was just rubbing something in his eye.]*
- **Teen 2:** “What’s up Joel? You used to come to football practice every Sunday morning without fail. It must be at least two months since I last saw you.” *[Joel makes excuses and tries to change the subject.]*
- **Teen 3:** “Hey Joel, was that you I saw on Saturday evening going into those church youth rooms? I’m nearly sure it was you.” *[Joel denies vehemently that it was him.]*

We will come back to this sketch later, but do you see what was happening here? Each time Joel was given an opportunity to tell others he was now a follower of Jesus, he denied it and told lies to try and cover it up. This reminds me of an incident in Peter’s life. In our last lesson we discovered some of Peter’s ups and downs as he followed Jesus. Can you remember any of them? *[Review the first four points—his birth (born in sin), his first meeting with Jesus, his faith is tested (and found to be weak) and his great profession of faith.]*

Now let’s look up Matthew 26:69-75 to see what happened when Peter was put under pressure to admit to being a follower of Jesus. *[Have a teen read the passage out loud.]*

Show **VISUAL 5** with transitions which will appear as you progress through the lesson.

His denial of Christ: Matthew 26:69-75

These verses tell us what happened to Peter immediately after the Lord Jesus was arrested. Instead of admitting to being a follower of Jesus, we find Peter denying that he even knows who Jesus is. Poor Peter—he was finding it so hard to learn and to change. How is Peter spiritually right now? Is he spiritually strong or is he really weak? Peter has reached one of the lowest points in his life because he actually denies that he even knows the Lord Jesus.

Don’t be too critical of Peter. Have there not been times when you denied the Lord Jesus? Perhaps someone in your class was teased for being a Christian. It was a really difficult time for them. Instead of trying to help them by saying that you are a Christian too, you just walked away. You didn’t stand up for the Lord Jesus. You denied Him. The moment you did that you probably felt bad, rotten, like crying—just like Peter did. You knew what you should do and you missed an opportunity to stand up for Jesus.

Perhaps you deny Him by the way you live. You are known as a Christian but your life does not back it up. Sometimes you swear or perhaps on the football pitch you go in to deliberately hurt someone. Afterwards you feel bad but you don’t really repent. As a result, your witness for the Lord Jesus is damaged.

Whenever the cock crowed, Peter felt really bad. He was in the depths of despair. He wept bitterly. There is no doubt that Peter’s repentance was genuine. If we do deny the Lord or sin in another way, then we too should show remorse and hatred for that sin. We should follow Peter’s example in sincere repentance, then sin no more. What a lesson Peter was taught in his denial of Christ.

His restoration to Christ: John 21:15-17

After the denial Peter was probably very unsure of how he stood with Jesus. He felt so worthless because of what he had done. Perhaps you have felt like that after letting the Lord down. You wonder how it is between

you and the Lord. Well, if you do what Peter did and genuinely repent, then you can know your sin has been forgiven and forgotten. You should be encouraged by the way Jesus dealt with Peter. He sent a personal message to him after the resurrection (Mark 16:7). Jesus was still interested in Peter. It would appear that Jesus and Peter had a personal meeting even before the other disciples saw the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:4-5). Peter was as dear to the Master as ever, and Christ wanted him to know that.

It was now time for a public testimony of restoration. By the Sea of Galilee, Christ asked Peter the same question three times—"Do you love Me?" Peter's answers were not defiant, proud or boastful, but honest. He simply said, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." We need honesty when putting things right with God—honesty about our sin, honesty about repentance and honesty about our love for God. Those Christians, who show evidence of this honesty after sinning, know and experience God's tenderness, mercy and love. The Lord Jesus is ready and willing to restore them to fellowship with Him.

METHOD: HANDOUT

Split the young people into two groups and then distribute **HANDOUT 6**. Each group should complete the second column of their table by inserting the correct verse into the right place.



Handout 6 answers

Group 1

Guilt due to sin: **John 21:17**.

Unsure of relationship: **Mark 16:7**.

Feels worthless: **2 Peter 1:1**.

Ashamed of denying Christ: **Acts 3:12-13**.

Group 2

Cleansing and forgiveness: **1 John 1:9**.

Right relationship with Jesus again:

1 John 1:7.

Still valued by Jesus: **Matthew 10:29-33**.

Bold in proclaiming Christ: **1 Peter 3:15**.

When they have finished, bring the groups together and share the answers for the other group. Then read the table again to make sure they grasp the teaching.

Encourage the teens to think over 1 John 1:9 and ask them what this verse means for the Christian who sins or feels he has let Jesus down. Point out that John was writing here to Christians. Also encourage the teens to take time at home to memorise this verse.

// LESSON BREAK //

METHOD: FINDING ANSWERS FROM ACTS 2

Have the young people turn to Acts 2. Then go through the questions one by one giving the young people opportunity to answer.

- What special event took place in verse 1? (The Day of Pentecost/the coming of the Holy Spirit.)
- What did people hear that was so strange to their ears (verse 6)? (The disciples speaking in different languages.)
- What did onlookers presume when they heard all this noise (verse 13)? (That the disciples were drunk.)
- What bold thing did Peter do (verses 14-39)? (He stood up to explain what was happening and to preach the Gospel.)
- How did the people respond to the preaching of the Gospel (verse 37)? (They were convicted of their sin and asked what they should do?)
- What did Peter say they needed to do (verse 38)? (Repent and be baptised.)
- How many people responded positively that day to the preaching of the Gospel (verse 41)? (About 3,000.)

His boldness to proclaim Christ: Acts 2:14-15,37-41

What a changed Peter we find in these verses! No denying here and no fear of people or circumstances. He stood up to speak, even though there were thousands watching and

listening. Peter didn't care, he wanted the world to know that he was a Christian and he wanted the world to know his Jesus too. At last he was living up to the name the Lord Jesus had given him—Rock (John 1:41-42)! He was standing firm and witnessing for Christ.

What brought about the change? Well, when the Lord Jesus returned to Heaven, He kept His promise about sending the Holy Spirit (John 16:7). When Peter and the others were together on the day of Pentecost they were filled with God the Holy Spirit in a very special way. It was God the Holy Spirit who gave Peter the courage to stand up and speak up. God used Peter that day in such a wonderful way that about three thousand people became followers of the Lord Jesus! What a change in Peter's life! If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ then the Holy Spirit came to live in you the moment you trusted Christ for your salvation. He will lead you and guide you. When you tell others about the Lord, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts them of their sin and their need of a Saviour. Just as He helped Peter, He will help you too, to be bold in proclaiming the Gospel message.

METHOD: "YES! IT WAS ME!"

Ask the same teens to do the second part of the sketch.

- **Teacher:** *[Read the following text.]* Joel has been a Christian for just over two months now. He still finds it hard to tell people about it. It's not that he is ashamed of his faith, he's just scared of how people might react. However, he has been praying recently that God the Holy Spirit would give him boldness to tell others.
- **Teen 1:** "I saw you with a few others in McDonald's last week. I wondered what you were doing just before you began to eat. Did you pray?"
- **Joel:** "Yes I did. I am a Christian now and I believe that everything we have is a gift from God, so I just wanted to say thanks to Him before I ate the food."
- **Teen 2:** "What's up Joel? You used to come to football practice every Sunday morning

without fail. It must be at least two months since I last saw you."

- **Joel:** "Well, actually I have become a Christian now and I want to worship God and learn more from His Word. Church is at the same time, so I had to make a choice."
- **Teen 3:** "Hey Joel, was that you I saw on Saturday evening going into those church youth rooms? I'm nearly sure it was you."
- **Joel:** "Yes, I never had the courage to tell you guys before, but I have actually become a Christian now. On Saturday night it's great to be able to go and meet with other young people who also want to follow Jesus. We do a lot of singing and study the Bible together. Afterwards we just hang out and have a laugh ... it's really cool!"

CONCLUSION

*[Show **VISUAL 6**.]* Peter had been changed forever. Now he was doing really well spiritually. Oh yes, there were downs too, as there are in the life of every Christian but as we grow in the Christian life the downs should become less and the overall progression should be upward. Step by step he was changing and becoming more like the Lord Jesus. Can that be said of your life also?

Do you see the amazing change which took place in Peter's life? The same Peter who let the Lord down so many times, would later become an influential leader in the Christian church. The same Peter who denied even knowing Jesus was later prepared to endure persecution and eventually to be martyred for his faith.

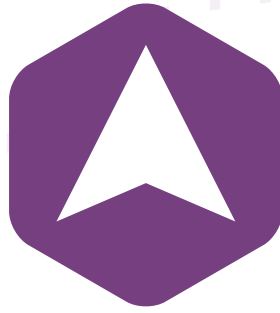
Meantime, what does the pattern for your life look like? Are the downs getting fewer? Is the overall graph going upwards? Perhaps as we have looked at Peter's life you have realised that you are not where you should be in your relationship with Jesus. Like Peter, you can ask Christ to forgive you and experience the blessing of being restored into a right relationship with Him.

METHOD: A TIME OF PRAYER

Ask the teens to close their eyes and to think about the implications of what they have learned from the life of Peter. Encourage them to silently bring their failures to God, to confess their sin and to seek the forgiveness and restoration that He offers. You may wish to close this time by praying out loud yourself.

METHOD: HANDOUT

*Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 7**. They could fill it in during the programme or later at home. ●*



LESSON 4

JOHN: A DEVOTED FOLLOWER

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to understand what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus.



to consider the personal cost that is involved in following Jesus.



to walk closely with the Master everyday, even through hard times.

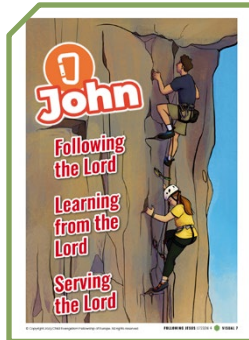


to respond positively to Jesus' call.

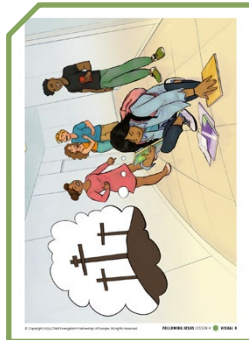
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 2



VISUAL 7



VISUAL 8



HANDOUT 8



HANDOUT 9



HANDOUT 10

INTRODUCTION: WHO AM I?

Show **VISUAL 2**. Read out the information below and give the teens the opportunity to suggest who it could be.

- **Name:** Means "Jehovah is gracious"
- **Occupation:** Fisherman
- **Family background:** Younger brother of James and son of Zebedee
- **What people said about him:** He had a special relationship with Jesus
- **Famous for:** Writing a lot about love; very "black and white" in his thinking; was often together with Peter
- **Writings:** One of the Gospels, three letters and Revelation
- **Memory verse:** John 15:13-14 *[Consider sending the words of the verses to your young people on a suitable social media platform. Encourage them to use their phone to memorise the verse throughout the day.]*

Do you know the identity of this man? Yes, it is John. *[Show **VISUAL 7** with transitions as you progress through the lesson.]*

METHOD: SWORD DRILL

When you want to look up a Bible verse with the teens in this study, ask them to "draw their swords" (hold their Bible up high). Give the Bible reference and have them repeat it. On the command, "Attack!" they will compete to find the verse. The first teen to find it stands up. Give a few moments for others to find it and then ask the winner to read the verse aloud.

We want to find out a little more about John. See what you can discover about him from the following references.

Mark 1:19: What were John and his brother doing when Jesus called them to follow Him? (Mending their nets.)

Mark 3:17: What nickname did Jesus give to John and his brother? (Sons of Thunder.)

John 13:23: Rather than using his own name, how did John refer to himself in his writings? (The disciple whom Jesus loved.)

John 19:25-27: At which significant event was John the only disciple present? (The crucifixion of Jesus.)

By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John wrote five of the books we have in the New Testament—the Gospel of John, the epistles 1, 2 and 3 John and also Revelation. In his Gospel, John tells us about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ. His three epistles were written to teach and encourage people who had become Christians and were still young in the faith. In the book of Revelation, we are told of an amazing vision John had of things that would happen in the future. In this vision John learned many important things that we will look at in our next meeting. Before then, we want to see what we can learn from John who was known as the "beloved one" because of his special relationship with Jesus.

Following the Lord

On a difficult rock climb, it is important for an inexperienced climber to stay close to the leader. In his life with the Lord Jesus, John also learned the importance of following closely. Many Bible scholars believe that there is strong evidence to suggest that before John became a follower of Jesus, he was a disciple of another John, namely John the Baptist. In John 1:35-36, John the Baptist tells his disciples to follow Jesus because He is "the Lamb of God", the One he has been preparing the way for. Jesus is the One who has come to take away the sin of the world.

John was probably one of the men who then travelled with Jesus in order to examine Him more closely. They followed their new teacher to Galilee (John 1:43) and witnessed Jesus' first miracle at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:2). They journeyed with Him to Capernaum and Jerusalem and then back to Galilee where John briefly returned to his former occupation.

Then one day, John and his brother James were mending their nets as the Lord Jesus and some of His new disciples came by. Jesus called them both. Read Mark 1:19-20 to see how they responded to Jesus' call. Immediately they left what they were doing and followed Him.

From that moment, they dedicated their lives to following Jesus.

Have a look again at Mark 1:20. Did you notice what they left behind when they followed Jesus? *[Allow the young people to answer.]* Following Jesus involves personal sacrifice. These brothers had to leave their hometown, their family and their job. Yet despite the cost, when Jesus came and called them, they obeyed right away. They didn't allow anyone or anything to prevent them from obeying Jesus because they knew that He was no ordinary man (John 2:11).

The Lord Jesus still calls people to follow Him today. He calls them to turn away from their sin and to come to Him for forgiveness. Is Jesus calling you to become His follower? Perhaps as you have listened to the Bible being taught here in this meeting or in church, you have realised that you have sin in your life and that you need the Lord Jesus as your Saviour.

When Jesus calls, will you obey and follow Him? As with John, you will find that it will often involve personal sacrifice. There will be things in your life you will have to give up, things that will hinder your walk with Jesus. Maybe your friends will tease you and disown you. If you obey Jesus and follow Him, He has promised to be your friend (John 15:13-14).



Handout 8 answers

Follower scramble

The friends I hang out with.

How I spend my time.

Harmful habits.

The entertainment venues I visit.

The movies I watch.

The things I spend my money on.

The sites I visit on the Internet.

The sport that I play.

METHOD: UNSCRAMBLE WORDS

*How might becoming a follower of Jesus change a young person's lifestyle? Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 8**. Decipher the phrases to find the things that might have to change.*

Ask the young people what they have found. Use follow-up questions to ascertain if the young people agree with the things listed. If you have time, encourage a healthy discussion on these things.

Even though there was a high personal cost, John never regretted becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. If Jesus is calling you to follow Him, don't let anything keep you back, obey Him today!

Learning from the Lord

John was one of three disciples who had a very close and special relationship with the Lord. He was there at the very start of Jesus' earthly ministry and listened daily to His teaching. With his own eyes he watched Jesus. He was up close and observed the miracles Jesus performed. He witnessed the compassion Jesus had for those in need. The things that he personally heard, saw, looked at and touched (1 John 1:1-4) he recorded for us in his New Testament writings.

Sword drill: John 20:30-31. Did John record everything that Jesus did in his Gospel? No, there were many other things that he didn't write down (John 21:25). Why did John write the things he wrote? After three years of following, observing and learning from Jesus, he came to the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. He wants you to believe this also and follow Jesus so that you may have eternal life.

John didn't always find it easy to be a follower of Jesus. There were times when he made mistakes and let the Lord Jesus down. In Luke 9:54 we read how John and his brother James lost their temper and wanted to call down fire from Heaven and destroy the people who refused to welcome Jesus. It's hardly surprising then that Jesus nicknamed them the "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). In another incident recorded in Mark 9:38, we see John being selfish

and wanting special privileges for himself. John had a lot to learn about the type of person the Lord Jesus wanted him to be.

METHOD: GOOD AND BAD ATTITUDES

Look up the following references and compare the actions and attitude of the Lord Jesus to the selfishness, bad temper and hatred displayed by John and James. What would John have learned from the behaviour of the Lord Jesus in these incidents?

Have the young people read the following references one at a time. Allow them to respond before you give them the answers using the information provided after each reference.

Mark 6:31-34: Jesus was tired and needed rest, yet still unselfishly put the needs of others before His own. Contrast this with John and James' desire to have the best for themselves.

John 13:3-5: Jesus showed a servant attitude by washing the disciples' feet. Contrast this with John and James' desire to have places of prominence and power.

Luke 23:33-34: Jesus showed forgiveness to those who reject Him even as they nailed Him to the cross. Contrast this with John and James' anger and hatred to those who rejected them as they brought the message of Jesus.

As he spent time with Jesus, John learned a lot by watching how the Lord reacted to different situations. It became very obvious that Jesus' reactions were very different to John's. Through His displays of love, humility, patience and forgiveness, the Lord Jesus showed John a wonderful example of how Christians should live. The challenge was clear. Jesus expected the lives of his followers to change so that they were different from those around them who did not know Him.

It seems clear that John learned a lot from the Lord. By the time he wrote his letters to Christians many years later, John displayed a very different attitude from the one he showed in his early days as a follower of Jesus. He encouraged Christians to show love to others, not hatred (1 John 3:14-15). He told them they should even be willing to give up their lives for one another, instead of being selfish (1 John

3:16). And he taught that Christians should be willing to share, rather than be greedy and seek things for themselves (1 John 3:17). John was a different person! He displayed the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:17, that the Lord Jesus completely transforms the lives of those who are His true followers.

If you are a Christian, does your life display evidence that the Lord Jesus has changed you? It should! Remember, old attitudes and actions should be left behind as you set out on this new life of following Him. Of course, these changes will not all happen at once, but if you are truly following Jesus and learning from Him, your life will change. In Galatians 5:22-23 you will find a good checklist of the qualities you should expect to find in the life of a follower of Jesus. Are they evident in yours?

// LESSON BREAK //

Serving the Lord

John was always keen to tell others about the Lord Jesus so that they could come to know Him too. That was the reason he wrote his Gospel. After Jesus had ascended into Heaven and the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, John and the other apostles continued to serve the Lord. They unashamedly preached the Gospel message that salvation can only be found in Jesus (Acts 4:12). People were astonished at how bold they were in their preaching (Acts 4:13). The people knew that they were uneducated, ordinary men, yet they spoke with such power and authority. John was not ashamed to witness for His Lord, even though he was often severely persecuted because of what he believed.

[Show **VISUAL 8**] Living for Jesus and serving Him can sometimes be difficult. Other people can be very nasty or they can make fun of us. Perhaps at school, you try to witness to others but then they pick on you and think it is funny. Later John wrote that Christians should not be surprised when the world hates us (1 John 3:13). When we serve Jesus we should expect to suffer.

METHOD: THE TOP 50 PERSECUTED COUNTRIES

You can get information about persecuted Christians from Open Doors. Their Web site (opendoorsuk.org) gives an up-to-date list of countries in the world's top 50 persecutors of Christians with downloadable resources. Ask the young people to name some of the countries they think might be on the list. Then show it to them as a large visual or give them each their own copy.

METHOD: CASE STUDY

Photocopy and distribute the case study found on **HANDOUT 9**. Read out the story and discuss the following questions.

- How would Ah Yee have felt when she saw how her friend Ming Su was treated by the teacher?
- Why was the choice Ah Yee faced such a difficult one?
- What could she have done rather than admit to her Christian faith?
- What does the story tell you about the type of relationship Ah Lee had with the Lord Jesus?
- How do you think the Lord Jesus felt about the actions of Ming Su and Ah Lee?



Handout 10 answers

John's experience

Put in prison; beaten; preach the Gospel; martyred; exiled; Patmos.

METHOD: JOHN'S EXPERIENCE

Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 10**. Then ask the young people to work in groups of two or three to fill in the blanks.

Why was John so determined to serve the Lord no matter what the cost? Perhaps it was because he remembered how much Jesus had suffered for him (John 19:17-18). Remember John witnessed that also (John 19:26). Maybe John remembered his excitement when he discovered that Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:3-8). Nothing was going to stop John serving the One who had done so much for him.

Young Christian, do you ever stop to think of all that the Lord Jesus has done for you? He left Heaven to come to Earth and die for your sins. He took your punishment so that you could be forgiven and be sure of spending eternity in Heaven. Are you serving Him as you should? Are you telling others about Him? It will not always be easy—perhaps like John you will have to suffer hardships and difficulties. You should never be ashamed of serving the Lord. As the famous missionary C. T. Studd once said, "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, there is no sacrifice too great for me to make for Him."

CONCLUSION

John learned many lessons as a follower of Jesus Christ. Sometimes he made mistakes. But he didn't give up—he kept going and served the Lord in every way he could. Let's seek to follow his example.

METHOD: PRAYER

Encourage the young people to participate in an open time of prayer. Suggested prayer topics are given on the checklist for prayer on **HANDOUT 10**.



LESSON 5

JOHN: LOOKING FORWARD

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to become aware of future events as revealed in God's Word.



to truly desire the Lord's return and to live expectantly.



in light of the soon return of our Lord to give priority to serving Him now.

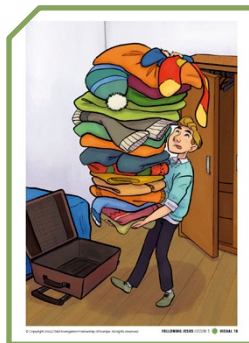


to repent of their sin so that they too will be ready for the Lord's return.

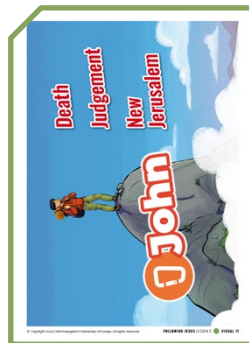
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



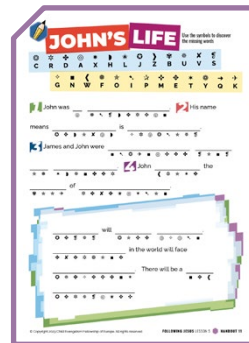
VISUAL 9



VISUAL 10



VISUAL 11



HANDOUT 11

INTRODUCTION

Reveal the text of **VISUAL 9** progressively as you work through the lesson.

Look at this rock climber. He is climbing at an altitude where he is high above the clouds. As he rests from his climbing and surveys the panorama before him, he can see many other mountains far into the distance. While he can see the peaks, he cannot see the valleys in between. That is a good picture for us to keep in mind as we prepare to look at what the Bible says about future events. In the book of Revelation, the Lord took John to a place where he had a unique perspective on things that will happen in the future. Many of these are difficult for us to understand because we can only see the peaks; we cannot see what is going on in between.

John in later life

John is now much older. (95 A.D. is favoured by most scholars as the time Revelation was written.) It is almost 70 years since Jesus called John to be one of His disciples (26/27 A.D.) and about five years before John died.

Look at Revelation 1:9. Where was John? He had been exiled to the Island of Patmos, a small, rocky, barren island in the Mediterranean Sea. This was where the Romans sent people they considered to be dangerous or troublemakers. While on that island, John received a wonderful revelation from God of things that would happen in the future. He wrote these things down in what we now know as the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible.

When John saw this vision, it was a time of persecution both for him personally and for Christians everywhere. The opening chapters contain letters to seven churches. Each church received rebuke and encouragements depending on their condition. The Lord assured the Christians that He knew how they are spiritually and He knows all about the difficulties they are facing. Many had died the death of martyrdom at the hands of Nero, including Peter and Paul. Now the persecution was continuing under the harsh reign of Domitian.

In spite of the trials and temptations, the Lord calls the Christians to stand fast against them. Revelation serves as an encouragement and reminder to all believers that, even though times may be difficult, their victory has already been secured through the blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:9 and 12:11).

The book of Revelation

Many people feel that Revelation is a hard book to understand, but that is all the more reason to read it! Let's look at two reasons why we should study this book:

Sword Drill: 2 Timothy 3:16. This verse tells us that the entire Bible is inspired by God and that the entire Bible is profitable for us.

Sword Drill: Revelation 1:1-3. Look at verse 3 again. What special promise and encouragement is there for us in this verse? There is a blessing for all who read, listen to and keep these words. No other book in the Bible carries a promise like that!

The Lord wants us to understand what will happen in the future. He gave us this revelation to show us the things that will soon take place (Revelation 1:1). Today, people everywhere are fascinated with what is going to happen in the future. They will read their daily horoscope. Some will turn to things like tarot cards, palm reading, ouija boards and anything they believe will help them learn more about what will happen in their personal lives. God forbids us to attempt to discover future events by these methods (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) and warns of the dangers associated with these things. Everything we need to know about the future, God has already revealed to us in His Word.

Not only is it important that we give these things our attention, it is vital that you have a right response to what God says. Disobeying God's warnings about the future will have very serious consequences.

Let's spend the rest of our time looking at some of the events that John saw in his vision. As we do so, we will turn to other verses in the Bible that will aid us in our understanding.

The second coming of Christ

Look up Revelation 1:7-8. In his vision John is told clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again.

This great event will happen. There are more than 300 prophecies about the second coming of the Lord Jesus in the New Testament, so we cannot ignore it. Something that gives believers great confidence in the promises of God is that everything else promised about Jesus actually came true. In the Old Testament more than 300 prophecies were made about the Lord Jesus coming into the world the first time, some of them more than 1,000 years in advance. Jesus promised His followers that He would come again (John 14:3). The angels declared it at the Lord's ascension (Acts 1:11). All of these things give the Christian confidence in the promise of the second coming.

Will God keep His Word? Yes! Will Jesus return? Yes! When Jesus returns it will be a wonderful day for the believer (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Those who are saved will go to meet the Lord in the air and will be with Him forever.

But what about those who have scoffed at the idea of His return, and have rejected the Gospel? For them, it will be a terrible day. They will realise that they have been wrong. The Lord will bring judgment on them and they will forever be separated from the presence of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).

Make sure you are not one of these people. We don't know when Jesus will return (Matthew 24:36), no-one knows except God the Father. God is patient and is giving the scoffer and all people the opportunity to come to Him (2 Peter 3:3-4.9), but one day His patience will come to an end, and the Lord Jesus will return. So it is vital to be ready (Matthew 24:44).

METHOD: SURVEY

Encourage the young people in the coming week to ask three non-Christians the question, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is coming back again as He said He would?" Tell them to make a note of their responses and be prepared to share them at the next meeting.

(Ask the young people what things they will take time to prepare for.) In life we prepare for so many things—for going to school each day, for exams, for a school presentation, for holidays, for a sports event, or for going out somewhere special.

*[Show **VISUAL 10**. Tell the young people that the guy in the visual is going on holiday to a location where he is guaranteed hot weather. Ask them, "What is he doing wrong?"] He is bringing lots of warm clothes that he won't need. He needs to set priorities. He needs to make the right choices so that he is properly prepared for his journey. What preparation have you made for the second coming of the Lord Jesus? Have other things taken up your time? Maybe you never thought about it much until now.*

If you are not ready to meet the Lord Jesus, then you need to repent of your sin and ask Him to be your Saviour. Only then can you be sure that you are ready.

Christians today hold differing viewpoints regarding what might happen in the last days. For example, some people say that Revelation should be interpreted literally, while others believe that the language used is mainly symbolic. However, we all agree that no-one knows the day or the time (Matthew 24:36) but that He is coming again and that it may be very soon. The most important question is, are you ready to meet Him?

// LESSON BREAK //

*Reveal the text of **VISUAL 11** progressively as you work through the lesson.*

John's vision in Revelation leaves us in no doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again. The consequences of not being ready for the Lord's return are both tragic and terrifying. Before looking at these consequences there is another future reality that we need to think about. If Jesus does not return in our lifetime then this is something every one of us will face.

Death

Life goes by very quickly. None of us can be sure of tomorrow. Unless the Lord returns in

our lifetime, physical death will come to us all (Hebrews 9:27a).

Perhaps you think you are too young to think of death. Ecclesiastes 12:1 tells you to “Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth.” People usually die when they are older but this is not always so. (You may wish to relate an incident of a young person who died or was tragically killed. Be careful to find the balance between sincerity without playing on their emotions.) We are not guaranteed old age.

The problem is that we are born spiritually dead. We are born in sin (Psalm 51:5) and have no real interest in God or in what Jesus has done for us. Our sin is a barrier between us and God. Because we are spiritually dead we cannot help ourselves—only God can. When God speaks to us about our sin and shows us what Christ has done, our response should be to turn from our sin (Acts 3:19) and trust in Christ alone for salvation (Acts 16:31). Then we are no longer spiritually dead but alive! We are then ready to face physical death because we have eternal life (John 3:16).

So in the future all of us will either die or still be alive at the Lord's return. After that comes ...

The Judgment

In Hebrews 9:27, the Word of God speaks very clearly of judgment after death.

One of the things that will happen at the Lord's return is that He will judge (2 Timothy 4:1). In his vision, John saw how on that day the Lamb's Book of Life will be opened (Revelation 20:12). The names of all those who have trusted in Christ for salvation are recorded in this book (Philippians 4:3). If your name is not there then a terrible prospect awaits you (Revelation 20:15).

Everyone from all time will stand before God. If their name is not in the Book of Life, they will be cast into Hell forever. This is eternal death. Earlier we looked at spiritual death—this can be remedied because all who trust in Christ have new life in Christ. We also considered physical death—this can be prepared for by trusting in Christ. But there is no second chance for those who are eternally dead. It is too late.

However, it is not too late today. John's vision in the book of Revelation has shown us clearly what will happen in the future, and now is the time too for you to prepare for the future (2 Corinthians 6:2). Christ died on the cross to take the punishment for our sin (1 Peter 2:24). You must prepare for the second coming, death and judgment by trusting in Him. Have you given this serious consideration or are you living with no real thought for the future? Being saved is important for the “here and now” too as Christ gives forgiveness for sin and meaning for every part of our life. Whatever is keeping you from coming to the Lord Jesus is not worth it.

The New Jerusalem

The Lord also revealed to John what will happen at the end times to those who have put their trust in Jesus and whose names are written in the Book of Life. They will spend eternity in the glorious presence of God. The Lord gave John the vision of a holy city coming down from Heaven. In Revelation 21-22, John describes the wonderful characteristics of the New Jerusalem. Here are some aspects. *[Encourage the young people to look up Revelation 21-22 and to follow as you summarise the content.]*

Revelation 21:12: The city is surrounded by a high wall with 12 gates and an angel at each gate. Believers will be totally secure. Our communion with God and with His people will never be broken.

Revelation 21:12-14: The names of the 12 tribes are written on the gates and of the 12 apostles on the foundations. They represent the people of God in the Old and New Covenant. The whole church will be gathered in the presence of God.

Revelation 21:18-21: The city is made out of pure gold, clear glass, precious stones, etc—material that can reflect the light. God is present in this city and His glory is perfectly reflected and fills the whole place. There cannot be a corner without light. Our intimacy with God will be perfect. We will be overwhelmed by His presence.

Revelation 22:1-2: John sees the river of water of life going through the city and the tree of life

yielding its fruit every month. Life from God will be given in abundance. No more suffering, nor disease, nor sin, nor will anything be cursed! We will constantly enjoy life from and with God and all its blessings.

What a wonderful place! If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, you should look forward to being there with Him one day. If not, then come to Him and be sure that you too will have a place prepared for you in Heaven.

CONCLUSION

John had been a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout his life. He had been one of the Lord's closest friends when He was on Earth. Now, as an older man, exiled to a barren island because of his faith, the Lord rewarded him with this wonderful vision and revealed to him many things, which would happen in the future. When John considered the future, he knew he was prepared because Jesus was both his Saviour and Lord. He had no need to fear death or judgment; instead he looked forward to the day when he would meet the Lord Jesus again in Heaven (1 John 3:2-3). Are you looking forward to it? Are you sure you are ready to meet the Lord? If not, get right with Him today. If you are saved, then get serving and tell others about the Saviour who is coming again.

METHOD: TEAM QUIZ

This team quiz has three rounds.

- 1. Alternate round:** Both teams are asked a question alternately, gaining two points for each correct answer. If a question is answered incorrectly then the opposing team can gain a point by answering it correctly.
- 2. Starter round:** A question is asked for both teams. The team member with their hand up first answers the question. If correct, no points are awarded but that team is asked three further questions, gaining one point for each correct answer. Incorrect answers are not passed over, nor is there a penalty for wrong answers.
- 3. Quick fire round:** Each question is for both teams. The person with their hand up first gains one point for their team for

each correct answer, but loses a point if the answer is wrong.

Keep the quiz moving quickly as it is more exciting. Do, however, take time during or after the quiz to review wrong answers as this reinforces the learning process.

Alternate round

1. What was John's father called? (Zebedee.)
2. What was John's brother called? (James.)
3. What was John's occupation? (Fisherman.)
4. What was James and John's nickname? (Sons of Thunder.)
5. On what island was John when he received the Revelation? (Patmos.)
6. What is promised to those who read the Revelation? (A blessing.)
7. What were three of the things John left to follow the Lord? (Family, home, job.)
8. What should we do when God speaks to us about following Him? (Obey.)

Starter round

1. How many books did John write? (Five.)
2. What are the five books? (Gospel of John; 1, 2 and 3 John; Revelation.)
3. What are the epistles mainly about? (Encouraging Christians.)
4. What is Revelation mainly about? (A vision given from God to John about the future.)

Quick fire round

1. What did John lose one day? (Temper.)
2. What is a barrier between us and God? (Sin.)
3. What do we need to do about our sin? (Repent.)
4. What will Jesus do when we confess our sin? (Forgive.)
5. In Revelation 21 John saw a vision of a holy _____? (City.)
6. Why was John exiled to the island of Patmos? (Because he was seen as a troublemaker.)

7. What other hardships did John face? (Beatings and imprisonment.)
8. Who said, "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, there is no sacrifice too great for me to make for Him"? (C. T. Studd.)

Starter round


1. What did John see in the revelation from God? (The future.)
2. What are some of the things people use to try to see into the future? (Horoscopes, tarot cards, palm reading, ouija boards.)
3. What does God say about these? (They are wrong, He forbids them.)
4. Where has God already revealed what He wants us to know? (The Bible.)

Quick fire round

1. What great event regarding the Lord Jesus is still to happen in the future? (The second coming.)
2. How many prophecies are there about the second coming in the New Testament? (More than 300.)
3. Who will Jesus return for? (Believers.)
4. When will Jesus return? (No-one knows.)

5. What are we told to "remember" in Ecclesiastes 12:1? (Our Creator.)
6. What is the one thing we are sure of apart from the second coming? (That we will die.)
7. What will Jesus do when He returns? (Judge.)
8. In what book do our names need to be written? (The Book of Life.)

METHOD: TAKE HOME HANDOUT

Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 11**. They could fill it in during the programme or later at home. 

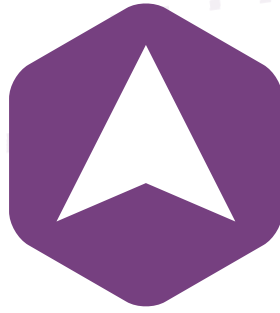


Handout 11 answers

Fill in the spaces:

John was **a fisherman**. His name means **Jehovah is gracious**. James and John were **nicknamed sons of thunder**. John **wrote** the **book** of **Revelation**.

Jesus will **come again**. **Everyone** in the world will face **judgement**. There will be a **New Jerusalem**.



LESSON 6

JUDAS: PRETENDING TO FOLLOW

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to realise the foolishness of pretending to follow Christ.



to love the Lord above all else.



to live authentic Christian lives.



to realise the necessity of "personal" faith.

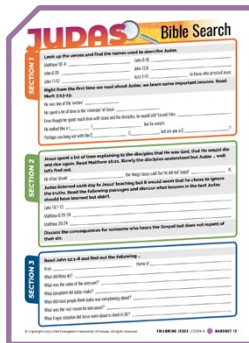
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 2



VISUAL 12



HANDOUT 12



HANDOUT 13

INTRODUCTION: WHO AM I?

Show **VISUAL 2**. Read out the information below and give the teens the opportunity to suggest who it could be.

- **Name:** Derives from the name "Judah" and means "Jehovah leads"
- **Occupation:** Unknown
- **Origin:** The only one of the 12 disciples not from Galilee
- **What we know about him:** Responsible for the disciples' money bag, but helped himself to what was put into it
- **Where we read about him:** More told of him in the Gospels than any other disciple, with the exception of Peter
- **Writings:** None
- **Famous for:** Betraying the Lord Jesus
- **Memory verse:** 1 Timothy 6:10 *[Consider sending the words of the verse to your young people on a suitable form of social media. Encourage them to use their phone to memorise the verse throughout the day.]*

Do you know who it is? Yes, of course it is Judas (Iscaiot)! *[Show **VISUAL 12** with transitions as you progress through the lesson.]*

Our studies over the past weeks have centred on two of the best-known disciples, namely Peter and John. Now we look at the life of another disciple who is also well-known—but for all the wrong reasons! Judas is infamous as the man who pretended to be a follower of the Lord Jesus, but in the end he committed the ultimate act of betrayal.

Some scholars suggest that because his parents called him "Jehovah leads", they must have had great hopes for him to be led by the Lord. But instead of that, he became someone who was led by Satan. Even though 2,000 years have passed, very few today would call their son Judas. Even people who don't know much about the Bible know what it means to accuse somebody of "being a Judas". Judas lived life on a steep and dangerous downhill slope.

METHOD: CALL MY BLUFF

Divide the group into two teams. In this game, one young person from each team takes turns to go up to the front and make three short statements about him/herself. Two of the statements should be true and one should be untrue. They will try to disguise the lie. The aim of the game is for the opposing team to guess which of the three statements is untrue.

Did you find it easy or difficult to hide the lie? Judas was living a lie because he was pretending all the time to be a follower of Jesus. Remember that you might be able to fool others but you cannot fool God.

There is so much written about Judas in the Gospels, yet when we begin to study this character, we find that he is wrapped in mystery. We know almost nothing about his background. Even his call to be a disciple is not recorded in Scripture.

So what else does the Bible tell us about Judas? We are going to divide into smaller groups and discover the answers together.

METHOD: GROUP DISCUSSION

At this point in the lesson divide the young people into groups of four/five people. Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 12**, ensuring you have a copy for each young person. Let the young people work at each section on his/her own and then have some feedback within the groups. Group leaders should then comment on each section using the notes provided in **HANDOUT 13**, before moving on to the next section. Ensure that group leaders receive a copy of the handout and comments in advance of the meeting to enable them to prepare adequately.

He fooled the others

[Section 1—comments for the group leaders.]
Judas had the privilege of being part of a very small group of people that got closer to Jesus than anyone else. Yet he wasted that privilege and chose to betray the One who could have been his Saviour. Instead of following Jesus, here is a man who followed Satan (John 13:2).

To anyone watching, Judas must have looked like a true follower of Jesus but in reality he was only pretending to follow. He may have fooled the other disciples but he didn't fool the Lord. Jesus knew all along that one day Judas would show that he was not who he appeared to be. He knew that one day Judas was going to betray Him (John 6:71, John 13:11). How tragic that he spent so much time in Jesus' company but he was certainly not a true believer.

What about you? You may be in the Christian crowd. You go to church. You come to this meeting. You go to other Christian events but are you really a Christian? You may not be deliberately trying to fool others; you just got carried along with the crowd. They talk about the time they repented of their sin and put their trust in Jesus but you know that you have never done that.

Or maybe you are just happy for others to think that you are a Christian so that they don't try to evangelise you. Judas could not fool God and neither can you. He knows those who are true followers.

If you have never repented of your sin and trusted the Saviour, then do it now. Instead of pretending, today you could become a true follower of Jesus Christ.

// LESSON BREAK //

He ignored the truth

[Section 2—comments for the group leaders.] As Judas walked day by day in the company of the Lord Jesus, he heard almost every lesson Jesus taught. Some of those lessons applied to him. Jesus told him the parable of the unfaithful steward (Luke 16:1-13); He preached against the love of money (Matthew 6:19-34); He cautioned them about how terrible it would be for His betrayer (Matthew 26:24). How tragic that even though he heard these lessons, he seemed to ignore the truth.

Jesus explained clearly to the disciples how He was to die and be raised from the dead (Matthew 16:21). There is no doubt that Judas knew the way of salvation. Yet despite knowing

very clearly how he could have his sins forgiven and be right with God, he never repented.

It seems incredible, doesn't it? How could someone listen to all that Jesus taught and yet remain unmoved? Young person, are you doing the same? How many times have you heard the Gospel explained? You know you have sin in your life, which separates you from God. You know the only way to be forgiven is to turn away from your sin and ask the Lord to save you. Yet you have never done anything about it!

Tragically, Judas demonstrates to us that it is possible to listen repeatedly to the Word of God and yet still be lost for all eternity. Listening is not enough. You must obey the words of the Lord Jesus and apply them to your own life.

He put money first

[Section 3—comments for the group leaders.] Perhaps this story tells us what it was that kept Judas from becoming a true follower of Jesus. In this situation we see the "real Judas"—someone whose main love and concern in life was money.

What Mary did was an outward sign of her love and devotion to her Lord. But Judas couldn't bear to see Mary use the ointment in this way. For him Mary's act of devotion was just a waste.

Oh yes, he said it would have been better to have sold the ointment and have given the money to the poor but that objection was only a self-righteous cover-up for what Judas really thought. Judas was a hypocrite. He didn't care about the poor. He only cared about himself and his own pocket (John 12:6).

Do you see where Judas' priorities lay? To him, getting money was much more important than personal devotion to the Lord. He ignored Jesus' warning that it is possible to acquire possessions but lose your own soul (Mark 8:36).

What is the most important thing in your life? Is it to follow the Lord Jesus and to live for Him, or are you more concerned about other things? Perhaps dedication to sport comes first for you. Maybe following your friends is more important to you than following Jesus. Maybe, like Judas, it is material things. You always want the latest

electronic gadgets, the newest computer games or the latest fashion.

Whatever it is, don't let it get in the way of you following Jesus. The most important thing in life is to be saved and to have a right relationship with Him.

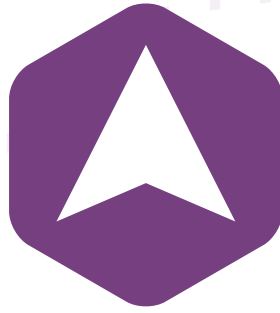
CONCLUSION

[Bring the groups back together and briefly summarise the lesson.] We have seen today how Judas pretended to be a Christian. He fooled the others, but He didn't fool the Lord. He

ignored all the teaching he had received from the Lord Jesus. He allowed money to be more important to him than following the Lord.

Judas' story presents you with important lessons you need to learn. Don't ignore Jesus' warnings. You need to invite Him to become your Saviour and Lord. That means giving Him first place in your life because He is more important than anything else.

Stop pretending to follow Jesus! Surrender your life to Him today and become a true follower. 



LESSON 7

JUDAS: ON THE ROAD TO RUIN

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to clearly see the wrong steps that led to Judas' demise.



to truly appreciate the tragedy of Judas' story.



to identify areas of sin in their own lives and to deal with them now.



to repent before it is too late.

In several places in this lesson we address the necessity for the young people to deal with sin in their lives. Often these lessons can be applied to both saved and unsaved young people. You should adapt the application to suit your group.

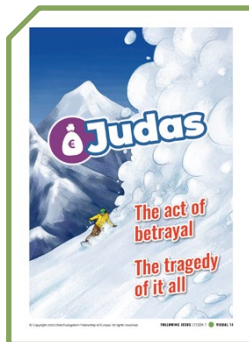
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 12



VISUAL 13



VISUAL 14



HANDOUT 14

INTRODUCTION: THEY HAVE MARKED HISTORY!

Do you remember what we learned the last time about Judas? *[Show **VISUAL 12** and briefly review the three points from the previous lesson: he fooled the others; he ignored the truth; he put money first. Reveal the text of **VISUAL 13** progressively as you work through the lesson.]*

Many young people live simply for adventure and excitement. They want to enjoy themselves without thinking about the dangerous consequences of their actions. For example, do you know what it means to go off-piste? Each winter, many people are killed when they decide to leave the marked ski area and to ski off-piste. Often they ignore the warning signs or the weather forecasts. They think they can deal with any situation they will face. Scientists have discovered that the average speed of an avalanche is between 210–320 km/hr (130–200 miles/hr). If you get caught in one, you have no chance to ski away and escape. Unless you are found quickly, you will probably die.

Today we want to look at the steps that led Judas to his final demise. For Judas personally, it was a sad and tragic downward slope. As we look at the mistakes that Judas made, examine your own life to ensure that you are not on a similar downward slope.

The beginning of the end

METHOD: SWORD DRILL

Choose one of the following two references and have the teens look up and read it out loud—Matthew 26:14–16 or Mark 14:10–11.

Judas had seen enough. The incident where Mary poured the expensive ointment on Jesus' feet was the final straw for him. He was disillusioned and he wanted out. He had lived the lie long enough. So he did something terrible—something that would trigger a series of events which would lead to a tragic end.

He went to the Jewish leaders and asked how much money they would give him if he delivered the Lord Jesus into their hands. The chief priests were glad to see him and so they

offered to pay him 30 pieces of silver. Judas agreed. The stage was set. From that moment on Judas looked for an opportunity to betray Jesus.

What pushed Judas to such treachery? Was it really what he saw as the waste of the ointment? Was it anger at the rebuke the Lord Jesus gave to those who complained? Was it jealousy? Was it the love of the money? Regardless of the real reason, we have already discovered he was not a true follower of Jesus, so we should not really be surprised that Judas would be prepared to commit such a wicked sin.

Perhaps you too have become involved in a particular sin. The first time you committed that sin it didn't seem so bad. You thought you could handle it, it was only once. Then you did it again and again and now it is as if it has taken control of you. The Bible says that we are born in sin and that this sin is evident by our sinful actions. We cannot break the power of sin by ourselves—we are held captive by Satan (2 Timothy 2:26). Only the Lord Jesus can help us to find the way to escape these things (Romans 8:2).

Judas stands as a lesson to us about the power of sin. What seemed to him to be small and trivial incidents of failure led to his ultimate downfall, and exposed him as a non-Christian, even though he was part of a group which followed Jesus. Perhaps that is a fair description of you. You seem to fit in with Christian company and you know plenty about Jesus, but at a deeper level you know that you have never truly trusted in Jesus and been changed by the Gospel. Such a position is dangerous, and calls for immediate action, owning up to the lack of spiritual reality in your life and submitting to Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

True Christians still struggle with sin every single day though! The big lesson from Judas' life for those who have truly trusted in Jesus is to live in such a way as to be aware of temptation and to try to avoid sin at all costs. As believers we have been set free from the power of sin, but our flesh, the world around us, and the devil will work hard to trap us, making single mistakes into repeated actions, which eventually

become sinful habits. Such habitual sin can be so destructive. While it definitely won't take a true Christian to hell, it will take away their happiness, robbing them of a close relationship with God, and even assurance of salvation. The Christian's daily work is to put sin to death and to be aware of the stranglehold that it seeks to get. This means having an open and honest walk with God, not hiding our mistakes and sins, but confessing them to God and asking for help from the Holy Spirit to become more like Jesus.

METHOD: CHOICES AND CONSEQUENCES

Look up the following Bible references and discover how one sin led to another and how the situation escalated and ended in death.

*[Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 14**. Have the young people work in groups to complete the table using their Bibles.]*

Do you see from these few biblical examples, how desire for something can so quickly lead to sin? Then see how one sin can grow into something that eventually leads to really serious consequences. The ultimate end of sin is death—not necessarily physical death, but eternal death and separation from God (James 1:14-15). That is why it is so important not to ignore sin, but to deal with it.



Handout 14 answers

Wrong choices

Eve and the serpent: **Eve ate the forbidden fruit—Sin and death entered the world.**

Cain and Abel: **Cain was jealous and angry toward his brother—Murder, curse.**

King David: **Bathsheba and Uriah—David desired Bathsheba and committed adultery—Pregnancy, death of her husband.**

Ananias and Sapphira: **They lied to the Holy Spirit and the apostles about their giving—Both punished with instant death.**

It is interesting to note that some of the people we have thought about were believers, yet they still allowed sin to take a grip on their lives. If you are a believer and have become involved in a particular sin, then the sooner you are prepared to admit your sin and turn from it, the easier it will be to get back on the right track. Sin will take you further than you realise, so get it sorted out now.

The missed opportunity to repent

If you have time, read the following passages John 13:1-2,18-30.

Judas was with the other disciples and the Lord Jesus at a special Jewish feast. The course of action that Judas had embarked on was no longer in its initial stages. John 13:2, 27 tell how Satan now had control of Judas' life. Judas had left himself open to the evil one rather than resisting him.

We are told in James 4:7 that if those who are Christians resist the devil he will flee from them. When you are tempted into some sin, cry out to the Lord for help and resist Satan. God will give you the victory (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Can you imagine how Judas could sit with the Lord Jesus and the disciples as if everything was all right, when all the time in his mind he was planning how he was going to betray Jesus? But probably even more amazing was the fact that Jesus still loved Judas and dealt with him gently. Jesus encouraged the disciples to examine themselves. He told them that one of them would betray Him (John 13:21). This was Judas' opportunity to admit that he was the one and to seek the Lord's forgiveness. However, even when faced with the reality of the sin he was about to commit, Judas was unmoved. You see, Satan had taken control of Judas' life to the extent that he ignored Christ's words and continued in his sin. It was a missed opportunity to repent.

When God speaks to you about sin don't miss the opportunity to repent. Perhaps He has spoken many times. Instead of resisting the devil you are resisting God. If God the Holy Spirit

is convicting you of some sin in your life, then don't ignore His warnings. Confess it and get right with God, before it is too late.

// LESSON BREAK //

Reveal the text of **VISUAL 14** progressively as you work through the lesson.

The act of betrayal

If you have time, read one of the following passages: Luke 22:39-48 or Matthew 26:36-50.

Judas continues on his road to ruin. He has almost reached the climax of his sinful pathway. He had opportunities to repent and missed them. Now he has gone beyond the point of no return.

Judas the traitor was now on the side of those who hated Jesus—the Jewish leaders. They wanted to arrest Jesus but would not do it openly during the daytime because they feared the reaction of the crowds. Judas knew the Lord would be in the garden of Gethsemane that night. He walked out of the crowd and kissed Jesus to identify Him. This was his final act of hypocrisy, because the kiss was a traditional greeting of a disciple to his master, a sign of respect and love. How could Judas stoop so low? Answer: because of sin.

Do you realise what your sinful heart is capable of? Don't underestimate the power of Satan and sin. Maybe you have already stooped low in sin and you want to repent. It is not too late. There is still mercy and forgiveness with the Lord. Cry out to Him for salvation. Don't make the same mistake as Judas.

The tragedy of it all

Read Matthew 27:1-5. The next morning the Jewish religious leaders decided to put Jesus to death. This made Judas realise he had done wrong and he was full of regret. It was still not too late for him to repent and seek forgiveness from Jesus but he took a different course of action. He was wrong yet again!

He tried to return the money but the religious leaders mocked him. He threw the money into

the temple and then ended his life on Earth by hanging himself. It was the end of Judas' life on Earth but not for eternity.

How tragic that Judas' life should end this way. He had the great privilege of being one of the 12 disciples, yet he never fully surrendered his life to the Saviour. Instead he just pretended to be one of them while he continued in his sin. What about you, have you surrendered your life to the Lord? You have heard the Gospel many times but maybe you are not willing to give up that certain sin. You see the warning signs but you plan to just continue living that double life.

Judas also thought he knew best. He failed to allow Jesus to be his Saviour and Lord. The hard reality is that he will now be punished in hell forever.

CONCLUSION

Does this solemn lesson not make you think about where your sin is taking you? Stop fooling yourself and misleading those around you. You cannot fool God, and it is Him you will have to give an account of your life to one day (Romans 14:12). Get real! Your life does not have to continue in this way. Jesus died for your sin so that you would not have to suffer the eternal consequences of your sin. He wants to forgive you and give you real life with meaning and purpose.

Are you going to waste your life or will you repent, accept Christ's forgiveness and become a true follower of Jesus Christ? It is too late for Judas but it is not too late for you.

Be sure to make yourself available for counselling. Also as the end of this lesson is very serious, you may wish to have a time of prayer or sing a song before beginning the quiz.

METHOD: ALPHABET QUIZ ON JUDAS

Divide the teens into two teams. When you call a letter, the first person to bring you an object beginning with that letter (e.g. C—a coin; P—a pen; W—a watch) earns the right to answer the question beginning with that letter. A correct answer earns ten points. Call the letters at random. If no object can be found, ask the question to both teams and allow the first person

that stands up to answer it. If wrong, the question is passed to the other team.

What "A" did the soldiers do with Jesus that they were afraid to do openly? (Arrest.)

What "B" did Judas do to Jesus? (Betray.)

What "C" was Judas not? (Christian.)

What "D" did Mary show to the Lord? (Devotion.)

What "E" is spent either in Heaven or Hell? (Eternity.)

What "F" did Judas not have? (Future.)

What "G" was the place Jesus was arrested? (Gethsemane.)

What "H" is how Judas ended his life? (Hanging.)

What "I" was Judas' second name? (Iscariot.)

What "J" pretended to be a follower of Jesus? (Judas.)

What "K" was how Judas identified Jesus to the soldiers? (Kiss.)

What "L" did Judas have for money? (Love.)

What "M" wanted to show her devotion to the Lord? (Mary.)

What "N" is the best time to repent? (Now.)

What "O" was put on Jesus' feet? (Ointment.)

What "P" is something we can gain but lose our soul? (Possessions.)

What "R" is vital for our salvation? (Repentance.)

What "S" are we born with? (Sin.)

What "T" is the number of pieces of silver Judas received? (Thirty.)

What "U" should Christians not do about Satan's power? (Underestimate.)

What "V" can Jesus give us over sin? (Victory.)





LESSON 8

ANDREW: BRINGING OTHERS TO JESUS

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to understand their responsibility of leading others to Jesus.



to gain greater confidence in sharing their faith.



to learn how to prepare to give a personal testimony.



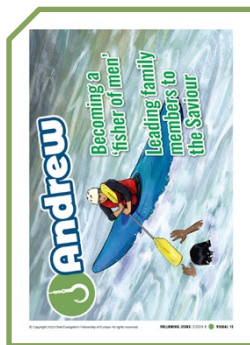
to realise they do not have a testimony and to come to Jesus for salvation.

This is quite a long lesson with several methods suggested. If you are restricted for time, use only those methods which will be most suitable for your group.

VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



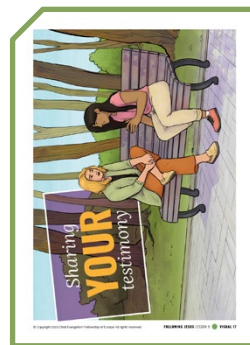
VISUAL 2



VISUAL 15



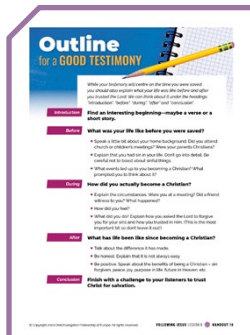
VISUAL 16



VISUAL 17



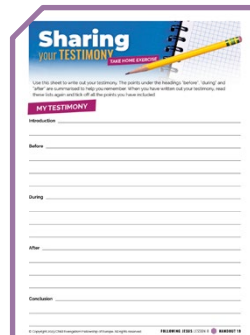
HANDOUT 15



HANDOUT 16



HANDOUT 17



HANDOUT 18

INTRODUCTION: WHO AM I?

Show **VISUAL 2**. Read out the information below and give the teens the opportunity to suggest who it could be.

- Name: His name means "manly"
- Occupation: Fisherman
- Origin: Bethsaida in Galilee
- What people said about him: He was part of the inner circle together with Peter, James and John
- Did you know? He was the first disciple to be called by Jesus
- Famous for: Bringing the lad with the five loaves and two fish to Jesus
- Memory verse: 1 Peter 3:15 *[Consider sending the words of the verse to your young people on a suitable form of social media. Encourage them to use their phone to memorise the verse throughout the day.]*

Do you know who it is? Yes, of course—it is Andrew! *[Reveal the text of **VISUAL 15** progressively as you work through the lesson.]*

Andrew was a good friend of Peter, James and John. The four of them shared the same profession as fishermen, so it is little wonder that Andrew found himself part of this special group of four within the 12 disciples. It was their eagerness to lead that often caused friction among them. But in years to come that eagerness to lead was put to good use when they became key leaders in the early church. The leadership training they received from being disciples of Jesus proved invaluable.

Andrew had the right attitude to serving the Lord. Even though he was often in the shadow of his better-known brother, he gladly served the Lord in the background. He didn't seek to draw attention to himself, unlike Peter who was hasty and impulsive. James and John caused a few problems too, earning the nickname "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). Andrew, however, is portrayed in Scripture as the most thoughtful and least confrontational of all the disciples. There's a lot that we can learn from Andrew's good example, so let's look together at what the

Bible tells us about him. His great desire in life was to rescue people who were lost in their sin.

Becoming a "fisher of men"

Sword Drill: Mark 1:16-18. As we have discovered, Andrew worked as a fisherman along with his brother Peter. It was while the two of them were fishing that Jesus called them to follow Him. Andrew discovered that the Lord Jesus had another job for him—not to be a fisherman but a "fisher of men"! Jesus wanted Andrew to tell others about Him, so that they could come to know Him too.

Andrew certainly did what the Lord told him to do—almost every time we read about Andrew, he was bringing someone to Jesus. Let us look at who Andrew brought to the Saviour and see if there is a pattern here for us to follow.

Leading family members to the Saviour

Sword Drill: John 1:41-42. The occasion recorded in Mark 1:16-18 when Jesus called Andrew and Peter to follow Him was not the first time they had met. In John 1 we read how John the Baptist pointed Andrew to the Lord Jesus (John 1:35-36,40). Andrew was obviously excited at having met the Lord, and wanted to tell others about Him. Immediately he found his brother Peter and told him, "We have found the Messiah!"

Isn't this a great example for us to follow? You see, when Andrew found the Lord, the first person he wanted to introduce Him to was his brother.

Are you so excited about being a Christian that you want your family to know Jesus too? Maybe you have told others about the Lord Jesus, but have you told your family too? This is perhaps the most difficult group of people to talk to about the Lord. Why do you think that is? *[Listen to the young people as they share their concerns and encourage them where necessary. In some situations it may be unwise to push this point—be aware of religious sensitivities.]*

METHOD: PRAYER BOOKMARKS

Photocopy **HANDOUT 15**, cut off the bookmarks at the top of the page and distribute them to the young people. Encourage them to write in the names of family members who they want to pray for. As you may have young people in the group who themselves are not saved, tell the group



Handout 15 answers

1st Row

Where they should go? **Jerusalem.**

What did this mean for them? **The place they were at the time.**

What could this mean for you? **Start at home—family, friends, school class, neighbours, sports team.**

2nd Row

Where they should go? **Judea.**

What did this mean for them? **The wider region around them.**

What could this mean for you? **Think wider—maybe get involved in outreach with your church in the area around where you live.**

3rd Row

Where they should go? **Samaria.**

What did this mean for them? **To people of a different culture/religion.**

What could this mean for you? **Be prepared to share the Gospel with people of other nationalities and religions who live around you.**

4th Row

Where they should go? **End of the Earth**

What did this mean for them? **Anywhere in the world that God might send them.**

What could this mean for you? **Ask God to show you His will for your future. Might He want you to consider becoming a missionary one day?**

that they can fill it in later if they prefer. This will prevent any unnecessary embarrassment.

As we go through this lesson, other names may come to mind. As they do, write them down under the appropriate heading. Then in the coming weeks pray specifically for that person, that God will speak to them of their need of a Saviour and call them to Himself. But also pray that God will use you by giving you an opportunity to speak to them about the Lord.

Let's come back to our disciple Andrew. We want to look now at another occasion when he brought someone to Jesus.

Show **VISUAL 16** with covers on the text, which you will remove as you progress through the lesson.

Leading children to the Saviour

Sword Drill: John 6:8-9. Here we have the familiar story of the feeding of the 5,000.

The disciples were faced with the huge problem of how to feed all of these people who had come to hear Jesus (probably 20,000 including women and children). The disciples talked among themselves but they didn't know what to do. Then Jesus took the little boy's lunch, performed a miracle and fed them all.

We all know the story of the little boy with the five loaves and two fish, but do you know who it was that brought the boy to Jesus? Yes, it was Andrew! Although he was not at all sure how the boy's lunch could be of any help in the situation, he was always on the lookout for people he could introduce to the Lord. As a result this little boy met the Saviour, and no doubt seeing Jesus use his lunch to feed so many had a great impact on his life.

It is a great privilege to be able to bring the Gospel to boys and girls. A child who trusts the Lord Jesus as Saviour and sets out on a life of living for Him can have a great impact on many others throughout the rest of his/her life. Perhaps you could find ways of getting involved in sharing God's Word with children. There may be opportunities for you to help in a children's

meeting in your church, or maybe in a *Good News Club*® run by *Child Evangelism Fellowship*®. You could begin by doing things like marking the roll, holding choruses or helping with discipline, but eventually you could learn how to teach memory verses or even a Bible lesson to the children. How exciting it would be to see the Lord use you to play a part in bringing boys and girls to know the Lord Jesus Christ!

On your bookmark, under the heading “children”, write down the names of individual children or a children’s meeting in your area. Pray that the Lord would call these little ones to become His followers. Pray too that the Lord would show you if He wants you to get involved in reaching them with the Gospel.

Leading others to the Saviour

Sword drill: John 12:20-22. In the city of Jerusalem some Greeks wanted to meet Jesus. Perhaps some of the disciples may have wondered if Jesus wanted to meet people who were not Jews. But Andrew didn’t hesitate—he knew that the Lord would be glad to have these people come to Him. Once again Andrew did not miss an opportunity to bring others to the Saviour.

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven He gave instructions to His followers about what they should do. Look up Matthew 28:18-20. What did Jesus tell His followers to do in verse 19? Jesus commands us to go and make disciples of all nations. He wants us to become what Andrew was—“a fisher of men”.

But where should we go to share the good news? Jesus also answered this question for the disciples in Acts 1:8.

METHOD: OBEYING THE COMMANDS OF JESUS

Distribute the lower part of **HANDOUT 15**. Have the young people look up Acts 1:8 and fill in the blank spaces on the handout. Through discussion, help them to discover the various regions mentioned in the verse and see how the verse can be applied to their own situation.

The Lord wants to use Christians to spread the Gospel message at home, further afield, with those of different cultures and religions and even to the end of the Earth. He wants to use us to lead others to Him—but how? One way is by sharing your personal testimony.

// LESSON BREAK //

What is a testimony and do I have one?

Imagine you are walking home from school one day when you witness a car accident. As a witness of that accident you might be asked by the police to give a statement. They will ask you questions like, “Where were you before the accident happened? What exactly happened? What happened afterwards?” That formal statement that you give to the police is your testimony.

[Show **VISUAL 17**.] Among Christians, when we talk about giving a testimony we simply mean telling people the story of how you came to know the Lord Jesus and what a difference He has made in your life. The goal is not to draw attention to yourself but to Jesus who alone can save them.

Perhaps you have been in a meeting before when someone was giving their testimony. As you listened to them you realised that you have never experienced what they were talking about. Maybe you even wished in your heart that you could know the peace and joy which that person was talking about. We would love to be able to lead you to the Lord. He wants to have a personal relationship with you but you must repent of your sin and invite Him to be your Saviour and Lord. If you do that, then you too will have a testimony to share. If you want to talk more about this then please speak to me afterwards. [Be sure to make yourself available for counselling.]

Leader note: you may want to ask a young person beforehand if they would briefly share their testimony.

The example of the apostle Paul's testimony

Sword drill: 1 Peter 3:15. In this verse we are told that we should always be ready to give a reason for the hope that we have in us. Your personal testimony is one of the most effective means you have for making such a defence of your faith in Jesus Christ. Often people will not be prepared to listen to a sermon or to read a Gospel tract, but they are interested to hear "your story" of how you came to faith in Jesus. The opportunity to share your testimony might come unexpectedly, so you will want to be prepared.

What are some of the situations where you might be able to share your personal testimony? *[Allow young people to give suggestions.]* Youth meeting, church, special outreach event, personal conversation.

If you are asked to give your testimony in a meeting what are you going to do? The first thing to do is to say "yes". You will probably be nervous but remember that people without Jesus are lost. You should use every opportunity you have to witness for Him. Whether it is in a public meeting or in a private conversation, the Lord has promised that the Holy Spirit will give you the strength you need to witness for Him (Acts 1:8).

So what makes a good testimony? The account of the Apostle Paul's conversion is told three times in the book of Acts (Acts 9:1-19, Acts 22:1-21 and Acts 26:1-23). Many people believe that we have a good pattern to follow in chapter 22.

If you have time, read Acts 22:1-21 explaining the outline as you go along.

Acts 22:1-3—Introduction—He gets their attention and briefly introduces himself.

Acts 22:3-5—His life before accepting Christ—Describes his upbringing, education, zeal, the things he did (without going into detail).

Acts 22:6-11—During his conversion to Christ—Where? When? What happened? How God spoke to him.

Acts 22:12-21—How his life changed after accepting Christ—His experience with the Lord, the change in his personality, new doors God opened for service.

METHOD: OUTLINE FOR A GOOD TESTIMONY

While your testimony will centre on the time you were saved, you should also explain what your life was like before and after you trusted the Lord. We can think about it under the headings "introduction", "before", "during", "after" and "conclusion". *[Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 16**. Take time to read through the outline. Discuss and add personal comments where applicable.]*

METHOD: CHECKLIST FOR A GOOD TESTIMONY

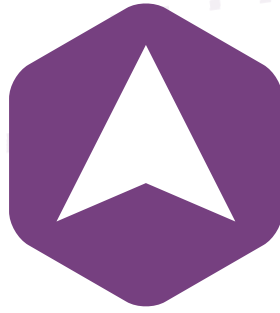
*[Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 17**.]*

METHOD: SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

Why not take time this week to think about how you could prepare to share your testimony? Use these guidelines to help you. Better still, write out your testimony on this handout and let one of the leaders see it at the next meeting. *[Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 18**.]*

CONCLUSION

One of the greatest privileges we can have is to be able to tell others about the Lord. Be sure that you are ready to take the opportunity when it comes. In fact, pray day by day that God will give you the opportunity to speak to others about the Lord Jesus Christ. Sharing your faith with others will help you grow stronger as a Christian. Ask God to open your lips and to honour your words that someone may come to know the Lord Jesus through your witness. ●



LESSON 9

ANDREW: SHARING THE MESSAGE

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to see how the Gospel message is unique and how essential it is to share it with others.



to realise that fear is normal and that it should not hinder them from witnessing.



to learn how to share the Gospel and respond to the typical objections people raise.

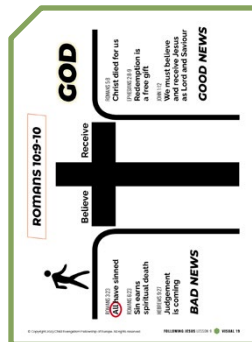


to realise that their excuses for not being a follower of Jesus will not stand up on the day of judgment and that they need to surrender their lives to the Lord now.

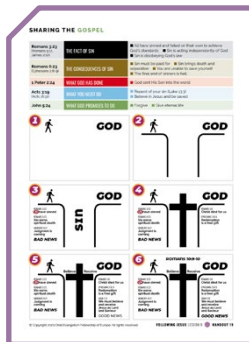
VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 18



VISUAL 19



HANDOUT 19



HANDOUT 20



HANDOUT 21

INTRODUCTION: TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Ask two girls to prepare the following sketch as an introduction to the lesson.

A: Hi, I've just got my exam results. I passed! Have you got your results yet?

B: Yes, I passed too! It's brilliant! That means we will both be able to take the same course next year!

A: I'm so excited! On the bus on the way home I just had to tell the lady I was sitting beside, even though I have no idea who she is!

B: Yes, I've sent text messages to everyone. Emma and Joanne are coming to my house tonight for a celebration party. Will you come too?

A: Of course. But I have to go now. Mum's just come home and I'm just bursting to tell her! See you later.

What are the two girls on the phone so excited about? Yes, they both got good marks and will both be able to take the same course next year. They are so excited they want to shout it to the world.

Whenever you receive really good news, sometimes you can get so excited that you feel as if you want to share it with the whole world. Nothing is able to hold you back. You can't hide the smile on your face. Everyone you meet asks you why you are so cheerful and you are only too happy to tell them.

In the same way, when we become followers of Jesus we should naturally want to tell others about it. In our last study we saw how Andrew, one of the 12 disciples, was someone who was always telling others the good news that he had found Jesus. We learned how important it was to always be ready to share our testimony (or our story) of how we became followers of Jesus (1 Peter 3:15). Andrew didn't just share his testimony, he also had the wonderful privilege of leading others to the Saviour. Today we want to think more about different ways we might be able to lead people to Jesus.

METHOD: SHARING THE GOSPEL

*Tell the young people that you are going to introduce them to another way that they can share the Gospel with others by using the Bible. Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 19**. Have the young people read the references out loud. Then read the main points and explain the teaching using the notes in the table.*

Encourage the young people to cut the chart out and to place it in their Bible for future reference. Alternatively they could underline the verses in their Bibles or, if they prefer, place little post-it notes to help them find the texts. Encourage them to go a step further and to memorise the verses and the points that should be made with each verse.

There are many good Gospel leaflets (tracts) available at little or no cost. *[Have some examples to show and allow the young people to take some with them.]* Why not keep some of these in your rucksack? Then you can give one to someone you meet or even take time to read it with them.

Barriers to witnessing

*Reveal the text of **VISUAL 18** progressively as you work through the lesson.*

For many Christians, just hearing the words "witnessing" or "evangelism" causes their minds to be filled with fear. This fear can be a real barrier to witnessing. Why do you think some Christians might be fearful of witnessing? *[Allow the young people to make suggestions. If possible, note down what they say in a place where everyone can see. Then articulate some of those fears using the text below.]*

FEAR OF BEING LAUGHED AT

This may happen, but when we think of the ridicule and suffering Christ went through for us then the prospect of being laughed at is not really so bad (Isaiah 53:7). Also, if we believe that our friends are going to a lost eternity surely we can risk opposition in order to warn them (Acts 4:18-19).

FEAR OF BEING REJECTED

Again this is something we may face, and something the Lord Jesus faced as well. He knows what it is like to be rejected (Acts 4:11). For you it may mean being isolated by others, but often those who witness for the Lord Jesus find that true friends eventually come to respect them for the stand they take. Remember, even though others may turn away from us, the Lord Jesus has promised to always be with us (Matthew 28:20).

FEAR OF BEING LOST FOR WORDS

The resources you will receive with this lesson will help you to be better prepared when the opportunity arises. Even when you don't know what to say, the Lord can touch your mouth (Jeremiah 1:9). God also reassures us in His Word that the Holy Spirit will help you by reminding you of the things you should say (John 14:26).

FEAR OF PEOPLE POINTING OUT OUR FAULTS

Jesus is the only one who ever lived a perfect life and none of us come up to His standard. When we looked at the life of Peter, we realised that although there may be times when we let the Lord down, we should still be growing to be more like the Lord Jesus everyday. Staying close to the Lord is vital if we are going to have the courage to witness for Him. Spending regular time alone with God in our quiet time is of utmost importance. It is more important to talk to God about people than to talk to people about God. Pray for people by name. Think about key Bible verses and learn them by heart. If you are walking close to the Lord and have prayed for the people then you will find it much easier to speak freely.

“I still find it very difficult”

Sometimes we find it so difficult to witness to others. We say to ourselves, “Could we not just leave it to the people who are good at it?” Maybe you think that way but personal evangelism is not something optional in the Christian life. Jesus has given strict instructions to all His followers to go and share the message of the Gospel with others (Matthew 28:18-20). All

around us people are lost without Jesus. They need to hear that Jesus died for them on the cross and why that is a matter of life and death for them (1 Corinthians 1:18). We can always think of other things to do with our time but when we think that Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to die for us, then that should motivate us to witness out of our love for Him (2 Corinthians 5:14). Jesus said that if we really love Him, we will show it by obeying Him (John 14:15). Even though we find it difficult, we can know that God will go with us (Acts 1:8).

// LESSON BREAK //

METHOD: OBJECTIONS TO FOLLOWING JESUS

To help us with our fears about witnessing we are going to split into groups and look at possible answers to some questions or comments we may have to face.

*At this stage of the lesson divide the young people into groups of four to six, with four questions each or all the questions depending on time. Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 20** to each of the young people. The group leaders should have received **HANDOUT 21** with the leader's notes in advance.*

METHOD: USING THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION

You never know where you might be when you get an opportunity to share the Gospel one-to-one. Here is a method that you can use to illustrate the Gospel in a very clear way. One of the advantages of this method is that all you need is something to write with and a piece of paper, e.g. napkin, back of a bus ticket, a receipt from your bag. When you have finished talking you can leave it with the person so they can think more about it—provided you haven't used the back of your hand!

Explain this as you do it. Use a board, a flip chart or the PowerPoint presentation to do this. If you have never done it before you will need to practise it first.


1. Start by writing “God” on the right and drawing a stick figure on the left. State that in the beginning God made each person to have fellowship with Him.

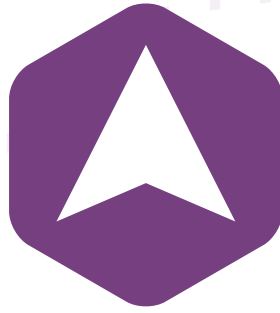
2. Each person chose to go his own way, turned his back on God, rebelled against Him, and so fell into sin. This caused a separation between people and God. (Draw the two sides of the cliff).
3. We know that a great separation exists between God and individuals because the Bible tells us that (quote Romans 3:23). Write the word "sin" vertically between the two sides of the cliff, and write "Romans 3:23" under the man, noting under it "all have sinned" and circling the word "all." Now quote Romans 6:23, write it down and note under it "sin earns spiritual death." Then quote Hebrews 9:27, write it down and put down "judgment is coming." Then say, "This is the bad news," and write it down at the bottom. At this point a person is in a hopeless and helpless condition with no way of crossing the chasm.
4. Then quote Romans 5:8 and as you are quoting it, draw the cross over the term "sin" by drawing the lines starting from God's side. Write down "Romans 5:8" and "Christ died for us" underneath the side of God. Now quote Ephesians 2:8-9, write it down and note "redemption is a free gift." (God's grace is absolutely free.)
5. Quote John 1:12 and as you are quoting it write "believe" on the left side of the cross and "receive" on the right. Write the reference down on "God's side" with this notation under it, "We must believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour." Then say, "This is the good news," and write it on the bottom of that side. This now is the only way a person can cross the chasm of sin that separates the individual from God.
6. When a person believes (puts his total trust in) that Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty for the individual's sin and receives Christ into his life through a prayer, that person then becomes a child of God. When that person confesses Christ as Lord and Saviour and believes in His atoning work on his behalf, the person is saved (quote Romans 10:9-10) and write it over the whole illustration.

Show **VISUAL 19** as a summary. Split them into small groups and distribute small pieces of paper to each person. Have one person in each group practise explaining this to the others. Keep **VISUAL 19** displayed during this exercise.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps you have listened to all of this and cannot really witness, the reason being that you are not yet a believer. Maybe as you have listened to the talk and discussion on witnessing you realise your need of the Lord Jesus. You know about Him but do not know Him. Why not trust in Him and then you too can be involved in sharing Him with others?

Andrew has provided us with a great example of what it is like to be someone who constantly seeks opportunities to bring others to Jesus. He had a great love for the Saviour, and as a result he longed that others would come to know the Lord Jesus as well. For the follower of Christ, witnessing is a great privilege but also an awesome responsibility. The Bible says that one day in Heaven we will receive a reward for how we have served and followed Jesus (2 Timothy 4:7-8). What greater reward could there be, than to meet those in Heaven who we personally led to the Lord? May God give every one of you the joy of leading souls to the Saviour. 



LESSON 10

MARY: FREED FROM SIN

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to discover the blessing of being freed from sin.



to be filled with gratitude for their salvation.

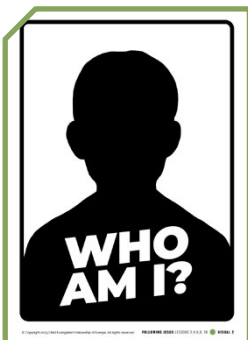


to avoid the things that would hinder them from following Jesus.

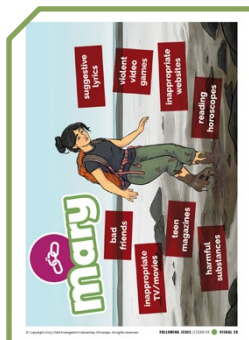


to realise that the Lord can free them from Satan's grip, and to seek His forgiveness in salvation.

VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 2



VISUAL 20



HANDOUT 22

INTRODUCTION: WHO AM I?

Show **VISUAL 2**. Read out the information below and give the teens the opportunity to suggest who it could be.

- **Name:** Shared with several people mentioned in the New Testament
- **Occupation:** She later served the Lord out of her private means
- **Origin:** Probably from the town of Magdala
- **What people said about her:** She had been possessed by seven demons
- **Famous for:** Being the first person Jesus appeared to after He rose from the grave
- **Memory verse:** Galatians 4:4-5 *[Consider sending the words of the verses to your young people by a suitable social media platform. Encourage them to use their phone to memorise the verse throughout the day.]*

Do you know who it is? Yes, it is Mary Magdalene. *[Reveal the text of **VISUAL 20** progressively as you work through the lesson.]* She was one of a number of women who followed the Lord Jesus. Turn to Luke 8:1-3 and tell me what we can learn in this passage about Mary Magdalene.

Ask the young people to look up the reference and then to be ready to give the rest of the group one piece of information on Mary. Each person should give a new fact until all the information from the passage of Scripture is covered. The following paragraphs will incorporate these facts.

Mary: a slave to sin

In Luke 8:1-3 we have the first mention of Mary Magdalene. She is not to be confused with Mary the mother of Jesus, nor with Mary the sister of Lazarus (or either of the two other Marys mentioned in the New Testament). This is the Mary who had been possessed by seven demons. Her life had been under the dominion of Satan. Then one day she met the Lord, probably while He was ministering in Galilee (Mark 1:39). He drove the demons out and set her marvellously free!

Up until that point, Satan had a powerful grip on Mary's life. She was not in control of herself. She was a slave to sin. We are not sure how her demon possession made itself visible to others but we know that she was both a sinner by nature and involved in sinful actions. Just as the girl in the visual is sinking in the mud, so Mary was sinking in sin. Her life must have been a real mess, but Jesus freed her from the sin that so enslaved her. What a tremendous change the Lord made when He saved her! He gave her freedom from the power of sin (Romans 6:17-18), forgiveness (Psalm 103:3), a purpose for living (Galatians 2:20) and eternal life (John 3:16).

METHOD: BIBLE STUDY— UNDER SATAN'S CONTROL

The Bible does not tell us anything about Mary Magdalene before she met the Lord other than the fact that she was possessed with seven demons. Have you ever wondered what that must have been like for Mary? We can only speculate as to the answer but we can also look at some of the many other examples in the New Testament of people being possessed by demons. Look up Luke 8:26-33 for just one example. *[Have someone read the passage then initiate a short discussion using the following questions.]*

- What effect did the demons have on the possessed man?
- What do we learn about demons from this story?
- How did the demons react to Jesus and why?
- What would you say to someone who is thinking of getting involved in things that have a link with the occult?
- If this subject scares you, how would 1 John 4:4 help you as a follower of Jesus?

[Teacher's note: be sensitive with this subject and to the young people who may be emotionally impacted.] Remember, if Jesus Christ is not your Saviour then you too are under the dominion of Satan. You are not demon possessed as Mary was, but you are in the kingdom of darkness and a slave of Satan. Perhaps you think, "Not me,

I live my life the way I want to." Do you? Think what happens when you try to break some habit, or you try to turn over a new leaf, or even try to keep a New Year's resolution. You very quickly find that you simply cannot change on your own. You need to be freed by the Lord Jesus Christ so that you will no longer be ruled by sin (Romans 6:14).

A few weeks ago we looked at Judas. He was also under the dominion of Satan but his life ended tragically. In contrast to Judas, Mary did the right thing and took the opportunity to repent and be set free. Do you realise that Jesus is the only One who can set you free from Satan's grip? That's because He is God (Colossians 1:13-14). If you realise that and you are willing to surrender your life to Him, then tell Him just now that you are sorry for going your own way. Ask Him for forgiveness. Thank Him for dying on the cross for your sin. Receive the salvation that He offers you.

Temptation to sin is something that the Christian has to deal with everyday as well. The evil one can make sin seem very attractive. Sometimes as a Christian you might even become involved in things which can hinder your walk with God. Things like these ...

*As you reveal each phrase on **VISUAL 20**, ask the young people to elaborate and give examples.*

All of these things can enslave your mind and can stand in the way of you being a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. Just like trying to walk through a muddy field, these things can stick to us and slow us down. They can hinder us from following Jesus the way we should. If you, as a follower of Jesus Christ, realise that you have been allowing harmful things into your life then you need to deal with them radically and deal with them now! You will never be truly happy as a follower of Jesus or truly effective in your service for Him until you confess those sins and change your ways (1 John 1:7).

// LESSON BREAK //

Mary: a follower of Jesus

Despite Mary's background, after her conversion she became very close to the Lord. If you look again at Luke 8:1-3, you will read that Mary Magdalene accompanied Jesus and the 12 disciples as they went through the cities and villages of Galilee proclaiming the good news. Travelling with the Lord and providing for His needs and those of His disciples was her way of showing her appreciation to Him. She was so full of gratitude to her Saviour for all He had done for her.

Mary's life was completely transformed from being a slave to sin to being a follower of Jesus. Has this same transformation taken place in your life?

When God looks down at this world He sees two groups of people. He sees those who are following Him and those who are living their own way. There is a vast difference between the person who is following Jesus and the person who is under Satan's control. One is captive and the other is free. One is in a hopeless situation; the other has hope for this life and the life to come.

METHOD: GROUP DISCUSSION

Let's look at the Bible and see what happens when someone says "no" to the Lord Jesus and when someone says "yes".

*Divide the young people into groups and provide them with copies of **HANDOUT 22**. It is necessary to have a leader in each group to guide the discussion. Take time in the groups to decipher the references, look them up, discuss the definitions and fill in the blanks. At the appropriate time, bring the groups back together again. Go through each point giving them the correct answers while responding to any questions that may have arisen in the groups.*

The following definitions are given to help you as you summarise the discussion and respond to any questions that may have arisen in the groups.

Regeneration: An act of God in which He makes dead sinners alive and gives them a new nature.

Adoption: *An act of God whereby He makes us members of His family, gives us the privileges of sons and makes us heirs of His inheritance.*

Redemption: *Through the shedding of His blood on the cross, Christ paid the full price to buy us out of the slave market of sin and set us free, thus delivering us from the penalty, power and presence of sin.*


Justification: *An instantaneous legal act of God whereby He declares that the sinner who has trusted Christ is free from guilt and punishment, and has a new standing of righteousness before Him.*

Reconciliation: *Through the death of Christ, God's alienation from us is ended by removing the cause (sin, guilt, condemnation). It is received through repentance and faith in Christ.*

Eternal security: *Those who are truly saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever.*

CONCLUSION

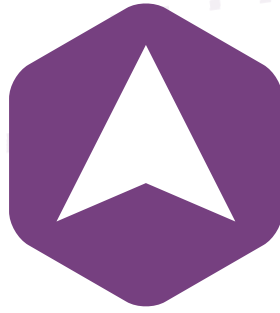
The Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for sin when He died on the cross, and is able to set free all who will come to Him for forgiveness. He was willing to pay that price in order that Mary could be set free from her sin—and in order that you could be set free too! In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we read more about the wonderful truth of redemption. As you read these verses, do you realise just how special you are to the Lord Jesus? The price of setting you free from sin and its punishment was much more than silver or gold—it was the precious blood of God's perfect Son. He longs that you would accept all that He did for you on the cross. Will you do so?

If you are someone who has been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus, do you realise that your life now fully belongs to Him (1 Corinthians 6:20)? He has bought you with His own blood. Like Mary, you must be willing to respond by surrendering your life totally to His service. In the light of all He has done for you, He deserves nothing less. 



Handout 22 answers

Bible reference	No	Yes
Ephesians 2:4-5	Dead	Alive
Galatians 4:5	Disobedient children	Become a member of God's family
Matthew 20:28	A slave in bondage	Redeemed
John 3:18, Romans 5:1	You are condemned to eternal punishment	Justified before God
Romans 5:10-11	Enemies of God	Reconciled to God
John 10:27-29	Live in uncertainty	Have assurance of salvation



LESSON 11

MARY: EMPOWERED TO SERVE

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to learn that when they are freed from sin that they are also empowered to serve.



to love the Lord as Mary did.

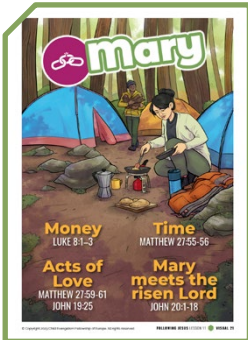


to faithfully serve the Lord with the gifts and talents He has given them.

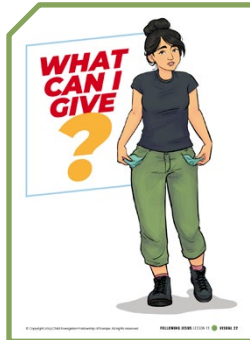


to realise that the first thing they must give the Lord is their life.

VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



VISUAL 21



VISUAL 22



HANDOUT 23



HANDOUT 24

INTRODUCTION: ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Use an Internet search engine such as *google.com* or *wikipedia.com* to find images of the following events. Show them to the young people, one picture at a time and ask them to name the event that made world news. First show the photograph, then start to give the clues (i.e. date, facts) and eventually the answer. You may choose other events that will be more appropriate for your country.

- 6 June 1944—This marked the beginning of the Allied Invasion of Europe and was the most decisive victory in World War II. 130,000 allied troops invaded the coast of Normandy, France. (Answer: D-Day.)
- 9 November 1989—It quickly led to the fall of the Iron Curtain, a border which separated much of Eastern and Western Europe. This construction separated East Berlin and West Berlin for 28 years. (Answer: The fall of the Berlin Wall.)
- 31 August 1997—Killed in a car accident in Paris. The headlines read "Death of a princess". (Answer: Death of Diana Princess of Wales.)
- [Before you show this photograph tell the young people that the name of the event and the date are the same.] 3,000 people lost their lives in the joint attacks that day. A series of suicide attacks carried out by al-Qaeda in America. The most spectacular caused the collapse of the World Trade Centre twin towers. (Answer: September 11, 2001.)
- 26 December 2004—350,000 people were killed and many more injured. It was Boxing Day. (Answer: Tsunami in the Indian Ocean.)

METHOD: "I WAS THERE"

Ask the young people to think of an event at which they were present which they think they will remember for a long time. Allow them to share briefly. Be prepared to also share an example yourself.

Mary Magdalene was also present at a number of world-changing events that she would never forget. Let's find out together what they were.

METHOD: SWORD DRILL—WHERE WAS MARY?

Before the young people look up the verse tell them they must not just read it aloud, but instead answer the question "Where was Mary in this verse?"

- Matthew 27:55-56 (Mark 15:40, Luke 23:49) (Answer: At the cross. Along with the other women she was at the cross and observed Jesus' crucifixion.)
- Matthew 27:61 (Mark 15:47, Luke 23:55) (Answer: At the burial. She observed how His body was laid in the tomb.)
- Mark 16:9 (John 20:1-16) (Answer: In the garden. It was resurrection morning. At first she thought she was speaking to the gardener but then she recognised Him as the Lord.)

Mary Magdalene had witnessed the very events on which our Christian faith is built—the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God the Son. Mary knew the truth, but she didn't let it stay something she only knew about in her head—she allowed it to affect her life. She was different, her life had been changed and she was so grateful that she sought to serve the Lord in whatever way she could. Mary is a wonderful example to us. Her life shows that we can serve the Lord with whatever gifts and talents He has given us. That is something that will become obvious as we study the following Scripture references together.

Show **VISUAL 21**. Also photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 23**.

MONEY: LUKE 8:1-3

Mary showed real love to the Lord by the way she used her possessions. She ministered to or helped support the Lord Jesus and the disciples out of her own money. She may have been well-off financially, but she certainly was not selfish with her money. As the Lord had blessed her, so she was willing to give generously to the Lord's work.

Each of these stories and the appropriate questions are on the handout. Give the young people time to answer and to write down the answers.

Consider Ryan and Emma. Both are young Christians who have part-time jobs. When Ryan gets paid each week he saves some money for the new phone he wants to buy. He also spends some on streaming subscriptions, snacks and occasionally a new computer game. If he has any money left, he puts it in the missionary offering at the youth meeting. Emma believes that a tenth of her income belongs to the Lord, so each week she sets aside one tenth of her pay and then decides what she wants to do with the rest. Sometimes she even gives some more money to the missionary she supports.

- According to 2 Corinthians 9:7, how might we have a wrong attitude in our giving? (By giving reluctantly or under pressure.)
- What sort of giving pleases the Lord? (Freely and joyfully.)
- Read Malachi 3:8. How is it possible to rob God? (By withholding what is rightfully His.)
- Why do missionaries need financial support from people like Emma? (They live from the gifts of God's people.)
- Who was more like Mary and why? (Emma, because she was not selfish but gave first to the Lord.)

How about you? Do you give generously to support the Lord's work like Mary did? If you are a follower of Jesus, you should obey Him by giving of your financial means.

TIME: MATTHEW 27:55-56

These verses tell us how Mary, along with some other women, had left her home and had gone to Jerusalem with Jesus. Mary was willing to give of her time to serve the Lord. Nothing was more important than working for the Lord in any way she could.

Consider Ben and Joshua. Both are good athletes and are often chosen to represent their schools. Every minute Ben has is used to train—he wants to do really well in sport. Joshua trains hard too. He doesn't want to let the team down, but he makes sure he allocates time to be involved in the youth meeting and in his local church. In the summer Ben played sport nearly

all the time, while Joshua gave some time to help in outreach to children.

- In what ways are Ben and Joshua similar? (Both have a big interest in sport and lead very busy lives.)
- How are they different? (They prioritise things differently—for Ben sport is all-important, but Joshua makes time to serve the Lord as well as keeping his interest in sport.)
- According to Ephesians 5:16, why is it important to make the best use of time? (Because we are living in evil days—people need the Lord.)
- How should you use your time (Galatians 6:10)? (Use your time to help others especially like-minded believers.)
- What good advice does Ecclesiastes 12:1 have for young people? (Be sure not to forget God among all the other demands on your time.)

How much time do you give to your local church? How much time do you give to going out and getting involved in special outreach? Are you like Mary—always making sure you are using your time to serve the Lord?

// LESSON BREAK //

ACTS OF LOVE: MATTHEW 27:59-61, JOHN 19:25

You cannot read this without noticing Mary's constant love. It was not love for the Lord when things are going well, but a love that continued even when circumstances were very difficult. Only one disciple was at the cross, but Mary and the other women were there, despite all the hatred people were showing for Christ and Christians at that time.

Consider Sarah. She attended a small school in a country area. Most of the teachers were Christians. There was a large Christian Union. It was easy to be a Christian there. Then Sarah had to leave primary school and move to secondary school. There were fewer Christians there. The other students did not think much of her Christian standards and often teased her. It

was very hard for her. Sarah eventually stopped going to the Christian Union and did not attend church and Bible class as regularly as she had done previously. Gradually her interest in Christian things began to fade because the going was tough.

- What difficulties did Sarah face when she changed schools? (Teasing, bullying and lack of friends because of her faith.)
- Look up John 15:20. Should Sarah have been surprised that things were difficult for her? (No, because the Lord Jesus clearly said that His followers should expect to be persecuted, just as He was.)
- How was Sarah different from Mary? (Sarah stopped following the Lord because it was hard, but Mary continued to be devoted to the Lord, even during difficult times.)
- What things could Sarah have done which might have helped her stay loyal to the Lord? (Kept in the company of Christian friends instead of stopping attending Christian Union and Bible class; prayed for the Lord's help in the situation; read God's Word and depended on its promises.)

How about you? Is your love for the Lord constant or do you waver when things are tough? We should resolve to love the Lord through all circumstances.

METHOD: ROLE PLAY

Divide the young people into three groups and give each group leader one of the role play scenarios provided in **HANDOUT 24**. Give each group time to prepare a role play which they will present to the others. At the end of each, have a short discussion on how the actions and attitudes of Christian characters in the role plays reflected those of Mary.

SCENARIO 1

At Hannah's church, a missionary is explaining how €8 per week is enough to pay fees to train a pastor in Uganda. Hannah wants to commit to helping, but will have to explain to her mum and dad who are not Christians and who have insisted she gets a part-time job so that the money she earns can contribute towards the

cost of going on the school ski trip. How will they react when she tells them she wants to give part of her earnings away, and how will she convince them that she should?

SCENARIO 2

Ian is an excellent rugby player, good enough to have had a trial for the Junior International team. His coach says he cannot miss any training sessions during the summer if he is to be selected, but Ian has planned to help at his church's summer camp. Ian talks to his best friend about the issue, and then tells the coach what he has decided. What will Ian do?

SCENARIO 3

Rachel and her brother Aaron are both Christians. Their elderly neighbour has been in hospital but is now home again. Their mum suggests that they should call with her each day for a while, just to spend some time with her and do any little jobs she needs done, but Rachel is not so sure. Both of them are studying for exams at the moment, and anyway the old lady's family should be able to look after her. Aaron feels it's a good idea and a way to show practical Christian love—but how will he convince Rachel?

Mary meets the risen Lord

At the start of our lesson we thought about memorable events we have witnessed. If Mary had been asked about memorable events in her life, there is no doubt that her greatest memory would have been that of meeting the Lord Jesus on the morning He rose from the dead. In the account of the resurrection found in John 20:1-18 we see once again how devoted Mary was in her service for the Lord. *[As you read through the passage, comment on the following verses:]*

verse 1: Mary was at the tomb even before daylight.

verse 10-11: When others had left, Mary lingered on, desperate to find the body of the Lord Jesus.

verse 15: Her love made her want to do the impossible. How could she possibly take Jesus' body away?

verse 16: Mary's love and devotion were rewarded. She was one of the first to see the risen Lord.

verse 18: She had the privilege of telling the disciples about the resurrection.

Mary had been a faithful and committed follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the terrible events surrounding His arrest and resurrection had not deterred her from following faithfully. On that first Easter morning when she met the risen Lord, Mary knew that all the sacrifices she had made to follow Him had been worthwhile.

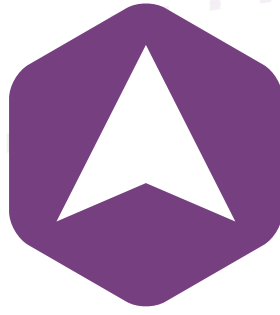
In the Bible and throughout history, God has used women to fulfil a vital role in His service. Their roles are often different from men, but equally important. Indeed, women have risen to the challenge of missionary work better than men—missionary societies often report a shortage of men applying to serve on the mission field. Will you be like Mary, willing to serve the Lord faithfully even when it is tough?

CONCLUSION

Notice Mary's response when she recognised the Lord on that resurrection morning. Read John 20:16—"Master." (Some translations say

"Rabboni/Teacher".) This sums up Mary's attitude to the Lord Jesus. She gave joyful, willing, devoted service to the One who had freed her from the power of Satan. *[Show VISUAL 22.]* Maybe you ask, "What can I give?" Well you can follow Mary's example by giving your money and your time, and you can serve Him with acts of love but, more than that, Jesus wants to be Lord of your life. The words of Romans 12:1 could certainly be applied to Mary. Her response to all that the Lord Jesus had done for her was a willingness to surrender every part of her life to Him.

It is very clear from the words of this verse that God expects all Christians to be willing to serve Him wholeheartedly. It is perfectly reasonable that God should ask us to do so. Remember, the Lord Jesus gave His life to set us free from the punishment we deserve. Our response should be one of gratitude and a desire to hold nothing back from Him. Are you willing to surrender yourself totally to Him and His service? Are you also a faithful servant of Christ, like Mary was? Let the life of this lady be a challenge and an example to you. Give all that you have to the Lord, just as she did. ●



LESSON 12

BEING A TRUE BELIEVER

Objectives: We would like the teens:



to discover what characterises a true follower of Jesus.



to honestly examine how their lives measure up to these characteristics.

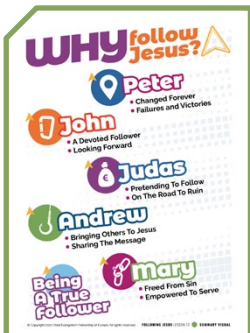


to become active and committed followers.

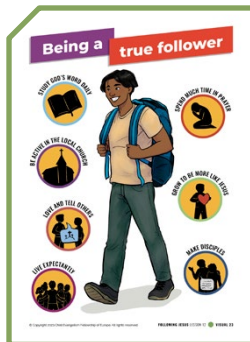


who now realise they are not true Christians to repent of their sin and invite Jesus to be both Saviour and Lord of their lives.

VISUALS AND HANDOUTS USED IN THIS LESSON:



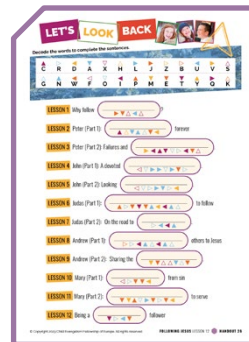
SUMMARY VISUAL



VISUAL 23



HANDOUT 25



HANDOUT 26

INTRODUCTION: WHO'S WHO?

Photocopy and cut out **HANDOUT 25**. Make sure you have one set of cards for each group. Cut the cards out in advance, mix them up and place each set in a plain envelope. There are 25 cards in total, five containing the names of the characters we have studied and 20 providing four pieces of information on each character. Get the teens to work in groups. Give them an envelope each and tell them they have three minutes to place the characters in the order we studied them and to place the corresponding four characteristics alongside them. They may work on tables or use the floor. When the time is up, inspect the groups and give a small prize to the group who completed the task first.

You may wish to ask if anyone learned the memory verses and give them an opportunity to recite them before the group.

Over the past months we have looked closely at the lives of these five people. We have sought to learn from both their strengths and weaknesses. We have critiqued their successes and their failures. We have learned many lessons that will help us to be better followers of Jesus.

Use the **SUMMARY VISUAL** to briefly recall the biblical characters and the lessons you have taught.

There was the amazing change which took place in Peter's life after he met the Lord. He let the Lord down many times, but he learned from those mistakes. The same Peter who denied even knowing Jesus became a great preacher of the Gospel in the early church. Later he was prepared to endure persecution and eventually to be martyred for his faith.

John had been a devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ throughout his life. He had been one of the Lord's closest friends when He was on Earth. When John considered the future, he knew he was prepared because Jesus was both his Saviour and Lord. He had no need to fear death or judgment, instead he looked forward to the day when he would meet the Lord Jesus again in Heaven.

In the life of Judas we saw someone who pretended to follow but he didn't fool the Lord. We were reminded of the tragic consequences of living in such a way and ignoring the truth—namely eternal punishment and separation from God.

Andrew provided us with a great example of someone who constantly seeks opportunities to bring others to Jesus. He had a great love for the Saviour, and as a result he longed that others would come to know Him also.

Mary gave joyful, willing, devoted service to the One who had freed her from the power of Satan.

What's in a name?

Jesus started His earthly ministry with a little group of only 12 men who He called to come and follow Him. During those three years many more joined, so that in a reasonably short time, many thousands were claiming to be His followers. In those early days, Jesus' followers were considered by many to be a Jewish sect that was simply known as "The Way" (Acts 9:2). Then they received a new name which 2,000 years later is still commonly used.

Look at Acts 11:26. What name was given here to followers of Jesus that has stuck ever since? In Antioch, they were called "Christians" for the first time (see also Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16). The word "Christian" means "one who believes in Christ and His teachings", or simply "one who belongs to Christ". Many people in the world today call themselves Christians but they do not all belong to Him. Tragically, on the great Day of Judgment, there will be people who will be very surprised. Look up Matthew 7:21-23 to discover what will happen.

Many use the name Christian but they are not true followers of Jesus Christ. Why do they mistakenly think that they will one day be in Heaven?

METHOD: TRUE OR FALSE

Have the young people shout out "true" or "false" for each statement.

I am a true Christian because I ...

... go to church every week.

- ... give generously to the church, charities and mission agencies.
- ... live in a Christian country.
- ... have been baptised and confirmed.
- ... accept that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.
- ... have a family tradition of being good Christian people.
- ... believe that the life of Jesus is a good example to follow.
- ... raised my hand or went to the front during a Gospel invitation.
- ... help with practical things at the church or do other voluntary work.
- ... have repented of my sins, put my trust in Jesus and am seeking to live for Him everyday.

While many of the things listed above are OK or even good for a Christian to do, only the last one will make you a true Christian. Simply believing in the existence of Jesus is not enough.

Maybe you ask, "How can I be sure that I am a true Christian?" A Christian is a person who has repented of their sins and put their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. If you are a true Christian, then at some time in your life you heard the call of God to salvation (1 Peter 2:9). You will have realised that you are a sinner in need of a Saviour. At that moment when you responded positively to that call (John 10:27) you were saved (Acts 16:31)—you were born again (John 3:3).

How many of you can remember the moment you were saved? *[Allow young people the opportunity to respond.]* Many Christians cannot remember the exact date or time when they trusted Christ but they know that they were born again.

The moment you were, you probably prayed something like this: "Heavenly Father, I know that I have sinned against You and that my sins separate me from You. I am truly sorry. I now want to turn away from my past sinful life and turn to You for forgiveness. Please forgive me and help me avoid sinning again. I believe that Your Son, Jesus Christ, died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears

my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the Lord of my life, to rule and reign in my heart from this day forward. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen."

Say to the young people, "If there is someone here and as you listened to me read that prayer, you know that you are not a Christian and you would like to become one, then come and speak to me after the meeting and we can talk about your situation and perhaps pray that prayer together."

What's in a name? If you wear the name Christian, then people should see by the way you live that you are different from those around you. The Bible says that when you are born again you become a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). The "old you" has gone along with its old priorities, beliefs, desires and plans. The "new you" sees things from a whole new perspective.

Being a Christian is more than a name. It's more than making a decision. It's about trusting Christ fully for salvation and then living as Christ's ambassadors here on Earth (2 Corinthians 5:20). When people look at you, they should see Jesus! When people listen to you, they should hear you talk about Jesus. There's much more to a name than just a label.

// LESSON BREAK //

Reveal the text of **VISUAL 23** progressively as you work through the lesson.

Characteristics of a true follower

God has made us all different. We look different. We have different personalities and different temperaments. However every true follower of Jesus Christ will share certain characteristics. These things will be evident in our lives for all to see. So what is a true follower of Jesus like? A true follower of Jesus will ...

STUDY GOD'S WORD DAILY

Peter, John, Andrew and Mary, whom we have studied, were people who knew the Lord well.

How did these people get to know Jesus? By spending time with Him, talking to Him and listening to what He had to say. As they got to know Jesus better, their lives were changed as a result. While we cannot physically be with the Lord Jesus as the disciples were, we can spend time with Him in His Word. Spending time with God is vital if we are to grow spiritually and get to know Him better. That is why a regular quiet time is so important for all Christians.

What is the longest chapter in the Bible? *[Look up Psalm 119:9-16, but before you read it out loud ask the young people to notice the reasons the psalmist gives for studying God's Word.]*

Think about what the great 19th-century preacher D. L. Moody said, "The Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible." *[Ask the young people to explain what the quotation means.]*

In James 1:22-24, we are taught that obedience to God's Word is something God requires from every Christian. When God reveals His will to us through His Word, we must be prepared to submit our lives to it! Again we can look at Peter, John and the others as examples of people who learned to be obedient to God's Word.

In the Bible God gives Christians clear instructions about what they should and should not do. We have the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Throughout the Bible, we have many examples and illustrations to tell us how we should behave. Are you obedient to God's Word, or do you ignore it when it says things you don't like? Remember Proverbs 3:6—God promises to guide those who acknowledge Him in all their ways.

SPEND MUCH TIME IN PRAYER

This should be part of your regular quiet time. As you read His Word, God speaks to you. Through prayer you can talk to Him. This is a real privilege to be able to talk to Almighty God. We can talk to Him at anytime (1 Thessalonians 1:2) and we know He will both hear and answer our prayers (Psalm 17:6). There are no shortcuts to getting to know God. If you are going to become a better follower of Jesus, you need to spend

time with Him each day in prayer. As you learn to talk to God and listen to Him, you will find it easier to know what God wants you to do.

BE ACTIVE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

In Acts 2 we read that about 3,000 people repented, identified themselves with Christ and joined themselves to the local gathering of believers (Acts 2:41). No Christian was ever meant to "go it alone". We need to keep together, otherwise the pressures of the world will weaken our faith.

Sword drill: 1 Peter 4:10. It is a great privilege to belong to a group of Christians but it also carries with it the responsibility of getting involved and contributing with our money, time and love. Are you actively involved in any of your church's ministries? If not, then look for opportunities where you can use your gifts and abilities to serve others.

Do you belong to a local church? If not, then look for a church where you will be fed from God's Word and start to attend that church regularly.

GROW TO BE MORE LIKE JESUS

Several weeks ago we saw how John, once so selfish and hot-tempered, was changed by the Lord. For John, coming to know the Lord Jesus was the beginning of a process of growing to be more like Him. The character of the Lord can be clearly seen in the list of qualities set out in Galatians 5:22-23. *[Read these verses.]* Examine your own life against this list. If you are truly growing to be like the Lord, then these things will be seen in you life more and more.

As we learned from Peter, we may on occasion let the Lord down but the overall progression is one that is continually going up and becoming more like the One we are following.

If there is sin in your life that you are ignoring, that sin will inevitably slow your growth down. You need to deal with it. Throw away everything that would hinder you and keep your eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2).

LOVE AND TELL OTHERS

Sword drill: Matthew 22:37-39. Here Jesus declared that the most important command was

to love God and love others. We need to show love to our fellow believers but we also need to have a love for the lost. Having a heart for the lost is essential if we are to win them and see them become followers of Christ.

Sword drill: John 13:34-35. What is our motivation for loving one another? *[Allow young people to answer.]* First of all because He first loved us (1 John 4:10), but secondly because when unbelievers observe our love for one another they should recognise us as followers of Jesus. When we love one another we prove that we "practise what we preach", but also our love for one another will be a powerful testimony to a lost world.

MAKE DISCIPLES

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus told His followers to go and make disciples. He didn't tell them to simply go and evangelise. He told them to go and reproduce more people who were also committed followers of Jesus. It is a privilege to lead someone to the Lord but after we do that we should also take time to disciple that person. We want to get alongside them and help them to take their first steps in their new faith. We want to read the Scriptures with them and help to answer the many questions that they have.

Is there someone who you could disciple? Don't just think about your own spiritual growth—invest your life in discipling others.

LIVE EXPECTANTLY

At the end of the book of Revelation, we have John praying that the Lord would come again soon (Revelation 22:20). If the Lord were to

come today, would you be ready to meet Him? Perhaps there are things in your life which you would be ashamed of if you were to meet Him. Perhaps there are members of your family or some of your friends who are not Christians, but you haven't yet told them about the Lord. Remember, the Lord will come again when we least expect Him (Matthew 24:44).

CONCLUSION

We have reached the end of our studies in the lives of Jesus' followers. How much we have learned from them! Which lessons have been most important for you? Have you learned what it means to become a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, are you living every day in a way that is pleasing to Him?

[Read out 1 John 3:2 and then finish by saying ...] As followers of Jesus our goal is to become more like Him each day. Of course, we will never be fully like Him until we reach Heaven, but on that day when we see Him, we will become like Him. What a wonderful day that will be!

METHOD: WORDSEARCH

Photocopy and distribute **HANDOUT 26**. They could fill it in during the programme or later at home. ●



Handout 26 answers

Fill in the blanks:

Jesus; Changed; victories; follower; forward; Pretending; ruin; Bringing; message; Freed; Empowered; true



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- Attend Youth Challenge training sessions to get to know teens better and how to teach them.
- Join Youth Challenge events: week-ends, camps, sports nights, missions events.
- Become part of the Youth Challenge prayer programme.


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