



Jesus Defines Discipleship

Matthew 16:13–17, 20–27



LESSON GOAL

Students will understand the cost of following Christ, deny themselves, and follow Him.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Tell what the Father revealed to Peter.
- Explain why Jesus rebuked Peter.
- Describe what it means to die to yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Christ.
- Analyze what difficulties the disciples faced in understanding the cost of discipleship.

KEY VERSE

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” —*Matthew 16:24*

APPLICATION

- Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ.
- Be mindful of the things of God.
- Rejoice in Christ’s return and reward.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Is Transfigured
Matthew 17:1–8

Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

Despite having seen Jesus’ amazing miracles, the disciples vacillated between believing that Jesus was the Son of God and doubting Him. After the disciples’ hard-hearted response to the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:52), Jesus tested their perception of Him by walking on the water (Matt. 14:22–33). At first, the disciples thought Jesus was a ghost, but later they praised Him as the Son of God. Just when the disciples seemed to finally grasp the truth of Jesus’ identity, they again revealed their unbelief. When Jesus challenged them to feed the second great multitude, the disciples again simply admitted their own inability instead of turning to Jesus (Matt. 15:32–39). Furthermore, when Jesus warned them of the “leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6), the disciples thought Jesus was upset that they had brought no bread for the journey (Matt. 16:7). Jesus accused the disciples of being of “little faith” (Matt. 16:8), of having hard hearts (Mark 8:17), and of having unseeing eyes and unhearing ears (Mark 8:18). Even after seeing Jesus feed thousands of people on two separate occasions, the disciples were still worried about having enough food and missed the spiritual truth Jesus was teaching (Matt. 16:9–12; Mark 8:19–21).

Even after being with Jesus for more than two years, the disciples doubted Jesus. Not unlike the crowds and the Pharisees, the disciples did not have an unshakable confidence that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, even after seeing His miracles and hearing His teaching. If the disciples were not confident in Jesus’ identity now, how strong would their faith be when they learned that Jesus was not setting up His earthly kingdom until He first was crucified, resurrected, and returned from heaven? Would they be willing to pay the cost of following a dying Messiah? Before Jesus revealed His death and resurrection to His disciples, the Father revealed to them that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

Revelation of Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:13–17)

With approximately six months of His earthly ministry left, Jesus increasingly withdrew into Gentile territory to avoid confrontations with Jewish leaders and to spend time with His disciples. While Jesus and His disciples were in the district of Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13), located approximately 25 miles northeast of the Sea of Galilee and a few miles south of Mount Hermon, Jesus had just finished a time of solitary prayer (Luke 9:18). Alone on the road with His disciples (Mark 8:27), Jesus asked them, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matt. 16:13).

The disciples’ answer reveals exactly how much confusion there was surrounding the person of Jesus (Matt. 16:14). Similar to Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:1–2), some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected from the dead. Others

thought that He was Elijah, the prophet whom Malachi predicted would come before the Day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5). Still others, influenced by the Jewish Apocrypha, thought that Jesus might be Jeremiah, whose return was to precede the coming of the Messiah. In addition to those ideas, the Jews thought that Jesus could be any number of Old Testament prophets risen from the dead (Luke 9:19). Remarkably, all these identifications pointed to expected predecessors of the Messiah and not the Messiah Himself. After the disciples responded to Jesus' question, Jesus followed up by asking the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt. 16:15).

In response to Jesus' question, Peter confessed to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). Both John the Baptist and Jesus' disciples had previously confessed that Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:34, 41, 49), but both later expressed doubts when they compared Jesus' ministry with their expectations for the Messiah. Like the rest of Israel, the disciples found themselves confused about Jesus' identity. Despite his lack of faith and his hard heart, Peter confessed that Jesus was the Messiah. His assurance did not come from man ("flesh and blood"), whether from himself or other men, but from the Father Himself, who had revealed the truth about Jesus' identity (Matt. 16:17). God had chosen to bless Peter (and presumably the other disciples) with an assurance that Jesus was the Messiah, at the same time that the rest of the Jewish population was busy guessing which dead prophet had been resurrected.

Revelation of Death and Resurrection of Christ (Matt. 16:20–23)

In Matthew 16:20, as well as in the parallel passages of Mark 8:30 and Luke 9:21, Jesus forbade His disciples to tell others that He was the Christ. Jesus knew that no good could be accomplished by revealing His identity to the multitudes. The crowds who had already seen Jesus do many miracles were still unwilling to follow Him. They wanted to make Him king by force (John 6:15) but did not want to submit to Him. The crowds would not have Jesus as their spiritual ruler, and now was not the time for Jesus to be their physical ruler. Instead of being made king, Jesus told His disciples that "He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day" (Matt. 16:21). The Father's revelation of Jesus as the Christ was followed by the Son's revelation of what He must suffer as the Christ.

Peter was shocked when he heard Jesus' prediction of what was going to happen. Believing that he knew better than His Lord, Peter "began to rebuke Him, saying, 'Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You'" (Matt. 16:22). Peter foolishly imagined that Jesus had been mistaken, so he took it upon himself to correct his Master. Peter believed in a Messiah who would establish His kingdom upon earth, not one who would be killed. After being the beneficiary of God's sovereign grace, Peter was unwilling for God to be sovereign. In many ways, Peter was like the crowds who wanted God's kingdom on man's terms. Peter did believe, but his belief was not a full-grown confidence in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Jesus' rebuke of Peter was severe. Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). Peter had unwittingly participated in Satan's plan to prevent Jesus from taking the punishment for man's sin. Because he was not "mindful of the things of God," Peter was actually tempting Jesus to forsake the cross. His man-centered view of the Messiah did not include God's plan for His suffering, death, and resurrection. Satan had tempted Jesus to forsake God's plan, and now Peter was putting another stumbling block before Jesus' obedience. Instead of serving His Master, Peter was being used as Satan's pawn because of his man-centered thinking.

Revelation of Cost and Reward of Following Christ (Matt. 16:24–27)

The Father's revelation of Jesus as the Messiah and Jesus' revelation of His future suffering, death, and resurrection challenged the disciples' expectations. The disciples had followed Jesus expecting to serve Him when He reigned as king, but now they learned their king would be rejected and killed. Suddenly, following Christ must have seemed much more costly than they had imagined and the disciples had to choose if they were going to continue following Him.

Jesus knew that being His disciple is costly, and He presented that cost to His disciples, saying, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24). Being Jesus' disciple requires denying one's self (refusing to give into one's selfish desires), taking up one's cross (being willing to pay any price for the sake of Christ), and following Christ (submitting one's own will to Christ's will). Although there is a great cost in becoming Christ's disciple, there is no other way to save one's life. If someone holds on to his life and lives it for his own pleasure, he will eventually lose it and come into judgment (16:25). The only people who find life, both life in this age and in the one to come, are those who are willing to lose their life by denying themselves, taking up their cross, and following Christ. Jesus emphasized the same point by asking, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (16:26). When the disciples first followed the Messiah, they thought they were gaining the world. Jesus now challenged the disciples that only by giving up the world could they save their soul. A willingness to follow after Him is the only way to save one's soul, and no amount of passing pleasures, possessions, or pride is worth trading for one's salvation. Those who deny themselves, pick up their crosses and follow Christ will not only save their souls but will also be rewarded at the return of Christ. Jesus told His disciples that when He returned "in the glory of His Father with His angels," He would "reward each according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

Conclusion

The Father's revelation of the Son's identity as the Messiah was quickly followed by the Son's revelation of the Father's plan that the Messiah be rejected, suffer, and be resurrected. The disciples had been blessed with the knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, but they needed to respond to that knowledge by faithfully following Him, regardless of the cost on earth. Following Him required that they die to themselves, pick up their crosses, and become like Christ. Although being the Messiah's disciple was more costly than the disciples had ever imagined, the only way to save their souls was by following Jesus. The cost on earth would be great, but they could rejoice and look forward to their reward at the return of Christ.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What did Jesus and the disciples do at the beginning of the story?

Jesus went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. The disciples got in the boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.

What had happened to the disciples while Jesus was praying?

The winds began to blow fiercely and the disciples were finding it impossible to cross the Sea.

What did Jesus do after praying?

Jesus began walking on the Sea of Galilee toward His disciples.

What did Peter ask Jesus when he saw Him out on the water?

Peter asked if he could come out onto the water also.

What happened when Peter walked out onto the water?

Peter was distracted by the wind and waves and sunk into the water.

What happened when Peter sunk into the sea?

Jesus reached out and saved him. When Jesus got back into the boat the storm stopped.



Surprise Ending

In Matthew 16:25, Jesus said, "Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." The disciples must have been challenged by this surprising statement, which is the exact opposite of what the world teaches. Prepare the children for Jesus' statement by playing a simple game with which they'll be familiar, such as bingo or a review game where points are given to two teams. At the beginning of the game, tell the children that there will be a surprise ending. Tell them that something unexpected will happen at the end of the game. As the game proceeds, track the game's progress as normal: call out "Bingo!," make matches, or add up the score. When the game ends as normal, reveal the surprise ending: the losers are actually the winners this time! No doubt, the children will be surprised, but the teacher will have an excellent opportunity to transfer to Jesus' surprising teaching that only those who lose their life will find it.



The Cross

In this week's lesson we see the importance of Christ's death to pay the penalty for sin, something which even the disciples had not yet fully realized. Christ therefore sets the ultimate example of what it costs to live for the glory of God and He expects no less from His disciples. Although the cross has come to symbolize many things today, in the first century it symbolized only one thing—a cruel and

humiliating death. Jesus calls His disciples to be continually denying themselves and counting the cost of following Him. Discuss some of the costs of following Christ with the children e.g. we cannot always do what we want to do, we cannot always do what other children do, we may be mocked or rejected, etc. It may be good to introduce the children to and pray for some of the Christians around the world who are persecuted and even killed for their faith in Christ. In today's lesson we will find out why paying such a cost is worth it.



Who Is Jesus?

Jesus asked His disciples who people said He is and their answer reveals the confusion which surrounded Jesus' true identity. Some said He was John the Baptist back from the dead. John was the greatest prophet of Jesus' day and had been very popular amongst the people before his execution by Herod. If he had come back from the dead, this would explain why He could perform such great miracles. Others thought He was Elijah. This is also to be expected since Elijah performed many great miracles and it was predicted that Elijah's coming would precede the coming of the Lord (Mal. 4:5). Still others said that He was Jeremiah whom Jewish Apocrypha said would precede the coming of the Messiah. The crowds evidently saw something unique in Jesus' life and ministry, but did not want to acknowledge the conclusion to which everything was clearly pointing. Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Son of God, the awaited Messiah. Play a game of "who am I" with the children. Begin to describe a well-known animal, object or person and let the children guess who you are describing. As you give them more and more information it will be clear exactly who or what you are. In the same way, Jesus' life and ministry was providing people with the clues they needed to discover who He really was. In today's lesson we will find out what they concluded.



How Did He Know?

Although the crowds should have realized who Jesus really was, they evidently could not. Peter's confession explains exactly who Jesus is. The teacher can illustrate this to the children by miming out a character which the children would know, but may not recognize. Make sure that one student or helper in the class knows the correct answer and have them reveal it after the rest of the class has had an opportunity to guess your identity. How did he know? The child only knew the correct answer because you revealed it to him beforehand. In today's lesson we will see that people were trying to guess who Jesus was, but they kept getting it wrong. Peter is the one who came up with the correct answer and we will find out in the lesson who gave him the answer.



Who Is He and How Should I Respond?

Jesus' identity as the Son of God requires us to respond to Him in a certain way. Act out a number of characters for the children to guess e.g. a doctor helping a patient, a policeman directing traffic, a teacher, etc. Ask the children who you are, what you do, and how people should respond to you as a result e.g. a traffic officer directs traffic so we should stop when he indicates and go when he indicates. If we misunderstand who a person is, we may not respond to them correctly. In today's lesson we will discover who Jesus is, what He has done for us and how we need to respond to Him.



What's In the Way?

In today's lesson we discover that following Christ is not a decision which is to be taken lightly. Jesus demands that we continually deny ourselves and consider the implications of following Him. Humanly speaking, this presents an obstacle for

some people who would like to follow Christ, but cannot get past these two prerequisites to salvation. Show them some hurdles or road signs which depict an obstacle or obstruction in the road. Ask the children what things sometimes get in the way of them following Christ on a daily basis e.g. they do not want to stop sinning, they only want to do what they want and not what God wants. In today's lesson Jesus will reveal two big hurdles which stand in the way of following Him. After the lesson it would be good to come back to this discussion and remind the children that we can't follow Christ while these obstacles are blocking the way, so how are such obstacles overcome or removed? Only the faith which comes as a gift of God's grace can overcome such formidable obstacles, we cannot do it by our own self effort alone. We can ask God to give us this faith.



Concealed and Revealed

In today's lesson we see that Jesus' identity was not apparent to most of the crowd, but God makes it plain through Peter's confession. Have the teacher reveal parts of a picture of a person. As parts of the picture are revealed, ask the children who it is. In today's lesson we will see how God revealed who Jesus is.



Take Up Your Cross

Denying oneself and following Christ demands commitment. This idea of commitment can be hard for a child to understand. To illustrate this concept of commitment, talk with the students about war. Many people go off to war everyday. These individuals have completely committed themselves to either a particular person or cause. They have denied themselves all the privileges that we enjoy here at home (a warm bed, home, food, family, etc). And even though it may cost them their own life, they are willing to do whatever is necessary in battle for their leader. This is true commitment, seen everyday by those who go off to war to fight for our country. This type of giving oneself and full commitment is exactly what Jesus requires of those who wish to follow Him today. If anyone commits less than a 100% of oneself they are not a true follower of Jesus Christ.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

“Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.” —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students’ understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Passage Outline

Revelation of Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:13–17)

Revelation of Death and Resurrection of Christ (Matt. 16:21–23)

Revelation of Cost and Reward of Following Christ (Matt. 16:24–27)

Introduction

Can you imagine what it must have been like for the disciples to have walked on this earth with the Son of God? What things they would have seen and how excited they would have been for the days of His coming kingdom. Yet what if the Messiah had turned to you and said that the cost of following Him was the giving up of your own life. Like it was for the disciples, this type of news would be rather shocking and hard to take. In today’s lesson, Jesus explains to His disciples what it takes for one who wishes to follow after Him. How will the disciples take such news? Let’s look into how the disciples responded to this price of following Christ, the Son of God.



Lead-off Questions (LOQs)

LOQ: At the beginning of today’s lesson, what is it that Jesus asks of His disciples?

Answer: Although Jesus already knows all things perfectly, Jesus wanted His disciples to truly consider who it was that they were following. So Jesus asks them, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (16:13). The disciples reply shows how confused people were over the identity of Jesus. Some believed Him to be the return of His cousin, John the Baptist. Others believed that Jesus was a former prophet, like Elijah or Jeremiah that had come back to life. All these responses revealed that the world had not accepted Jesus as being the Messiah that they had been waiting for.

LOQ: What was it that God had revealed to Peter?

Answer: Peter responded to Jesus’ question by saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (Matt. 16:16). Unlike the rest of Israel, Peter was not confused about who Jesus was. He knew that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus explained that Peter was confident of this not because any many had told him, but because God the Father had revealed to him the truth about Jesus’ identity. While the rest of Israel kept guessing as to who Jesus was, God had chosen to bless Peter with the understanding that Jesus was the Messiah.

LOQ: What was so shocking about what Jesus said was going to happen to Him in the near future?

Answer: After it was agreed that Jesus is the Son of God, Jesus goes on to tell His disciples what must happen to Him in the days to come. As the Son of God, Jesus was going to suffer many things in Jerusalem, where He would be killed and then be raised from the dead. Jesus had revealed to His disciples what He was going to have to do as the Son of God. As God's Son, Jesus was sent to the world to die at the hands of men so that with His life He could take away the penalty of their sin.

LOQ: What was Peter's response to what Jesus had said He was going to do?

Answer: Peter was shocked when he heard Jesus' description of what was going to happen. That Jesus was going to suffer and die did not go well with what He and the disciples had imagined Jesus' kingdom to look like. They had pictured Jesus as being king and head over all the earth, not rejected and then murdered. Peter refused to listen to what Jesus had to say, choosing instead to correct Him. To Peter, such a thing could never happen to Jesus.

LOQ: Why does Jesus rebuke Peter for his response to God's plan?

Answer: Instead of showing that he cared for Jesus, Peter's response showed that he was not willing to accept God's plan for His Son. Rather than accepting that the Son of God was sent to die for the sins of the world, Peter wanted God's plan to look like what he considered best. Peter thought that he knew what was to be done better than God did. This refusal to accept God's plan was a great sin in Jesus' eyes, showing a lot of pride in Peter's life. For this Jesus greatly rebukes Peter saying, "Get behind me Satan, you are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23). Because Peter was not accepting God's plan, Jesus accused Peter of doing the work of Satan, the enemy. Like Satan, Peter was trying to keep Jesus from taking the punishment of man's sin on the cross.

LOQ: What cost does Jesus say is required of those who wish to follow Him?

Answer: That Jesus was going to die for the sins of the world was the ultimate example of obedience to God. If any one wanted to follow Jesus as His disciple, Jesus said that they would have to follow His example. Jesus told His disciples that this required them to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Him. This meant that those who wished to have life in Jesus must refuse to live according to what they selfishly wanted, be willing to pay any price for Christ just as He was willing to pay for them, and submit their lives to what God wanted them to do. Although this is a great cost in becoming Christ's disciple, there is no other way to be saved.

LOQ: What does Jesus say is the reward for those who follow Him?

Answer: Jesus told His disciples that the only people who would find life, are those who are willing to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Christ. Only by giving up the things of the world could a person experience salvation in Jesus Christ. This giving up the things of the world is a true mark of a repentant Christian. All others who seek after the things of the world will be forever judged for their sin in hell. They will lose everything because they did not deny themselves and obey Christ.

LOQ: What difficulties did the disciples face in understanding Jesus' death and cost of discipleship?

Answer: The difficulties the disciples had with what Jesus was telling them regarding His death and the cost of discipleship is that it was completely opposite from what they were originally expecting in the coming of the Messiah. The disciples had followed Christ expecting to serve Him when He reigned as King but now they learned their King would be rejected and killed. This seemed impossible to the disciples. Also, when the disciples first followed the Messiah, they thought that they were gaining the whole world. Jesus now challenged them that only by giving up the world could they truly save their souls and be disciples of Him.

Summary

The Father's revelation of the Son's identity as the Messiah quickly followed by the Son's revelation of the Father's plan that the Messiah be rejected, suffer, and be killed. The disciples had been blessed with the knowledge that Jesus was the Messiah but they needed to respond to that knowledge by faithfully following Him, regardless of the cost on earth. Following Jesus required that they die to themselves, pick up their cross, and become like Christ. Although being the Messiah's disciple was more costly than the disciples had ever imagined, the only way to save their souls was by following Jesus. The cost on earth would be great but they could rejoice and look forward to their reward at the return of Christ.

Application

What was required of the disciples is also required to any who wish to follow after Jesus today. One who desires to find life in Jesus Christ must understand and submit to the truth that He was sent to the earth to die for the sins of man. Once he or she has understood this God's plan for His Son, each are then called to pay the same cost that Jesus instructed His disciples to pay. For all Christians truly deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow after Christ. If one is obedient to this call to discipleship, he or she will receive eternal life in Jesus Christ. To deny this call of denying oneself mean that they will lose their life and be judged for their sins in hell. May all those who claim to love and follow after Christ today see whether or not he or she has truly denied their selfish desires for this world. Without this denial of self, one is not truly a follower of Jesus Christ.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lessons.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



His Names Reveal His Character

The Jews had many ideas about who Jesus is (Matthew 16:14). Turn the children's attention to who they think Jesus is by asking them for various names and titles of Jesus. Write these names on a large poster-board. This will be a great opportunity to discuss with the children various aspects of Jesus' character. If your students can read, prepare a list of verses for them to read aloud to the class and have the other



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children tell which of Christ's name or titles are revealed in each verse. Explain to the children that we only know who Jesus is because God reveals Him to us in the Bible.

Act It Out

Act out a dramatization of the events of this story. The entire scene can be acted out or it could be broken up throughout the lesson. At the end of each section the actors can "freeze" and the teacher can explain that part of the message. The teacher could also act as a narrator throughout the story.



What's Worth More?

Create a list of pairs of items that have similar value. Give the students the names of two objects. The objects could start out of little value and become very valuable. Ask the students which is more valuable. (eg. Which is worth more an apple or a dollar?) Eventually work up to the world or a person. (eg. Which is worth more a person or the entire world?) The teacher may even want to bring in some pictures or objects to illustrate. Next ask the students which would be harder to give up. Explain that their soul is far more valuable than anything that the world has to offer. Explain that there are some people that would and do give up their soul for things in the world. Jesus says that in order to follow Him we must deny our selves, take up our cross and follow Him. When we give up the things of this world we gain something far more valuable - our soul.

Praise and Worship

Change My Heart O God

Humble Thyself In The Sight Of The Lord

All Hail The Power Of Jesus Name

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Costly Coin

Materials: photocopy of coin pattern, cardboard, scissors, paste, coloring utensils
Directions: This craft serves to emphasize counting the cost of discipleship. Pass out coin pattern to each student. Direct the students to cut around the perimeter of each circle. Use one circle to trace a third circle on cardboard. Then, cut out the cardboard circle. Paste the paper circles on each side of the cardboard circle to make a coin. Instruct the students to color in the pictures that symbolize the world and their soul. Instruct the students to write Matthew 16:26a "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" around the perimeter of the world side of the coin, and Matthew 16:26b "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" around the soul side of the coin. Use the Costly Coin to remind the students that they must deny self to follow Christ.



Deny Oneself

A big part of today's lesson is the call to deny oneself. Take this time after the lesson to talk with the children about some of the things that they could deny this morning. Some of these things should be a love for money or other material objects, a desire to please self (putting what I want over the needs of others), a love to please others, etc. All these desires are selfish in nature, and should be placed aside and replaced with a love for Christ. In denying self we no longer desire to please ourselves, but desire to please God. This should be a great opportunity to point out the selfishness that we are called to walk away from if we desire to follow Christ.



“Obstacles to Discipleship”

Materials: Craft sheets, scissors, glue, crayons

Jesus calls everyone who desires to come after Him to deny themselves, take up their crosses and follow Him. There are many things in this world can be a road block to a person's salvation. People may desire to keep the world rather than following Christ.

Directions: Give each student the above materials and ask them to cut out the things that they think might be a roadblock to a person denying themselves, taking up their cross and following Christ. Explain to the students that giving up the things of the world does not make a person saved but is a requirement of a true disciple of Christ.



Act and Apply

Design a skit of 3 or more scenes where the lesson is applied to real life situations. These skits could illustrate the students denying themselves, taking up their crosses, following Christ and sharing the gospel. When we die to self we no longer care what others think of us but only how we can serve our Lord.



“Jesus defines discipleship”

Use this worksheet to reinforce the key truths of today's lesson. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.



Small Group Activity: “Denying Yourself”

Use this worksheet in a small group. Lead the students in discussing the questions and their answers. The worksheet is located at the back of the lesson.

Coloring Pages

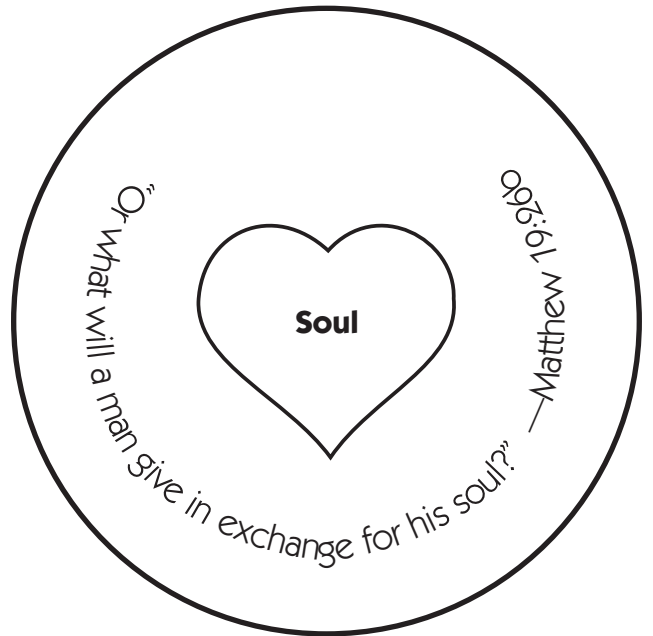
Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

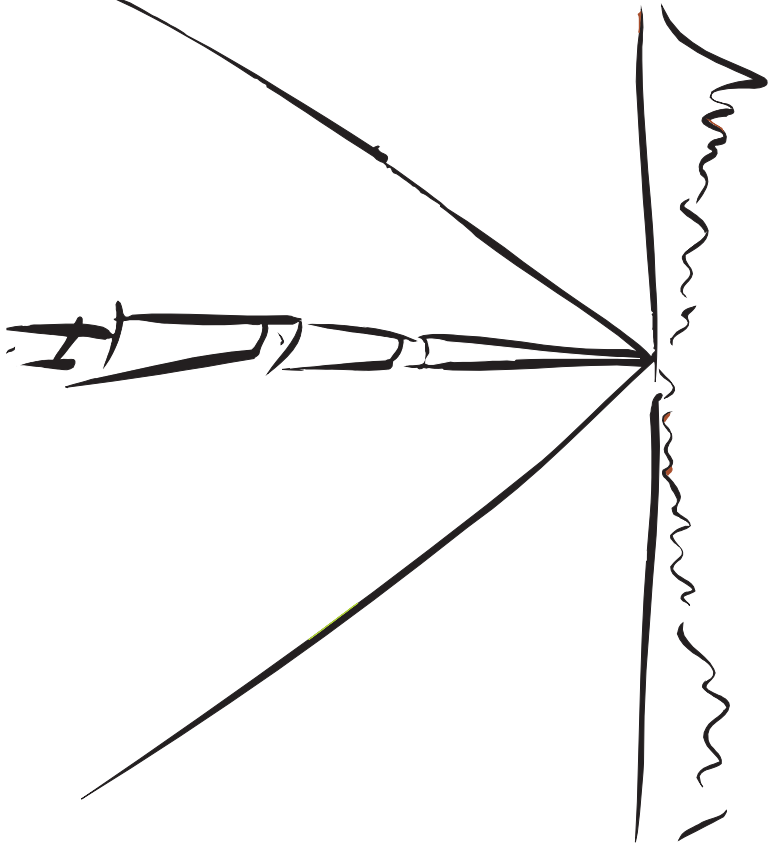
“Then Jesus said, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” —*Matthew 16:24*

Costly Coin



Obstacles to Discipleship

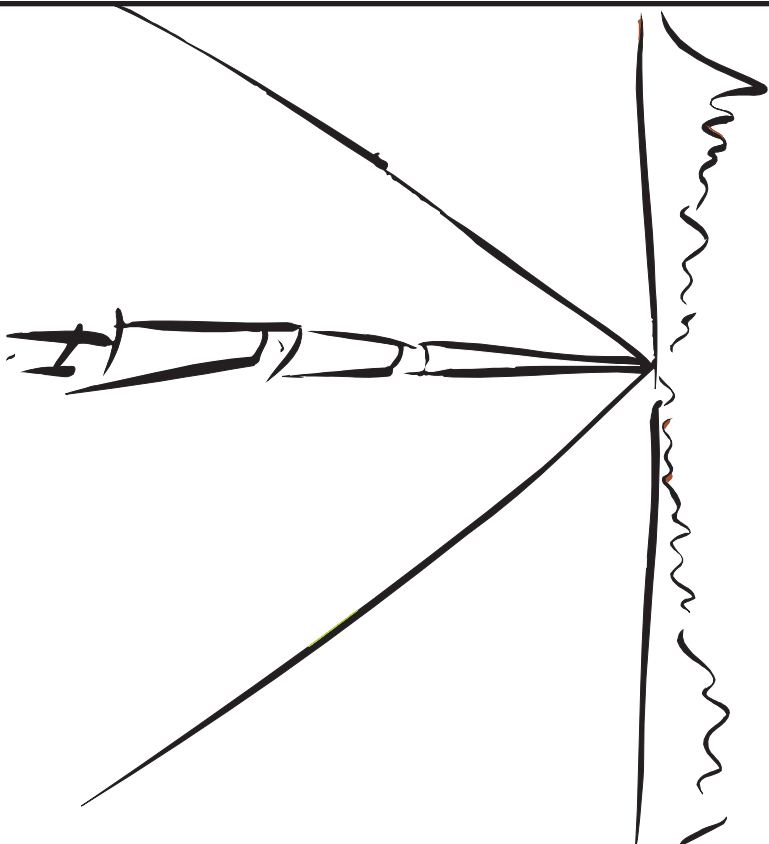
Jesus calls people who desire to follow Him to put Him first. What are some things that can become roadblocks to discipleship?



“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” —Matthew 16:24

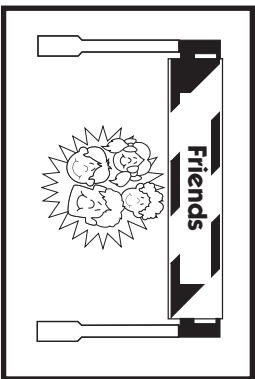
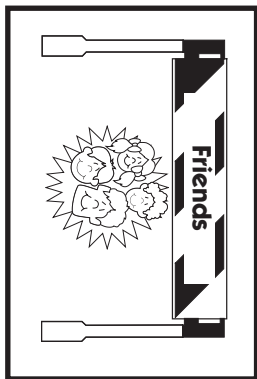
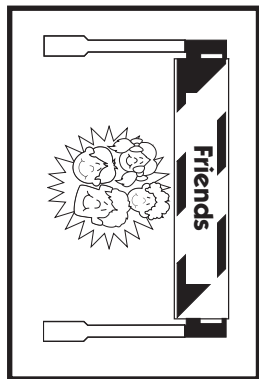
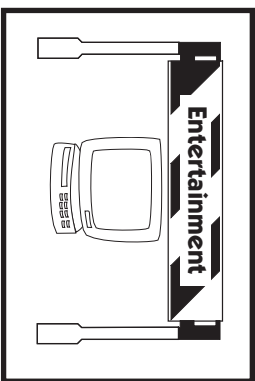
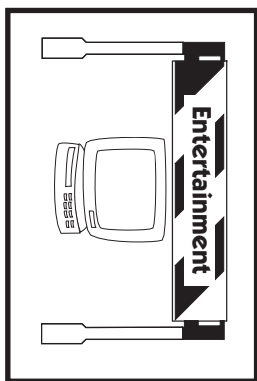
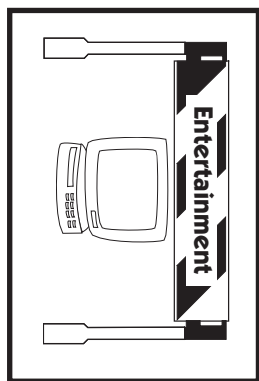
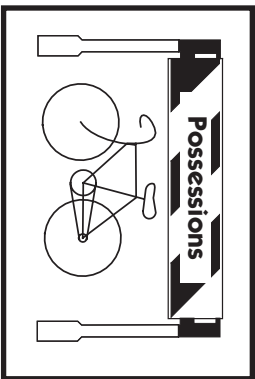
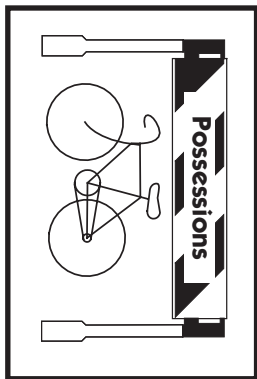
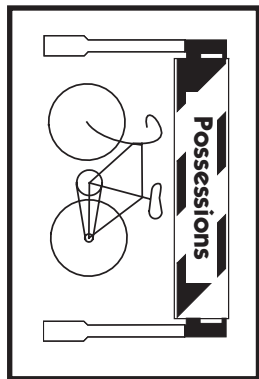
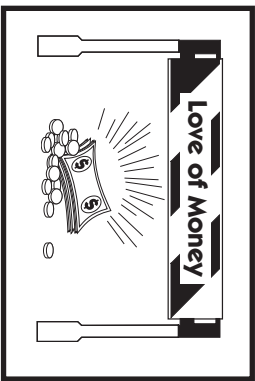
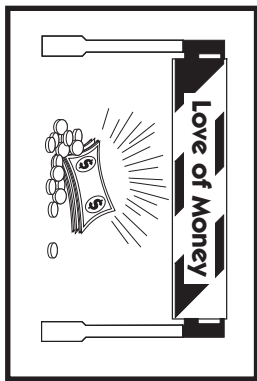
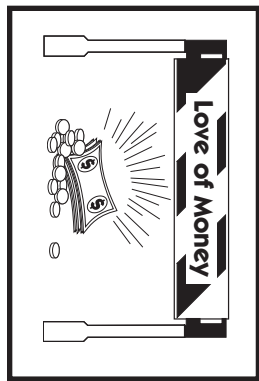
Obstacles to Discipleship

Jesus calls people who desire to follow Him to put Him first. What are some things that can become roadblocks to discipleship?



“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’” —Matthew 16:24

Obstacles to Discipleship



Jesus *defines* discipleship



Matthew 16:13–17;
21–27

Name _____

1. In Matthew 16:16 Peter said that Jesus was “_____ the _____ of the _____.”

2. Who revealed that to Peter? _____
 - a. Jesus
 - b. John
 - c. God the Father
 - d. The woman at the well

3. True or False: Jesus said He must be killed and raised on the fifth day. _____

4. Jesus rebuked Peter Peter because he was “not mindful of the things of _____, but of _____” (16:23).

5. Jesus said that if anyone wanted to come to Him he must:
 - a. deny himself
 - b. take up his cross
 - c. follow Jesus
 - d. all of the above

6. What does it mean to “take up your cross”? _____

Denying Yourself

“Then Jesus said, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.’” —*Matthew 16:24*

Have you ever saved your allowance for something you really wanted? Can you remember going to the store, picking out your item, and exchanging your money for it? I am sure you were very excited and did not mind giving up your earnings in order to receive something you wanted. In a similar way, based upon what you want—the world or Christ—you are exchanging your life for it. When you choose to follow the world you are exchanging your life for what the world has to offer, but when you choose to follow Christ, you are giving up your life to follow Him. This is the exchange that has lasting value.

In today’s Bible lesson, Christ asked, “What profit is there if a man gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” Of course there is no profit. Even if that person gained the whole world, on the day of judgment he would have nothing to give in exchange for his soul. On the other hand, Christ said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” To follow Christ is not always easy; you must pick up your cross, but on the day of judgment, the believer will enter into God’s glory. In the list below, match the verse that tells what the disciples willingly gave up to follow Christ with the disciple’s names.

VERSES: A) Matthew 4: 21, 22; B) Mark 1:18, 20; C) Matthew 4:18–20

___ Peter and Andrew

___ James and John

___ Disciples

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___ James and John

___ Disciples

In what way were the disciples denying themselves?

When the disciples left all they had to follow Christ, they were no longer known as fishermen but as followers of Christ. They lost their old life but found real life in Christ. This was a great exchange! Paul put it this way: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). So, when you choose to deny yourself and live for Christ, remember He will help you make the difficult decisions that come with picking up your cross. In what ways have you denied yourself and chosen Christ?

I denied myself and made a choice to follow Christ when I wanted to:

But instead I chose to:

I picked up my cross and followed Him when I:

In the future, I will depend upon Him to help me pick up my cross when I must chose to:

PRAYER

Gives thanks that Christ will help you pick up your cross and make the right decisions. Thank Him for the eternal life He has prepared for His followers.

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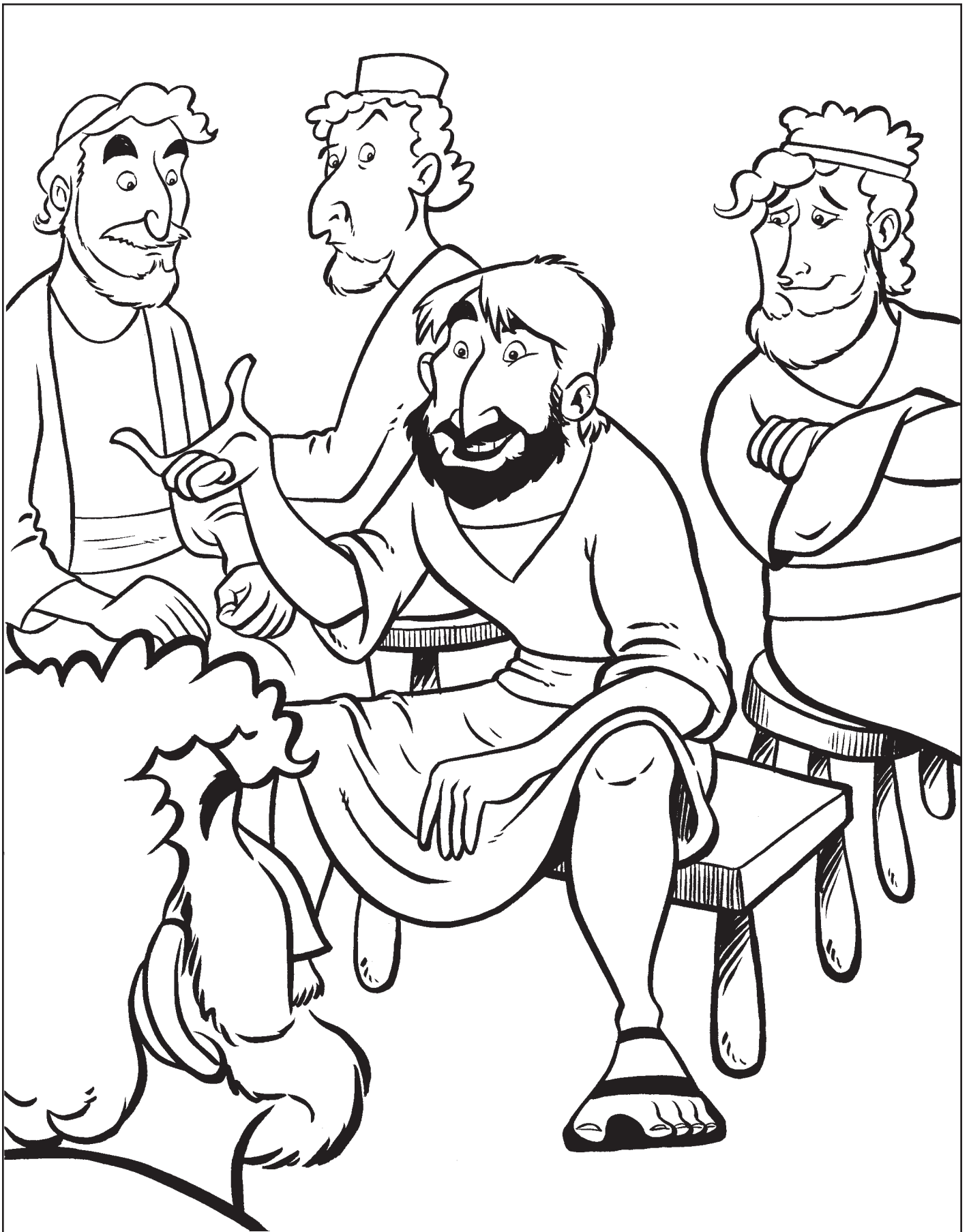
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“He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” —Matthew 16:15–16



"But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'"

—Matthew 16:23

