

DAY 1 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you prefer a large gathering with a feast or a small, intimate gathering with a simple, special meal?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*Timeline: Jesus is teaching people at a meal about the Kingdom of God (Christianity) before his death, burial and resurrection. The question important for us to ask is this: Who has a seat at the table in the new Kingdom of God?*

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’

“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’” **Luke 14:15–24 NIV**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that those who were originally invited to God’s ultimate plan refused to participate? Why do some respond and others reject?

What does it say about God’s heart that he invited EVERYONE? Do you embrace and promote that invitation?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for the depth of your love for all people. Thank you for allowing me to not only have a seat at your eternal table but also for empowering me to invite others!

DAY 2 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is the most surprising person you have seen Jesus transform?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**NOTE: “Levi” in this passage is “Matthew” who would later write the Gospel of Matthew that would be oriented towards teaching Jews about Jesus!**

Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector’s booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi’s fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus’ disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with such scum?”

Jesus answered them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent.” One day some people said to Jesus, “John the Baptist’s disciples fast and pray regularly, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. Why are your disciples always eating and drinking?”

Jesus responded, “Do wedding guests fast while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.” Then Jesus gave them this illustration: “No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and uses it to patch an old garment. For then the new garment would be ruined, and the new patch wouldn’t even match the old garment. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the new wine would burst the wineskins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine must be stored in new wineskins. But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the new wine. ‘The old is just fine,’ they say.” **Luke 5:27–39 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Jesus said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” Who are you leading into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ—“healthy” people or “sick” people?

Jesus’ generosity at his table is so abundant that he is willing to abandon traditions and old methods to make a way for new, unaccustomed people to participate. How willing to embrace change (while holding firm to truth) are you?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for changing me. Help me to hold loosely to my preferences so I can participate in the change you bring so more people can share in your abundance.

DAY 3 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you want to be responsible for providing for more people or less at this time in your life? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*God spoke through the prophet Malachi a few hundred years before Jesus came to the earth:*

“My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations,” says the LORD Almighty. **Malachi 1:11 NIV**

Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen me. However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.

“And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.” **John 6:35–40 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

The Jews mistook their importance for exclusivity. They were not to be God’s *only* people; they were to be God’s *special* people who bring the worship and knowledge of God to all nations. God’s plan does not fail, even if the delivery system failed to operate. God will be worshipped by all nations. How far back can you trace your spiritual heritage?

What does Jesus identify as God’s will, and how does that impact you personally?

Who needs to see Jesus through you today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for removing my guilt and fear through Jesus. Thank you for promising to never reject me. Thank you for making me eternally alive through your Holy Spirit and promising to take me to be with you for eternity!

DAY 4 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is one of the most memorable meals you’ve ever eaten? Who was with you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When the time came, Jesus and the apostles sat down together at the table. Jesus said, “I have been very eager to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. For I tell you now that I won’t eat this meal again until its meaning is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.”

Then he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, “Take this and share it among yourselves. For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come.”

He took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.

“But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray me. For it has been determined that the Son of Man must die. But what sorrow awaits the one who betrays him.” The disciples began to ask each other which of them would ever do such a thing.

Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus told them, “In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called ‘friends of the people.’ But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

“You have stayed with me in my time of trial. And just as my Father has granted me a Kingdom, I now grant you the right to eat and drink at my table in my Kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. **Luke 22:14-30 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How will you practice communion differently after reading Jesus’ words?

Rather than arguing who is greater, Jesus urged his followers to serve. How can you serve others from a grateful heart?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you know I don’t deserve a place at your table. Thank you for inviting me to eat and drink at your table. Teach me to have your generous heart and thank you for making me a part of your plan!

DAY 5 – SCRIPTURE, OBSERVATION, APPLICATION, PRAYER (“SOAP”)

CONVERSATION STARTER

Do you like surprises?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

*After Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, he appeared to many in his new, resurrected body.*

Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them.

“Peace be with you,” he said. But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

“Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched. Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ You are witnesses of all these things.

“And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.” **Luke 24:35–49 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How do you see Jesus’ heart in this passage?

What do you think Jesus would have said to you if you had been there when he appeared?

Have you repented so you can receive forgiveness of sins? (see Acts 2:38)

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for filling sinful, broken people with the willingness to repent, forgiving them their sins, and filling them with power so the church could grow and declare your power to every nation. Shepherd me and use me to help others be reconciled to you for your glory!