

MATTHEW

1-14

HOME

DEVOTIONALS

INTRODUCTION

These devotionals are designed to last for 12 weeks (84 days). Each devotional is intended to take less than 10 minutes, but can be expanded to take as much time as you are willing to spend.

Purpose of this study:

The purpose of these devotionals is to allow families to apply the Bible Bowl material to their lives, grow together in Christ, and understand the events in Matthew 1-14 better. This was created to help all families and not just families preparing for Bible Bowl. It is our prayer that all families will be able to use this to grow closer to each other and closer to God.

Format of lessons:

- **Read:** Families should read a specific passage which is generally 2 to 10 verses in length.
- **Ask:** Review 2 or 3 questions about what was just read. Many times these questions lead into the next section. Suggested answers are in italics next to the question.
- **Discuss:** This section contains an open ended question for your family to talk about based on the passage that was read.
- **Help:** Families can use this section to get ideas for the discussion. This section is purely meant to be an aid in the discussion time.

Day 1

Read: Matthew 1:1-6

Ask:

- What is a genealogy? (*A line of descent, a lineage, who was the father of who*)
- Why do you think Matthew begins with the genealogy of Jesus? (*To demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah by demonstrating he was a son of Abraham and David*)
- Who are some people you recognize in Jesus' genealogy? (*Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.*)

Discuss: Matthew begins his gospel by giving evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. What evidence do we have that Jesus is the Messiah?

Help: There are many evidences we have to point to Jesus as the Messiah and Savior. Some evidence we have is that Christianity has survived for over 2,000 years in spite of persecution. Also, the apostles (who walked with Jesus) were willing to suffer and die for Jesus. Further evidences are throughout the Bible.

Day 2

Read: Matthew 1:7-9

Ask:

- Who is David? (*a king of Israel, the father of Solomon, the writer of many psalms, etc.*)
- What did God think of David? (*That he was a man after God's own heart*)
- What is the significance of mentioning Uriah's wife? (*It was David's greatest error. David stole Uriah's wife and had Uriah killed*)

Discuss: David was called a "man after God's own heart." What does it mean to be a person after God's heart? Does it mean we have to be perfect?

Help: It is important to remember that we do not need to be perfect to please God. Being a person after God's heart is striving to please him and doing whatever we can to serve him and show our love for him. Remember, that God still loves His children even when they fail.

Day 3

Read: Matthew 1:10-11

Ask:

- What happened to Judah around the time of Jeconiah? (*Judah went into exile*)
- What does it mean to be exiled? (*Removed from your home and not allowed to return*)
- Why was Judah sent into exile? (*Because they sinned against God and did many wicked things*)

Discuss: God punished Israel and Judah for the evil that they did. How will God punish those who do not follow him now? How can we be sure we won't be exiled to Hell?

Help: There are many people in the world who claim that there is no hell, but the Bible is clear that hell is real and that God will send people who do not obey him there. To avoid being sent there, we need to live our lives in a way to please God, which means living a life of love.

Day 4

Read: Matthew 1:12-17

Ask:

- What happened to Israel after they were exiled? (*They were eventually allowed to return*)
- Why did God let Israel return if he had exiled them due to their wickedness? (*Maybe to keep his promises, maybe to give them a second chance*)
- Why did God send Jesus? (*To give us a second chance and fix all the wrongs we have done*)

Discuss: God continually gives people second chances. When we fail to obey God, how do we get a second chance? How often will God forgive us and give us another chance?

Help: God desires that no one perish, so He is willing to forgive us for the things we do wrong if we ask for forgiveness and truly try to turn from the wrong we did. God will continually forgive us as long as we are trying to serve him and follow him. To truly turn from the bad things we do, we need to be baptized into Christ.

Day 5

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

Ask:

- How did Mary come to be with child? (*Through the Holy Spirit*)
- What did Joseph plan to do when he learned Mary was with child? (*Divorce her quietly*)
- Why did Joseph not divorce Mary? (*God commanded him to take Mary as his wife*)
- What risk did Joseph take in obeying God? (*If people knew Mary was pregnant before she was married, it would have looked bad for Joseph. Joseph would have been treated as an outcast at best*)

Discuss: Is obeying God always a popular choice? How can we obey God when others disapprove? How should people's reaction impact our decision of obeying God?

Help: Obeying God is not always going to make people like us. There are some that will be upset or mistreat us because we are obeying God. We should not let this keep us from obeying God. Whether the world likes it or not, we should strive to follow God.

Day 6

Read: Read Matthew 2:1-8

Ask:

- Why did the magi come to Jerusalem? (*They were looking for the king of the Jews that had been born*)
- What did Herod want the magi to do? (*Return to him and tell him where the child was so he could worship the child*)
- Why did Herod really want the magi to report to him? (*So he could kill the child*)

Discuss: Herod attempted to deceive the magi. Do people try to deceive us today? How can we be sure we are not deceived?

Help: There are always people looking to deceive us. We have to be careful to check to make sure what people tell us is true. We can also check to make sure we are not deceived by talking to people that we trust. In I Thessalonians 5:21 we are told to test everything.

Day 7

Read: Matthew 2:9-12

Ask:

- What did the magi do when they saw Jesus? (*They bowed down and worshipped him*)
- What gifts did they bring to Jesus? (*gold, incense and myrrh*)
- Why do you think they brought gifts to Jesus? (*Perhaps to honor him or as an act of worship*)

Discuss: What gifts can we bring Jesus? What does he want us to bring him?

Help: Unlike the magi, we do not physically give gifts directly to Jesus. Instead we bring gifts to him by our actions, by giving to others and showing love. Jesus wants us to give him our entire life and rely fully on him.

Day 8

Read: Matthew 2:13-18

Ask:

- How did Joseph learn he should take Jesus to Egypt? (*An angel appeared to him in a dream*)
- What happened in Bethlehem after Joseph took Jesus to Egypt? (*All the boys who were two years and younger were put to death*)
- What would have happened to Jesus if he had remained in Bethlehem? (*He would have died*)

Discuss: God saved and protected Jesus. Does God protect us today? How?

Help: God continues to protect us. He helps keep us out of danger and helps prevent worse injuries when we get hurt. God is constantly watching out for us.

Day 9

Read: Matthew 2:19-23

Ask:

- Why didn't Joseph take Jesus to Judea? (*Archelaus was reigning there and Joseph was afraid*)
- Where did Joseph take Jesus? (*Nazareth*)
- Was Jesus growing up in Nazareth part of God's plan? (*Yes. We know because it was prophesied*)

Discuss: People from Nazareth were despised by others. Why do people despise others today? How should we treat those that others despise? How might others react to us doing this?

Help: When Simon learned Jesus was from Nazareth, he asked if anything good could come from Nazareth. This is how people of that time viewed inhabitants of that city. People despise people because of where they are from, what religion they follow, physical traits and many other reasons. We should show all people, no matter how others view them, the love of God. Others might not like us doing this, but we should still do it.

Day 10

Read: Matthew 3:1-6

Ask:

- What was John preaching in the desert? (*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near"*)
- What does it mean to repent? (*To turn from what you were doing, to have a change of heart*)
- What did the crowds do as they were being baptized by John? (*Confessed their sins*)

Discuss: Why is it important for us to repent from bad things that we do? What role does confessing have in repentance? How can we help each other repent from our sins?

Help: Since we follow Jesus, we should devote our lives to him, which means turning away from all bad things. Confessing is a powerful tool. When others know what we are struggling with they can help us overcome our sins. We can help others overcome sins by encouraging and supporting them.

Day 11

Read: Matthew 3:7-10

Ask:

- What fruit did John say to bear? (*Fruit in keeping with repentance*)
- What excuse did John tell the Pharisees and Sadducees not to use? (*That they have Abraham as their father*)
- What will happen to trees that don't bear good fruit? (*They will be cut down and thrown into the fire*)

Discuss: How do we bear fruit? How can we be sure we are producing good fruit?

Help: We bear fruit by what we do and how we act. In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul lays out the fruit of the Spirit that should be seen in our lives if we are following God. By encouraging these qualities and doing God's will, we can bear the good fruit we are called to.

Day 12

Read: Matthew 3:11-12

Ask:

- What did John baptize with? (*Water for repentance*)
- What did John say Jesus would baptize with? (*The Holy Spirit and with fire*)
- What is the difference between wheat and chaff? (*Wheat is gathered and chaff is burned up. Wheat is useful and chaff is worthless.*)

Discuss: What happens when we are baptized? What are we baptized with?

Help: When we are baptized into Christ we are forgiven of our sins and are given the Holy Spirit. We are baptized with water physically, but spiritually with the blood of Christ. We are baptized we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift from God.

Day 13

Read: Matthew 3:13-17

Ask:

- Why did Jesus insist on being baptized? (*"To fulfill all righteousness"*)
- What does it mean "to fulfill all righteousness"? (*To fully follow all that God commanded, to do everything necessary or required*)
- What did the voice from heaven say about Jesus? (*"This is my Son, whom I love, with him I am well pleased."*)

Discuss: How do we fulfill all righteousness? Why is it important to please God?

Help: We fulfill all righteousness by obeying everything that God commanded. By following God and showing his love and compassion throughout our lives, we can please God just as Jesus did. Pleasing God is the most important part of our life. It is by pleasing God that we get to spend eternity with him. By pleasing Him, He will always care for us and guide us.

Day 14

Read: Matthew 4:1-4

Ask:

- Why did Jesus go into the desert? (*To be tempted by the devil*)
- How long was Jesus without food? (*40 days and 40 nights*)
- What did Jesus say man lives on? (*Every word that comes from the mouth of God*)

Discuss: Could man physically live on bread alone? Why do we need the Word of God? How do we live on the Word of God?

Help: Today, living on bread alone is not possible. However, in Jesus' day, a man could literally live a long and healthy life on bread and water alone. Even today, the most basic meal that is given is often bread and water. The point Jesus is making is that this isn't what is important. Without the Word of God, life is worthless and pointless. The Word of God brings us purpose and life. We live on the Word of God by studying it and applying it to our lives.

Day 15

Read: Matthew 4:5-7

Ask:

- What did the devil want Jesus to do? (*Throw himself down from the highest point of the temple*)
- Why would this be tempting to Jesus? (*It would prove to all that he was the Son of God*)
- How did Jesus respond to the devil's temptation? (*By quoting scripture saying, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test."*)

Discuss: Why is it important that Jesus was tempted by the devil? How did Jesus overcome the temptations? How can we be better at overcoming temptations?

Help: The fact that Jesus was tempted makes it clear that Jesus was in all ways man. As the Hebrews writer points out, we have a High Priest or mediator that has gone through everything we do in life. Jesus overcame these temptations by keeping his focus on God's word. We can overcome temptation by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. In Hebrews 12, the writer calls us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Day 16

Read: Matthew 4:8-11

Ask:

- What did Satan want Jesus to do? (*Worship him*)
- What was Satan willing to give Jesus? (*All the kingdoms of the world and their splendor*)
- How did Jesus respond to Satan? (*That we should only worship the Lord our God*)

Discuss: We should worship God and God alone. How do we worship things other than God? How can we make sure we are only worshipping God?

Help: We often don't realize when we are worshipping something other than God. Worshipping something instead of God means that we consider something more important than God. People can do this with sports, tv, video games, work, and school. We have to make sure that in everything, God comes first.

Day 17

Read: Matthew 4:12-22

Ask:

- Where did Jesus meet Peter and Andrew? (*Along the Sea of Galilee casting a net into the lake*)
- Before meeting Jesus, what profession did Peter and Andrew have? (*Fishermen*)
- What did Jesus say he would make Peter and Andrew? (*Fishers of men*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be a fisher of men? How can we become fishers of men?

Help: When a person is fishing, they are spending time focused on trying to catch fish. They will go through great lengths to try to attract and catch fish. Fishers of men are likewise trying to catch men. It means that we are trying to bring people to Jesus. This can occur in many forms, such as inviting friends to attend a fun event at church.

Day 18

Read: Matthew 4:23-25

Ask:

- What was Jesus doing as he went throughout Galilee? (*Taught in synagogues, proclaimed the good news of the kingdom, healed every disease and sickness*)
- What illnesses did Jesus heal? (*severe pain, demon-possession, seizures, and the paralyzed*)
- Were there any sicknesses Jesus couldn't heal? (*No*)

Discuss: Is Jesus still able to heal all sicknesses? Why might he not heal someone's physical suffering?

Help: Jesus is able to heal all disease and sicknesses, but he does not always heal someone's physical sufferings. We may not understand why he chooses not to heal someone, but there is always a reason and a purpose. Sometimes, perhaps, the illness will bring about glory to God more than a healing. Paul went through suffering, but Jesus told him that his grace was sufficient for Paul. It can be hard to go through physical pain and suffering, or watch someone else, but we need to understand that Jesus sees the full picture and has a reason for allowing this.

Day 19

Read: Matthew 5:1-6

Ask:

- What does it mean to be blessed? (*In this case, it means "happy"*)
- Who does Jesus identify as being blessed? (*The poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness*)
- How are they blessed? (*Theirs is the kingdom of God, they will be comforted, they will inherit the earth, they will be filled*)

Discuss: We are called to embody the attitudes Jesus identifies as being blessed. How can we have these attitudes in our life? Are they natural to have?

Help: It is not normal for people to want to be meek or poor in spirit or any of these attitudes that Jesus says is blessed. We have to work to fill our lives with these attitudes. When we focus on God and his will, it becomes easier. We realize how insignificant we are in comparison and become meek. We long for him more, and thus hunger and thirst for righteousness. We mourn over ungodly behavior because God means everything to us.

Day 20

Read: Matthew 5:7-12

Ask:

- How are those that are persecuted blessed? (*Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*)
- Why should those who are persecuted rejoice? (*Great is their reward in heaven*)
- What does it mean to be persecuted? (*To be insulted or mistreated*)

Discuss: How might we be persecuted if we follow Jesus? How should we react if people do persecute us?

Help: Persecution can come in many ways for Christians. In some places in the world, Christians are beaten, imprisoned and even put to death. We don't typically experience the same kinds of persecution. People can insult us, think less of us, purposely do things to sabotage us, etc. If people mistreat us we should rejoice that we are followers of Christ.

Day 21

Read: Matthew 5:13-16

Ask:

- What is salt useful for? (*The main use of salt is to season food*)
- Why is a lamp under a bowl useless? (*A lamp's purpose is to give light, but if it is under a bowl no light can be given*)
- Where does Jesus tell us to shine our lights? (*Before men*)

Discuss: How do we shine our lights? Why is it important for us to shine?

Help: We shine our lights by doing good in all situations. The world is full of selfishness, hatred, and darkness. Christians bring light by being selfless and loving. By shining our light, we can bring people to Jesus and change the world by showing his love.

Day 22

Read: Matthew 5:17-20

Ask:

- Who will be called least in the kingdom of God? (*Anyone who breaks one of the least of Jesus' commandments and teaches others to do likewise*)
- Who will be called greatest in the kingdom of God? (*Whoever practices and teaches Jesus' commandments*)
- Whose righteousness must we surpass to enter the kingdom of heaven? (*The Pharisees and teachers of the law*)

Discuss: Can we enter heaven based on our righteousness? What did Jesus mean?

Help: It is clear from Ephesians 2:8-9 that man is not saved by works or their own righteousness. Jesus is making the point that there are two parts to following his teachings. First you have to apply them to your life, second you have to teach others to follow them. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were considered hypocrites because they would add to the law and put a burden on people, while not truly following God themselves. We should avoid being like the Pharisees, but stick to what Jesus has said.

Day 23

Read: Matthew 5:21-22

Ask:

- What were the people long ago told? (*"Do not murder"*)
- Who did Jesus say was subject to judgement? (*Anyone who is angry with his brother*)
- What does it mean to be "subject to judgement"? (*Perhaps held accountable for*)

Discuss: How is anger similar to murder? What is the danger of anger? How can we keep ourselves from becoming angry?

Help: Anger can be very dangerous. Anger can lead us to act rashly and do things we would not otherwise do. Anger destroys lives and relationships when we say things that we don't mean or do things we shouldn't do. We should look for ways to stop ourselves from becoming angry. We should remove ourselves from situations that might make us get angry. There are also a number of strategies that can be utilized to stay calm (such as counting slowly to 10, reading the Bible, etc.)

Day 24

Read: Matthew 5:23-26

Ask:

- If someone is offering a gift, what should they do first? (*Resolve any problems they have with their brother*)
- What is an adversary? (*An opponent or an enemy*)
- Why should you settle matters quickly with your adversary? (*If you don't, you may end up in a much worse situation*)

Discuss: What should we do if we have a problem with someone? What should we do if someone has a problem with us? What are some ways we can handle a problem with someone?

Help: It is important for us to take care of problems with people quickly. Often times, not taking care of a situation immediately will make matters worse and harder to resolve later. We can handle problems with people in many ways. The most important thing to do is talk to them. If they are not willing to talk, bring a mediator (or someone to help the conversation) into the situation and have them help.

Day 25

Read: Matthew 5:27-30

Ask:

- What did Jesus say to do if your right eye causes you to sin? (*Pluck it out*)
- Why should we gouge it out? (*It's better to lose one part of your body than all of your body be cast into hell*)
- What did Jesus say to do if your right hand causes you to sin? (*Cut it off*)

Discuss: Does Jesus mean to literally cut our hand off or gouge out eye out? What point is Jesus trying to make? What actions should we take if something causes us to sin?

Help: Jesus does not mean that we literally need to cut off body parts to keep ourselves from sinning, but he is telling us to do whatever it takes to remove sin from our lives. If being around a person makes you sin, then don't be around them. Do whatever it takes to prevent yourself from sinning.

Day 26

Read: Matthew 5:31-37

Ask:

- What were people told long ago not to do if they made a vow? (*Do not break your oath but fulfill them*)
- What did Jesus say about swearing? (*Do not swear any oath at all*)
- What should we do instead of making oaths? (*Let our yes be yes and no be no*)

Discuss: Why do people make oaths and promises? How can people trust us if we don't make promises?

Help: People make oaths and promises to give weight to what they are saying. They want to make it clear that what they are saying is true and accurate. If we are always honest, we don't need to make promises and oaths because people know that we are truthful. If we lie, it is harder for people to trust us.

Day 27

Read: Matthew 5:38-42

Ask:

- What does it mean "eye for an eye"? (*We might say "tit for tat". It's the idea that if you do something to me, I will do it back to you*)
- Jesus says that if someone strikes you, what should you do? (*Turn your other cheek to them*)
- How did Jesus say to treat those who want to borrow from us? (*Give without expecting anything back*)

Discuss: Why do we like to get even when someone is mean to us? How should we treat those who do bad things to us?

Help: It is natural to desire revenge when someone does something bad to us. It's hard to let someone get away with something. We should show love to the people and go above and beyond to treat them better than they treat us. If we return kindness for evil, it may change how they behave or treat us.

Day 28

Read: Matthew 5:43-48

Ask:

- How did people treat their enemies? (*They hated them*)
- How did Jesus say enemies should be treated? (*We should love them and pray for those who persecute us*)
- Who loves those who love themselves? (*Tax collectors*)

Discuss: How do we show love to our enemies? Why should we love people who don't love us?

Help: We should show kindness to our enemies even when we don't want to, and especially when they don't deserve this. We are called to follow Jesus who gave up his life for people who hated him and were enemies (see Romans 5).

Day 29

Read: Matthew 6:1-4

Ask:

- What is a hypocrite? (*A pretender, a person who does things to be seen and not for God*)
- How do hypocrites give? (*They announce it with trumpets*)
- How should we give? (*In secret*)
- Who will see us and reward us if we give in secret? (*Our Father in heaven*)

Discuss: Why do people like to give publicly? What's the danger of giving so others see? Why should we give in secret?

Help: Giving where others can see will put the focus on you and not on who you are giving to, nor why you are giving. When giving in secret, you aren't the one that is important. Many people want the attention and to show how generous they are. Giving should never be about us, but about God.

Day 30

Read: Matthew 6:5-8

Ask:

- How do hypocrites pray? (*Standing in the synagogues and on street corners*)
- Who prays with many words? (*Pagans*)
- How should we pray? (*In private without babbling*)

Discuss: Why do some people say wordy prayers? Why is praying alone better than praying publicly? Does this mean we should not lead people in prayers (such as at church)?

Help: When praying in public, there are many people who will pray differently than they would in private. They want people to see how spiritual they are or draw praise from those who hear. Instead, when we pray, we should pray to God to talk to him and not be concerned about who hears us. Prayer is talking to God, not speaking to men.

Day 31

Read: Matthew 6:9-15

Ask:

- What does “hallowed” mean? (*Something greatly revered or respected*)
- What did Jesus pray for? (*God’s will to be done on earth, daily bread, forgiveness, and delivery from temptation and the evil one*)
- Why should we forgive others? (*Our heavenly Father will forgive us*)

Discuss: Should we say this prayer word for word? Why or why not? What should we pray for?

Help: There are many denominations that encourage people to say the words of this prayer as their own prayer. While there are many things that we should also pray for, God wants us to pray with our hearts and not just quote something to him. Praying is building a personal conversation with God.

Day 32

Read: Matthew 6:16-18

Ask:

- What is fasting? (*To abstain from all or some kinds of food*)
- How do hypocrites fast? (*They look somber and disfigure their faces to show they are fasting*)
- How should we fast? (*In such a way so that others don’t know that you are fasting.*)

Discuss: Can we fast from things other than food? What is the benefit of fasting? Who should know when we are fasting?

Help: Fasting generally refers to food, but we can also abstain from other things in life. The point of fasting is to refocus on God and build our relationship with him. We should be careful to not tell people about our fasting. An exception could be made for parents, so that they know what is going on.

Day 33

Read: Matthew 6:19-24

Ask:

- What happens to treasures on earth? (*Moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal*)
- Where should we store up treasures? (*In heaven*)
- What happens when someone tries to serve two masters? (*They will hate one and serve the other*)

Discuss: How do we store up treasures? What master do people serve other than God?

Help: Storing up treasures is all about what you consider important. If you are striving for worldly things, then you are storing up treasures on earth. If instead, you are focused on serving God and serving Him then you are storing up treasures in heaven.

Day 34

Read: Matthew 6:25-34

Ask:

- How are the birds and lilies taken care of? (*God provides for them*)
- Who runs after food, drink and clothing? (*The pagans*)
- What should we seek? (*God's kingdom and his righteousness*)

Discuss: What impact does worrying have? What do we tend to worry about? How can we stop worrying?

Help: Worrying never has a positive impact. It does not help anything, but can cause long term health issues. Philippians 4 tells us that we should not be anxious about anything but in everything with prayer, give thanks to the Lord. If we focus on the things God has done for us, it will minimize our worry.

Day 35

Read: Matthew 7:1-6

Ask:

- If we judge others, how will we be judged? (*By the same measure that we use*)
- What should be done before taking a speck out of a brother's eye? (*We should remove the plank from our eye. In other words, we need to remove the sin from our life before we help someone remove their sin*)
- What is the result of removing the plank from your own eye? (*You can see clearly to help your brother*)

Discuss: What is Jesus talking about with regards to the speck and plank? Why do people tend to judge? How do we stop ourselves from judging people?

Help: Jesus is saying that we need to remove sin from our lives, before we try to help someone remove sin from their life. When we remember our failings and where we come short, we are less inclined to judge others for their failings.

Day 36

Read: Matthew 7:7-12

Ask:

- What will happen to those who ask? (*They will receive*)
- If a child asks for bread, what won't their parent give them? (*A stone*)
- What should we do to others? (*As we want them to do to us*)

Discuss: What good gifts does God give? Does God give us everything we ask for? Why or why not?

Help: Everything we have or receive comes from God. God provides us everything we need in life. God does not give us everything materially and earthly that we want, but God does provide us everything we need for life (both physical and spiritual).

Day 37

Read: Matthew 7:13-23

Ask:

- How can we tell if people are truly following God? (*By their fruit*)
- What does Jesus mean when he describes people as wolves in sheep's clothing? (*They pretend to be following Jesus but are really not.*)
- Will everyone who does good things enter heaven? (*No*)

Discuss: Is doing good things enough to please God? What does God desire?

Help: Jesus clearly says that not all who do good things in his name will enter heaven. Instead, God wants our hearts and not just our deeds. God doesn't want people who merely do good deeds because they are required to, but because they want to.

Day 38

Read: Matthew 7:24-29

Ask:

- How does a wise man build his house? (*On a rock foundation*)
- How does a foolish man build his house? (*On a sand foundation*)
- What happens to the houses when the rain and winds come? (*The wise man's house stands firm, the foolish man's house falls*)

Discuss: How can we be like the wise builder? What happens when we put the words of Jesus into practice? How will this allow us to stand firm in life's storm?

Help: By building our lives on the teachings of Jesus we can build a firm life so that when we go through tough times, we can stand firm. We will have faith to trust in Jesus and not worry about any trouble that may come.

Day 39

Read: Matthew 8:1-4

Ask:

- What is leprosy? (*A contagious disease that affects the skin and can cause disfiguration*)
- What did the leper say to Jesus? (*"If you are willing you can make me clean"*)
- How did Jesus respond to the leper? (*"I am willing, be clean"*)

Discuss: The leper realized that Jesus had the power to heal, but understood that Jesus did not have to heal him. What does God owe us? Why is He willing to help us?

Help: God is the master of the universe and our creator. He owes nothing to us, but He loves us and desires to do good things for us, which is why He sent Jesus to save us.

Day 40

Read: Matthew 8:5-13

Ask:

- Who came to Jesus asking for help? (*A centurion*)
- Why didn't the centurion want Jesus to come to his home? (*He didn't deserve Jesus to come to his home.*)
- How did Jesus react to the centurion? (*He was amazed by his faith*)

Discuss: The centurion believed Jesus had the power to heal his servant. How can we build our faith? In what ways do we demonstrate our faith?

Help: Building our faith is very important. Learning to trust in God and rely on Him is vital to our life of faith. We demonstrate our faith by living a life that follows God regardless of what others think or what happens.

Day 41

Read: Matthew 8:14-17

Ask:

- Who did Jesus heal? (*Peter's mother-in-law, the demon-possessed and all the sick*)
- How did Jesus cast out demons? (*With a word*)
- What prophecy did Jesus fulfill by healing people and casting out demons? (*"He took up our diseases and carried our infirmities"*)

Discuss: Does Jesus take up our infirmities? What infirmities does he take up? How does he take them up?

Help: Jesus does still take up our infirmities. He takes up our sins and failures and removes them from us. He is our mediator and intercessor with God, as well as our friend and brother. He wants to help us carry our load.

Day 42

Read: Matthew 8:18-22

Ask:

- What did a teacher of the law tell Jesus? (*"I will follow you wherever you go."*)
- What did a disciple want to do before following Jesus? (*Bury his father*)
- Who did Jesus say should bury the dead? (*The dead*)

Discuss: Is following Jesus full of comfort? What did Jesus mean about letting the dead bury the dead?

Help: In this passage, Jesus emphasizes that there is no place for him to lay his head. Following Jesus is not a life full of ease and comfort, but comes with hardships and heartaches. We should follow anyway. By telling the disciple to let the dead bury their own dead, Jesus is referring to those that are dead in sin should bury their own physically dead.

Day 43

Read: Matthew 8:23-27

Ask:

- What was Jesus doing during the storm? (*Sleeping*)
- What did the disciples fear would happen to them? (*They would drown*)
- How did Jesus calm the storm? (*He rebuked the winds and the waves*)

Discuss: Why are storms so scary to people? What is a "storm of life"? How can we make it through tough times?

Help: Storms can be incredibly scary. They are loud, full of danger, and we have no control. In life, we have storms where things go bad and it is not something we have control over. Jesus can calm even these storms though, if we trust in him and ask him. Jesus can get us through any storm in life.

Day 44

Read: Matthew 8:28-34

Ask:

- Who met Jesus in the region of Gadarenes? (*Two demon possessed men*)
- What did Jesus do to the demons? (*Cast them into a herd of pigs*)
- What did the people plead with Jesus to do? (*Leave their region*)

Discuss: Why do you think the people wanted Jesus to leave? Why do people reject Jesus now? What can we do if a person rejects Jesus?

Help: Perhaps the people wanted Jesus to leave because they were afraid of what he was capable of. He had already demonstrated a power they did not have. These people saw Jesus and did not see his compassion and his love for them. They only saw a power they could not understand. Even today people reject Jesus for many reasons, including fear, misunderstandings, and a desire for control. When people reject Jesus, we should be patient and loving to them and continue to try to help them accept Jesus.

Day 45

Read: Matthew 9:1-8

Ask:

- What did Jesus tell the paralytic? (*“Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven”*)
- How did the teachers of the law react? (*They accused Jesus of blasphemy*)
- Why did Jesus tell the paralytic his sins were forgiven? (*To demonstrate he had the ability to forgive sins as well as heal people*)

Discuss: Why is it important that Jesus can forgive sins? Does Jesus still forgive sins today? Why do some people find it hard to accept that Jesus has forgiven them?

Help: Jesus came to earth to forgive sins. He came to die on a cross that he may free us from our sins and we can receive forgiveness. Some people struggle with believing Jesus has forgiven them, because they think they have done too much bad and no one can forgive them. Jesus, however, does forgive them. In Acts we read of Saul (later known as Paul), who persecuted Christians by throwing them in prison and having them stoned. We see in Acts the transformation that he went through, and can see in his writings that even he was forgiven.

Day 46

Read: Matthew 9:9-13

Ask:

- Where did Jesus find Matthew? (*A the tax collector's booth*)
- Who did Jesus eat with at Matthew's place? (*Tax collectors and "sinners"*)
- What does God desire? (*Mercy, not sacrifice*)

Discuss: How do we show mercy to others? Who do we have a tough time showing mercy to? Why?

Help: We show mercy to others by not judging them and forgiving them their failings. No one is perfect, and it is important for us to keep that in mind. Unfortunately, people consider certain sins worse than others and struggle to show mercy to a person even when that person has repented. For example, if a reformed murderer came into a church and people knew of his crime, many would avoid him and want nothing to do with him. This is not, however, an act of mercy. We are called to love everyone!

Day 47

Read: Matthew 9:14-17

Ask:

- What question did John's disciples have? (*Why did they and the Pharisees fasted, but Jesus' disciples did not*)
- When will the guests of the bridegroom mourn? (*After the bridegroom is taken away from them*)
- Why do people not sew a new patch onto an old garment? (*It will pull away from the garment and make the tear worse*)

Discuss: Why is patching something old with something new a problem? What was wrong with the old law that the Pharisees and John's disciples were following? Did Jesus come to fix the old law? What did he come to do?

Help: Jesus is explaining to his disciples that he did not come to fix but to replace. If you fix something old with something new, you are likely to cause further problems. The problem with the old law was not the law but the way people treated it. They used it to try to show righteousness while their hearts were not affected by it. Jesus came to replace it with a focus on the heart rather than deeds such as fasting. It is not that fasting is wrong, but the way that it was being used at that time was wrong.

Day 48

Read: Matthew 9:18-26

Ask:

- What did the woman do to be healed? (*Came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak*)
- What did Jesus say healed the woman? (*Her faith*)
- How did Jesus raise the dead girl from the dead? (*He took the girl by her hand*)

Discuss: The woman realized that reaching out to Jesus could bring healing. What healing does Jesus offer us now? How do we reach out to him?

Help: In Matthew, Jesus calls for the weary and heavy laden to come to him and he will give them rest. Jesus wants everyone to come to him. While he may not heal physical diseases as he did in this passage, he will heal all of our soul's diseases and offers us eternal peace with him.

Day 49

Read: Matthew 9:27-31

Ask:

- What was wrong with the two men? (*They were blind*)
- What did they call to Jesus? (*"Have mercy on us Son of David."*)
- What did Jesus do for the two men? (*He touched their eyes and healed them*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be spiritually blind? How can we tell that we are spiritually blind? How can we help someone who is spiritually blind?

Help: In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul explains that unbelievers have been blinded by the god of this world, in other words Satan. To be spiritually blind is to not see or know Jesus. Knowing Jesus and seeking him means that we are not spiritually blind. To help those who are spiritually blind, we have to help them learn of Jesus and see who he is.

Day 50

Read: Matthew 9:32-34

Ask:

- What was wrong with the man brought to Jesus? (*He was demon-possessed and could not talk*)
- How did the crowd react to what Jesus did? (*They were amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."*)
- How did the Pharisees react? (*"It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."*)

Discuss: Why would the Pharisees say this? Do people today attribute works of God to things other than God? Why is that such a bad thing?

Help: The Pharisees did not want to believe that Jesus was a servant of God. To believe that would mean that they were wrong about who he was and would have to follow him. People today attribute works of God to a number of different things other than God. The most common example is evolution. People want to explain away the existence of God or not give him the glory. Some people want a reason to live a life that is not in line with the teachings of God. This is a complete rejection of God.

Day 51

Read: Matthew 9:35-38

Ask:

- How did Jesus feel about the crowds that came to him? (*He had compassion*)
- What did Jesus tell his disciples? (*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.*)
- What did Jesus say we should ask God to do? (*Send out workers into the field*)

Discuss: Who are the workers Jesus was referring to? What does it mean to be a worker in the fields for the Lord? What is the harvest?

Help: We are the workers for the Lord. Jesus is saying that there are many searching for truth and for him, but there are not enough people reaching out to them. We need to tell people about Jesus and help those that are seeking come to him. Numerous times throughout the Bible, we are instructed about the importance of teaching about Jesus.

Day 52

Read: Matthew 10:1-4

Ask:

- What authority were the apostles given? (*To drive out spirits and heal every disease and sickness*)
- Who did Jesus select for his Twelve? (*Simon, who is called Peter, Andrew, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector, James son of Alphaeus, and Judas Iscariot.*)
- What do we know about the backgrounds of these men? (*They were tax collectors, fishermen, ordinary men*)

Discuss: Jesus chose ordinary men for the extraordinary. What does that mean for us today? What has God called us for?

Help: Jesus called uneducated fishermen, despised tax collectors, and people from very ordinary backgrounds. These were not the best and brightest. No matter how smart or talented we think we are God has a place for us. God has called us to follow him. No matter what he asks of us, or what he tells us to do, we should follow Him.

Day 53

Read: Matthew 10:5-10

Ask:

- Who did Jesus send the Twelve to? (*The lost sheep of Israel*)
- What were the Twelve to do? (*Preach “The kingdom of heaven is near”, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and drive out demons*)
- What were the Twelve told not to take with them? (*Gold, silver or copper, a bag, extra tunic, sandals or a staff*)

Discuss: Why did the Twelve not need money or extra clothing? Why is stuff so important to people? What should be most important?

Help: The twelve did not need anything, because God would make sure they were taken care of. Often times we put an emphasis on possessions. People want the newest video game, the nicest car, the biggest house, etc. We need to learn to be content. We don't need the things of this world.

Day 54

Read: Matthew 10:11-16

Ask:

- What were the disciples to look for in each village? (*A worthy person*)
- What were they told to do if a town rejected them? (*Shake the dust off their feet*)
- Since Jesus was sending them out among wolves, how were the disciples to behave? (*As shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be shrewd? How can we be shrewd yet innocent? Why should we be shrewd?

Help: To be shrewd is to have sharp powers of judgement. We need to understand that the devil is coming after us and will use all sorts of tricks, lies and deceptions to lead us astray. We must be shrewd to identify his deceptions, but we must remain innocent and free from all wrong doing.

Day 55

Read: Matthew 10:17-25

Ask:

- What did Jesus say would happen to the Twelve? (*They would be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. They would be brought before governors and kings*)
- What were the disciples not to do when persecuted? (*Worry*)
- Who is the student not above? (*His teacher*)

Discuss: How might we be persecuted? How should we respond to persecutions?

Help: Persecution comes in many forms. The apostles were beaten, imprisoned, stoned, beheaded, and exiled. We don't face these same persecutions today. Instead, we face persecutions of people disliking us, teasing us, insulting us and treating us badly. No matter how we are treated, we should rejoice and be glad because what happens to us here is nothing as to what we will gain in eternity.

Day 56

Read: Matthew 10:26-33

Ask:

- Who should the disciples fear? (*The One who can destroy both the body and soul in hell, God*)
- Why should we not fear men? (*Because they can only kill the body, and because we are worth more than many sparrows and God cares about them*)
- Who will Jesus acknowledge before God? (*Those who acknowledge Jesus before man*)

Discuss: How do we acknowledge Jesus before man? How do we disown him before man? What keeps us from acknowledging Jesus before man?

Help: There are many people who call themselves Christians but don't want people at work or school to know that they are Christians. They hide the truth, so that people don't think badly of them. In so doing, these people disown Jesus before man. We should be willing to talk about what we believe openly and honestly. As Jesus told his disciples, we should not fear man, because they can do nothing to our soul.

Day 57

Read: Matthew 10:34-39

Ask:

- What did Jesus come to bring? (*A sword*)
- Who is not worthy of Jesus? (*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Jesus, and anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Jesus, and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Jesus*)
- How does one gain life? (*By losing his life*)

Discuss: Does Jesus mean we should actually hate our family? What is Jesus saying then? How do we show that we love Jesus more than anything?

Help: Jesus obviously is not telling us to hate anyone. In fact, he is very clear throughout his teachings that there is no room for hate in his followers' lives. What Jesus is telling us is that we should not love anything, not even our lives, more than we love him. In so doing, we demonstrate that we are truly following him.

Day 58

Read: Matthew 10:40-42

Ask:

- Whoever receives Jesus receives who? (*The One who sent him, God*)
- What reward was received by the one who received a prophet? (*A prophet's reward*)
- What example does Jesus give of a way a person will not lose their reward? (*Giving a cup of water to a little one because he is Jesus' disciple*)

Discuss: What reward will we receive if we receive God's people? How do we receive people? Who should we be receiving?

Help: Jesus is telling us that it is important to show hospitality especially to fellow believers. This means that we invite others into our home, whether offering someone a meal or a place to stay. We should show the love of Christ especially to other Christians.

Day 59

Read: Matthew 11:1-6

Ask:

- What did John send his disciples to ask Jesus? (*"Are you the one who was to come or should we expect someone else?"*)
- What report were John's disciples to take to John? (*The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.*)
- Who did Jesus say was blessed? (*The man who does not fall away on account of Jesus*)

Discuss: Was it wrong for John to question if Jesus was the Messiah? Is it wrong for us to ask questions? Who can we ask questions to?

Help: The Bible never condemns anyone for asking questions and seeking answers. In fact, the Bereans are applauded in Acts 17 for searching the Scriptures to see if what Paul told them was true. We should always check what people tell us. If we ever have questions, we can talk to parents, elders, deacons, the preacher, etc.

Day 60

Read: Matthew 11:7-15

Ask:

- What did people go into the desert to see? (*A prophet*)
- Who is greater than John the Baptist? (*The least in the kingdom of heaven*)
- Who did Jesus say John was? (*The Elijah who was to come*)

Discuss: How are those in the kingdom of heaven greater than John? Who is in the kingdom of heaven?

Help: John devoted his life to following God and doing his word, but John never saw the fullness of why Jesus came to earth. We get to experience what John never did when we join the kingdom of God, that is the church. We are not greater than John because of anything we do, but only because of what God does for us.

Day 61

Read: Matthew 11:16-19

Ask:

- What did people say about John? (*“He has a demon.”*)
- What were people saying about Jesus? (*“Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners”*”)
- How is wisdom proved right? (*By her actions*)

Discuss: How can we know what is wise? How can we be sure we are acting wisely? Why is important for us to be wise?

Help: Reading the Bible and talking to our parents will help us learn what is wise and what is not. We can also tell by the results of what we do if we are behaving wisely. If we do something and it hurts someone, we are probably not behaving wisely.

Day 62

Read: Matthew 11:20-24

Ask:

- How did cities react to the miracles Jesus performed in them? (*They did not repent*)
- How would Tyre, Sidon and Sodom have responded if Jesus had performed his miracles in them? (*They would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes*)
- Why will it be more bearable for Tyre, Sidon and Sodom than for the cities Jesus performed miracles in on judgement day? (*They would have repented, but Jesus' generation did not*)

Discuss: What signs do we have today to point us to Jesus? Why do people ignore these signs?

Help: The people in Jesus' time were given many signs and wonders and yet they rejected them. We can still see the impact of Jesus and signs of his existence around us even today. One of the greatest proofs is the existence of the church. As Gamaliel told the Pharisees, if the church was of man, it would fail, but if it is of God it would never cease. He knew what he was talking about. It turns out that Jesus really was from God. There are many other signs that point to Jesus, such as all of creation (Romans 1:20-21), historians such as Josephus, etc.

Day 63

Read: Matthew 11:25-30

Ask:

- What has been committed to Jesus? (*All things*)
- Who knows the Father? (*The Son and those that the Son chooses to reveal him to*)
- What will Jesus do for the weary and burdened who come to him? (*Give them rest*)

Discuss: What is a yoke? What rest does Jesus offer? What burden does Jesus put on us? Why is the light?

Help: A yoke is a piece of equipment that is used to hook two animals together so they can pull some load. Jesus is saying that he will pull your load with you and he will do the brunt of the work. Jesus does not offer us a free ride, but an eternal rest when this life is over. Jesus expects us to do our part in carrying the load. That means we should be showing love and doing his will.

Day 64

Read: Matthew 12:1-8

Ask:

- Why were the Pharisees upset? (*Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain*)
- Whose law did the disciples break? (*The Pharisees'*)
- Who is Lord of the Sabbath? (*Jesus*)

Discuss: Are there man-made rules and customs we follow today that are not God's commands? Are these wrong? What was wrong with the rules the Pharisees made?

Help: There are a number of man-made rules that we follow. One example is washing your hands before you eat. It is something that we are taught from a young age, but not a command of God. There are some customs you might see in the church, for example the order of worship. It is not wrong to follow man-made customs or rules necessarily. The trouble comes when you enforce them on others or treat them as if they are the commands of God.

Day 65

Read: Matthew 12:9-14

Ask:

- Why did some ask Jesus if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath? (*They were looking for a reason to accuse him*)
- What were the Pharisees willing to do on the Sabbath? (*Lift a sheep out of a pit*)
- What did Jesus say it is lawful to do on the Sabbath? (*Good*)

Discuss: Is it ever wrong to do good? Why/why not? Are there times people oppose doing good? When?

Help: This is tricky. We should always do good, but we should also be aware that we need to communicate with our parents and be very careful and mindful. We should also consider the importance and time sensitivity. If it is bed time but you want to send an encouraging note to someone, that might be something you can do the next day. If you are expected to be home at a certain time, but a child is injured and needs to be helped, then it is important to let your parents know, but it is still right to help the child.

Day 66

Read: Matthew 12:15-21

Ask:

- Why did Jesus warn people not to tell who he was? (*To fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah*)
- What did Isaiah prophecy Jesus would proclaim? (*Justice*)
- How did Isaiah describe Jesus? (*A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not snuff out*)

Discuss: What did Isaiah mean that Jesus would be a bruised reed that would not break? How can we be like Jesus in this?

Help: People pushed against Jesus and fought with everything he taught. They mistreated Jesus to the point of death, but no matter how people treated Jesus, and no matter how often he was rejected, he did not break. He kept going further no matter what happened. We should have that same spirit in us.

Day 67

Read: Matthew 12:22-29

Ask:

- How did the Pharisees say Jesus cast out demons? (*By Beelzebub*)
- What did Jesus say happens to a house divided against itself? (*It cannot stand*)
- What does it mean if Jesus cast out demons by the Spirit of God? (*That the kingdom of God had come upon them*)

Discuss: What is the importance of unity? How can we encourage unity? How do families and congregations crumble?

Help: A group of people working together for a common goal is a powerful thing. The sky is the limit when people work together. When people start allowing disagreements and trouble get in between them and being able to work with others, families and congregations can crumble. When relationships crumble, Satan does his best work.

Day 68

Read: Matthew 12:30-37

Ask:

- What sin does Jesus say cannot be forgiven? (*Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*)
- Where does what we say come from? (*Out of the overflow of our hearts*)
- By what will we be condemned or acquitted? (*Our words*)

Discuss: Do you ever say things that you wish you could take back? Why do we say things that we later regret? Why is it important to be careful about what we say?

Help: Speaking without thinking can make things very bad. We say things that we don't mean and immediately want to take back. It is hard to mend the hurt that we can cause by not being careful with what we say and how we say it. What we say is an indication of what is in our hearts.

Day 69

Read: Matthew 12:38-42

Ask:

- What did the Pharisees want Jesus to do? (*Perform a miraculous sign*)
- What did Jesus call his generation? (*A wicked and adulterous generation*)
- Who will stand up at the judgement day and condemn Jesus' generation? (*The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be spiritually adulterous? How was Jesus' generation "adulterous"? How are people spiritually adulterous today? How can we make sure we are not?

Help: To be spiritually adulterous is to give our time and focus to things that take us away from God. The book of Hosea is a story regarding the way that Israel behaved in an adulterous manner by worshipping other gods. Jesus' generation was focused on outward righteousness instead of inward. They were focused on self instead of God. Today, people can be very similar, turning their hearts away from God. In everything, we should make sure we are working for God.

Day 70

Read: Matthew 12:43-45

Ask:

- What does an evil spirit do after it leaves a man? (*Goes through arid places seeking rest but does not find it, so returns to the house he left*)
- If the evil spirits returns and finds the house empty, what will it do? (*Goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself and they go to live there*)
- What is the final condition of the man? (*Worse than his original condition*)

Discuss: If a person turns from evil, why is it important to fill their life with good things? What happens if they don't?

Help: People who escape from sin can be quickly pulled back into it if they don't fill their life with other things. A person who is overcoming an addiction can be pulled back into the addiction if they do not fill their life with something to replace the addiction.

Day 71

Read: Matthew 12:46-50

Ask:

- What did Jesus' mother and brothers want? (*To speak to Jesus*)
- What did Jesus ask when he was told about his mother and brothers? (*"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"*)
- Who did Jesus say were his family? (*Whoever does the will of his Father in heaven*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be Jesus' brothers and sisters? How should that impact our lives? Who do we belong to if we are not following Jesus?

Help: To be Jesus' brothers and sisters means we are children of God. Being children of God should impact every part of our life. We should live like God, our Father, would want us to live and emulate him in our life. .If we are not following Jesus we are children of the devil.

Day 72

Read: Matthew 13:1-9

Ask:

- What happened to the seed that fell on the path? (*The birds came and ate it.*)
- Why did the seed in rocky places wither? (*It had no roots*)
- What happened to the seed that fell among thorns? (*The thorns grew up and choked the plants.*)

Discuss: How do we grow roots spiritually? What are some potential thorns in our lives? How can we avoid thorns?

Help: Our faith cannot just be an outward appearance. We have to spend time maturing spiritually by studying the Bible. Thorns are the worries and concerns that steal away our joy in serving the Lord.

Day 73

Read: Matthew 13:10-17

Ask:

- Why did Jesus speak in parables? (*Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven were not given to the crowds*)
- What prophecy was fulfilled by the people? (“*You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving...*”)
- Who longed to see what the disciples saw? (*Many prophets and righteous men*)

Discuss: Is hearing something enough? How important is understanding? What should we do if we don't understand something?

Help: People hear things all the time. We have a saying, “In one ear and out the other.” We need to make sure that we truly listen when people talk and strive to understand. If we don't understand we should ask questions so that we can understand. Many times the disciples asked Jesus to explain a parable because they did not understand it.

Day 74

Read: Matthew 13:18-23

Ask:

- What did the seed represent? (*The word of God*)
- What did the seed that fell on rock places represent? (*Those that receive the word immediately with joy, but has no root so lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.*)
- How much did the seed that fell on good soil produce? (*A hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown*)

Discuss: How do we know if we are in good soil? What can we do to produce crops?

Help: If we are in good soil, we show it by how we act, but we also are building roots (our faith). As we grow, people will see us and come to know Christ as well. We produce crops by bringing others to Jesus.

Day 75

Read: Matthew 13:24-30

Ask:

- In Jesus' parable, what happened during the night while everyone was sleeping? (*The enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat*)
- What did the owner's servants want to do about the weeds? (*Pull them up*)
- Why didn't the owner want the servants to pull the weeds? (*Because while they pulled up the weeds, they may root up the wheat with them*)

Discuss: Why do we live among people who do not follow God? Why doesn't God simply take away wicked people? How should we behave towards unbelievers?

Help: God desires that all come to repentance. We should show unbelievers God's love so they may want to learn more and come to him. There are many people who turn to God late in their life. If God were to remove all the wicked, there are some who may have been saved who would be lost.

Day 76

Read: Matthew 13:31-35

Ask:

- What seed does Jesus compare the kingdom of God to? (*A mustard seed*)
- What ingredient does Jesus compare the kingdom of God to? (*Yeast*)
- What impact does yeast have on dough? (*It makes the dough get bigger or rise*)

Discuss: How is the church like a mustard seed? How can we help it to continue to grow?

Help: The church started very small in an upper room in Acts 1. The church started to grow though, and has grown to include millions of people. We can help the church to continue to grow by speaking to people about God and helping them come to him.

Day 77

Read: Matthew 13:36-43

Ask:

- In Jesus' parable, what did the seed represent? (*The Son of Man*)
- Who is the enemy? (*The devil*)
- What happens to the weeds at the harvest (*They are thrown into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*)

Discuss: What will happen to those that don't follow God? What happens to us if we follow God?

Help: In the end, all those God will spend eternity in hell. Hell is removed from God. It is a terrible place. There is nothing good about hell. If we follow God and receive God's forgiveness, then we will spend eternity with him in heaven. Heaven is every way the opposite of what hell will be.

Day 78

Read: Matthew 13:44-52

Ask:

- What did Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven to? (*A treasure hidden in a field, a merchant looking for fine pearls, a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish*)
- What did the man who found the treasure do? (*Sold all he had and bought the field*)
- What will the angels do to the world? (*Come and separate the wicked from the righteous*)

Discuss: What is the kingdom of God worth? What should we be willing to sacrifice for the kingdom of God? What are we willing to sacrifice?

Help: There is nothing worth more than the kingdom of God. If serving God requires a sacrifice, there should be nothing that we wouldn't be willing to sacrifice for God and his kingdom.

Day 79

Read: Matthew 13:53-58

Ask:

- What town did Jesus come to? (*His hometown, Nazareth*)
- How did the people respond to Jesus? (*They were amazed and wondered where he had gotten this wisdom and miraculous powers from.*)
- Why didn't Jesus perform any miracles there? (*Because of their lack of faith*)

Discuss: We are called to change to become more like Jesus. Why might people not see or accept that we are changing? How can we handle people who don't accept us as children of God?

Help: Unfortunately, people often see what they expect to see. If we change, people often don't see the change and expect to see who we used to be. We should not let other people's thoughts about us affect how we live. We should continue to grow and become more like Jesus no matter what other people think. Over time they will see the changes.

Day 80

Read: Matthew 14:1-5

Ask:

- Who arrested John? (*Herod the tetrarch*)
- Why did Herod arrest John? (*Because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife*)
- What did Herod want to do to John? (*Kill him*)

Discuss: Did John know what would happen when he spoke against Herod? What might happen to us if we speak God's word? How should we respond to the dangers?

Help: John knew that his message was not a popular one. John spoke God's message regardless of what Herod would do to him. We may be persecuted if we speak God's word, but we should still speak of God regardless.

Day 81

Read: Matthew 14:6-12

Ask:

- What promise did Herod make? (*To give Herodias' daughter whatever she asked*)
- What did Herodias' daughter ask for? (*The head of John the Baptist*)
- Why did Herod kill John? (*Because of an oath he made*)

Discuss: Do we make promises that we don't want to keep or can't keep? Why should we be careful about promises we make? How can we make sure we don't make a promise we don't want to keep or can't keep?

Help: This is one of the major stories where an oath came back to haunt someone. In Judges 11, we learn of Jephthah who also made a foolish vow. We should be careful not to make promises, because we do not want to end up regretting the promise.

Day 82

Read: Matthew 14:13-21

Ask:

- Why did the disciples want Jesus to send the crowds away? (*So the crowd could go to the villages to buy food*)
- How much food did the disciples have? (*Five loaves of bread and two fish*)
- How much food was leftover? (*Twelve basketsful*)

Discuss: Jesus provided physical food to the crowd. What kind of food does Jesus provide us now? What is spiritual food? How does he provide it?

Help: In John 6, Jesus talks about the fact that he is the Bread of Life. Spiritual food is the type of food that strengthens our spiritual body, rather than our physical one. Things such as prayer, studying the scriptures, doing good deeds, etc. are ways that we can get spiritual food. If we hunger and thirst for righteousness, Jesus will fill us.

Day 83

Read: Matthew 14:22-27

Ask:

- What did Jesus have the disciples do while he dismissed the crowds? (*Get into the boat and go on ahead of him*)
- How did Jesus reach the disciples? (*By walking on water*)
- Why were the disciples afraid? (*They thought Jesus was a ghost*)

Discuss: What scares you? How can we overcome things that we fear?

Help: As Franklin Roosevelt once said, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself.” Fear is one of the biggest reasons why people decide not to obey God. They don’t want to face the consequences. God however is with us in everything. When God is for us, we have nothing to fear.

Day 84

Read: Matthew 14:28-36

Ask:

- What proof did Peter want? (*For Jesus to tell him to come out on the water*)
- Where were the other disciples while Peter walked on the water? (*Still in the boat*)
- Why did Peter begin to sink? (*Because he saw the wind and was afraid, or because he doubted*)

Discuss: Why is it good for us to leave our comfort zone? What are some of the ways we can leave our comfort zone for God? How can we make sure that we aren’t overwhelmed when we leave our comfort zone?

Help: Leaving our comfort zone is very difficult. We like to stay where we feel comfortable, but God wants us to step out of our comfort zone. We should spend time in prayer and talk to friends and family to help us find ways we can leave our comfort zone and serve God.

