



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.

Curiosity Activity: Walk This Way

SUPPLIES: plastic cones (4)

Before kids arrive, set cones out in four areas of the room, such as the four corners. You can also set out paper cups turned upside down if you don't have cones.

Today we're going to walk together to each part of the room. Point to the cones. **Usually when we move from one place to another in our room, we walk there. Let's walk to the cones together.** Line kids up at one cone. Invite them to follow you walking from one cone to another until you all reach the first cone again.

Now we're going to try some different ways to move from one cone to another. Encourage the kids to follow you from one cone to another again. This time, lead them in a different way between each cone such as hopping, giant stomping, flying like an airplane, or walking sideways. End by walking backwards.

Have the kids sit down. **Was it easy to walk backwards and do something differently?** Allow the kids to respond. **Jesus' way of living is backwards and upside down from how the world lives! But sometimes it's good to do things in a different way. Today we'll discover that Jesus' way is different. His way of doing things surprised people!**

Make It Inclusive!

If you have a child unable to move between the cones, invite them to do some of the actions with their hands only, such as hopping (lightly tapping hands on lap), stomping (making fists that go up and down), or flying like an airplane.



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"

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.

Mountain Puzzle

SUPPLIES: safety scissors (1 pair per kid), envelopes, (1 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Mountain Puzzle](#) (1 per kid)

Before kids arrive, print one [Mountain Puzzle](#) per kid. If you have mostly younger kids, you may want to cut some of the puzzles apart before the kids arrive.



Jesus taught some people on a mountain. Lots of people call that teaching the Sermon on the Mount. Let's use this picture of a mountain to create puzzles we can put back together to remind us of what Jesus taught on the mountain and how His way is different.

Give each kid a copy of the Mountain Puzzle and invite them to cut the strips apart. After they have all the strips cut, encourage the kids to put the puzzle together (using the numerical order on the bottom) and to share one thing they remember from the God's big story each time they put a piece of the puzzle together. The kids can take their puzzle pieces home in the envelopes.

Make It Virtual! This activity could work from home by sending printed puzzles home ahead of time or by emailing the puzzle file to families.



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.

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!

Closing Activity: Different Direction

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet), marker, clear glass of water

Ahead of time, use a marker to draw an arrow on a sheet of paper. Fill a glass with water. Practice holding the arrow behind the glass of water ahead of time to make sure the arrow can be seen behind the glass of water.

Lots of things may make us happy. What are some things that make you happy? Allow the kids to respond. **Maybe an ice cream cone or cookie, or a fun new toy. Did you know Jesus says there are other things that make us truly happy, or blessed, in His kingdom? It might seem backwards, but we are learning about how Jesus' way is different!**

Hold up the paper with the arrow. **Which direction is the arrow pointing? Everyone point in that direction (or walk in that direction!).** Encourage the kids to point or walk in the direction of the arrow.

Then hold the arrow picture behind the glass of water. **Now which direction is the arrow pointing?** Encourage the kids to walk or point in the direction of the arrow.

It changed to a different direction! When we live for Jesus, we can live His way! His way is different! Let the kids take turns holding the arrow behind the glass. Encourage them to replicate the experiment at home with their families to help them remember that Jesus' way is different!

What are some ways Jesus' way is different from the world's way of living? Allow the kids to respond.



10:45 Service