

WEEK 6: THE WORKS OF JESUS

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Big Picture

This is where we're going... the big ideas you want people to understand more deeply during this session.


- Miracles (affirming Jesus' deity and power)
- Kingdom Teachings—Jesus is the perfect human KING who came as a humble servant.
- Showing the foretaste of the future—his life and teachings demonstrate and declare what the world should be like and will be like under his rule
- Jesus' Calling: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life—to the Father and to restoration
- God is a loving father who desires restoration with his children

Set the Training Tone

You will not need to repeat this list every week, but be aware of these and reestablish the right tone as necessary.

- We are here to learn and change (not just a social time, but we also desire to grow closer and build community)
- Have fun, keep things moving and participatory.
- Welcome a challenge from me or others in the group (let's give each other permission to challenge us—probe, ask questions etc.).
- Strive to be honest and vulnerable and we should honor that by keeping what is shared in confidence.
- We are going to try and answer questions as much as possible from within the Story found in the Bible. Everything we need to learn about God and humans can be found right here in his Story!

Review Last Week's Story

-  **Last Week...** We looked at Jesus' birth and life—a humble life, human in every way, tempted in every way. Just like us. But Jesus lived his life without ever sinning or losing trust in his Father, God. Jesus found his very life and identity, in and from his Father.
- We also saw Jesus filled and empowered to do miraculous things by the Holy Spirit.
- We also learned the names given to Jesus at his birth, *Jesus: The Lord is salvation & Immanuel: God with us*. These names showed us a lot about why he came to earth and who he is.

THE STORY & DIALOGUE

Scene 1 ~ Miracles

Story from Luke 3, John 1, Mark 2-5

Crowds followed Jesus wherever he went as he performed many miracles and healings. He cast demons out of people and the demons shuddered in fear before Jesus. His teaching and miracles concerned the local Jewish leaders; they were not comfortable with some of Jesus' unusual methods.

One time when Jesus was teaching he told a paralyzed man, *"Don't worry, your sins are forgiven."* When some local religious leaders questioned Jesus on who gave him the authority to forgive sins, saying God alone can forgive sin, Jesus proved his authority to them by healing the man completely!

Another time, Jesus was exhausted after teaching all day. He suggested that he and the disciples get into a boat and go to the other side of the sea. A fierce storm came up suddenly. No matter how hard they tried, his disciples couldn't keep the boat from filling with water and went to Jesus in a panic.


Jesus stood up, and said to the wind and waves, *"Quiet, be still now."* And the wind stopped blowing and the sea became calm. When the disciples saw this they looked at each other and said, *"Who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey him?"*

On several occasions Jesus raised people from the dead. Once as Jesus was traveling he was asked to go to the home of a man named Jairus whose daughter was very sick. While on the way to their home, news arrived that the girl had already died. Jesus continued on and when he arrived at Jairus' home there was a crowd of people inside weeping loudly. Jesus asked them, *"Why are you crying? The girl is not dead—she's sleeping."* The crowd laughed at him. When they went into the girl's room, Jesus took the girl's hand and said, *"Little girl, get up!"* Immediately the girl jumped out of bed and began walking around! Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were absolutely amazed!

After spending an entire night in prayer, Jesus chose twelve men out of all of his followers to be his apprentices, calling them apostles. They traveled with Jesus wherever he went as he taught them to live in the ways of God. He sent the apostles out to heal the sick, teach others what they had learned and to share the message of the Kingdom of God.

Scene 1 Dialogue ~ Miracles

Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

1. Did God create humans to live forever?
2. From what we’ve learned from the Story so far, why do people die?
3. Who gave man his life?
4. Who do you think has the power to raise people from the dead?
5.  If Jesus has the authority to forgive sin, and has power over the creation, and has authority over the demons, and can raise the dead back to life, then who do you think he is?

 [Resting Slide]

6. What are your thoughts about all of this?

Scene 2 ~ The Kingdom

Story from Matthew 5, 7, 10, 13, 18–20; Mark 3–6, 10, 13; Luke 6, 8–10, 12–15, 17; John 3

Jesus continued to teach people, “*The Kingdom of God has come—turn from your sin and self and turn to God!*”

One day he climbed up a hill with a group of his closest followers. They sat down together and Jesus began to teach them about God’s Kingdom.

He said, “*God blesses those who realize their need for him; the humble and poor, the gentle and merciful—the Kingdom of God belongs to them. God blesses the pure in heart and those who hunger and thirst to be with him.*”

Then Jesus went on to teach about God’s laws that were given to Moses.

Jesus said, “*Don’t think I came to get rid of the laws of Moses and the writings of the Prophets. I have come to fulfill them!*” He taught them, “*The laws and commands tell you not to murder, but I say if you hate someone or insult them you are just as guilty as a murderer. Your words and actions bring judgment on you.*”

“*The laws also tell us to never have sex with someone else’s spouse. But I say anyone who even looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart.*” He also taught them, “*If someone steals your shirt from you, offer them your coat too. Live generously! Love your enemies. Anyone can love their friends—but you are to love the unlovable. You must live differently, doing what is good, right and perfect—just like God your Father.*”

The people were amazed at Jesus’ teaching; He had real power and authority—unlike their teachers of the law.

(Pause for a moment...)

Jesus continued to teach about the Kingdom of God using short stories that had powerful meanings, called parables. He said, *"The Kingdom of God is like a tiny seed that is planted in a field. This seed may be small at first but it grows into a large tree where birds can come and find shelter."* Jesus told dozens of stories like this to the crowds.

He said the Kingdom is...

*Like a hidden treasure buried in a field—worth diligently searching for,
Like yeast spread in a large ball of dough—just a little will change a lot,
Like a precious pearl—worth trading everything for,
Like a great feast—where the poor, the forgotten and the outcast all get invited,
and on and on...*

Jesus was asked, *"When is this 'Kingdom' that you are teaching about going to come?"* Jesus replied, *"The Kingdom of God is not something you can predict. People will not say, 'here it is,' or 'there it is,' because the Kingdom of God is within you."*

"Do not let all of this bother you. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms and I am going there to prepare a place just for you. You know the way to the place where I am going."

One of Jesus' followers asked him, *"Lord, how can we be with you if we do not know the way?"*

Jesus answered, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes back into a close relationship with the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father too. From now on, you do know him and have seen him in me."*

People were astonished at Jesus' teaching and wisdom. They understood some of these pictures, but others remained a mystery to them.

(Pause for a moment...)

One night a Pharisee named Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, *"Rabbi, we know you were sent by God to teach us. Your miracles haven't proven to us that God is with you."* Jesus replied, *"You're right—but unless someone is born a second time they will never understand God's Kingdom."* *"What do you mean?"*



Nicodemus questioned, *"How can someone who is fully grown climb back inside their mother and be born a second time?"* Jesus answered him, *"The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they have been born a second time by God's Spirit. Humans can only give human life, but God's Spirit gives new life in the Kingdom."*

"How can this happen!?" Nicodemus asked. Jesus replied, *"You are a respected Jewish teacher, but you don't know this simple truth? If you won't believe me when I teach you about everyday things, how will you believe me when I tell you about God's Kingdom?"*

"What I am telling you is true. God showed his great love for people by sending me—his only son—to this world. Anyone who believes in me and lives in my ways will find life that is complete and eternal! He sent me here to save people—not to judge them. Those who want to live in sin and darkness will reject me and bring God's judgment on themselves. But those who want to live in God's ways will trust me and live forever!"

Scene 2 Dialogue ~ The Kingdom

Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

7. **What do you think the Kingdom of God is? Where is it?**
8. **Why is it so hard to describe?**
9. **How does someone “enter the Kingdom of God” according to this story from the Bible?**
10. **What do we learn about Jesus from these stories?**
11. **Is his Kingdom like that of the human kings we heard about earlier in the stories?**
 - *No—Jesus is the perfect human King. He always does what is good and right and perfect. He is the true King the people always wanted!*
12. **What would the world be like if everyone lived in the Kingdom, under God’s rule, care and protection?**
13.  **What do you think is the connection between living in God’s ways and believing in Jesus?**
14.  **In your own words, what is Jesus teaching his followers in this scene?**

Scene 3 ~ The Lost Son

Story from Luke 15:11-32

Jesus told them another parable about a father and his sons. “There was once a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father, *‘I want my inheritance right now—give me what’s coming to me!’*

“So the father divided the property between the sons. It wasn’t long before the younger son packed his bags and left for a distant country. There, undisciplined and self-indulgent, he wasted everything he had on partying and prostitutes. After he had gone through all his money he ended up homeless and hungry. He got a job with a farmer who assigned him to his fields to feed the pigs. He was so hungry he would have eaten the corn cobs in the pig slop, but no one would give him any.

“That brought him to his senses. He said, *‘All those farmhands working for my father sit down to three meals a day, and here I am starving to death. I’m going back to my father. I’ll say to him, “Father, I’ve sinned against God; I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son. Take me on as a hired hand.”’* He got right up and went home to his father.

“When he was still a long way off, his father saw him. His heart pounding, he ran out, embraced him, and kissed him. The son started his speech: *‘Father, I’ve sinned against God, I’ve sinned before you; I don’t deserve to be called your son ever again...’*

“But the father wasn’t listening. He was calling to the servants, *‘Quick. Bring the best robe and dress him. Put the family ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Then get a grain-fed heifer and roast it. We’re going to feast! We’re going to have a wonderful time! My son is here! It is like he was dead and now he’s alive! He was lost but now he is found!’* And they began to have a wonderful time.

Scene 3 Dialogue ~ The Lost Son

Remember **this is a dialog, not a quiz**. The “answers” below each question are there to help you as a leader guide the discussion toward some key ideas.

15. Why doesn't the father punish the son?
16. Why does he put the family ring on his finger?
17. What are they celebrating? The son did nothing but sin... does he deserve forgiveness and a celebration?
18. Who does this father remind you of?
19. What would happen to you if your life was saved in this way?
20. 📺 The parable of the Lost Son is a picture of what is called the *gospel*... after hearing this story, how would you explain the gospel?

📺 [Resting Slide]

EXTENDING THE DIALOGUE

Using Media

Use of songs or artwork for further discussion...

📺 *Les Miserables*

Clip of the bishop with Jean Val Jean

📺 [Resting Slide]

21. Why does the bishop say, “I know who you are?”
He is identifying with him
22. Why does the bishop say “How do you know I’m not going to murder you?”
He knows his own heart is as evil as Jean Val Jean’s
23. How does the bishop demonstrate he believes the gospel...? “my brother”
24. Are you asking yourself how you can be like the bishop or like Jean Val Jean?
 - You become like the bishop NOT by trying to be a good person or a “good Christian” but by IDENTIFYING with Jean Val Jean and his sinfulness.
25. What other thoughts or comments do you have about this clip?
Is there anything you are wondering about?

Further Application

26.  If what we discussed today is true, how does/should it affect your life?

27.  How should it affect us as a community?

28.  How would it affect others... our neighborhood, our city?

WALKING IT OUT

The Walking It Out handout is tool to help us engage the Story individually and with others during the week. This session alone is not nearly enough for someone to be saturated in the Story and begin living out the implications of the Story in everyday life with a community.

As you distribute them...

point out a few key things from the handouts you as a leader have already found meaningful.