

MATTHEW

15-28

HOME

DEVOTIONALS

INTRODUCTION

These devotionals are designed to last for 13 weeks (91 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 15-28 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 the 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 discuss 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 during the discussion time.

Day 1

Read: Matthew 15:1-6

Ask:

- What tradition did the Pharisees and teachers of the law accuse the disciples of breaking? (*Washing their hands before eating*)
- What law did Jesus say the Pharisees and teachers of the law broke? (*Honor your father and mother*)
- How did they break it? (*By saying any help they would give their parents was a gift devoted to God.*)

Discuss: Are all traditions bad? What are some traditions that we follow today? How can we make sure that we do not treat our traditions like laws?

Help: It is important to differentiate between a tradition and law. A law is a command of God, a tradition is something that originated with man. There are a number of traditions that children may be familiar with, including family and church traditions. A common tradition is the order of worship (a certain number of songs, prayers, a sermon, etc). Consider what would happen if someone broke that tradition and how others may respond.

Day 2

Read: Matthew 15:7-14

Ask:

- What is a hypocrite? (*A person who claims to have moral standards or beliefs but their behavior does not show it*)
- Where were the people's hearts? (*Far from God*)
- What happens when the blind leads the blind? (*They both fall into a pit*)

Discuss: Why were the Pharisees offended by Jesus' teachings? How can we be sure that we are not being hypocrites? What does it mean for our hearts to be with God?

Help: The Pharisees thought that they were close to God because they followed all of their traditions. The Pharisees did not understand that truly following God is not following a list of traditions but pursuing God and His will with all of your heart. Everything we do should come back to God, not because we are commanded to, but because we want it to.

Day 3

Read: Matthew 15:15-20

Ask:

- What did Peter ask Jesus to do? (*Explain the parable*)
- Where do things that come out of the mouth come from? (*The heart*)
- What comes out of the heart? (*Evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and slander*)

Discuss: How can we tell what is in someone's heart? How do we show what is truly in our hearts?

Help: How we talk and behave tells people what is important to us and what is truly in our hearts. Our priorities and daily life will clearly show what is in our hearts. We need to be aware when sin and darkness are in our heart and strive to cleanse ourselves of anything wrong.

Day 4

Read: Matthew 15:21-28

Ask:

- What problem did the Canaanite woman have? (*Her daughter suffered from demon-possession*)
- How did the Canaanite woman respond when Jesus said that it was not right to throw the children's bread to the dogs? (*"Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table."*)
- What happened because of the Canaanite woman's faith? (*Her daughter was healed*)

Discuss: How did the Canaanite woman demonstrate her great faith? How do we demonstrate our faith?

Help: The Canaanite woman is one of two people in Matthew that Jesus comments on how great their faith is (the other being the Centurion in Matthew 8). These people believed that Jesus was capable of doing anything and were willing to do whatever it took so that Jesus would provide the healing they needed. Faith is not simply believing but putting your belief into action. James says that faith without works is dead.

Day 5

Read: Matthew 15:29-32

Ask:

- Who did the crowd bring to Jesus? (*The lame, blind, crippled, mute and many others*)
- What did the people do after seeing Jesus heal all the sick that were brought to Him? (*Praised God*)
- How long did the people stay with Jesus without food? (*Three days*)

Discuss: What is God doing today? How should we respond to all the amazing God has done and is continuing to do? How important should God be because of this?

Help: The people were so amazed at the work of Jesus that they went days without food so that they could be there and see all that He did. These people were in awe of God. God is continuing to do so much for us today, but we often miss it. We don't consider all the blessing that God has given us. If we truly appreciated and understood how awesome God is, we would be filled with the same awe as the crowds in Matthew 15. Everything else in our lives would dim in comparison to God.

Day 6

Read: Matthew 15:33-39

Ask:

- How much food did the disciples have? (*Seven loaves and a few small fish*)
- What did Jesus do with the food the disciples had? (*Gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to the disciples*)
- How many did Jesus feed? (*4,000 besides women and children*)

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 7

Read: Matthew 16:1-4

Ask:

- Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees ask Jesus for a sign? (*To test Him*)
- How would the Pharisees and Sadducees predict the weather? (*By the sky being red in the evening or morning*)
- What sign did Jesus give the Pharisees and Sadducees? (*The sign of Jonah*)

Discuss: What signs or evidence do we have that Jesus is the Christ and that God exists?

Help: People in Jesus' day wanted sign and wonders to prove that Jesus was truly the Son of God. Even though Jesus healed many, they still would not believe. Today the amount of evidence for Jesus and God is overwhelming. Psalms 19:1-2, Romans 1:20-22 both explain that nature clearly demonstrates God's existence. There is also historical evidence as to the existence of Jesus in a number of ancient writings as well as numerous reasons to believe the teachings in the Bible regarding Jesus.

Day 8

Read: Matthew 16:5-12

Ask:

- What did Jesus tell the disciples to be on guard against? (*The yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees*)
- What did the disciples think Jesus meant? (*Jesus was talking about how they had forgot bread*)
- What did Jesus actually mean? (*The teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees*)

Discuss: How can we be on guard against “yeast”? How can we know that a person’s teaching is wrong?

Help: Paul writes in I Thessalonians that we should test everything and hold to that which is true. Many times, people make mistakes accidentally while they are teaching. We need to be careful to listen to what is taught, whether by preachers or teachers, and confirm that it is true. Remember, everyone makes mistakes, even preachers and teachers.

Day 9

Read: Matthew 16:13-16

Ask:

- What did Jesus ask the disciples? (“*Who do people say the Son of Man is?*”)
- Who did people say Jesus was? (*John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets*)
- Who did Peter say Jesus was? (“*The Christ, the Son of the living God*”)

Discuss: What do you want people to say about you? What can we do so that people see us the way that we want to be seen?

Help: Even though Jesus was the Christ, not everyone realized or accepted that this was true. Those closest to Him, such as Peter, realized the truth. People are always watching us and judging us. They see how we behave and it shapes their beliefs about us. We need to be very careful about how we act and what we say. One mistake can have long term consequences in the way that people view us.

Day 10

Read: Matthew 16:17-20

Ask:

- What did Jesus say His church will be built on? (*This rock, Peter’s confession*)
- What will not overcome the church? (*The gates of Hades*)
- What did Jesus warn the disciples? (*Not to tell anyone that He was the Christ*)

Discuss: How is Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God the foundation of the church? How is this foundation seen in the church? How does this foundation impact our daily lives?

Help: A foundation is what everything is built on. The church is made up of the people following God, and not the building where they meet. The church’s foundation is Jesus then it should be the foundation for the lives of Christians. In the end, everything in the church and in our lives comes back to the Son of the living God.

Day 11

Read: Matthew 16:21-23

Ask:

- What did Jesus say would happen? (*He would suffer many things, be killed and be raised to life on the third day*)
- How did Peter respond to Jesus? (*“Never Lord! This shall never happen to you!”*)
- What did Jesus say that Peter had in mind? (*Things of men*)

Discuss: What is the difference between thinking of things of man and thinking of things of God? How do we make sure that we are focused on the things of God?

Help: Man is focused on the physical, God on the spiritual. When we focus on the things of this world, or physical things, we find ourselves less inclined to thinking of godly things. While physical needs are important, focusing on God and our spiritual growth are more important.

Day 12

Read: Matthew 16:24-28

Ask:

- What does it require to follow Jesus? (*Denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Him*)
- Who will find their life? (*Whoever loses his life for Jesus*)
- How will Jesus reward each person? (*According to what he has done*)

Discuss: What does it mean to deny ourselves? How do we sacrifice ourselves for Jesus?

Help: We all have wants and desires. Who, as a child, didn't dream about making tons of money, having the perfect house, or a myriad of other things we wanted for ourselves. As we grow up we realize that isn't realistic, but often we still focus on bettering our lives. It is vital that we consider others above ourselves. A child may want a new toy or game, but perhaps it would be better to think about what others might need.

Day 13

Read: Matthew 17:1-8

Ask:

- What happened to Jesus on the mountain? (*He was transfigured*)
- Who appeared with Jesus? (*Moses and Elijah*)
- What did the voice from the cloud say? (*“This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”*)

Discuss: How do God and Jesus reveal themselves to us today? How do we see them at work?

Help: God and Jesus continue to work for us and with us. When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit dwells inside us. God helps us in many ways and circumstances. We can all think of times when something really bad could have happened, but for some unexplainable reason, it didn't. We can learn about God through the Bible as well as through the world around us.

Day 14

Read: Matthew 17:9-13

Ask:

- What command did Jesus give the disciples? (*Not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had been raised*)
- What were the disciples trying to understand? (*Why the teachers of the law said Elijah must come first*)
- Who did the disciples realize was Elijah? (*John the Baptist*)

Discuss: Have we ever misunderstood what God's plan is? How do we learn God's plan?

Help: The disciples and teachers of the law had long misunderstood what God had planned. They thought that Elijah would come in a particular way, that the Christ would come and free Israel from Rome, but they were wrong. God's plan was totally different than what people at that time thought. We often try to guess God's plan, but we cannot know what he fully intends until it happens. Studying the Bible and following His commands allows us to adapt to whatever God's plan may be for our lives.

Day 15

Read: Matthew 17:14-18

Ask:

- What problem did the man have? (*His son had seizures and was suffering greatly*)
- Who had tried to heal his son? (*The disciples*)
- How did Jesus heal the man's son? (*He rebuked the demon*)

Discuss: What do we do if things don't work out the way we expect? Why is it hard to keep trying after failures?

Help: The man had tried to get Jesus' disciples to heal his son, but when that did not work he did not give up but kept trying. Too often, people give up when things go wrong. We have to get back up and try again just as this father did.

Day 16

Read: Matthew 17:19-23

Ask:

- Why weren't the disciples able to cast out the demon? (*Because they had so little faith*)
- What could the disciples do with faith as small as a mustard seed? (*Move a mountain*)
- What would be impossible for the disciples? (*Nothing*)

Discuss: What is faith? How do we grow our faith?

Help: Faith is total belief without doubt. Hebrews 11:1 says that faith is the being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. Growing our faith is difficult, because it means relying more and more on Jesus and God. It requires us to put ourselves in situations where we have to rely on Jesus and God to take care of us and see us through.

Day 17

Read: Matthew 17:24-27

Ask:

- What did the collectors of the two-drachma tax ask Peter? (*If Jesus paid the temple tax*)
- Who did Jesus say was exempt from taxes? (*The sons*)
- What did Jesus tell Peter to do so they didn't offend the collectors of the tax? (*Go to the lake, throw out his line, and take the first fish he caught and find the money in its mouth*)

Discuss: When should we avoid offending people? How do we offend people?

Help: There are times when we might offend people by simply being a Christian. We do not behave the way the world does, which can offend people. We have to be careful that we are not purposely offending people when we can reasonably choose not to. This may mean that in certain situations we do not talk about an issue that may be offensive to some. It is important to keep in mind that there is a time and place for all things.

Day 18

Read: Matthew 18:1-6

Ask:

- What did the disciples ask Jesus? (*"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*)
- What must we do to enter the kingdom of heaven? (*Become like little children*)
- Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? (*Whoever humbles themselves like a child*)

Discuss: How should we be like little children? How are little children humble?

Help: As we grow older, we start to think that we have control of our lives and don't need to rely on anyone else to get us through. Children however are humble and know that they must rely on their parents and understand that their parents get to make decisions regarding their lives. In the same way, we should be like children and rely on God, our Father and keep in mind that He is the one in charge of our lives, not us.

Day 19

Read: Matthew 18:7-9

Ask:

- What does “woe” mean? (*Great sorrow or distress*)
- What should we do if our hand or foot causes us to sin? (*Cut it off and throw it away*)
- Rather than be cast into hell, it is better to enter life how? (*Maimed or crippled*)

Discuss: Does Jesus mean to literally cut off our hand or foot? 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, 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 20

Read: Matthew 18:10-14

Ask:

- What will a man do if one of his hundred sheep wanders off? (*Leave the 99 and find the one*)
- If the man finds the sheep, what will the man's reaction be? (*Happier about the 1 than the 99*)
- Who is God not willing to be lost? (*Any little ones*)

Discuss: Why is God happier about the one that was lost? Should we wander away from God just so He is happier when we come back?

Help: God loves all that choose to follow Him. He is overjoyed that we should choose to follow Him. This passage does not mean we need to wander away to make God happier, but is instead focused on those that do not know Jesus. The best way to please God and to make Him happy is to bring others to Him that they may follow Him.

Day 21

Read: Matthew 18:15-20

Ask:

- What should we do when someone sins against us? (*Go and show him his fault just the two of you*)
- What if they don't listen to us? (*Bring along 2 or 3 others*)
- What if they refuse to listen to the church? (*Treat them like a pagan or a tax collector*)

Discuss: Why is it important to talk to someone about how they offended you? Is it wrong to tell others what someone did to you when you haven't talked to that person? Why?

Help: Many times, people do not realize that they have done something to offend another person. Letting them know allows them to correct their behavior. If we start telling others what this person has done, it can quickly turn to gossip and make our relationship with that person even worse. It can also give that person an undeserved bad name among others if we start talking about them.

Day 22

Read: Matthew 18:21-27

Ask:

- What question did Peter have? (*How many times should he forgive his brother?*)
- How much did the man owe the king? (*10,000 talents – millions of dollars*)
- What did the master do when the servant begged? (*Cancelled the debt*)

Discuss: How have we sinned against God? What has He done for us? Why is this forgiveness so special?

Help: Every time we sin or do something unloving, we are sinning against God. When we choose to follow God and are baptized, He forgives us of everything we've done wrong. It is important to remember that we have done nothing to earn or deserve forgiveness. God forgives in spite of the fact that we continue to sin against Him.

Day 23

Read: Matthew 18:28-33

Ask:

- How much did the fellow servant owe the servant who the king had forgiven? (*A hundred denarii – a few dollars*)
- What did the servant do when his fellow servant begged? (*Threw the man into prison*)
- How did the king respond when he heard what had happened? (*He was angry and had the man thrown into jail until he could pay off his debt*)

Discuss: Why is it important for us to forgive others? Why is it hard for us to forgive?

Help: When someone does something wrong to us, we want revenge or an apology or something to get even with them. This is not biblical though. When someone does something wrong to us, we need to let it go and forgive the person. We can talk to the person about what happened but we don't seek retribution or require them to be worthy of our forgiveness. If we don't forgive, we won't be forgiven.

Day 24

Read: Matthew 19:1-6

Ask:

- Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about divorce? (*To test Him*)
- What did Jesus use to answer the Pharisees? (*Scriptures*)
- What should man not do to what God has joined? (*Separate*)

Discuss: How are we tested spiritually? What can we do to pass these tests?

Help: People will often challenge our faith. Sometimes this will be in science class and sometimes this will be friends or classmates who disagree with what we believe. To be able to answer these tests, we need to turn to the Bible and use it to help us answer these tests. We can also talk to parents or other members of the church to help us better respond to these tests.

Day 25

Read: Matthew 19:7-12

Ask:

- What did Moses command? (*That a man give his wife a certificate of divorce*)
- Why did Moses permit divorce? (*Their hearts were hard*)
- What did the disciples think of this situation? (*It was better not to marry*)

Discuss: Was the Law of Moses perfect? Why were the Jews given the Law? Are we still under the Law?

Help: The Law of Moses was not perfect. If it had been, there would have been no reason for Jesus to come and die for us. Instead it was meant as a guide to help a people find the morality that God called them to. We are not under this law anymore, but instead we are under the Law of Christ. We no longer must abide by the Sabbath or offer sacrifices, but heaven is our Sabbath rest and the only sacrifice we needed was Jesus on the cross.

Day 26

Read: Matthew 19:13-15

Ask:

- Why were little children brought to Jesus? (*For Him to place His hands on them*)
- How did the disciples respond to those who brought the children? (*They rebuked them*)
- What did Jesus tell the disciples to do? (*Let the little children come to Him*)

Discuss: Why are children so important to God? How can we help those younger than us to obey Jesus?

Help: Children are molded into what they will become when they are young. Children who grow close to God will often times have close personal relationships with God as they grow into adults. A child who is led astray is likely to follow the wrong path into adulthood. We can help younger children grow and become like Jesus by setting a good example, talking to them, and offering to answer questions that they may have. We should be the supports to help those younger than us.

Day 27

Read: Matthew 19:16-22

Ask:

- What did the man want to know? (*What good things he had to do to get eternal life*)
- What did Jesus tell the man to do to be perfect? (*Give away his possessions to the poor and come follow Jesus*)
- Why did the man go away sad? (*He had great wealth*)

Discuss: Is having money bad? When does it become bad? How can we keep money from getting in the way of our spiritual walk?

Help: Money in of itself is not a bad thing. Money is a very useful thing and we can use it to serve God and do His will. It becomes a bad thing when we strive for money for the sake of having money and things. When money is the motivation instead of the tool, we have a problem. We need to always remember that money is simply a tool to use to serve God.

Day 28

Read: Matthew 19:23-30

Ask:

- What is easier than a rich man entering the kingdom of God? (*A camel passing through the eye of a needle*)
- How can people be saved? (*With God*)
- What will those that left home and family for Jesus' sake receive? (*A hundred times as much and eternal life*)

Discuss: What can we do, without Jesus, to enter the kingdom of God? Why do we need God to enter?

Help: Paul reminds us in Romans 8 that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We do not deserve to enter the kingdom of God and there is nothing we can do to earn it. We need God, because by ourselves it is impossible. God provides us the way to join Him in His kingdom.

Day 29

Read: Matthew 20:1-10

Ask:

- How much did the landowner agree to pay the first men he hired? (*A denarius*)
- How many times did the landowner hire men to work in his vineyard? (*5 times – early, 3rd hour, 6th hour, 9th hour and 11th hour*)
- How much did the landowner pay the last men he hired? (*A denarius*)

Discuss: Do you think that landowner was fair with how he paid? Why/why not? Will people who followed Jesus hundreds of years ago receive a better reward than those of us following Him today? Why not?

Help: Jesus is demonstrating that all men who choose to follow Him will be rewarded. Whether a person followed Jesus in the first century or today, they will both receive eternal life. Whether a person follows God for the last days of their life or served Him for 70 or 80 years, they will still receive eternal life. Just because one person has known and followed God longer does not make them better than a person who recently came to follow God.

Day 30

Read: Matthew 20:11-16

Ask:

- What did the men hired first grumble about? (*That they were paid equally when they did more work*)
- Did the landowner pay what he promised? (*Yes*)
- Did grumbling do the men any good? (*No*)

Discuss: What do people grumble or complain about? How do we stop from complaining?

Help: Grumbling and complaining does no one any good. Learning to be content in all circumstances allows us to not complain when things aren't perfect. Paul gives us the solution to being content in all circumstances in Philippians 4:13. Through Jesus we can be content and know that no matter what happens, God's will is being done in our lives.

Day 31

Read: Matthew 20:17-19

Ask:

- Where were Jesus and the Twelve going? (*Jerusalem*)
- What were the chief priests and teachers of the law going to do to Jesus? (*Condemn Jesus to death and turn Him over to be mocked and flogged and crucified.*)
- What would happen on the third day? (*He would be raised to life.*)

Discuss: Did Jesus know what was going to happen? Why did he go to Jerusalem anyways? What good things do we avoid because we fear consequences?

Help: The Bible emphasizes that Jesus knew what was to come but chose to follow the path of pain and death. We often don't want to talk about Jesus or defend Him because of the reaction of other people. Jesus died for us by His own choice, and we are afraid of being ridiculed for standing up for Him or telling others about His love.

Day 32

Read: Matthew 20:20-23

Ask:

- What did the mother of Zebedee's sons want? (*That one of her sons be at Jesus' left and the other at His right*)
- What did Jesus ask? (*If they could drink the cup He was going to drink*)
- Why didn't Jesus give them what their mother asked for? (*The places belonged to those that the Father had prepared them for*)

Discuss: Have you ever wanted something you could not have? Why does God say "no" when we pray?

Help: A preacher once said that God gives the answer to our prayers that we would want if we knew everything He did. We often think that God saying no either means He isn't there or doesn't care about us. Nothing can be further from the truth.

Day 33

Read: Matthew 20:24-28

Ask:

- How did the rulers of the Gentiles act? (*They lorded it over those they ruled*)
- What did the disciples have to do to be great? (*Be servants*)
- What did the Son of Man come to do? (*To serve, not be served*)

Discuss: How do we serve? What can we do in the house to be a servant? In the church?

Help: Jesus makes it very clear that we are called to be servants. We serve by not only doing what is required of us but going above and beyond. Serving is identifying a need and fulfilling it, such as noticing the garbage is overflowing and taking it out even if it isn't our job to do it.

Day 34

Read: Matthew 20:29-34

Ask:

- What did the two men shout? (*"Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"*)
- What did the two men want? (*Jesus to restore their sight*)
- How did Jesus heal them? (*He touched their eyes*)

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 35

Read: Matthew 21:1-6

Ask:

- What did Jesus send two disciples ahead to do? (*Bring Him a donkey and its colt*)
- What did the disciples find? (*Everything exactly as Jesus said it would be*)
- What prophecy did this fulfill? (*Zechariah 9:9*)

Discuss: Why is it important Jesus fulfilled prophecies such as the one mentioned in this passage? How does this help us verify that He is the Son of God?

Help: Matthew often points out when Jesus fulfilled prophecy. It is vital that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies to demonstrate that He was the Christ who was to come. The fact that so many prophecies exist in the Old Testament and that Jesus fulfilled each helps us to be certain that Jesus was truly the Son of God.

Day 36

Read: Matthew 21:7-11

Ask:

- How did Jesus enter Jerusalem? (*On a donkey*)
- What did the crowd do? (*Spread the cloaks and branches on the road*)
- What did the crowd say Jesus was? (*The Son of David*)

Discuss: Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king. What is He king of? What should He be king of? How do we show He is our king?

Help: The Jews were expecting an earthly king like King David, but they were mistaken. Jesus did not come to reign over an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly one. We, as Christians, belong to that heavenly kingdom and therefore should make Jesus king of our lives. This means putting Him and His will first and foremost in our life.

Day 37

Read: Matthew 21:12-17

Ask:

- What did Jesus do when He entered the temple? (*Drove out all those buying and selling there*)
- Who came to Jesus in the temple? (*The blind and the lame*)
- How did the chief priests and teachers of the law react to all the wonderful things Jesus was doing? (*They were indignant*)

Discuss: What is the temple today? How do we make it a “den of robbers”? How do we make it a house of prayer?

Help: In 1 Corinthians 6:19, Paul explains that our bodies are the temple of God. How we live and what we do determines if our body is being kept us holy for God or not. We need to take good care of our body in every way. We need to make sure we are filling ourselves with spiritual food and following God in all that we do.

Day 38

Read: Matthew 21:18-22

Ask:

- What did Jesus see on the side of the road? (*A fig tree*)
- What did Jesus find on the fig tree? (*Nothing but leaves*)
- What happened to the fig tree? (*It immediately withered*)

Discuss: How do we bear fruit? What will happen to us if we do not bear 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. Failing to bear good fruit means that we are not following God.

Day 39

Read: Matthew 21:23-27

Ask:

- What did the chief priests and elders of the people want to know? (*Where Jesus got His authority*)
- What did Jesus ask them in return? (*Was John's baptism from heaven or from men*)
- Why didn't they answer Jesus? (*They feared the people if they said from man, and knew Jesus would ask why they didn't believe if they said from God.*)

Discuss: Why is it important for us to be able to know and defend our beliefs? What should we do if we aren't sure about what we believe or why we believe it?

Help: The Pharisees knew that they could not defend what they believed about John the Baptist, so they decided to give no answer. We need to make sure we are always ready to give a defense of our beliefs, because we never know when we might be able to help someone to Christ. If we don't understand a belief or why we believe it, it is important to research it and to talk to parents, ministers, or elders.

Day 40

Read: Matthew 21:28-32

Ask:

- How did the sons respond when their father asked them to work in the vineyard? (*The first said he would, the second said he wouldn't*)
- What did the sons actually do? (*The first did not go work in the field, the second did*)
- Who believed John? (*The tax collectors and prostitutes*)

Discuss: What value is there in claiming to follow Jesus with no action? What action is required of us?

Help: In James, we are told that faith without deeds is dead. James points out that even the demons believe and shudder. Belief alone is not enough, we are called to action. We need to daily strive to be like Jesus in every way, showing love to all that we come into contact with.

Day 41

Read: Matthew 21:33-41

Ask:

- How did the tenants treat the servants? (*Beat, killed and stoned them*)
- Why did the landowner send his son? (*Because he thought they would respect his son*)
- What will the landowner do to the tenants? (*Bring them to a wretched end*)

Discuss: Who do the tenants represent? How do we give God “His share of the crops”?

Help: The tenants represent the Israelites who enjoyed the blessing of God but never gave their hearts to Him. They felt they deserved all the good God showed them, but missed the point that God really wanted them to want Him. We give God His share of the crops by giving Him our hearts and lives. This isn't about us keeping some for ourselves and giving some to God. It is all God's in the first place, and we should give it all to God. Everything we do should be for God.

Day 42

Read: Matthew 21:42-46

Ask:

- What happened to the stone the builders rejected? (*It has become the capstone*)
- Who would the kingdom of God be given to? (*Those who will produce its fruit*)
- Why didn't the Pharisees arrest Jesus? (*They were afraid of the people*)

Discuss: How was Jesus rejected? How is Jesus rejected today? How can we help a person who has rejected Jesus?

Help: Rejecting Jesus is a major problem. Rejecting Jesus means that you refuse to recognize Him as God and refuse to serve Him. The people of His time rejected Him by ascribing His miracles to demons, by testing Him and even seeking to kill Him. People reject Jesus most obviously by fighting against Christianity and claiming there is no God, but they also reject Him by living a sinful life and denying His rule over their life. To help people who have rejected Him, we have to show them His love and compassion and help them see who Jesus really is and what He means to us.

Day 43

Read: Matthew 22:1-7

Ask:

- Who did the king send his servants to? (*To those who had been invited*)
- What did those invited to the wedding banquet do instead of going to the banquet? (*One went to his field, another to his business, the rest mistreated and killed his servants*)
- How did the king respond? (*He sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and their city*)

Discuss: What gets in our way of following God? What can we do to make sure God is the most important thing in our life?

Help: As humans, we are very easily distracted. Sports, tv, movies, books, friends and many other things can come between us and following God. A quick test to see if something is more important than God is to ask would I rather be doing this than being at worship service. If the answer is yes, then that is a problem. In everything, God needs to be first.

Day 44

Read: Matthew 22:8-14

Ask:

- Who was invited to the wedding banquet? (*Anyone the servants found*)
- What did the king notice about one of the guests? (*He was not wearing wedding clothes*)
- What was done with the man? (*They tied him hand and foot and threw him into the darkness*)

Discuss: Is accepting Jesus' invitation enough? What more is required? How do we put on proper clothes?

Help: It is very important for us to accept Jesus' invitation by being baptized into His family and church, but it is not enough. Many people call themselves Christians but the way they live is contradictory to the teachings of Jesus. Instead we need to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossians 3:12).

Day 45

Read: Matthew 22:15-22

Ask:

- What did the Herodians call Jesus? (*Teacher, a man of integrity that teaches the way of God in accordance with the truth*)
- What did the Herodians ask Jesus? (*Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar*)
- What did Jesus say to give to Caesar? (*What is Caesar's*)

Discuss: What belongs to God? How do we give God what is God's?

Help: Everything originally comes from God so everything belongs to God. Jesus is not contradicting this statement but highlights what Paul says in Romans that we should follow the governments God has put on earth. God deserves our everything. Everything we do should be for God. Everything we have should be used to glorify and honor Him.

Day 46

Read: Matthew 22:23-33

Ask:

- Did the Sadducees believe in the resurrection? (*No*)
- Why were the Sadducees in error? (*They did not know the Scriptures or the power of God*)
- How did Jesus prove the resurrection to the Sadducees? (*By quoting scriptures*)

Discuss: Why is the fact that there is a resurrection important? Do you think people today misunderstand the resurrection? How can we better understand it?

Help: The resurrection is one of the foundations of Christianity. Paul spends many chapters in many of his books explaining the importance of the resurrection. Without the resurrection we are without hope. Because there is a resurrection, we know that death is not the end of our story. To better understand the resurrection, we need to study the Scriptures.

Day 47

Read: Matthew 22:34-40

Ask:

- What is the greatest commandment? (*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind*)
- What is the second greatest? (*Love your neighbor as yourself*)
- What hangs on these two commands? (*All of the Law and the Prophets*)

Discuss: How does love impact our lives? How should love define our lives?

Help: All of the commands of Jesus can be summed up in the word "love." Every action we take should be because of love. When we do things that are unloving, that is when we fall short and sin.

Day 48

Read: Matthew 22:41-45

Ask:

- What did Jesus ask the Pharisees? (*Whose son is the Christ*)
- Who did the Pharisees say the Christ was the son of? (*David*)
- What did the David call the Christ? (*Lord*)

Discuss: Whose son was the Christ? Were the Pharisees wrong? Why is it important that Jesus was the Son of God?

Help: The Pharisees saw the Christ as a man and only a man. They did not understand that He had divine origins. While Jesus was a descendant of David, and Matthew even calls Him the Son of David in Matthew 1, that is not the most important heritage of Jesus. Since He was the Son of God, His sacrifice on the cross provided salvation. If He was just a man, His death would have been meaningless.

Day 49

Read: Matthew 23:1-7

Ask:

- Why should we not do what the Pharisees did? (*They do not practice what they preach*)
- Why do the Pharisees do everything they do? (*For men to see*)
- What did the Pharisees love? (*Places of honor at banquets, the most important seats in the synagogue, to be greeted in the marketplaces, and have men call them 'Rabbi'*)

Discuss: What should be our reason for doing things? Why do we do things for people to see? How do we make sure what we are doing is not just for people to see?

Help: Everything we do should be for God and not for people to see. This is hard for most people. We like attention and for people to notice when we do things. It can be hard to avoid recognition for hard work. If we want to be sure that we are doing things for God then we should think about how we would feel if no one noticed what we were doing.

Day 50

Read: Matthew 23:8-15

Ask:

- Why should we not call each other “Rabbi”? (*We have one Master and we are all brothers*)
- Why should we not call each other “father”? (*We have one Father and He is in heaven*)
- How do we exalt ourselves? (*By humbling ourselves*)

Discuss: Do we view some in the church as more important than others? How do we show humility?

Help: There are many in the church that we look up to and respect, but we should always remember that does not make them inherently better than us. They are just people as well trying to serve God. We shouldn't look for recognition of what we do, but simply strive to follow God.

Day 51

Read: Matthew 23:16-24

Ask:

- What were the teachers of the law and Pharisees saying was important in the temple and at the altar? (*The gold in the temple and the gift on the altar*)
- What did Jesus say was important regarding the temple? (*The one who dwells in it*)
- What did the teachers of the law and Pharisees neglect? (*Justice, mercy and faithfulness*)

Discuss: What is the most important commandment? How do we neglect love, justice, mercy and faithfulness when we are striving to follow God's commands?

Help: The teachers of the law and Pharisees would make sure they obeyed every law and command to an exact measure. They missed the reason behind it all. It is important to make sure we season everything we say with love. There are many who claim the name “Christian” who speak hatred at those who do accept their teachings. This is not the way of a Christian, we speak truth with love.

Day 52

Read: Matthew 23:25-32

Ask:

- How do you clean a cup? (*You wash the inside and the outside is cleaned as well*)
- What is inside a white washed tomb? (*Dead men's bones*)
- What did the teachers of the law and Pharisees' forefathers do to the prophets? (*Murdered them*)

Discuss: Is it enough to do to good things? What does God really want?

Help: All our acts of service to God are worthless if God does not have our heart. God told the Israelites that they honored Him with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him. Our heart is the most important thing to God.

Day 53

Read: Matthew 23:33-39

Ask:

- Who would Jesus send to the Pharisees and teachers of the law? (*Prophets, wise men and teachers*)
- What would the Pharisees and teachers of the law do to them? (*Kill and crucify some, flog others*)
- What did Jesus long to do? (*Gather Jerusalem's children together as a hen gathers her chicks*)

Discuss: Why did Jesus not gather Jerusalem to Himself as He longed to do? What was God willing to do to gather us to Him?

Help: Jesus cannot force anyone to come to Him. God sent Jesus to die for us to show us how great His love for us was so that we might choose to come to Him. We have a choice, to accept the love of God or to reject Him.

Day 54

Read: Matthew 24:1-8

Ask:

- What did the disciples want Jesus to tell them? (*When would the end of the age come and what would be the signs*)
- How were the disciples to react to the wars and rumors of war? (*Not be alarmed*)
- What did Jesus say was to come? (*War, famines, earthquakes*)

Discuss: What bad things are happening in the world? How should the bad things going on impact us?

Help: The world is full of bad things going on. However, these should not scare us or worry us. Instead, we should use bad things to shine God's light and help turn things around.

Day 55

Read: Matthew 24:9-14

Ask:

- How would the disciples be treated? (*They would be hated, persecuted and put to death*)
- Who will be saved? (*Whoever stands firm until the end*)
- Where would the gospel be preached? (*In the whole world*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be persecuted? Why do people fall away when persecuted? What should we do when people mistreat us because of Jesus?

Help: We don't normally face the persecution that Christians faced in the first century. There are parts of the world where Christians are jailed, tortured or even killed because of Christ. We could face teasing, mocking, and other forms of similar attacks because of our beliefs. Many will fall away just to escape the persecution. It is hard, but we need to be like the apostles in Acts 5 and rejoice in our suffering.

Day 56

Read:

Ask: Matthew 24:15-25

- What should those in Judea do when the end of the age comes? (*Flee to the mountains*)
- What was no one to go back for? (*Their cloak or anything in the house*)
- Why would these days be cut short? (*For the sake of the elect*)

Discuss: How did Jesus know what was to come? Is it important that Jesus knew the future? Does He know our future?

Help: Since Jesus is God, He is all knowing and knows what is to come. That includes our future. He is a shepherd and a guide leading us down paths that are best for us. We may sometimes feel like where He is leading us is not where we want to go, but since He knows the future, He knows what is best for us.

Day 57

Read:

Ask: Matthew 24:26-35

- Who is the Son of Man? (*Jesus*)
- Who will see the Son of Man when He returns? (*Everyone*)
- Who will be gathered? (*His elect*)

Discuss: Why is it important that Jesus is returning? What will happen when He returns?

Help: When Jesus returns, all the dead will be raised and we will get to go to heaven with Him if we have lived faithfully and followed His commands.

Day 58

Read: Matthew 24:36-44

Ask:

- Who knows the day or hour Jesus will return? (*Only the Father*)
- What was happening before the flood? (*People were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*)
- Since we don't know when Jesus will return, what should we do? (*Be ready*)

Discuss: Can we pinpoint the day Jesus will return? Why do some try to predict the day Jesus will return? Should we believe people who claim that Jesus has returned?

Help: Throughout the denominational world there are people who claim they calculated the exact day Jesus will return or that Jesus has already come back and left. These are both contradictory to what the Bible says. People love to claim to have knowledge or be privileged to have certain information, but they are only full of lies.

Day 59

Read: Matthew 24:45-51

Ask:

- What will it be good for a servant to be doing when his master returns? (*What he is supposed to be doing*)
- What does the wicked servant do? (*Beats his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards*)
- What will the master do with the wicked servant? (*Cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites*)

Discuss: What is it we are to be doing? Why should we be doing good and not evil? What will happen if Jesus returns and we are not following Him?

Help: We should be living a life full of love when Jesus returns. If He returns and we are not striving to follow Him and showing His love to the world, then He will send us away to hell because He does not know us.

Day 60

Read: Matthew 25:1-5

Ask:

- How many virgins went to meet the bridegroom? (*10*)
- How many were wise? (*5*)
- What did the wise virgins do? (*Took oil in jars along with their lamps*)

Discuss: What do we need to do to make sure we are ready when Jesus comes?

Help: The foolish virgins forgot oil in this parable. It is not anything physical that we need to have to prepare for Jesus' coming. Instead it is where our heart is and what we are doing that we need to make sure are right. If Jesus came back right now, would He say that you are truly following Him?

Day 61

Read: Matthew 25:6-13

Ask:

- Why did the wise virgins not share their oil? (*There would not be enough for them*)
- What did the foolish virgins do? (*Went to buy oil*)
- What happened while the virgins were buying oil? (*The bridegroom came*)

Discuss: What will happen if we aren't ready when Jesus returns?

Help: If we are not ready when Jesus returns He will send us to hell, which is why it is so important that we are constantly striving to follow Him.

Day 62

Read: Matthew 25:14-18

Ask:

- How many servants did the master give money to? (3)
- What did the first 2 servants do? (*Put the money to work and doubled it*)
- What did the last servant do? (*Buried the money*)

Discuss: What has God given us? How do we take good care of what God has given us?

Help: God has given us many blessings and talents. He has given us all we need to leave and more. We can take good care of what God has given us we use what He has given us for His kingdom and not for our own personal gain.

Day 63

Read: Matthew 25:19-23

Ask:

- What did the master do when he returned? (*Settled accounts with the servants*)
- What did the master tell the two servants who doubled what he had given them? (*“Well done, good and faithful servant!”*)
- What did he do for those 2 servants? (*Put them in charge of many things*)

Discuss: What will God do for us if we use what He gave us properly?

Help: If we use what God has given us for His kingdom and not for ourselves, then God will bless even more richly. In the end, God will give us eternal life in heaven.

Day 64

Read: Matthew 25:24-30

Ask:

- Why did the servant hide the money? (*He was afraid*)
- What did the master say the servant should have done? (*Put it on deposit with the bankers*)
- What was done with the servant? (*He was thrown out into the darkness*)

Discuss: How do we “bury” things God has given us?

Help: We bury things that God has given us by failing to use it in the way God meant for us to. It is very common that people choose not to use talents and skills God has given them.

Day 65

Read: Matthew 25:31-40

Ask:

- How will people be separated? (*As a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats*)
- What did those on the right do for the king? (*see verses 35 and 36*)
- When did they do these things? (*Whenever they did them for least of His brothers*)

Discuss: Who should we be helping? What should we be doing to help others?

Help: Helping others should be second nature to us. When we see someone in need and we strive to help fulfill that need. That is the life that the king is saying those on His right lived.

Day 66

Read: Matthew 25:41-46

Ask:

- Where were those on the left side sent? (*Into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels*)
- Why? (*Because they had not taken care of those in need*)
- When did they not do these things for the King? (*When they failed to do these for the least of these*)

Discuss: Why is helping others such an important part of a Christian's life?

Help: It was once said that when you love someone you become more like them. If we love Jesus and are trying to follow Him, we want to be like Him. While on earth, He helped the poor, the sick, the hopeless, and the downcast of society. We should also go out of our way to help all those who are in need.

Day 67

Read: Matthew 26:1-5

Ask:

- How far away was the Passover? (*2 days*)
- Who assembled at the palace of the high priest? (*The chiefs priests and the elders of the people*)
- Why did they not want to arrest Jesus during the Passover? (*They feared a riot*)

Discuss: Why did the chief priests and elders want to arrest and kill Jesus? Why do people try to eliminate Christianity today?

Help: The chief priests and elders were afraid of Jesus. There were two reasons for this. First, He challenged their authority and their rule and they were afraid that they would lose their power. Second, they were afraid that the Romans would come and destroy the nation of Israel because of Jesus. They did not see and understand who Jesus was or the power of God. Today people fight against Christianity for numerous reasons varying from fear to misunderstanding and some because they feel God hurt them.

Day 68

Read: Matthew 26:6-13

Ask:

- What did a woman pour on Jesus? (*Very expensive perfume*)
- How did the disciples react? (*They were indignant*)
- Where would what the woman did be told? (*Wherever the gospel is preached*)

Discuss: Is Jesus telling us not to give to the poor? What is He saying about priorities?

Help: Jesus is absolutely not condemning giving to the poor. Instead Jesus is reminding the disciples that the poor are important, but that He is more important. Give to the poor, serve them, help them from their poverty, but do not neglect Jesus to do so. In all that we do, we need to be sure that our hearts and minds are in the right place.

Day 69

Read: Matthew 26:14-16

Ask:

- Who went to the chief priests? (*Judas Iscariot*)
- What did Judas want? (*Money*)
- What was Judas willing to do? (*Betray Jesus*)

Discuss: What are people willing to do for money? Why is love of money so dangerous?

Help: Love of money and desire for money are the cause of many problems in the world. In some countries, people are starving while the government steals money meant to help the poor. People are beaten, robbed and even killed for a few dollars. People who desire money above all else will do whatever it takes to get it.

Day 70

Read: Matthew 26:17-25

Ask:

- Where did the disciples prepare the Passover? (*At an unnamed person's home*)
- Who was with Jesus eating the Passover? (*The Twelve*)
- How did they respond when Jesus said one of them would betray Him? (*They were very sad and began saying, "Surely not I, Lord?"*)

Discuss: Have you ever been betrayed by one of your friends? What would you have done if you had known they would betray you?

Help: Often times, people will feel betrayed when a friend does something that is hurtful. One of the most common betrayals is when a friend tells everyone a secret that we told them. If we knew that a friend would share a secret, we would probably never tell them the secret. It is interesting that Jesus knew who would betray Him, and yet still kept Him close and treated Him as a friend.

Day 71

Read: Matthew 26:26-30

Ask:

- What did Jesus do with the bread? (*He took it, gave thanks and broke it*)
- What did Jesus say the cup was? (*His blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*)
- What did they do before going out to the Mount of Olives? (*Sang a hymn*)

Discuss: Why do we copy what Jesus did at worship service on Sunday? Does Jesus mean the bread and cup literally change into His flesh and blood? What does He mean?

Help: By setting up this moment, Jesus provides a way for us to remember and reflect on the price that was paid for our freedom. Jesus poured out His blood so that we could be with Him forever. It is important for us to not forget this. Of course, the bread and cup do not change into Jesus' flesh and blood, but Jesus meant that these symbolized His death.

Day 72

Read: Matthew 26:31-35

Ask:

- What did Jesus say all the disciples would do? (*Fall away on account of Him*)
- Who said they would not? (*Peter*)
- How many times would Peter disown Jesus? (*3*)

Discuss: Why do people fall away from Jesus? How can we be sure we will not disown Him?

Help: People fall away for numerous reasons including troubles in life, doubts, or what "experts" say. We need to be willing to talk to fellow Christians whenever anything comes up that could cause us to fall away. If we have doubts or questions, we should share them with other Christians and have them help us.

Day 73

Read: Matthew 26:36-45

Ask:

- What did Jesus pray the first time? (*That God take the cup from Him if possible*)
- What were the disciples doing when Jesus returned? (*Sleeping*)
- What did Jesus pray the second time? (*"If it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done."*)

Discuss: Did God answer Jesus' prayer? Does He answer our prayers? Why does God answer no?

Help: God knew what was required and answered Jesus' prayer. Jesus saw and understood the answer to His prayer. God still answers our prayers, but not always in the way we hope. God answers our prayers in the way we would want Him to answer them if we knew everything He did.

Day 74

Read: Matthew 26:46-56

Ask:

- What was the crowd armed with? (*Swords and clubs*)
- What did one of Jesus' companions do? (*Drew out a sword and struck the high priest's servant*)
- What did Jesus say His Father would put at His disposal? (*12 legions of angels*)

Discuss: Why didn't Jesus call 12 legions of angels? Why did He allow Himself to be arrested?

Help: Jesus willingly went to the cross. He wasn't forced to be arrested or die, but He chose to go through with it. It was this willing sacrifice that demonstrates the fullness of His love and mercy. Through His willing death, He freed us from our sins so that we could be adopted into His family.

Day 75

Read: Matthew 26:57-63

Ask:

- Who was Jesus brought to? (*Caiaphas, the high priest*)
- What were the chief priests and Sanhedrin looking for? (*False evidence against Jesus so they could put Him to death*)
- Did Jesus respond to the charges? (*No*)

Discuss: Why did the Sanhedrin need false witnesses? Why did Jesus not respond if He was innocent?

Help: Jesus committed no sins and did no wrong, but He was treated like a common criminal. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 53 by not answering His accusers. It is also important to note that Jesus understood what was required and knew that nothing He would say would change what was to come.

Day 76

Read: Matthew 26:63-68

Ask:

- What crime did they accuse Jesus of? (*Blasphemy*)
- What punishment did they say He deserved? (*Death*)
- What did they do to Jesus after saying He deserved death? (*Spit in His face and struck Him with their fists and told Him to prophesy who had hit Him*)

Discuss: Did Jesus deserve death? Why would He admit being the Son of God if He knew He would be killed for it? Are you willing to admit that Jesus is the Son of God even when people might mistreat you?

Help: Jesus did not deserve death. He simply told the truth regardless of the consequences. No matter how we might be treated, we need to be willing to tell the truth and defend Jesus.

Day 77

Read: Matthew 26:69-75

Ask:

- Who said that Peter knew Jesus? (*A servant girl, another girl, and those standing there*)
- How many times did he disown Jesus? (*3*)
- What did Peter do when he realized what he had done? (*Went outside and wept bitterly*)

Discuss: How do we react when we realize we have sinned? How should we react?

Help: Sometimes, people make light of the fact that they have sinned. They pray for forgiveness and that's the end until they sin again. Sinning is a terrible thing and we should feel a strong sense of remorse when we realize we have failed the God of the universe by coming up short.

Day 78

Read: Matthew 27:1-10

Ask:

- Why was Judas full of remorse? (*Jesus was condemned to death*)
- What did Judas try to do with the 30 silver coins? (*Return it to the chief priests and elders*)
- How did Judas die? (*He hung himself*)

Discuss: Did Judas do the right thing when he realized his mistake? What should he have done?

Help: Judas realized his mistake and the first thing he tried to do was right the wrong by returning the money. This was a good first step and one that we should do as well when we make a mistake. What Judas did next was the complete wrong thing to do. Judas saw no hope in his life and decided to end it. There is always hope and always redemption available if we simply seek it.

Day 79

Read: Matthew 27:11-14

Ask:

- What was the first thing the governor asked Jesus? (*“Are you the king of the Jews?”*)
- Who accused Jesus? (*The chief priests and elders*)
- Why was the governor amazed? (*Jesus did not make a reply*)

Discuss: Why didn't Jesus answer the accusations? Why did He not plead with Pilate for His life?

Help: Jesus already knew what was to come and what was required of Him. Jesus knew the price He had to pay and walked willingly to the cross. Jesus poured out His love for us.

Day 80

Read: Matthew 27:15-21

Ask:

- What custom did the governor have? (*To release a prisoner at the Feast*)
- Who did Pilate offer to release? (*Jesus or Barabbas*)
- Who did the crowd choose? (*Barabbas*)

Discuss: How does Barabbas represent us? What crime had Jesus committed? Was Barabbas innocent?

Help: Barabbas was a well known criminal. In Luke 23, we are told that he was a murderer and was part of an insurrection. Instead of the guilty, the innocent died. Like Barabbas we deserved punishment for our sins, but Jesus, the innocent lamb, took our place so we could be freed from our sins.

Day 81

Read: Matthew 27:22-26

Ask:

- What did the crowd want done with Jesus? (*Him crucified*)
- What did Pilate do to show his innocence? (*Washed his hands*)
- Who did the crowd say Jesus' blood would be on? (*Them and their children*)

Discuss: Whose fault is it that Jesus was crucified?

Help: People have blamed a number of different groups for Jesus' crucifixion. Some blame the Romans and some the Jews. God used the Romans and Jews to carry out His plan. In reality, it is because of us that Jesus had to die. It is our fault.

Day 82

Read: Matthew 27:27-31

Ask:

- Where did the soldiers take Jesus? (*The Praetorium*)
- How did the soldiers dress Jesus? (*Like a king with a scarlet robe, crown of thorns, and a staff*)
- How did the soldiers treat Jesus? (*They mocked Him and struck Him*)

Discuss: Have you ever been humiliated? How did it make you feel? How did you respond?

Help: Being humiliated is an extreme level of embarrassment. We don't like being humiliated, especially in front of people we care about. Jesus was the King of kings and Lord of lords, and yet allowed Himself to be humiliated and mocked. Philippians 2 highlights the humility of Jesus.

Day 83

Read: Matthew 27:32-38

Ask:

- Where did they crucify Jesus? (*Golgotha – The Place of the Skull*)
- What did the sign above Him say? (*“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews”*)
- Who was crucified next to Jesus? (*Two robbers*)

Discuss: What does it mean to be crucified? What would Jesus have experienced?

Help: To truly understand the depth of the love that Jesus showed, it is important to understand what Jesus went through. Before His crucifixion He was beaten terribly. Many people died from this beating before they could even be crucified. The nails in His hands and feet were not meant to kill Jesus, but suffocation would lead to the death of most who were crucified. It would be a constant struggle to breathe on the cross. This is just a small image of what Jesus went through on the cross for us.

Day 84

Read: Matthew 27:39-44

Ask:

- What did the crowd want Jesus to do to prove Himself? (*Come down from the cross*)
- What did the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law say? (*“He saved others but He can’t save Himself...”*)
- What were the robbers doing? (*Heaping insults on Him*)

Discuss: What is the worse insult someone has given you? How did you respond?

Help: Jesus’ humiliation continued while He hung on the cross as people hurled insults at Him. Jesus could have easily shown these people that they were wrong and that He was the Son of God, but He endured it. When people insult us, we should not let it hurt or impact us, but remember who we really are and that there is nothing they can do to change it.

Day 85

Read: Matthew 27:45-50

Ask:

- What did Jesus cry out at the 9th hour? (*“Eloi Eloi Lama Sabachthani?” which means “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”*)
- What did those standing there think He was doing? (*Calling Elijah to help*)
- What did they offer Jesus to drink? (*Wine vinegar*)

Discuss: Did God forsake Jesus? Does God ever forsake us?

Help: Read the first few verses of Psalm 22. Jesus is quoting Psalm 22:1 on the cross. Even when it appears that God forsakes you, He is still with you and loves you. He may not lead you on the road you desire, but He leads us on the roads that are best for us.

Day 86

Read:

Ask: Matthew 27:51-56

- What miraculous things occurred when Jesus died? (*The curtain of the temple was torn in two, the earth shook, rocks split, and the bodies of many holy people raised to life*)
- What did the centurion and soldiers exclaim? (*“Surely He was the Son of God”*)
- Who was watching from a distance? (*Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s sons*)

Discuss: What was the significance of the curtain of the temple being torn into two?

Help: The temple in the curtain separated the Holy of Holies (the place God “dwelled”) from the rest of the temple. In the tearing of the curtain, we see that we now can approach God (as Paul points out in Ephesians 3:12).

Day 87

Read: Matthew 27:57-61

Ask:

- Who buried Jesus? (*Joseph of Arimathea*)
- Where did he bury Jesus? (*In his own new tomb*)
- What did he put in front of the tomb? (*A big stone*)

Discuss: Why did Joseph bury Jesus? What did he give Jesus? What are you willing to give for Jesus?

Help: Jesus was dead, but Joseph still determined to follow Jesus and give of himself. From other gospels, we know that Joseph was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin. This means that him doing this would put his reputation on the line. He also gave his own tomb to Jesus. Even though hope seemed lost, Joseph still gave it all to Jesus. We should be willing to give everything for Jesus, especially since we know that through Him we have hope.

Day 88

Read: Matthew 27:62-66

Ask:

- Who did the chief priests and Pharisees go to? (*Pilate*)
- What did they want Pilate to do? (*To make secure the tomb until the third day*)
- Why? (*They feared the disciples trying to steal the body*)

Discuss: How useful was all the effort to keep Jesus in the tomb? What can stop God’s plan from being accomplished?

Help: The chief priests and Pharisees did everything they could to keep Jesus in the tomb, and He still rose from the dead. No matter what people may do to try to thwart God, God always wins. In the end, no matter what may happen along the way, God still wins!

Day 89

Read: Matthew 28:1-10

Ask:

- When did Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb? (*On the first day of the week*)
- Who told the women Jesus was raised from the dead? (*An angel of the Lord*)
- Who met them as they ran to tell the disciples? (*Jesus*)

Discuss: Why did Jesus appear to these women? Who else did Jesus appear to after rising from the dead?

Help: One of the powerful proofs that Jesus rose from the dead is the number of people He appeared to and testified that He had risen. He appeared to Peter, two disciples on the road to Emmaus, the ten disciples (without Thomas), the eleven disciples, Paul, 500 people at one time, James, and others. Each of these testified that they saw Jesus, so people could know for certain that Jesus was no longer dead.

Day 90

Read: Matthew 28:11-15

Ask:

- Who did the guards report to? (*The chief priests*)
- What story were the guards to tell? (*That the disciples stole His body*)
- Who heard the story? (*Many of the Jews*)

Discuss: How does this story help prove that Jesus truly rose from the dead?

Help: There are some odd things that happen in this story that help prove that Jesus is risen from the dead. First of all, the guards survived. According to Roman law, if guards fell asleep at their post or failed to successfully guard their charge (in this case the tomb), the penalty was a swift death. If Jesus' disciples stole His body, these guards should have been put to death, but they weren't. Secondly, the Pharisees never attempted to find Jesus' body. If the body had been stolen, they would have arrested each of the disciples until someone told where the body was. Why was the body never searched for or found? The only explanation is that Jesus rose.

Day 91

Read: Matthew 28:16-20

Ask:

- How did the eleven disciples know where to go? (*Jesus had told them*)
- What authority was given to Jesus? (*All authority in heaven and on earth*)
- What command did Jesus give the disciples? (*“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey every I have commanded you.”*)

Discuss: How do we go into all the world teaching about Jesus? Why is it important that we teach people about Jesus?

Help: We sometimes think that teaching the world means going to poor nations and preaching the Word, but it also means teaching people at home. It means that we tell everyone about Jesus and what He has done for us. If we are truly a people of love, then we would want no one to go to hell but everyone to have eternal life. How can we not tell people of the love of God?