

Grade 6—Unit 10

The Teachings of Jesus

Jesus taught by both example and words. In his teachings, he confronted the distorted view that God had rules just for the sake of having rules. He taught of a God who lovingly forgives the repentant sinner. Jesus called people from the deceitful riches of this world to the true riches of trust in a loving God and sharing feely with those in need. Jesus' compassion included willingness to suffer for the sake of others.

LESSONS

1. Love is the Reason
2. God Forgives Us
3. Forgiving Each Other
4. Using Money Wisely
5. Wealth Around the World
6. The Suffering Servant

Unit 10: The Teachings of Jesus

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Jesus' teachings draw us to the central truth that God loves and forgives us. Because of God's transforming love and grace, Christians can extend compassion and mercy to others.

Jesus also taught that God's love has something to say about wealth and poverty. Freedom from greed allows us to see the value God places on all persons. Trust in God's loving provision frees us to share compassionately with those in need.

In Matthew 5–7, Jesus preached the well-known Sermon on the Mount. This passage is central to Christian belief. The concepts he shared are highlighted throughout the New Testament as Jesus spoke in parables, told stories and encountered a wide variety of people.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Matthew 5–7, 13; 18:15–35

Luke 15:11–31; 16:19–25; 18:22–29

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Fulfilling the Purpose of the Law

Jesus sat on the mountainside, teaching the crowds how to receive God's favor and blessing. It was quite different from the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai over 1,000 years before. Yet Jesus said he had come to fulfill the Law, not abolish it.

The Law at Sinai brought the Israelite people into relationship with the God who had delivered them from Egyptian slavery. It provided rules that brought order out of chaos and identified a people who served the one true God. This Law asked the people to treat each other justly, because they themselves had been delivered from the injustices of slavery.

The Pharisees tried to keep God's law by paying careful attention to the Oral Law. Jesus saw that they got so caught up with all their rules that they forgot the basics of love for God and love for other humans. This was clear in the way strict Pharisees observed the Sabbath. The Sabbath had been given as a day of freedom from work. It was a day to rejoice in the goodness of God's creation. The Sabbath day offered wholeness. The Pharisees had turned it into a day constrained by rules about how far to walk and a myriad of other restrictions. You would think that, of all days, the Sabbath would be the time to bring wholeness to people. Yet healing was considered work. Rules had become more important than the well-being of people.

Justice cannot be legislated. Some people will always choose to be as bad as the law allows. Examples abound in our present-day legal system. We can legislate desegregation and affirmative action for minorities. That is a beginning. Legislation cannot eliminate attitudes of hatred and racism. Jesus saw that obedience to the Law could never be reached by making more rules and trying harder. People needed a change of heart. They needed to be changed inside, so they could truly love God and love each other.

Jesus warned against rigid adherence to the outward forms of the Law. Murder

begins with an attitude of hatred and anger. Not dealing with those inner attitudes becomes destructive (Matthew 5:21-22). Worshiping God and giving an offering will not please God if you are not at peace with your neighbor (Matthew 5:23-24). Instead of keeping only those promises that were made with a special oath, you should keep all your promises and always tell the truth. Thus, oath-taking becomes unnecessary.

The Law allowed for a punishment that matched the crime—an “eye for an eye” (Matthew 5:38-42). God wants us to forgive others in the same generous way God forgives us. It is not enough to love only neighbors and those of our own people (Matthew 5:43-48). Just as God sends sun and rain on all, we are to love even our enemies and those who persecute us.

When people truly love God and one another, obedience to the Law will follow naturally. Jesus came to show God’s compassion and mercy. His suffering love on the cross opened up the way for people to experience God’s presence. Therefore, Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the Law.

The Abundant Forgiveness of God

Jesus came to confront our distorted notions of who God is. God is not a vengeful God. The Creator of the universe is a God who loves us beyond all comprehension. His anger over sin is not the anger of someone who wants to control and rages even louder when things don’t go as planned. God’s anger is an anger that mourns deeply over the wholeness that might have been. God longs for this well-being for all people. To grasp good only for oneself breaks the wholeness that God planned for all people.

God’s love, mercy and forgiveness is linked to the love, mercy, and forgiveness we show to others (Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36; Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4; Luke 7:47; and 1 John 4:19). Even the law of Moses commands people to care for the poor, the widow and the orphan. This is a natural response to God’s love (Exodus 22:21-22).

As mentioned above, the Law allowed for punishments that fit the crime. Jesus invited people to forgive in the same generous way God forgives (Matthew 5:38-42).

The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) highlights forgiveness. “Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors.” This ability to forgive is so difficult and so contrary to the human spirit that people need to be changed by God from the inside for it to happen. The Lord’s Prayer asks God to empower believers with divine ability to live changed lives: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

The abundant forgiveness of God pervades Jesus’ teaching, and may be especially important for sixth graders, who have an emerging sense of conscience and guilt. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15) illustrates how God, as heavenly parent, unconditionally forgave the undeserving son who returned home.

We can distort the Sermon on the Mount by making it another stringent set of rules. We deceive ourselves, however, when we think we can be forgiving and loving by denying or burying anger and trying harder. We can also distort God’s love and forgiveness by turning them into mechanical formulas that will give us a passport into heaven. God calls us into a loving relationship. God’s love for us is most fully manifest in Christ Jesus, whose self-giving on the cross conquered sin and death.

The Deceitfulness of Wealth

Jesus spent a great deal of time discussing how we should use material possessions. He stated that one “cannot serve both God and money” (Matthew 5:24).

Jesus noted the common pattern of wealthy persons who became overly attached

to their possessions. They began to love their material goods more than they loved other people. When a rich young man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life, Jesus told him he would have to take practical steps to eliminate the wealth that alienated him from other people in society. He would have to sell his possessions and give money to the poor. The rich man was unwilling to follow Jesus' request. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God," Jesus stated (Luke 18:25).

In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23), the deceitfulness of wealth strangles the word of God in human hearts. The story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) demonstrates how wealthy persons are tempted to be callous toward the less fortunate—and how seriously God takes this offense.

Too often, especially in North America, Christians measure success by a person's financial status. We believe we're not rich, because we can always find someone else who is richer. We convince ourselves that if we can afford something, we automatically need it. And imperceptibly, bit by bit, the choking thorns grow over our lives, causing us to become unaware of the great needs of people whom God loves.

Once again the answer lies not in the "shoulds" and "oughts," but in the love of God. In *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, Donald Kraybill writes: "God's love for us transforms our economic behavior. Mercy, not accumulation, becomes our new yardstick for measuring success. Generous giving replaces conspicuous consumption. God's highest law forms the core of this upside-down way. Loving God with all our heart means loving our neighbors as much as ourselves. And this means caring, sharing, giving—valuing our neighbors' welfare as much as our own" (p. 141).

Jesus never said there was anything inherently wrong with being wealthy. Instead, he reminded us to be faithful stewards of what we have—whether it be \$10,000 or 25 cents. Above all, Jesus calls each of us to an attitude of humility, service, and love that transcends our tendency toward greed and power.

Suffering Love

Jesus did more than talk about wealth. He walked into the temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers. Here the regular money of the people was exchanged for coinage of the purest silver to pay the temple tax. Animals were sold as well. In all of these transactions, the temple hierarchy was making a huge profit at the expense of the poor. On top of that, this buying and selling was taking place in the Court of the Gentiles. The only place where the Gentiles were permitted to pray in the temple had been turned into a market. Jesus knew that disrupting the money scheme would lead to personal persecution. Yet compassion and love enabled him to work toward justice. He refused to succumb to feelings of fear.

During Jesus' last meal, he washed the disciples' feet (John 13). This act of servanthood symbolized what he had been doing all along. When Jesus included the outsider, sided with the poor, healed the sick, and challenged the religious and political system, he was serving. "I am among you as one who serves," he said (Luke 22:27).

Jesus' choice to live a life of love and servanthood, exemplified in the basin and towel of John 13, led to the cross. "The cross was," as Donald Kraybill states, "the natural social response of evil forces . . . the violent tool of the powerful trying to crush Jesus' basin ministry" (p. 259).

When we serve the poor and challenge the injustices wrought by powerful institutions in our present-day world, we will most likely experience persecution and hardship. God promises to walk with us as we seek to be change agents in a world that is filled with darkness and devoid of love.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Jesus came to fulfill the law by showing God’s great love.
- Having experienced God’s love and forgiveness, we are called to express it to others.
- Loving God means loving and sharing with others.
- Jesus was willing to suffer.

WORSHIP

Use the following songs for worship, from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*:

- “Help us to help each other” (Lesson 1), #362
- “Ubi caritas et amor” (Lesson 1), #452
- “I know not why God’s wondrous” (Lesson 2), #338
- “Marvelous grace of our loving Lord” (Lesson 2), #151
- “Heart and mind, possessions, Lord” (Lesson 4), #392
- “I bind my heart this tide” (Lesson 5), #411
- “Jesus took a towel” (Lesson 6), #449
- “Will you let me be your servant” (Lesson 6), #307

MEMORY PASSAGE

Matthew 5:3-11 (Lessons 1 and 6)

Matthew 5:3-11

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, 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 receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

The Beatitudes set God’s kingdom priorities straight. Jesus’ teachings provide a clear contrast to what the world values, and his followers are blessed for actions consistent with those teachings. In the memory passage, students can identify these Christ-like characteristics and note God’s blessings that are in store for those who exemplify them. There are no promises of worldly recognition, but rather blessings of eternal significance in God’s kingdom.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Because the topics of this unit are highly conceptual and must be applied to one’s life in order to gain their full meaning, students will present speeches, poems, or songs as a way to share their learning. At this point in the school year, students should be fairly comfortable with each other and more at ease presenting to the class. Each student should receive the instructions included at the end of this unit as a guide in preparing their speech. In grading the presentations, focus on sincere application of concepts to the student’s life more than on delivery.



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

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

Blessed are the meek, 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 receive mercy.

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

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

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

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and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil
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heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the
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Matthew 5:3-11

The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 1: LOVE IS THE REASON

Objective

Students will describe the limitations of rules. They will read Jesus' teachings on going above and beyond rules by acting with love.

Text: Matthew 5

Key Concepts

- Love should be the reason for our actions, not just following the rules.

Essential Questions

- What are the limits of rules?
- What did Jesus teach about following rules?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- “Don’t Break the Rules!” skit (p. 311-312)
- “When Rules Aren’t Enough” (p. 313)
- Student Bibles
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *Peace Be with You* by Cornelia Lehn (Faith & Life Press, 1981)

Teacher Preparation

- Make at least 6 copies of the skit, “Don’t Break the Rules!”
- Make copies of “When Rules Aren’t Enough,” one per student.
- Think of an example to share with students of a rule that is either limiting or helpful, for lesson step 1.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, obtain a copy of *Peace Be with You*. This book is out of print, but can be found in libraries or purchased used from Amazon.com.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Assign roles and perform the skit, “Don’t Break the Rules!” Afterward, lead a discussion about the limitations of rules with the following questions: What would you do if you were in Ashley, Malik or Tyler’s place? What’s the purpose of making rules? Can people follow the rules but not be doing what God really wants? Can you disobey rules and still follow God’s way? Think of examples.

LESSON STEPS

1. Invite students to share stories, real or hypothetical, of situations where rules were either limiting or helpful. (*You may need to share an example to begin the discussion.*) Then introduce today’s topic by explaining that Jesus spoke about rules on several occasions, and that he wanted people to focus more on love than on following the rules.

2. “When Rules Aren’t Enough.” Have students look up the verses and complete the questions individually on the student page. When they are finished, go over the responses as a class.

3. Above and beyond. Review your classroom or general school rules as a class. Then expand on the rules to go above and beyond the stated rules out of love, just as Jesus added to the rules he quoted in Matthew 5. For example, an expansion of “Do not talk while others are speaking” might say: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not talk while others are speaking,’ but I tell you, listen carefully to what others are saying and pay attention to them with respect.” Another might be: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not bother others; keep your hands to yourself,’ but I tell you, go the extra mile and if another’s school supplies fall on the floor, kneel down and help to pick them up.” What are other expanded rules can the class think of together?

4. The Beatitudes. Explain that Matthew 5 includes a portion of scripture known as the Beatitudes. This will be the students’ memory work for this unit. They will need to learn Matthew 5:3-11. You may want to give students time to begin memorizing now.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Invite student volunteers to read** “The Broken Fender” in the book *Peace Be with You*. Discuss the following questions: The owner of the broken fender could have gotten Phil in trouble with the law. Why do you think he didn’t? How did his actions change Phil’s life? In Matthew 5, Jesus didn’t say anything about how to respond to property damage, yet this Christian chose a unique approach. Which do you suppose he thought was more important: rules or love?
- **Breaking rules for God.** Sometimes Christians feel it’s necessary to break a rule in order to be faithful to God. They are not breaking rules set by God, but rather breaking rules set by humans, in order to follow God’s rules. Ask the class if they can think of examples of when this might happen. Someone may be able to tell the story about a conscientious objector in World War I, a person who didn’t pay full federal taxes because of military spending, a person who aided an undocumented immigrant in need, a person who refused to participate in a mandated dishonest business practice, or a refugee or mission worker who encountered unjust laws in another country.

Don't Break the Rules!



A skit for 6 people

Characters: Ashley, Malik, Mr. Turner, Narrator, Ron, Tyler

Scene 1: Monday morning in Mr. Turner's classroom

Mr. Turner: Welcome to class, everyone. Before we begin today's lesson, I need to make an announcement. Because of all the rain over the weekend, the grassy area behind the school has become very muddy. With the freezing temperatures today, it's going to be icy in some spots. Principal Brown has asked that everyone stay out of that area until further notice.

Ron: Excuse me, Mr. Turner?

Mr. Turner: Yes, Ron? Do you have a question?

Ron: Yes! The guys always play football back there after school. The playing conditions are absolutely perfect with the mud. What's the big deal?

Mr. Turner: We're concerned that someone could get hurt. The mud is slippery, and it's just not safe to play in it.

Ron: Okay.

Mr. Turner: I know it's disappointing, but I want to be clear about this. No one is to go back there under any circumstances. Is that understood?

Ron: Yes.

Scene 2: Monday noon in the lunchroom

Ashley: Did you hear the boys talking after class this morning? I think they're going to try and play football after school today.

Malik: So? They always do that.

Ashley: But now they're not supposed to play behind the school—and I think they're planning to anyway. Should we tell someone?

Malik: I'm sure the principal will be on the lookout after that announcement. They'll probably have teachers all around the area. But if it'll make you feel better, go ahead. Alerting Principal Brown about it couldn't hurt.

Ashley: I'll see. Maybe I'll just walk by there and glance out the window after school. If the boys are out there, then I'll tell someone.

Malik: That sounds like a good plan. I'll come with you.

Scene 3: Monday after school, in the hallway

Malik: What did you think about Mrs. Ludwig's story about the flying ants? I can't believe insects can take over an area like that.

Ashley: I know! Remember the plague on Egypt in the Bible? Flies everywhere! I just couldn't handle it.

Malik: Me, neither. Hey, we're coming up to that window. Let's see if the boys are really playing football in the mud after all.

Ashley: I hope not. They're going to be in big trouble. Wait a second! It sounds like someone's running down the hallway.

Tyler: *(out of breath)* Ashley, Malik! You've got to help me. Ron's hurt!

Ashley: What! Why are your shoes covered in mud?

Malik: Were you out back playing football?

Tyler: It doesn't matter. Come with me!

Malik: What happened?

Tyler: Ron's ankle must be broken. He landed on it wrong, and he's in terrible pain out there. Plus it's freezing cold. We have to help him inside so he can warm up while help comes! The rest of the guys ran off, so they wouldn't get in trouble.

Ashley: Where is he? Oh, I see now. Malik, it doesn't look very pretty. Come to the window.

Malik: Ouch! Maybe we should tell someone, so he can get the help he needs. Maybe I should call 911.

Tyler: No, we've got to bring him inside first!

Ashley: Tyler, Mr. Turner clearly told us not to go out in the mud. There's no way I'm disobeying the rules. We could all get in big trouble.

Tyler: Fine! I'll move him myself.

Malik: No, we'll go tell Principal Brown, and you wait here and keep an eye on Ron.

Tyler: Okay. Just hurry!

Scene 4: Monday after school, in front of Principal Brown's office

Malik: Okay, here we are, Ashley. Do you want to do the talking, or should I?

Ashley: It looks like neither of us will. See the sign on Principal Brown's door?

Malik: "Meeting in progress—do not disturb." We can't go in there.

Ashley: I certainly don't want to be the one to disobey the sign and upset Principal Brown, especially not to tell her that the boys were in the mud! What should we do?

Malik: I guess we could try to help Ron ourselves, like Tyler said.

Ashley: But that would be breaking the rules!

Malik: Ashley, at a time like this, don't you think it's okay to break at least one rule? Ron's hurt out there, and he needs our help. Taking care of him seems more important than following all the rules.

Name: _____

When Rules Aren't Enough

Look up each passage and then answer the questions listed below it.



1. Matthew 5:17

What did Jesus come to do about the Old Testament Law?

2. Luke 6:1-11

In Unit 7, Lesson 4, the script "Voices from Zero" mentioned a few of the Pharisees' rules. What do you recall about the Pharisees and Sabbath laws?

3. Luke 13:10-17 and Luke 14:1-6

Breaking Sabbath laws could eventually lead to being stoned. Why did Jesus continue to take this risk, breaking the Sabbath law by healing people?

4. Exodus 20:8-11 and Mark 2:23-28

Why did God ask the people to keep the Sabbath as a special day?

5. Matthew 5:21-22, 33-44

Jesus wants us to do more than just keep the law. What more does he want us to do, according to these verses?

ANSWER KEY

When Rules Aren't Enough

Look up each passage and then answer the questions listed below it.



1. Matthew 5:17

What did Jesus come to do about the Old Testament Law?

He came to fulfill the law.

2. Luke 6:1-11

In Unit 7, Lesson 4, the script "Voices from Zero" mentioned a few of the Pharisees' rules. What do you remember about the Pharisees and Sabbath laws?

They made extra, complicated rules about how far to walk and what was considered work on the Sabbath.

3. Luke 13:10-17 and Luke 14:1-6

Breaking Sabbath laws could eventually lead to being stoned. Why did Jesus continue to take this risk, breaking the Sabbath law by healing people?

Jesus cared about sick people and wanted to help them, no matter what day it was. He wanted to show that people are more important than rules. Jesus wanted people to see the Sabbath as a day to do good, not just follow rules.

4. Exodus 20:8-11 and Mark 2:23-28

Why did God ask the people to keep the Sabbath as a special day?

God wanted people to remember creation and be restored in body and spirit. It was a day set aside for humankind, not for humankind to be slaves to the Sabbath.

5. Matthew 5:21-22, 33-44

Jesus wants us to do more than just keep the law. What more does he want us to do, according to these verses?

They made extra, complicated rules about how far to walk and what was considered work on the Sabbath.

The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 2: GOD FORGIVES US

Objective

Students will observe God’s forgiveness as portrayed in the parable of the prodigal son.

Text: Luke 15:11-31

Key Concepts

- Just as God forgave the prodigal son, God is ready to forgive us, no matter what we have done.
- Only God can remove our self-centeredness.

Essential Questions

- In what situations is God willing to forgive?
- Do you need to ask God to forgive you?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Large sheets of paper, approximately 11" x 14"
- Markers
- Magnets or tape
- “Forgiveness” (p. 317)
- Trash can
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* by C. S. Lewis (HarperCollins, 2000)

Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of “Forgiveness,” one for each student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Ask students to name as many “sins” as they can think of, and list them on the board. Make sure they don’t overlook sinful attitudes, such as greed, hate, and bitterness. Then ask the students, one by one, to identify a sin listed on the board that God is willing to forgive, if the offender regrets the action and desires forgiveness. Erase the ones the students identify. All of the sins should be erased by the time the discussion is over. *Note: If a student raises the question of the “unpardonable sin,” refer to Mark 3:22-30. In this context, Jesus was affirming that his power was from the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees had suggested that Jesus’ power was from Satan. In doing this, they were blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, the true source of Jesus’ power. That is the eternal sin to which he refers.*

LESSON STEPS

1. Read Luke 15:11-31 aloud, asking for volunteers to read. This story of the prodigal son is a beautiful portrayal of God’s forgiveness.

2. Living comic strip. Divide the class into eight groups. Each group will portray one scene from the story as in a frame in a comic strip. The idea is to imagine a comic strip of the story. Then the students become the characters and animals that would be in the strip. Assign each group one of the following frames:

Frame 1	vv. 11-12	father and son
Frame 2	v. 13	son and many friends
Frame 3	vv. 14-16	son and pigs
Frame 4	vv. 17-19	son
Frame 5	vv. 20-21	father and son
Frame 6	vv. 22-24	father, son, and servants
Frame 7	vv. 25-27	older son and servant
Frame 8	vv. 28-33	older son and father

Distribute large sheets of paper and markers. Each group should write what the characters are saying in their verse(s). When they act out their frame, they will hold up the sheets as “speech bubbles.” (*OR, instead of holding up the speech bubbles, each group could post them on the board and present their silent frame to the class.*)

Retell the story of the prodigal son as a living comic strip, frame by frame.

3. Have students to respond to the story by asking these questions:

- How might the father have felt when the son left home?
- Why do you think the son left?
- What did the son find when he was away from home?
- What made the son realize he had acted wrongly?
- How did the father treat his son when he asked to return home?
- Why do you think the father forgave his son?
- How might the son have felt after being welcomed home and forgiven?

4. Distribute the “Forgiveness” student page. Allow several minutes of silence for students to reflect on and write about areas in their lives where they need God’s forgiveness. End the class by inviting them to tear up and throw away their papers in the trash can. Make sure the students do not see each other’s papers. Emphasize God’s willingness to forgive all who are truly sorry for their sins.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Read *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*** by C. S. Lewis. In the story, Eustace needs forgiveness and cleansing after turning into a dragon because of his selfishness and greed. Aslan offers him forgiveness and restoration.
- **Perform the living comic strip** for another class in your school.

Forgiveness

Think about areas in your life where you need God's forgiveness. These could be actions or attitudes that have harmed yourself, others, or God. Write them down in the space below, and silently pray for God's forgiveness for your actions and thoughts in these situations. Then fold up this paper. No one else will ever read it.

If you truly are sorry for what you have done, God has forgiven you. You may need to talk to someone, if you hurt another person, and God will give you the courage to do that. You may also need to ask yourself for forgiveness. Be gentle with yourself. God loves you just as much now as ever!



The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 3: FORGIVING EACH OTHER

Objective

Students will recognize Christ's model of forgiveness.

Text: Matthew 18:15-17

Key Concepts

- Because God loves and forgives us, we can forgive each other.
- Some actions that seem to be forgiveness are actually distortions of the concept.

Essential Questions

- How should Christians treat those who mistreat them?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- “Common Forgiveness Myths” (p. 320)
- Student Bibles
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: *Peace Be with You* by Cornelia Lehn (Faith & Life Press, 1981)

Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of “Common Forgiveness Myths,” one per student.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option three, obtain a copy of *Peace Be with You*. This book is out of print, but can be found in libraries or purchased used from Amazon.com.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Ask students to think of a time someone treated them badly. How did they respond? Invite them to share their responses aloud. Then read Matthew 18:15-17 as the model for responding to someone who does wrong to you. Explain that people often think that once a person refuses to listen to the church, he/she should be excommunicated and shunned. Point out that while Jesus did not approve of pagans and tax collectors' behavior, he treated them with love and attention, inviting them to follow his teachings. This is an alternative interpretation of verse 17.

LESSON STEPS

1. Invite student volunteers to mime the parable in Matthew 18:21-35 as another student reads it aloud. You will need the following characters: king, servant with huge debt, servant with little debt, jailers, observing servants. You may want to have students read it first, with partners or together as a class. Then read it aloud and add the miming.

2. Discuss the parable. How do the students interpret it? Emphasize that because God forgave us, and Jesus Christ modeled forgiveness, we also have the power to forgive in situations that seem impossible to overcome.

3. “Common Forgiveness Myths.” While Jesus clearly teaches forgiveness, it is not always clear what forgiveness really means. One common “forgiveness myth” is when people ask for forgiveness but continue their destructive behaviors again and again. Divide the class into four groups, assigning each a discussion topic from the student page.

4. Summarize the myth discussions, inviting a spokesperson from each group to report to the whole class. Make sure the students clearly understand why each item is classified as a myth. Suggest Christ-like ways to respond in each situation, without causing additional harm to the persons involved.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Perform the mimed parable for younger children,** without the narrated text. The audience can guess what is happening. Then have your class present it again with the narrated text and explain the significance in relation to forgiveness.
- **Read “Turning Sorrow into Christian Purpose”** from *Peace Be with You*, page 116. Read partway through the story, stopping immediately after the parents learn of their son’s death and question how it could have happened. Ask students to identify how the parents are feeling, what the natural human reaction might be, and how a follower of Christ might act in this situation. Then finish the story and invite them to respond again to the parents’ actions.
- **Read stories of forgiveness** from *Peace Be with You*, found on pages 63, 67, 72, 76, and 111.

Common Forgiveness Myths

Read one of the forgiveness myths below, according to what your group was assigned. Discuss the situation and identify the following:

1. What's wrong with the idea?
2. Why will people be hurt if they follow the myth?
3. How would you change the myth so it is more like true forgiveness?

Forgiveness Myth 1:

Forgiveness means never telling on someone else when they've done something hurtful. (Fact: Read Matthew 18:15-16)

Forgiveness Myth 2:

Forgiveness means someone in your family can sexually or physically abuse you or a sibling and all they need to do is say they are sorry. (Fact: This only helps the abuser continue to do wrong. The only way to stop abuse is to report it and demand that the abuser seek help and be accountable to someone outside the family. The abuser is sick and needs help. Keeping silent does not help the abuser at all.)

Forgiveness Myth 3:

Forgiveness means the same thing as forgetting. (Fact: Forgiveness has little to do with forgetting and much more to do with not seeking revenge. The gift of forgiveness means even more because we know the person has not really forgotten, but acts as if he or she has.)

Forgiveness Myth 4:

Forgiveness happens all at once. (Fact: Forgiveness often happens a little step at a time. It sometimes takes years, especially if the person who wronged you doesn't seem to care that you were hurt.)



The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 4: USING MONEY WISELY

Objective

Students will recognize the danger of misusing money and the blessing of sharing generously.

Text: Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:19-31; Luke 18:18-30

Key Concepts

- Jesus warned that money can interfere with our love of God and others.
- God wants us to have compassion on those in need and use our resources to help others.

Essential Questions

- What’s wrong with money?
- How does God want us to use our money?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- “Wealth and Riches” (p. 323)
- Student Bibles
- Envelopes (1 per student)
- Dimes (enough for 10 per student)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: “A Parable for Simple Living” (p. 326)

Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of “Wealth and Riches,” one per student.
- Fill envelopes with 10 dimes each (*one envelope per student*). You may use a different coin, if you prefer.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Hand out the envelopes with dimes. Explain that each envelope contains 10 dimes, and students will have the opportunity to keep all of the money, some of it, or none of it, depending on how well they negotiate. Place the students in pairs (*including yourself if there is an odd number*).

Students will make proposals to their partners by writing the following on their envelopes: 1. The number I keep, and 2. The number you get. They may choose to keep all the dimes for themselves and offer their partner none, offer their partner half the money, offer their partner all the money, or any amount in between. No discussion between partners is allowed. Once each partner has written his/her proposal on the envelope, partners exchange envelopes and decide if they will accept or reject the proposal. If they accept it, each student keeps the coins as proposed. If it is rejected, neither gets the money.

LESSON STEPS

1. Debrief. Following the introductory activity, ask students to share their reasoning in making their proposals, and in accepting or rejecting their partners' proposals. You will likely find a variety of responses, such as "I tried to keep as much money for myself as I could," or "If I couldn't have a fair share, I didn't want my partner to get one, either," etc. A few students may even express willingness to share with others!

2. Matthew 6:24. Explain that this activity shows the many different views of money. Jesus' view is clear in his short statement in Matthew 6:24. Read the verse aloud to the students.

3. "Wealth and Riches." Divide the class into two groups and assign each group one of these passages: Luke 16:19-31 and Luke 18:18-30. Distribute the first page of "Wealth and Riches," on which each group member will respond to the passage. When they have filled out their section of the page, they should discuss their responses as a group. Finally, ask a spokesperson from each group to summarize their passage and responses for the whole class. Students in the other group should take notes on the passage they didn't read.

4. Honor God above money. All of us are called to honor God above money, but the way we do that may be different for each person. Some may be called to sell all of their possessions and give to the poor, like the rich ruler. Others may be asked to share generously what they have, like the rich man (*although he did not do so towards Lazarus*). Instruct students to fill out the second page of "Wealth and Riches"—the "Honoring God with My Possessions" section, prayerfully considering how God is asking them to be faithful with their money.

5. Close by singing "Heart and mind, possessions, Lord" from *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #392.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Read "A Parable for Simple Living,"** a modern-day parable (p. 326), aloud to the class. Ask students to identify things in their own lifestyle that cloud their vision of those in need around them.
- **Create parables.** Invite students to create modern-day parables about the use of money. The stories should uphold the theme of today's lesson. Students may work individually and read their written work to the class, or perform the parables as group skits for the class and others.

Name: _____

Wealth and Riches



Read the passage assigned to your group and answer the following questions.

Luke 16:19-31

1. Briefly summarize the parable about the rich man and Lazarus.

2. Describe the actions of the rich man and Lazarus during their lives.

3. What did the rich man want Lazarus to do for him, according to verse 24?

4. Why did Abraham refuse the rich man's request to send Lazarus to his five brothers?

5. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make through telling this parable?

Luke 18:18-30

1. Briefly summarize the conversation between Jesus and the rich ruler.

2. What commandments had the rich ruler obeyed since he was a child?

3. What had the rich ruler not done?

4. How did the rich ruler respond to Jesus' instructions?

5. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make in this conversation?

Honoring God with My Possessions

Using the chart below, write down ways your possessions hinder and help you to honor God. Examples have been included to help you start thinking.



<i>Ways My Possessions Keep Me from Honoring God</i>	<i>Ways to Honor God with My Possessions</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Spend all of my allowance on myself</i><i>2. Refuse to share my clothes with my sister/brother</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Give \$1 a week to my church offering</i><i>2. Donate my unused clothes to the thrift store</i>

This section is to be used for private and prayerful thought.

ANSWER KEY

Wealth and Riches



Read the passage assigned to your group and answer the following questions.

Luke 16:19-31

1. Briefly summarize the parable about the rich man and Lazarus.

A rich man ignored a beggar, Lazarus, outside his gate. When both died, Lazarus went to heaven; the rich man went to hell. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus with water, but Lazarus couldn't come from heaven. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers on earth, but Abraham said no.

2. Describe the actions of the rich man and Lazarus during their lives.

The rich man ignored the poor. Lazarus was a beggar and lay outside the rich man's gate.

3. What did the rich man want Lazarus to do for him, according to verse 24?

Dip his finger in water to cool the rich man's tongue

4. Why did Abraham refuse the rich man's request to send Lazarus to his five brothers?

If the brothers didn't listen to Moses and the prophets, they wouldn't listen to Lazarus either.

5. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make through telling this parable?

Answers will vary. A possible answer is that what we do in this life affects how we will spend eternity. Generous people are rewarded; those who ignore others' needs won't have a second chance.

Luke 18:18-30

1. Briefly summarize the conversation between Jesus and the rich ruler.

The rich ruler asked what to do to receive eternal life. Jesus said to obey the commandments and give to the poor. He was sad because of his wealth. Jesus explained that it is hard for a rich person to enter God's kingdom, but it is possible with God.

2. What commandments had the rich ruler obeyed since he was a child?

Do not commit adultery, murder, steal, or give false testimony; honor your parents

3. What had the rich ruler not done?

Sold all his possessions and given to the poor

4. How did the rich ruler respond to Jesus' instructions?

He was sad, because he had so much wealth.

5. What point do you think Jesus was trying to make in this conversation?

Answers will vary. A possible answer is that God can help us overcome our hang-ups with money. If we give up earthly things, God will reward us in more meaningful ways and with eternal life.



A Parable for Simple Living



And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed, as it is written, “He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, his righteousness abides forever.” (2 Corinthians 9:8-9)

Behold, the difficulty of living simply in the kingdom of God is like a poor man who was given a great treasure by his rich uncle. This treasure came with clear instructions to be followed and an amazing promise. The poor man was to take out of this treasure enough money to care for all of his family’s needs, but only just enough. Then he was to spend the rest of his life giving away the rest of the treasure as he went about doing good deeds.

The amazing promise that came with the treasure was that whenever the poor man ran out of treasure for his own needs and to give away doing good deeds, the rich uncle would replace it with more treasure. As you can imagine, the poor man quickly agreed to follow the instructions, and was given the great treasure. He took it home and spread it out on the kitchen table and called his family together. He told them what had happened, and together they figured out what they needed for themselves. They set aside that amount, and then they began to go about distributing the rest.

The poor man’s family would never have believed that doing good deeds and giving away money could be so much fun! And just about the time that the treasure was almost gone, the servants of the rich uncle came to their house with more treasure. Again they set aside what they needed and went about giving away the rest.

Now this cycle of receiving treasure and doing good deeds went on undisturbed for a while, until one day the poor man and his wife noticed that while they had been busy going about doing good, their neighbor on the left had been busy building a nice addition to his house. It made the poor man’s house look even poorer.

And so the next time the servant of the rich uncle came with more treasure, the poor man set aside what they needed plus a little more to build an addition for his house. Then he and his family went about giving away the rest of the treasure. But, of course, since they had set

aside more than usual for their new addition, there wasn’t much left to give away, and it didn’t take as long to give it away. But that was okay, because there was plenty to do with all that building and decorating and furnishing of the new addition.

Now as the poor man and his wife were spending more time at home, they began to notice other things happening around them. Their neighbors on the right had bought a new fancy car, which made the poor man’s small car look shabby. And so the next time the servants came with the treasure, the family set aside what they needed plus a little more for a new, better car. And then they thought of how much more efficient a van would be for distributing the treasure. They went to the dealer and ordered a new van. The price was high, but it was much more efficient.

The family set about in their van, doing good and giving away what was left, except that there wasn’t much left. In fact, they noticed that though they still had plenty of treasure set aside for their own needs, the rest of the treasure went pretty fast. They found themselves sitting around waiting for the servants of the rich uncle to bring more treasure. And all that waiting was kind of boring.

The next time the treasure came, the family decided they couldn’t be good distributors of the extra treasure if they were bored most of the time, so they set aside even more for entertainment. When they went to load the extra treasure into the van to give it away, they noticed there wasn’t anything left. And they thought for a moment or two. But thinking got boring, so they went back into the house with the new addition to be entertained by what they had bought. And pretty soon, they had forgotten all about doing good and giving away treasure.

Eventually, they instructed the servants of the rich uncle to just deposit the treasure in the bank directly and not bother them at their home anymore. They wouldn’t be there anyway, having bought a second home at the beach for the winter and a third home in the mountains for the summer. They had found that using and taking care of all their things took all of their time. And even though deep down they didn’t like working so hard to take care of all those things, at least they had something to do with their time, since now giving away treasure didn’t take any time at all.

The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 5: WEALTH AROUND THE WORLD

Objective

Students will be introduced to the unequal distribution of wealth around the world. They will examine Jesus' teachings on wealth and apply them to daily life.

Text: Luke 21:1-4

Key Concepts

- The United States is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.
- Many areas of the world do not benefit from a fair share of wealth.

Essential Questions

- How is wealth distributed around the world?
- How might other countries view the U.S. in regard to wealth?
- What can I do to help others receive their fair share of wealth?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- Skittles candies or crackers
- "Gross National Income Per Capita" (p. 329)
- "Gross National Income Per Capita" teacher's page (p. 330)
- Student Bibles

Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of "Gross National Income Per Capita," one per student.
- Choose a country from the page for each student, so that the whole class represents the spectrum of wealth from Luxembourg to Burundi (*the actual extremes according to World Bank data*).
- Cut some of the candies or crackers so you will be able to distribute the fraction amounts. (*See teacher's page, p. 330, for chart of amounts.*)

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Hand out candies or crackers to each student according to the portions listed for that student's country on the GNP per Capita chart. Explain that each portion represents a country's wealth in relation to others around the world.

LESSON STEPS

- 1. Ask students to guess** which countries their portions represent, and then reveal the actual countries. Distribute the student page, "Gross National Income Per Capita" and invite discussion about the questions listed. Allow the students to eat their food now, sharing with others if they wish.
- 2. Invite a volunteer to read Luke 21:1-4.** While people have different amounts of wealth, everyone is called to share generously according to what they have.

Ask students to imagine what might happen in our world if everyone shared as much as the widow did.

Have them think more about this through a written response to the questions on the student page. Allow at least 10 minutes for writing.

3. Pray and respond. Invite students to share their ideas, and then pray together for God's guidance in decisions about personal wealth. Invite the class to form a response plan. One idea would be to support Mennonite Central Committee's relief kits ministry by making kits as a class. For a current list of kit options, visit www.mcc.org/kits/

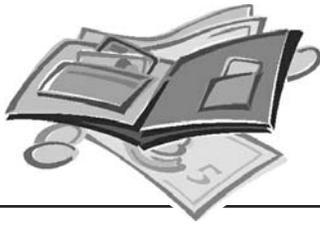
EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Extend your class sharing project** to include support from your school or local community. Students can make announcements, create posters, write newspaper ads, and contact the local media for promotion.
- **Bring in articles** about poverty, injustice, programs that provide relief and economic aid, projects that empower oppressed people, and other articles on subjects like these. Extra credit points may be given to students who find articles. Divide the class into groups to read about the articles and summarize them for the others. Are any of the people in the articles making a difference? How might students and teachers make a difference?

Gross National Income Per Capita

GNI per capita tells us the average income of people in a country. Use the chart below to understand how your country's wealth compares to others around the world.



Luxembourg	\$ 65,630
United States	43,740
Japan	38,980
France	34,810
Australia	32,220
Saudi Arabia	11,770
Trinidad and Tobago	10,440
Mexico	7,310
Chile	5,870
South Africa	4,960
Romania	3,830
Brazil	3,460
Jordan	2,500
Thailand	2,750
Albania	2,580
China	1,740
Ukraine	1,520
Paraguay	1,280
Cameroon	1,010
Nicaragua	910
India	720
Pakistan	690
Vietnam	620
Bangladesh	570
Kenya	530
Haiti	450
Cambodia	380
Nepal	270
Ethiopia	160
Burundi	100

Class Discussion Questions

How did you feel if you received one of the smallest portions? What was your reaction when you saw what the wealthiest countries received?

How did you feel if you received one of the largest portions? How did your feelings change when you saw the poorest countries' portions?

How did you feel if you received a portion somewhere in the middle?

Personal Questions

Think about how Jesus' teachings on wealth apply to you personally. How can you respond to the unequal wealth distribution around the world? How can you share what you have received? Respond to these questions in the space below.

2005 Gross National Income Per Capita
 Courtesy of the World Bank, World Development
 Indicators database, July 1, 2006.

Gross National Income Per Capita

Teacher's Page

GNI per capita tells us the average income of people in a country. Students will use the chart below to understand how their country's wealth compares to others around the world. You will assign countries to the students and distribute candy pieces to demonstrate the disparity.



Country	Average Income	Candy Portion (in whole pieces)
Luxembourg	\$ 65,630	66
United States	43,740	44
Japan	38,980	39
France	34,810	34
Australia	32,220	32
Saudi Arabia	11,770	12
Trinidad and Tobago	10,440	10
Mexico	7,310	7
Chile	5,870	6
South Africa	4,960	5
Romania	3,830	4
Brazil	3,460	3
Jordan	2,500	2.75
Thailand	2,750	2.5
Albania	2,580	2.5
China	1,740	1.75
Ukraine	1,520	1.5
Paraguay	1,280	1.25
Cameroon	1,010	1
Nicaragua	910	1
India	720	0.7
Pakistan	690	0.7
Vietnam	620	0.6
Bangladesh	570	0.6
Kenya	530	0.5
Haiti	450	0.4
Cambodia	380	0.4
Nepal	270	0.3
Ethiopia	160	0.2
Burundi	100	0.1

2005 Gross National Income Per Capita

Courtesy of the World Bank, World Development Indicators database, July 1, 2006.

The Teachings of Jesus

LESSON 6: THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Objective

Students will recognize Jesus' commitment to servanthood and refusal to use violent self-defense as a model for his disciples.

Text: John 13:1-18, Matthew 5:3-11

Key Concepts

- Jesus was committed to a life of servanthood and compassion.
- Jesus' willingness to suffer provides a model of how his disciples should respond to persecution.

Essential Questions

- How did Jesus treat others, including those who arrested him?
- How can we follow Jesus' example of servanthood and suffering?

Estimated Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials

- Student Bibles
- Drawing paper (2" x 2.75" and full sheets)
- Drawing supplies: pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons, etc.
- Stapler
- Sticky tack (or other adhesive to post paper on walls)

Teacher Preparation

- Create a bulletin board with a large cross in the center.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Distribute the small pieces of drawing paper and drawing supplies. Ask students to think of the worst job or chore they ever did, and then draw a scene about it. When most have finished, invite students to share their drawings with the class and explain the terrible jobs they illustrated.

LESSON STEPS

1. Read John 13:1-18 as a class, inviting student volunteers to read the parts of the narrator, Simon Peter, and Jesus. Explain that washing others' feet was an especially terrible job in Jesus' day, because people walked in sandals for miles in a hot, dusty climate. The servant of the house usually washed the guests' feet. In taking on this task himself, Jesus showed that he was willing to serve others in any way.

2. Highlight Jesus' acts of service as an example of how his followers are to live. Instruct students to think of types of service they might realistically do, and to list those items somewhere on their drawings.

3. The ultimate service. Ask students for ideas of what the ultimate form of service might be. Someone will probably mention giving up everything for someone else, even your own life. Highlight that this is exactly what Jesus did in dying on the cross. Jesus' washing his disciples' feet can be viewed as foreshadowing this ultimate act of servanthood.

Invite the students to staple their drawings onto the cross on the bulletin board, as a symbol of their willingness to serve others.

4. Read Matthew 5:3-11 as a class. When people truly serve others, they do not expect anything in return. There is often little reward for servanthood. In the Beatitudes, Jesus promises rewards for true servants in terms of God's kingdom. Jesus' followers may never receive tangible earthly rewards, but the Beatitudes outline the immeasurable rewards that are to come.

5. Beatitudes drawings. Divide the class into nine groups, assigning one of the Beatitudes to each group. The groups should think of a scenario to fit their Beatitude, and illustrate it on a full sheet of paper. When students are finished, have them explain their drawings to the class and post them on the wall beside the bulletin board.

6. Lead in prayer, asking God to give everyone in the class strength to follow Jesus' example of servanthood.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)

- **Beatitudes skits.** Instead of drawing examples of the Beatitudes, assign Beatitudes to small groups of 3-4 students. Each group should create a skit based on a real-life situation that illustrates their Beatitude. You might choose a few of the Beatitudes that are easier to understand. This exercise is helpful as a memory aid.
- **Memory work.** Have students work in pairs to continue memorizing Matthew 5:3-11. They will need to recite this passage as part of the unit assessment.

Name _____

Unit 10 Assessment: Personal Presentation

1. Write or recite to your teacher Matthew 5:3-11.
2. Look back over the student pages, your notes, and assignments for each lesson in Unit 10: The Teachings of Jesus. Below, list something you learned from each lesson. Please use complete sentences.

Lesson 1: Love is the Reason

Lesson 2: God Forgives Us

Lesson 3: Forgiving Each Other

Lesson 4: Using Money Wisely

Lesson 5: Wealth around the World

Lesson 6: The Suffering Servant

3. Now choose the topic that is most meaningful to you: love, forgiveness, wealth, or servanthood. Write a speech explaining to the class what this topic means to you personally. You may put the speech into a poem or a song, if you wish.

Keep these requirements in mind as you develop your presentation:

- Include what Jesus taught about this topic as recorded in the Bible.
- Apply Jesus' teachings to your life in a personal way.
- The speech (poem or song) must be at least 2 minutes long.

Unit 10 Assessment: Personal Presentation

ANSWER KEY

1. Write or recite to your teacher Matthew 5:3-11.

Students should have all verses written, or be able to say the scripture to the teacher from memory.

2. Look back over the student pages, your notes, and assignments for each lesson in Unit 10: The Teachings of Jesus. Below, list something you learned from each lesson. Please use complete sentences.

Below each lesson, students should have at least one sentence about what they learned.

3. Now choose the topic that is most meaningful to you: love, forgiveness, wealth, or servanthood. Write a speech explaining to the class what this topic means to you personally. You may put the speech into a poem or a song, if you wish.

Keep these requirements in mind as you develop your presentation:

- Include what Jesus taught about this topic as recorded in the Bible.
- Apply Jesus' teachings to your life in a personal way.
- The speech (poem or song) must be at least 2 minutes long.

Students should include the three parts mentioned above. They should explain Jesus' teaching about the topic, apply the teaching to their lives, and speak for approximately 2 minutes.