

Unit 23: The Teachings of Jesus

Unit Description: Jesus taught like no one else—as One who has authority. Everything Jesus taught about revealed what God’s kingdom is like, the kingdom that Jesus had come to establish in full.

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.



SESSION 1: Jesus Taught about Character
Matthew 5



SESSION 2: Jesus Taught about Behavior
Matthew 6



SESSION 3: Jesus Taught about God’s Love
Luke 15



SESSION 4: Jesus Taught about God’s Kingdom
Matthew 13



SESSION 5: We Are Part of God’s Kingdom
Matthew 22; Luke 14



UNIT 23 | SESSION 1

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT CHARACTER

MATTHEW 5

KEY PASSAGE:

Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.
1 Chronicles 29:11 NIV

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

What do you think would happen if you stomped on a ketchup packet? Would you expect only air to escape the contents of the packet? Undoubtedly, the pressure of the stomp would result in an explosion of ketchup, and perhaps a messy shoe.

Oddly enough, we don't always predict our responses to specific situations accurately. In moments of extreme pressure or challenge, we are surprised at our own responses and decisions.

The beginning of The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 contains what we often call the 'Beatitudes.' In these eight verses, there are specific descriptions of people who could be seen in a negative light. Poor, mourning, humbled, hungry, thirsty, and persecuted are all words that describe a posture seen as less than favorable in our culture. Yet, this text speaks of the blessing of each of them.

The blessings result through a God-centered perspective. The poor in spirit, hungry, humble are those who have set their hope in God and His eternal kingdom. The poor in spirit have recognized that they are utterly lost without God. Those who mourn acknowledge the guilt of their sin and the pain of a broken world. The hungry and thirsty understand that nothing in this world

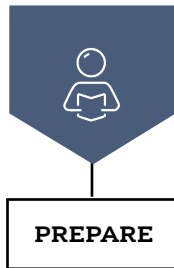
will satisfy like Jesus. The character of the people of God reveals a response of faith in Him.

Who we are isn't determined by how we respond to pain and hardship; however, our character is often displayed in these moments. The choices we make and the way in which we fill ourselves during times of peace and rest are often revealed during high-pressure situations. Those being transformed by the power of God will display faithfulness and virtue in these times. Those not gripped by the Spirit of God will display their graceless state.

Don't be surprised that what you have filled yourself with comes out when you are pressed. And don't be surprised when God shows Himself to you in a distinct way in these times of trouble.

TERMS TO KNOW

Bless: the act of saying or wishing good for others



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- “Light It Up” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ribbon awards, 1 per kid

Session Starter (Option 2)

- tablecloths
- clear jars, 1 per group
- water, 1 bottle per group
- food coloring, 1 bottle per group
- vegetable oil, 1 cup per group
- salt shakers, 1 per group
- flashlights, 1 per group



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- “Jesus Taught about Character” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- “Unit 23, Session 1” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- “Amer and Victoria Safadi” missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “Yours (1 Chronicles 29:11)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- ball



LOVE

Review & Bible skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- empty tissue boxes, 1 per kid
- construction paper
- stickers

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- boxes, 4
- gross items such as dirty socks, trash, or rotten fruit; 4
- wrapping paper
- bows

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Match It!” activity page



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What is character? How would you describe someone who displays good character?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Light It Up” on the activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will learn how Jesus taught people to let their light shine bright so others may see their good works and give praise to God.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: GREAT REWARDS



Form kids into four groups. Assign each group one of the following scenarios to act out:

- Comforting someone who is sad or hurt
- Feeding people who are hungry
- Creating peace from an argument
- Praising God when others persecute you

Tell each group to keep their scenario a secret. Allow a few minutes for groups to prepare a short skit to act out their scenarios. Then invite groups one at a time to act them out while everyone else tries to guess what they are doing. After each skit, award each kid with a ribbon.

| **SAY** “You were given a ribbon as a reward for the character you showed when you took difficult circumstances and responded like Jesus. Today, we will learn that people in God’s kingdom live differently and display Christlike character. We will also learn that God rewards those who live for Him by faith. Not only do we have the eternal reward of living with God forever in His kingdom, but we also experience the reward of being happy in the Lord now.”

OPTION 2: SALTY LAVA LAMPS

Before the session, cover tables with a plastic tablecloth. Form kids into groups of three or four. Provide each group with a clear jar, water, food coloring, vegetable oil, salt shaker, and flashlight. Explain to kids that they will be making a lava lamp using these materials.

Direct groups to fill the jar three-quarters full of water and then add a few drops of food coloring. Lead groups to add in the oil until the jar is almost filled. Allow the oil and water to separate. Direct kids to pour in some salt using the salt shaker. Watch as the salt creates bubbles that fall and rise. Add more salt to create more bubbles. Turn off the lights and tell the groups to shine a flashlight behind the jar to make the lava lamp glow. Add additional salt to create the bubbles again.

| **SAY** “Salt and light produced a fun experiment! In our Bible story, we will learn that Jesus calls us to be like salt and light. Salt has many uses, and we have many ways we can show others what Jesus is like by how we live. Light shines in darkness and when we live for Him, we are like light in this dark world.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! I am so excited you are here today! My name is [your name], and today we will read a story from the book Matthew. Did you bring your Bible with you? If so, please take it out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

Throughout the next several weeks, we will be reading Bible stories about Jesus’ teachings. Jesus is an amazing teacher and taught with authority because He is truth. But Jesus is more than just an amazing teacher. He is the Son of God. When we read what Jesus taught, we can remember that His teachings help us know how we can live with Him forever. Today, we will learn that Jesus taught how His followers can reflect His character to the world. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

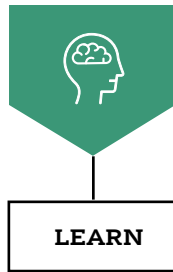
SAY “ Today, we will learn a new big picture question and answer. The question is, **What did Jesus teach when He was on earth?** The answer is, **Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.** Let’s say the answer together: **Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.**

When we read our Bibles, we learn all about Jesus. We also learn that the Bible shows us the way to life through Jesus. And the new life we receive by faith in Him changes us to live in a way that shows others what God’s kingdom is like. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Over the last several weeks, we have learned about the miracles Jesus performed. We learned how Jesus’ miracles proved He is God’s Son. Because He proved He truly is the Son of God, we know that He is perfect and trustworthy. As we read Jesus’ teachings, we can obey His teachings by faith and seek to live like Him. Can anyone point to a Bible story that shows how someone lived by faith in God? [Allow a volunteer to point a Bible story.] We can remember that it is not how we live that saves us, but how we live shows that we have been saved. Let’s learn how we can live to honor God! ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 5. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Taught about Character.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT CHARACTER

“Great crowds of people followed Jesus wherever He went. One day, Jesus went up on a mountain. He sat down and began to teach about the kingdom of God.

First, Jesus taught about the blessings that come to those who follow Him. He said:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

Then Jesus taught how believers should live. Jesus said that believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. **“Let your light shine before others so that they may see the good things you do and praise God.”**

Then Jesus taught about God’s law. Jesus did not come to get rid of the law, but to obey it perfectly. He said that to enter heaven, a person can’t just look righteous on the outside—like the religious leaders. A person must be righteous on the inside too, obeying God for the right reasons.

Jesus said, **“Love your enemies, and pray for them.** If you do this, you will be true children of your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both the good and the evil, and He causes rain to fall on both the righteous and unrighteous. If you only love those who love you, what reward will you get for that? Even people who don’t know God do that. **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

Christ Connection: Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use a flashlight: Turn on a flashlight when you teach that believers are the light of the world. Shine the light in a dark room and emphasize how our lives can reflect the light of Jesus in a dark world.

Invite responses: Encourage kids to give some examples of ways they can love their enemies when you teach that part of the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Sometimes we can read Jesus’ teachings and find them confusing. Oftentimes we are confused because Jesus’ kingdom is very different from our world. The life and teachings of Jesus show us that Jesus’ kingdom reveals the character of God. This means that what the world says is weak is really strong. Or what the world says is ridiculous is really wise. We must renew our minds through God’s truth to better understand His ways.

As Jesus taught, He told the crowd that there are blessings for those who follow Him. Who were some of the people that will be blessed? Look at Matthew 5:3-11. [**Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 5:3-11.**] The poor in spirit, the humble, those who mourn, peacemakers, and others who reflect faith in God through the way they live will be blessed. Not only do we have the hope of a future blessing in heaven, but we have the assurance of experiencing joy in God now through His Spirit at work in us.

Jesus said that we are like salt and light to a world that does not know Him when our works follow His commands. But do our works save us? [**Allow responses.**] No, our works do not save us. Still, Jesus said the law was important. What did Jesus say He did with the law? [**Allow responses.**] Jesus said He came to perfectly obey the law and do all it commanded. Jesus lived the perfect life for us.

When we trust in Jesus, He gives us a new heart with new desires. Now, we can obey God by faith and live in a way that shows others what He is like. We can love our enemies, forgive others, and endure persecution. We honor God and show our love for Him when we live for His kingdom. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 23, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If we sometimes lie or say mean things are we still Christians? Why?
2. Why is it important that we obey God for the right reasons?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Tell kids that many Christians around the world face persecution for their faith in Jesus. Share that Amer (ah MEHR) and Victoria Safadi (sah FAH dee) moved from the country of Jordan to Cincinnati, Ohio, because of persecution.

SAY “ Amer (ah MEHR) and Victoria Safadi (sah FAH dee) did not know if Cincinnati, Ohio, was



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

where God wanted them to start a church. They began praying and met Travis Smalley, the pastor of Lakota Hills Baptist Church. The pastor told Amer that his church wanted to support him in starting a church for people who speak Arabic in Cincinnati. Within three months of starting the church, they had 55 people who speak Arabic from eight different countries coming to the church and new people attending each week. ”

Show the missions video. Pray for the Safadis as they tell people in Cincinnati about Jesus. Pray that the Arabic-speaking people coming to learn more about Jesus will believe in Him and accept Him as their Savior.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Chronicles 29:11 together.

SAY “ Jesus taught about character. He taught that people are blessed when they follow Him. When we live like Jesus taught, others see Him in us and give God the glory. Our key passage reminds us that all glory belongs to Him! ”

Direct kids to stand in a single file line. Instruct kids to read the key passage poster together. Give the kid first in line a ball. Direct the first kid to say the first word of the key passage and then pass the ball over her head to the person behind her. Then that kid will say the second word in the key passage and pass the ball through his legs. Continue the pattern until the key passage has been completed. Shuffle kids around in the line so they have different words each time. Continue as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “Yours (1 Chronicles 29:11).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

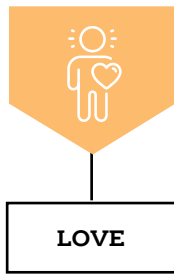
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Lord, thank You for Your Word and how it teaches us to be more like You. Thank You for loving us and for sending Jesus to live the perfect life for us. Help us live to honor You. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 5. Remind kids that Matthew is the first book in the New Testament and was written primarily to Jews. Explain that Matthew records more Old Testament Scripture than the other three Gospel books. Tell kids that many of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5 have Old Testament references from Isaiah and the Psalms.

Consider comparing the New Testament Israel Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Sea of Galilee [D6].) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 5:12.

SAY “ Jesus’ teachings were not always easy to hear. He told His followers to rejoice when they faced suffering for their faith. Do you think it is easy to rejoice when you are suffering? [Allow responses.] Rejoicing because of suffering may not come naturally to us, but when we trust in Jesus, He gives us His Spirit to strengthen us and to count it joy to suffer with Him.

When Christians suffer for the sake of Jesus, they show the world that Jesus is better than anything else. We model the same joy Jesus showed when He went to the cross for sinners. And just as Jesus is glorified through His death and resurrection, all who trust in Him, even if they suffer, will also receive an eternal reward. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

| **SAY** “ In today’s Bible story, what teaching of Jesus is hardest for you to obey? Why? ”

Answers will vary. Encourage kids to remember that we will not always perfectly obey God, but we can ask Him for forgiveness when we fail and remember that Jesus obeyed perfectly for us. Remind kids that we can ask God to help us live more like Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 2:20.)

| **SAY** “ What are ways you can be a light for Jesus so that others can give glory to God? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that any time we love others before ourselves, forgive one another, seek God’s kingdom, and share the gospel we are reflecting the light of Christ.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Eph. 5:8-9.)

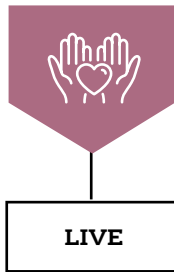
| **SAY** “ Can we do good things and glorify God without trusting in Jesus? Why not? ”

Help kids understand that all of our best efforts or good deeds are not glorifying to God without faith in Jesus because our hearts have not been made new. Tell kids that faith in Jesus gives us new hearts that now want to live for God and bring glory to Him. Explain that before Jesus saves us our good deeds are done for selfish reasons and will never save us.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read James 2:22.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: MISSIONS MONEY BANK



Distribute an empty tissue box, construction paper, tape, scissors, markers, and stickers to each kid. Explain that the kids will make a money bank to collect money for missions.

Direct kids to cover the empty tissue box using the construction paper but leave the hole at the top of the box uncovered. Lead kids to use the tape to secure the paper. Assist younger kids who may need help covering their box. Once the boxes are covered, direct kids to use markers and stickers to decorate their money bank. Encourage kids to use their banks to save money and then give it to a missions offering through their church.

SAY “ We can be a part of sharing the gospel with people all around the world through missions offerings. God uses our money to help missionaries reach more people for Jesus by starting churches, meeting the needs of people they are serving, and providing gospel resources. ”

OPTION 2: WHAT'S INSIDE?



Before the session, gather four gross items such as stained and smelly socks, trash, or rotten fruit. Wrap each item in a beautiful box using wrapping paper and bows.

Form kids into four groups and provide each group with a box. Invite groups to guess what might be wrapped in their box. Discuss how pretty the boxes are wrapped. After each group has decided what their box might hold, lead groups to unwrap the boxes and reveal the contents. Emphasize how such a pretty box could hold such gross items. Then invite two kids to read Matthew 23:27-28 and Philippians 3:9.

SAY “ In our story, Jesus taught that people can't just look righteous on the outside but must be clean inside. These boxes looked pretty, but when you opened them they were filled with rottenness. Our obedience to Jesus' teachings doesn't make us clean. We are only made righteous by faith in Jesus. As we obey by faith and out of love for God, we display character that reflects Jesus. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God that Jesus lived the perfect life for us and asking Him to help us live like Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Match It!” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 23 • Session 1

JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT CHARACTER

Matthew 5

**WHAT DID JESUS TEACH WHEN HE WAS ON EARTH?
JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT GOD AND HIS KINGDOM. HE TAUGHT THAT ALL
SCRIPTURE IS ABOUT HIM.**

Great crowds of people followed Jesus. One day, Jesus went up on a mountain and began to teach about the kingdom of God.

He said:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”

Jesus said, “Let your light shine before others so that they may see the good things you do and praise God.”

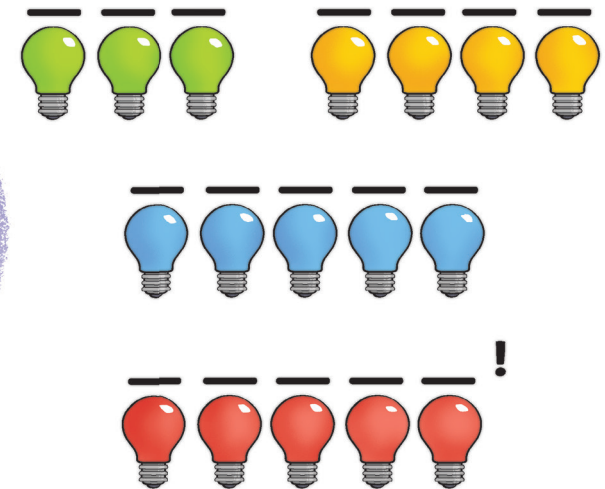
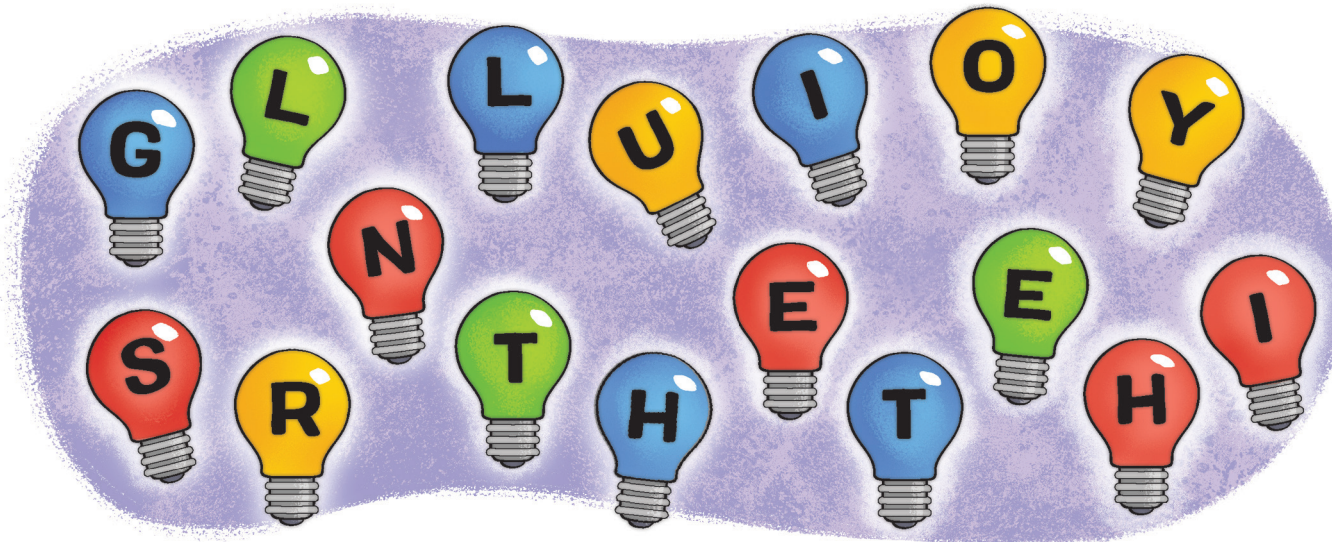
Then Jesus taught about God's law. Jesus did not come to get rid of the law, but to obey it perfectly. He said that to enter heaven, a person must be righteous on the inside too, obeying God for the right reasons.

Jesus said, “Love your enemies, and pray for them. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Christ Connection: Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.

FOLD

Light It Up | Unscramble the letters for each colored light bulb to spell out the message.



Match It! | Look up Matthew 5:2-11 in your Bible to help you match the blessings Jesus taught.

Blessed are the poor in spirit

Blessed are those who mourn

Blessed are the humble

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

Blessed are the merciful

Blessed are the pure in heart

Blessed are the peacemakers

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness

for they will be shown mercy

for they will be called sons of God

for they will be filled

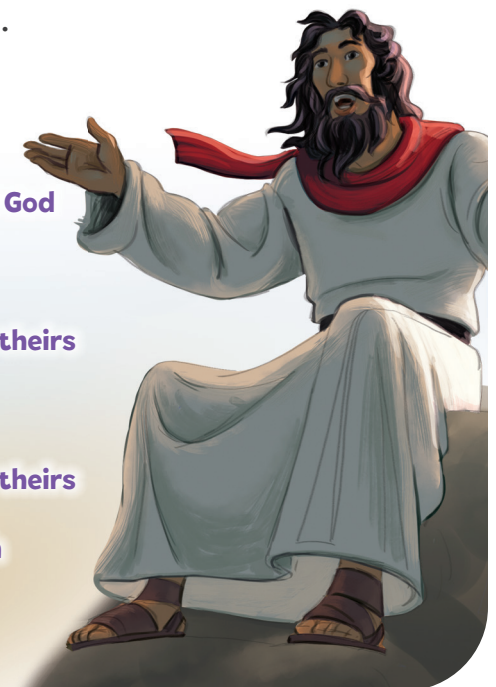
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs

for they will be comforted

for the kingdom of heaven is theirs

for they will inherit the earth

for they will see God



NAME:



theGOSPELPROJECT.

Jesus Taught about Character

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- One day, Jesus went up on a mountain. He sat down and began to teach people about the kingdom of God.
- Jesus taught about the blessings that come to those who follow Him. He taught how believers should live so that others praise God.
- Jesus taught that He came to fulfill the law and that people must be made righteous on the inside.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 29:11

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus teach when He was on earth? Jesus taught about God and His kingdom. He taught that all Scripture is about Him.

