FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Day 1: Jesus Calls Me

Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen

Bible story	Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)
Memory verse (NKJV)	Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)
Takeaway	Jesus calls me by name to follow Him, and I can say yes and trust Him.
Daily call	Leader: “Jesus said” Kids: “Follow Me!”

Objectives

- Study Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51 in context.
- Explain what Jesus’ call to follow Him costs (Luke 9:23) and examine their own reasons for following.
- Memorize Matthew 4:19.
- Write a specific, personal application.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish
- Copies of today’s student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Cardstock cards; Pens; Envelopes

Teacher preparation

- Read Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching “31 Days with Jesus” devotionals at The Preacher’s Pen: Day 11: Calling the Disciples (Answering the Call); Day 16: The Great Catch (Trusting Jesus with Your Future).
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Luke calls it the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1).
- Fishing was usually done at night with large nets. In the morning the nets were washed and mended (Luke 5:2; Matthew 4:21).
- Peter and Andrew were brothers. James and John were brothers, the sons of Zebedee, and partners with Peter (Luke 5:10).
- John 1:35-51 shows that some of these men had already met Jesus earlier. Luke 5 is the day they left their work to follow Him full time.
- Jesus calls ordinary people, like fishermen, to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22).
- Following Jesus means trusting Him even when we do not understand (Luke 5:5).
- Jesus knows each of us by name (John 1:47-48; John 10:27).
- Following Jesus means leaving behind anything that keeps us from Him (Luke 5:11).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Opener	Discussion starter (below).
0:05-0:20	Bible study	Read the passages together and teach the lesson (script below).
0:20-0:30	Discussion	Open discussion; push for Scripture-based answers.
0:30-0:35	Study sheet in pairs	Work through the study questions; note anything to bring back tomorrow.
0:35-0:40	Application and commitment	Students write a specific action on the application page. Prayer.

Discussion starter

What would it take for you to walk away from your plans, your phone, or your job today? What is worth leaving everything for?

Bible study

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

Following Jesus begins with a call. In John 1:43 Jesus found Philip and said two words: "Follow Me." In the Gospels, the word follow is more than walking behind someone. A disciple followed a teacher to learn his words and copy his life. Jesus was inviting ordinary working men into a whole new way of living.

Luke 5:1-11 shows how that call worked in real life. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were professional fishermen on the Lake of Gennesaret. After a long night with empty nets, a carpenter from Nazareth told Peter how to fish. Peter's answer is the heart of discipleship: "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). Peter did not understand, but he obeyed.

The result was overwhelming: breaking nets and sinking boats. Peter's response is worth noticing. He did not ask for a business partnership. He fell on his knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8). Seeing who Jesus is always shows us who we are. Yet Jesus answered with grace and purpose: "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men" (Luke 5:10).

The cost was real. They “forsook all and followed Him” (Luke 5:11). Peter and Andrew left their nets. James and John left their boat and their father (Matthew 4:20-22). Jesus later said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).

Why do people follow Jesus? Some follow a crowd. Some follow out of habit or because their family always has (compare 2 Timothy 1:5, where Timothy’s faith had to become his own). Some followed Jesus only for the loaves and fish (John 6:26). The fishermen followed because they saw who He was. The real question for every teen is personal: Why do you follow Jesus, and will you follow Him when it costs you something?

Discussion questions

1. Peter said, “nevertheless at Your word.” Where do you find it hardest to obey Jesus when it does not make sense to you?
2. Why does seeing Jesus clearly make us aware of our own sin (Luke 5:8)?
3. What are the “nets” people your age hold onto instead of following Jesus?
4. Read Luke 9:23. What does it cost to follow Jesus daily?
5. Be honest: Why do you follow Jesus? Habit, family, friends, or faith of your own?

Review

- What is the big idea of today’s lesson? (Jesus calls me by name to follow Him, and I can say yes and trust Him.)
- Quote Matthew 4:19.
- Jesus calls ordinary people, like fishermen, to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22).
- Following Jesus means trusting Him even when we do not understand (Luke 5:5).
- Jesus knows each of us by name (John 1:47-48; John 10:27).
- Following Jesus means leaving behind anything that keeps us from Him (Luke 5:11).

Memory verse activity

Have students write the verse from memory, then discuss its key words and how it connects to today’s text.

Craft (Craft Time): Why Do You Follow? Commitment Card

Materials: Cardstock cards; Pens; Envelopes

1. Read John 6:26-27 and Luke 9:23 together.
2. Each student writes a short, honest answer to: “Why do I follow Jesus?”
3. On the back, write one specific way you will follow Him this week (Luke 5:5, “nevertheless at Your word”).
4. Seal it in an envelope addressed to yourself. Teachers mail them in one month.

Recreation and snack

Game: Fishers of Men Tag: one child is “Peter”. Tagged children join hands and become part of the “net” until everyone is caught. For little ones, play Follow the Leader.

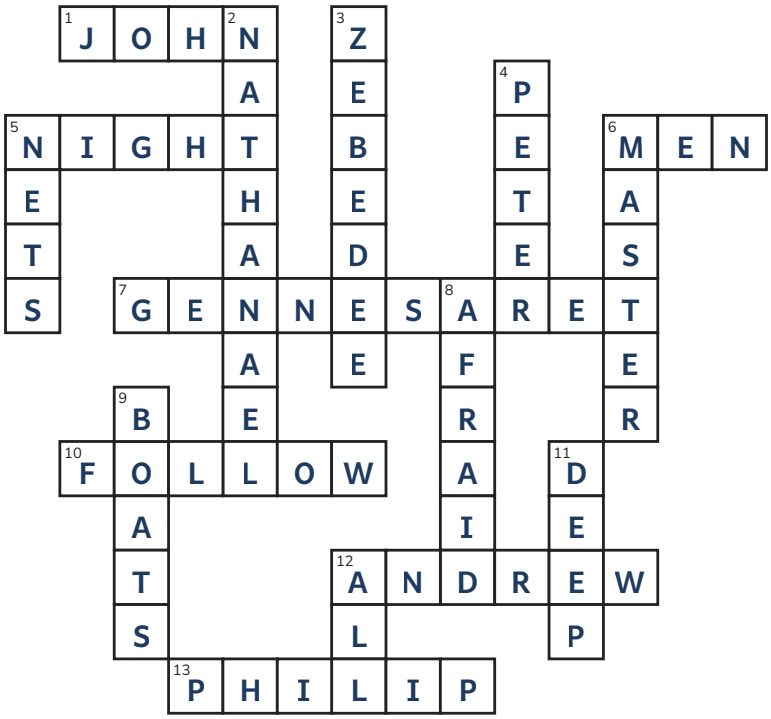
Snack: Fish-shaped crackers in a small paper boat or cup (“nets full of fish”) with water. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; I Will Make You Fishers of Men; Footprints of Jesus; Jesus Loves Me; Where He Leads Me.

Answer keys

Crossword



Across: 1 JOHN; 5 NIGHT; 6 MEN; 7 GENNESARET; 10 FOLLOW; 12 ANDREW; 13 PHILIP

Down: 2 NATHANAEL; 3 ZEBEDEE; 4 PETER; 5 NETS; 6 MASTER; 8 AFRAID; 9 BOATS; 11 DEEP; 12 ALL

Word search



Study sheet

Answers come straight from the passages listed. Let students read the text aloud and answer in their own words; guide them back to the verse when needed.

Sources for this lesson

- “31 Days with Jesus” by Christopher Gallagher, The Preacher’s Pen: Day 11: Calling the Disciples (Answering the Call); Day 16: The Great Catch (Trusting Jesus with Your Future) (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: Why Do You Follow Jesus? (Matthew 7:28-29); Who Is Jesus? (John 20:30-31)
- Scripture: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Text: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51

Jesus Calls the Fishermen

Following Jesus begins with a call. In John 1:43 Jesus found Philip and said two words: "Follow Me." In the Gospels, the word follow is more than walking behind someone. A disciple followed a teacher to learn his words and copy his life. Jesus was inviting ordinary working men into a whole new way of living.

Luke 5:1-11 shows how that call worked in real life. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were professional fishermen on the Lake of Gennesaret. After a long night with empty nets, a carpenter from Nazareth told Peter how to fish. Peter's answer is the heart of discipleship: "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). Peter did not understand, but he obeyed.

The result was overwhelming: breaking nets and sinking boats. Peter's response is worth noticing. He did not ask for a business partnership. He fell on his knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8). Seeing who Jesus is always shows us who we are. Yet Jesus answered with grace and purpose: "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men" (Luke 5:10).

The cost was real. They "forsook all and followed Him" (Luke 5:11). Peter and Andrew left their nets. James and John left their boat and their father (Matthew 4:20-22). Jesus later said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

Why do people follow Jesus? Some follow a crowd. Some follow out of habit or because their family always has (compare 2 Timothy 1:5, where Timothy's faith had to become his own). Some followed Jesus only for the loaves and fish (John 6:26). The fishermen followed because they saw who He was. The real question for every teen is personal: Why do you follow Jesus, and will you follow Him when it costs you something?

> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
>
> **Matthew 4:19 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus calls ordinary people, like fishermen, to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22).
- Following Jesus means trusting Him even when we do not understand (Luke 5:5).
- Jesus knows each of us by name (John 1:47-48; John 10:27).
- Following Jesus means leaving behind anything that keeps us from Him (Luke 5:11).

Background

- The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Luke calls it the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1).
- Fishing was usually done at night with large nets. In the morning the nets were washed and mended (Luke 5:2; Matthew 4:21).
- Peter and Andrew were brothers. James and John were brothers, the sons of Zebedee, and partners with Peter (Luke 5:10).
- John 1:35-51 shows that some of these men had already met Jesus earlier. Luke 5 is the day they left their work to follow Him full time.

Discuss

1. Peter said, “nevertheless at Your word.” Where do you find it hardest to obey Jesus when it does not make sense to you?
2. Why does seeing Jesus clearly make us aware of our own sin (Luke 5:8)?
3. What are the “nets” people your age hold onto instead of following Jesus?
4. Read Luke 9:23. What does it cost to follow Jesus daily?
5. Be honest: Why do you follow Jesus? Habit, family, friends, or faith of your own?

Live it

- Name one habit, distraction, or attitude you will put down this week so you can follow Jesus more closely.
- Read one chapter of a Gospel each day this week and write down one thing Jesus did or said.
- Invite one friend to come to VBS or worship with you. Say, “Come and see.”

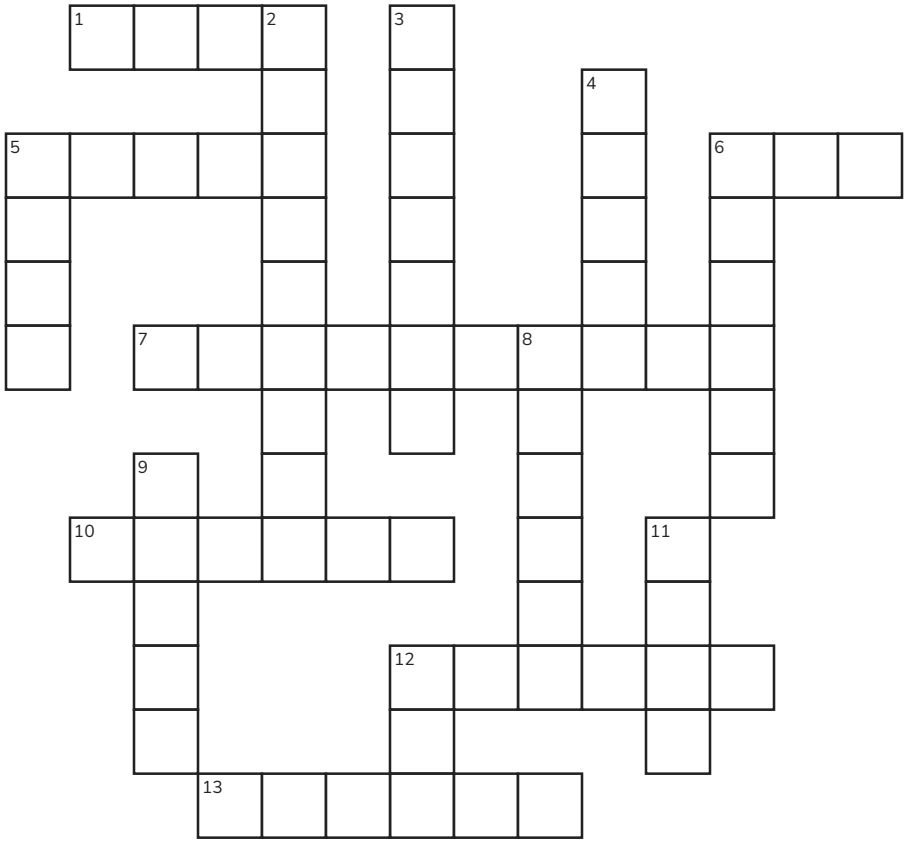
Further reading: “31 Days with Jesus” at The Preacher’s Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 11: Calling the Disciples (Answering the Call); Day 16: The Great Catch (Trusting Jesus with Your Future).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Crossword Puzzle

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Name: _____



Across

- 1. Brother of James, son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21)
- 5. “We have toiled all ____ and caught nothing” (Luke 5:5)
- 6. “I will make you fishers of ____” (Matthew 4:19)
- 7. The lake where Jesus taught from the boat (Luke 5:1)
- 10. Jesus said, “____ Me” (Matthew 4:19)
- 12. Peter’s brother (Matthew 4:18)
- 13. Jesus found him and said, “Follow Me” (John 1:43)

Down

- 2. Philip told him, “Come and see” (John 1:45-46)
- 3. Father of James and John (Matthew 4:21)
- 4. Fisherman who said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8)
- 5. They left their ____ and followed Him (Matthew 4:20)
- 6. What Peter called Jesus in Luke 5:5
- 8. “Do not be ____” (Luke 5:10)
- 9. The fish filled both ____ (Luke 5:7)
- 11. “Launch out into the ____” (Luke 5:4)
- 12. They forsook ____ and followed Him (Luke 5:11)

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Word Search (Challenge)

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Name: _____

Words go in all eight directions, including backward.

A	C	O	J	D	X	B	E	O	K	E	A	Y	F	V	Z
N	F	O	R	S	O	O	K	E	E	I	L	M	S	P	X
T	G	K	X	D	O	H	R	L	D	U	U	A	H	Q	U
K	M	W	D	M	B	I	P	E	T	E	R	S	C	U	X
N	X	Y	Z	J	Y	F	K	I	Z	K	B	T	T	L	W
M	M	I	A	S	Y	S	H	E	L	B	N	E	T	S	B
L	Q	B	T	I	B	F	P	E	O	I	R	R	Z	K	C
N	W	W	Q	P	E	L	E	A	N	A	H	T	A	N	H
Z	S	O	E	D	P	L	T	G	S	W	L	P	E	E	D
T	A	V	L	F	I	S	H	E	R	M	E	N	R	R	B
L	N	G	M	L	U	S	N	O	G	Z	Q	R	Z	W	L
N	S	G	A	S	O	N	C	U	A	P	D	S	D	Y	N
J	O	G	E	K	E	F	T	I	Z	F	N	B	W	N	V
H	U	J	N	G	H	M	V	X	P	H	M	C	G	N	A
J	R	E	S	Y	A	C	A	X	O	L	O	M	R	J	H
J	W	F	L	J	D	C	P	J	M	T	E	S	G	S	Q

Find these words: ANDREW • BOATS • DEEP • DISCIPLE • FISHERMEN • FOLLOW • FORSOOK • GALILEE • GENNESARET • JAMES • JESUS • JOHN • MASTER • NATHANAEL • NETS • PETER • PHILIP • ZEBEDEE

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Study Sheet

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Name: _____

> Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
> **Matthew 4:19 (NKJV)**

Read each passage and answer in your own words.

Luke 5:1–3

Why do you think Jesus taught from Peter's boat? What does this show about how Jesus uses ordinary things?

Luke 5:4–7

What was unusual about Jesus' command? What did Peter's obedience lead to?

Luke 5:8–10

How did Peter respond to the miracle? How did Jesus respond to Peter?

Matthew 4:18–22

What did each pair of brothers leave? How quickly did they respond?

John 1:43–51

How did Philip share Jesus with Nathanael? What can we learn from "Come and see"?

Luke 9:23

List the three things Jesus says a follower must do. What does each look like this week?

John 6:26–27

Why were some people following Jesus? What is the right reason to follow Him?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Discussion and Journal

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Name: _____

For discussion

1. Peter said, “nevertheless at Your word.” Where do you find it hardest to obey Jesus when it does not make sense to you?
2. Why does seeing Jesus clearly make us aware of our own sin (Luke 5:8)?
3. What are the “nets” people your age hold onto instead of following Jesus?
4. Read Luke 9:23. What does it cost to follow Jesus daily?
5. Be honest: Why do you follow Jesus? Habit, family, friends, or faith of your own?

Journal

Jesus called the fishermen right in the middle of their work. Where in your everyday life is Jesus calling you to follow Him?

Peter said, “nevertheless at Your word.” Write about one thing Jesus asks in Scripture that you need to obey even if you do not fully understand it.

What “nets” do you need to leave behind to follow Jesus more closely?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 1 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Real-Life Application

Jesus Calls Me: Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)

Name: _____

Big idea: Jesus calls me by name to follow Him, and I can say yes and trust Him.

Choose one or more

- Name one habit, distraction, or attitude you will put down this week so you can follow Jesus more closely.
- Read one chapter of a Gospel each day this week and write down one thing Jesus did or said.
- Invite one friend to come to VBS or worship with you. Say, “Come and see.”

My plan for the next 7 days

Day	What I will do	Done?
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Accountability partner: _____ Check-in date: _____

Prayer

_____

_____

_____

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Day 2: Jesus Teaches Me

Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders

Bible story	The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)
Memory verse (NKJV)	"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock." (Matthew 7:24)
Takeaway	Following Jesus means listening to His words and doing what He says.
Daily call	Leader: "Hear" Kids: "And do!"

Objectives

- Study Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29 in context.
- Explain why hearing without doing is self-deception (Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22).
- Memorize Matthew 7:24.
- Write a specific, personal application.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a rock and a cup of sand
- Copies of today's student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Index cards; Pens; Bibles

Teacher preparation

- Read Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching "31 Days with Jesus" devotionals at The Preacher's Pen: Day 14: The Sermon on the Mount (Embracing Jesus' Blueprint for Faith); Day 18: The Parables of Jesus (Lessons for Life); Day 20: Jesus Teaches on Prayer.
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- Jesus sat down to teach (Matthew 5:1). In that culture, rabbis normally sat while teaching.
- Many houses in Galilee were built of stone. Dry streambeds could flash flood in a heavy rain, washing away anything built on sand.
- Luke 6:20-49 records a similar sermon, sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain.
- "Authority" (Matthew 7:29): the scribes quoted earlier teachers; Jesus spoke on His own authority ("But I say to you," Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).
- Jesus is the greatest Teacher. He taught "as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29).
- Jesus teaches us how to live: be salt and light, love others, pray, and seek God first (Matthew 5-7).
- Hearing is not enough. The wise person hears Jesus and does what He says (Matthew 7:24; James 1:22).
- A life built on Jesus' words stands strong when storms come (Matthew 7:25).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Opener	Discussion starter (below).
0:05-0:20	Bible study	Read the passages together and teach the lesson (script below).
0:20-0:30	Discussion	Open discussion; push for Scripture-based answers.
0:30-0:35	Study sheet in pairs	Work through the study questions; note anything to bring back tomorrow.
0:35-0:40	Application and commitment	Students write a specific action on the application page. Prayer.

Discussion starter

Who is the best teacher you have ever had? What made them great? Was it what they knew or how they changed you?

Bible study

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

Matthew 7:28-29 tells us how the first audience reacted to the Sermon on the Mount: "the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes quoted other rabbis. Jesus said, "But I say to you." He spoke as the One who has the right to tell us how to live.

The sermon is a blueprint for disciples. It starts with character (Matthew 5:3-12). Your attitude is one of the keys to how you will receive the words of Jesus. It moves to influence: salt and light, so that others "may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Then Jesus goes to the heart: anger as well as murder, lust as well as adultery, honesty without oaths, and love for enemies (Matthew 5:21-48).

In chapter 6 Jesus addresses motives. Do you give, pray, and fast to be seen by people or by God (Matthew 6:1-18)? The pride of doing good to be praised by others is still with us. Then He addresses priorities: treasure in heaven, a single focus, freedom from worry, and "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:19-34).

Chapter 7 calls for decisions: how we treat others (Matthew 7:1-12), which road we take (7:13-14), which teachers we trust (7:15-23), and which foundation we build on (7:24-27). Notice that both builders heard the same words and faced the same storm. Storms come to everyone. The only difference was obedience.

Jesus taught by words, by actions, by being close to people, and by stories. But He never taught just to inform. He taught to transform. James says it plainly: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). Following Jesus is not proven by how much we know, but by what we do with what we know.

Discussion questions

1. What does it mean that Jesus taught "as one having authority"? How should that change how we read His words?
2. Jesus addresses the heart, not just actions (Matthew 5:21-28). Why does He go deeper than outward rules?
3. Matthew 6 talks about doing good to be seen. Where do you see that temptation today, including on social media?
4. What does "seek first the kingdom of God" look like for a student?
5. Read James 1:22. How can someone deceive themselves by only hearing?

Review

- What is the big idea of today's lesson? (Following Jesus means listening to His words and doing what He says.)
- Quote Matthew 7:24.
- Jesus is the greatest Teacher. He taught "as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29).
- Jesus teaches us how to live: be salt and light, love others, pray, and seek God first (Matthew 5-7).
- Hearing is not enough. The wise person hears Jesus and does what He says (Matthew 7:24; James 1:22).
- A life built on Jesus' words stands strong when storms come (Matthew 7:25).

Memory verse activity

Have students write the verse from memory, then discuss its key words and how it connects to today's text.

Craft (Craft Time): Hear and Do Challenge

Materials: Index cards; Pens; Bibles

1. Each student reads Matthew 5-7 quickly and picks one teaching they have heard but not done.
2. Write it on a card with the reference and a specific, measurable plan for the next seven days.
3. Pair up with an accountability partner and exchange cards.
4. Check in with your partner at the next class or by message.

Recreation and snack

Game: Rock or Sand Relay: teams carry a beanbag "brick" to a gray mat (rock) and must avoid the tan mat (sand). Or play "Hear and Do" (like Simon Says): kids only move when they clearly hear the instruction.

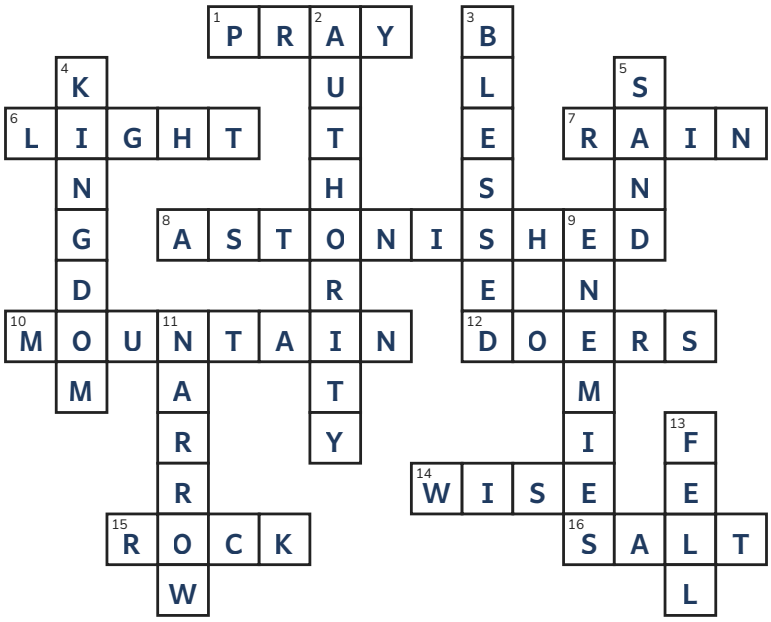
Snack: "House on the Rock": a graham cracker square (house) on a cereal-treat square (rock). Offer a nut-free option. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: The Wise Man Built His House Upon the Rock; This Little Light of Mine; Wonderful Words of Life; Trust and Obey; Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day.

Answer keys

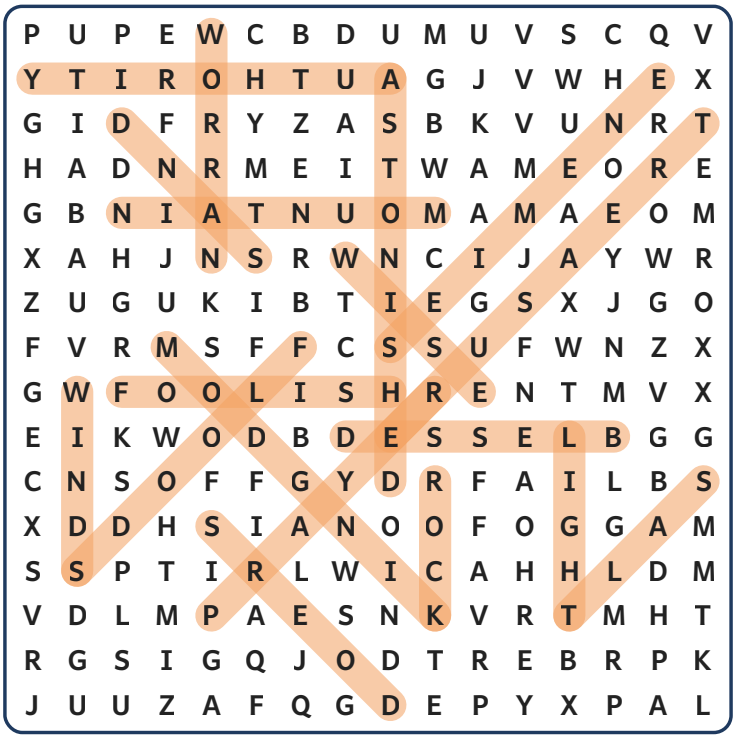
Crossword



Across: 1 PRAY; 6 LIGHT; 7 RAIN; 8 ASTONISHED; 10 MOUNTAIN; 12 DOERS; 14 WISE; 15 ROCK; 16 SALT

Down: 2 AUTHORITY; 3 BLESSED; 4 KINGDOM; 5 SAND; 9 ENEMIES; 11 NARROW; 13 FELL

Word search



Study sheet

Answers come straight from the passages listed. Let students read the text aloud and answer in their own words; guide them back to the verse when needed.

Sources for this lesson

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- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: Why Do You Follow Jesus? (walk-through of Matthew 5-7); Jesus the Teacher (Matthew 7:28-29)
- Scripture: Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Text: Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29

The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:28-29 tells us how the first audience reacted to the Sermon on the Mount: "the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes quoted other rabbis. Jesus said, "But I say to you." He spoke as the One who has the right to tell us how to live.

The sermon is a blueprint for disciples. It starts with character (Matthew 5:3-12). Your attitude is one of the keys to how you will receive the words of Jesus. It moves to influence: salt and light, so that others "may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Then Jesus goes to the heart: anger as well as murder, lust as well as adultery, honesty without oaths, and love for enemies (Matthew 5:21-48).

In chapter 6 Jesus addresses motives. Do you give, pray, and fast to be seen by people or by God (Matthew 6:1-18)? The pride of doing good to be praised by others is still with us. Then He addresses priorities: treasure in heaven, a single focus, freedom from worry, and "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:19-34).

Chapter 7 calls for decisions: how we treat others (Matthew 7:1-12), which road we take (7:13-14), which teachers we trust (7:15-23), and which foundation we build on (7:24-27). Notice that both builders heard the same words and faced the same storm. Storms come to everyone. The only difference was obedience.

Jesus taught by words, by actions, by being close to people, and by stories. But He never taught just to inform. He taught to transform. James says it plainly: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). Following Jesus is not proven by how much we know, but by what we do with what we know.

> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."
>
> **Matthew 7:24 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus is the greatest Teacher. He taught "as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29).
- Jesus teaches us how to live: be salt and light, love others, pray, and seek God first (Matthew 5-7).
- Hearing is not enough. The wise person hears Jesus and does what He says (Matthew 7:24; James 1:22).
- A life built on Jesus' words stands strong when storms come (Matthew 7:25).

Background

- Jesus sat down to teach (Matthew 5:1). In that culture, rabbis normally sat while teaching.
- Many houses in Galilee were built of stone. Dry streambeds could flash flood in a heavy rain, washing away anything built on sand.
- Luke 6:20-49 records a similar sermon, sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain.
- "Authority" (Matthew 7:29): the scribes quoted earlier teachers; Jesus spoke on His own authority ("But I say to you," Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).

Discuss

1. What does it mean that Jesus taught "as one having authority"? How should that change how we read His words?
2. Jesus addresses the heart, not just actions (Matthew 5:21-28). Why does He go deeper than outward rules?
3. Matthew 6 talks about doing good to be seen. Where do you see that temptation today, including on social media?
4. What does "seek first the kingdom of God" look like for a student?
5. Read James 1:22. How can someone deceive themselves by only hearing?

Live it

- Choose one command from Matthew 5-7 and practice it every day this week (for example, Matthew 5:44 or Matthew 7:12).
- Pray the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) slowly each morning, thinking about each line.
- Do one good work quietly this week without telling anyone (Matthew 6:3-4).

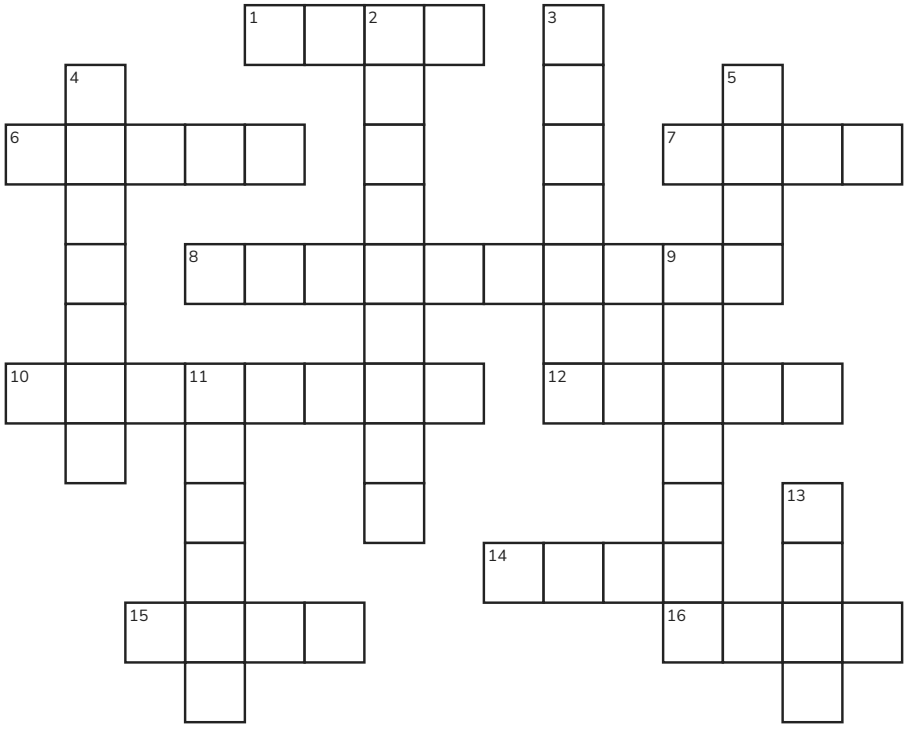
Further reading: "31 Days with Jesus" at The Preacher's Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 14: The Sermon on the Mount (Embracing Jesus' Blueprint for Faith); Day 18: The Parables of Jesus (Lessons for Life); Day 20: Jesus Teaches on Prayer.

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Crossword Puzzle

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Name: _____



Across

- 1. “In this manner, therefore, ____” (Matthew 6:9)
- 6. “You are the ____ of the world” (Matthew 5:14)
- 7. “The ____ descended, the floods came” (Matthew 7:25)
- 8. The people were ____ at His teaching (Matthew 7:28)
- 10. Jesus went up on a ____ and taught (Matthew 5:1)
- 12. “Be ____ of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22)
- 14. Hearing and doing makes you like a ____ man (Matthew 7:24)
- 15. The wise man built on the ____ (Matthew 7:24)
- 16. “You are the ____ of the earth” (Matthew 5:13)

Down

- 2. He taught as one having ____ (Matthew 7:29)
- 3. “____ are the pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8)
- 4. “Seek first the ____ of God” (Matthew 6:33)
- 5. The foolish man built on the ____ (Matthew 7:26)
- 9. “Love your ____” (Matthew 5:44)
- 11. “Enter by the ____ gate” (Matthew 7:13)
- 13. The house on the sand ____ (Matthew 7:27)

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Word Search (Challenge)

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Name: _____

Words go in all eight directions, including backward.

P	U	P	E	W	C	B	D	U	M	U	V	S	C	Q	V
Y	T	I	R	O	H	T	U	A	G	J	V	W	H	E	X
G	I	D	F	R	Y	Z	A	S	B	K	V	U	N	R	T
H	A	D	N	R	M	E	I	T	W	A	M	E	O	R	E
G	B	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	A	M	A	E	O	M
X	A	H	J	N	S	R	W	N	C	I	J	A	Y	W	R
Z	U	G	U	K	I	B	T	I	E	G	S	X	J	G	O
F	V	R	M	S	F	F	C	S	S	U	F	W	N	Z	X
G	W	F	O	O	L	I	S	H	R	E	N	T	M	V	X
E	I	K	W	O	D	B	D	E	S	S	E	L	B	G	G
C	N	S	O	F	F	G	Y	D	R	F	A	I	L	B	S
X	D	D	H	S	I	A	N	O	O	F	O	G	G	A	M
S	S	P	T	I	R	L	W	I	C	A	H	H	L	D	M
V	D	L	M	P	A	E	S	N	K	V	R	T	M	H	T
R	G	S	I	G	Q	J	O	D	T	R	E	B	R	P	K
J	U	U	Z	A	F	Q	G	D	E	P	Y	X	P	A	L

Find these words: ASTONISHED • AUTHORITY • BLESSED • DOERS • ENEMIES • FLOODS • FOOLISH • KINGDOM • LIGHT • MOUNTAIN • NARROW • PRAYER • ROCK • SALT • SAND • TREASURE • WINDS • WISE

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Study Sheet

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders
(Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Name: _____

> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."
>
> **Matthew 7:24 (NKJV)**

Read each passage and answer in your own words.

Matthew 5:3–12

List three of the Beatitudes. Which one describes the kind of person you most want to become?

Matthew 5:13–16

What do salt and light do? How can a Christian student be salt and light at school?

Matthew 5:21–24, 43–48

How does Jesus go deeper than the outward command? What does He require of the heart?

Matthew 6:1–6

What warning does Jesus give about doing good? Who should we be trying to please?

Matthew 6:19–34

What does Jesus say about treasure and worry? What does it mean to seek first the kingdom?

Matthew 7:24–29

What was the only difference between the two builders? What does that teach about obedience?

James 1:22–25

Compare James' mirror illustration with Jesus' builders. What do they both teach?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Discussion and Journal

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Name: _____

For discussion

1. What does it mean that Jesus taught “as one having authority”? How should that change how we read His words?
2. Jesus addresses the heart, not just actions (Matthew 5:21-28). Why does He go deeper than outward rules?
3. Matthew 6 talks about doing good to be seen. Where do you see that temptation today, including on social media?
4. What does “seek first the kingdom of God” look like for a student?
5. Read James 1:22. How can someone deceive themselves by only hearing?

Journal

If someone looked only at your actions this week, what would they think you believe about Jesus?

Pick one teaching from Matthew 5-7 that you have heard but not done. Write a plan to do it this week.

What storms are you facing right now? Is your life built on the rock?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Real-Life Application

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Name: _____

Big idea: Following Jesus means listening to His words and doing what He says.

Choose one or more

- Choose one command from Matthew 5-7 and practice it every day this week (for example, Matthew 5:44 or Matthew 7:12).
- Pray the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) slowly each morning, thinking about each line.
- Do one good work quietly this week without telling anyone (Matthew 6:3-4).

My plan for the next 7 days

Day	What I will do	Done?
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Accountability partner: _____ Check-in date: _____

Prayer

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Day 3: Jesus Shows Me How to Love

Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

Bible story	Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)
Memory verse (NKJV)	"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15)
Takeaway	Following Jesus means loving and serving others the way He loved and served us.
Daily call	Leader: "Serve" Kids: "Like Jesus!"

Objectives

- Study John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27 in context.
- Describe the servant heart Jesus modeled (John 13:14-15; Philippians 2:3-8) and plan a way to serve.
- Memorize John 13:15.
- Write a specific, personal application.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a towel, a basin (bowl), and a pitcher of water
- Copies of today's student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Planning sheet; Pens; Bibles

Teacher preparation

- Read John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching "31 Days with Jesus" devotionals at The Preacher's Pen: Day 25: The Lord's Supper (Remembering Jesus); Day 30: "Do You Love Me?" (Renewed Love and Calling); Day 19: Miracles of Jesus (Trusting God's Provision).
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- Foot washing was a sign of hospitality (Genesis 18:4; 1 Timothy 5:10) and one of the lowliest servant tasks (1 Samuel 25:41).
- Order of events that night (from the class lesson): Passover begins (Luke 22:15-18), the disciples dispute about greatness (Luke 22:24-30), Jesus washes their feet (John 13:1-17), the betrayer is revealed (John 13:21-30), the Lord's Supper is instituted (Matthew 26:26-29), and the new commandment is given (John 13:34-35).
- Jesus' act was an example of humble service, not a new act of worship. The apostles taught the attitude behind it (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-8).
- Jesus loved His disciples "to the end" (John 13:1), even the one who would betray Him.
- The Lord and Teacher took the lowest servant's job and washed dirty feet (John 13:4-5).
- Jesus gave us an example of humble, loving service to follow (John 13:14-15).
- People will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34-35).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Opener	Discussion starter (below).
0:05-0:20	Bible study	Read the passages together and teach the lesson (script below).
0:20-0:30	Discussion	Open discussion; push for Scripture-based answers.
0:30-0:35	Study sheet in pairs	Work through the study questions; note anything to bring back tomorrow.
0:35-0:40	Application and commitment	Students write a specific action on the application page. Prayer.

Discussion starter

Rank these from most wanted to least wanted: team captain, cleaning bathrooms, class president, taking out the trash. Why do we rank them that way?

Bible study

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

John 13 opens with one of the most moving sentences in the Gospels: "Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13:1). Jesus knew the cross was hours away. Yet His focus was not on His own suffering but on teaching and serving His disciples.

The disciples, meanwhile, were arguing about rank and places of honor (Luke 22:24). Foot washing was the job of the lowest servant, and none of the twelve volunteered. So Jesus rose, prepared Himself like a servant, and washed their feet (John 13:4-5). It was genuine loving service, an act of humility, and a courtesy their pride had made them forget. He washed Judas' feet too, overcoming evil with good.

Peter's objection (John 13:6-8) sounds respectful, but good intentions become dangerous when they lead us to refuse the Lord's will. Peter was letting his own reasoning be his guide. Jesus' answer was firm: "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Discipleship means surrendering to the way of humility Jesus came to teach, even when we do not yet understand.

Jesus explained His action: as Teacher and Lord, He had served them, so they ought to serve one another (John 13:13-15). The apostles never taught foot washing as a church ritual or act of worship. They taught what it pictured: lowliness of mind, subjection, and loving service (Philippians 2:3-8; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 5:5). The point is a servant's heart.

This kind of love comes from God. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Real love acts: "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). When you are tempted to think about your place, your rights, or your reputation, picture the Son of God with a towel around His waist, kneeling at the disciples' feet.

Discussion questions

1. Jesus knew the cross was coming, yet He served others. What does that tell you about His love?
2. Peter's intentions were good but he resisted Jesus. How can good intentions lead us away from obedience?
3. Why do you think the apostles taught humility and service instead of a foot washing ritual?
4. Where is the "who is the greatest" attitude strong in your world?
5. What is one "towel and basin" job you could do that no one else wants to do?

Review

- What is the big idea of today's lesson? (Following Jesus means loving and serving others the way He loved and served us.)
- Quote John 13:15.
- Jesus loved His disciples "to the end" (John 13:1), even the one who would betray Him.
- The Lord and Teacher took the lowest servant's job and washed dirty feet (John 13:4-5).
- Jesus gave us an example of humble, loving service to follow (John 13:14-15).
- People will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34-35).

Memory verse activity

Have students write the verse from memory, then discuss its key words and how it connects to today's text.

Craft (Craft Time): Service Plan

Materials: Planning sheet; Pens; Bibles

1. Discuss: Who in our church or community is often overlooked?
2. As a group, plan a real service project within the next month (yard work, meals, cards, helping elderly members).
3. Assign roles, a date, and a contact person. [PLACEHOLDER: youth minister or adult sponsor approval]
4. Close by reading John 13:14-17.

Recreation and snack

Game: Servant Relay: teams pass a towel and a dry bowl down the line, each child naming one way to help someone before passing it. Or "Serve the Team": kids carry cotton balls on a spoon to fill a teammate's cup.

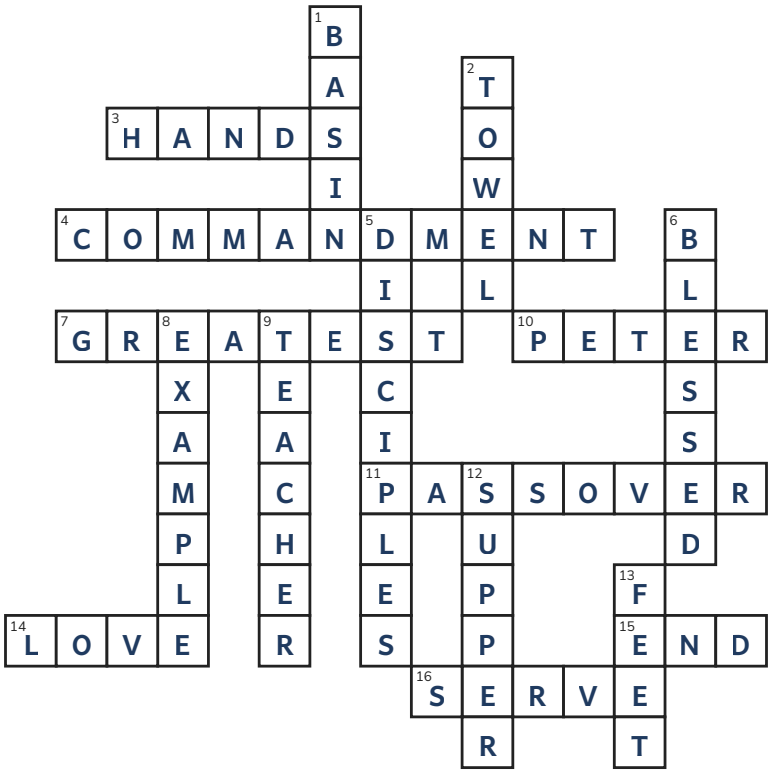
Snack: "Towel rolls": rolled fruit snacks or tortilla roll-ups, with a cup of water. Older classes can serve snack to a younger class today. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: Jesus Loves the Little Children; Oh, How I Love Jesus; Deep and Wide; Footprints of Jesus; Jesus Loves Me.

Answer keys

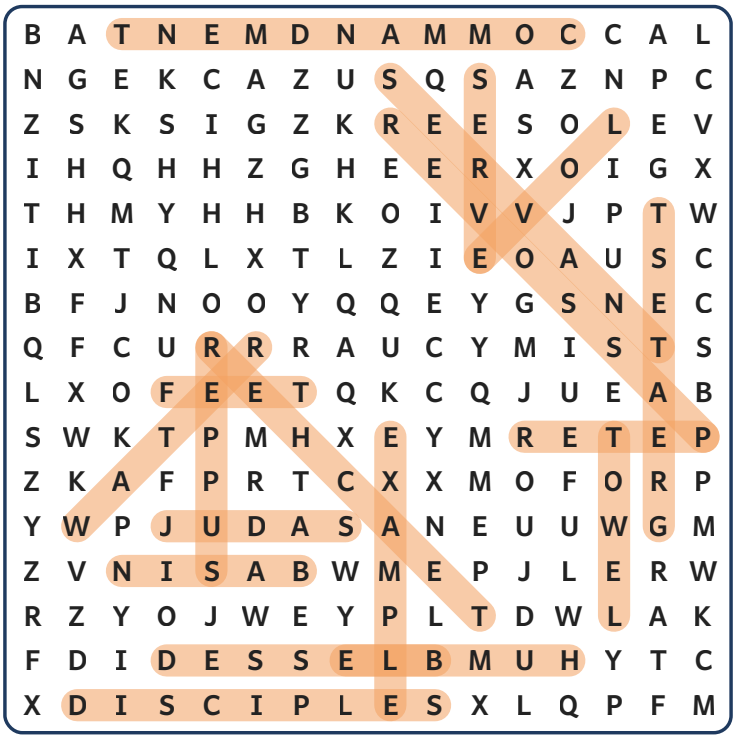
Crossword



Across: 3 HANDS; 4 COMMANDMENT; 7 GREATEST; 10 PETER; 11 PASSOVER; 14 LOVE; 15 END; 16 SERVE

Down: 1 BASIN; 2 TOWEL; 5 DISCIPLES; 6 BLESSED; 8 EXAMPLE; 9 TEACHER; 12 SUPPER; 13 FEET

Word search



Study sheet

Answers come straight from the passages listed. Let students read the text aloud and answer in their own words; guide them back to the verse when needed.

Sources for this lesson

- “31 Days with Jesus” by Christopher Gallagher, The Preacher’s Pen: Day 25: The Lord’s Supper (Remembering Jesus); Day 30: “Do You Love Me?” (Renewed Love and Calling); Day 19: Miracles of Jesus (Trusting God’s Provision) (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet (John 13:1-20, 2016 class lesson); Love As Displayed By God (1 John 4:7-9)
- Scripture: John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Text: John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

John 13 opens with one of the most moving sentences in the Gospels: "Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end" (John 13:1). Jesus knew the cross was hours away. Yet His focus was not on His own suffering but on teaching and serving His disciples.

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> "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."
> **John 13:15 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus loved His disciples "to the end" (John 13:1), even the one who would betray Him.
- The Lord and Teacher took the lowest servant's job and washed dirty feet (John 13:4-5).
- Jesus gave us an example of humble, loving service to follow (John 13:14-15).
- People will know we are His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34-35).

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- Jesus' act was an example of humble service, not a new act of worship. The apostles taught the attitude behind it (Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3-8).

Discuss

1. Jesus knew the cross was coming, yet He served others. What does that tell you about His love?
2. Peter's intentions were good but he resisted Jesus. How can good intentions lead us away from obedience?
3. Why do you think the apostles taught humility and service instead of a foot washing ritual?
4. Where is the "who is the greatest" attitude strong in your world?
5. What is one "towel and basin" job you could do that no one else wants to do?

Live it

- Do one unseen act of service at home every day this week (dishes, laundry, cleaning) without being asked.
- Write a note of encouragement to someone who is often overlooked.
- As a class, plan a service project for the church or community (cards for shut-ins, cleaning, yard work).

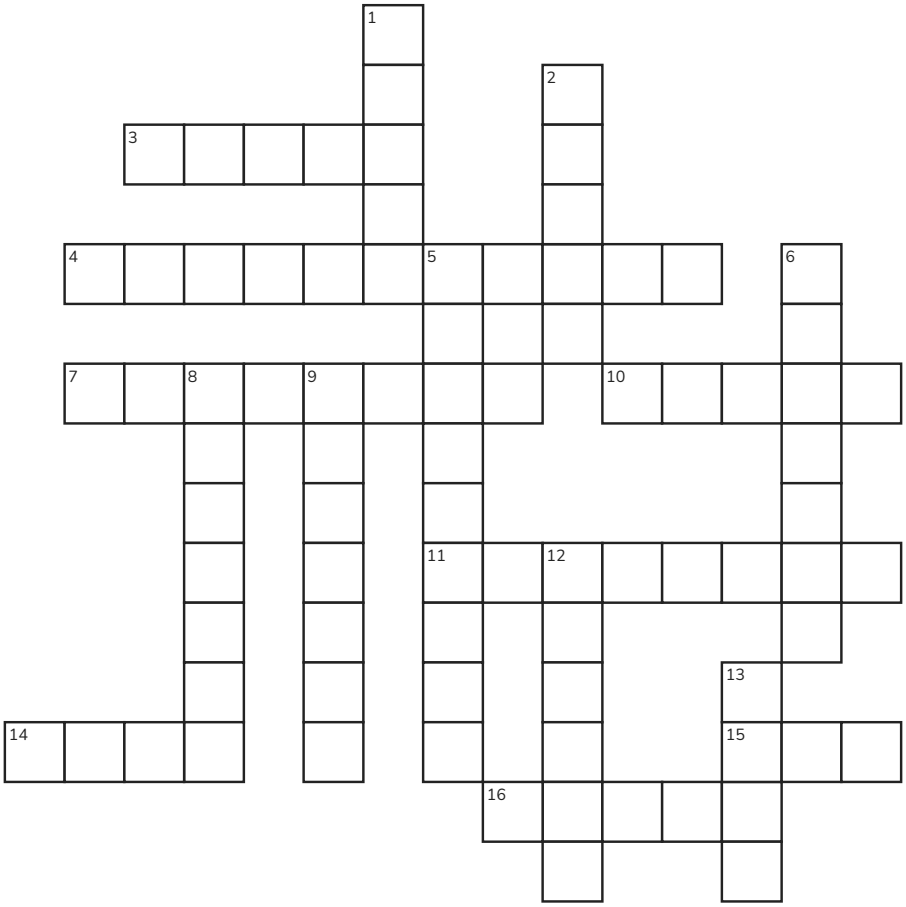
Further reading: "31 Days with Jesus" at The Preacher's Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 25: The Lord's Supper (Remembering Jesus); Day 30: "Do You Love Me?" (Renewed Love and Calling); Day 19: Miracles of Jesus (Trusting God's Provision).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Crossword Puzzle

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Name: _____



Across

- 3. "Not my feet only, but also my ____ and my head!" (John 13:9)
- 4. "A new ____ I give to you" (John 13:34)
- 7. The disciples argued over who was the ____ (Luke 22:24)
- 10. Said, "You shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8)
- 11. The feast that was about to begin (John 13:1)
- 14. "That you ____ one another" (John 13:34)
- 15. He loved them to the ____ (John 13:1)
- 16. He came not to be served, but to ____ (Mark 10:45)

Down

- 1. He poured water into a ____ (John 13:5)
- 2. Jesus girded Himself with a ____ (John 13:4)
- 5. "By this all will know that you are My ____" (John 13:35)
- 6. "____ are you if you do them" (John 13:17)
- 8. "I have given you an ____" (John 13:15)
- 9. "You call Me ____ and Lord" (John 13:13)
- 12. Jesus rose from ____ (John 13:4)
- 13. He began to wash the disciples' ____ (John 13:5)

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Word Search (Challenge)

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Name: _____

Words go in all eight directions, including backward.

B	A	T	N	E	M	D	N	A	M	M	O	C	C	A	L
N	G	E	K	C	A	Z	U	S	Q	S	A	Z	N	P	C
Z	S	K	S	I	G	Z	K	R	E	E	S	O	L	E	V
I	H	Q	H	H	Z	G	H	E	E	R	X	O	I	G	X
T	H	M	Y	H	H	B	K	O	I	V	V	J	P	T	W
I	X	T	Q	L	X	T	L	Z	I	E	O	A	U	S	C
B	F	J	N	O	O	Y	Q	Q	E	Y	G	S	N	E	C
Q	F	C	U	R	R	R	A	U	C	Y	M	I	S	T	S
L	X	O	F	E	E	T	Q	K	C	Q	J	U	E	A	B
S	W	K	T	P	M	H	X	E	Y	M	R	E	T	E	P
Z	K	A	F	P	R	T	C	X	X	M	O	F	O	R	P
Y	W	P	J	U	D	A	S	A	N	E	U	U	W	G	M
Z	V	N	I	S	A	B	W	M	E	P	J	L	E	R	W
R	Z	Y	O	J	W	E	Y	P	L	T	D	W	L	A	K
F	D	I	D	E	S	S	E	L	B	M	U	H	Y	T	C
X	D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S	X	L	Q	P	F	M

Find these words: BASIN • BLESSED • COMMANDMENT • DISCIPLES • EXAMPLE • FEET • GREATEST • HUMBLE • JUDAS • LOVE • PASSOVER • PETER • SERVANT • SERVE • SUPPER • TEACHER • TOWEL • WATER

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Study Sheet

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Name: _____

"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."
John 13:15 (NKJV)

Read each passage and answer in your own words.

John 13:1-3

What did Jesus know as He came to this supper? What does verse 1 say about His love?

Luke 22:24-27

What were the disciples arguing about? How does Jesus define greatness?

John 13:4-5

List every action Jesus took. What does each one show about Him?

John 13:6-10

Why did Peter object? Why was Jesus' answer so serious?

John 13:12-17

What lesson did Jesus draw from His action? Where is the blessing found?

Philippians 2:3-8

How does Paul describe the mind of Christ? How does the foot washing picture this?

1 John 4:7-11

Where does real love come from? How did God show His love?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Discussion and Journal

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Name: _____

For discussion

1. Jesus knew the cross was coming, yet He served others. What does that tell you about His love?
2. Peter's intentions were good but he resisted Jesus. How can good intentions lead us away from obedience?
3. Why do you think the apostles taught humility and service instead of a foot washing ritual?
4. Where is the "who is the greatest" attitude strong in your world?
5. What is one "towel and basin" job you could do that no one else wants to do?

Journal

Who is the hardest person for you to serve? What would it look like to "wash their feet" this week?

When have you been more concerned about your place or reputation than about serving? What will you do differently?

Write a prayer asking God to give you a servant's heart like Jesus.

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 3 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Real-Life Application

Jesus Shows Me How to Love: Serve Like Jesus! | Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet (John 13:1-17, 34-35; Luke 22:24-27)

Name: _____

Big idea: Following Jesus means loving and serving others the way He loved and served us.

Choose one or more

- Do one unseen act of service at home every day this week (dishes, laundry, cleaning) without being asked.
- Write a note of encouragement to someone who is often overlooked.
- As a class, plan a service project for the church or community (cards for shut-ins, cleaning, yard work).

My plan for the next 7 days

Day	What I will do	Done?
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Accountability partner: _____ Check-in date: _____

Prayer

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Day 4: Jesus Saves Me

He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb

Bible story	The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)
Memory verse (NKJV)	“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” (Matthew 28:6)
Takeaway	Jesus died for my sins, was buried, and rose again, so I can be saved and live with Him.
Daily call	Leader: “He is not here” Kids: “He is risen!”

Objectives

- Study Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30 in context.
- Explain why Jesus died and how His death, burial, and resurrection connect to baptism (Romans 6:3-4).
- Memorize Matthew 28:6.
- Write a specific, personal application.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a large gray ball or paper “stone” and an empty box
- Copies of today’s student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Long paper strip; Markers; Bibles

Teacher preparation

- Read Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching “31 Days with Jesus” devotionals at The Preacher’s Pen: Day 26: The Crucifixion (The Ultimate Sacrifice); Day 27: The Guarded Tomb (Waiting in Hope); Day 28: The Resurrection (Risen Indeed).
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- Crucifixion was reserved for slaves, rebels, and the worst criminals. Roman citizens were normally exempt.
- The sign above the cross was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19:20).
- The tomb was cut out of rock and sealed with a large stone. The guard and the seal made tampering a serious crime (Matthew 27:62-66).
- Jesus was in the tomb parts of three days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday), rising "the third day" (1 Corinthians 15:4).
- Jesus, the sinless Son of God, willingly died on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb that was sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:57-66).
- On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, just as He said (Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- Because Jesus lives, we have forgiveness, hope, and good news to tell (Matthew 28:7).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Opener	Discussion starter (below).
0:05-0:20	Bible study	Read the passages together and teach the lesson (script below).
0:20-0:30	Discussion	Open discussion; push for Scripture-based answers.
0:30-0:35	Study sheet in pairs	Work through the study questions; note anything to bring back tomorrow.
0:35-0:40	Application and commitment	Students write a specific action on the application page. Prayer.

Discussion starter

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18 aloud. Why would anyone call the message of the cross foolishness? Why do Christians call it power?

Bible study

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

What does the cross of Christ mean to you? Many of us have heard about it so often that it can lose its effect. Paul warned that the cross could be "made of no effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17). "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Roman crucifixion was a slave's punishment. The first-century historian Josephus called it the most wretched of deaths. Victims were usually scourged, made to carry the crossbeam, nailed to it, and left exposed, with their crime posted above their heads. Jesus endured all of this: Barabbas was released in His place, and Jesus was stripped, crowned with thorns, mocked, spit upon, struck, and nailed to the cross under the charge, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:26-37; Isaiah 50:6).

Why? Luke 24 shows two disciples on the road to Emmaus who needed their eyes opened to this. The Who: God the Father gave the Son (John 3:16). The What: Jesus is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2), the Lamb who takes away sin (John 1:29), our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). The When: at the appointed time, fulfilling Scripture (Matthew 26:18; John 19:30). The Why: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and

God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The burial matters too. Jesus was laid in a rich man’s new tomb, as Isaiah 53:9 foretold, sealed with a stone and guarded by soldiers (Matthew 27:57-66). Paul connects His burial to ours: “we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

Then came the first day of the week: an earthquake, an angel, a rolled-away stone, terrified guards, and the announcement, “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said” (Matthew 28:6). The resurrection is the foundation of our faith. It declares Jesus to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4) and shows that sin and death do not have the final word. The question is not only whether Jesus rose, but whether you have died to sin and been raised with Him.

> **Teacher note for today**
>
> Students may ask about baptism. Answer from Scripture (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 2:38) and encourage them to talk with their parents and with [PLACEHOLDER: minister or elder contact name and phone].

Discussion questions

1. Has the cross ever “lost its effect” on you? How can we keep from becoming hard-hearted about it?
2. Walk through the Who, What, When, How, and Why of the cross. Which one means the most to you?
3. Why is the resurrection the foundation of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14-17)?
4. How does Romans 6:3-4 connect Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to baptism?
5. Jesus died for sinners (Romans 5:8). How should that change the way we treat people?

Review

- What is the big idea of today’s lesson? (Jesus died for my sins, was buried, and rose again, so I can be saved and live with Him.)
- Quote Matthew 28:6.
- Jesus, the sinless Son of God, willingly died on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb that was sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:57-66).
- On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, just as He said (Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- Because Jesus lives, we have forgiveness, hope, and good news to tell (Matthew 28:7).

Memory verse activity

Have students write the verse from memory, then discuss its key words and how it connects to today’s text.

Craft (Craft Time): Passion Week Timeline

Materials: Long paper strip; Markers; Bibles

1. As a group, build a timeline from the Lord’s Supper to the resurrection using Matthew 26-28.
2. Add references for each event and one prophecy fulfilled (Isaiah 53).
3. Mark where Romans 6:3-4 connects to death, burial, and resurrection.
4. Post it in the classroom for Day 5.

Recreation and snack

Game: Roll the Stone: teams roll a large ball (the stone) along a course to the finish. Or “He Is Risen!” freeze tag: tagged players crouch until a teammate taps them and shouts, “He is risen!”

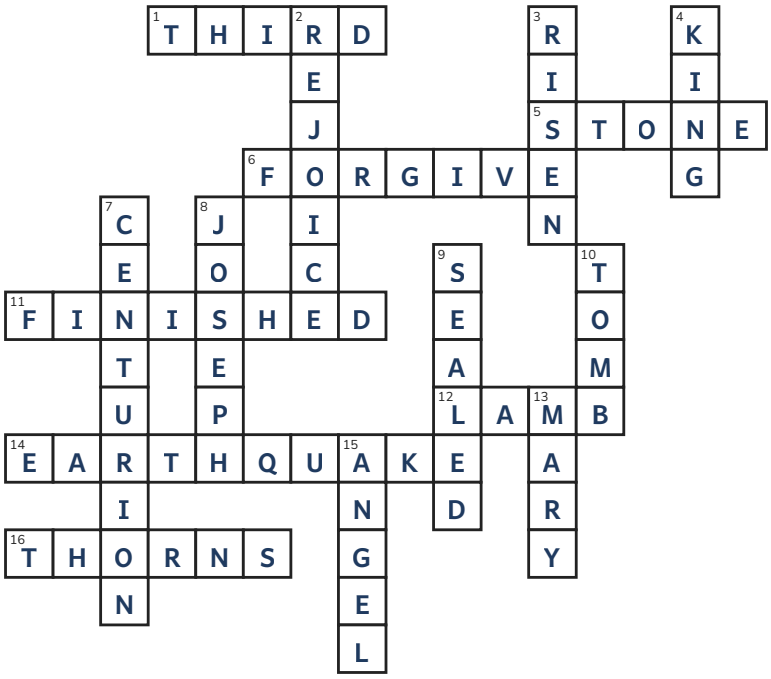
Snack: “Empty tomb”: half a mini pita or a round roll (the tomb) with a grape or round cracker “stone” rolled beside it. Open the pita to show it is empty. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: Low in the Grave He Lay (Up from the Grave He Arose); Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross; Nothing but the Blood; Jesus Loves Me; He Is Lord.

Answer keys

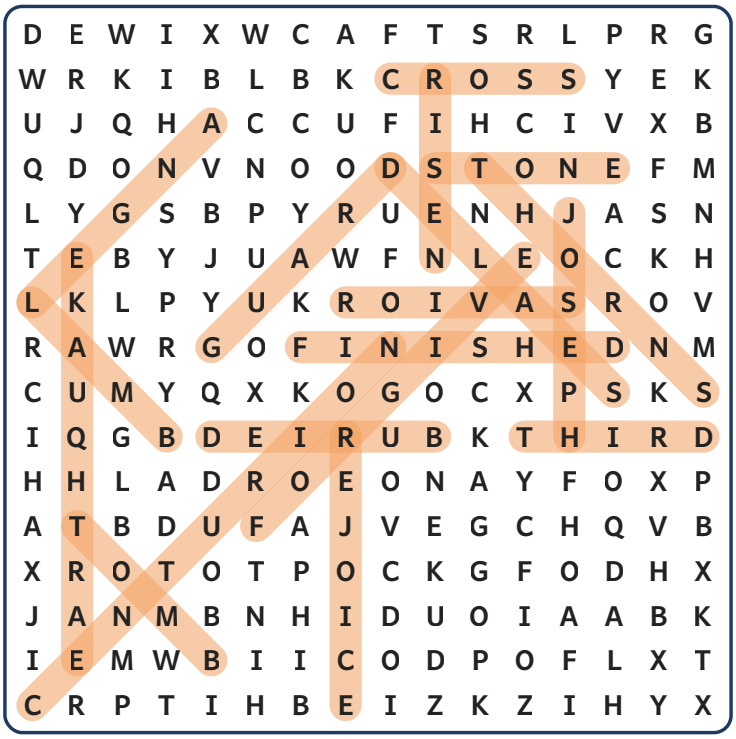
Crossword



Across: 1 THIRD; 5 STONE; 6 FORGIVE; 11 FINISHED; 12 LAMB; 14 EARTHQUAKE; 16 THORNS

Down: 2 REJOICE; 3 RISEN; 4 KING; 7 CENTURION; 8 JOSEPH; 9 SEALED; 10 TOMB; 13 MARY; 15 ANGEL

Word search



Study sheet

Answers come straight from the passages listed. Let students read the text aloud and answer in their own words; guide them back to the verse when needed.

Sources for this lesson

- "31 Days with Jesus" by Christopher Gallagher, The Preacher's Pen: Day 26: The Crucifixion (The Ultimate Sacrifice); Day 27: The Guarded Tomb (Waiting in Hope); Day 28: The Resurrection (Risen Indeed) (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: A Slave's Punishment for a King (Matthew 27:54); Jesus' Burial and Ours (Matthew 27:57-66; Romans 6:3-11); Opening Our Eyes to Jesus (Luke 24:13-32); Love As Displayed By God (Romans 5:8)
- Scripture: Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Text: Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30

The Cross and the Empty Tomb

What does the cross of Christ mean to you? Many of us have heard about it so often that it can lose its effect. Paul warned that the cross could be "made of no effect" (1 Corinthians 1:17). "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Roman crucifixion was a slave's punishment. The first-century historian Josephus called it the most wretched of deaths. Victims were usually scourged, made to carry the crossbeam, nailed to it, and left exposed, with their crime posted above their heads. Jesus endured all of this: Barabbas was released in His place, and Jesus was stripped, crowned with thorns, mocked, spit upon, struck, and nailed to the cross under the charge, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:26-37; Isaiah 50:6).

Why? Luke 24 shows two disciples on the road to Emmaus who needed their eyes opened to this. The Who: God the Father gave the Son (John 3:16). The What: Jesus is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2), the Lamb who takes away sin (John 1:29), our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). The When: at the appointed time, fulfilling Scripture (Matthew 26:18; John 19:30). The Why: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The burial matters too. Jesus was laid in a rich man's new tomb, as Isaiah 53:9 foretold, sealed with a stone and guarded by soldiers (Matthew 27:57-66). Paul connects His burial to ours: "we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Then came the first day of the week: an earthquake, an angel, a rolled-away stone, terrified guards, and the announcement, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said" (Matthew 28:6). The resurrection is the foundation of our faith. It declares Jesus to be the Son of God with power (Romans 1:4) and shows that sin and death do not have the final word. The question is not only whether Jesus rose, but whether you have died to sin and been raised with Him.

> "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."
>
> **Matthew 28:6 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus, the sinless Son of God, willingly died on the cross for our sins (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Jesus was buried in a borrowed tomb that was sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:57-66).
- On the third day Jesus rose from the dead, just as He said (Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
- Because Jesus lives, we have forgiveness, hope, and good news to tell (Matthew 28:7).

Background

- Crucifixion was reserved for slaves, rebels, and the worst criminals. Roman citizens were normally exempt.
- The sign above the cross was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (John 19:20).
- The tomb was cut out of rock and sealed with a large stone. The guard and the seal made tampering a serious crime (Matthew 27:62-66).
- Jesus was in the tomb parts of three days (Friday, Saturday, Sunday), rising “the third day” (1 Corinthians 15:4).

Discuss

1. Has the cross ever “lost its effect” on you? How can we keep from becoming hard-hearted about it?
2. Walk through the Who, What, When, How, and Why of the cross. Which one means the most to you?
3. Why is the resurrection the foundation of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14-17)?
4. How does Romans 6:3-4 connect Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to baptism?
5. Jesus died for sinners (Romans 5:8). How should that change the way we treat people?

Live it

- Read one Gospel account of the crucifixion and resurrection this week (Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, or John 18-20).
- When you take the Lord’s Supper this Sunday, think about the Who, What, When, How, and Why of the cross.
- If you have questions about obeying the gospel, talk with your parents, a teacher, or one of the preachers or elders this week.

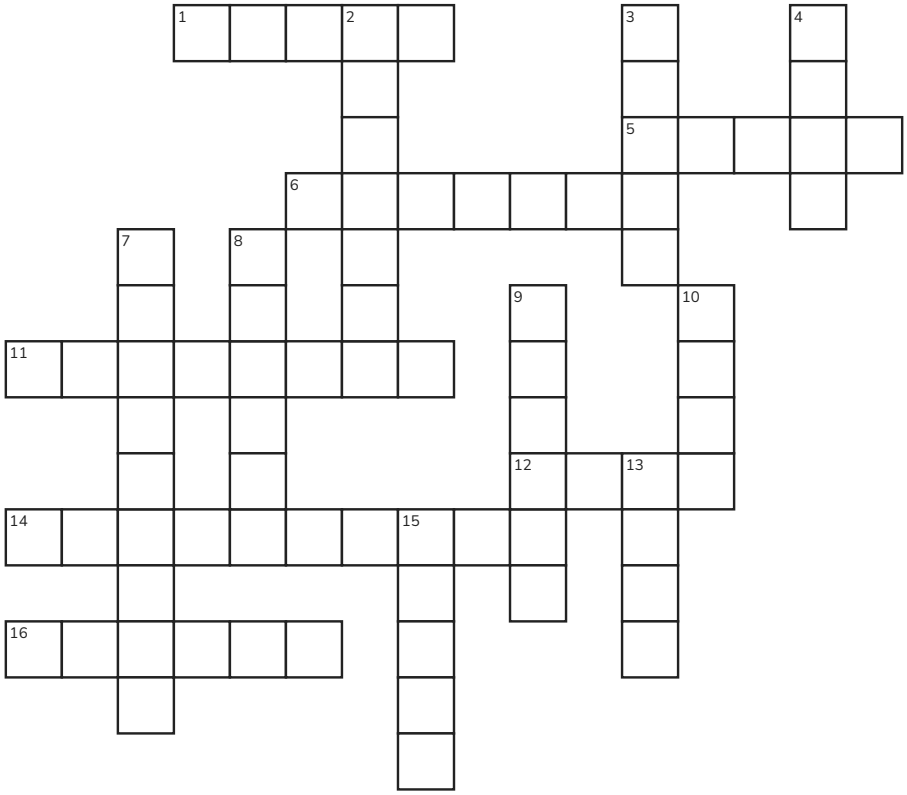
Further reading: “31 Days with Jesus” at The Preacher’s Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 26: The Crucifixion (The Ultimate Sacrifice); Day 27: The Guarded Tomb (Waiting in Hope); Day 28: The Resurrection (Risen Indeed).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Crossword Puzzle

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Name: _____



Across

- 1. He rose again the ____ day (1 Corinthians 15:4)
- 5. A large ____ was rolled against the door (Matthew 27:60)
- 6. “Father, ____ them” (Luke 23:34)
- 11. “It is ____!” (John 19:30)
- 12. “Behold! The ____ of God” (John 1:29)
- 14. There was a great ____ (Matthew 28:2)
- 16. The soldiers put a crown of ____ on His head (Matthew 27:29)

Down

- 2. Jesus met the women and said this (Matthew 28:9)
- 3. “He is not here; for He is ____” (Matthew 28:6)
- 4. “This is Jesus the ____ of the Jews” (Matthew 27:37)
- 7. He said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54)
- 8. Rich man of Arimathea who gave his tomb (Matthew 27:57)
- 9. They ____ the stone and set a guard (Matthew 27:66)
- 10. Jesus was laid in a new ____ (Matthew 27:60)
- 13. ____ Magdalene came to see the tomb (Matthew 28:1)
- 15. He rolled back the stone and sat on it (Matthew 28:2)

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Word Search (Challenge)

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Name: _____

Words go in all eight directions, including backward.

D	E	W	I	X	W	C	A	F	T	S	R	L	P	R	G
W	R	K	I	B	L	B	K	C	R	O	S	S	Y	E	K
U	J	Q	H	A	C	C	U	F	I	H	C	I	V	X	B
Q	D	O	N	V	N	O	O	D	S	T	O	N	E	F	M
L	Y	G	S	B	P	Y	R	U	E	N	H	J	A	S	N
T	E	B	Y	J	U	A	W	F	N	L	E	O	C	K	H
L	K	L	P	Y	U	K	R	O	I	V	A	S	R	O	V
R	A	W	R	G	O	F	I	N	I	S	H	E	D	N	M
C	U	M	Y	Q	X	K	O	G	O	C	X	P	S	K	S
I	Q	G	B	D	E	I	R	U	B	K	T	H	I	R	D
H	H	L	A	D	R	O	E	O	N	A	Y	F	O	X	P
A	T	B	D	U	F	A	J	V	E	G	C	H	Q	V	B
X	R	O	T	O	T	P	O	C	K	G	F	O	D	H	X
J	A	N	M	B	N	H	I	D	U	O	I	A	A	B	K
I	E	M	W	B	I	I	C	O	D	P	O	F	L	X	T
C	R	P	T	I	H	B	E	I	Z	K	Z	I	H	Y	X

Find these words: ANGEL • BURIED • CENTURION • CROSS • EARTHQUAKE • FINISHED • FORGIVE • GUARD • JOSEPH • LAMB • REJOICE • RISEN • SAVIOR • SEALED • STONE • THIRD • THORNS • TOMB

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Study Sheet

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Name: _____

> "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."
>
> **Matthew 28:6 (NKJV)**

Read each passage and answer in your own words.

Isaiah 53:4–9

List the details Isaiah gave hundreds of years before the cross. Which ones were fulfilled in Matthew 27?

Matthew 27:26–37

List the things Jesus suffered. Why would the King of kings accept a slave's punishment?

Luke 23:33–46

What did Jesus say from the cross? What do His words teach us?

Matthew 27:57–66

Who buried Jesus? What steps did the leaders take to secure the tomb, and why?

Matthew 28:1–10

Describe the scene at the tomb. What did the angel say and command?

Romans 5:6–8; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Why did Jesus die? What did He take, and what did He give?

Romans 6:3–11

How is baptism connected to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection? What happens in baptism according to Paul?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Discussion and Journal

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Name: _____

For discussion

1. Has the cross ever "lost its effect" on you? How can we keep from becoming hard-hearted about it?
2. Walk through the Who, What, When, How, and Why of the cross. Which one means the most to you?
3. Why is the resurrection the foundation of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14-17)?
4. How does Romans 6:3-4 connect Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection to baptism?
5. Jesus died for sinners (Romans 5:8). How should that change the way we treat people?

Journal

Write a letter to Jesus thanking Him for the cross. Be specific about what His sacrifice means to you.

Have you become hard-hearted about the cross? What will help you remember it with fresh eyes (consider the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)?

Because Jesus is alive, what fear or worry can you hand over to Him?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 4 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Real-Life Application

Jesus Saves Me: He Is Risen! | The Cross and the Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:27-28:10; Luke 23:33-46; John 19:30)

Name: _____

Big idea: Jesus died for my sins, was buried, and rose again, so I can be saved and live with Him.

Choose one or more

- Read one Gospel account of the crucifixion and resurrection this week (Matthew 26-28, Mark 14-16, Luke 22-24, or John 18-20).
- When you take the Lord's Supper this Sunday, think about the Who, What, When, How, and Why of the cross.
- If you have questions about obeying the gospel, talk with your parents, a teacher, or one of the preachers or elders this week.

My plan for the next 7 days

Day	What I will do	Done?
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Accountability partner: _____ Check-in date: _____

Prayer

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Day 5: Jesus Sends Me

Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost

Bible story	The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)
Memory verse (NKJV)	And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16)
Takeaway	Jesus sends His followers to tell the good news, and everyone who hears can obey it the way people did in Acts 2.
Daily call	Leader: “Go” Kids: “And tell!”

Objectives

- Study Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41 in context.
- Walk through the Acts 2 response to the gospel using Scripture (hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized).
- Memorize Mark 16:15-16.
- Write a specific, personal application.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a globe or world map
- Copies of today’s student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Bibles; Sticky tabs; Study sheet

Teacher preparation

- Read Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching “31 Days with Jesus” devotionals at The Preacher’s Pen: Day 31: The Ascension (Empowered to Go); Day 29: Breakfast with Jesus (Restoration and Purpose); Conclusion: The Journey Continues.
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- Pentecost ("fiftieth") was a Jewish feast held fifty days after Passover. Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-11).
- Jesus was seen for forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3), so Pentecost came about ten days after the ascension.
- "Remission" (Acts 2:38) means forgiveness, the sending away of sins.
- Conversions in Acts include hearing the gospel and being baptized (for example Acts 8:12, 35-38; 16:30-34; 22:16).
- Before He went back to heaven, Jesus sent His followers into all the world with the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).
- Jesus ascended to heaven and will come again (Acts 1:9-11).
- On Pentecost people heard the gospel, believed, repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-41).
- Every follower of Jesus has good news to share and a life of faithfulness to live (Acts 1:8; Revelation 2:10).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Opener	Discussion starter (below).
0:05-0:20	Bible study	Read the passages together and teach the lesson (script below).
0:20-0:30	Discussion	Open discussion; push for Scripture-based answers.
0:30-0:35	Study sheet in pairs	Work through the study questions; note anything to bring back tomorrow.
0:35-0:40	Application and commitment	Students write a specific action on the application page. Prayer.

Discussion starter

If you could send one message to every person on earth, what would it say? Jesus actually gave His followers that job.

Bible study

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

Jesus did not leave His followers with a nice memory. He left them with a mission. "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark records the same charge: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:15-16).

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus ascended (Acts 1:3, 9). The ascension was not the end of His work but the beginning of theirs. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me" (Acts 1:8). The question from the two men in white still fits: "why do you stand gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11). There was work to do, and Jesus will return.

Acts 2 shows the Great Commission carried out for the first time. Peter preached Jesus crucified and raised (Acts 2:22-36). The crowd heard, believed, and were cut to the heart. Their question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37), received an inspired answer: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). About three thousand obeyed (Acts 2:41).

Jesus Himself taught every step of this response: hearing (Matthew 7:24; Romans 10:17), believing (John 8:24; Mark 16:16), repenting (Luke 13:3; Luke 24:47), confessing (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). Paul does not describe baptism as a symbol of something that already happened; he describes it as the point where we are buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16). Then Jesus calls us to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10).

Following Jesus always ends in going for Jesus. You do not need a pulpit to be a witness. Philip simply said, "Come and see" (John 1:46). The journey does not end at VBS. Keep seeking Jesus daily, obey Him fully, and share Him with the people He places in your life.

Presenting the gospel response

Step	What it means	Scripture
Hear	Listen to and learn God's word about Jesus	Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24
Believe	Trust that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God	John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6
Repent	Turn away from sin and turn to God	Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3
Confess	Say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord	Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32
Be baptized	Be buried with Christ in water for the remission of sins	Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16
Live faithfully	Keep following Jesus every day	Acts 2:42; Revelation 2:10

Guidance for teachers

- Teach these steps straight from the open Bible (Acts 2:36-41), as the people on Pentecost obeyed.
- Do not lead a "sinner's prayer." The Bible's answer to "What shall we do?" is Acts 2:38.
- If a student expresses a desire to be baptized, affirm them, pray with them, and connect them with their parents and with [PLACEHOLDER: minister or elder contact]. Never pressure a child.
- Record any questions or interest on the follow-up card for the VBS director.

Discussion questions

1. Why do you think Jesus gave His followers a mission instead of just a memory?
2. Trace each step in Acts 2: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized. Where is each one taught by Jesus?
3. What does Romans 6:3-4 teach happens in baptism?
4. What would "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth" look like for you?
5. If a friend asked you, "What shall I do?" could you open your Bible and show them?

Review

- What is the big idea of today's lesson? (Jesus sends His followers to tell the good news, and everyone who hears can obey it the way people did in Acts 2.)

- Quote Mark 16:15-16.
- Before He went back to heaven, Jesus sent His followers into all the world with the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).
- Jesus ascended to heaven and will come again (Acts 1:9-11).
- On Pentecost people heard the gospel, believed, repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-41).
- Every follower of Jesus has good news to share and a life of faithfulness to live (Acts 1:8; Revelation 2:10).

Memory verse activity

Have students write the verse from memory, then discuss its key words and how it connects to today's text.

Craft (Craft Time): Open Bible Practice

Materials: Bibles; Sticky tabs; Study sheet

1. Tab these passages in your Bible: Romans 10:17; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16; Revelation 2:10.
2. In pairs, practice walking a friend through them.
3. Discuss how to answer common questions with Scripture and gentleness (1 Peter 3:15).
4. Commit to one conversation this month.

Recreation and snack

Game: Go and Tell Relay: each child runs to the far end, picks up a card with one word of the memory verse, and "tells" it to the next runner. When finished, the team says the verse in order. For little ones, play "Pass the Good News" by passing a ball while singing.

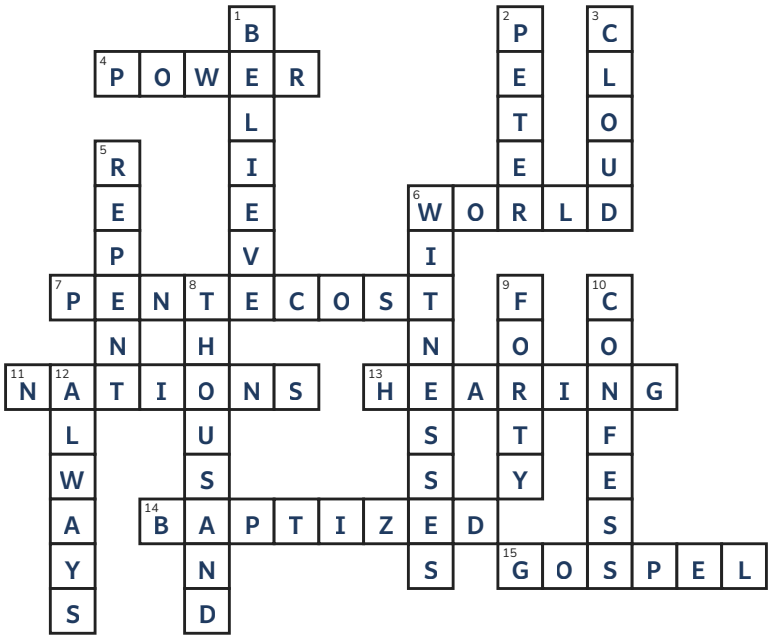
Snack: "All the World" snack: round crackers or cookies with blue and green icing (globes), or a nut-free "Go and Tell" trail mix. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: Go Ye Into All the World; I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; He Is Lord; Jesus Loves the Little Children; Where He Leads Me.

Answer keys

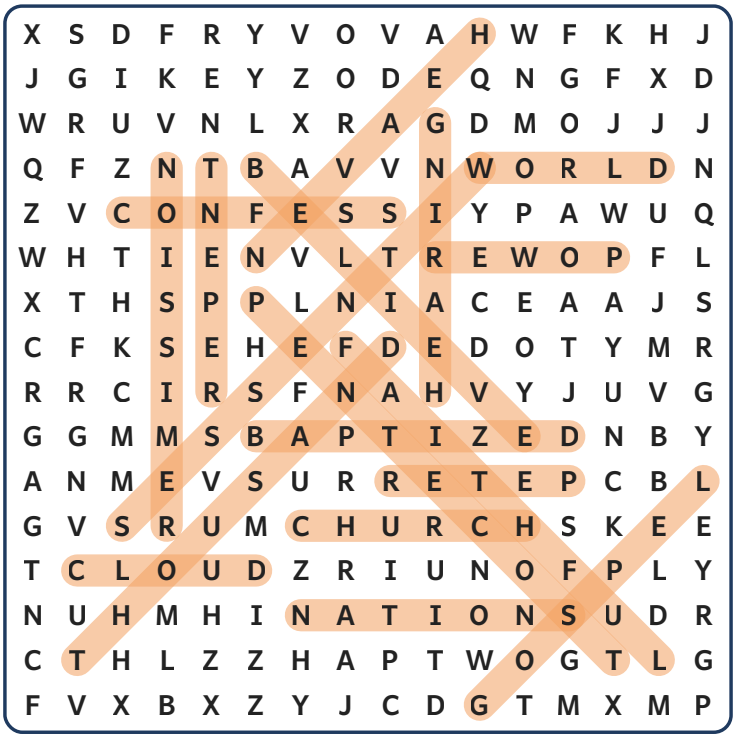
Crossword



Across: 4 POWER; 6 WORLD; 7 PENTECOST; 11 NATIONS; 13 HEARING; 14 BAPTIZED; 15 GOSPEL

Down: 1 BELIEVE; 2 PETER; 3 CLOUD; 5 REPENT; 6 WITNESSES; 8 THOUSAND; 9 FORTY; 10 CONFESS; 12 ALWAYS

Word search



Study sheet

Answers come straight from the passages listed. Let students read the text aloud and answer in their own words; guide them back to the verse when needed.

Sources for this lesson

- “31 Days with Jesus” by Christopher Gallagher, The Preacher’s Pen: Day 31: The Ascension (Empowered to Go); Day 29: Breakfast with Jesus (Restoration and Purpose); Conclusion: The Journey Continues (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: Jesus the Teacher (Jesus taught about hearing, believing, repenting, confessing, baptism, and being faithful); Jesus’ Burial and Ours (Romans 6:3-11)
- Scripture: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Text: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41

The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost

Jesus did not leave His followers with a nice memory. He left them with a mission. “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Mark records the same charge: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved” (Mark 16:15-16).

Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus ascended (Acts 1:3, 9). The ascension was not the end of His work but the beginning of theirs. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me” (Acts 1:8). The question from the two men in white still fits: “why do you stand gazing up into heaven?” (Acts 1:11). There was work to do, and Jesus will return.

Acts 2 shows the Great Commission carried out for the first time. Peter preached Jesus crucified and raised (Acts 2:22-36). The crowd heard, believed, and were cut to the heart. Their question, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37), received an inspired answer: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). About three thousand obeyed (Acts 2:41).

Jesus Himself taught every step of this response: hearing (Matthew 7:24; Romans 10:17), believing (John 8:24; Mark 16:16), repenting (Luke 13:3; Luke 24:47), confessing (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10), and being baptized (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). Paul does not describe baptism as a symbol of something that already happened; he describes it as the point where we are buried with Christ and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16). Then Jesus calls us to be faithful until death (Revelation 2:10).

Following Jesus always ends in going for Jesus. You do not need a pulpit to be a witness. Philip simply said, “Come and see” (John 1:46). The journey does not end at VBS. Keep seeking Jesus daily, obey Him fully, and share Him with the people He places in your life.

> And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
>
> **Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Before He went back to heaven, Jesus sent His followers into all the world with the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15).
- Jesus ascended to heaven and will come again (Acts 1:9-11).
- On Pentecost people heard the gospel, believed, repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:36-41).

- Every follower of Jesus has good news to share and a life of faithfulness to live (Acts 1:8; Revelation 2:10).

Background

- Pentecost ("fiftieth") was a Jewish feast held fifty days after Passover. Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-11).
- Jesus was seen for forty days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3), so Pentecost came about ten days after the ascension.
- "Remission" (Acts 2:38) means forgiveness, the sending away of sins.
- Conversions in Acts include hearing the gospel and being baptized (for example Acts 8:12, 35-38; 16:30-34; 22:16).

The response to the gospel (Acts 2:36–41)

Step	What it means	Scripture
Hear	Listen to and learn God's word about Jesus	Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24
Believe	Trust that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God	John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6
Repent	Turn away from sin and turn to God	Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3
Confess	Say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord	Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32
Be baptized	Be buried with Christ in water for the remission of sins	Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16
Live faithfully	Keep following Jesus every day	Acts 2:42; Revelation 2:10

Discuss

1. Why do you think Jesus gave His followers a mission instead of just a memory?
2. Trace each step in Acts 2: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized. Where is each one taught by Jesus?
3. What does Romans 6:3-4 teach happens in baptism?
4. What would "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth" look like for you?
5. If a friend asked you, "What shall I do?" could you open your Bible and show them?

Live it

- Practice explaining Acts 2:36-41 from your own Bible to a parent or friend.
- Invite someone to worship with you this Sunday.
- Choose one way to keep following Jesus after VBS: daily Bible reading, faithful attendance, or serving at church.

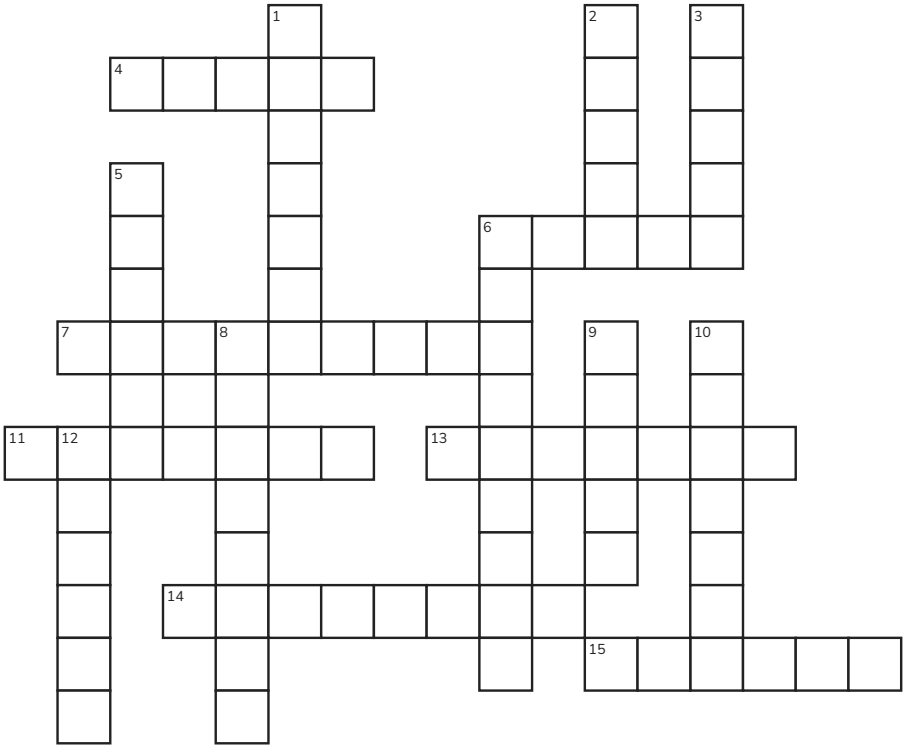
Further reading: "31 Days with Jesus" at The Preacher's Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 31: The Ascension (Empowered to Go); Day 29: Breakfast with Jesus (Restoration and Purpose); Conclusion: The Journey Continues.

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Crossword Puzzle

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Name: _____



Across

- 4. “You shall receive ____” (Acts 1:8)
- 6. “Go into all the ____” (Mark 16:15)
- 7. The day the apostles first preached the gospel in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1)
- 11. “Make disciples of all the ____” (Matthew 28:19)
- 13. “Faith comes by ____” (Romans 10:17)
- 14. “He who believes and is ____ will be saved” (Mark 16:16)
- 15. “Preach the ____ to every creature” (Mark 16:15)

Down

- 1. “And ____ in your heart that God has raised Him” (Romans 10:9)
- 2. He preached on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14)
- 3. A ____ received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9)
- 5. “____, and let every one of you be baptized” (Acts 2:38)
- 6. “You shall be ____ to Me” (Acts 1:8)
- 8. About three ____ souls were added (Acts 2:41)
- 9. He was seen by them during ____ days (Acts 1:3)
- 10. “If you ____ with your mouth the Lord Jesus” (Romans 10:9)
- 12. “I am with you ____” (Matthew 28:20)

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Word Search (Challenge)

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Name: _____

Words go in all eight directions, including backward.

X	S	D	F	R	Y	V	O	V	A	H	W	F	K	H	J
J	G	I	K	E	Y	Z	O	D	E	Q	N	G	F	X	D
W	R	U	V	N	L	X	R	A	G	D	M	O	J	J	J
Q	F	Z	N	T	B	A	V	V	N	W	O	R	L	D	N
Z	V	C	O	N	F	E	S	S	I	Y	P	A	W	U	Q
W	H	T	I	E	N	V	L	T	R	E	W	O	P	F	L
X	T	H	S	P	P	L	N	I	A	C	E	A	A	J	S
C	F	K	S	E	H	E	F	D	E	D	O	T	Y	M	R
R	R	C	I	R	S	F	N	A	H	V	Y	J	U	V	G
G	G	M	M	S	B	A	P	T	I	Z	E	D	N	B	Y
A	N	M	E	V	S	U	R	R	E	T	E	P	C	B	L
G	V	S	R	U	M	C	H	U	R	C	H	S	K	E	E
T	C	L	O	U	D	Z	R	I	U	N	O	F	P	L	Y
N	U	H	M	H	I	N	A	T	I	O	N	S	U	D	R
C	T	H	L	Z	Z	H	A	P	T	W	O	G	T	L	G
F	V	X	B	X	Z	Y	J	C	D	G	T	M	X	M	P

Find these words: BAPTIZED • BELIEVE • CHURCH • CLOUD • CONFESS • FAITHFUL • GOSPEL • HEARING • HEAVEN • NATIONS • PENTECOST • PETER • POWER • REMISSION • REPENT • THOUSAND • WITNESSES • WORLD

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Study Sheet

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Name: _____

> And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."
>
> **Mark 16:15-16 (NKJV)**

Read each passage and answer in your own words.

Matthew 28:18–20

What authority does Jesus claim? List the commands in the Great Commission.

Mark 16:15–16

Who is to hear the gospel? What does Jesus say about who will be saved?

Acts 1:6–11

What did Jesus promise before He ascended? What did the two men in white say?

Acts 2:22–36

What facts about Jesus did Peter preach? What was his conclusion in verse 36?

Acts 2:37–41

What did the people ask? What was Peter's answer? How did the people respond?

Romans 10:9–10, 17

How does faith come? What role does confession play?

Romans 6:3–4; Acts 22:16

What happens in baptism according to these verses? How does this connect to Day 4?

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Discussion and Journal

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost
(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Name: _____

For discussion

1. Why do you think Jesus gave His followers a mission instead of just a memory?
2. Trace each step in Acts 2: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized. Where is each one taught by Jesus?
3. What does Romans 6:3-4 teach happens in baptism?
4. What would “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth” look like for you?
5. If a friend asked you, “What shall I do?” could you open your Bible and show them?

Journal

Have you obeyed the gospel the way the people did in Acts 2? If not, what questions or obstacles stand in your way? If so, how are you continuing steadfastly (Acts 2:42)?

Write the names of three people who need to hear about Jesus. Pray for them by name this week.

Write out, in your own words, how you would show a friend from the Bible what to do to be saved.

FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 5 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Real-Life Application

Jesus Sends Me: Go and Tell! | The Great Commission, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:3-11; Acts 2:22-41)

Name: _____

Big idea: Jesus sends His followers to tell the good news, and everyone who hears can obey it the way people did in Acts 2.

Choose one or more

What does the Bible say to do?

- Hear: Listen to and learn God's word about Jesus (Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24)
- Believe: Trust that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6)
- Repent: Turn away from sin and turn to God (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3)
- Confess: Say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32)
- Be baptized: Be buried with Christ in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 22:16)
- Live faithfully: Keep following Jesus every day (Acts 2:42; Revelation 2:10)

- Practice explaining Acts 2:36-41 from your own Bible to a parent or friend.
- Invite someone to worship with you this Sunday.
- Choose one way to keep following Jesus after VBS: daily Bible reading, faithful attendance, or serving at church.

My plan for the next 7 days

Day	What I will do	Done?
Mon		
Tue		
Wed		
Thu		
Fri		
Sat		
Sun		

Accountability partner: _____ Check-in date: _____

Prayer