

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you need Jesus to do in your life that only he can do?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When they returned to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd surrounding them, and some teachers of religious law were arguing with them. When the crowd saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with awe, and they ran to greet him.

“What is all this arguing about?” Jesus asked. One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, “Teacher, I brought my son so you could heal him. He is possessed by an evil spirit that won’t let him talk. And whenever this spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground. Then he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn’t do it.”

Jesus said to them, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. “How long has this been happening?” Jesus asked the boy’s father. He replied, “Since he was a little boy. The spirit often throws him into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.”

“What do you mean, ‘If I can’?” Jesus asked. “Anything is possible if a person believes.” The father instantly cried out, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. “Listen, you spirit that makes this boy unable to hear and speak,” he said. “I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!”

Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd as people said, “He’s dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up. Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, “Why couldn’t we cast out that evil spirit?” Jesus replied, “This kind can be cast out only by prayer.” **Mark 9:14–29 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

How many people do not experience Jesus’ power and blessing in their lives, not because he isn’t powerful and generous, but because they won’t believe and trust him?

Why do you think Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening?”

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for being my good shepherd. While I do believe in you, I do struggle with unbelief. Build my faith and help me keep my eyes on you!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

In your prayers, do you tend to be polite and ask for little or bold and ask for much? Why?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

“What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”

“You unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

“If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for one who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”

The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.” **Mark 9:14–29**
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APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Not having the appropriate belief or approach to heal the boy or cast out the demon, the disciples and the “teachers of the law” resorted to arguing—something that gave them something to do and feel powerful about...and something that was not helpful given the need and circumstance. Are you ever tempted to argue with someone instead of look together to Jesus to meet your overwhelming needs?

If all your prayers were answered overnight, what would be different tomorrow morning?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, increase my faith to ask bold prayers with confidence!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

What do you believe Jesus can accomplish if you ask him through prayer? Does he want to?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. Immediately, when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running up to greet Him.

And He asked them, “What are you discussing with them?” And one of the crowd answered Him, “Teacher, I brought You my son, possessed with a spirit which makes him mute; and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.” And He answered them and said,

“O unbelieving generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him to Me!” They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. And He asked his father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!”

And Jesus said to him, “‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “I do believe; help my unbelief.” When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, “You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.”

After crying out and throwing him into terrible convulsions, it came out; and the boy became so much like a corpse that most of them said, “He is dead!” But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him; and he got up. When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, “Why could we not drive it out?” And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.” **Mark 9:14–29 NASB**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Who does Jesus have a heart for in this passage, and how can you tell?

Jesus provides different things for different people...he rebukes the teachers, connects with the father, heals the boy, and trains the disciples. What do you need him to do for you today?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I stand in awe of your power, presence, and majesty. Thank you for your genuine patience with me as you develop me to become more like Jesus. We pray that you would protect people from the Enemy and that you would keep our hearts soft, our minds clear, and our consciences clean.

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

How do you like to spend personal time with Jesus? Do you realize what a privilege that is?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know he was there, for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead.” They didn’t understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?” But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.”

Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.” **Mark 9:30–37 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Jesus loved everyone, but he spent significant time with a few. Later, his disciples would be recognized not because they were super heroes, but because they had “been with Jesus.” Can people tell something different about you?

Do you struggle with the desire to be “great”? Have you surrendered that to Jesus so he can 1) save you from dangerous pride, and 2) show his greatness THROUGH you?

What children (spiritual and physical) are you welcoming on Jesus’ behalf?

Are you learning to be more childlike towards your Heavenly Father—more trusting, more vulnerable, more grateful, more open and honest about feelings, more resilient, more restful, more engaged? Is that your goal—why or why not?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, I take this time to humble myself before you, grateful that you care enough to teach and train and live with me through your Holy Spirit. Help me become more childlike!

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

CONVERSATION STARTER

When are you tempted to say, “MINE!” like a young child threatened with loss?

SCRIPTURE OBSERVATION

John said to Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him to stop because he wasn’t in our group.”

“Don’t stop him!” Jesus said. “No one who performs a miracle in my name will soon be able to speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us. If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.

“But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone hung around your neck. If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands. If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It’s better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, ‘where the maggots never die and the fire never goes out.’

“For everyone will be tested with fire. Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? You must have the qualities of salt among yourselves and live in peace with each other.” **Mark 9:38-50 NLT**

APPLICATION SUGGESTIONS

Why do you think the disciples were worried that “outsiders” were participating in Jesus’ ministry? Have you ever been tempted to be territorial with good things? Does it surprise you that Jesus allows “outsiders” to participate? Those whose position or importance feels threatened would do well to remember that once they were outsiders too, and Jesus was kind to them...

Jesus was very stern in his warning not to lead children into evil. What are some examples we see today of adults influencing children for evil? Is there anyone in your life you need to warn about the severe consequences Jesus described?

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS

Lord, thank you for including me in your plan and grace. Help me never to lead anyone into sin. Lead me...not into temptation, but deliver me from the evil one. Fill me!