



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus' Way Is Different

SCRIPTURE: [Matthew 5](#)

WORD OF WONDER: from [Matthew 5:8](#)

There's a different way. A different way for those who experience suffering. A different way to view sadness. A different way to love those who have hurt you. A different way to see people.

Sometimes I think how unfair it is when I have to suffer or mourn loss, or how angry I could get with those who have wronged me. I decide in my heart I'm justified in my thoughts. My human nature says it's fine to be mad. It's easier to put up a wall or hold a grudge than to be forgiving. I like to control the narrative and decide what works for me.

But Jesus says there's a different way, and it's about His kingdom and His heart. Jesus taught His disciples this so they could be like Him.

Read [Matthew 5:1–12](#).

Our brokenness can be the tool God uses to not only show His power and heart, but His power can be displayed in us as we show others a different way to live. Our joy and blessedness come from His transforming power in our lives. He can transform His kingdom in a different way, a way that displays His heart to the world.

- How can you help kids see the heart of Jesus today?
- How can you help kids see a different way today?

—Stephanie Rhyne

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The Gospel of Matthew is technically anonymous with no internal claim of authorship. The early church identifies Jesus' disciple Matthew as the source of tradition. We read about Jesus calling Matthew, the tax collector, in [9:9–13](#).

WHAT?

Matthew is the first book in the New Testament but was probably not the first Gospel written. Matthew shares a basic structure with Mark but adds a great deal of Jesus' teachings. Chapters 5–7 contain Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount."

WHERE?

Antioch, a city in Syria, has been proposed as a possible location for the writing of Matthew. It was an important location for early Christians who were interested in Jesus' rabbinic teachings and message for the people of Israel (see [Acts 11:19–26](#)).

WHEN?

The Gospel may have been written shortly before or after the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 AD. That puts it a generation after Jesus' resurrection, when the church required oral traditions of Jesus to be written down.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

As God's own Son, Jesus shows how God values people. God does not merely bless those who suffer; in the person of Jesus, God became a human who suffered for the sake of the kingdom. Jesus is a different kind of king.



Curiosity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: play dough, building blocks, toy people figures, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Beatitudes Coloring Sheet](#) (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Play Dough Emotions

Set-up: Set out containers of play dough in various colors.

Play: Encourage the kids to use the play dough to create faces that show emotions. Show the kids how to make a round ball of play dough for eyes and a long snake shape that can be used as a mouth. Allow the kids to use their creativity to form different shapes to make a happy face, a sad face, an excited face, and more!

Play Station: Build a Mountain Scene

Set-up: On a table or floor space, set out a variety of building blocks and toy people figures.

Play: Share that you will be talking about a day when Jesus sat on a mountain and preached to a group of people. Encourage the kids to use the blocks to build a big mountain. Place the toy people figures around the mountain to create the scene of people listening to Jesus as He taught them.

Play Station: The Beatitudes Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the [Coloring Sheet](#). Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a mountain scene.

9:00 Service



Belief

LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:
God, through Your Holy Spirit You are leading us closer to You and showing us Your wonderful ways. Please help us follow Your way and not our own. Jesus' way is different, and we want it to become our way too! In Jesus' name, Amen.

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from The Big Picture Bible p216

"The Sermon on the Mount"

9:00 Service

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

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

—from Matthew 5:8

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- What does pure mean?
- Why do you think people whose hearts are pure are happy and blessed?

Leader Tip: It might help kids to know that while pure can mean perfect, God is not asking us to be perfect. He blesses those who want to be with Him and away from sin. Sin is not pure. Sin messes up what is good, right, true, and perfect.



Faith

LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Game: Beatitudes Actions

What are some things that make most people happy? Allow the kids to respond. It may be by getting the coolest toys, the most delicious food, playing fun games, or having the most friends. But Jesus' way is different! He says people are happy when they are sad, when they are too tired to keep going, when they are OK with what they have, when they follow God even when it's hard, when they show mercy and kindness, when they want to do what's right more than anything else, when they choose not to fight with others, and even when they get in trouble for doing something right. I'm going to say those statements and you will act out each one!

Read the statements below and pause to give the kids time to act out the statement after you read it. To make it harder for older kids, you can whisper the statement in the ear of one kid and have her act it out while the others guess what she is acting out.

Jesus says people are happy ...

- when they are sad.**
- when they are too tired to keep going.**
- when they are OK with what they have.**
- when they follow God even when it's hard.**
- when they show mercy and kindness.**
- when they want to do what's right more than anything else.**
- when they choose not to fight with others.**
- when they get in trouble for doing something right.**



Identity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Responding in Worship: Sitting with Jesus

SUPPLIES: blankets or towels

Jesus' way is different. When the world around us makes us sad, frustrated, and angry, Jesus is there to comfort us and let us know that everything will be OK because He is in charge. That is what He wanted the people on the mountain to know and that's what He wants you to know too!

Think of what makes you feel most safe, happy, and taken care of. It could be your favorite blanket, stuffed animal, or when you eat your favorite treat. Now, imagine that Jesus can offer you this, and even more. He can help you feel loved, seen, and known because He sees you, knows you, and cares about you as His child.

This is also what it means to be blessed. In a moment, we're each going to find a place to sit. We'll spread out around the room and close our eyes. When you close your eyes, you can imagine Jesus sitting beside you and being with you. You can quietly tell Him anything you want. After a minute, I'll pray and thank God for being with us today.

Give kids time to find an item to sit on and to spread out in the room. You may want to turn on some quiet music during their moments of prayer.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish praying on their own, pray with them and thank God for always being with us and teaching us to follow His ways.

God, thank You for always being with us. Thank You for sending the Holy Spirit as our helper and giving us the power to live Jesus' way. Thank You for sending Jesus for us. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Today and always, may you walk with Jesus. On good days and hard days, may you turn to Him and remember that His way is best!

9:00 Service