

New Testament 3: Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

Engage CD

Cross Explorations® Sunday School



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Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Avenue. St. Louis
MO 63118-3968

1-800-325-3040 www.cph.org

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Cross Explorations® At-a-Glance

15 Minutes

Engage
(Large-Group
Opening)

20 Minutes

Explore
Level 1
(grades 1–3)
Level 2
(grades 4–6)

25 Minutes

Express
Drama
Music
Crafts
Activities
Service

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Matthew 5:1–12



Key Point

Because Jesus was poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, and rejected for our sake, God forgives our sins and blesses us with all good gifts, especially life with Him forever.

Law/Gospel

In this world, I suffer and struggle because of my sin. **Jesus offers comfort, mercy, and grace through faith in Him and gives me eternal riches and blessings.**

Context

Jesus has been baptized and tempted. He has heard the news of the arrest of John the Baptist. He has called His first disciples. Now, He begins His ministry in earnest, teaching to great crowds of people. This portion of Matthew is commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Commentary

Jesus has power to heal, but the greatest gift He gives suffering humanity is His Word. Those He heals of one disease will succumb to another. Those He raises from the dead will die again. But those He brings to faith will have comfort now and untold blessings in the world to come.

The Greek word *makarios* ("blessed") is a "declaration of blessedness" upon the person who is in communion with God through Jesus Christ. There are many beatitudes in the Bible, including fifteen in Luke's Gospel (1:45; 6:20–22; 7:23; 10:23; 11:27–28; 12:37–38, 43; 14:14–15; and 23:29).

In the kingdom of God, the hungry are filled, the mourning rejoice, the last become first, and God chooses the foolish to shame the wise and learned.

The Beatitudes are Christological—all of them apply to Jesus. He was poor and hungry, a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. Yet it was for the joy set before Him that He endured the cross, despising its shame. He now sits at the right hand of God. He was hated, despised, rejected, cast out, beaten, spat upon, and crucified. Yet now, risen from the dead, He has a name that is above all other names, at which every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

The Beatitudes are Gospel. Do not turn them into Law. They are descriptive, not prescriptive. They show what life is like in Christ: things may be bad for you in this life, but in the life to come, you will have joy forevermore.

Finally, the Beatitudes are both spiritual and physical in their meaning. Luke says, "Blessed are the poor"; Matthew says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Both are true. Generally speaking, Christianity has advanced most rapidly among the poor, the hungry, the outcast, the hopeless of society. In the United States, where studies have shown that most people living below the official poverty line have two cars and a television, we must take a more spiritual application.

The statement "Blessed are those who hunger" is talking about those who are spiritually hungry, but it can also apply to those who are physically hungry. Jesus fed the five thousand, and they were filled. The Greek word *chortazo* ("fill") is used in both places. This vivid word derives from *chortos* ("grass") and indicates a state of being full like a cow that has eaten so much it couldn't possibly hold another bite. By grace we hunger after the things of God, and He fills us to the brim. It is likewise with those who weep.

Everyone in the world has trouble and sorrow, and God uses those troubles to draw people to Himself through Christ. In the arms of our suffering Savior, we find comfort and consolation. At the same time, our deepest grief is over our sins. Yet Jesus Christ takes our sins upon His own body on the cross and gives us the same beatitude He gave the thief: "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/ podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.



Greg Copeland © CPH.

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Matthew 6:25–34


Key Point

As we seek God's kingdom through Christ, we are freed from worry, knowing we have all we need.

Law/Gospel

I worry about my life because I depend on myself instead of on God. **Jesus, who provided for my greatest need by paying for my sins on the cross, describes the Father's care for creation to show me His love and take away my worry.**

Context

Jesus preaches to all believers, those who are "poor in spirit" and therefore possess God's kingdom by grace, through faith (Matthew 5:1–3). He has taught His followers to pray for spiritual, heavenly blessings in the Lord's Prayer (6:5–14) and to find lasting treasure in heaven, not on earth (6:19–24). Now, He assures His disciples that the Father cares for their physical needs as well.

Commentary

Being anxious or worried is sin because it demonstrates unbelief in God's providential care. Faced with the accusation of God's Law, our sinful inclination is to deny that we have a problem with worry, but making excuses will accomplish nothing before God's judgment seat. Repentance is our only option, especially as we face the one unavoidable cause of anxiety in life: death. In fact, our preoccupation with food, clothing, health, and wealth is another sign of our unbelief.

Jesus, in His incarnation, entered our stressful, anxious existence and was "tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). He endured hunger, homelessness, and hatred from others but never worried about food, clothing, shelter, or safety. He always had perfect faith in His Father, so He wasn't concerned in the slightest about proper medical care as He faced the cross for our sins. The Lily of the Field was thrown into the oven of God's wrath to be burned up for all of our sins of worry and care and faithlessness.

Therefore, He has overcome our greatest anxiety by dying to "destroy the one who has the power of death," Satan (Hebrews 2:14).

He has delivered us from the slavery of the fear of death by promising us everlasting resurrected life with Him.

Now the same Jesus authoritatively tells us, "Do not be anxious, but simply trust in Me." His promises relieve our anxieties and reveal a gracious heavenly Father who just can't wait to bless us. His analogies for this are vivid. Just picture a flock of geese tilling, sowing, waiting, and harvesting or lilies picking cotton, spinning thread, and weaving garments. Both are ridiculous! The Lord cares for them! This does not mean that we are to be lazy (see 2 Thessalonians 3:10), but as we live out our vocations, we have no cause for worry at all.

Yet to remain free from worry, we must always put into practice Jesus' admonition: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). That must be our top priority—if we can even call it a priority. What God has done and is still doing for us in Jesus Christ—the Gospel, the righteousness of God—goes beyond being a priority and actually is all in all for us. So we joyfully seek God's kingdom in Word, Sacrament, and prayer. These are far more real and enduring than the stuff of this life. Jesus bids us look to Him as the focal point of all of our life, to rest in His forgiveness, and to find in Him the secure ground of confidence for facing all of life's apparent ambiguities and anxieties.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/ podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.



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POWERPOINT TIPS

The slides on this CD work with PowerPoint versions from 2003 forward or with the free, downloadable PowerPoint Viewer.

The full PowerPoint program is available as part of Microsoft Office for PCs or Macs. A variety of programs on Apple computers convert and use PowerPoint files as well.

As an alternative, Microsoft offers PowerPoint Viewer as a free download. This program lets you view, project, or print slides, but not create or edit them. You need the complete PowerPoint program for those tasks.

To install PowerPoint Viewer, use the link on the automatic menu of this CD.

1. Put the CD in your computer's CD drive.
2. Click "Install." Follow the directions on the automatic menu. It will take you to this site: <http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=13>
3. You need to agree to the license terms. Once installation completes, restart your computer.

Troubleshooting

When working with these PowerPoint slides, some things may affect the look of your slides.

1. Different versions of PowerPoint may provide slides that look slightly different than the originals. You might see odd spacing or words that run out of a text box or off the page. You may see odd placement of Bible references.

The problem comes from different fonts on the computers that made the slides and the one you use. Even fonts with the same names may differ from one computer or system to another.

2. To help, we use fonts embedded in Microsoft Office programs and common to most computers. Using the Microsoft Office fonts should take care of most of the differences between the two operating systems.
3. We also prepare and check slides on PC and Mac computers to make sure they work with both systems.
4. If you find odd spacing with apostrophes and quotation marks, change a setting in your PowerPoint program. After doing so, you might need to retype the punctuation marks to get rid of the odd spacing.
 - For Macs, when in the PowerPoint program, click on the word "PowerPoint" along the top menu and choose "Preferences" from a pull-down menu.

Choose “Autoformat As You Type.” Click to check the box in front of “Straight quotes with smart quotes.”

- For PCs, go to File/Options/Proofing/Autocorrect Options. Choose “Autoformat as you type” and click to mark the choice that says “Straight Quotes with Smart Quotes.””

Editing slides

If you have 1997, 2003, 2007, or 2010 Microsoft Office with a full PowerPoint program, you can edit these slides or copy and paste them into different presentations. Some animations may not work in pre-2003 versions of PowerPoint.

(PowerPoint 1997 does not copy and paste slides easily. Please consult your software manual for help.)

When editing and creating slides, you may have difficulties when you cut and paste elements from one slide or presentation to another. However, this is very easy to do if you know a few secrets.

PowerPoint defaults to the design template of the presentation you pasting slides **into** and does not automatically carry over design elements from the slide you copied. This means you can lose art, photos, and other elements of the original slide. However, a few easy steps can retain the design of the original slide.

1. Make sure you are in NORMAL view.
2. Copy slides from the source (right-click to bring up the menu and choose COPY), and then put your cursor below or between the slides in the new presentation to insert the copied slides.
3. Paste slides into the new presentation (right click to bring up menu and choose PASTE).
4. When you do, a small clipboard icon appears at the bottom right-hand corner or somewhere near the new slides. (If it does not appear, undo and reinsert.) Click on the clipboard. Two choices appear in a menu below the clipboard: 1) Keep source formatting; OR 2) Use design template formatting. To retain the design elements of the copied slide, choose 1. To take on attributes of the new presentation, choose 2.

Playing Slides with Linked Music

Open the PPT file. The music slides will automatically play when you click to the first page of lyrics. Do not click again until the song finishes.

Beatitude





Lesson 1 Handout

Jesus Preaches on the Mount

Matthew 5:1–12

Invocation

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Song

Opening Sentences

Litany of Praise

Leader: In the name of God the Father:

People: Praise to our creating God!

Leader: In the name of His Son, Jesus:

People: Praise to our redeeming God!

Leader: In the name of God the Spirit:

People: Praise to our renewing God!

Leader: Let us join with thankful voices:

People: Amen! Amen! Praise the Lord!

Leader: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King
of creation!

O my soul, praise Him, for He is your
health and salvation!

People: Let all who hear
Now to His temple draw near,

All: Joining in glad adoration!

Leader: Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me
adore Him!

All that has life and breath, come now
with praises before Him!

People: Let the Amen
Sound from His
people again;

All: Gladly forever adore Him!

Song

Presentation

Offering and Prayers

Praise Prayer

Leader: Praise to You, O Lord, for Your daily
goodness and mercy.

Redeem us from our sins, from death,
and from the devil.

Alert us to the needs of others around us.

Inspire us to worship You in spirit and in
truth.

Satisfy our needs, and fill our hearts with
thankfulness to You.

Energize us for service and for witness. In
Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Song

Lesson 2 Handout

Jesus Teaches Us to Trust

Matthew 6:25–34

Invocation

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Song

Opening Sentences

Thank You, God

Leader: For making the world and all that is in it
good:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For making us and giving us wonderful
bodies and minds:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For wanting us to be happy and to enjoy
the world You made:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For the homes we have and the people
who love and care for us:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For food to eat and people who
prepare it:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For friends with whom we work and play:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For leading us to know You are our
Friend and Savior:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For Baptism and the gift of the Holy
Spirit:

People: Thank You, God.

Leader: For everything:

People: Thank You, God. Amen.

Song

Presentation

Offering and Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be
Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be
done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this
day our daily bread; and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who trespass
against us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the
kingdom and the power and the glory forever
and ever. Amen.**

Song

Bible Challenge Questions

for Engage Openings, New Testament 3

Lesson 1

True or false? The Beatitudes are relevant to our lives today. **True.**

Lesson 2

What does the word *anxious* mean, and why do we not need to be anxious? **To be afraid or nervous of something; because Jesus takes care of us**

Lesson 3

What kinds of people were anointed in Bible times? **Prophets, priests, kings**

Lesson 4

How much bread and fish did Jesus use to feed five thousand people? **Five barley loaves and two fish**

Lesson 5

Which three disciples were chosen by Jesus as an inner circle, who saw things the others did not? What do the three have in common? **Peter, James, and John. All were fishermen; James and John were brothers.**

Lesson 6

True or false? Jesus had only twelve disciples. **False. Jesus has many disciples, including you and me. However, Jesus chose twelve followers who are often called the twelve disciples or apostles.**

Lesson 7

What is a Samaritan? **In biblical times, it was someone living in Samaria. Today, it often refers to a helpful person because of the Bible account of the Good Samaritan.**

Lesson 8

True or false? Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd." **True. See John 10:14.**

Lesson 9

What is the name of the prayer that Jesus taught to His disciples and that we often say? **The Lord's Prayer**

Lesson 10

Name a friend of Jesus who lived in Bethany. **Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and some whose names we don't know**

Lesson 11

What three lost things did Jesus talk about in His parables? **Sheep, coin, son (Luke 15)**

Lesson 12

Name someone who saw Jesus heal another person. **Many people saw Jesus heal others, including the twelve disciples and the crowds who followed Him.**

Lesson 13

Finish these words that Jesus said: "Let the children . . . **come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God**" (Mark 10:14).

Jesus Teaches about God's Kingdom

New Testament 3

Bulletin Notes

The following summaries of this quarter's *Growing in Christ*® and *Cross Explorations* Sunday School lessons are intended to provide a Sunday School link to parents and the congregation. These paragraphs can be copied from the Director CD using a word-processing program.

Consider using these summaries:

- Print them in your congregation's weekly bulletin or newsletter.
- E-mail them as a weekly e-mail encouragement for student and parent Sunday School participation.
- E-mail them as a review e-mail follow-up to Sunday School each week.
- E-mail them as a "staying in touch" note or e-mail for students or families who are absent.

Lesson 1

"Jesus Preaches on the Mount" is today's Sunday School lesson. Jesus explains in His Word that He was poor, hungry, sorrowful, hated, and rejected for our sake so that God would grant us His gifts and blessings. *Discuss with your children, "How does our sin blinds us? What does Jesus offers us through faith in Him?"*

Lesson 2

In today's Sunday School lesson, "Jesus Teaches Us to Trust," we hear another portion of Jesus Sermon on the Mount. The theme? Do not worry! Talk with your children about how God has provided for them. List the blessings God gives your family in this life. Then talk about the eternal and spiritual blessings that God gives through His Son, Jesus. *Ask your children, "What do you worry about? How has God answered that worry?"*

Lesson 3

In today's Sunday School lesson, "Jesus Is Anointed," the children learned how in faith, a sinful woman lovingly anointed Jesus. They also learned how in faith we grasp God's free mercy, receive the forgiveness of sins, and respond with acts of love and praise. As a family, consider ways that you might respond to God's mercy. *Ask your children, "What sins will God forgive?"*

Lesson 4

Today, the Sunday School classes learned about "Jesus Feeds Five Thousand." They learned that in His love, God promises to care for all our physical and spiritual needs and gives us the greatest treasure—His Son and the gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. *As a family discuss, "In what ways has God provided for both your physical and spiritual needs?"*

Lesson 5

Today's Sunday School, lesson is "The Transfiguration" of our Lord. At the transfiguration, Jesus' glory was unveiled before the disciples. Today, His glory is unveiled for us in the Word preached by the pastor, in the water of Baptism, and in the bread and wine of His Holy Supper. In heaven, we shall see Him in all His glory! *Discuss with your children, "How are we like the disciples who trembled at the sound of God's voice?"*

Lesson 6

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