FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · GRADES 7-8

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: Smooth stones or gray paper stones; Paint pens or markers; 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	Small groups of 3 to 4 work through the discussion questions.
0:30-0:33	Memory verse	Write it from memory; discuss key words.
0:33-0:38	Study sheet	Begin the study sheet in pairs; finish the journal page at home.
0:38-0:40	Application and prayer	Each student names one action step. 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?

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): Foundation Stones

Materials: Smooth stones or gray paper stones; Paint pens or markers; Bibles

1. Each student chooses three teachings from Matthew 5-7 that are hard to live out.
2. Write a short phrase and reference on each stone (for example, "Love enemies, Matthew 5:44").
3. Share one with the group and how you could do it this week.
4. Keep the stones on a desk or dresser as a reminder to build on the rock.

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.

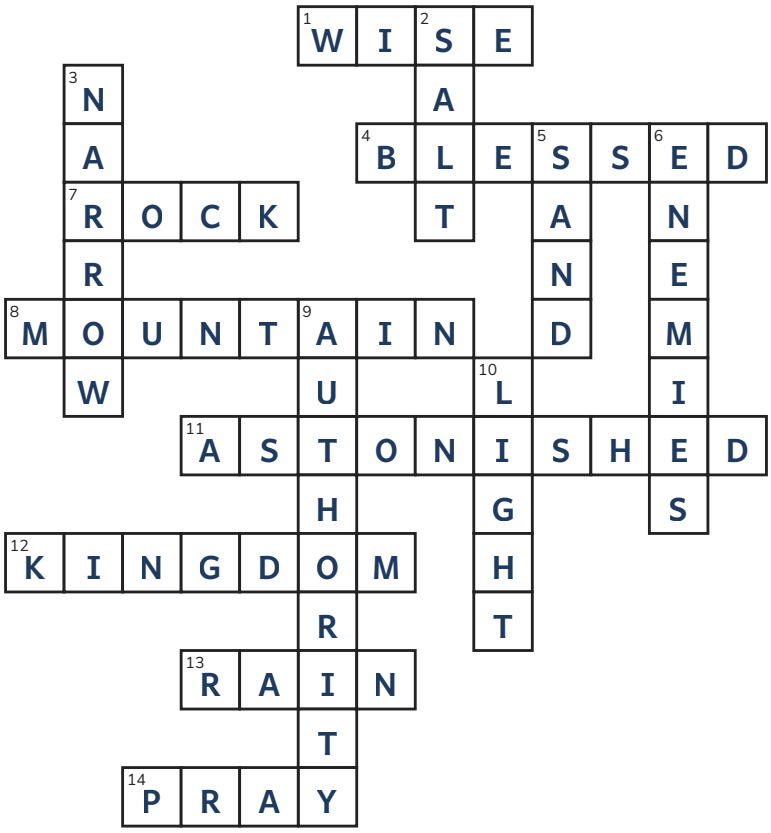
Snack: "House on the Rock": a graham cracker square (house) on a cereal-treat square (rock). Offer a nut-free option. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

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

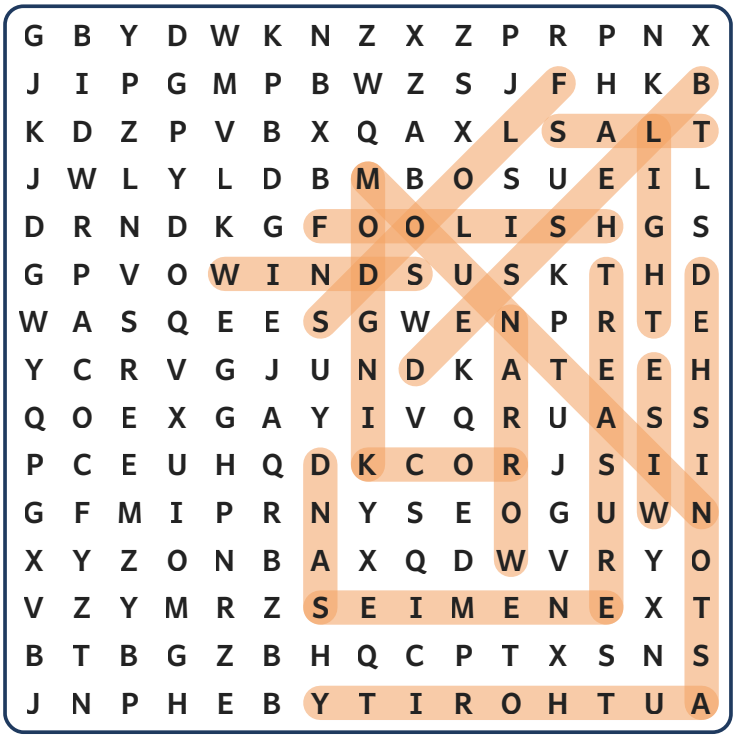
Crossword



Across: 1 WISE; 4 BLESSED; 7 ROCK; 8 MOUNTAIN; 11 ASTONISHED; 12 KINGDOM; 13 RAIN; 14 PRAY

Down: 2 SALT; 3 NARROW; 5 SAND; 6 ENEMIES; 9 AUTHORITY; 10 LIGHT

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 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 (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- 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).