

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Jesus Calls for Personal Decision
Mark 8:27-38

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Read "Connect with Life". Write the suggested names on separate pieces of paper in letters large enough for the group to read when you hold them up.

Worship Time Leader:

1. Make assignments for the drama to be presented in the Worship Time. Older children and teens can play the roles. Reserve the parts of Jesus and Peter for men (if you have men to do them). All other roles can be male or female.
2. Copy the two special drama script pages (found at the end of the Worship Time section) for each of those who will participate in the drama.
3. Arrange a time to practice the drama, if necessary.
4. Assign someone to bring costumes for the drama—scarves, sandals, etc. Keep it simple. (Women can wear the scarves and men wear the towels over their heads with ends thrown over their shoulders. Nothing more is needed).
5. See the box in the Worship Time section that suggests “trading coins” with the children in your congregation.

Music Sources:

- “Jesus Calls Us”. Baptist Hymnal (BH), p. 293.
“Have Thine Own Way”. BH, p. 294.
“I’ll Live for Him”. BH, p. 298.
“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”. BH, p. 305.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Jesus Calls for Personal Decision*****Focal Text**

Mark 8:27-38

Background Text

Mark 8:11-38

Main Idea

Jesus calls people to commit their lives fully to him, regardless of the cost.

Question to Explore

Who do you say Jesus is?

Teaching Aim

To help the church commit themselves individually to following Jesus fully, regardless of the cost.

Gathering together:

Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus". Have the children of your church to lead the group in singing the hymn.

First thoughts:

Nick and June had a beautiful baby boy. They were ecstatic. June could not wait for their baby to look at her and say, "Mama!" She devised a plan that would not fail. Every time she did something for the baby, she said, "Mama's baby boy. Mama loves you. Mama will take care of you." That went on for weeks. June was faithful to keep saying "mama" so there would be no doubt what his first words would be.

The day finally came. She had just fed him. He looked lovingly into her eyes, moved his lips and prepared to speak. A chill ran down June's back. He looked at her and said, "dada!"

Jesus spent a great deal of time teaching his disciples who he was. He worked miracles, cast out demons, and he even raised the dead. Now the disciples should know he was the Messiah. Our lesson today is a time of testing for the disciples. Who would they say Jesus was?

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Jesus Calls for Personal Decision

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Introduction to your personal study:

Television programs often discuss the significance of Mohammed, Buddha, Jesus and other religious leaders. Some people have suggested that these are all religious teachers. Comments emphasize that all of these leaders strove to uplift society. Some suggest that these leaders are of equal value and importance in the world today. The scripture today causes us to look at the revolutionary teaching of Jesus about his role as the promised Messiah.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

Concept of Messiahship is Introduced (Mark 8:27-29)

Mark 8:27 Caesarea Philippi is only about thirty miles from Capernaum but was far enough to be relatively free from the influence of Herod Antipas and the Pharisees and Sadducees. Here Jesus was able to have time to teach these close disciples about his coming crucifixion, death, and resurrection. He introduces the subject by asking “Who do people say that I am?” He got the attention of the disciples by approaching the subject of Messiahship from the general and then moving to the specific. Jesus knew and was committed to the mission mandated by his Father.

In asking this question, Jesus was attempting to raise their understanding of who he was and what his mission was (Mark 8:28). Religious leaders saw him as opposition. People had vague ideas of a political Messiah. The disciples shared the three popular opinions of that day. News of John the Baptist’s death was widespread. There was some feeling that Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life. Others felt that Jesus was Elijah. Elijah was expected to come as a predecessor of the promised Messiah. Still others felt he was some type of prophet. He was felt to be a forerunner of the coming Messiah. Recognition of Jesus as the promised Messiah was beyond the understanding of the people.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Disciples Questioned About Their Concept of Messiah (Mark 8:29-31)

Mark 8:29 Jesus asked a question that sought to see if the disciples’ understanding went beyond the common opinions of the day. He asked a question every individual must answer for himself. The answer came back: “You are the Christ.” They were stating that he was not a forerunner, not one preparing for the Messiah, but the Messiah himself. They recognized Jesus in his divine mission. They did not yet understand how he would fulfill that mission. Their expectations of the Messiah were much different from the reality of how Jesus would fill that role.

Mark 8:30 The disciples recognized him as Messiah. However, Jesus was not ready for a full publication of his role as the Christ. Jesus did not want forced recognition. The disciples were not ready to publicize the Messiah as they did not understand fully all the ramifications. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. Their time to proclaim him would come but it was not yet.

Mark 8:31 Jesus confronts his disciples with his future. He would face trial at the hands of the religious leaders and teachers of the law. He would be rejected by the current religious establishment. He would be crucified. Then the ray of sunlight - he said that he would rise from the dead.

Peter Reacts to Jesus’ Explanation of Messiahship (Mark 8:32)

Mark 8:32 Jesus told them everything. He was open about the coming events. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Peter had heard Jesus' teachings. He had seen the waves calmed. He had seen the sick healed. He had seen the dead restored to life. He did not see how Jesus with all this power should have to face such tribulation. With this power he would not have to bear it. Peter did not understand the true nature of the kingdom of God.

Jesus Explains Cost of Messiahship to Disciples (Mark 8:33-38)

Mark 8:33 After Peter had taken Jesus aside, Jesus turned and saw all the disciples. There before his fellows, Jesus sharply chastised Peter. Peter had made the great confession in public and now he was rebuked in public. Peter's statement of rebuke about Jesus' future parallels Satan's comments as he tempted Jesus in the Wilderness at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Satan sought to turn Jesus from the path of becoming the Lamb of God and instead turning to an earthly kingdom. Now Peter tries to persuade Christ from serving as the sacrificial lamb for the sins of the world.

Mark 8:34 The scene shifts and Jesus calls the people to him along with the disciples and begins his lecture on discipleship. He publicly tells the crowd essentially the same things that he has just told the disciples in private. He describes his way of life in contrast to the one that Peter advocated. He tells them that those who are thinking about following him must consider the cost of being his follower. It would be saying no to one's self. Following Jesus will call for a loss of self interest and self exaltation. This is the first public announcement of Jesus' impending death on the cross.

Mark 8:35 He tells the people that if a person sought to preserve his life and the things in it that in the long term the person will actually lose it. Self interest will cause an individual to lose his life. To deny oneself is not to merely quit a bad habit like smoking; but to make Christ King and commander of one's life. A person becomes submissive to him as master of life. Giving away one's life will ultimately preserve his/her life. The behaviour of men now towards Christ will determine Jesus' conduct toward them in the future. Taking up one's cross is to make an absolute commitment, even to die for it.

Mark 8:36 Gaining the temporary fame, possessions, or power of the world means little compared to the gaining of permanent forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God. This statement speaks of that part of man that is eternal, not the temporary qualities of the individual's earthly life.

Mark 8:37 Jesus indicates that there is nothing that a person can do to redeem the eternal qualities of his being once it is lost. There is no possession that a person has that he can trade for eternal life once his soul is gone.

Mark 8:38 The response of a person in the present determines the response of Jesus in the future judgment. This is a plain teaching of the final coming of Christ. An

individual's behaviour and attitude toward Christ, now, determines Christ's behaviour and attitude toward the individual at his coming in the future.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Jesus indicated that as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, he was not going to be an earthly king or military ruler. He was coming as a servant and a sacrifice. He would die on the cross for the sins of the world. Those who follow him should expect to give up hopes of wealth, honour, and ease. We are to expect the same treatment that Jesus received. Disciples must give up control of their lives and follow the direction of Jesus, Messiah. Followers must follow Jesus completely, regardless of the present cost. He presented his disciples with a paradox. The person who wants to have life has to give it away. The one who seeks to keep his life will lose it.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Jesus Calls for Personal Decision

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Mark 8:27-38

Background Text

Mark 8:11-38

Main Idea

Jesus calls people to commit their lives fully to him, regardless of the cost.

Question to Explore

Who do you say Jesus is?

Teaching Aim

To help the church commit themselves individually to following Jesus fully, regardless of

Connect with Life:

Write these names on pieces of paper: Jim Jones, Father Divine, David Koresh, Charles Manson, Sunn Myung Moon, Jesus Christ. Hold pieces of paper up one at a time and let class see them. Ask. What do these have in common? Get responses.

State: Jim Jones led a group of followers to commit suicide in South America. Father Divine was a leader in the 1940-50 period who stated he was Jesus Christ and whose disciples believed he was divine. David Koresh was the charismatic leader of the Waco, Texas group who claimed to be the head of the biblical house of David. Charles

Manson was a supposed religious person who led followers to kill a number of people. Sunn Myung Moon of the Unification Church claimed to be God.

Ask: What else do you know about any or all of these? Give opportunity of participants to respond with their knowledge of these.

Say: Today we are going to look at what Jesus says about himself and his followers.

Guide the Study:

Say: Let's see how Jesus introduces the discussion about who he is. Let's read Mark 8:27-29.

Read passage.

Say: Jesus asked his disciples who people thought he was.

Ask: Who did people say that Jesus was? Receive answers. (John the Baptist, Elijah. A prophet).

Say: Jesus moves the conversation from what people say about him to asking the disciples who they thought he was. Find their response in Mark 9:29. (Peter speaking for the disciples indicates that they believe Jesus is the Messiah).

Say: This gives Jesus an opportunity to correct their understanding of the real meaning of Messiahship.

Ask: What did he tell them would happen to him. Let the group discover in Mark 8:31 that he must suffer, be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed, and be raised to life.

Ask: How did Peter react to Jesus' explanation of his future? Let class look in Mark 8:32 to find answer.

Ask: How did Jesus react to Peter's statement? Let class read answer in Mark 8:33.

Comment: The ways of God are not always what man expects. God does not necessarily work in the way that people plan or expect.

Ask: Can you give an experience you have had where God worked in your life, but in a way you did not expect? (**Note:** You may want to have an experience of your own to relate in case members do not give an example from their own lives. This writer has prayed for God to act where he could have ease and comfort. Yet, many times God put the writer in an uncomfortable situation where qualities of character developed).

Say: Let's see the plan that God has for Jesus' disciples.

Ask someone to read Mark 9:34-38.

Summarize the passage for the group: A follower of Christ must do what Jesus wants, not what the individual wants. The person who holds tightly to his life and his interests will eventually lose it. The opposite is true also. The person who gives away his life in service to Jesus will save it.

State: Jesus asked two questions in Mark 8:36-37.

Have someone read Mark 8:36-37.

Ask: What are the two questions? Get pupils to respond with the two questions.

Question: What consequence did Jesus say would come to the person who did not follow him? Help the group to understand that Jesus will not recognize that person at the judgment.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Share this commentary with the group: People today respond in various ways to the question, "Who do you think Jesus is?" Among possible answers you might hear are: Jesus is a historical character. Jesus was a religious teacher. Jesus is the founder of the Church. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Saviour of the world. Jesus was the hero in Bible stories.

Ask: What are some significant things people have done when they followed Jesus? Let pupils respond. If they need help suggest these: "Changed their vocation. Left their home to go to other nations to minister to people. Became a good steward of material resources. Gave up recreation time to assist people. Ministered to neighbours and other needy people in practical ways. Involved themselves in witnessing to people. Became an example of Christian living. Others today who follow Jesus are imprisoned in China, The Sudan, and other nations. Still others are being put to death every year because of being a Christian."

Ask: What are changes that believers could make to be better Christians? Allow time for individuals to name specific actions Christians could take.

Ask: What is a change you personally could make to be more obedient to Christ? Do not ask for verbal response.

Ask: What change will you make this week because you are a follower of Jesus? You don't need to answer aloud. Instead, think silently for a minute about this. Allow a brief time of silence for pupils to think.

Pray, Lord, help us today as we commit to do this one specific thing this week.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Jesus Calls for Personal Decision **Mark 8:27-38**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

IDENTITY – VOCATION – JESUS

As youth, you deal with issues of identity. Separating from parents and establishing your own values and goals is healthy.

Questions of identity become questions of vocation. Vocation, in its larger sense is bigger than just a job. Vocation refers to the commitments and vision that shape what our lives are really about.

Essential to the adolescent question “Who am I?” is a personal struggle to answer the question “Who is Christ?”

On individual pieces of paper, each of you write the answer to the following questions:

1. Who was Jesus to me when I was 6-years-old?
2. Who was Jesus to me at age 10?
3. Who is Jesus to me right now?

You may want to share your answers with each other—or use them for personal reflection.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Jesus Calls for Personal Decision*****Mark 8:27-38****Beginning the Service:****Drama presentation of Mark 8:27-30**

Characters involved: Jesus, Peter, disciples

Bring scarves, towels, (plus sandals, etc. if you choose) for the characters to use to increase the interest of the drama. (Women can wear the scarves and men wear the towels over their heads with ends thrown over their shoulders. Nothing more is needed).

Note: The narrator stands before the group and begins speaking (without trying to explain what you are doing). As other participants in the drama have parts, they stand to deliver them. Then they each remain standing.

Narrator: Jesus and his disciples are walking on the way to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked them, **“Who do people say I am”**

One disciple answers: **“Some say John the Baptist.”**

Another disciple says: **“Others say Elijah.”**

A third disciple says excitedly, breaking into the speech of the second disciple: **“And some say one of the prophets.”**

Jesus stops walking and asks, very clearly: **“But what about you? Who do you say I am?”**

Peter answers boldly: **“You are the Christ.”**

The drama can conclude at this point or continue through the end of the chapter. If the entire chapter is used, asked someone to portray Jesus who will be careful to memorize the words and speak with enthusiasm and authority.

Jesus begins to speak: **“The Son of Man will suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law. He will be killed and after three days will rise again.”**

(Peter pulls Jesus to one side and whispers to him obviously denying what Jesus has just said).

Jesus: **“Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”**

Jesus speaks to his disciples and to the crowd: (Here, the entire home church should be seen as the group to whom Jesus is speaking). **“Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul” If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the Father’s glory with the holy angels.”**

Offering:

Remind the congregation that a true offering to God is one where everything that God has given us—is given back to Him. This includes our time, our abilities, our love, and our lives as well as the material possessions that we have received from God.

Praying for the World:

Remind the congregation that the ministries of your church, along with the resources given by your congregation to carry out those ministries, have much to do with the words of Jesus repeated in the drama.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Let’s Make a Deal

Text: Mark 8:36

Ed and Judy, two four-year-old children, were playing together one afternoon. Ed had a small bag of candy that was delicious. Judy sure wanted some but Ed would not share. Judy disappeared for a few minutes. She returned with several beautiful pieces of candy. They were red and looked like they would taste so good. Ed could not stand it. He looked at his candy. He knew how it tasted. He knew it was good. But he knew that Judy's' would be better. He had never seen candy like that. He could not constrain himself. He handed Judy his candy and took hers. Without the slightest hesitation, he put all of the candy in his mouth at once. He smiled with glee. A few moments later, his smile slowly turned to a frown. When the full flavour hit him, he knew it was not candy. It tasted like rubber. He also noticed that Judy was nowhere to be found. She had tricked him out of his candy. Ed went home crying, much wiser for the trouble.

In Luke 4:5-8, the devil offered to trade the entire world to Jesus if he would just bow down and worship him. Jesus recognized it as a bad deal. The devil wanted to make a deal with Jesus. Our Lord rejected his offer by quoting scripture to him. The devil has not given up. He has just changed targets. He looks at us and says, "Let's make a deal!" Jesus warned us in Mark 8:36, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?"

Today, many people seek to gain as much of the world as is possible. Their worth is measured by how much of the world they own. Do we realize that it is a bad deal? Jesus wouldn't deal with the devil. Why should we?

I. The devil offers us the world but he can't deliver it. He will offer anything necessary to secure and maintain your allegiance. All he wants is your worship. When he is negotiating with you, remember that he pays the lowest wages. Paul tells us that "the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). The devil always promises more than he can deliver. No one gains the whole world.

If you have children in your group, try this. Give each one a coin (just alike). Tell them they can keep the coin. (And allow them to keep the coins). Then show them more coins that are bigger, brighter, gold coloured, or in some way look like they are better coins but are, in reality, worth less. Tell them how these new coins would be better. Ask them if they want to trade their coin for one of the "better" or "prettier" ones. Don't actually let them trade, of course. But watch your adults. They will be almost beside themselves with worry that a child may choose to exchange the higher value coin for the lower value one. Finally, explain to the children that what they have is really the better coin because it is worth more. In Canada, the "Toonie" and the "Loonie" (\$2.00 and \$1.00) coins are ideal for this illustration. The \$2.00 coin is larger, but mostly silver-coloured. The \$1.00 coin is smaller but gold-coloured and, when new or polished, shines brightly.

II. To trade the soul for the world is a bad bargain. It is a bad deal. Something of value should be offer for one's soul. I John 2:17 tells us that "the world and its desires pass away." It is perishing. When a person dies, no matter what he or she takes into the grave—that is as far as it will go. When a persons dies, do you know what he or she leaves to others? Everything! Peter tells us, "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The

heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. (II Peter 3:10)."

We were made for God. The world can never satisfy us. Wealth, honour, or pleasure will not fill our need for God. We belong to God.

III. When the devil offers a deal, there is the question of profit or loss. Even if a man gains the whole world, he has no idea of what he will actually gain. It is clear what a man will lose.

He will lose:

1. Eternal life
2. The privilege of becoming a child of God
3. Peace with God
4. The abundant life
5. Heaven

Call to Commitment:

When Jesus talks of exchanging a soul for the world, he was speaking of trading the higher form of life. The rich fool of Luke 12:16 is an example of a man who traded his soul for the world. His crops produced more than he was prepared to store. He had to tear down his barns and build bigger ones. Then he said to himself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself (v.20)?" He forfeited the higher life and wanted to buy it back, but he had nothing to pay. He lost everything. Are you choosing the higher life?

Concluding the Service:

Sing "Jesus Calls Us" or another hymn or chorus that calls for us to follow Jesus.

Copy these two pages for each of those who will take part in the drama.

Drama presentation of Mark 8:27-30

Characters involved: Narrator, Jesus, Peter, three disciples

Bring scarves, towels, (plus sandals, etc. if you choose) for the characters to use to increase the interest of the drama. (Women can wear the scarves and men wear the towels over their heads with ends thrown over their shoulders. Nothing more is needed).

Note: The narrator stands before the group and begins speaking (without trying to explain what you are doing). As other participants in the drama have parts, they stand to deliver them. Then they each remain standing.

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Jesus: **“Get behind me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”**

Jesus speaks to his disciples and to the crowd: (Here, the entire home church should be seen as the group to whom Jesus is speaking). ***“Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul” If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the Father’s glory with the holy angels.”***