

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

Have you ever had any strange or unexplainable experiences?

**SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION**

One day Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.” So they got into a boat and started out. As they sailed across, Jesus settled down for a nap. But soon a fierce storm came down on the lake. The boat was filling with water, and they were in real danger. The disciples went and woke him up, shouting, “Master, Master, we’re going to drown!”

When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves. Suddenly the storm stopped and all was calm. Then he asked them, “Where is your faith?” The disciples were terrified and amazed. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “When he gives a command, even the wind and waves obey him!”

So they arrived in the region of the Gerasenes, across the lake from Galilee. As Jesus was climbing out of the boat, a man who was possessed by demons came out to meet him. For a long time he had been homeless and naked, living in the tombs outside the town. As soon as he saw Jesus, he shrieked and fell down in front of him. Then he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, I beg you, don’t torture me!”

For Jesus had already commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. This spirit had often taken control of the man. Even when he was placed under guard and put in chains and shackles, he simply broke them and rushed out into the wilderness, completely under the demon’s power.

Jesus demanded, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, for he was filled with many demons. The demons kept begging Jesus not to send them into the bottomless pit. There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby, and the demons begged him to let them enter into the pigs. So Jesus gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned. **Luke 8:22–33 NLT**

**APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS**

While many of us have never knowingly witnessed a miracle of weather or freedom from demonic possession, the mere presence of the universe would suggest there are many elements of reality that we cannot or do not fully understand. How do you respond to these powerful eye-witness testimonies—do you humbly try to adjust your understanding to embrace surprising events, or do you attempt to adjust the apparent meaning of the Scripture to conform to your predetermined beliefs? How does this inform your understanding of Jesus?

**PRAYER SUGGESTIONS**

Lord, you created me before you gave me awareness. Guide me as I learn, obey, and share the Good News!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who is always happy to see you?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Continued...** When the herdsmen saw it, they fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been freed from the demons. He was sitting at Jesus’ feet, fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid.

Then those who had seen what happened told the others how the demon-possessed man had been healed. And all the people in the region of the Gerasenes begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone, for a great wave of fear swept over them. So Jesus returned to the boat and left, crossing back to the other side of the lake. The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him.

But Jesus sent him home, saying, “No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you.” So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him.

On the other side of the lake the crowds welcomed Jesus, because they had been waiting for him. Then a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell at Jesus’ feet, pleading with him to come home with him. His only daughter, who was about twelve years old, was dying... **Luke 8:34–42 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Does it surprise you that the people were more afraid of Jesus than a demon-possessed man? Do you fear/respect Jesus more than anyone else?

How soon did the man who was saved from sin and spiritual bondage did the man tell others about Jesus? What “qualified” him to share Jesus with others?

Why do some fear/reject Jesus and some eagerly welcome him? What helped you open up to Jesus?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, you have the words that lead to life. You are the light of the world. You bring sight to the blind and freedom to the captive. Thank you for setting me free! Help me to always have an open mind and a welcoming heart to you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who or what do you turn to when you feel overwhelmed or desperate?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

**Continued...** As Jesus went with him, he was surrounded by the crowds. A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding, and she could find no cure. Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.

“Who touched me?” Jesus asked. Everyone denied it, and Peter said, “Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you.” But Jesus said, “Someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me.”

When the woman realized that she could not stay hidden, she began to tremble and fell to her knees in front of him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed.

“Daughter,” he said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” While he was still speaking to her, a messenger arrived from the home of Jairus, the leader of the synagogue. He told him, “Your daughter is dead. There’s no use troubling the Teacher now.” But when Jesus heard what had happened, he said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid. Just have faith, and she will be healed.”

When they arrived at the house, Jesus wouldn’t let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, James, and the little girl’s father and mother. The house was filled with people weeping and wailing, but he said, “Stop the weeping! She isn’t dead; she’s only asleep.” But the crowd laughed at him because they all knew she had died. Then Jesus took her by the hand and said in a loud voice, “My child, get up!” And at that moment her life returned, and she immediately stood up! Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were overwhelmed, but Jesus insisted that they not tell anyone what had happened. **Luke 8:42–56 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

God invites his children to approach him confidently and with much faith. What is your attitude when you pray? What do you diligently ask God for?

What was the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ compassion? What, then, is the purpose for you showing Jesus’ compassion today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, fill me with faith today in your goodness and mercy so that I can live in your peace and participate in your kindness to others.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

Who has been the most genuine example of Jesus in your life?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. For we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all of God’s people, which come from your confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven. You have had this expectation ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News.

This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God’s wonderful grace.

You learned about the Good News from Epaphras, our beloved co-worker. He is Christ’s faithful servant, and he is helping us on your behalf. He has told us about the love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you.

So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

**Colossians 1:3–10 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Are you experiencing faith in Jesus and love for God’s people coming from a confident hope of what God has reserved for you in heaven?

Every generation is responsible for passing the Good News on to the next. Who did you receive it from, and who are you passing it on to?

What are you learning about God?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for your grace. My life is filled with noise and distraction. Help me to keep my head clear, my heart soft, and my eyes open so I can produce every kind of good fruit for you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you think *God* cares about most?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.

But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn’t matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.

For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. **Colossians 3:1–17 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How are you translating your experience of God’s love into love for others?

How does God see you? Based on what?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a member of your family and your body on earth. Teach me to live in peace and be filled with thanks!