

# THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS PART ONE

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pieces of paper, pens; small container
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: FIVE THINGS

Have your group sit in a circle. In the middle have a container of folded scraps of paper with pre-written nouns on them (you'll find some examples below). Have each teen in turn select a scrap of paper. Their challenge is to come up with five things that they could be grateful for if they were the person, place, or thing that they have selected. For example, someone who picked up a paper that said "snail", might say, "If I were a snail, I would be thankful for (1) each time I don't get stepped on, (2) the convenience of a portable home, (3) that I'm never in a hurry, (4) lots of fresh air, (5) gardeners who don't set traps". The others in the group should keep count. Encourage the group to be creative and have fun with it. A few examples of nouns you could use would be: *a snail, a plumber, a parking lot, a tomato, a candle, a puddle, an eraser, a dentist, a tropical rainforest, a cactus, a fingernail, an octopus.*

IF YOU HAVE TEENS THAT COME EARLY, INVITE THEM TO SUGGEST SOME ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO ADD TO THE CONTAINER. FOR SMALL GROUPS, EACH PERSON MAY TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS, AND YOU MAY WANT TO JOIN IN AS WELL.

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: HARDSHIP AND HOPE

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- Do you know someone whose life seems filled with hardship?  
How would you describe that person's worldview?
- Do you think it's possible for someone with a trouble-filled life to have a positive, hopeful outlook?

*A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *Each person responds to hardship differently. Many people respond with anger, despair or cynicism. If we are fortunate, we may know someone who navigates their hardship with faith and resilient joy.*

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- *It is possible to face suffering and difficulty with hope and even joy. Many of the saints in scripture and tradition provide us with examples of how this is possible when we place our confidence in our loving Father. This doesn't mean that life is easy or that we will never be sad or angry, but it does mean that we can seek God's help to see our situation through his eyes and to keep a grateful spirit no matter our circumstances.*

## THE LESSON: JOHN 11

The lesson portion can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

Jesus' life was characterized by prayer. The Gospel narratives tell us that he prayed continually. He prayed at significant moments, such as at his baptism, before choosing the twelve disciples, and in the garden of Gethsemane. But he also regularly withdrew from the crowds that surrounded him to spend time in quiet solitary prayer.

One thing that stands out when we look at Jesus' prayer life is gratitude. Jesus took time to thank his Father for who he is and for what he has done. It's noteworthy that before he performed many miracles, Jesus gave thanks.

Gratitude also comes up elsewhere in the Gospels. On one occasion Jesus was approached by ten lepers with the words, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us". He sent them to show themselves to the priests and on the way they found that they had been healed. One of them returned, "praising God with a loud voice" and "fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks". This became a teachable moment, when Jesus pointed out the gratitude of this one healed man as an example against the other nine who did not "return and give praise to God" (Luke 17:11-19).

In a moment we'll look at the narrative of the raising of Lazarus in John's Gospel. Lazarus, Mary and Martha were a family living at Bethany who were very dear to Jesus and there are several stories in the Gospels that tell us about them. In this particular story, take note of how Jesus is feeling, and then consider the first words he speaks in prayer.

Refer to John 11:1, 3, 17, 32-45.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: JOHN 11:1-45.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How would you describe Jesus' emotional state in this story? What do you think made him feel that way?
- How was Jesus' perspective different from the perspective of Mary and of the crowds?
- Read again the actual recorded prayer of Jesus in verses 41 and 42. What can we learn from this prayer?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *Jesus was sad. He wept and verse 33 says he was "deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled". Jesus loved the family at Bethany and the death of Lazarus was a sad event. Notice that Jesus himself weeps when he witnesses the grief of Mary and the others; but when they arrive at the tomb, it says he was "deeply moved again". The scene of the raising of Lazarus reminds us as readers of what Jesus was about to endure. Perhaps this was also something Jesus was conscious of.*

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- *Jesus understood that what was happening was not final. He knew that God could and would raise Lazarus through him. Mary didn't know this and instead simply was sorrowful that Jesus had not arrived in time to make a difference. The others in the crowd felt similarly. There is a subtle accusation in their remarks against Jesus for not having prevented what happened. But Jesus understood that this death had a very definite purpose. In the midst of grief, Jesus had full confidence in the power and plan of God.*
- *We can learn to be thankful even in hardship. We can be encouraged by the confirmation that God always hears. And we can recognize that even in difficulty God can use circumstances for his purposes.*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Write a simple prayer of thanksgiving to say each morning this week. It can be something as brief as, "Thank you God for this new day".

In the evenings, take some quiet time to review the events of the day with a grateful spirit. Choose five things specific to the day that you can thank God for.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.

*Almighty God, who hast given thine only Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace that we may always most thankfully receive that his inestimable benefit, and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, BCP PAGE 191)

## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", the final prayer in the booklet.

# THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

PART ONE

## JOHN 11: **THE FATHER HEARS**

<sup>1</sup>Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha... <sup>3</sup>So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill..." <sup>17</sup>Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days... <sup>32</sup>Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup>When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup>And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup>But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup>Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup>So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup>I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup>When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup>The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." <sup>45</sup>Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him...