

LESSON 1: JESUS IS THE WAY

This includes:

1. LEADER PREPARATION
2. LESSON GUIDE

1. LEADER PREPARATION**LESSON OVERVIEW**

Jesus' life turned societal norms upside-down. The Temple used to be a place where only a select few people were invited to encounter God personally. Jesus came to change all that. Now we all can experience eternal life with God in heaven—but only through a personal relationship with Jesus. He died for *everyone*, not just a select few, so we're all invited to this heavenly party. Thanks to Jesus' free gift of salvation, we never have to feel left out or like we aren't good enough.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Jesus, the only way to eternal life with God, is preparing a place for each of us in heaven.
2. WHY: Teenagers can gain confidence in the truth that Jesus, who loves each of us, is the only path to God.
3. HOW: Students can grow closer to Jesus and trust him as they explore how he's the way, the truth, and the life.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

John 14:1-14

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE

Luke 21:5-6

TEACHING PREP

LEADER
TIP

Use this short overview to prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your group, you'll want to absorb it as you prepare to lead.

Read John 14:1-14.

It's exciting to look to the future, and that's what Jesus is doing in this passage. He's sharing with the disciples—and us—that he has a plan. Thankfully, that plan includes us. We've received an invitation to the heavenly party, because Jesus' plan of salvation is for everyone.

This passage is rich with promise: Jesus is planning on us being in heaven, and he's coming back to earth to take us there. Because we can't get to heaven on our own, Jesus has already prepared the way for us. All we need to do is place our trust in him as our Savior.

Jesus, as fully God and fully man, is the only way to eternal life with God in heaven. Because Jesus is the tangible image of the invisible God, knowing Jesus is the same as knowing God. When we unite our lives with Jesus, we unite them with God.

It can seem narrow that Jesus is the only way to God, but this way is available to everyone. Jesus is also the truth (the fruition of God's promises) and the life (as he combines his divine life with ours).

Some people are puzzled by how Jesus says we can ask for anything and he will do it (verse 13). Jesus isn't a genie; instead, the key is to ask in his name, and our requests and pleas must be in line with Jesus' character and vision.

As with many of Jesus' discussions with his disciples, they just didn't get it yet. While Jesus explained more about his purpose and our future with him, the disciples stuck to basic questions. How often do we do that with Jesus? Even when we've been in a relationship with him for quite some time, we can still have pretty basic questions or struggle with fundamental aspects of our faith journey. Just as with the disciples, Jesus is patient with us and explains things in a way we can better understand.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

TEXTS OR TWEETS

Send one or both of these messages to your students prior to your meeting. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- Have you ever found out about a party—that you weren't invited to? Come find out about the ultimate party...and we're all invited!
- If you could ask Jesus for anything, what would it be? Get ready for a great conversation this week!

PARENT EMAIL

Send this email to parents following the lesson to encourage them to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

We've started a new three-lesson series called "Jesus at the End of Time." It will help students explore Jesus' role in the future, as well as their future with him.

In the first lesson, we looked at John 14:1-14, where Jesus told the disciples about what was to come. Jesus said we can trust him because he's going to prepare a place for us in his Father's home.

Jesus was speaking about the time following his death. He's preparing a place in heaven for his disciples—anyone who believes in him—for all eternity. As the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus is the only path to eternal life with God.

Find some time—or create some time—at the dinner table or in the car to talk more about this topic with your teenager. Feel free to start the conversation with these questions:

- What's it like to receive—or not receive—an invitation to a party?
- Why do you think a relationship with Jesus is intended for everyone? What would you tell someone who's missing out on this important relationship?
- How do Jesus' promises fill you with hope—both now and for eternity?

Thanks for all your prayers for our students and our ministry. Have an amazing week!

LESSON 1: JESUS IS THE WAY**2. LESSON GUIDE****GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]****LEADER
TIP**

Preview the following video for your group: youtube.com/watch?v=dXk4vBaxTkQ (or use another video about not being included). You'll need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then play the video clip. Then **ASK**:

- *Blair didn't invite Serena to her party. Jenny is caught in the middle, not sure what to do. Which character did you identify with most, and why? How has this scene played out in your own life?*
- *What's the best thing to do in Serena's situation, and why?*
- *What is it like to realize you aren't invited or included? When, if ever, is it OK to not invite someone?*
- *Describe a time when you were surprised to be invited somewhere. What was that like?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *It stinks to not be invited to a party. We feel left out or like we're not good enough. But there's an incredible party we're all invited to, and it will last forever. Let's see what we have to look forward to.*

TEACHING POINTS**LEADER
TIP**

Use the Teaching Points to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read John 14:1-14 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so several people have a chance to read.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *It's exciting to look to the future. Let's dig into this Scripture passage where Jesus shares his special plan—and lets us know we're included in it.*

1. WE'RE ALL INVITED**ASK:**

- *When you picture heaven, what is it like? Who's there?*

- *What is it like to hear that Jesus is already planning on you being in heaven with him? How might that affect your everyday life—and your relationship with him?*
- *Do you believe that salvation through Jesus is available to everyone and not just a select few people? Why or why not?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus has already prepared the way for eternal life; in fact, he's the only way to get to heaven. And he's planning on each one of us being there. All we need to do is place our trust in Jesus as our Savior. This Scripture passage is filled with promises, and we can trust Jesus to always keep his promises. Not only is Jesus planning on us being in heaven, but he's coming back to take us there.*

2. WE CAN KNOW JESUS

ASK:

- *How has your friendship with Jesus changed in the past year? past three years? past five years?*
- *What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and truly knowing him?*
- *How are your pictures of God the Father and Jesus similar, and how are they different?*
- *If we couldn't experience a relationship with Jesus personally—and just had to rely on someone else telling us about it—how would life be different?*
- *Why is it important that no barriers stand between us and God—and between us and heaven, if we're followers of Jesus?*
- *What will you ask Jesus first when you get to heaven, and why?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only path to eternal life with God. Because Jesus is the tangible image of the invisible God, knowing Jesus is the same as knowing God. When we have a relationship with Jesus, we also have a relationship with God. Although Jesus is the only way to God, that isn't a narrow concept because it's available to everyone who believes in him.*

3. WE CAN ASK JESUS FOR ANYTHING

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Some people view Jesus as a wish-granting genie, but that's not how it works. The key is to ask in Jesus' name and to offer requests and pleas that are in line with his character and his intentions. He wants to answer our prayers to bring glory to God the Father in heaven.*

ASK:

- *If you could ask Jesus for anything and knew he'd say yes, what would it be, and why?*
- *What would you say to someone who wonders why their prayers aren't answered—or aren't answered how they'd like them to be?*
- *What makes it difficult to ask for things in Jesus' name? How might that "condition" change what you ask for?*
- *What are some things you can pray about regarding your relationship with Jesus? What are some things you can pray about regarding your eternal future with him?*

EXTRA DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three to discuss these questions.



ASK:

- Read Luke 21:5-6. During Jesus' time on earth, the Temple was an ornate structure in the center of Jerusalem where people gathered to worship. The Temple contained varying levels of holy places, and only the most righteous people could personally encounter God in the holiest spot. If you didn't have direct access to God through Jesus, how might your life and faith be different?
- Why was it necessary for the Temple to be torn down? What did this symbolize about our relationship with God—and how Jesus impacted it?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

LIVING IT OUT

ASK:

- God wants you to have eternal life with him. Jesus did all the work on the cross; now you just need to believe in him and trust him as your Savior. How does your daily life reflect the fact that Jesus has already chosen and included you?
- What's one thing you can do this week to get to know Jesus better?
- What person in your life might be most open to you introducing Jesus to him or her? What's an easy, natural way to do that?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *God loves you so much that he chose you to be reunited with him. He even provided a way to heaven through his Son, Jesus. Amid all of life's challenges and busyness, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that we're included in God's plan. Let's live our lives focused on this good news.*



Ask students to each find a quiet spot in your meeting area for a few minutes of prayer and reflection. Consider praying together as a group or asking if any students would like prayer from the rest of the group.

SUMMARY



Provide a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) this lesson's content, (2) the dialogue that took place today, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the Scripture below.

"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me' "
(John 14:6).