

## Instructions for Group Leaders

Included in this lesson plan are notes and resources for you. The questions listed are to be used as a help to guide and encourage your group conversation. You are free to improvise through the questions as the conversation takes you. Do your best to involve everyone in the discussion as some may dominate conversation and others may hide.

Teaching will be a natural element of discussion, but allow the questions to move your members toward understanding the concept of the passage and message. Your role is not at teacher, but a facilitator.

Remember to review your resources for leading a discussion. Those techniques will help you to build an involved and caring atmosphere as well as challenge you as you serve and lead your group.

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Attached is an outline of the study for the semester. Listed first is a set of passages for you to read before your first meeting. Studying these passages will help you to know the context of the passage and prepare you to respond to questions.

Your outline will show you the passage for the week and the themes to be discussed. Be sure to review the passage and questions before each meeting.

Your lesson each week is only expected to last 30-40 minutes. These study discussions should be only one element of your group community. Make sure to also allow time for laughter, history telling (getting to know each other), prayer, service, etc.

After the outline, you'll find your weekly breakdown of passages and questions. Each lesson will list the passages to read for that meeting as well as a list of questions to ask the group. For your convenience, the questions will be marked as what type of question they are. Each type of question serves a unique purpose.

*Observation Questions:* Helps the group discover context, people, actions that are literally taking place in the passage. Helps the group set a foundation to discuss the themes. These questions are great for involving individuals who are typically quite or cautious about sharing.

*Interpretation Questions:* Helps the group discover what is meant by the writer. Understanding what the writer was saying to his audience is an invaluable element of understanding the message being given. It cannot mean something to us today that it did not mean to the audience it was written to. It can however be applied uniquely to each reader. (See Application Questions)

*Application Questions:* Helps the group make the passage being discussed personally relevant to current circumstances. These questions move the reader beyond knowledge to a place where they can let the Holy Spirit transform their life.

*Each question is abbreviated as: Obs., Int., or App.*

## Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' | Matthew 5-7

### Group Leader Pre-Read:

- *Matthew Chapters 1-4 (Observe the events leading up to this sermon)*
- *Matthew Chapters 5-7 (Read over the whole sermon that you'll be discussion with your group this semester.*
- **Basic context:** Jesus steps away from the crowds that have been following him and begins to teach his disciples for perhaps the first time as a group. Keep in mind what Jesus may be trying to accomplish with his first sermon. Consider the background of the disciples and how they may perceive this teaching and why it may be specifically relevant for their ears. When Jesus addresses these different topics, consider what might be implied about how the disciples currently think about that topic, and why Jesus teaching may be challenging or different than what they are used to hearing.

### Lesson 1: The Beatitudes / Matthew 5:1-12

- Break down certain values the God holds
- Discovering what Jesus looks for in a disciple

### Lesson 2: Salt & Light / Matthew 5:13-16

- Discuss the purpose and Identity there is on God's people (purposes of Salt and Light)
- Discover how Jesus affirms and encourages his people

### Lesson 3: The Law / Matthew 5:17-20

- Bridging Old Testament and New Testament
- Confirming the purpose that Jesus came to fulfill

### Lesson 4: Anger / Matthew 5:21-26

- God's emphasis on loving one another (forgiveness).
- Judgment vs. Reconciliation

### Lesson 5: Adultery & Divorce / Matthew 27-37

- Learning the source of sin
- Dealing with the "heart of the issue" rather than the symptoms
- Why God values a promise.

### Lesson 6: Revenge & Love for Enemies / Matthew 5:38-48

- Understanding grace & mercy
- Really, who is our enemy?
- Agape Love, (loving even when it's undeserved)

### Lesson 7: Public Behavior / Matthew 6:1-18

- Dealing with personal pride / insecurities

### Lesson 8: Possessions & Worry / Matthew 6:19-34

- Defining anxiety and the stronghold it causes.
- Eternal perspective

### Lesson 9: Checking our own hearts / Matthew 7:1-6

- Dealing with the sin in our own lives (proper response)

### Lesson 10: Prayer, God as Father, and God's Kingdom / Matthew 7:7-14

- How and what to ask of God.
- What is God's kingdom and how we can enter

### Lesson 11: Fruit, Disciples, & Foundations / Matthew 7:15-29

- The analogy of fruit and the believer.
- Learning the value of obedience to the Lord

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 1

### The Beatitudes / Matthew 5:1-12

Lesson 1 Objective: Break down certain values the God holds + Discover what Jesus looks for in a disciple

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Observation: Who is Jesus teaching in this passage? (*Consider who specifically, what people, what professions, what gender, etc*)

Interpretation: Why do you think Jesus is telling the disciples **who** is blessed?

Int: Why do you think Jesus begins his **first** teaching to the disciples with a lesson on blessing?

Int: What do you think '**blessed**' means when Jesus uses it in this passage?

Int: Why might it be valuable for someone to know what qualities God honors?

Application: If **you** were Jesus' disciple in this passage, how do you think **you'd** feel about following Jesus after hearing this part of the message?

App: Who do **you** think of when you think about someone who is blessed? Why?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 2

### Salt & Light / Matthew 5:13-16

Lesson 2 Objective: Discuss the purpose and Identity there is on God's people (purposes of Salt and Light) + Discover how Jesus affirms and encourages his people

Read Matthew 5:13-16

Obs: What do you know about the usefulness of **salt**? (consider the time of the disciples)

Int: Why might Jesus have used this example of salt to teach the disciples about their purpose?

Int: What do you think was significant about a "**city on a hilltop**" at the time of the disciples?

Int: Why do you think Jesus uses "**You are**" statements to begin this teaching?

App: Besides God, how else are you told **your** identity and purpose? (tell you "you are")

App: What are some ways that someone can discover what **God** thinks about them?

*(Leader Note: ministry opportunity, take liberty)*

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 3

### The Law / Matthew 5:17-20

Lesson 3 Objective: Bridging Old Testament and New Testament + Confirming the purpose that Jesus came to fulfill.

Read Matthew 5:17-20

Obs: What misunderstanding might Jesus be addressing in verse 17?

Int: What does Jesus mean when he talks about “**God’s law**”?

Obs: What does Jesus say **in this passage** is his reason for coming?

Int: Why do you think Jesus wants people to know that he **agrees** with the law?

Int: How might it be hard for these followers to believe Jesus when they have only ever known the law?

*(Leader note: help define the law as the writings of the prophets in the Old Testament)*

App: How do you feel about being instructed to obey God’s law?

*(Leader: help people process what they think about)*

App: How do you feel about **obedience** in general? How do **you** feel about doing what God asks you to do?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 4

### Anger / Matthew 5:21-26

Lesson 4 Objective: God’s emphasis on loving one another (forgiveness) + Judgment vs. Reconciliation

Read Matthew 5:21-26

Obs: In this passage, Jesus uses a law analogy to illustrate his point. What parallels do you see Jesus make between **his principle** and **the system of law**?

Int: Why is a **sacrifice** in the Temple important for the Jews that Jesus is speaking to? (Consider what was accomplished when a Jew made a sacrifice to God)

Int: Jesus says in verse 24 that our reconciliation with our enemy is of **higher** importance than our reconciliation with God. Why do think forgiving each other is so important to God?

App: Which is more difficult for you to do? Why? **(A)** Confess your brokenness and ask God for forgiveness. **(B)** Forgive someone who has hurt you when they don’t feel sorry about it.

Int: How does reconciling your differences with your enemy free you from a **guilty** judgment? (v25)

App: How do you feel about **your** “court date” with the “Judge”? How well do you feel you have forgiven those who have hurt you?

App: What is a good, healthy way of seeking reconciliation with someone who has hurt you?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 5

### Adultery & Divorce / Matthew 5:27-37

Lesson 5 Objective: Learning the source of sin, Dealing with the “heart of the issue” rather than the symptoms

Read Matthew 5:27-37

Obs: When Jesus says “you have heard the commandment that says...” what law do you think he is referring to?

Int: Based on what you read in **this passage**, why do you think Jesus decided to address adultery and divorce with his disciples? (Think about what culture might have currently thought about those topics and how Jesus was challenging it.)

Int: What does Jesus mean when he uses the word “**heart**” in verse 27?

Int: Why do you think Jesus addresses sin so directly, by going to the heart of the matter?

App: If God were to reveal a destructive **attitude or behavior** in your life, what would you do to go about restoring it?

App: In Romans chapter 12, Paul talks about how a believer is transformed by the renewing of this mind. “How does the **renewing of the mind**” help a person overcome sin and struggles? (**Leader Note:** *It may be helpful to read Romans 12*)

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 6

### Revenge & Love for Enemies / Matthew 5:38-48

Lesson 6 Objective: - Understanding grace & mercy, Agape Love, (loving even when it’s undeserved)

Read Matthew 5:38-48

Obs: What does Jesus say about the difference between believers and pagans (*non-believers in the Christian God*).

Obs: What does this passage say about how God deals with “good and evil”?

Int: Why do you think it’s important for **the disciples** to know how to respond to offenses?

App: How do **you** feel when someone gives you a demand or takes something from you?

Int: What do you think is accomplished by carrying a soldier’s gear for an **extra mile**? (v 41)

Int: How does choosing **not to retaliate** against someone accomplish the message of Christ?

App: What are some examples of how **we** may be faced with the choice to retaliate or to love?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 7

### Public Behavior / Matthew 6:1-18

Lesson 7 Objective: - Dealing with personal pride / insecurities

Read Matthew 6:1-18

**Note** > The word 'hypocrite' in Matthew 6 in the original Greek was to: *act under an assumed character (stage-player, i.e. dissembler)* Strong's Concordance.

Int: Why do you think Jesus uses the word "**hypocrites**" to describe the people who celebrate their good deeds?

Obs: What does Jesus say in this passage about rewards?

Int: Why do you think Jesus is teaching his disciples about how **they** should and shouldn't pray?

Int: How would **you** have felt if you were to meet a miserable and unkempt man or a man praying on a street corner?

App: What are some ideas of how to humbly respond to **compliments and praise**?

Int: Why do you think **humility** a quality that Jesus wants to see from his disciples?

App: What are some ideas of how to grow in **personal humility**?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 8

### Possessions & Worry / Matthew 6:19-34

Lesson 8 Objective: Defining anxiety and the stronghold it causes, Eternal perspective

Read Matthew 6:19-34

Obs: What comparison does Jesus use to talk about **our** basic needs?

Int: Why do you think Jesus says "These things dominate the thoughts of **unbelievers**..." in verse 31?

App: How do you think anxiety (worry) might be a hindrance to **your ability** to serve and love people?

Int: What do you think Jesus means when he says "Seek the **Kingdom of God**" in verse 32?

Int: How might the desire for treasures (money, influence, possessions) oppose the Kingdom of God? (*ref v 19-20*)

App: What are some **practical steps** that we can do to learn how to let go of fear and anxiety?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 9

### Checking our own hearts / Matthew 7:1-6

Lesson 9 Objective: Dealing with the sin in our own lives (proper response)

Read Matthew 7:1-6

Int: What is Jesus communicating by using the speck and log comparison?

Obs: In this passage, what does Jesus say about *“standard of judgment”*?

App: What do **you** think about when you hear the word ‘judgment’?

Int: Why do you think Jesus teaches about the way his disciples should treat *each other*?

App: How do you know if **you** have a “log in your own eye”?

App: What are some other ways you could help your friend ‘remove the speck’ without *judging* him?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 10

### Prayer, God as Father, & God’s Kingdom / Matthew 7:7-14

Lesson 10 Objective: How and what to ask of God. What is God’s kingdom and how we can enter.

Read Matthew 7:7-14

Obs: What does Jesus say about the *“narrow gate”*?

Int: Why do you think Jesus tells his disciples about the *difficulty of their “road”*?

App: Why do you think the narrow way to **God’s Kingdom** is so much harder to find?

Int: Jesus refers to a “door that will be opened to you” in verse 8. What do you think that door referring to?

Obs: What **action words** does Jesus use to describe how we should approach God? Why do you think Jesus uses these words to communicate his point?

App: How do you **know** if you are walking the narrow way or the wide way?

App: What would you do to **help** someone discover the “narrow gate”?

## Facilitator's Notes: Lesson 11

### Fruit, Disciples, & Foundation / Matthew 7:15-29

Lesson 11 Objective: The analogy of fruit and the believer. Learning the value of obedience to the Lord

Read Matthew 7:15-29

Obs: What does Jesus say the “fruit” stands for in his comparison in verses 15-20?

Int: How can someone know if your “fruit” is good or bad? (**Leader note:** *Consider that most people won't naturally see bad fruit in themselves. How do you know when all you see is good in yourself?*)

Obs: Who does Jesus say **will** enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

App: Jesus says that many people who do signs and wonders in His name will not enter God's Kingdom. How do **you** feel about that statement?

Obs: What does Jesus say about **obedience** to God in verses 24-27?

Int: Why do you think Jesus emphasizes **obedience** throughout these paragraphs?

App: What are some ideas about how someone can grow in their obedience to the Lord?