

Leader's Guide for

The Bible Stories Video Project:

The Path of Jesus

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Introduction to *The Path of Jesus* from The Bible Stories Video Project

Many have wondered what it might have been like to walk with Jesus, to literally live in first century Palestine when Jesus walked this earth. What would that be like?

- Would we recognize Him as the promised Messiah?
- Would we help or hinder His mission?
- Would our selfish desires and goals get in the way?

Surely we would have behaved differently than those who were there! Or would we? *The Path of Jesus* brings the Gospels to life. Through short dramatic portrayals, we follow Jesus from the time of His birth until His death and glorious resurrection. Along the way we see clearly His mission and the New Covenant He established. We see how Jesus invites each of us today to walk the path with Him.

The Path of Jesus is a wonderful resource for use by groups or individuals. All who desire a clear and simple presentation of Jesus' life, ministry and mission will enjoy this program. Seekers, new believers and long time believers alike will be challenged by the truths presented through Jesus' life and teaching.

This study guide is provided to help you make the most of the seven video sessions. Scripture, open-ended questions, and discussion questions will help participants apply the truths presented. Leaders should read through each session and watch the video segment before class. Leaders may also want to watch the Director's Commentaries, which are a special feature on the DVD. Then decide which scriptures you will use and which questions will be most effective for your group.

The Path of Jesus is meticulously researched and packed full of information and food for thought. The presenter, Christopher Gornold-Smith, illuminates the Gospel story and challenges each of us to follow the Savior and to walk The Path with Him. Blessings to you as you seek a deeper understanding of Jesus and a closer walk with Him.

Lesson 1: The Christmas Story (*The Path is Revealed*);

Scripture References: Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35, 2:1-16

Theme: The events surrounding the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem were ordered by God as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 1:

1. What is one life event or life stage you are currently looking forward to? Why does this event make you smile when you think of it? How long will you have to wait? Are you doing anything to prepare?
2. Read Micah 5:2. What is the prophet Micah referring to? At the time of Jesus' birth, the Israelites have been waiting 700 years for this prophecy to come true. What sort of ruler do you suppose the Jews were expecting? Why does the hope of this king fill their hearts with longing?
3. Read Matthew 1:1-16. Describe Joseph's heritage. What do you know of the occupation of this man who is descended from kings? What makes him uniquely positioned to be the earthly father of the Messiah?
4. In a time when genealogy listings typically included only men, Matthew includes characters such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheeba in Jesus' family tree. Why would he include these women and not mention the traditional Jewish matriarchs Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel?
5. Who are some of the miracle babies you remember from the Old Testament? (*Isaac, Sampson, and Samuel for example*) How are these miracle births different from what you know of Jesus' birth? In today's program we'll see how the miracle birth of Jesus is very different from those recorded before.

View Program 1: The Christmas Story (9:51 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. The video shows Mary joyfully sharing the news of her pregnancy. What is Joseph's reaction? What event changes Joseph's mind about how he will respond?
2. What are some of the other supernatural events that occurred in relation to the birth of Jesus? Besides the supernatural, what else strikes you as odd about the Savior's arrival on earth?
3. Describe the shepherds, the first recorded visitors to the baby Jesus. What is their economic, social and faith background?
4. Now describe the wise men who seek the new king some time later. What is their economic, social, and faith background?
5. Do you feel more of a connection with the shepherds or the wise men? Why?
6. What is King Herod's response upon learning of the new king? Who pays the price for his selfish wish to remain in control?
7. What are the three gifts the wise men bring to Jesus? What do they represent? (*Gold for a king, Incense for a priest to offer in worship, and Myrrh for a physician to use in healing the sick*) How do these three gifts foretell the roles Jesus will fill in His ministry?
8. So, the Path of Jesus begins with God sending His Son to a waiting world. From the heritage of His parents, to the miraculous birth, to the various visitors, to the amazing escape to Egypt, this is a story steeped in contrasts, miracles, and rich meaning. How does the story of the heavenly King born of a virgin and placed in a manger strengthen your faith in the Son of God as the One sent to earth to offer us saving grace?

Lesson 2: The Temptation (*The Path is Genuine*)

Scripture Reference: Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13; Deut. 8:3; 6:13, 16; Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 2:8; Hebrews 2:18.

Theme: Jesus faced real temptation and overcame it. He can help us do the same.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 2:

1. Describe a time when you felt you were on top of the world. A time when you felt at peace and richly blessed. In your experience, was this a time when you were fervently seeking God or coasting in your faith?
2. Review Matt. 3:13-17. How might Jesus be feeling following His baptism experience and the verbal blessing of His Father in heaven? Thinking logically, what would you expect Him to do next?
3. Have you ever been to the desert? Give a few adjectives to describe the desert landscape.
4. What does it mean if someone describes going through a “desert time?” Have you experienced a “desert time?” What helped you through?
5. Look up Matt. 4:1. Who led Jesus into the desert? Why? Today we’ll see how the Savior’s time in the desert was used by God to prepare Him for things to come.

View Program 2: The Temptation (5:29 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. Following the mountain top experience of His baptism, Jesus willingly goes into the desert for a time of preparation for public ministry. Why does He choose this difficult path?
2. Taking time away and alone to seek God is one thing, but fasting for forty days is another matter. In addition, we know Jesus is able to make bread if He wants, yet He does not. Why does Jesus make fasting a part of this time of preparation?
3. Satan tempts Jesus when He is at a low point and weak from the fast. The commentator points out that still Jesus is able *NOT* to sin. Yet, He experienced the temptation to the fullest. Why was real temptation necessary for Jesus' path to be genuine?
4. What clever techniques does Satan use? Describe times when you've felt tempted in ways that mirror the temptations Jesus faces.
5. What "weapons" does Jesus use to counter Satan's three offers? Review Matt. 4:1-11 if needed. What weapons do you have at your disposal when facing the temptation to sin?
6. Ultimately, temptations or tests should build our faith and draw us closer to God. That's how we pass the test! Has this been true in your life? If not, how can you use your next time of testing as a way to grow in faith and knowledge of God?
7. The discipline of fasting can be a great tool for spiritual growth. Why do you think this is? Make a plan to try fasting. You can fast from food, TV, desserts, or any thing that would be a challenge to you. Meditate on Hebrews 2:18 as you experience your time of fasting. Use the time for prayer and connection with God.

Lesson 3: Jesus and the Pharisees (*The Path is New*)

Scripture Reference: Luke 7:11-17, 11; Matt. 12:38-42; John 9

Theme: Jesus is not interested in our religious rules, but in a relationship.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 3:

1. Religion and politics are said to be two hot topics one should avoid discussing in public. Why?
2. What world religions are you familiar with? Can you describe the basic tenets of several of them?
3. Does the word “religious” have a positive or negative meaning in today’s society? How about the label “Born Again Christian?” Compare this with someone described as a “Disciple of Jesus.” Why do these have different connotations?
4. Describe your church. What activities happen there? What are important functions of your church as the body of believers lives out faith in community?
5. In this program we will have a glimpse of Jesus engaged in public ministry and teaching. Based on your knowledge of Jesus, what types of people does He tend to interact with? As you watch, look for how Jesus seems to adjust to the sick and needy as well as to the proud and pious.

View Program 3: Jesus and the Pharisees (10:39 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. Did you catch the difference between the Temple and the Synagogue? One is a place to take offerings and sacrifices and the other is a place of prayer and study. Which is more important in your view? Does your church make room for all of these things?
2. How did the presenter describe the temple priests at the time of Jesus? How about the Pharisees, whose lives centered around the Synagogue?
3. Were you surprised to hear that Jesus and the Pharisees were in agreement on a number of issues? Jesus doesn't shy away from engaging them in important discussions. Nor does He hesitate to speak truth to them. What types of issues does Jesus confront the Pharisees with in this segment? What is the reaction of most of them?
4. The Pharisees' religion is based on careful, painstaking interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. They have come up with 613 commandments people must keep in order to be in good standing. What is Jesus' reaction to this religion of rules? See Luke 11:39.
5. What proof do the Pharisees have of Jesus' credibility? Given that they've seen Him in action and have heard Him teach, why are they still determined to undermine him?
6. Read John 9:41. The Pharisees see themselves as the keepers of truth. The Savior has come to fulfill the very laws they know so well, yet they don't make the connection. The path He describes is very different from the one they are comfortable with. Why are most of them unable to accept His new way?
7. Following set rules is often much easier than engaging in a living relationship. But that is the new path Jesus calls us to. What can you do to seek a genuine relationship with the Savior, instead of trusting in man-made rules?

Lesson 4: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (*The Path is for All*)

Scripture Reference: Luke 18:9-14

Theme: God invites everyone, regardless of our past sins. He can forgive and transform us!

Opening questions for use before viewing program 4:

1. “Sin” has become an unpopular word in our society. Why do you think that is? Can you come up with definitions for the words “sin” and “sinner?”
2. Now can you come up with a list of sins and place them in order of severity?
3. In the context of a word processor, what does “left justified” or “right justified” mean? When you think of getting in line with God, define “justified.”
4. What would you consider to be the marks of a good prayer life? What would you say is the purpose of prayer?
5. Read Luke 18:9. To whom will Jesus address the parable? Watch the video to see how Jesus uses a memorable story to show His path is available for all who will humble themselves.

View Program 4: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (8:17 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. This segment sets the stage with a description of the political climate of the day. The nation of Israel, God's chosen people, is being ruled by the Romans, who were pagan idolaters. Describe how Jewish society viewed both the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Are there modern equivalents of these two?
2. What does the Pharisee's posture and position say about his views of himself? Read the Pharisee's prayer in Luke 18:11-12. What messages do you hear him saying between the lines of his spoken prayer?
3. What does the tax Collector's posture and position say regarding his self-assessment? Summarize the content of his prayer.
4. How about your own prayer life? Do your prayers focus on self, or on God? Are you looking for His will, or justification of your own will? In all of this, how can we keep our prayer life from becoming just one more rule we keep, in order to somehow earn our salvation?
5. Does it appear that Jesus is soft on sin, not caring about our behaviors? Discuss Mark 7:20-23 in relation to this parable.
6. Why might "spiritual pride" be the most deadly of sins? How can one guard against this sin? What would it take for you to look at others as God sees them, rather than in comparison to yourself?
7. The path of Jesus is open to all who will humble themselves and come to Him for forgiveness. Take a moment now for an honest look at your own heart and motives. No matter what sins you may be dealing with, ask God for forgiveness.

Lesson 5: The Decision (*The Path is Costly*)

Scripture Reference: Luke 14:26-33

Theme: Following Jesus is costly, but it is even more costly to not follow Him.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 5:

1. Our society urges us to strive towards a better life, so we can be happy. Think of a time when you bought into a false advertising claim. What products or lifestyles do we look to in order to solve our problems and give us a fuller life?
2. How about Christianity? Sometimes well-intentioned Christians hold the best parts of faith as a carrot in front of non-believers, to try to entice them into the kingdom. What types of false advertisement have been used to try to “sell” Christianity? What promises do Christians sometimes present to those who might be considering faith?
3. Now, consider a modern corporate merger or take over. The key players in such a large decision must carefully weigh the pros and cons of the merger. What types of things will they consider? Will their final decision be based mostly on selfish motives or on the good of the company?
4. Read Luke 14:25 before viewing the video segment. What do you learn about the setting for today’s story? Today’s video will show how Jesus explains the importance of counting the cost of joining His path.

View Program 5: The Decision (6:55 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. There are crowds following Jesus. His path is becoming somewhat popular, and appears to be gaining momentum. What are these crowds of followers expecting from Jesus? What might be some dangers of a “popular” Christianity?
2. What decision is facing the king in the parable? What does the invading army represent?
3. The king wants to get as much accurate information as possible. He understands the time is short. Why is it important for those considering faith to count the cost before committing their life to Christ?
4. What might the cost of following Jesus look like for those in the story? Remember, Jesus would soon enter Jerusalem and go to the cross.
5. How about today? What is the cost of following Christ and giving Him control of your life? Now, don’t stop there, count the rewards too.
6. Think back to the discussion of the corporate merger, from opening question #3. As we consider handing over control of our lives, we must think about who we’d rather have in charge. From what you know of God, why is He far more capable of steering the ship than we could ever hope to be? Go ahead and count the cost of becoming a Christian. But before you make your choice, also count the costs of NOT walking the path with Jesus.

Lesson 6: The Absent King (*The Path requires Commitment*)

Scripture Reference: Luke 19:11-27

Theme: We are accountable to use all we have for the growth of the Kingdom.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 6:

1. Do you consider yourself a risk taker? How about a hard worker?
2. Describe a time when you took a risk and worked hard for some sort of reward or gain. Perhaps this was in the context of a sport, a business venture, or even advanced education. What were you risking? How hard was the work? What rewards motivated you?
3. Suppose your friend is taking a long journey and asks you to look after his prized antique automobile. How would you care for his valued possession? What would be your objective in your friend's absence?
4. Read Luke 19:11. Here we find Jesus nearing Jerusalem. What do many of His followers think is about to happen? Jesus takes the opportunity to warn them that He will not be with them forever, and that He will want to have their help. Walking His path will require much, and the people must understand.

View Program 6: The Absent King (10:36 minutes)

Questions for use after the program:

1. Were you surprised that this parable is based on actual events that would have been familiar to the listeners? Why do you think Jesus chose to relay this truth in this way?
2. Describe the king in this parable. Some adjectives which describe the king would not be good words for describing the Lord. Yet, the king does represent Jesus. How can this be?
3. How do the first two servants respond to the challenge? How do they include risk, hard work and wisdom in their responses?
4. How about the third servant? How does he respond to the challenge? What is the third servant's attitude toward the king?
5. What would it look like for a church, a family, or an individual to use all their resources (physical, mental, financial, spiritual, etc.) for Kingdom building instead of self building? What risks would be involved in this sort of decision? What hard work is involved? Why might wisdom also be necessary?
6. Jesus has entrusted us with a great resource: The keys to the Kingdom of God! How are you working to grow the Kingdom, so on the day of His return, He will say "Well done, good and faithful servant?" Walking the path of Jesus comes with responsibility – Will you take the challenge?

Lesson 7: The New Covenant (*The Path is Complete*)

Scripture Reference: Matt. 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-30; John 13:1-30

Theme: Jesus is God's Covenant with us. We can depend on Him.

Opening questions for use before viewing program 7:

1. What would be a good definition of "covenant?" A covenant has been described as a two-way promise given with boundaries (laws) and grace (love). How does this definition fit your own experience with common covenants such as in marriage, parenting or membership in an organization?
2. Read Exodus 13:3-10. What event is commemorated with the Jewish Passover? What are some of the Passover instructions included in this portion of Scripture? Note: *If possible, bring unleavened bread (matzos) to class today, in order to show a portion of the Passover meal.*
3. Unleavened bread bakes quickly. It is used in the Passover meal as a reminder that the Israelites escaped Egypt in a hurry. Read Exodus 12:21-23. How was the blood of the Passover lamb used?
4. Following the deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites are in a process of literally becoming the nation of Israel. Look up Exodus 19:3-6. Describe the covenant between God and the Israelites.
5. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What does God promise through the prophet? Drawing on your knowledge of Old Testament history, why is a New Covenant needed? How does Jeremiah describe the New Covenant that is to come? After waiting and watching for 600 years, the Israelites finally get to see the New Covenant fulfilled. Watch the final video segment to see how Jesus' path is the perfect fulfillment of the New Covenant.

View Program 7: The New Covenant (13:56 minutes)

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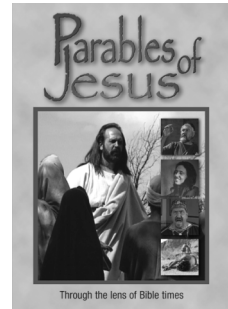
Questions for use after the program:

1. The program begins with a portrayal of the Last Supper in Jerusalem. Jesus alone knows the significance of this particular Passover meal. What preparations does He make?
2. As the meal gets under way, the disciples begin arguing over who is the greatest. How does Jesus demonstrate that the values of the New Covenant are quite different from those of society?
3. Jesus gives Judas the seat of honor and then personally serves him the unleavened bread dipped in the dish. This is a further gesture of honor. Since Jesus already knows what Judas will do, why do you think He treats Judas with so much respect?
4. God ordered the Israelites to celebrate the Passover as a way of remembering their deliverance out of slavery. Jesus is initiating a brand New Covenant. What instructions does Jesus give the disciples regarding the bread and the wine? How are His words both shocking and rich with meaning?
5. Yet, for the disciples to fully understand that Jesus is a servant who has brought a New Covenant, they must see him drink a different sort of cup. Read Matthew 26:39. How does Jesus continue to show a servant's heart?
6. Look up John 10:17-18. What do you learn about Jesus' death and resurrection?
7. Throughout Jesus' ministry and right up through His resurrection, His message is consistent. He invites us repeatedly to "follow Him." He asks us to enter into a living relationship, a New Covenant, and He assures us that He will walk the path with us. How does the New Covenant fit with the definition of "a two way promise given with boundaries (laws) and grace (love)"? Are you holding up your end of the Covenant? If not, how can you walk the path more closely with the Savior?

Other titles available:

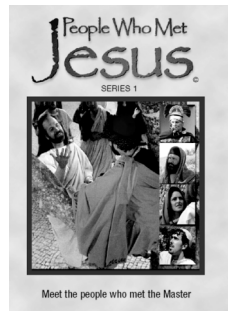
Parables of Jesus

Here are seven short narrated dramas portraying the parables of Jesus, hosted by Christopher Gornold-Smith. See the Bible come alive, understand the customs and culture behind the parables, and feel the impact of Jesus' message. See the parables of the Good Samaritan, Unmerciful Servant, Treasure and the Pearl, Lost Son, Midnight Visitor, The Dinner, and The Manager. A wonderful resource for Bible study, small groups, and Sunday school. Free PDF guide on website. 58 minutes. DVD - #500867D



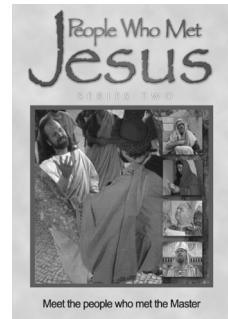
People Who Met Jesus, Series I

Here are eight short narrated stories about people to whom Jesus ministered: Simon Peter, Matthew, the centurion, the woman at the well, the nobleman, Jairus, the rich young ruler and Nicodemus. See the way He related to these people from such diverse backgrounds. A free downloadable PDF guide is available which presents a more in-depth understanding of supporting Scripture for each dramatic story. This is a wonderful resource for Bible study, small groups and Sunday school. 58 minutes. DVD - #4653D



People Who Met Jesus, Series II

Here are narrated stories of eight people who met Jesus. Three of them became His disciples, and five of them rejected Him, but all of them were impacted by His life and message. They are very different personalities and each one has something to teach us: Zacchaeus, The Man Born Blind, Annas the Priest, Caiaphas, Judas Iscariot, Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate, and Joseph of Arimathea. Understand the events leading up to the death and resurrection of Christ through the eyes of the people involved. Free downloadable PDF guide available. 50 minutes. DVD - #500763D



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