

Resource: Translation Guide (FIA)

Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (FIA) Translation Guide © 2023 SRV Partners Released under CC BY-SA 4.0 license. Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (FIA) Translation Guide has been adapted in the following languages Tok Pisin, عربى, Français, हिन्दी, Bahasa Indonesia, Português, Русский, Español, Kiswahili, 简体中文 from Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (FIA) © 2023 SRV Partners Released under CC BY-SA 4.0 license by Mission Mutual

Translation Guide (FIA)

MAT

Matthew 1:1-17

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 1:1-17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Because this story has so many names, it might be helpful to proceed to the next section first, and come back to these questions at the very end.

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This is a list of ancestors of Jesus. In this list we find names of the family members of Jesus who lived before him. Matthew does not mention all the names of Jesus' ancestors; he only mentions the most important ones. Therefore, sometimes when he calls someone a son, it is in fact a grandson or sometimes even a great-grandson. This way, he could skip some names.

The first group are 14 ancestors from Abraham up to King David. King David lived about 1000 years before Jesus was born. David was the most important king in Israel's history. The Bible tells us that God loved him very much. When David was king, this was the best time in Israel's history.

The second group are 14 ancestors from King David's son up to king Jeconiah. King Jeconiah lived about 500 years before Jesus was born. This was the worst time in Israel's history. The people of Israel had been disobedient to God. God punished them by sending people from another country to attack them. This country was Babylon. The king of Babylon attacked Israel and won. He took many people from Israel prisoner and took them to his own country. They now had to live in Babylon for a long time. In the history of Israel people called this event "the deportation to Babylon," or "the exile." The Israelites stayed in Babylon for several generations, but then God allowed them to go back to their country. From that time onwards they were mostly called by the name Jews, instead of Israelites.

The third part of the list are 13 ancestors from the time of the deportation to Babylon up to Mary's husband Joseph. Mary was going to be the mother of Jesus.

Stop here and ask people to tell about their own ancestors. How far back do you still know the names of your ancestors? Can you tell a story about your ancestors? Are there stories about good ancestors? Do people also tell stories about ancestors who did bad things? In your community, do people think it is important to know your

ancestors? Is it a good thing to remember many names from your ancestors, or is it not so important? Why, or why not?

The last list has only 13 generations, even though Matthew says that each list has 14 generations. Matthew therefore meant that each list had *roughly* 14 generations.

We do not know why Matthew wanted to have roughly 14 generations in each list. It was important to him, but we do not know exactly why.

In the first group there are 14 men, and the last one is a king-David.

In the second group, there are 14 men, and they are all kings. They are all descendants of king David.

In the third group, there are 12 men who are still descendants of king David, but they are no longer kings. But then comes Jesus. Jesus is the last name on the third list. Jesus is a descendant of David. But Jesus will also be a king! Matthew makes this clear because he calls Jesus the Christ, or the one that God appointed for a special task.

Let us now look in more detail at each of these groups of 14 ancestors. Some of these ancestors have stories in the Bible. Some are good stories, some are bad stories!

Matthew begins with Abraham. God began the history of his special people with Abraham. God had promised Abraham to make a big nation out of him. God made this promise when Abraham was already very old and had no children! But when Abraham was 100 years old, he and his wife did have a son. The name of the son was Isaac. Isaac is the second name in the list.

Isaac had two sons. They were twins. From these two sons God selected the younger one, Jacob. God changed Jacob's name into Israel. That is why Abraham's descendants later became known as Israelites. Jacob is the third name in the list.

Jacob had 12 sons. Matthew continues the list with the family line from Jacob's fourth son, Judah.

Matthew mentions two sons of Judah, but he also mentions their mother. Her name was Tamar. Tamar was not an Israelite. The story of Judah and Tamar is not a good story. We do not have enough time now to tell the whole story, but Tamar was first married to Judah's eldest son. The son died without having children. Judah promised that Tamar could marry his younger son, but he did not do as he had promised. Tamar then tricked Judah into sleeping with her, so that she could become pregnant and have a son. She pretended to be a prostitute and invited Judah to sleep with her. Judah slept with her. He did not know that he was sleeping with Tamar. He thought he was sleeping with a prostitute. Tamar did become pregnant from her father-in-law. This had been her plan. She then told Judah what she had done. Judah confessed that he had done wrong. He should have given his son as a husband to Tamar, as he had promised. Matthew includes the son that was born from Tamar and Judah as the next person in his list. His name was Perez.

After this Matthew gives us a few names of people without a story. The next name of a person with a story is Boaz. Matthew tells us that the mother of Boaz was Rahab. Rahab was not an Israelite woman. She was a prostitute in a city called Jericho. We cannot tell the whole story, but the Israelites were about to attack the city of Jericho. Two Israelite men had gone into the city to explore first. The people of Jericho wanted to kill these two Israelite men, but Rahab protected them. She hid them in her house. Therefore, God in his turn protected Rahab. When the Israelites attacked the city they spared Rahab and her family. Rahab began to live with the Israelites. She married an Israelite man and they had a son. The son's name was Boaz. His name is in the list.

Boaz had a son and his name was Obed. We have another story here. Matthew tells us the mother of Obed was Ruth. Ruth was also not an Israelite. Ruth was from the country of Moab. Moab was a country next to Israel. At some point there was a famine in Israel, and a family with two sons left Israel to go to Moab. The sons each married a Moabite girl. The father as well as the two sons of the family died in Moab. The mother of the family returned to Israel. The Moabite widow of her oldest son stayed back in Moab, but the younger son's widow went with her. The name of this younger son's widow was Ruth. In the Bible, Ruth is honoured because she was faithful to her mother-in-law. Even though she was from another country, she came to Israel with her mother-in-law. She stopped worshipping the gods that the people in Moab worshipped, and worshipped the God that the Israelites worshipped. She married Boaz.

So, Boaz and Ruth had a son and his name was Obed.

Obed had a son and his name was Jesse.

Jesse had a son and his name was David. David was a shepherd boy first, but he became king of the Israelites. In all the history of Israel, he is the most beloved king. When he was king, this was the best time for Israel.

These were the first 14 generations. Now we will go to the next 14. All the people in this second list are kings.

David had a son and his name was Solomon. We have another story here. This is not a good story. Matthew tells us Solomon's mother had been the wife of Uriah, another man. This is because David had committed adultery: He slept with a woman who was not his. The woman was the wife of Uriah who was one of David's faithful soldiers. This man was not an Israelite. When Uriah was away fighting in a war for David, David took the wife of Uriah and slept with her. When she became pregnant, he made sure that her husband was killed in the war. God was very angry with David because he had done these things. The son that was born died. This was God's doing. But David was very sorry about what he had done and God forgave him. David married the wife of Uriah and they had another child. This son became king after David. His name was Solomon.

The other people in this list do not have a special story. At the end of this second list, Matthew has reached the time when the Israelites were punished by God and sent to Babylon as prisoners. This was the most terrible time in all of Israel's history.

Now we will go to the last list of names. Even though all these people are still descendants of king David, they are no longer kings. The country of Israel is now ruled by other people.

There are no special stories for the people in the third list, apart from the last people! The almost last man in the list is Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary. Mary was going to be the mother of Jesus. There is a big story here, but you are going to hear all about that in the next section in Matthew!

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualise this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Matthew says that he is going to give the list of names of ancestors of Jesus.

Second scene: The first list

Third scene: The second list

Fourth scene: The third list

Fifth scene: Matthew gives an explanation of his list.

The characters in this story include:

- Matthew, who is writing the book. His name is not in this story, but he is the one who is telling the story. For this story only, it will help to imagine Matthew.
- Matthew is telling the story to some people. Some of the people who are listening to him are Jewish—that means they are descendants of Abraham themselves. Some of the people who are listening to the story are not Jewish. They are not Israelites. All of them probably know the names that Matthew mentioned, and they know the stories about these people. For this story only, it will help to imagine Matthew's listeners.
- Jesus
- All the names mentioned in the three groups

These are the people mentioned in the first group:

- 1.** Abraham
- 2.** Isaac
- 3.** Jacob
- 4.** Judah
- 5.** Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, and the mother of Judah's sons
- 6.** Perez
- 7.** his brother Zerah
- 8.** Hezron
- 9.** Ram
- 10.** Amminadab
- 11.** Nahson
- 12.** Salmon
- 13.** Rahab, the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz
- 14.** Boaz
- 15.** Ruth, the wife of Boaz and the mother of Obed
- 16.** Obed
- 17.** Jesse
- 18.** King David

These are the people mentioned in the second group:

- 1.** The wife of Uriah, king David's soldier, who became the mother of David's son, Solomon
- 2.** King Solomon
- 3.** King Rehobeam.
- 4.** King Abijah
- 5.** King Asa
- 6.** King Jehoshaphat
- 7.** King Jehoram
- 8.** King Uzziah
- 9.** King Jotham
- 10.** King Ahaz
- 11.** King Hezekiah
- 12.** King Manasseh
- 13.** King Amon
- 14.** King Josiah
- 15.** King Jeconiah
- 16.** King Jeconiah's brothers

These are the people mentioned in the third group:

- 1.** Shealtiel
- 2.** Zerubbabel
- 3.** Abihud
- 4.** Eliakim
- 5.** Azor
- 6.** Zadok
- 7.** Akim
- 8.** Elihud
- 9.** Eleazar
- 10.** Matthan
- 11.** Jacob
- 12.** Joseph, who was the husband of Mary
- 13.** Mary, the mother of Jesus
- 14.** Jesus

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualise the story and the action in it.

Here is something you can do to help you remember this story. You may first want to go to script 5 and think about how you are going to pronounce the names of all the people in the story in your language.

Collect a bag of pebbles, rocks, beans, or other small objects. Lay out a long row of pebbles, one pebble for each name. You can place a special rock when there is a special character. Whenever there is a mother mentioned, you can put down an extra pebble. The mother pebble can be next to the son pebble. Or it can be next to the husband, whatever you like.

Use a big pebble for Abraham, at the beginning.

Use a big pebble for each last name in the list.

Use the biggest pebble for Jesus, at the end.

Can you have different coloured rocks for each person who was a king? Or can you add some extra object to each pebble when the person was a king?

How can you mark that the time of David was a good time, and the time of the exile a bad time? How would you mark the time of Jesus' birth?

You can listen to the recording of the lists of names again as you do this.

Here is something else you can do to remember the story. But you need a lot of helpers!

Line up 18 people. Each of them is one character from the first list. Each of them will memorise the name of their own character.

Play a game. Everybody says their character's name, one after the other, in the right order.

Do this a few times. Next, can people also remember the name of their character's father? And their character's son? His mother, or wife? Do this a few times and see how many names people are able to remember! Who can remember the most names, in the right order?

Ask people to tell you the story that goes with their character.

Do the same for the second and third list. You can use the same people. For the second list you need 16 people. For the third list you need 14 people.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatise the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Matthew, who is writing the book. His name is not in this story, but he is the one who is telling the story. For this story only, it will help to imagine Matthew.
- Matthew is telling the story to some people. Some of the people who are listening to him are Jewish, that means they are descendants of Abraham themselves. Some of the people who are listening to the story are not Jewish. They are not Israelites. All of them probably know the names that Matthew mentioned, and they know the stories about these people. For this story only, it will help to imagine Matthew's listeners.
- Jesus.
- All the names mentioned in the three groups.

These are the people mentioned in the first group:

- 1.** Abraham
- 2.** Isaac
- 3.** Jacob
- 4.** Judah
- 5.** Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, and the mother of Judah's sons
- 6.** Perez
- 7.** his brother Zerah
- 8.** Hezron
- 9.** Ram
- 10.** Amminadab
- 11.** Nahson
- 12.** Salmon
- 13.** Rahab, the wife of Salmon and the mother of Boaz
- 14.** Boaz
- 15.** Ruth, the wife of Boaz and the mother of Obed
- 16.** Obed
- 17.** Jesse
- 18.** King David

These are the people mentioned in the second group:

- 1.** The wife of Uriah, king David's soldier, who became the mother of David's son Solomon
- 2.** King Solomon
- 3.** King Rehobeam.

- 4.** King Abijah
- 5.** King Asa
- 6.** King Jehoshaphat
- 7.** King Jehoram
- 8.** King Uzziah
- 9.** King Jotham
- 10.** King Ahaz
- 11.** King Hezekiah
- 12.** King Manasseh
- 13.** King Amon
- 14.** King Josiah
- 15.** King Jeconiah
- 16.** King Jeconiah's brothers

These are the people mentioned in the third group:

- 1.** Shealtiel
- 2.** Zerubbabel
- 3.** Abihud
- 4.** Eliakim
- 5.** Azor
- 6.** Zadok
- 7.** Akim
- 8.** Elihud
- 9.** Eleazar
- 10.** Matthan
- 11.** Jacob
- 12.** Joseph, who was the husband of Mary
- 13.** Mary, the mother of Jesus
- 14.** Jesus

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Before you begin:

Decide who will act out Matthew, and who will act as his listeners. Maybe they can sit in a circle on the floor as Matthew is telling his story. Arrange yourself in the most natural position for listening to a story.

Decide whether you want to act out the stories of the special people. They have no text in this story. Maybe some people can act out the stories that go with these people in the background every time a special name is mentioned. Maybe instead of acting out these stories, people can make a so-called frozen scene: they act out one part of the story but do not move. It is as if someone made a painting of this story, and the people are pretending to be the painting.

You can also act out or make a frozen scene for the good time for Israel at the end of the first list, and the bad time for Israel at the end of the second list.

The people who act as Matthew's listeners can turn around to look at the drama or at the frozen scene, and turn back to listen to Matthew when the drama is finished. Start the action.

Act out Matthew telling to his listeners: "This is the list of ancestors of Jesus. Jesus is Christ, the promised Saviour. Jesus was a descendant of David, and David was a descendant of Abraham."

Act out Matthew who will tell his listeners the first list of 14 generations. You can use the same pebbles or objects that you have used in session 4. The person who is pretending to be Matthew can lay down a new pebble every time he gives a name. If you have enough people in the room, you can also use real people instead of pebbles. Give the person who is David a crown or some other object that makes him look like a king.

Abraham had a son; his name was Isaac. Isaac had a son; his name was Jacob. Jacob had a son; his name is Judah. Jacob had other sons as well. Judah had two sons: Perez and Zerah. Their mother was Tamar.

Pause the action.

- Embarrassed,
- Offended,
- Shy,
- I am uncomfortable that Matthew includes these people in his list because they do not have a good story.
- I like it that there is a woman in the list. It seems quite honourable to be in the list of ancestors of Jesus. [!end] Restart the action.

Perez had a son; his name was Hezron. Hezron had a son; his name was Ram. Ram had a son; his name was Amminadab. Amminadab had a son; his name was Nahshon. Nahshon had a son; his name was Salmon. Salmon had a son; his name was Boaz. The mother of Boaz was Rahab.

Pause the action.

- Embarrassed,
- Surprised,
- I am not sure what I think about God including a prostitute in this list.
- I am pleased that God included this woman among his people even though she was a prostitute.
- I am glad that there are foreigners mentioned in the list of ancestors of Jesus. [!end] Restart the action.

Boaz had a son; his name was Obed. The mother of Obed was Ruth.

Pause the action.

- Pleased,
- Surprised,
- I am glad that Ruth chose God.
- I like it that there were three women on the list so far.
- I like it that God included these women even though they were not Israelites.
- It seems that God was welcoming foreigners among his people even then. [!end] Restart the action.

Obed had a son; his name was Jesse. Jesse had a son; his name was David. David became king.

Stop the action. Ask the people who are listening to Matthew: "How do you feel when you are reminded about king David, the most beloved king of Israel?" You may hear things like:

- Happy,
- Proud. [!end]

Now continue with Matthew telling the people the second list. If you have used real people for the first list, you can now use the same people for the second list. Give each of them a crown or something that makes them look like a king!

Start the action.

David had a son; his name is Solomon. The mother of Solomon was not David's wife, but the wife of a man named Uriah.

Stop the action.

- Offended,
- Disgusted,
- Embarrassed,
- Angry,
- I do not know why Matthew includes this bad story about a good king.
- I am surprised that God loved David even though he made mistakes. [!end] Restart the action.

Solomon had a son; his name was Rehobeam. Rehobeam had a son; his name was Abijah. Abijah had a son; his name was Asa. Asa had a son; his name was Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat had a son; his name was Jehoram. Jehoram had a son; his name was Uzziah. Uzziah had a son; his name was Jotham. Jotham had a son; his name was Ahaz. Ahaz had a son; his name was Hezekiah. Hezekiah had a son; his name was Manasseh. Manasseh had a son; his name was Amon. Amon had a son; his name was Josiah. Josiah had a son; his name was Jeconiah. He had other sons as well. During this time many of the Israelites had to leave their homes and go to a foreign country, the country of Babylon.

Stop the action.

- Scared,
- Embarrassed,
- Ashamed. [!end] Restart the action.

Jeconiah had a son and his name was Shealtiel. Shealtiel had a son and his name was Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel had a son and his name was Abihud. Abihud had a son and his name was Eliakim. Eliakim had a son and his

name was Azor. Azor had a son and his name was Zadok. Zadok had a son and his name was Akim. Akim had a son and his name was Elihud. Elihud had a son and his name was Eleazar. Eleazar had a son and his name was Matthan. Matthan had a son and his name was Jacob. Jacob had a son and his name was Joseph. Joseph was the husband of Mary. Mary was the mother of Jesus. Jesus is the Christ.

Act out Matthew giving his conclusion to his listeners. He says: "So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. There were 14 generations from David up to the time the people were forced to go to Babylon. And there were 14 generations from the time that the people were forced to go to Babylon, up to the birth of the Christ."

Stop the action. Ask the people who are listening to Matthew: "How do you feel when you hear about a descendant of David who is born in your time? How do you feel when you hear that this descendant is the Christ, the king who is also a Saviour?" You may hear things like:

- Happy,
- Glad,
- Hopeful.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This is a list of ancestors of Jesus Christ. In this list we find names of the family members of Jesus who lived before him.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: Does your language have special words for a list of ancestors?

This story is a long list of names. Each time there is a father and a son, and sometimes a mother.

Stop here and discuss with your team: What is the most natural way to give a list of family names in your language?

The second list ends with mentioning the time of the exile to Babylon. **Exile** means that most of the Israelites were taken to another country by force. They were not allowed anymore to live in their own country. Only a few people stayed behind.

Babylon was the name of a country east from Israel. This region is in the country we nowadays know as Iraq. God used the Babylonian people to punish the Israelites for their sins.

Matthew says that Jesus is the son of David. David was a king of Israel who lived about a thousand years before Jesus was born. Jesus is not a direct son of David, because he lived much later. But Jesus is from the same family line. Therefore Matthew calls him a son of David. A long time ago God had said that the special king and Savior who would come would be a descendant from David. Jesus is a descendant of David, and he is this special king and Savior.

Jesus was a descendant of David. David was a descendant of Abraham. **Abraham** lived about a thousand years before David. God had promised Abraham to give him many descendants. Abraham's descendants were God's special people. They were called Israelites. Abraham was the first ancestor of the Israelites.

David was not Abraham's direct son, but he was from the family line of Abraham.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: In your language, is it possible to call Jesus son of David even though he was not his direct son, and is it possible to call David the son of Abraham even though he was not his direct son? If you cannot do this in your language, what other words could you use?

The name Jesus means "God saves." **Christ** is the Greek word for the Hebrew word **Messiah**. It means someone whom God has anointed, or appointed for a special task. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for special tasks. Jesus is all of those things, but the New Testament authors tend to see Jesus as a king appointed by God for a special task. Matthew calls Jesus as Jesus Christ to make clear that Jesus is the King and Savior.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: What word will you use for Christ? Will you say something that sounds like Christ, or will you say something that means a Saviour?

If you already translated another gospel, be sure you use the same word for Christ. Remember that Christ or Messiah is in the Master Glossary.

This story has many names that can be difficult to pronounce. Can you find a way that makes them a little bit easier to pronounce? The names do not have to be exactly the same as in the Bible, as long as people can recognize that they are the same.

It can be difficult to remember all the names in this story. What would be the best way to remember them? Can you turn them into a tune? Can you sing them? Will it help to clap or stamp your feet in a rhythm? Can you divide the lists among three people, and each one records one of the 3 lists?

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 1:1-17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (5681057 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (9805964 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 1:18-25

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 1:18-25 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous section we heard stories about Jesus' ancestors. This story tells about the birth of Jesus himself. The mother of Jesus was Mary. Mary was engaged with Joseph. They were going to get married, but at the beginning of the story they are not yet married. They were engaged. In Israel, being engaged was a serious matter. At the time of the engagement the groom paid a bride price to the family of the bride. It was a shameful thing to break an engagement.

Stop here and discuss: How are marriages decided in your community? Is there something like an engagement? Can you tell a story about arranging a marriage in your community? What were the agreements that were made beforehand? What are the expectations that the families have from each other?

Mary was pregnant before she was married. Matthew does not explain much about how Mary became pregnant. He very simply says that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit had sexual relations with her, the way a man would with a woman. It means that the power of God caused Mary to become pregnant.

Matthew does not tell us how Joseph found out. Mary probably told him.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about a girl who became pregnant before she was married? What happened? How did her family members and other people in the community respond?

Joseph is a good, or righteous man. This means that he wants to follow God's law. Joseph must have thought that Mary had been with another man. This would have been against God's law. Joseph had the right to break his engagement with Mary because of this. If he would tell the people why he broke the engagement, Mary would be very much ashamed. People might punish Mary for breaking God's law. Joseph does not want Mary to be shamed in public. He thinks the solution may be to break the engagement quietly. Joseph was thinking about these things when he fell asleep.

When Joseph is sleeping, he has a dream. In the dream he sees an angel. The angel calls Joseph a son of David. David here means King David. King David lived a long time ago. Joseph is not a direct son of David, but he is a descendant of David. God had promised David that one of his descendants would be the Messiah, the special king and Savior. Joseph does not know this yet, but Mary's son would be this Messiah.

The angel tells Joseph to continue with the marriage, because Mary is pregnant by the power of God.

Stop here and discuss: What value do the people in your community give to dreams? Can you tell a story of someone doing something because of a dream?

The angel says that God had already said a long time ago that this would happen. A prophet had given a message to the people of Israel on behalf of God. This prophet said: "The virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and they will call him Immanuel." Immanuel means "God is with us."

A prophet is a man-or sometimes a woman-who gives messages from God to the people.

The angel here is talking about something that the prophet Isaiah had said to the people of Israel a long time ago.

At that time, the king was Ahaz. This king's name is in the second list of ancestors of Jesus, in the previous section. This was during a time when people from another country were fighting with the Israelites. God told Isaiah to tell the king that he did not have to be afraid, because God was going to protect Israel. God gave the king a sign that God was going to do what he said. Through Isaiah, God said: "The young woman will be pregnant and have a son. She will give the name Immanuel to the child. And before the child will be grown-up, the enemy that attacked the Israelites will be defeated."

The young woman who became pregnant and had this child lived in the time of Isaiah. Her situation was normal: It was no special miracle. But the angel is repeating a part of the same promise now to Joseph, but making a small change. Instead of "young woman," he says "virgin," which means a woman who has not yet slept with a man. He makes clear that what happened at the time of Isaiah was going to be repeated now, but in a much bigger way.

The angel says that the child will be called Immanuel. This is not the name that Joseph has to give the child. It is a title that people will give the child. Immanuel means in the Hebrew language: "God is with us." When the people will see Jesus, they will see that God is with them.

Joseph wakes up and does what the angel tells him. He proceeds with the marriage and takes Mary home as his wife. Joseph does not sleep with Mary though. He waits till after the baby is born. When the baby is born, Joseph gives him the name Jesus. Jesus means "God saves." When Joseph gives Mary's baby a name, he is officially saying, "This is my child." He is adopting the baby as his own child. Joseph was a descendant of David, and by adopting Mary's child, this child is now also a descendant of David. God's promise to David about the special king and Savior is about to be fulfilled!

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Joseph considers to divorce Mary. **Second scene:** Joseph receives a dream. **Third scene:** Joseph takes Mary home as his wife.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Mary
- Joseph
- Angel
- Prophet

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene we hear that Mary was engaged to Joseph but was pregnant before marriage. We already heard the names of Mary and Joseph at the end of the third list of the ancestors of Jesus, in the previous section. We do not hear anything else about Mary and Joseph at this point. Matthew does not tell us more about who they were, or where they lived. From other verses in the gospel, later on, we know that Joseph was a carpenter. Joseph and Mary were rather poor. Joseph thinks about breaking the engagement with Mary quietly, without shaming her in public.

In the second scene Joseph is sleeping and has a dream. Matthew wrote his book in Greek. The Greek text says, "See, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream." The word "see" means that the listeners know that something important or surprising is going to happen.

The angel tells Joseph that he does not have to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Mary has not done wrong; she does not need to be punished. Her pregnancy is special. God's power made her pregnant. The child that will be born is also special. He will save his people from the punishment of their sins. His birth will fulfill a promise that the prophet has made a long time ago.

In the third scene Joseph wakes up. He does what the angel says. He continues with the procedures for marriage, and takes Mary home as his wife. But he does not sleep with her until after the baby is born. When the child is born, he gives him the name Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Mary
- Joseph
- Angel
- Prophet

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Act out Joseph finding out that Mary is pregnant.

Stop the action.

- Angry,
- Hurt,
- Sad,
- Offended,
- How could Mary do this to me?
- Who might the father of the child be?

Act out Joseph thinking about what to do. What are his options? What different options might he consider?

Stop the action.

- Confused,
- Worried,
- Disturbed,
- Sad,
- Scared.

Ask the actor playing Mary, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Worried what Joseph will do,
- Surprised at what God has done with me,
- Excited,
- Nervous. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the angel speaking to Joseph. The angel calls Joseph a "son of David."

Stop the action.

- Surprised,
- Puzzled: I am just a poor man, how can he call me a son of our greatest king? [!end] Restart the action.

Behind the angel you can act out Isaiah telling king Ahaz God's promise.

Act out Joseph waking up after the dream.

Stop the action.

- Excited that I have seen an angel,
- Happy that God is sending someone who will save us from our sins,
- Happy that God is using Mary,
- Relieved that Mary has not done anything wrong,
- Curious about what is going to happen next,
- Concerned about what the people will say. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Joseph taking Mary home.

Stop the action.

- So relieved that Joseph continued with the marriage,
- Excited,
- Nervous. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the baby being born and being named.

Stop the action.

- Amazed,
- Happy,
- Surprised that God has used us for this baby,
- Curious what is going to happen.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this passage, Matthew tells the story of the birth of Jesus the Messiah.

The name **Jesus** means "God saves." **Messiah** is a Hebrew word. It means someone whom God has anointed, or appointed for a special task. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for special tasks. Jesus is all of those things, but the New Testament authors tend to see Jesus as a king appointed by God for a special task. Matthew calls Jesus the Messiah to make clear that he is both a king and Savior.

What word will you use for Messiah? Will you say something that sounds like Messiah, or will you say something that means a Saviour? Messiah means the same as Christ. Messiah is the Hebrew word; Christ is the same word in Greek. In the previous section Matthew used the Greek word, Christ. Discuss with your translation team whether you want to have a different word for Messiah and Christ, or whether you will use the same word each time.

If you already translated another gospel, be sure you use the same word as you have used there. Christ or Messiah is in the Master Glossary.

Mary was **engaged** to Joseph. In Israel, an engagement was a formal agreement between 2 families. Marriages were usually arranged by the parents. At the time of the engagement, the bridegroom agreed to pay a certain amount to give to the family of the girl as a bride price.

Breaking an engagement was considered as bad as a divorce.

Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

The **Holy Spirit** is the power of God working in people, or through people. The spirit of God is called holy because it is perfect. Mary became pregnant because the power of God made her so.

Some people who will hear that Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit might get confused and think that God had sexual relations with Mary. Some translators may therefore want to say this as "Mary was pregnant by the power of God."

Joseph was a **righteous** man, which means that he wanted to do the right thing. He tried to follow the laws God gave his people through Moses. See the Master Glossary for more information about righteousness.

In this dream, Joseph sees an **angel**. An angel is a spirit messenger from God. To a human, an angel looks like a person. They often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. If there is no word in the language for "angel" that a non-believer would understand, you could translate this as messenger of/from God, envoy of God, or perhaps ambassador of God. The word angel is in the Master Glossary.

The angel says that Joseph has to name the baby **Jesus**. Jesus means God saves. Jesus will save his people from their sins. **Sin** refers to an act of disobedience to God. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act like ritual prayer or following certain religious rules. The word sin is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus will **save** his people from their sins. When people sin they have to be punished and will be ashamed. Jesus will rescue the people from this punishment and shame.

Jesus will save "*his* people" from their sins. "His people" here means the Israelites. Later, any person who will believe in Jesus will be his people. Be careful that you do not just say "people." You could say "his own people."

Some ways to say the sentence could be:

- Jesus will rescue his own people from the results of their wrongdoing.
- Jesus will save his people from the punishment for their sins.
- Jesus will take away the shame of his people that is caused by their disobedience to God.

The angel talks about a promise that the Lord gave through the prophet. The **Lord** is referring to God. It means master. The Jews used this as a respectful term to speak about God. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

A **prophet** is a person who gives messages from God to the people. A prophet is different from an angel. An angel is a spirit being, but a prophet is a human.

Some languages use a word that means someone who tells what will happen in the future. A prophet does sometimes tell what will happen in the future, but this is not the main thing. A prophet often tells people that they need to repent and warns them for God's punishment.

Discuss what words you will use for angel and for prophet. See the Master Glossary for more information about these terms.

The angel talks about *the* prophet. He does not say which one. Joseph will probably know that he talks about a prophet named Isaiah, who was so well known that people would often just call him "the prophet."

The angel says that the birth of Jesus will **fulfill** what the prophet said. When Jesus will be born, the thing that the prophet had said that would happen will have happened.

The word **virgin** means a girl who did not yet have sexual relations with a man.

Immanuel is a Hebrew word and it means "God is with us." The angel says that people will call Jesus that. It will not be the name for Jesus, but it will be a title.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 1:18–25

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3318799 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5729058 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 2:1–12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 2:1–12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The previous pericope ended by saying that Jesus was born. We now get some more information: Matthew tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, a small town in the province of Judea. Bethlehem was the town where king David had been from.

Matthew tells us that after Jesus was born, some astrologers-magi, or some translations say wise men-from a country east of Judea came to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the most important city for the Jews.

The astrologers were people who were studying the stars and tried to predict what was going to happen in the world based on the stars. They had seen something special in the sky and somehow because of this they knew that a special king was born among the Jews. They thought this king was so special, that they wanted to go to him and honor him.

Stop here and discuss: In your community, are there people who study the stars, planets, and other things in the sky, and use this to make predictions? Can you tell a story about someone who does this? Can you tell a story about someone who did something because of something they saw in the sky?

We do not know from what country the astrologers came, but it was probably quite far. It might have been the country of Persia, which is now called Iran.

When they came in Judea, they first went to Jerusalem. Because Jerusalem was the capital, this was a good place to start their search. They asked, "Where is the one who is born king of the Jews?" This means they were looking for a newborn child who was also a king, or a child that would become a king when he grows up.

But the people in Jerusalem did not know anything about the birth of a new king!

Now, you need to understand a little bit about the political situation during this time. Ever since the time of the exile that we heard about in the beginning of the book of Matthew-this most terrible time in the history of Israel-Israel was not an independent country anymore. Several other nations had ruled over them, one after the other. During that time the descendants of Abraham began to be called by the name of Jews, instead of Israelites.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, what used to be the nation of Israel was part of the Roman empire. An empire is a group of countries that is ruled by the same person. The boss of the empire was called an emperor. The Roman empire was very big, and the emperor had a lot of power. The emperor lived in the city called Rome, which is in the country we now know as Italy.

What used to be the nation of Israel was now divided in several parts called provinces. Judea was one of these provinces. The Roman emperor had made a man named Herod king over the province Judea.

Herod was not a descendant of Abraham, but his parents followed the religion of the Jews. Herod called himself a Jew but some people did not think he was a real Jew. Herod became king after fighting with other people who were rulers. He was always afraid that other people might take away his kingship, and therefore he had already killed some people, even people within his own family.

Stop here and show the people some maps.

- *Show a map of Israel in the time of king David. Point where Jerusalem is, and where Bethlehem is, where David was from.*
- *Show a map of Judea as part of the Roman empire. Show where Rome is, where Jerusalem is, and where Bethlehem is.*
- *On the same map, show where Judea is in relation to the Eastern countries-Babylon, Persia, Arabia-and try to imagine the distance that the astrologers had traveled. The astrologers may have come from the area around Persia. They will probably have covered at least one thousand kilometers by the time they reach Jerusalem. The journey would have taken several weeks or maybe even months. They might have walked, but more likely were riding on camels. What city or place do you know that is a thousand kilometers away from where you live? Can you imagine going there if there were no trains, cars or buses? How long might it take you if you would walk? What would you pack for the journey? Where would you sleep at night?*

So, King Herod is ruling over the Jews in Judea, and then he hears that some people from another country have come to Jerusalem and are asking where the king of the Jews is born. King Herod does not like that news! King Herod thinks he himself is the king of the Jews.

When King Herod hears this news, he calls together some special people. King Herod knows that the Jews believed that God had promised that one day the Messiah would come, a special king and Savior. Now the astrologers say that the king of the Jews is born. Maybe this king is the Messiah!

The astrologers do not know exactly where the child is born. King Herod calls together some people from among the Jews who know the promises of God very well. These people are chief priests and teachers of the law. Later on we will talk more about what these words mean exactly. He asks if they know where the Messiah would be born. The chief priests and teachers of the law tell king Herod that God had said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, in Judah. Judah is the old name for Judea. About 700 years earlier, God had given a message to the Israelites through a prophet named Micah. In the message, God spoke to the village of Bethlehem, as if the village was a person. God said, "You, Bethlehem in Judah, are a very important place! Because in Bethlehem someone will be born who will be a ruler, and he will be the shepherd of my people Israel."

A shepherd is here another word for a king. A shepherd is taking care of sheep or goats or other animals. In the same way, a king is taking care of people. A king who is ruling like a shepherd is a kind and caring king.

The Israelites believed that this message from God was talking about the Messiah. And so, the chief priests and the teachers of the law tell king Herod that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Next, king Herod calls the astrologers to his palace. He does this secretly; he does not want other people to know. He asks them questions because he wants to know when they first saw the special star. He thinks the child might have been born on the day that the astrologers first saw the star. If King Herod knows when the astrologers saw the star, then he would know how old the child would be now. The astrologers tell him what he wants to know.

King Herod tells the astrologers to go to Bethlehem to look for the child. He tells them to find the child and then come back to him and tell him where the child is. King Herod says that he also wants to go to the child and worship it. But King Herod is lying. He wants to kill the child. King Herod does not want a Messiah to be born, and he does not want a king of the Jews. King Herod wants to remain the king of the Jews himself.

The astrologers leave the king and go to Bethlehem. Bethlehem was not very far from Jerusalem, only about 10 kilometers. As they are on their way, suddenly they again see the special star in the sky. This makes them very happy. Somehow the star points them to the house where the child Jesus is. They find the child Jesus and his mother, Mary. They kneel down in front of the child-this is a sign of great respect. By doing this they worship Jesus. The astrologers give expensive and precious gifts to the child Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold is an expensive metal; frankincense and myrrh are each made from the sap of trees and are used to make perfumes, incense, or medicine. All these were appropriate gifts to give to a king. With their gifts and with their respect they are saying to the child Jesus, "We believe you will become a great king!"

Stop here and show the pictures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then discuss: What would your people consider the best gifts for an important person? How do your people show respect and honor to an important person? How would you behave in front of an important leader? What would you do to greet an important leader? What is the appropriate body posture when you are greeting a king?

After the astrologers have met the child Jesus, they have a dream. God is giving them this dream. From the dream they understand that king Herod wants to harm the child. Therefore, they do not go back to king Herod in Jerusalem. They go back to their own country via another way.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: The astrologers are arriving in Jerusalem.

Second scene: King Herod asks the priests where the Messiah would be born.

Third scene: King Herod meets with the astrologers.

Fourth scene The astrologers meet Jesus.

Fifth scene: The astrologers go back home.

The characters in this story include:

- The baby Jesus
- Astrologers
- King Herod
- The people of Jerusalem
- Chief priests and teachers of the law
- The prophet
- Jesus' mother, Mary
- And probably Joseph, even though Matthew does not give his name

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene we hear that Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea. We also hear that Herod, who is appointed by the Roman Emperor, is king over Judea. We then hear that some astrologers from a country in the east have come to Jerusalem, the capital of Judea.

Stop here and look again at the maps.

Think about the timing. The astrologers may have traveled at least 1,000 kilometers by the time they reached Jerusalem. The journey would have taken several weeks, or maybe even months.

They might not have left directly after seeing the star. Setting out on such a long journey would have taken preparation and planning. This means that by the time they reach Jerusalem, Jesus is at least a few months old.

So, Jesus is born in Bethlehem. Around the same time, the astrologers in a very far country are seeing a special star. They decide to go and look for the king of the Jews. By the time that Jesus is at least a couple of months old, the astrologers arrive in Jerusalem.

Imagine the astrologers arriving in Jerusalem, the capital of Judea. They looked different than the people in Judea. They wore different clothes. They were foreigners. They spoke a different language. We do not know how many of them came. They probably had camels and servants. Maybe they were quite a large group.

The astrologers ask the people in Jerusalem where the king of the Jews was born. Imagine how surprised they might have been that the people in Jerusalem did not know anything about the birth of a king!

King Herod hears about these people. He is troubled. This means he is *very* upset! All Jerusalem is troubled, meaning that many people in Jerusalem are also troubled. Maybe they are confused about what these astrologers might be talking about. But the people in Jerusalem might have been especially troubled because they knew that King Herod was not a nice man. Whenever King Herod was upset, he might make trouble for the Jews.

King Herod calls together chief priests and teachers of the law. Priests were the people who worked in the temple of God. Teachers of the law were people who were studying the books with the law of God. These people knew about the promises that God had made to the Jews. They were able to tell King Herod that God had said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

King Herod calls the astrologers to him secretly, maybe at night, because it would be difficult for foreigners to come to the palace unnoticed if it was daytime. The astrologers may have been surprised that the king wanted to meet them in secret. What do you think that the secret meeting might have looked like? Can you imagine

maybe a dark palace, and a servant guiding the astrologers with a candle into the room of the king? People whispering? The light of the candles reflecting on people's faces? Why do you think that the king wanted the meeting to be in secret?

The king wants to know when the astrologers had first seen the star. He pretends that he also wants to worship the child. He tells the astrologers to come back to him after they have found the child. The astrologers listen to him, but Matthew does not tell us whether they promised to do what he said. Maybe they were already suspicious about king Herod's intentions?

The astrologers leave king Herod and, maybe the next day, they start traveling to Bethlehem. They may have been a bit puzzled. They knew that a very important king of the Jews had been born. They came from a very far country to worship this king. But the people in Jerusalem did not seem to care about this king! Nobody went with them to look for this king in Bethlehem.

Then, suddenly, they see the special star again! The fact that they see the star means that it must be evening, or night.

The original text says: "See, they saw the star!" This means it was sudden and unexpected. Seeing the star again makes them overjoyed. Maybe they had felt disappointed because of the cold welcome in Jerusalem, but now they are excited and encouraged.

Matthew tells this part a little bit out of order: he says, "The star comes up again; the star guides them to Bethlehem and stops over the house; and then the astrologers are overjoyed." It might be easier to say that the star comes up again, *then* that the astrologers are overjoyed when they see this, and *then* that the star guides them to the house in Bethlehem where Jesus is.

They follow the star and find the house where the child Jesus lived. In the house are Mary and the child Jesus. Matthew does not mention Joseph. Maybe Joseph had gone out on an errand, or was working, or maybe he was there and Matthew just did not say it.

Bethlehem was a small town and the house where Mary and Joseph lived with Jesus must have been a simple house. Can you imagine the difference between Herod's palace in Jerusalem and the little house where Jesus lived?

The astrologers give expensive gifts to the child Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. It would have smelled very lovely. The smell would have filled the house.

Can you imagine the surprise on the faces of Mary and Joseph when these visitors with their gifts came to their house? The astrologers probably told them everything that happened, and Mary and Joseph may have told the astrologers everything that happened to them! Even though the astrologers were not Jews and came from a very far country, they understood how very important the birth of Jesus was.

One of the astrologers-or maybe even all of them!-then has a special dream. From the dream they understand that King Herod has lied and wants to harm Jesus. Possibly they are not surprised by this; they might already have been suspicious about King Herod! And so, they do not go back to Jerusalem, but go back to their own country by another way.

Can you imagine Mary and Joseph maybe waving goodbye to them from the door of their house, with little Jesus on their arm?

What do you think the neighbors might have been thinking about these strange visitors?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The baby Jesus
- Astrologers
- King Herod
- The people of Jerusalem
- Chief priests and teachers of the law
- The prophet
- Jesus' mother, Mary and
- Probably Joseph

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus being born in Bethlehem in Judea.

At the far end of the room, act out the astrologers seeing a special star. How might they have studied and discussed to find its meaning? How did they come to the decision to travel to Judea?

Act out the astrologers traveling to Judea. After a long journey, they reach Jerusalem.

Stop the action.

- Tired but excited,
- Curious,
- Maybe I am expecting the city to be decorated because of the birth of the king,
- Maybe I expect that I will soon be in a beautiful palace and will be able to pay my respect to this king. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the astrologers asking around where the king of the Jews is born.

Stop the action.

- Surprised,
- Amused (how can they say such a strange thing?),
- I think these people are wrong, there is no king born.
- Is there a king born? That would be good news!

Ask the actors playing the astrologers: "How are you feeling when the people of Jerusalem are responding in this way?" You may hear things like:

- Surprised,
- Disappointed,
- Confused,
- Did we make a mistake? How can we be wrong? [!end] Restart the action.

Act out king Herod hearing about the astrologers.

Stop the action.

- Angry, because *I* am the king,
- Confused,
- Upset,
- If a king is born, or even if people *think* that a king is born, they may start fighting against me.
- I should try to find out more about this. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out king Herod calling the chief priests and teachers of the law and talking with them. The chief priests and the teachers of the law tell him what the prophet Micah had said.

Stop the action.

- If the Messiah really had been born now, we would have known.
- If the Messiah really has been born, God would have told *us*, not some strangers in another country.
- The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem, but this is a promise for some future time.
- This is an old promise; I do not really believe it. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the secret meeting between the king and the astrologers.

Stop the action.

- I am scared that what they are saying might be true.
- I have to do something to get rid of this child.
- I should make the astrologers think that I want to worship the child.

Ask the actors playing the astrologers: "How are you feeling about this meeting with the king?" You may hear things like:

- Suspicious: Why are we meeting in secret?
- Disappointed: Why does he not seem to know about this king?
- Excited: Now we can go to Bethlehem! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the astrologers traveling to Bethlehem. On the way they see the special star again. The Bible is using a very strong word to describe their joy. How would you act out this joy? Would you jump up and down? Would you shout? Would you embrace each other?

Stop the action.

- Excited,
- Encouraged,
- Relieved that we were not wrong,
- Happy that the star is showing the way. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the astrologers finding the house and going inside and meeting Mary and the child. They kneel down on the ground before the child in respect and offer expensive gifts.

Stop the action.

- Excited,
- Very happy,
- Surprised that the other people do not know about this king,
- Surprised that the king lives in a small village in a poor family,
- Curious what is going to happen with this king.

Ask Mary: "How do you feel?" You may hear things like:

- Very surprised,
- Encouraged,
- Happy that there are people who understand how important Jesus is,
- What will Joseph say when he comes back home!
- A bit worried what Herod might do,
- Excited that such important people came to my house,
- Amazed that God has told people who are not Jews about the birth of Jesus! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the astrologers having a dream and going back to their country without going back to king Herod in Jerusalem. This made their journey longer, because they had to take a different road. They could not travel through Jerusalem without king Herod hearing about it and so had to take a roundabout way.

Would you like to act out the astrologers coming home and telling their family and friends about meeting Jesus?

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Sometime after Jesus was born, some **astrologers**, or **magi**, from the east came to Jerusalem. These astrologers were people who were looking at what happened in the sky at night and tried to interpret what they saw. Some translations call them "wise men."

Stop here and discuss what word you are going to use for astrologers. Is there a word in your language for people who study the stars to learn about the future?

The astrologers from the East ask, "Where is the one who is born king of the Jews?" **Jews** means descendants of Abraham. Earlier, they were called Israelites. Because the country of Israel did not really exist anymore, the people were called Jews instead of Israelites. Jew is a shorter way of saying "someone from Judea." But all the descendants of Abraham were called Jews, even those who did not live in Judea. The word Jews is in the Master Glossary.

King Herod calls together a meeting of **chief priests** and **teachers of the law**, or as some translations say, **scribes**.

Priests were the people who worked in the temple of God. The temple was the most important religious place for the Jews. It was the place where they worshiped God. The temple was in Jerusalem. In the temple, special people called priests made offerings to God on behalf of the people. The purpose of these offerings could be to give thanks to God, or to ask forgiveness for sin. Priests were the in-between-people between God and people. Because people were sinful, they could not go to God directly. A priest would go to God on behalf of the people.

The word priests will come back many times in the Bible, so you need to spend some time on how you want to translate this in your language. The word priest is in the Master Glossary. The words temple and offering are also in the Master Glossary, even though you do not need these words for this passage of Scripture. But listening to their definition in the Master Glossary may help you with deciding on your word for priest.

Some priests had more authority than other priests. They were called chief priests. One person was the most important priest, and he was called the high priest.

Teachers of the law were people who were studying and teaching the law of God. This does not mean just the rules and commandments that God had given, but everything that God had said and done. They were studying all the books that we now call the "Old Testament." They called these books "the law and the prophets." The teachers of the law knew many passages by heart.

The word teacher of the law is in the Master Glossary. The word will also come back many times in the book of Matthew, so spend some time on deciding the best word.

King Herod asks the chief priests and teachers of the law where the **Messiah** was to be born. Messiah is a Hebrew word. It means someone whom God has anointed, or appointed for a special task. When the Jews talked about the Messiah they meant a special king that God would send them. This king would save the Jews from their difficulties. Many Jews thought that when the Messiah would come, they would get back their political independence. They would no longer be ruled by other people. The country of Israel would become strong and powerful again, as it had been in the time of king David. Use the same word for Messiah as you have used in the previous passage. The word Messiah is in the Master Glossary.

The priests and the teachers of the law tell the king that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They say that the **prophet** has written that. A prophet is a person who gives messages from God to the people. Use the same word as you have used in the previous passage. The word prophet is in the Master Glossary.

The priests talk about "*the prophet*." They do not give the name of the prophet, but we know that the text they are quoting is from the book of Micah. This text is so well known to them, that they do not find it important to give the name of the prophet. They assume that when people hear this quote, they know this was from the book of Micah.

The astrologers see Jesus and **bow down and worship** him. They may have come down on their knees and touched their forehead to the ground. Or they may have stretched themselves out on the ground in front of Jesus. This was a sign of great respect, fit for a king or a God. By doing this they were worshiping Jesus. They bowed down as a sign of their worship.

The astrologers **open their treasures**. This means they open the boxes or bags with gifts. The gifts are **gold**, **frankincense**, and **myrrh**.

Gold is a very valuable, yellow metal. It can be used to make many beautiful things, like coins, jewelry, or vessels.

Frankincense is the sap from certain trees that was hardened into little clumps. This has a pleasant smell and people can burn this so that the smell would spread-like incense, if you know this-or it was used to make perfume or creams.

Myrrh is similar, but comes from a different tree. Myrrh was used for perfume as well, but also as medicine. Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were all very expensive gifts, and in those days very suitable to give to a king.

Show again your team the pictures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

If your language has no name for frankincense and myrrh, you could describe it. You could maybe say that the astrologers gave Jesus gold and two kinds of precious and sweet smelling oil. Or if people know about burning incense, you could say, "The astrologers gave Jesus gold and very precious incense as well as expensive perfume."

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 2:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (5344847 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (9158395 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 2:13-23

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 2:13–23 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This story is happening immediately after the astrologers had visited Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus.

The previous story ended with the astrologers having a dream. From the dream they understood that king Herod wanted to harm the child Jesus. Therefore they did not go back to king Herod to tell him where the child Jesus was, but they went home via a different route.

After the astrologers have left Mary and Joseph, Joseph has a dream. In the dream Joseph sees an angel. The angel tells Joseph that king Herod wants to kill the child. Joseph needs to take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Egypt was a neighboring country. King Herod had no power in Egypt. Jesus would be safe there.

Show a map of Bethlehem in relation to Egypt.

Now Matthew again has a quote from a prophet. As in the previous passages, he does not say which prophet: he just says "the prophet." This time the prophet is a man named Hosea. Hosea lived about 750 years before Jesus was born. Hosea gave messages from God to the people of Israel.

One time, God was speaking about all the people of Israel together as if they were one person. He said: "I already loved Israel when he was still a young child. I called my son-meaning Israel-out of Egypt." God is referring here to a time in Israel's history, many hundred years even before Hosea, when the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. God freed them and led them out of Egypt and gave them the country of Israel to live in.

Matthew is repeating the last part of this message from God, but he is giving it a different meaning. The son now means Jesus, and not Israel. The child *Jesus* is now in Egypt. Later, when Jesus will be back in Israel, it would be as if God has called Jesus-his son-out of Egypt. Matthew means to say: "What was true for Israel, will be true for Jesus!"

In the meantime, when the astrologers do not come back to Jerusalem, king Herod realizes that they have deceived him. They have not done what he asked them to do. They have secretly gone back to their own country. King Herod becomes furious. He then does a terrible thing. He has all the baby boys in Bethlehem and surrounding villages murdered. He knows that one of them must be the king of the Jews that the astrologers talked about, but he does not know which boy. He knows roughly how old the child must be. He takes no risk: he murders every possible small boy that could have been the king of the Jews, and quite a few more. He has his soldiers kill all the small boys that are less than 2 years old in Bethlehem and the surrounding villages.

Matthew then quotes another prophet, but this time he gives the name of the prophet. The prophet's name was Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived about 600 years before Jesus' birth. This was the time when the Israelites were taken to Babylon-the exile, this most terrible time in the history of Israel. Just before the Israelites were taken to Babylon, Jeremiah had already said that this would happen.

Jeremiah had said that the people in a place called Ramah could hear the voice of someone crying. Someone was mourning and crying very loudly. He then says that the person who was crying was Rachel. Rachel was one of the foremothers, a female ancestor, of the Israelites. She had already died a very long time ago, but Jeremiah talks as if Rachel was still alive. Jeremiah was using poetic language to express how terrible the time of the exile would be. He means to say that if Rachel had still been alive, she would be crying because the Israelites are being made prisoners. Rachel's grief would be so great that nobody would be able to comfort her and make her stop crying.

Jeremiah mentions that the crying is heard in Ramah. This was a place that was a bit more to the north of Jerusalem.

Matthew applies this prophecy from Jeremiah to the situation now. When king Herod murdered the babies in Bethlehem, this was a terrible time for the people in Bethlehem. If their ancestor Rachel would still have been alive, she would have cried very much, just like the mothers and fathers in Bethlehem whose children were murdered were crying now.

Stop here and discuss: Can you tell a story about a baby dying in your community? What happened? How did other people respond? How did the death of the baby affect the family and the community?

In the meantime, Joseph and Mary and Jesus are safe in Egypt. We do not know how long they stayed in Egypt. It might have been a few months, or a few years. But, after they have lived there for some time, king Herod dies.

King Herod had three sons. After his death, his kingdom was divided in three parts. Each son got one part. Herod's son Archelaus became ruler over Judea. Herod's son Herod Antipas became ruler over a province named Galilee, as well as another province. His third son got another part.

An angel tells Joseph in a dream that it is safe for him to go back to Israel. But once they are on the way, Joseph hears that king Herod's son Archelaus is now ruler over Judea. This makes Joseph afraid. Joseph knew that Archelaus was not a good person. Joseph then has another dream, and an angel tells him to go to Nazareth. From the gospel of Luke, we know that Joseph and Mary had lived in Nazareth before they went to Bethlehem. Nazareth was a small town in the province of Galilee. It was north from Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Show the people a map of Israel in the time of Jesus. Look up Nazareth.

Nazareth was not a very honorable place to live. The people in Judea looked down on people in Galilee, and in Galilee itself, people looked down on people from Nazareth! It was one of the lowest, least respectful, places where you could live.

Matthew again refers to a prophet. This time he says "prophets"-more than one. He says that the prophets had said that "he will be called a Nazarene." A Nazarene means someone from Nazareth, and "he" refers to the Messiah. We do not have a text in the Old Testament where a prophet says that the Messiah will be someone from Nazareth. But, we do have texts where a prophet says that the Messiah is going to be looked down upon. Matthew might mean to say that when Jesus' parents went to live in Nazareth, this would make true that the Messiah was going to be looked down upon by other people.

In your community, are there places that are not considered very honorable to live? What can you tell about the people from this place? If you meet someone from this place, how do you react? If you hear someone is from this place, what are your expectations about this person?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Joseph has a dream.

Second scene: Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus go to Egypt.

Third scene: King Herod has the baby boys in Bethlehem murdered.

Fourth scene: Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus started traveling back to Israel.

Fifth scene: Joseph, Mary, and baby Jesus settle in Nazareth.

The characters in this story include:

- Angel
- Joseph
- Mary
- The baby Jesus
- King Herod
- The prophet (Hosea)
- The astrologers
- The babies in Bethlehem
- The people living in Bethlehem and surrounding villages
- King Herod's soldiers
- The prophet Jeremiah
- Rachel
- King Archelaus
- Herod's other two sons. They are not mentioned in the story, but it will be helpful for us to understand about them.
- The "prophets"

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

An angel warns Joseph and tells him to go to Egypt. Mary and Joseph leave at night: probably the same night during which Joseph had the dream. It would be safer to leave at night, so that people would not see them leave and tell king Herod where they went.

We do not know how far Mary and Joseph walked during their journey to Egypt. This depends on where in Egypt they ended up. They might have traveled for at least one week, but it might have been several weeks. The journey probably was difficult. There were roads, but very few villages on the way.

During the time that Joseph and Mary will stay in Egypt, king Herod will die. But he is not dead yet. While Mary and Joseph are still on their way to Egypt, King Herod murders the baby boys in Bethlehem.

The king had expected the astrologers to come and tell him where the child was that was going to be the king of the Jews. Bethlehem was not very far from Jerusalem. The astrologers could have come back to him within a day or two. So the king probably gave up waiting very quickly, and sent soldiers to Bethlehem just a few days after the astrologers had left.

Bethlehem was a small village. The king also killed the baby boys in the villages around Bethlehem, just to be sure. Because these were small villages, just a few children might have been murdered. But you can imagine how scared the people of the village were when the soldiers of the king came marching into their village, looking into each house, and grabbing their babies. The soldiers killed each baby with a sword. If you were in this village when this happened, what would you hear? What would you see?

King Herod died sometime after this. Matthew says: "See, an angel tells Joseph in a dream!" This means it happened suddenly. The angel tells Joseph to go back to Israel, with Mary and Jesus. The angel says the people who were trying to kill Jesus are dead. From this, Joseph knows that King Herod has died. Joseph and Mary, with Jesus, start traveling, but before they reach Judea, Joseph hears that Herod's son Archelaus is now king. They might have met some people on the road coming from Judea who told him this. This news makes Joseph afraid. He does not trust king Archelaus. Maybe he is wondering what to do, when he has another dream. The dream gives him instructions where to go. Joseph then takes his family and settles in Nazareth.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Angel
- Joseph
- Mary
- The baby Jesus
- King Herod
- The prophet (Hosea)
- The astrologers
- The babies in Bethlehem
- The people living in Bethlehem and surrounding villages
- King Herod's soldiers
- The prophet Jeremiah
- Rachel
- King Archelaus
- Herod's other two sons. They are not mentioned in the story, but it will be helpful for us to understand about them.
- The "prophets"

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Divide the room or space in parts. Decide where Bethlehem is going to be, and where Jerusalem, Egypt, and Nazareth will be. Decide where you will place the actors playing the various prophets. The prophets are not living at the same time as the other people in the story. They gave their messages a long time ago. Maybe they can stand on a chair to show the difference with the other people. Or, they can stand just outside the door, and shout their messages into the room from a distance!

Act out the astrologers leaving Mary and Joseph after their visit to Bethlehem. Act out Joseph having a dream.

Act out Joseph waking his family and Joseph, Mary, and Jesus leaving Bethlehem.

Stop the action.

- Scared,
- Tense,
- Wondering what will happen,
- How will we get to Egypt?
- Glad that God has warned us.

At the other side of the room, you can act out the prophet Hosea saying "I called my son to come out of Egypt." This prophecy is not being fulfilled yet; Jesus is still on the way to Egypt. But it is going to be fulfilled when Jesus starts traveling back. Ask the person acting out the prophet to stay in the same place for some time. He can repeat his line later.

Even though Matthew already tells us early in the passage that King Herod died, you do not yet want to act out his death now. Keep this for later.

When Mary and Joseph are still traveling, in another part of the room act out king Herod waiting for the astrologers to come back.

Stop the action.

- Impatient,
- Frustrated,
- Upset,
- Why are the astrologers not coming back?
- What can I do to get rid of this child?

[!end]Restart the action.

Act out that king Herod sends his soldiers to Bethlehem.

Stop the action.

- I do not like this, it seems cruel.
- I just do what I am told. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the soldiers arriving in Bethlehem, searching for baby boys, and killing them.

Stop the action.

- Terrified,
- Angry,
- Desperate,
- Hopeless. [!end] Restart the action.

On the other side of the room, act out the prophet Jeremiah giving his prophecy. Act out Rachel crying. Act out people trying in vain to comfort her.

Act out Herod dying. Be aware that this did not happen immediately after the murder of the babies; some time has passed in between.

Act out Herod's three sons becoming rulers over some provinces. Archelaus became ruler over Judea, (which includes Jerusalem and Bethlehem), and Herod Antipas became ruler over Galilee. This includes Nazareth. Make the actors playing the two sons stand in the correct place of the room: one near Bethlehem, and one near Nazareth.

The third son and his provinces are not important yet for this story. You can make him stand anywhere!

Act out Joseph having a dream. Act out the angel telling him to go back to Israel.

Act out Joseph, Mary, and Jesus traveling back to Israel.

Now is a good time to have the prophet Hosea repeat his sentence: "I called my son to come out of Egypt!"

Stop the action.

- Happy that we can go back to Israel,
- Nervous,
- Wondering what will happen. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Joseph hearing from someone that king Archelaus was now king over Judea.

Stop the action.

- I do not think Archelaus is much better than his father.
- I am scared.
- Maybe Archelaus will also try to kill Jesus.
- What should I do? [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Joseph having a dream. Matthew does not say whether an angel spoke to him in the dream, or whether God gave him instructions in a different way. But from the dream, Joseph understands that he should go to Nazareth.

Stop the action.

- I am excited that God is helping me and telling me what to do.
- I wonder why we have to live in Nazareth, this is not a good place.
- I hope that the king will not find Jesus there. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Mary and Joseph arriving in Nazareth and settling there.

Act out the "prophets" saying, "The Messiah will be called a person from Nazareth!"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream.

An **angel** of the **Lord** means an angel from God. Lord means master. The Jews used this as a respectful term to speak about God. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

An angel is a spirit messenger from God. To a human, an angel looks like a person. They often come with a specific message or to do a specific task. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word angel is in the Master Glossary.

Astrologers-some translations say magi, or wise men-were people who were studying the stars and tried to predict what was going to happen in the world based on the stars. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Joseph and Mary and Jesus go to Egypt, and then come back again. This makes it true that **the prophet** had said that God had said "I called my son to come out of Egypt." A prophet is someone who gives messages to the people from God. Use the same word as you have used in the previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about prophet. This message had already become true once, when God freed the Israelites from Egypt where there had been slaves. But now it became true again.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 2:13-23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3802956 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6542373 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 3:1-17

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 3:1-17 in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The previous section finished when Joseph, Mary, with little Jesus settled in Nazareth, in Galilee. Matthew is now jumping forward in time and skips many years. Jesus is now a grown man.

Matthew tells us about a man named John. John is called "the Baptist," or the baptizer. This was a title that people gave him. It meant he was giving people baptism. Baptism was a Jewish ceremony that showed that people were turning away from their old way of life and starting a new way of life. If you "gave" someone baptism, you made someone take a dip in water. The person who went under water was the one taking baptism. A person who took baptism was saying: "I am sorry for the bad things that I have done and I want to change." Before this time, usually only people who were not Jews but wanted to become a Jew took baptism. John is doing something new by giving baptism to Jews.

Are there any rituals in your community that involve water? Can you tell a story about that? What does this ritual or activity mean?

John was telling people to repent of the bad things they had done. These people were not more bad than other people. Every single person, including John himself, has not obeyed God in everything and needs to tell God they are sorry.

John was speaking in the wilderness. The wilderness was a dry and lonely place. Matthew is telling us about another prophecy now. About 700 years earlier, the prophet Isaiah preached to Israel to warn them that they would be punished, but he also gave them messages of hope. In one of his messages, he had said that soon the people of Israel would be forgiven, and their punishment completed. He said that there was good news because God was coming to rule, and God would take care of his people. Before God would come, there would be a person who would shout in the wilderness to tell the people to get ready to receive God. He would say that the people should make a straight road so that God could come easily, because God would be coming soon.

Matthew tells us that John is the person whom Isaiah talked about. John was preaching from the wilderness. John was telling people to repent from their sins. By repenting, they would become ready to receive God. It was as if they were making a road for God to come easily.

John tells people to repent because the kingdom of heaven has come near. The kingdom of heaven means the same as the kingdom of God. That the kingdom has come near means that God has begun to rule over the people.

John is wearing simple clothes and eating simple food. By seeing this, the people would be reminded of God's prophets in the Old Testament. John is looking like a prophet, and speaking like a prophet.

Among the people who come to John are also Pharisees and Sadducees. These were two different groups of religious leaders with slightly different beliefs.

John does not think that these leaders are really sorry for their sins. He calls them poisonous snakes. He means to say that the religious leaders are dangerous, and are deceiving the people. John asks them who told them that they could escape from God's anger. He is not really asking a question; he means to say that even if they will take baptism, they will not be able to escape from God's anger. Their repentance is not real. They need to prove that they have repented by changing their behavior.

John knows that the religious leaders may say that they are safe from punishment because they are descendants of Abraham. Abraham was the very first ancestor of the Israelites, the Jews. The religious leaders think they are safe because they are Jews, and Jews are God's chosen people. John tells them that if they do not truly repent, there is no point in being a descendant of Abraham. If God wanted, he could change even a stone into a person who was a Jew! Just being a Jew is not enough. Jews have to repent, just as non-Jews have to do.

If someone truly repents, his behavior will change. John compares people with a fruit tree. Someone who does not show the right behavior is like a fruit tree that does not bear fruit. John tells the religious leaders that the ax is ready to cut such trees right at the roots. A tree that is cut down at the roots will die, and will be good for nothing. Like that, someone who does not show changed behavior will be punished.

Show a picture of an ax.

Show a picture from a fruit tree in Israel-a fig tree or an olive tree. These are the kind of trees that John is talking about. The fruit trees in Israel were thin and the wood was not useful for making anything. When a fruit tree was chopped it was used for firewood only. What trees that bear edible fruit are there in your area?

John baptized people by dipping them in water. John tells the people that after him someone will come who will give a different kind of baptism. That will not be a baptism with water, but a baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. When people were baptized with water, this was a sign that they had repented and were forgiven. When something is washed with water, it is cleaned. Fire also cleans by burning what is dirty or not useful.

John then uses another picture from nature. Wheat is a plant that people grow for using the seeds, also called grains. The grains can be made into flour so that people can bake bread, or boil it to make porridge. When a farmer has harvested, cut, the wheat from his fields, he has to beat the grains so that the outer skin of the grains comes off. This is called threshing, and the place where he does this is called the threshing floor. This would be a place where soil would be stamped tightly to make a very hard surface.

The skin of the wheat grains is called chaff. It is very lightweight. After threshing the wheat, the farmer uses a tool called a winnowing fork. This was a long stick like a fork, and the farmer would shake up the wheat and

throw it in the air. The wind would then blow the chaff a bit further away, but the seeds would fall back on the ground. This process is called winnowing. By doing this the farmer could very easily separate the grains from the chaff. The chaff would be swept up and burned. It had no further use.

Show the people a picture of wheat as it is growing in the fields.

Show a picture of a farmer winnowing the wheat with a winnowing fork.

Do people grow wheat in your area? Can you describe what people do with it after harvesting? If people do not grow wheat, are there other staples that people grow in your area? What things are similar, and what is done differently from this description of winnowing?

John says that the person who will come after him will be like a farmer who is separating the wheat from the chaff. People who have not repented will be like the chaff, and will be punished. Other people will be like the grains. The word for spirit in the language that John spoke is the same as the word for wind. So when John talks about baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire, this sounds similar to the winnowing process that a farmer does. Both are using wind and fire to separate the good from the bad.

An important person would sometimes have a slave—an unpaid servant—who would carry his sandals, or shoes. This would be a very low job. John says that the person coming after him is so important, that John is not good enough to even do this very low job.

If it is needed, you can show people a picture of a sandal.

So far, Matthew has not said who the important person is that John is talking about. But now this is becoming clear, because Matthew tells us that Jesus is coming to be baptized.

Jesus came from Galilee; this is the province where his parents took him after they came from Egypt.

Jesus comes up to John and must have asked or indicated that he wanted to be baptized, just like the other people who were there. John does not want to do this at first. He knows that Jesus has not done anything to repent of!

But Jesus insists. Jesus says that it has to happen this way, because it is God's will. By taking baptism Jesus would do the right thing that God wanted. Jesus' baptism is indicating that Jesus is willing to do the work that God sent him to earth for. Jesus is humbling himself by confessing sins that he has not done! This is already telling us what Jesus has come to earth for.

So, John does what Jesus wants and baptizes him. Jesus comes out of the water and then Jesus sees an opening in the sky. Through the opening, the Holy Spirit of God is coming down. The way the Holy Spirit is coming down is just as how a dove, which is a type of bird, would come down on someone and sit on someone's head or shoulder. Maybe the spirit looked like a dove at this moment, or maybe it was only moving like a dove.

If it is needed, you can show people a picture of a dove. But remember that Matthew does not say that Jesus saw a dove, but that Jesus saw the spirit moving like a dove.

Someone then hears a voice that is speaking from heaven. This means it is the voice of God. Matthew does not say who all can hear the voice. Jesus and John probably heard the voice, but Matthew does not explain whether other people who were there also heard the voice. The voice of God says that this person—meaning Jesus—is his son, that he loves him very much, and that he is very happy with him.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: John is baptizing the people.

Second scene: John warns the religious leaders that they have to repent, and explains that after him someone more powerful than him will come.

Third scene: Jesus receives baptism.

The characters in this story include:

- John the baptizer
- The people from Jerusalem, Judea, and the area around the Jordan River
- Pharisees and Sadducees
- Abraham
- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- God (his voice).

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Matthew begins this section by saying "in those days." But he does not mean that these were still the same days as that Mary and Joseph and little Jesus went to live in Nazareth. Almost 30 years have passed! How would you begin telling the story to make it connect well with the previous one? Do you need to say something like "after many years"?

The story takes place in the wilderness. John is standing next to the Jordan River.

Show your team a picture of the river and the wilderness.

John is wearing clothes that are made from the hair of a camel.

Show your team a picture of a camel. Show a picture of a cloak made from camel hair.

The hair of the camel was made into rough cloth. This means his clothes were very simple.

Around his waist he was wearing a belt made of leather. Leather is the dried skin of a dead animal. In the Old Testament the prophet Elijah is wearing the same clothes.

John is eating locusts and wild honey. This was the simple food that was available in the wilderness. It was food for a poor person.

Locusts are insects. John may have roasted them over a fire or boiled them in water.

Show your team a picture of locusts.

Honey is made by bees, another type of insect. Honey is sweet and sticky. Often people would keep bees so that they could eat the honey, but John ate wild honey-meaning that he found it in the wilderness.

Show your team a picture of a beehive with honey.

John speaks to the religious leaders very harshly. He uses picture language to warn them. You can use several objects to help you remember his speech.

Can you find something (or someone) that looks like

1. A snake
2. A tree fruit (like a coconut, mango, or apple, or whatever fruit is growing on trees in your area)
3. An ax or something to cut down a tree
4. Abraham
5. Stones
6. Water

7. Sandals
8. Fire (matchsticks or a real fire)
9. Something that looks like a winnowing fork
- 10. And grain?**

You may not have all these objects exactly, but you can use something that looks a little bit like it. Then try remembering John's speech by holding the different objects. During the speech others can act out the cutting down of a tree, the threshing and winnowing of grain, the sweeping up and the burning of the chaff.

Sometime after John gives this speech to the religious leaders, Jesus comes. It might have been the same day, or it might have been some days or weeks later. John must have been preaching for several months.

Jesus came from Galilee. He would have walked there. The journey would have taken several days.

When Jesus came up from the water, the sky opened. What do you think that that might have looked like? How would you describe this in your language?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- John the baptizer
- The people from Jerusalem, Judea, and the area around the Jordan River
- Pharisees and Sadducees
- Abraham
- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- God (his voice)

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out John giving people his message. Act out people coming to listen to him. Think about how the people would behave. Would they jostle together to come closer to John? Would some people want to come closer, or want to stay at the back? Would people be relaxed, or tense? What might people have said to each other?

You can act out the prophet Isaiah speaking his prophecy.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing the people: "What do you feel when you see John?" You may hear things like:

- Amazed,
- Impressed,
- Encouraged that God has sent someone who may be a prophet,
- Scared because I know that I have sinned. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out John baptizing the people in the river. Act out some people taking baptism and confessing their sins. Think about what this would look like. If you were there, what might you have heard when people were confessing their sins? What kind of things might they have said to John? What did the people look like when they came up from the water, all wet? What might their faces have looked like? Might they have said anything?

Stop the action. Ask the people: "What do you feel when you are taking baptism?" You may hear things like:

- Relieved that I have confessed my sin,
- Happy that I am forgiven. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Pharisees and Sadducees coming and asking for baptism.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing them: "How are you feeling? What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- We do not really need baptism, because we are Jews!
- We have to take baptism because it will make us look humble and people will like this. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out John speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees. He is comparing them with poisonous snakes. He tells them to do actions that will prove they have repented. He tells them it is not enough to be a descendant of Abraham. He tells them that they may be punished just as a tree that is having no fruit will be chopped and burned. You can use the objects that you have selected in the previous script to help you remember his speech.

Act out Jesus coming to John, John refusing to give Jesus baptism, Jesus insisting, and Jesus receiving baptism.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing John: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- It feels wrong to give Jesus baptism.
- It is amazing that Jesus wants to take baptism.
- I am glad that Jesus wants to do what God wants.

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I am glad that I am doing what God wants.
- I am glad that I can begin my work. [!end] Restart the action.

How could you act out the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus?

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "How are you feeling when you saw the Spirit coming down, and heard the voice of God?" You may hear things like:

- Grateful that my father loves me and that the Holy Spirit is there to help me.

Ask the actor who spoke God's voice: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Very happy that Jesus is doing what I want him to do,
- I love him so much!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

John is called the **Baptist**, or the baptizer. This means that he was someone who gave **baptism** to people. The word baptism is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

John was preaching in the **desert**, or **wilderness**, of Judea. The word wilderness is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

John tells the people to **repent** because the **kingdom of heaven** is near. The word repent is in the Master Glossary. The word kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary. Use the same words that you have used in previous passages.

Among the people who came to get baptism were also **Pharisees** and **Sadducees**. Pharisees and Sadducees were two different groups of religious leaders.

The Pharisees were seen as the most influential group of religious leaders in Israel. The Pharisees were devoted to God's law. The word "Pharisees" means "being separated." They wanted to keep themselves separated from people who did not follow God's law.

The Sadducees were less strict in following God's law. They believed only the first five books of the Old Testament were important. They cooperated much more readily than the Pharisees with the Roman government. We do not really know what the name "Sadducees" meant.

Both words are in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

John says that after him someone will come who will baptize people with the **Holy Spirit** and fire. The word "holy" refers to people or things that belong to God, are dedicated to him, or are like him. Use the same word as you have used in the previous sections. The word Holy Spirit is in the Master Glossary.

After Jesus had been baptized, the **heavens** opened. The heavens here can mean the visible sky, or it can mean the place where God lives. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 3:1-17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4104559 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7066749 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 4:1-11

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 4:1-11 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The previous story ended with Jesus taking baptism, and the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus. God had spoken from heaven, and said that Jesus was his dear son.

This story happens right after this.

Jesus was led by the Spirit to go into the wilderness. This means that the Holy Spirit was now telling Jesus to go, or making him go, into the wilderness. Jesus was already in the wilderness when he was baptized, but now he is going deeper inside, to a more remote place.

Show your team a picture of the Judean desert.

The reason why the Holy Spirit is doing this is so that the devil would tempt Jesus. The devil would try to make Jesus disobey God. Because the Holy Spirit was leading Jesus, we know that God wanted this to happen. Jesus needed to go through this test.

This story mentions the devil, the tempter, and Satan. These are all names for the same person. The devil was an angel, but he rebelled against God. He became an evil spirit. The devil, or Satan, is now the name of the leader of all the evil spirits. In this story he is also called "the tempter," because he is trying to make Jesus to do something wrong.

Before the devil starts talking with Jesus, Jesus fasts for 40 days. This means that he did not take any food during this time.

The number 40 in the Bible is important. In the Old Testament, the prophet Moses fasted for 40 days before God gave the Israelites his commandments through him. The Israelites wandered around the desert for 40 years. The number 40 often indicates a time of preparation.

Do people in your community fast? What is the reason they do so? Can you tell a story about someone fasting for a very long time?

The devil tries three times to make Jesus do something wrong, and each time Jesus responds by quoting a text from the Bible. All three quotes are commandments that God had given the Israelites through Moses, more than thousand years earlier. At that time, the Israelites were staying in the wilderness, and time and again they disobeyed God and broke God's commandments. Jesus is staying in the wilderness as well, but he is keeping God's commandments.

When Jesus had taken baptism, God had said to Jesus that he was his dear son. The devil now wants Jesus to prove this. Jesus is very hungry, but the devil says Jesus could just use his power as the son of God to change some stones that were lying about into bread so that he can eat. Jesus refuses to do this.

Jesus then refers to something that took place in this wilderness story of the Israelites, during the time of Moses. The Israelites were hungry and complained to God. God gave them special food-manna-that miraculously came every day. Moses later told the Israelites that God had made the people go hungry so that they would learn that obeying God is more important than food. Food will only give us physical life, but obeying God gives us complete life.

Jesus tells the devil that obeying God is more important than food. This also means that if Jesus had told some stones to become bread, he would have disobeyed God. Using his power for himself was not what God wanted Jesus to do. It was important for Jesus to go through this difficult time.

The devil then tries again. He takes Jesus to the holy city, which is Jerusalem. The city is called holy because God's temple is there, and this is the place where God meets with his people. The devil again asks Jesus to prove that he really is God's son by jumping from the highest point of the temple. If Jesus would jump, he would surely fall dead. But the devil now also quotes something from the Old Testament. He repeats something from Psalm 91. The writer of that psalm expressed great trust in God. He said that if terrible things would happen to people, God would protect them. Angels would support the people, and they would not even get hurt by their foot hitting a stone. So the devil says that if Jesus would jump down, the angels would catch him so that he would not die. Then he would have proven that he was the son of God.

Show your team a picture from the temple in Jerusalem. This temple does no longer exist; it was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 A.D. This picture is what people guess that it would have looked like.

Jesus does not give in. He knows that the devil is using this verse in a wrong way. He again quotes something from the wilderness story of the Israelites. Moses told the Israelites not to test God-this means, not to try out God to see if he would do something, or not.

The devil tries again for the third time. He shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. The devil pretends that he has the power to give all this to Jesus, if Jesus would just kneel down and worship the devil.

Jesus has come to be the king and savior. But he is not a king yet. He first will have to suffer much. The devil pretends that Jesus can become a king now, without going through all the suffering. But the devil is lying, of course. If Jesus would bow down to the devil, Jesus would not be king—the devil would be king.

Jesus responds again by quoting from the wilderness story of the Israelites. God had told the people to worship no one but God himself.

After the third attempt from the devil, Jesus orders the devil to go away. The devil obeys. Jesus calls the devil "Satan." Satan means "enemy."

Satan then leaves. He has not been successful: Jesus has not disobeyed God. Then angels come and take care of Jesus.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus is in the desert, fasting for 40 days.

Second scene: The devil tries to make Jesus disobey God.

Third scene: Angels are attending to Jesus.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- The devil (Satan)
- Angels

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The passage begins with "then." This means, after Jesus had been baptized.

Jesus was already in the wilderness when he was baptized, because John was preaching from the wilderness. But now, Jesus is moving further away to a place that is even more remote. He will be all alone for 40 days. He will not take even the simple food that John ate. The Holy Spirit leads him there. The Holy Spirit is not a visible person. He does not force Jesus, as if he has no choice. But he somehow makes clear to Jesus that God wants him to go deeper into the wilderness.

In the wilderness, it would be hot in the daytime and cold at night. At night, the only light would come from the stars and the moon. There would be wild animals, birds, maybe a hot wind in the daytime. There would have been many rocks that the devil could point to. If someone is very hungry, your sight can trick you. It would be easy to imagine that a stone would actually be a loaf of bread. Imagine that you would have the power to actually make it bread!

The devil takes Jesus to Jerusalem. This probably means that this happened in a vision: not that Jesus really went to Jerusalem.

The temple was a large building and it was very high. If a human would jump from the top, he would be crushed to death on the stone floor at the bottom.

The devil takes Jesus then to a high mountain. The devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. He shows them how important and great these kingdoms are. It is not physically possible to see all the kingdoms of the world from one mountain. The devil gave Jesus visions-almost as if he was showing Jesus a movie.

Show the people a photo showing a panoramic view that one could see from the top of a very high mountain. With clear weather-no fog at all-you can see very far if you are on top of high mountain.

Each time when Jesus answers the devil, his answer begins with the words "it is written." This means that Jesus is referring to words that are in the Hebrew Bible, what we now call the Old Testament. Make sure that your 3 answers of Jesus also have the same words each time, so that it is clear that Jesus is quoting from the Scriptures each time.

The second time that the devil tries to tempt Jesus he also uses these same words: "It is written." It is important that you let the devil use the same words as Jesus did, so that your listeners will recognize that the devil is trying to do the same thing as what Jesus is doing-quoting from Scripture.

As soon as the devil has left, angels come to serve Jesus. They probably gave him food and water. They help him to recover from the 40 days of fasting and from the temptation from the devil. This would give Jesus back his physical strength, so that he could walk back, out from the wilderness and back to the towns and villages.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The Holy Spirit
- The devil (Satan)
- Angels

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

It might be helpful to also act out again Jesus' being baptized, the Holy Spirit coming down on him, and God saying that Jesus was his dear son.

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "How did you feel when this happened?" You may hear things like: "Happy, Encouraged."

Act out Jesus being led by the Holy Spirit deeper into the wilderness and fasting for 40 days.

Stop the action.

Act out the devil trying to tempt Jesus to turn the stones into bread.

Stop the action.

- I am very hungry, but I must be strong.
- I must not give in.
- I must remember what my father wants me to do.
- It is more important to obey God than to have food.
- True life does not happen because of food, but because of obedience to God. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' refusal.

Act out the devil taking Jesus to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the temple, and suggesting that Jesus will jump down.

Stop the action.

- I must not do this, I know I am the son of God, I do not have to prove it.
- God does not want us to test him. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' response to Satan.

Act out the devil taking Jesus to high mountain and showing him all the kingdoms of the world, and telling him that he will give it to him if Jesus will bow down to him.

Stop the action.

- It is not right to skip the suffering that God wants me to go through.
- It would be wrong to bow down before Satan.
- Satan is lying, he has no power to give me anything.
- God has said that we should worship only him. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' response to Satan and telling him to go away.

Stop the action.

- I am angry that I could not get Jesus to disobey God.
- I am frustrated.
- I will try again later sometime. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the devil leaving and angels coming to serve Jesus.

Stop the action.

- Relieved that this is over, grateful.
- So glad that the angels are here with me now!

Ask the actors playing the angels: "how are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- We are so proud of Jesus!
- We are happy that we can take care of him.
- We are so glad that he did not listen to Satan!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus **fasted** for 40 days. Fasting means he took no food. Matthew does not tell us whether or not he took water. There would anyway have been very little water available.

The devil comes to **tempt** Jesus. Tempting means to test. The **devil** is the leader of all evil spirits.

Satan is one of the names for the devil. It means "enemy," and sometimes "someone who accuses."

Discuss with your team how you will translate these 2 different terms. Do you want to use a word that sounds like "devil" and "Satan," or do you want to describe them with a phrase? Do you have a local term for the leader of evil spirits, or the most powerful evil spirit? How would this character be different, or similar, to the meaning in the Bible?

The words Satan and devil are in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Tempter means someone who tempts, or tests someone.

The devil wants Jesus to prove that he is the **Son of God**. That Jesus is the "son" of God means he has a very special relationship with God. It does not mean that God is the father of Jesus in the biological sense, in the way that a human man is the father of a son. When Jesus is called the Son of God it also means that he is the Messiah, the special king and Savior that God had promised to send to save the people.

The phrase Son of God is in the Master Glossary. Use the same phrase that you have used in previous passages.

Bread was common food for the Jews. It is made of grain that was made into flour and baked. A loaf of bread was round and a bit flat.

If needed, show your team a picture of bread.

Jesus' first answer to the devil's temptation is that a person does not just live by eating bread, but by obeying the words that God speaks. If people in your community do not normally eat bread, you can also say food instead of bread.

The **temple** was the most important religious place for the Jews. It was the place where special people called priests made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. The temple was like the house of God. It was the place where people came to pray and to worship God. There was only one temple. It was in Jerusalem. For that reason the city of Jerusalem was called the holy city. **Holy** means that something is set apart and has a special purpose.

The word holy is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

The word temple is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Show the team again a picture of what the temple might have looked like.

Jesus responds to each temptation with the words "**It is written.**" This can be said something like "God's word says," "the Scriptures say," or "God has told us in his book," or "it says in God's book."

Angels come to serve Jesus. Use the same word as you have used for angel in the previous sections. The word angel is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 4:1–11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3302751 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5623711 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 4:12–25

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 4:12–25 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Before this story we heard how Jesus was baptized by John the baptizer. The Holy Spirit had come down on Jesus. Then Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness by himself, fasting. The devil came and tried to make him disobey God, but Jesus remained obedient to God.

Now, Matthew tells us that Jesus heard that John has been put in prison. Matthew does not give us details about this yet, but in some later chapters he will tell us that it was Herod Antipas who arrested John. Herod Antipas was the son of king Herod who had tried to kill Jesus as a baby.

Jesus had grown up in the province called Galilee. Later he had gone to the province Judea to take baptism. After hearing that John the baptizer has been arrested, he goes back to Galilee and begins his work. Now that he is baptized, received the Holy Spirit, and has been tested by the devil, he is ready!

Earlier, Jesus had lived in a small village called Nazareth. After returning from Judea he begins to live in a town called Capernaum. Capernaum was a town next to a big lake, called the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew also calls this the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali. The people of Israel were divided into 12 tribes. Each tribe had a specific part of the country that belonged to them. Zebulun and Naphtali are names of two of the tribes. Capernaum lies in the part that belonged to Naphtali. Nazareth was in the part that belonged to Zebulun. This is important, because Matthew now refers again to something that the prophet Isaiah had said a long time ago. Isaiah had said that there would be trouble and darkness for the people. But then he said that a special king would come, a descendant of Israel's most beloved king David, whom we heard about before. This descendant of David would rule over the people forever. The coming of this king would be like a light for people who so far had been in the dark.

Isaiah is using poetry, a special way of saying something in a more beautiful form. He says the same thing twice, that there is light for the people in darkness, but in slightly different words. This was very common in Jewish poetry. Darkness and light are not referring to physical darkness and light, but to spiritual darkness and light.

Isaiah mentioned especially that the people who would live in Zebulun and Naphtali would see this light. Isaiah gives a lot of details about the place where the people will see this light: He calls it "the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, near the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles." When Isaiah talks about "beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles," he is referring to the area that was east of the Jordan river and of the sea of Galilee. Gentiles is a word that means any person who is not a Jew. Isaiah meant that even the people who would live outside of Israel, and who would not be Jews, would see the light.

Jesus is beginning his work of telling the people about the kingdom of God in the area that belonged to Zebulun and Naphtali. Soon after this, Jesus will also cross the lake and go to the area that Isaiah calls "Galilee of the Gentiles." The official name of this area at the time of Jesus is "Decapolis." Many people who were not Jews but Gentiles live there. The prophecy from Isaiah that there would be a light for the people in the darkness had come true!

Show your team a map. Show where the Judean wilderness is, where Galilee is, and point out Nazareth, Capernaum, and the Sea of Galilee. Point out the area across the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, the "Galilee of the Gentiles."

Jesus is telling the people that they have to repent. This means they should stop doing bad things and instead behave the way that God wants them to behave. This is now especially important, because the kingdom of God has come near. That the kingdom has come near means that God has begun to rule over the people. This was the same message that John the baptizer was giving earlier. God is ruling over the people, so people should start behaving the way members of God's kingdom should behave!

Pause

The people who lived around the Sea of Galilee used the lake for fishing. Fishermen would take a boat and row or sail to deeper water and then throw out nets. Fish would swim into the nets and the fishermen would pull the nets back inside the boat. Or, the fishermen would walk into the water and throw out a net from there.

Show your team a picture of a fishing boat in the water.

[!action] Show a picture of people fishing with a net. If needed, show a picture of a pile of fish.

When Jesus is walking on the shore of the water he calls Simon and Andrew to follow him. He says he will make them fishers of men. Simon and Andrew are now catching fish. Instead, Jesus will make them catch people. Not with a net, but by telling them about the kingdom of God. Jesus is telling them that he wants them to become his followers, and that they will make other people become Jesus' followers as well.

Jesus calls Simon and his brother Andrew to follow him. Matthew calls Simon, "Simon who is called Peter." Simon was not yet called Peter at this time. Later, Jesus will give him the name Peter. Matthew gives this information already now so that his readers know that this is the same person that they know as Peter.

James and John are preparing their nets. People made nets with strong, thin threads and knotted them together. The threads would often break, and then the fishermen would fix the nets by adding new threads and knots. James and John might have been checking the nets, or they might have been repairing them.

When Jesus calls these men to follow him, they obey immediately. They leave their old life of being fishermen behind, and they become followers, disciples, of Jesus. They will go where Jesus goes, learn from him, and learn to do what he wants.

In your community, what is the relationship between a teacher and his students? Can you tell a story about students "following" a teacher? Or, can you tell a story about a "teacher," who is going around to teach people, and who collects followers?

Jesus travels through the whole of Galilee and teaches in the synagogues. Synagogues were buildings where Jewish people gathered together to pray and to study the laws of God. Often there would be a teacher who would read something from the Scriptures and then explain it to people. This probably was what Jesus was doing. Jesus was also preaching—that means telling—the people good news. The good news was that God's kingdom was near! God's rule over the people was beginning. Everything that God had spoken about in the Scriptures was going to come true.

Jesus also heals people. This proves that the things that he says are really true. It shows that Jesus has authority.

When people find out that Jesus is able to heal people, they take sick people to Jesus so that he can heal them. Matthew mentions a variety of illnesses. This does not mean that Jesus only healed these illnesses. These are just examples. He healed people who were suffering from any kind of illness, injury, or handicap. He also healed people who were possessed by demons. This means that evil spirits were controlling these people and made them sick or made them behave in a strange way. Jesus made these evil spirits go away.

Jesus is traveling through Galilee, but the news about what he is doing is spreading to other places. By Syria, Matthew probably means the area that was north of Galilee. Decapolis is the name for the area to the east of Galilee. People are also coming to see Jesus from Judea and from Jerusalem, the capital city that was in Judea.

If it is helpful, look at the map again where these places might be.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 parts.

The first part, where Jesus goes to Galilee, has 2 scenes:

First scene: Jesus hears that John is put in prison and goes to Galilee.

Second scene: Jesus begins to preach.

The second part, where Jesus calls his first disciples, has 2 scenes:

First scene: Jesus calls Peter and Andrew.

Second scene: Jesus calls James and John.

The third part, where Jesus is preaching in Galilee and healing many people, has one scene.

The characters in this story include:

- John the baptizer
- Jesus
- Isaiah
- The people living in Zebulun and Naphtali
- Simon called Peter
- Simon's brother Andrew
- James
- John, the brother of James
- Their father Zebedee
- The crowds coming to Jesus, including sick people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Matthew mentions only very casually that John has been put in prison. He does this because the story is about Jesus, not about John. In your language, maybe you have to first say that John is being put in prison, and then that Jesus hears about it.

Matthew does not tell us *when* John was put in prison. Maybe it happened during the time that Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days, or maybe it happened right after that. It could be that Jesus hears this news right after he comes back from spending 40 days in the wilderness.

So immediately, or very soon after, being alone in the wilderness Jesus travels back to Galilee. This would mean a couple of days walking. Jesus first goes to Nazareth, which is where his family still is, but then goes to Capernaum. He begins to live there. Capernaum is a much bigger town than Nazareth. Many people come and go through Capernaum. It is a good place to start teaching.

Simon and Andrew, and John and James, are fishermen. Fish was an important food for the people in Israel. These four men probably did good business. Simon and Andrew are throwing out their nets in the sea. Maybe they were sitting in a boat a little bit out from the edge of the water, and Jesus called out to them. Or maybe they were throwing their net while standing in the water. People would usually fish when it was dark. Maybe Jesus met them in the evening, or early morning.

James and John are in a boat. A fishing boat was about 8 meters long and 2 1/2 meters wide. It was about 1 1/4 meters deep. It could fit about thirteen people.

Show your translators the photo of the boat and choose a way to show the size of the boat, perhaps by drawing the dimensions on the ground with a stick and asking people to step inside the drawn lines.

We do not know if these four men were the only people there at this time. It is possible that there were other people fishing and working at the same time, in different boats.

Matthew says that these four people *immediately* leave their work behind. The net that Simon and Andrew are using is left behind on the shore, and the father of James and John stays behind in the boat with the nets that still need repairing!

After calling these people to follow him, Jesus begins to travel throughout Galilee. He goes from village to village and preaches in the synagogues. Each village had a synagogue. Bigger towns would have several. After some

time, people begin to hear about him and are coming to see him from all over the place. It would take an effort for people to carry sick people to Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 parts.

The **first part** has 2 scenes.

The **second part** has 2 scenes.

The **third part** has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- John the baptizer
- Jesus
- Isaiah
- The people living in Zebulun and Naphtali
- Simon called Peter
- Simon's brother Andrew
- James
- John, the brother of James
- Their father Zebedee
- The crowds coming to Jesus, including sick people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus hearing that John had been put in prison. If you want, you can first act out that John was arrested and taken to prison.

Stop the action.

- Sad,
- I know now is the time for me to start my work. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus traveling throughout Galilee and preaching.

In the background, act out the prophet Isaiah speaking his text.

Act out Jesus walking along the lake and calling Simon and Andrew.

There might have been baskets filled with fish standing on the shore, ready to be taken to the market. Can you imagine what Jesus would have smelled? Could there have been wind blowing in Jesus' hair, might he have

walked with bare feet in the sand, or maybe with his feet in the water? What might Jesus have seen as he was looking out over the lake?

Stop the action.

- Surprised,
- Excited,
- Eager,
- Why us?
- What does it mean to catch people instead of fish?

Act out Jesus calling James and John.

Stop the action.

- Excited,
- Curious,
- What about our father?

Ask the actor playing the father of James and John: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Shocked,
- Upset,
- Surprised. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus traveling throughout Galilee and preaching.

Act out people bringing sick people to him. Act out Jesus healing them. Act out people telling other people about Jesus. Act out more and more people coming to see Jesus.

Stop the action.

- Happy,
- Encouraged,
- Relieved,
- Could Jesus be the promised king?
- I am glad that God's kingdom is coming.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus was walking along the side of the Sea of Galilee in this story. This lake is about 21 kilometers long and 10 kilometers wide. Its deepest point is 67 meters—very deep! Many people used it to fish and make a living.

Show a picture again if needed. Discuss what word you would use for this body of water. If you already translated some other Gospels, use the same word as you have used there.

Isaiah talks about the land of Zebulun and Naphtali: "**the way by the sea**." Different translations say this in different ways. You can translate this in a way so that it means that the land of Zebulun and Naphtali is near the sea. "The sea" means the Sea of Galilee.

Isaiah talks about "Galilee of the **Gentiles**." This area is not the same as Galilee. He is using this phrase to mean a place that belongs to Gentiles. Gentiles is a word that just means "people." But when Jewish people were using

this word, they meant "everybody who is not a Jew." The Jews were the chosen people of God, and anybody who was not a Jew was an outsider. Jews looked down on people who were not Jews. But God had chosen the Jews to be his special people, *in order that* they could be a blessing to *all* the people.

Discuss how you want to say "Gentiles" in your language. The word will be used many more times in the New Testament. Maybe you can say something like "people who were not Jews."

If you already used this word in another passage, be sure you use the same word. The word Gentiles is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells the people they have to **repent**. Use the same word as you have used in earlier stories. The word repent is in the Master Glossary.

Kingdom of heaven: This means the kingdom of God. Use the same word as you have used in earlier stories. The word kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus then meets **James the son of Zebedee** and his brother **John**. James and John are brothers, and they are both sons of Zebedee. Think about what would be the most natural way to say this in your language.

Jesus says he will make them **fishers of men**. This means fishers who catch men. It should not sound bad, as if Simon and Andrew will catch people against their will. It should be clear that just as they have been gathering fish, they will now be gathering people.

Jesus called them to **follow him**. This means he invited them to come with him.

Jesus is teaching in the **synagogues** and **preaching** the **gospel** of the kingdom.

The word gospel means literally "good news." Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Preaching means telling people something important, with the hope that people will believe what you say and will change their thinking or their behavior because of what you say.

Synagogues were buildings where Jewish people gathered together to pray, to worship God, and to study the Scriptures. People did this especially on the Sabbath, which was the name for the seventh day of the week. Synagogues often functioned as a meeting place for the people in the community, and as a school. It was also a place to hear court cases. A synagogue is different from the temple. There was only one temple, in Jerusalem, but there were many synagogues. Another important difference is that in a synagogue people did not do sacrifices and there were no priests. Sacrifices only happened in the temple. The temple was a very large building; a synagogue could be just small. The word for synagogue is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Show your team a picture of what a synagogue might have looked like inside and outside.

People came to Jesus with sick people. They have all kinds of illnesses and physical problems. Some people suffered from **seizures**. This means that they sometimes become unconscious, fall down, and that their body begins to shake violently. A person who has seizures can hurt himself badly, and it can be difficult for them to lead a normal life.

A person who is **paralyzed** is unable to walk.

A person who has a **demon** is controlled by an evil spirit. This makes the person sick, or it makes the person behave in a strange way. The word demon is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Discuss the best way to translate this list of illnesses. It should not sound as if Jesus only healed people who had these particular illnesses, and no others.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 4:12-25

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2726577 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4682899 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:1-12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:1-12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus has chosen many of his disciples, or those who will follow him everywhere he goes. Large crowds also follow Jesus to hear him teach. Now, Jesus takes aside those who are committed to him and teaches them more about what life in God's Kingdom will be like. This is a guide for a believer's life with God. This part of Jesus' teaching shows us how Jesus' followers are different from others.

The same crowd of people who had followed Jesus was still present. Jesus saw them and went up on a small mountain or hill. Jesus may have been trying to escape the crowd following him. Scholars do not know exactly which mountain or hill he was on, but it was a mountain or hill near the Sea of Galilee.

Stop and show a photo of a mountain from the region of Galilee.

Jesus sat down on the mountain, which was how teachers commonly taught their disciples at that time. Jesus was primarily teaching his disciples, but the crowd of people was also listening to Jesus teach.

How do teachers or religious leaders in your culture teach a group of people? Tell a story about a time you listened to an important teacher, elder, or religious teacher teach you something. Where were you? Describe what the teacher did and what the people did.

Then, "Jesus opened his mouth," which means that Jesus started to teach his disciples. This section is the first part of Jesus' teaching. In this section, Jesus talks about the characteristics of his followers. His followers are "blessed," or "favored," by God. This does not mean that they are wealthy or have good health, but that God is pleased with them and they are satisfied with God.

In your culture, how do you describe a person who is blessed or satisfied? Describe a person you know who is blessed or satisfied.

The sayings were each short and easy to remember. The sayings are like proverbs. The Jewish religious leaders often taught using short sayings, so the crowd was used to this. For each saying, Jesus says that if a follower has this characteristic, they are "blessed."

First, Jesus said that people who are "poor in spirit" are blessed. "Poor in spirit" means people who know that they need God. "Poor in spirit" does not mean people who don't have money. Every person does need God, but not everyone says they need God. Jesus is saying that people who know their spiritual need for God are blessed or happy. The *reason* they are happy is because they belong to God's kingdom. They have a relationship with God.

Next, Jesus describes those who mourn, which means those who are sad and grieving. This is not just mourning over the death of a family member or being sad because of bad things that happen. This is general sadness as a part of the life of a follower of Jesus. Jesus says that this kind of person actually is blessed, or happy, *because* they will be comforted. The first two sayings are both similar to a message the prophet Isaiah spoke to God's people in the Old Testament. Isaiah's message to God's people was God will comfort his people.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team what situations cause you mourning, grief, or sadness. Tell a story about a time you mourned or someone you know experienced grief or sadness.

In the next saying, Jesus says humble people trust God rather than their own power. Jesus says humble people are happy or blessed *because* God will give them the whole earth. This means they will enjoy all the blessings God has in heaven and on earth.

Then, Jesus says that blessed people are those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness. This means that they want a right relationship with God in the same way people want food and drink. This is not literal hunger, but a way to describe how much they seek God in their lives. Jesus says that they are blessed or happy *because* God will fill them up the same way a person is satisfied after they eat and drink enough. At that time, people used the same word in the original language to talk about fattening animals. Jesus says that God will fill up people who want to do what is right.

The next saying is that people who are merciful are happy or blessed *because* they will receive mercy from God. A merciful person is sad over someone else's problem, and wants to help them and show kindness to them.

Then Jesus says that people who have a pure heart are blessed *because* they will see God. In the Jewish book of Psalms, God said that only those with a pure heart could come into God's presence. Someone with a pure heart is someone who only wants to please God and serve him loyally. This kind of person will see God in heaven.

Stop here and discuss in your culture someone who is clean or pure.

Next, Jesus describes people who work for peace between other people. People who bring together others who have conflicts or problems with each other are blessed *because* God will call them his children. This means peacemakers will belong to God's family in the same way a father and his children are in a family together.

In the last saying, Jesus says that people will treat his followers badly because his followers do what is good and right-they follow Jesus. His followers are blessed *because* they belong to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus repeats "kingdom of heaven" here to show the end of this set of sayings.

Now, Jesus tells his disciples that even now they can experience God's blessing when people say evil things about them. Even now they can have joy because they know that God will give them a reward when they enter heaven. And Jesus' disciples are not alone-people also persecuted the prophets from long ago.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus sees the crowds following him. Jesus goes up on a mountain and sits down to teach his close followers. This is the beginning of a long, important teaching from Jesus.

Second scene: Jesus teaches his close followers eight short sayings about what kind of people are blessed by God.

Third scene: Jesus focuses on the rewards his disciples will receive even now when they suffer for doing the right thing.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowd of people
- The close followers of Jesus, or disciples of Jesus
- God
- God's people, who are the people who are blessed
- People who make God's people suffer

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember the crowd at the beginning of this story is the same crowd who was following Jesus for healing and teaching. Jesus sees this crowd, goes up a mountain, and sits down on the mountain to teach his close followers. The crowd also listens.

It is important for the close followers of Jesus to sit closer to Jesus on the mountain. Jesus is speaking primarily to them, but the crowd is also there.

Jesus is about to begin a long, important teaching. Jesus teaches his disciples and the crowd how to be more like God. It is good to remember that it is not a list of things to do right. This teaching is a guide to life for people who want to follow God completely.

The second scene begins when Jesus starts to teach his followers. As Jesus shares eight important sayings, it is important to know that each saying is surprising and probably the opposite of what the disciples expected. Choose a natural way in your language to show that a new section is starting here, and that Jesus is starting to teach. In the original language, each of the eight sayings begin with "blessed." Jesus did this to help the listeners remember the sayings. It is good to think about how you express a list of important truths in your culture. What do you do in order to help people remember a list?

It is important to remember that each saying has two parts. The first part tells what kind of person is blessed and the second part tells *how* they are blessed. For example, in the first saying, Jesus says that people who know they need God are blessed *because* they belong to the kingdom of God.

It is important to remember the people described in these eight sayings are not blessed for being good people. They are humble and sad, they need God, they are hungry for doing what is good, they show kindness to others, they are loyal to God, they work for peace for others, and they suffer for doing what is good. Each of these ideas describes God's people and what they are like.

In the first saying, it would be good to show that God has a relationship with his people who need him. Next, it is important to show that God comforts his people.

Then, think about how you can show someone is humble, meek, and gentle. In the next saying, remember that Jesus does not say God's people have literal hunger and thirst. It might be helpful to show hungry and thirsty people to remember how much God's people want to know God.

Next, it is important to remember that God is the one who will have compassion on merciful or kind people. Then, Jesus talks about people who have pure hearts. Remember that in the Old Testament, God required pure hearts to enter his presence.

Jesus says in the next saying his followers work for peace. They are blessed for being like God *because* God will call them his children.

The last saying about suffering for doing what is good is important. This saying repeats "doing what is good" like in the saying before about being hungry and thirsty for "doing what is good." Jesus also repeats the "kingdom of heaven" again like in the first saying about the "poor in spirit."

For the third and final scene, Jesus now talks directly to his disciples. Jesus says "rejoice" and "be glad" when people persecute you. Jesus uses two strong words for happiness to emphasize that we should be very happy.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowd of people
- The close followers of Jesus, or disciples of Jesus
- God
- The people who are blessed
- People who make God's people suffer

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Make sure the team acts out Jesus seeing the crowds following him. Then, Jesus should walk up the mountain. Make sure his close followers sit closer to him to listen to the teaching. The crowd is also sitting nearby on the mountain to listen.

Stop the action.

- Excited to hear what Jesus will say,
- Tired from walking, and
- Annoyed at the crowds following Jesus [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus starts speaking and everyone is listening to him. As your team acts out each of the eight sayings, remember to have one person or a few people play the role of the people who are blessed. First, Jesus talks about a person who knows they need God. God shows his blessing to this person by bringing them into the kingdom of God.

Stop the action.

- Happy to be in God's Kingdom,
- At home, and
- Surprised God welcomed me. [!end] Restart the action.

When the blessed people are sad and mourning, show that God comes to comfort them. Think about how you can show God comforting his people.

For the next saying, Jesus says that God blesses humble people because God will give them the whole earth. Next, make sure your team acts out people who are eager to have a right relationship with God just like hungry and thirsty people are eager for food and drink.

Stop the action.

- Hungry for God,
- Satisfied, and
- Completely full in my heart. [!end] Restart the action.

For the next saying, God's people are blessed because they receive mercy from God. Then, Jesus says the people who are blessed have pure hearts. They are blessed because they will see God.

Stop the action.

- Shocked that people can see God,
- Confused, and
- Wondering how to have a pure heart. [!end] Restart the action.

In the next saying, Jesus says the people who work for peace are blessed. They are blessed because God calls them his children.

Stop the action.

- Proud of my children,
- Glad my children are working for peace, and
- Happy. [!end] Restart the action.

For the last saying, Jesus says the people who are blessed suffer for doing good. They are blessed because they belong to the kingdom of heaven.

For the last scene, make sure your translation team acts out the suffering that God's people have. Also, make sure that the actor playing Jesus talks directly to his close followers on the mountain for this part. Jesus says his followers should be very happy when they suffer for doing what is good.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like

- Proud my followers are doing good,
- Sad my followers are suffering, and
- Compassion on my followers. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus finishes this section of the teaching by saying his followers are like the prophets from the past because the prophets also suffered for doing what is good. These prophets spoke messages from God.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus went up the mountain and his **disciples**, or **followers**, came to him. Jesus had recently chosen these close followers. Make sure to choose a natural way in your language to show that the disciples followed Jesus and obeyed him, and did not just learn like students in a classroom. Translate "disciple" in the same way you've translated it before. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word disciple.

Jesus teaches using sayings. In each saying, Jesus says what kind of person is **blessed**, or favored by God. "Blessing" refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of bless.

In the first saying, Jesus talks about the **kingdom of heaven**. **Heaven** is the place where God lives. The kingdom of heaven is about God ruling in the hearts of his people rather than a physical place. You will remember the phrase "kingdom of heaven" from several previous passages. Translate the phrase the same here. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase kingdom of heaven.

For the saying about people who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, Jesus is referring to people who do what is right. This should be translated the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word righteousness.

Jesus then says the merciful are happy because they will receive mercy from God. To show **mercy** is to show compassion for those suffering or in need. God is the one who shows compassion to his people. Translate "mercy" in the same way as you have before, and remember that mercy is in the Master Glossary.

Next, Jesus says the **pure in heart** will see God. "Pure in heart" means someone who truly wants to please God. For the Jewish listeners, the heart was where a person's feelings and emotions are. In your language, think of what word describes your inner life, insides, or place of feeling and emotion.

Peacemakers are blessed because God calls them his children. Someone who works for **peace** is someone who sees conflicts or problems between other people and tries to make a solution. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of peace.

The last saying is that those who follow God will have **persecution**. This means that others will hurt God's people or cause them to suffer. This kind of suffering could be physical suffering or suffering from not having money.

Jesus says God will **reward** his people for their suffering. This reward is a special gift from God that he gives his people in heaven.

Jesus compares the suffering his disciples have with the suffering that God's **prophets**, or messengers, had in the Old Testament from people living during their time. People listening to Jesus were familiar with the persecution of the prophets. The prophets in the Old Testament spoke messages from God. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of the word prophet.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3479538 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5838174 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:13–16

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:13–16 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside to teach his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus has just finished teaching a group of sayings about the kind of people who are blessed by God, and how God blesses them. Now, Jesus talks about how his followers should be different than those around them. Jesus uses salt and light to describe how his followers should be different.

Jesus says that his disciples are like salt for all the people on the earth. People used salt to improve the flavor of food or to preserve food from spoiling. Some people think Jesus meant his disciples should improve the world they live in. Other people think Jesus meant his disciples should preserve the world, meaning his disciples should keep the world from becoming bad. Both meanings are helpful to think about.

Stop and talk about a time you or someone you know cooked some food with salt or other spices. Also, talk about a time you or someone you know used salt to preserve some meat or other food. How did the food taste? Then, talk

about a time when you ate food with no salt or food that was spoiled. What did the unsalted or spoiled food taste like?

Jesus asks how people can use salt that loses its strength. Useless salt loses its strength, and gets mixed with other things so that it no longer tastes like salt. Salt that is weak and not useful cannot become strong again.

Jesus says people will throw the useless salt outside, and then other people will walk on it in the same way they walk on trash on the road or path. Jesus is comparing the useless salt to useless disciples who are not different from the world around them.

Next, Jesus says that his disciples are like light for all the people in the world to see. Light is a common way Jesus describes the new kind of life his followers should have in the dark, or evil world around them.

Jesus compares his followers to a city on a hill that people would notice easily. No one can hide a city on a hill because a city on a hill would have many lights at night. "No one can hide a city on a hill" was likely a common saying at that time. Everyone around the hill would be able to see the city easily. In the same way, no one can hide a group of disciples of Jesus. The world should be able to see Jesus' disciples easily.

Stop and talk about a time when you saw a city or town at night from far away. Describe what it looked like. What kind of lights did you see?

Next, Jesus says people do not light a lamp and then put it under a basket or bowl in their house. This kind of lamp was a small, clay bowl of oil with a wick. People lit the lamp to give light for the house. Many homes had only one room, so one lamp could give light to the whole house.

Stop and show a photo of a lamp.

Jesus says people do not put a lamp under a basket or a bowl. Make sure the word you choose for basket or bowl is a large container and that no light can come through it. Jesus means it would be useless to light a lamp for the house and then immediately hide it under something.

Stop and show a photo of a basket/bowl.

Instead of hiding the lamp, people light the lamp and put it on a wooden, metal, or stone stand so everyone in the house can see it. The lamp was high up so it could give more light.

Stop and show a photo of a lampstand.

Stop and talk about a time when you needed to see at night. What kind of lamp or light did you use? Tell what you did with the light. What would have happened if you didn't have the light?

Now, Jesus says that his disciples should be like a lamp that gives light to everyone in the house. Jesus' disciples shine their light by being the kind of people Jesus described before as blessed by God. The disciples should live this way so everyone can see them. God blesses people who show they need God, are humble and sad, and are hungry for doing what is good.

When Jesus' followers live this way, people easily see them. The goal of this new way of living is not so other people will try and be like the disciples. Jesus says the goal is for people to glorify, or praise and honor their Father in heaven.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus says that his disciples are like salt for the world.

Second scene: Jesus says his disciples are like light for the world. His disciples are like a city on a hill or a lamp on a stand. No one can hide their light.

The characters in this story include:

- Disciples of Jesus
- People in the world
- A person lighting a lamp
- People in a house
- God

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples and the crowd on the same mountainside. He started by teaching them important sayings about people that God blesses, and now Jesus continues teaching about how his disciples should be different than people around them.

In the first scene, Jesus says his disciples are like salt. Remember that salt is used for flavoring food and preserving food. Think of how you can show that the disciples of Jesus are like salt for all the people in the world.

Then, Jesus makes a **contrast** between salt that is useful and salt that is not useful. You should choose a natural way in your language to show a contrast here between good salt and useless salt. Jesus says the useless salt is not good for anything. It is important to remember the salt is not useful out on the path either. People walk on the useless salt in the same way they walk on trash.

In the second scene, Jesus starts a new section by comparing his disciples to light. First, Jesus says that his disciples are light for all the people in the world. Then, Jesus compares his disciples to a city on a hill and a lamp on a stand.

It is important that Jesus' disciples should be a light for all the people on the earth. Think about how you will show a city built on a hill. People should easily see the city and notice it. No one builds a city on a hill and then hides it. It is impossible to hide it.

It is important to remember Jesus says people also do not light a lamp and hide it. The purpose of lighting a lamp is to give light. Remember that if a basket is hiding the lamp, no light shines through the basket at all.

Jesus compares a person who hides a light with someone who does not hide the light. Remember that the person lights the lamp this time and puts it in a high place in the room so everyone can see well, even in the dark.

In the last part of the scene, Jesus says his followers should be like this lamp that helps everyone see. It is important to remember that the purpose of shining like a lamp is not for other people to be like the disciples. The purpose is so that other people want to praise and honor God who lives in heaven.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus says that his disciples are like salt for the world.

Second scene: Jesus says his disciples are like light for the world. His disciples are like a city on a hill or a lamp on a stand. No one can hide their light.

The characters in this story include:

- Disciples of Jesus
- People in the world
- A person lighting a lamp
- People in a house
- God

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus starts by telling his disciples that they are like salt for the world. Try to act out the disciples living like salt among all the people in the world.

Stop the action.

- Interested in this new way of "salty" life,
- Curious, and
- Confused about why these people are acting this way.

Also ask the actors playing the disciples, "What kinds of things are the disciples living like salt doing?" You may hear things like:

- Loving others,
- Being kind, and
- Sacrificing for others. [!end] Restart the action.

Then, Jesus says salt that is not salty is not useful, and people will throw it out like they get rid of trash. Jesus compares his disciples to the salt that is not useful and loses its strength.

Stop the action.

- Disappointed that I lost my saltiness,
- Sad for not being useful, and
- Useless. [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jesus compares his followers to light. People should see Jesus' disciples clearly because no one can hide them in the same way no one hides a city on a hill. The city is bright with lights at night.

Stop the action.

- Bright,
- Glad to shine like Jesus, and
- Unable to be hidden. [!end] Restart the action.

Next, Jesus says people also do not light a lamp and then immediately hide it under a basket or bowl. Light a lamp or another light that is common in your culture to visualize this part of the story. Then, cover it with a large basket or bowl.

Stop the action.

- I can't see anything,
- I feel like I'm living in darkness, and
- Frustrated at the person who hid the light. [!end] Restart the action.

Light the same lamp or light again and then put it in a place so everyone in the room can see it.

Stop the action.

- I can see finally,
- Relieved, and
- Glad that the light isn't hidden anymore. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says his disciples should be like this lamp that helps everyone see in the house. When his disciples shine like this lamp to all the people in the world, people will see them and praise and honor God in heaven.

Stop the action.

- Proud of my children,
- Glad my children are shining, and
- Pleased with my children.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus teaches his **disciples** on the mountainside. His disciples are close followers who went with Jesus everywhere and obeyed him. Translate the same way you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a complete definition of the word disciple.

Jesus says his disciples are like salt for the earth, meaning for all the people living on the earth. People often used salt for improving the flavor of food or for preserving food. Jesus wanted his disciples to preserve the world from evil and to improve it. Jesus did not tell religious leaders to be like salt. Jesus told his ordinary followers they are like salt.

Jesus asks, "If salt loses its taste, how will it be made salty again?" Jesus does not want an answer to this question. Jesus uses a question to show it is impossible to change bad salt to good salt again.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of statement?

When salt loses its strength, it is useless. The word for "loses its strength" can also be translated "become foolish." Some people think Jesus warned his disciples to not "become foolish." It is more common to translate it as "salt that no longer does what salt should do" or "salt that loses its strength."

Jesus says his disciples are like **light** for the whole world, meaning all people everywhere. Translate "light" the same as you have previously. Light helps people in darkness find the way. Jesus means that his disciples help people in darkness. Jesus' disciples live like Jesus in a spiritually dark world.

No one can hide a city on a hill, and no one can hide the disciples of Jesus. Jesus compares his disciples to a lamp that shines for everyone to see. No one lights a lamp and hides it under a basket.

Stop and show the photos of the lamp, the basket or bowl, and the lampstand again if needed.

Jesus says people light a lamp and put it on a stand so everyone can see. In the same way, Jesus says his disciples should shine for people to see them. People should see the **good deeds** or **good works** of the disciples. This means people should see Jesus' disciples living differently than the world around them. Jesus' disciples should

be kind, merciful, needy for God, and they should want a right relationship with God in the same way people want food and drink.

When people see the disciples' good deeds, they should **glorify**, or praise and honor, God. "Glorify" means to speak well about someone or to give them honor. See the Master Glossary for a complete definition of the word glorify. The disciples are not doing good works in order to make people think they are great. They are doing good works to show that God is great.

Jesus says people should give praise or honor to their Father. Jesus calls God their "heavenly Father," meaning God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this.

Heaven can refer to the sky or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:13-16

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3003544 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5061381 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:17-26

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:17–26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside to teach his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus has just finished teaching about how his followers should be different from those around them. Now, Jesus teaches about how his disciples should live the right way.

Jesus is about to teach some important and unexpected ways his disciples should follow the law. Jesus says his disciples should not think that he came to the world to say people don't need to obey the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets anymore. It is possible that some people thought Jesus was trying to go against the law. The disciples should remember during this teaching that Jesus is not trying to destroy the law.

Jesus says he came to fulfill the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets and not to make the law useless. "Fulfill" means that Jesus made the prophecies of the Scriptures come true. It also means Jesus helped people understand what the true meaning of the law was. The true meaning was about more than just obeying the rules, but about having a right attitude in the heart.

Then, Jesus says, "I tell you the truth" to emphasize what he will say next. Jesus says this when he wants his disciples to listen closely because the next teaching is very important.

Jesus says that not even the smallest part or detail of the law will disappear as long as heaven and earth last. "As long as heaven and earth last" is another way to say "until the world ends." "Heaven" means the sky and not the place where God lives. Jesus also says not even the smallest part or detail of God's law will disappear until all things happen. "All things happen" could mean the end of the world, or it could mean until every prophecy comes true and every commandment is completed.

Jesus next talks about people who disobey the least important parts of God's law, or who teach other people to disobey the least important parts of God's law. Jesus says that God will call these people the least important in

the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says God will highly honor people who obey God's law and teach others to obey God's law.

Jesus now says "I tell you" to emphasize his next statement. This is the most important part of this section of his teaching. Jesus says unless people are righteous, or unless they do what is right more than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, they can't be a part of the kingdom of heaven. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law followed the laws very closely. Jesus means that for a person to be righteous, they have to do more than follow all of God's laws perfectly.

Next, Jesus teaches six important ways that his disciples should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus knows his disciples are familiar with God's laws. First, Jesus reminds them of the law "do not murder people" that is in Moses' law. "Murder" does not mean killing someone by accident. "Murder" means killing someone unlawfully. Jesus reminds them that God will judge people who murder other people.

Then, Jesus gives them a new teaching about murder. Jesus talks about three situations where a person's attitude in his heart can be just as bad as murdering someone. Jesus says even if his disciples are angry with their brother, God will judge them for their anger. Here, brother means a fellow disciple and not a brother by blood. The disciples had never heard someone teach that anger deserves judgment.

Next, Jesus says if anyone insults their brother, the Sanhedrin will judge them. The word in the original language for "insult" means to call someone "empty-headed" or "worthless." The Sanhedrin was the highest court for the Jews. No court at that time normally would judge someone for an insult.

Finally, Jesus says if one of the disciples calls his brother "a worthless fool," they will go to the fires of hell. This insult was stronger than calling someone "empty-headed" or "worthless." The fires of hell is a place where God eternally punishes people who don't follow God.

Jesus tells a story to show how seriously his disciples should take a conflict with another disciple. Jesus describes a disciple offering a gift at the altar. The altar was a bronze table where people gave gifts to God. The gifts could be animals, grain, or something else. Jesus probably was talking about the altar in front of the temple in Jerusalem.

Stop and show a drawing or photo of the altar.

Jesus says if this disciple remembers a problem or conflict with a brother, the disciple must leave his gift and go "be reconciled" with his brother. "Be reconciled" means to make peace with someone and have a right relationship with each other. Most people lived far from Jerusalem, so it may have been a week's journey to return home to make peace with the brother. Then after making peace, the disciple could return to the altar and offer his gift to God.

Stop and describe a time when you had a conflict with someone. How did you make peace with this person? What are some of the ways people "make peace" with one another in your culture?

Then Jesus tells a short story to show how important it is to be reconciled quickly with an enemy. Jesus describes an enemy who accuses a disciple of something. Jesus says if this happens, the disciple should settle the problem quickly on the way to the court. In a court, an accuser and an accused person talk to a judge about a problem they have with each other. Then, the judge decides how to resolve the problem. Sometimes, the judge requires the person to pay money to the accuser, and sometimes the judge sends the person to prison.

Jesus says if the disciple does not settle the problem quickly, the accuser will give the disciple to the judge. Then the judge will give the disciple to the person in charge of prisoners, and the disciple will go to prison. Jesus says the disciple will stay in prison until he pays even the smallest coin of what he owes. This means the disciple will pay everything he owes.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches about how he came to fulfill or complete the law. He says his disciples need to be more righteous than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

Second scene: Jesus gives a new teaching about murder. Jesus says someone who is angry with his brother also deserves judgment from God. Jesus gives two stories as examples of how important it is to make peace with others. One story is about a conflict with a brother and one story is about a conflict with an enemy.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The teachers of the law
- Pharisees
- A brother who has a problem with a disciple
- An enemy

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He has taught them important sayings about who God blesses and about how the disciples should be different from people around them. Now, Jesus teaches about the law.

In the first scene, it is good to know Jesus did not want his disciples to stop following the law. Jesus wanted to show how he made the prophecies come true in the law and the prophets. Jesus also wanted them to see that now people could understand the true meaning of the law.

It is important to know that Jesus uses the phrase "I tell you the truth" to emphasize that none of the law would disappear until all things happen. He knew that this new teaching about the law would be surprising to the disciples, and he wanted them to pay attention.

All of the law is valuable and Jesus did not want to destroy it. Because Jesus knew that people needed to obey God's law and follow it, Jesus says disobedient people will be least important in the kingdom of heaven, and that God will highly honor obedient people.

It is important to remember that Jesus also emphasized the next statement. He said "I tell you," to show how important it was for his disciples to be more righteous, or do what is right more than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Remember that the Pharisees and the teachers of the law obeyed God's law and taught other people to do this too.

It is important to remember that Jesus warned against two problems about the law. Jesus did not want people to stop following the law, and Jesus also did not want people to focus only on following the law. Jesus was showing the disciples that being righteous, or doing what is right, is more than following laws.

In the second scene, Jesus teaches the disciples about murder. Jesus shows them that God will judge someone for being angry at another disciple. Being angry at someone deserves punishment the same as killing someone deserves punishment.

It is important to see that God does not care only about our actions to our brothers, but also our attitudes. Jesus tells three ways the disciples should be careful not to be angry against their brothers. The three ways are a disciple being angry against another brother, a disciple insulting a brother, and a disciple calling a brother an even stronger insult. Jesus does not tell these in increasing strength of the problem. Jesus says the last person who insults a brother by calling them "a worthless fool" deserves the fires of hell. Jesus says this to shock the disciples and show them how seriously God looks at our attitudes towards our brothers.

It is important to remember Jesus gives two examples that show how important God sees right relationships. Jesus starts to speak directly to his disciples and says, "If you offer a gift at the altar and remember your brother is angry with you..." It's good to know that the disciple did not put the gift on the altar yet. Jesus said the disciple

should leave the gift at the altar, travel to make peace with his brother, and then return to offer the gift to God. It is important to remember Jesus tells this short story as an example of how serious the disciples should be in having right relationships with each other.

Finally, the last part of the second scene is the second story about making peace with an enemy. It is important to remember Jesus is not giving advice about courts. Jesus is showing how necessary it is to be in a right relationship with people, even an enemy. Jesus repeats "I tell you the truth" to show again how important it is to make peace with people. Jesus is talking about human relationships, and also he means that God will judge people who do not make peace with one another.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches about how he came to fulfill or complete the law. He says his disciples need to be more righteous than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

Second scene: Jesus gives a new teaching about murder. Jesus says someone who is angry with his brother also deserves judgment from God. Jesus gives two stories as examples of how important it is to make peace with others. One story is about a conflict with a brother and one story is about a conflict with an enemy.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The teachers of the law
- Pharisees
- Two people in a conflict: the disciple and the brother
- An enemy

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. Jesus tells them not to think that they should stop following the law and the teachings of the prophets. Jesus wants them to continue to obey the law of Moses. Jesus also says that he came to fulfill the law.

Stop the action.

- Confused,
- Glad Jesus does not want to destroy the law, and
- Amazed that Jesus said that he fulfilled the law. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells them every small detail of the law is important. Jesus says none of the smallest parts of the law will disappear until all things happen. Jesus says God calls people the least important in the kingdom of heaven if

they do not obey even the smallest laws of God. Jesus also says God will honor people who obey God's law and teach others to obey it, too.

Jesus says "I tell you" to emphasize his disciples need to be more righteous than even the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

Stop the action.

- Angry,
- Shocked at Jesus' words, and
- Confused how anyone could be more righteous than them. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus gives a new teaching on murder. He reminds the disciples that God will judge people who murder others. Jesus surprises them by saying that God will also judge someone who is angry with their brother. Jesus also says that an insult to a brother means judgment by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court. Jesus says if a disciple calls his brother "a worthless fool," God will judge them and punish them in the fires of hell.

Stop the action.

- Shocked,
- Confused, and
- How could someone be judged for only saying an insult? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the first story about a disciple who is offering a gift at the altar. This disciple remembers his brother is angry with him, so he leaves his gift at the altar and returns to make peace with his brother. Then he comes back to offer his gift again.

Stop the action.

- Surprised that the disciple came back to make peace with me,
- Happy in my heart, and
- At peace. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells another story about a disciple and an enemy. The enemy accuses the disciple of something. Jesus says the disciple should make peace with the enemy on the way to the court and not wait to make peace in the court.

Stop the action.

- Confused about why I need to make peace with my enemy,
- At peace, and
- Angry at my enemy. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus warns the disciple that if he does not make peace quickly, the disciple will have to see the judge, and then the person in charge of prisoners. The disciple may go to prison, and he may have to stay there until he pays everything he owes.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus says he did not come to destroy the **law**. The law of Moses is the rules from God that Moses shared with the Jewish people to tell them how to live. Sometimes the word law is mentioned alone, but it refers to the law God gave the Jews through Moses. Translate this the same way you have in previous passages.

Jesus also said he did not come to destroy the teachings of the **prophets**. The prophets, or messengers in the Old Testament, spoke messages from God. Translate this the same way you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a full definition of the word prophet.

Jesus said that he came to **fulfill** the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets. Some people believe this only means Jesus came to the earth to make all the prophecies in the Old Testament come true. Other people believe that Jesus did make all the prophecies come true, but they also think "fulfill" has a deeper meaning. "Fulfill" may mean that Jesus followed the pattern in the law and the prophets perfectly. "Fulfill" may also mean that Jesus made the law complete, or that Jesus came to teach the true meaning of the law and the prophets.

Jesus says "I tell you the truth" to emphasize the next teaching.

Stop and talk with your translation team about how you emphasize something in your language. What words do you use when you are about to say something very important?

Jesus says none of the law will disappear as long as **heaven** and earth last. Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the sky.

Jesus says not even the smallest part of the law will disappear. In the original language, the word for "smallest part" were "not even the smallest letter or stroke." Jesus is talking about the written text of the law of Moses. Jesus means that not even the smallest part or detail of the law will disappear. Even the smallest detail is important.

Jesus talks about who God will highly honor in the **kingdom of heaven**. Heaven is the place where God lives. The kingdom of heaven is about God ruling in the hearts of his people rather than a physical place. Translate the phrase the same way as you have in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God.

Jesus says that his disciples should be more righteous than the **Pharisees** and the teachers of the law. The Pharisees were seen as the most influential group of religious leaders in Israel. The Pharisees were devoted to God's law. They recognized both the written and oral religious traditions and law. The teachers of the law were also called scribes because they used to copy God's law by hand. They also studied and taught the law of Moses.

Jesus says the **righteousness** of the disciples needs to be far more than the righteousness of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. This means the disciples should be people who do what is right. This should be translated the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word righteousness.

Then, Jesus said that God will judge his disciples' attitudes. God will judge disobedience to the law, but there is more to following God's law than obeying in actions. Jesus says being angry with a brother deserves judgment from God. Jesus also says insulting a brother means the **Sanhedrin** will judge them. The high Jewish council is called the Sanhedrin and is made up of the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law. This group listened to court cases and passed judgment based on religious law. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word Sanhedrin.

Jesus says if a disciple calls a brother "a worthless fool," he will go to the fires of hell.

Hell is the name for the place where unbelievers go at the end of the world to be punished. Satan and his angels will also go there. There will be fire that lasts forever there. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hell.

Jesus tells a story about the need for a disciple to be **reconciled** with his brother. This means that Jesus wants people to make peace with one another. This is like the kind of peace God has with believers in Jesus because believers have been **reconciled** to God.

In the story, Jesus describes a disciple giving an **offering** at the **altar**. An altar may refer to a place where animals are killed and burned as an offering to God, or a place where incense is burned. It is often built of stones, perhaps like a table or small platform. An offering is a gift or sacrifice offered in a ritual to God, usually in the temple or on a special altar. Offerings can be made for many reasons, including to give thanks, to be purified, or to ask forgiveness for sin. Jesus says it is so important to be reconciled with a brother that the disciple should leave his offering at the altar and go make peace with the brother before offering the gift.

Stop and show a drawing or photo of the altar again if needed.

Jesus says if an enemy accuses a disciple of something, the disciple should settle the problem on the way to the court. The phrase for "settle the problem" means "make friends" in the original language. If the disciple does not make friends quickly with the accuser, the disciple will see the judge and eventually go to prison. The disciple will have to stay in prison until he pays everything.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:17-26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4467047 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7523556 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:27-32

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:27–32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside to teach his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus is teaching the disciples about how they should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. He said a person's attitude is more important than only their actions of obeying the law. First, Jesus talked about the true meaning of the law about murdering someone. Now, Jesus talks about the true meaning of the laws about adultery and divorce.

Jesus reminds his disciples about the law "do not commit adultery" that is in Moses' law. Adultery means having sexual relations with another man's wife, or sleeping with another man's wife. The disciples were familiar with this law.

Stop and discuss these sensitive words as a translation team. How can you describe words like "adultery" and "sexual sin" in a culturally appropriate way? What is the best way to translate these words into your language so that both men and women will be comfortable listening to the story? Consider using a phrase in your language like "a man sleeping with a woman" to make it culturally appropriate.

Jesus gives a new teaching about the law against adultery. Jesus says the law is not only about obeying in actions. The true meaning of the law is that people should not even commit adultery in their thoughts. Jesus says that even if a man looks at a woman with lust, that is the same as already committing adultery with her in his heart. When Jesus says "looking at another woman with lust," it does not mean thinking a woman is attractive. It means the man intends to have sexual relations with her in his heart. "Heart" here means in a person's inner life or in his thoughts or emotions.

Then, Jesus tells two shocking examples to show how important it is to not sin, or do wrong things. Jesus says that if your eye causes you to lust you should take out your eye and throw it away. That does not mean that an eye can cause a person to sin. It means that if someone is looking at someone else and wants to have sexual relations, they need to stop. Jesus does not mean a person should remove their literal eye. The eye is a symbol

for things we see that may cause us to sin. Jesus is using the eye to show how important it is to remove things from your heart that make you sin, like bad thoughts or attitudes.

Jesus compares losing one body part, this eye, to losing your whole body. Jesus says it is better to lose one part of your body and still be alive than for God to throw your whole body into hell. Hell is a place where God eternally punishes people who don't follow God.

Jesus gives another shocking example using a hand as a symbol. Jesus says if your right hand causes you to sin, you should also cut it off and throw it away. Jesus says "right hand" because the right hand is generally more useful than the left hand. This is like what Jesus said about the eye. Jesus does not mean to cut off your hand. Jesus uses this strong language again to show how important it is to remove sinful thoughts from your heart. Jesus says again that it is better to lose this one part of your body, your right hand, than for God to send your whole body to hell.

Stop and discuss in your language what kinds of phrases or idioms you use to exaggerate something or to show a point. Talk about how these phrases might be misunderstood by someone outside of your culture or language.

Next, Jesus teaches the disciples the true meaning of God's law about divorce. Divorce means legally ending a marriage. Jesus reminds them that divorce was allowed in the law of Moses. Jesus says that his disciples have heard in Moses' law that anyone who divorces his wife, needs to give her a certificate of divorce. A certificate of divorce is a written, official paper that says the woman and man are not married to each other anymore. Before this law in Moses' law, a man could just tell his wife "I divorce you."

There were different interpretations of the laws about divorce. Most people at the time thought the law of Moses meant that a man could divorce his wife for any reason, even if he didn't like her. These teachers of the law said that a man could end his marriage for any reason, as long as the husband gives his wife the certificate of divorce. Some other people believed the wife must be guilty of sexual sin in order for the husband to divorce her, but most people did not follow this interpretation.

Jesus says that the only reason a man can divorce his wife is if the wife has sexual relations with another man. If the wife did not sleep with another man during her first marriage, then the first marriage is not over yet. This means the divorce is not legal.

Stop and talk about divorce in your culture. What are the reasons that men and women end their marriages in your culture? How common is divorce in your culture?

Jesus says that if a man ends his marriage for any other reason, then the man forces the divorced wife to commit adultery. This means that when she gets married a second time, she will be guilty of sexual sin. In that culture, almost all divorced women had to remarry to have money to live.

Jesus says the second man who marries the divorced woman also commits adultery. This means the second husband is also guilty of sexual sin. Jesus wants the first woman and the first man to stay married to each other and not end their marriage.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples and the crowd about the true meaning of the law against adultery. Jesus uses two shocking examples to show how important it is to get rid of sin.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about the true meaning of God's law about divorce.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- A man and a woman
- A husband and a wife
- A second man

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He has taught them important sayings about who God blesses, about how the disciples should be different from people around them, and about the law. Now, Jesus teaches about how to understand the Old Testament laws about adultery and divorce.

In the first scene, it is important to remember that Jesus reminds the disciples about what the law of Moses says about adultery. Jesus says that even if a man looks at another woman and wants to sleep with her, it is the same as committing adultery with her in his heart. Remember that the man is already guilty when he looks at the woman with this intention to sleep with her. Remember also that the punishment for adultery was death. Jesus says the man who sleeps with another woman or even thinks about sleeping with another woman both deserve death.

Remember when Jesus uses the two examples about tearing out your eye and cutting off your hand, Jesus does not mean to take out your literal eye or cut off your literal hand. Jesus is using the eye and the hand as symbols to talk about how important it is to get rid of things that cause a person to sin. Think about how you can represent "taking out your eye" or "cutting off your hand" using toys or a drawing.

In the second scene, remember that Jesus reminds the disciples about the law for divorce. It is important to remember that the certificate of divorce was a written paper that showed the marriage was over. Jesus showed that it was not enough for a man to just give his wife this certificate of divorce to end the marriage. Remember in that time, men could generally divorce their wives for any reason, as long as they gave them the certificate of divorce.

Remember that Jesus talks about two different situations. It would be good to draw or use toys to show each of the different situations.

In the first situation, Jesus said that the only way to truly end a marriage was if the wife sleeps with another man. Then the marriage is over, and the man and wife can be divorced. This is a legal divorce.

For the second situation, Jesus says that the man and woman get a divorce for another reason. Remember that in this situation, the wife did not sleep with another man. For this situation, Jesus says that the divorce is not legal. When the wife marries a second man, she becomes guilty of sexual sin, and her second husband is guilty of sexual sin too. The first marriage is still valid, so that is why both the wife and the second husband are both guilty of sexual sin.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples and the crowd about the true meaning of the law against adultery. Jesus uses two shocking examples to show how important it is to get rid of sin.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about the true meaning of God's law about divorce.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- A man and a woman
- A husband and a wife
- A second man

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. Jesus reminds them about the law in Moses' law that says "do not commit adultery." Jesus tells them that even if a man looks at another woman intending to have sexual relations with her, the man is already guilty of adultery in his heart. Wrong actions deserve punishment and wrong thoughts also deserve punishment.

Stop the action.

- Shocked,
- Feeling like it's impossible to follow this new teaching about adultery, and
- Confused. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus gives two examples about how important it is to not sin. Jesus says that you should tear out your eye or cut off your hand if it causes you to sin. Jesus does not mean that you should literally tear out your eye or cut off your hand. Jesus is saying how important it is to remove things from your heart that make you sin.

Stop the action.

- Unsure what Jesus means,
- Confused on how to remove things that make me sin, and
- Shocked at Jesus' words. [!end] Restart the action.

Then, Jesus teaches about divorce. Jesus reminds the disciples of the law in Moses' law that a man needs to give his wife a certificate of divorce to end their marriage together. A man could end the marriage for any reason, as long as he gave his wife the certificate of divorce.

Stop the action.

- Sad that my husband wanted a divorce,
- Glad that he gave me the certificate so I can now legally remarry, and
- Disappointed. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the disciples that the only way to have a legal divorce is if the wife sleeps with another man. Jesus says that if the wife does not sleep with another man, and the husband still divorces the wife, this is not a real divorce. This means the first marriage is still legal. Jesus says if the wife gets married to a second husband, she is committing sexual sin. The second husband also is committing sexual sin.

Stop the action.

- Frustrated that my certificate is not valid,
- Shocked that remarriage means sexual sin now, and
- Trapped.

Also, ask the actor playing the first husband, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like:

- Confused about why I can't divorce my wife for any reason,
- Mad about the new teaching, and
- Shocked that the divorce certificate does not make this divorce legal.

Also, ask the actor playing the second husband, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like:

- Confused about why I am committing sexual sin when I marry this divorced woman,
- Shocked at Jesus' words, and
- Mad at the first husband for divorcing his wife the wrong way.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus gave a new teaching about adultery. **Adultery** is when a husband or wife has sexual relations with anyone other than their husband or wife. Jesus considered both men and women guilty of adultery when they have sexual relations with anyone outside of their marriage. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word adultery.

Jesus says that if a man looks at a woman with lust, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **Lust** means wanting what someone else has or wanting to do something that is wrong. Jesus means that lust is as bad as having wrong sexual relations. Jesus says this to protect women from the lustful thoughts of men. In that culture, a man owned his wife like she was his possession. When a man wants to have sexual relations with a woman, he is wanting someone else's possession.

Stop and talk about the phrase "in his heart." In your culture, how do you talk about a person's inner life, thoughts, or emotions?

Jesus shows two examples of how important it is to not sin. The word **sin** means an act of disobedience to God. Jesus says a person should tear out their eye or cut off their hand if it causes them to sin. Translate sin the same way you have in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word sin.

In the original language, "cause you to sin" means "cause a person to stumble." This does not mean falling down physically. Jesus means that if your eye or hand leads you away from God and away from salvation, you should get rid of it. Jesus wants his disciples to get rid of anything that leads them to disobey God.

Jesus says that it would be better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go to hell. **Hell** is the name for the place where unbelievers go at the end of the world to be punished. Satan and his angels will also go there. There will be fire that lasts forever in hell. Translate hell the same way you have in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hell.

Jesus also teaches about divorce. **Divorce** is a permanent separation between a husband and wife. Translate **divorce** the same way you have in previous passages. Jesus says that there are higher standards for divorce than what people were currently doing in the culture. At that time, a man only needed to give his wife a certificate for divorce to end the marriage. Jesus showed that the true meaning of the law was much stricter than people expected.

Jesus said the only allowable reason to end the marriage was if the wife was unfaithful and slept with another man. In the original language, the word for "unfaithful" or "unchastity" means sexual sin of some kind.

This is not the same word as adultery, but they are related ideas. If the wife remarried, then both her and her new husband would be guilty of adultery because the first marriage had never truly ended.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:27-32

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3386504 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5693634 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:33-42

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:33–42 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on the side of a mountain and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus is teaching the disciples about how they should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. He said a person's attitude is more important than only their actions of obeying the law. Jesus has talked about murder, adultery, and divorce. Now, he discusses making oaths and not paying back evil.

Jesus knows the disciples are familiar with God's laws. Jesus reminds the disciples about the laws in the Old Testament that say people should not break their oaths to God. An oath is added to a promise so that people know they must keep their agreement and that it cannot be changed. At that time, people would make a promise in God's name, and this meant they asked God to be their witness in their promise. If someone did not keep a promise they made in God's name, this was a misuse of God's name. Sometimes, people would make a promise in the name of something else, and the teachers of the law said people did not need to keep those promises.

Jesus gives a new teaching on oaths now. Jesus says his disciples should not make any oaths or vows. Jesus wants his disciples to always keep their promises without needing to make any oaths in the name of God or in the name of anything else.

Stop and discuss what kinds of oaths, vows, or swearing is present in your culture. What do people say when they make oaths? How do people make the strongest kind of oath or vow in your language?

At that time, people often made vows by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or a person's own head. Jews made vows like this because they were avoiding making an oath or vow in God's name. Jesus says that no vows at all are allowed because God rules over everything. People should not vow by heaven, because it is the throne of God, or where God sits. Heaven is the place where God lives, and "God's throne" means that God rules from heaven.

Jesus continues that people should also not make an oath with the word "earth" because it is God's footstool. A footstool is where a king places his feet. This does not mean God has feet. "The earth is God's footstool" means the whole earth belongs to God. Jesus also says people should not make a vow with the word "Jerusalem." Jerusalem is the city where God's temple was. Jesus says not to make vows by Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the city of the great king. The great King means God. Finally, Jesus says people should not make a vow using the words "by my head." Jesus says a person cannot change the color of their hair. Only God controls heaven and earth and a person's head. No one should make an oath or swear by their head.

Jesus says that his disciples should only say "yes" when they mean "yes" and "no" when they mean "no." Jesus says if a person says more than "yes" or "no," this statement comes from the evil one, the devil. God wants his people to be truthful and not add anything to their words.

Next, Jesus teaches his disciples about not repaying evil. Jesus reminds them about the saying in the Old Testament that if a person causes someone to lose an eye, that person also should lose an eye. Jesus also says if a person knocks out someone's tooth, that person should also lose a tooth. This saying was used so the courts did not punish someone more than they deserved. This saying does not mean a person could take out another person's eye in revenge. Other nations during the Old Testament time also had laws that allowed repayment for evil. During Jesus' time, it was likely that people paid money when they caused an injury to someone else instead of receiving the same injury themselves.

Stop and talk about what "repaying evil" is like in your culture. When someone injures someone else, what happens in the culture? Is there payment of money, punishment, or something else required? How is honor restored for the injured or dishonored person?

Now, Jesus says that his disciples should not fight the person who does evil things to them. Jesus gives four examples of ways his disciples should not repay evil. First, Jesus says that if someone insults you by hitting you on the right cheek with their hand, you should turn your face to let him hit the left cheek too. Hitting someone on the face like this was dishonoring to them.

Next, Jesus says if someone sues you for your tunic, you should also give the person your cloak, or your outer clothing. Suing means a person takes you to a judge to get payment. A tunic was the long shirt that men and women wore next to their skin like an undergarment. A cloak was more valuable than a tunic and people could use it like a blanket at night to keep warm. There were laws in the Old Testament saying no one could sue for the cloak since people needed it to keep warm at night. Jesus wanted his disciples to give their cloaks freely, which was more than the law required.

Stop and show pictures of a tunic and a cloak.

Next, Jesus says that if one of the soldiers living in the area forces you to carry his things for a mile, you should carry his things for two miles. During that time, the Romans ruled over the Jewish land, and a Roman soldier could force anyone to carry his things for up to one Roman mile. A Roman mile was about one and a half kilometers. Jesus means his disciples should do twice as much as someone forces them to do.

Stop and show a picture of a Roman soldier.

Finally, Jesus says his disciples should be ready to give money to anyone who asks them for money. He says when someone asks to borrow something, you should give it to them. In all four examples, Jesus does not want his disciples to fight back against the people who did evil to them.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples about oaths and vows. Jesus says his disciples should not make oaths. They should only say "yes" or "no."

Second scene: Jesus teaches about not repaying evil. He gives four examples of how his disciples should not repay evil.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- Someone who does evil to a disciple (insults, sues, forces to carry a pack)
- Someone who asks for something

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He has taught them important sayings about who God blesses, about how the disciples should be different from people around them, and about the law. Now, Jesus gives a new teaching about oaths and about not repaying evil.

In the first scene, it is important to remember that people commonly made vows during Jesus' time. They made vows in God's name or in the name of something else. Jesus says that even making a vow by something else is not good. God rules over everything, so any vow is misusing God's name.

It is important to remember that Jesus contrasts the Old Testament law and the new way Jesus is teaching it. Remember to show in your language that this is a new way to understand the law about oaths.

Remember that Jesus says four ways that his disciples should not make oaths: by heaven, by earth, by Jerusalem, or by their own heads. Then, Jesus concludes this scene by saying that his disciples should say "yes" when they mean "yes" and "no" when they mean "no." They do not need to add any oaths to their words to make them stronger. Remember that Jesus does not want the disciples to see this as a new list of rules to follow. Jesus wants his disciples to be truthful and honest.

In the second scene, remember that Jesus quotes a saying from the Old Testament about repaying evil. Remember that in Jesus' time, this saying was to protect people from not being punished more or less than they deserved. Remember that this was not about personal revenge against an enemy.

It is important to remember that Jesus gives four examples of how his disciples should not defend themselves. Jesus said his disciples should let someone hit both cheeks. Remember this was probably shocking for the disciples to hear, and that normally it was expected to defend your honor when someone insulted them.

Jesus also says his disciples should freely give their tunics and their cloaks when someone sues them for their tunic. Remember the cloak was important for people to stay warm at night. Even though the person suing the disciple did not deserve the cloak, Jesus wanted the disciple to show love by giving it away.

Remember that the Jews did not like the Roman soldiers who lived in their land. Remember that the Jews were only required to carry the pack one mile, and Jesus wanted them to go two miles! Think of how you can show this shocking command of Jesus with a drawing.

It is good to remember that the last statement Jesus makes in this scene is about people asking for money or asking to borrow something. Remember that Jesus does not say whether the person asking for something deserves it. Remember it would be unnatural to always be generous in giving money or lending something to someone else.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples about oaths and vows. Jesus says his disciples should not make oaths. They should only say "yes" or "no."

Second scene: Jesus teaches about not repaying evil. He gives four examples of how his disciples should not repay evil.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- Someone who does evil to a disciple (insults, sues, forces to carry a pack)
- Someone who asks for something

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. Jesus reminds his disciples about the laws that people should not break their oaths to God. Jesus says that no one should make any kinds of oaths.

Stop the action.

- Confused about why I can't make oaths,
- Shocked that oaths aren't good, and
- How do I talk without using oaths? [!end] Restart the action.

He says that his disciples should not make an oath or vow by heaven, because it is God's throne. Jesus also says that his disciples should also not make any oaths by earth, because it is God's footstool. Jesus says not to make oaths by Jerusalem, since it is the city of God. And Jesus says not to make oaths by your own head, since only God controls your head and all things. Jesus says his disciples should say "yes" and "no" and not add any oaths to their words. He says if they add any oaths, this comes from the devil.

Stop the action.

- Unsure of what Jesus really means,
- Feeling like it's too much to ask us not to use oaths, and
- Wondering how to say only "yes" and "no" without any oaths. [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jesus reminds the disciples about what the Old Testament says about repaying evil. He says the Old Testament law is to take the same thing that was taken from you. If someone takes your eye, take their eye. If someone takes your tooth, take their tooth. Jesus tells them a new way to live. Jesus says if someone hits you on the right cheek, turn your face to let them hit you on the left cheek. It was an insult to hit someone like this.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing the person who hit the disciple, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Confused about why the disciple didn't hit me back,
- Shocked at the disciple offering his other cheek to me, and
- Ready to hit the disciple again. [!end] Restart the action.

In the next example, Jesus says if someone takes you to a judge to get your tunic, you should also give him your cloak. A cloak was the outer clothing, and usually people could not sue someone for this since it kept people warm at night.

Stop the action.

- Not wanting to give up my cloak,
- Worried I'll be cold at night now, and
- Glad to be generous. [!end] Restart the action.

Next, Jesus says that if a soldier forces a disciple to carry the soldier's things for one mile, the disciple should volunteer to carry the things for two miles. Jesus wanted the disciple to do more than the law required.

Stop the action.

- Mad at Jesus' words,
- Feeling like it's unfair to need to carry the soldier's things for two miles, and
- Tired, since now I need to walk two more miles back home. [!end] Restart the action.

Finally, Jesus says his disciples should be ready to give money to anyone who asks for money. Jesus' disciples should also be ready to lend something to someone when they ask to borrow it.

Stop the action.

- Surprised the disciple gave me money,
- Happy to receive a gift, and
- Wanting to ask for more. [!end] Restart the action.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like:

- Glad my disciple was generous,
- Wanting to show my disciples how to love others, and
- Hopeful that my disciples will learn to give money freely.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus teaches his disciples about oaths and vows. Oaths and vows are similar. Jesus says his disciples should not make any oaths or vows. People said an **oath** to show they would keep their promise. The person who speaks the oath asks God to punish them if they do not keep their promise. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word oath.

A **vow** is a solemn promise made to God usually in return for God's favor. A person is not required to make a vow. But if a vow is made, it is considered sacredly binding like an oath. The person is released from the vow once he has done what he vowed to do. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word vow.

Jesus says his disciples should not make oaths or vows. Jesus did not want his disciples to make an oath by heaven because it is the throne of God. **Heaven** can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels

live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus also did not want his disciples to make oaths by earth, since it is God's footstool. A footstool was a place for a king to put his feet. Jesus says not to make oaths with the word "Jerusalem." Jesus says Jerusalem is the city of the great king, meaning God. **Jerusalem** is the name of the religious capital of the Jewish people. This was the holiest place for Jewish people. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word Jerusalem.

Jesus also says not to make oaths by your own head since a person cannot change the color of their hair. God is in control of everything. Jesus says if anyone says more than "yes" or "no," this comes from the evil one. "The evil one" means the **devil**. Translate this the same as you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the devil.

Jesus says if someone sues you for your tunic, you should also give your cloak. A **tunic** is an item of clothing that both men and women wear. Its closest translation is shirt. It is the item of clothing worn closest to the skin. When someone sued someone else, it meant they took the person to a judge to receive payment. A **cloak** was a valuable outer piece of clothing that people used like a blanket at night to stay warm. The Old Testament made laws against taking someone's cloak from them because people needed their cloak to stay warm at night.

Show the pictures of the cloak and tunic again if needed.

Finally, Jesus said that if a soldier forces you to carry things for him for one mile, you should volunteer to carry the things for two miles. A Roman **mile** was about one and a half kilometers. The actual distance is not as important as the meaning of doing more than the law requires.

Stop and discuss as a translation team how you talk about distances in your language. Talk about the most natural way to translate "mile" in your language. It might be best to say "length of ground" instead. You can also say "twice as far" instead of "two miles."

Show the picture of the Roman soldier again if needed.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:33-42

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3762186 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6323168 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 5:43-48

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 5:43-48 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside, and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus is teaching the disciples about how they should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. He said a person's attitude is more important than only their actions of obeying the law. Jesus has talked about murder, adultery, divorce, making oaths, and repaying evil. Now, he finishes this section of teaching by telling the disciples about loving their enemies.

Jesus reminds his disciples about the law in Moses' law that said to love your neighbor. "Neighbor" means someone who lives nearby, and this probably meant other Jews in this context. "Love" means to show kindness to someone. Jesus also adds "hate your enemy," even though Moses' law does not directly say this. Moses' law implies that Jews should "love their neighbors" and "hate their enemies" because "neighbor" means other Jews. That means that anyone who isn't a Jew is an enemy anyway and is automatically excluded from being a neighbor. Some teachers of the law at that time taught people to hate their enemies and this was a popular idea.

Stop and talk as a translation team about the idea of enemies in your culture. What is socially acceptable to do when you have an enemy? Think about a situation in your life or someone's life you know where there were enemies. Describe what happened and how the enemies treated each other.

Jesus tells his disciples they should live in a new way. Jesus says to love their enemies, which means his disciples should show kindness to people who oppose them or want to hurt them.

This is the final example Jesus gives about how his disciples should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus says his disciples should pray for those who persecute them or want to hurt them and cause them to suffer.

Jesus says that when his disciples love their enemies and pray for them, this shows they are children of God, their Father who lives in heaven. God makes the sun rise on good people and bad people, and God sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. Righteous people want to do good. God does good to both bad people and good people, and Jesus wants his disciples to be like God in how they do good to all people, even their enemies.

Next, Jesus uses four questions to emphasize why his disciples should love their enemies. First, Jesus asks them if they love people who love them, what reward, or gift, will God give them? Jesus means the disciples should not expect a reward for loving people who love them back. Jesus asks another question to emphasize that even tax collectors love people who love them. Tax collectors worked for the Romans, and they took extra money from the people. The Jews did not like tax collectors, and the Jews considered tax collectors religiously unclean because tax collectors worked with the Romans. Jesus is showing his disciples that even unlike people in their community could love people who loved them back. Jesus wanted his disciples to be different from this.

Stop and discuss how your culture views people who collect taxes. Talk about groups of people in your society who are considered unclean or shunned because of what they do. Tell a story about a time you interacted with them.

Next, Jesus asks them a question to emphasize that if you greet only your brothers, you are not doing anything better than what other people do. Greeting in the Jewish culture meant asking God to bring peace or blessing to the other person. "Brothers" means not only brothers by blood, but also anyone from their same people group.

Finally, Jesus asks a question to emphasize that even the Gentiles, or pagans, are loving and kind to their friends. "Gentiles" means people who are not Jews. "Pagans" shows that they did not worship God and did not know who God was. Jesus wanted to show his disciples that even people who did not know God know how to love those who love them back.

Jesus ends this section with a summary statement. This is a summary for this section and the previous passages about how the disciples must be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus tells the disciples they must be perfect like their heavenly Father is perfect, which means Jesus wants them to be completely faithful and mature and fulfill all the requirements. Jesus is not giving them more rules to follow, but he wants them to see God's heart behind the rules and learn how to live with the same kind of commitment to caring for others that God has. Jesus calls God their Father, which means when the disciples live this new way, they are acting like children of their Father God who lives in heaven.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells his disciples to love your enemies to show they are children of God.

Second scene: Jesus uses four questions to show why his disciples should love their enemies. He finishes the scene with a summary statement telling the disciples to be perfect like their heavenly Father is perfect.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- A neighbor
- An enemy
- Tax collectors
- Gentiles

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He has taught them important sayings about who God blesses, about how the disciples should be different from people around them, and about the law. This specific teaching about loving your enemies comes at the end of a long section about different ways Jesus' disciples should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

In the first scene, it is important to remember Jesus quoted the Old Testament law about loving your neighbor, and that he now gives his disciples a new way to live. Jesus also reminds the disciples of the common teaching at the time to "hate your enemies." Remember this was not a law in Moses' law, but many teachers did teach "hate your enemies" to the people.

Remember that Jesus wants the disciples to love their enemies as well as their neighbors. Jesus says they should love their enemies and pray for them "so that" the disciples will be children of God. The word in the original language for "so that" means the purpose for loving their enemies is to show the disciples are like God. Make sure to remember that loving your enemies does not make someone into a child of God. Instead, a disciple who loves their enemies shows they are already like their Father in heaven. Also, remember that this was probably shocking for the disciples to hear that they needed to love their enemies. Remember that Jesus says God makes the sun rise on both good and bad people, and he sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.

The second scene starts when Jesus uses the word "for" to indicate he is going to give the reasons why the disciples should love their enemies. Jesus uses a question for each of these reasons, and all the questions show that even ordinary people love their friends and neighbors. It takes a special kind of person to love people who do not love them back.

The first reason Jesus gives is that God will not give the disciples a reward if the disciples do not love their enemies. Next, Jesus reminds the disciples that even tax collectors love people who love them back. Remember that Jesus chooses tax collectors as an example because they were considered corrupt. Jesus is emphasizing his point again that even evil or corrupt people are nice to those who are nice to them.

Next, Jesus continues by saying that if his disciples only greet, or bless, their friends and neighbors, this is the same as ordinary people. Jesus adds that even the Gentiles, or the pagan unbelievers, greet and bless their friends. Jesus wanted his disciples to be different and have a higher standard of love for both neighbors and enemies.

It is important to remember that the last statement in this section is a summary statement for the entire section of teaching. Jesus is saying that the disciples should remember all the teaching he's given on being more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus taught the disciples about a new way to follow the laws of Moses on murder, adultery, divorce, making oaths, repaying evil, and loving their enemies. Now, Jesus tells the disciples that because of all this new teaching, the disciples should be perfect in the same way their heavenly Father is perfect.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells his disciples to love your enemies to show they are children of God.

Second scene: Jesus uses four questions to show why his disciples should love their enemies. He finishes the scene with a summary statement telling the disciples to be perfect like their heavenly Father is perfect.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples (and the crowd)
- An enemy
- Tax collectors
- Gentiles

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. Jesus reminds his disciples about the laws that they should love their neighbors, and he also quotes the common teaching "to hate your enemies." Now, Jesus tells the disciples they should love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them.

Stop the action.

- Shocked that Jesus wants us to love our enemies,
- Unsure how to love my enemy, and
- That's impossible to do. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says that his disciples show they are children of their Father in heaven when they love their enemies. Jesus tells the disciples that God does good to both good people and bad people. Jesus wants his disciples to be like God when they do good to their enemies.

Stop the action.

- Shocked that these people are loving me,
- Curious about the God they follow, and
- Thinking these people are not like other people. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the disciples that if they love people who love them back, that's the same as ordinary people. God will not give anyone a reward for only loving people who love them back. Jesus says even tax collectors love people who are friendly to them. Tax collectors stole money from people and the community did not like them.

Stop the action.

- Happy to love people who love me-maybe I can get more out of them,
- Happy to love the people who love me back, and
- Sad that not many people like me in the community. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus also says that even Gentiles, or pagan unbelievers, greet their own brothers. Jesus is showing the disciples that even unbelievers know how to be kind to people who are like them. Jesus wants his disciples to be different than this.

Stop the action.

- Hopeful that my disciples understand this teaching,
- Loving to all people, and
- Frustrated at how teachers of the law have misunderstood the law "love your neighbor." [!end] Restart the action.

Finally, Jesus ends this teaching section by telling the disciples that they need to be perfect like their heavenly Father is perfect. Jesus wants them to remember all the new ways he's taught the disciples about following God in this section.

Stop the action.

- Feeling like it is impossible to be perfect like God,
- Amazed at Jesus' words, and
- Hopeful that Jesus will teach us more about loving our enemies and learning to be perfect like God.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus tells his disciples they should love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them.

Persecute means that others will hurt God's people or cause them to suffer. Translate this the same way as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word persecution.

Jesus says when the disciples love their enemies, this will show they are children of their **heavenly father**, meaning God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this.

Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus says that God makes the sun rise on both good people and bad people. In the original language, Jesus repeats two similar phrases in opposite order. Jesus says "the evil and the good" and the "just and the unjust" because it is a poetic form in the original language. It might be more natural to use the poetic form in your language, or it might be better to keep the similar phrases in the same order.

Jesus says that God sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous. **Righteous** people are people who do what is right. This should be translated the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word righteousness.

Jesus asks several questions to emphasize that ordinary people love those who love them. Jesus does not want an answer to these questions. Jesus uses questions to emphasize why the disciples should love their enemies.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use questions here, or some other form of statements?

One question Jesus asks shows there is no reward for loving those who love them back. A **reward** is a special gift from God that he gives his people in heaven.

Another question Jesus asks is about tax collectors. Jesus says even the least liked people, tax collectors, would love people who loved them back. **Tax collectors** worked for the Romans, but the Romans did not pay tax collectors wages. Tax collectors took extra money from the people when they collected taxes and they became rich. Jews disliked tax collectors because tax collectors were traitors in working for the Romans, and tax collectors were thieves because they took extra money. Jews also saw tax collectors as unclean because tax collectors worked closely with Romans, and the Romans were not Jews in their religion.

Jesus also asks the disciples if **Gentiles**, or pagan unbelievers, would greet those who belong to their same group. Jews did not have a high opinion of Gentiles because Gentiles were not a part of God's family in their view. Jews traditionally viewed Gentiles as immoral and ungodly. Often the term Gentiles refers to the Romans. In the original language, the word Gentiles is translated as pagans, foreigners, or "those who do not know God."

Jesus is emphasizing that even Gentile unbelievers who do not follow God are able to love people who love them back. Jesus wants the disciples to live differently than the Gentiles. Translate Gentiles the same as in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word Gentiles.

Finally, Jesus summarizes this entire section of teaching by telling his disciples to be **perfect** in the same way their heavenly Father is **perfect**. In the original language, this means whole, complete, or mature. Other ways to translate perfect could be "totally devoted to God's ways" or "completely faithful to God."

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 5:43-48

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3925135 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6594377 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 6:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 6:1–8 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside, and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus is teaching the disciples about how they should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus has talked about murder, adultery, divorce, making oaths, repaying evil, and loving their enemies. Now, Jesus teaches about giving money to the poor and about prayer.

Jesus warns the disciples they should be careful not to do their acts of righteousness so that other people will see them. "Acts of righteousness" are good or right deeds that people do to honor or worship God. The three main kinds of good deeds that Jesus talks about are giving money to poor or needy people, praying, and fasting. In this story, Jesus teaches about giving money to the poor and praying. Jesus tells his disciples if they only do good deeds for other people to see them and admire them, their Father who lives in heaven will not give them a reward. A reward is a gift from God.

Jesus says that when his disciples give money to the poor, they should not blow a trumpet. Some people think that people blew literal trumpets during Jesus' time to announce a gift of money to the poor. A trumpet is a musical instrument that makes a loud noise. It could be made from a ram's horn. Jews blew trumpets for important religious days, so it's possible they also blew trumpets to attract people's attention. Others say this is a metaphor to show that people should not want attention for giving money to the poor.

Stop and show a picture of a trumpet.

Also, stop and discuss how people draw attention to themselves in your culture. What do people do when they want others to praise, honor, or admire them?

Jesus said that "hypocrites" give money to the poor so that other people will see them give the money. Hypocrites are people who pretend to be good and follow God on the outside, but inside they do not want to please God and care for the needy. Hypocrites only want other people to honor, praise, and admire them.

Stop and discuss as a translation team some examples in your culture of hypocrites. What words do you use in your language to talk about people who act one way on the outside but are different on the inside? How does your culture view hypocrites in general?

Jesus says hypocrites want honor when they give money in the synagogues and on the streets. Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to pray, read Scripture, teach, and worship. There was only one temple, but synagogues were in each community. "Streets" means public places in the town.

Stop and show a picture of a synagogue.

Then, Jesus says, "I tell you the truth" to emphasize what he will say next. Jesus says this when he wants his disciples to listen closely because the next teaching is very important. Jesus tells them that people praise and honor the hypocrites, but that will be the hypocrites' only reward. God will not reward hypocrites for giving to the poor in public.

Jesus tells his disciples a new way to give money to the poor. He says the disciples should not let their left hand know what their right hand is doing. Jesus does not mean that one hand literally does not know what the other hand is doing. This is special language to show that the giving should be in secret, or unseen by people. Jesus means that it should be secret so that not even your closest friends know that you gave money to the poor. Jesus says when his disciples give in this secret way, their Father God will reward them. God sees all the good things and bad things people do in secret, and God will reward disciples for doing good things.

Next, Jesus teaches about how his disciples should pray. "Pray" means talking to God. Jesus does not want his disciples to pray in a way that other people will see them and honor them. Jesus says the disciples should not be like the hypocrites who pray in the synagogues and on the street corners. Again, hypocrites are people who act like they want to please God, but they only want people to see them praying publicly in the synagogue, the place of worship, or the street corners, the public places where streets cross each other.

Jesus again says "I tell you the truth" to emphasize his next statement. Jesus says these hypocrites who pray publicly so that others can see them have already received all the reward they will ever get. God will not reward hypocrites for praying publicly for attention. Jesus does not mean that any public prayer is wrong. Jesus means that it is wrong for people to pray in order that others notice them.

Stop and talk with your translation team about prayer in your culture. How do you pray? How do others commonly pray? Describe both public and private prayer in your culture.

Jesus teaches his disciples a new way to pray. He tells them to go into their inner room in their house and shut the door. In Jesus' time, this room was probably a small storeroom that could lock. It was possibly the only room that could lock. Jesus says God their Father sees what they do in secret, which also means that only God will see the disciple in a secret closet room.

Jesus told the disciples not to say many meaningless words and not to say the same words over and over like the Gentiles. Gentiles were the pagans who did not worship and know God. Gentiles thought their gods would hear them and answer their prayers if they said long prayers.

Jesus did not want his disciples to be like the Gentiles in their prayers. Jesus reminded the disciples that their Father God already knows what they need before they ask him for it.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples about giving money to poor or needy people.

Second scene: Jesus teaches the disciples about how to pray to God.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- Poor people
- Hypocrites
- Other people watching
- God
- Gentiles/pagans

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He taught them about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Now he is starting a new section of teaching that warns the disciples against doing their righteous deeds for other people to see them. Jesus shows the disciples that God cares about their motivation for doing good deeds.

In the first scene, it is important to remember as Jesus starts this new teaching, he first gives a summary statement about all the different kinds of righteous works. He tells the disciples not to do their righteous works in front of other people. The disciples should do their good works for God alone.

The following teaching has three sections. The sections are about giving to the poor, praying to God, and fasting. The teaching about fasting will be in the next section. Jesus uses the same format for each of the three sections. Each section shows another way the disciples should do their good works for God alone and not for the praise of other people.

First, Jesus tells the disciples to be careful not to be like the hypocrites. Jesus does not want the disciples to draw attention to themselves when they give money to poor people. Think about how you can show someone blowing a trumpet or drawing attention to themselves in some other way. Jesus emphasizes that hypocrites get all their reward from other people, and God will not reward hypocrites for drawing attention to their own generosity.

Then, Jesus tells them the right way to give money to poor people. Jesus says their giving should be secret and no other people should know about it. Jesus tells the disciples that God knows what happens in secret, and God will reward the disciples for giving money to poor people in secret.

In the second scene, Jesus follows the same format as the first scene. First, Jesus says again for the disciples not to be like the hypocrites. Jesus does not want the disciples to pray publicly in front of other people so that other people will see them. Think about how you can show someone praying to draw attention to themselves. Jesus again emphasizes that the hypocrites get all the reward they will ever receive from other people. Hypocrites will not get any reward from God for praying to draw attention to their good works.

Next, Jesus tells the disciples the right way to pray to God. Jesus says the disciples should pray privately in a closed room so that no other people could see them praying to God. Again, Jesus says that God knows what happens in secret. God will reward the disciples for praying to God in secret.

It is important to know that the last part of the second scene is additional instruction about how to pray to God. First, Jesus explains more about the wrong way to pray. Jesus tells the disciples not to pray like the Gentiles. Jesus is reminding the disciples they should not repeat words over and over and pray for a long time without thinking about what they are saying.

Jesus ends this final section by reminding the disciples that God already knows what the disciples are praying. God already knows their needs before the disciples ask God for something. Remember that Jesus cares about the motivation for praying. Jesus wants the disciples to pray to God without drawing attention to themselves or praying like the Gentiles pray.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- Poor people
- Hypocrites
- Other people watching
- God
- Gentiles/pagans

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. Jesus tells his disciples they should be careful not to do their good works in front of other people so that other people can see them. Jesus says there's no reward from God if the disciples only want attention from other people for doing good works.

Stop the action.

- Confused about why I need to hide my good works,
- Surprised about this new teaching, and
- Wondering how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law if no one can see me do it. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the disciples that when they give money to poor people, don't draw attention to themselves like the hypocrites do. The hypocrites blow trumpets and announce their giving in the synagogue and on the public

streets. Jesus says people see the hypocrites and honor them for giving money, and that's the only reward the hypocrites will get. God will not reward the hypocrites for giving money so that others can praise them.

Stop the action.

- Unsure why it's bad to announce my generosity,
- Offended at Jesus' words, and
- Feeling like giving the money to the poor should be good enough to please God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches the disciples how they should give money to the poor. Jesus says it should be a secret. Their right hand should not know what their left hand is doing. Not even their closest friends should know about them giving money to the poor. Jesus says God will reward the disciples for being generous in secret.

Stop the action.

- Grateful for the gift of money,
- Unsure why it matters if they gave me the money in secret or in public, and
- Wanting other people to know about this gift so they'll feel social pressure to give me money too. [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jesus teaches the disciples about praying to God. Jesus starts with the wrong way to pray to God. Jesus does not want the disciples to pray like the hypocrites. The hypocrites draw attention to their prayers by praying in front of others. Again, Jesus says the praise from other people is the only reward the hypocrites will get. God won't reward the hypocrites for praying to God only for other people to see them pray.

Stop the action.

- Impressed by the hypocrites' long prayers,
- Annoyed that the hypocrites always are praying in front of us, and
- Wondering if God will listen to me if I pray like that too. [!end] Restart the action.

Then, Jesus teaches the disciples the right way to pray to God. Jesus says it should be private and secret prayer. Jesus says the disciples should pray by themselves to God and not in front of other people. God can see what people do in secret, and God will reward the disciples for praying in secret.

Stop the action.

- That's a good idea to pray in secret to God,
- Wondering how I'll find time alone to pray to God in secret, and
- Frustrated that no one will be able to see me pray to God. [!end] Restart the action.

Finally, Jesus says the disciples should not say the same words over and over when they pray. Jesus does not want the disciples to pray meaningless words like the Gentiles pray.

Stop the action.

- How can my gods hear me and answer me if I don't say all their names,
- Frustrated that I am being criticized, and
- Wondering how I should pray.

Jesus says God their Father already knows what the disciples will pray before they say it.

Stop the action.

- Glad my children are talking to me,
- Happy my children want a relationship with me, and
- Ready to answer my children's prayers.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus tells the disciples they should not do their works of righteousness in front of other people. Works of **righteousness** are good and right works that Jesus wants his disciples to do. In this story, Jesus gives two common examples of good works: giving money to the poor and praying to God. This should be translated the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word righteousness.

Jesus says God will not reward people for doing good works in front of other people. This **reward** is a special gift from God that he gives his people in heaven.

Jesus calls God their **Father** in heaven, meaning God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this. **Heaven** can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus does not want his disciples to blow a trumpet when they give money to the poor. A **trumpet** is a musical instrument that people blow to make music or announce something. Trumpets can be made from silver, bronze, or a ram's horn. People blew into the trumpet to make a loud noise. Jews used trumpets in battle, for religious ceremonies like a public fast or temple sacrifices, and for announcing a new king. It is possible Jews blew trumpets to announce large gifts of money to the poor, but Jesus also may have been using the trumpet as special language. Jesus did not want his disciples to draw attention to themselves giving money to the poor.

Stop and show the picture of a trumpet again if necessary.

Jesus said the **hypocrites** announce their giving in public. The word hypocrite in the original language means an actor in the theater that pretends to be someone they are not. In this context, a hypocrite means someone who looks good on the outside, but inside they do not truly love God. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hypocrite.

Hypocrites want people to see them give money in the synagogues or in the streets. **Synagogues** were Jewish places of worship where people in villages could meet instead of in the main temple in Jerusalem. Translate synagogue the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word synagogue.

Stop and show the picture of the synagogue again if necessary.

Jesus says "I tell you the truth" to emphasize the next teaching about how the disciples should give to the poor. Jesus says God will reward the disciples for giving to the poor in secret.

Stop and talk with your translation team about how you emphasize something in your language. What words do you use when you are about to say something very important?

Jesus also teaches his disciples how to pray. Praying means talking with God. Translate **prayer** the same as in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word prayer.

Jesus does not want his disciples to pray like the pagan **Gentiles** who do not follow God. The Gentiles repeated words over and over in their prayers. Some people think this means the Gentiles would say many names for their gods to make sure they said the right names for God. Translate Gentiles the same as in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word Gentiles.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 6:1–8

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4227153 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7038126 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 6:9–18

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 6:9–18 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside, and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus taught the disciples about how they should be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus also taught them about giving money to the poor and about prayer. Now, Jesus explains more about how to pray and he teaches about fasting.

Jesus starts this section by praying to God. During Jesus' time, the Jews commonly used set forms of prayers, and people could pray this exact prayer in the same way Jesus prayed it. The disciples could also use this following prayer as a guide for how to pray their own prayers.

Jesus does not want them to pray like the Gentiles, who say long, meaningless words. He shows them they can pray to God with simple words. The prayer starts with Jesus saying "Our Father in heaven." Jesus is praying to God who lives in heaven. Jesus is showing that we can talk to God like we talk to a father.

In the first part of the prayer, Jesus focuses on God himself. Jesus prays that people would honor or respect the holy name of God. In Jewish culture, a person's name represented the person. Often, Jews did not want to say God's name to show respect to God. Instead, they said "the name of God." To "honor God's holy name" means to honor God himself. God shows people he is holy, or perfect and worthy of worship. Jesus is praying that people would also recognize God as holy, and that people would honor God.

Stop and discuss as a translation team how people honor others in your culture. How do you talk about an honored person in your culture? What special words do you use for honored people? Do you say their names? Think about a situation when someone you know was honored.

Next, Jesus prays that God's kingdom would come. Jesus is praying that God would establish his rule over all people. Jesus prays that God will rule and that people will do God's will, or obey him on earth in the same way God rules in heaven and those who live in heaven do God's will.

Jesus also asks God to give us the "daily bread" we need. Bread was the common basic food in Jesus' time. Jesus is asking for the food that we need for one day. The Jews that Jesus was teaching were familiar with the way God provided for his people in the Old Testament.

Jesus next prays for forgiveness for our debts, or sins. "Forgiveness" in this context means God does not punish us when we do something wrong or have a debt or sin against someone. Jesus uses the word picture of debt, or owing something to someone, as a way to describe sin or disobeying God. We deserve punishment, but God chooses to treat us like we never did anything wrong. Jesus says that in the same way God forgives us for our debts, we also forgive other people who sin or do wrong things to us. We forgive the person who sinned, but we cannot cancel a debt. Relationship is the most important part of forgiveness.

Then, Jesus prays that God would keep us far away from temptation. Jesus does not mean that God tempts us to do wrong things. Jesus is asking God to protect us from situations where someone or something will cause

us to sin. Jesus asks God to deliver us from evil instead of letting us yield to temptation. Some people think this means Jesus is asking God to rescue or protect us from the evil one, the devil, because the devil is the one who tempts us to sin. Other people think that Jesus is asking God to protect us from evil in general. After this part, some people think Jesus also said "for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." These extra words are not a part of this passage of Scripture, but many churches say this doxology, or prayer ending, at the end of Jesus' prayer. It was common during Jesus' time for Jewish prayers to end this way.

Next, Jesus explains about forgiveness more. Jesus' mission on earth was to bring forgiveness to people through his death on the cross and resurrection. If people accept this and follow him, then they should act in the same way he acted towards them. Therefore, he expects his disciples to forgive others.

Then, Jesus teaches about fasting. Jesus finished talking about giving money to the poor and about prayer, and now fasting is the third way Jesus teaches about being righteous. Fasting means not eating food and sometimes also not drinking water for a day or longer so that a person can honor God, pray to God, or show sadness for their sins. Jesus assumes that sometimes his disciples will choose to fast for these reasons. Jesus teaches that when the disciples fast, they should do it in a way so that other people are not aware of their fasting.

Stop and talk about fasting in your culture. What are common fasting practices? Do people stop eating food and drinking water, or only food? Do people fast on certain days? Is it obvious in your culture when someone is fasting? Why do people choose to fast?

Jesus does not want the disciples to look sad or stop washing their faces or combing their hair like the hypocrites do. Jesus talked about hypocrites before when he said hypocrites only want other people to admire them for giving money to the poor. On the outside, hypocrites make their faces sad and pretend to be doing good when they fast. On the inside, hypocrites only fast so other people will see them and admire them. Jesus says, "I tell you the truth" to emphasize what he will say next. Jesus says this when he wants his disciples to listen closely because the next teaching is very important. Jesus tells them when people admire the hypocrites for fasting, that will be the hypocrites' only reward. God will not reward hypocrites for fasting so that other people will see them fasting.

Finally, Jesus teaches the disciples the right way to fast. Jesus says that when you, the disciples, fast, you should wash your face and comb, or anoint, your head. People anointed their head to make it look or smell good. The idea here is that you should wash your face and make your hair look good as if everything is normal. Other people should not see the disciples are fasting. God will see the fasting that the disciples do because God sees everything. God sees the disciples fasting in a secret way, and God will reward the disciples for fasting in secret.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples more about how to pray to God.

Second scene: Jesus teaches the disciples about how to fast.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- God
- People who do wrong things to the disciples
- Hypocrites
- Other people watching the hypocrites

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. He taught them about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus taught about giving money to the poor and about prayer, and now Jesus finishes this section by giving an example prayer and then teaching about fasting.

In the first scene, it is important to remember that this is a continuation of the section before about prayer. Jesus taught the disciples not to pray like hypocrites, and about how they should pray to God in secret. Now Jesus gives an example prayer of what the disciples should say to God. Jesus starts by saying "Pray like this." This example prayer is said to all the disciples and the crowd listening, but the disciples can also pray like this on their own too. Think about how you can show the disciples all praying this prayer to God together.

Remember that Jesus knows God is already holy, and he is praying that people would recognize God is holy. Also, remember that Jesus wants people to pray that God rules and that people do God's will on earth the same way as in heaven. Jesus prays to ask God for daily bread, or necessary food. Think about using toys or other objects to show bread that people need for that day.

Next, it is important to remember that Jesus teaches the disciples they need to ask for forgiveness from God. Jesus wants the disciples to ask for forgiveness from God in the same way the disciples forgive other people for doing wrong things to them.

Jesus ends the prayer by asking God to keep us away from temptation and to protect us from evil.

After Jesus finished the example prayer, he taught more about forgiveness. Remember that Jesus already taught about forgiveness in the example prayer, and now he explains more about why it is so important to forgive other people. Jesus says this in two ways in order to emphasize the importance of forgiveness. First he says, "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you." Then he says the same thing in a negative way. "If you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you." Think about how you can show two people forgiving each other using toys or other objects.

In the second scene, Jesus teaches about fasting. First, Jesus teaches how the disciples should not fast, and then Jesus teaches the right way to fast. This is the same format Jesus used when he taught about giving money to the poor and about praying in the section before this story. Each section shows a way the disciples should do their good works for God alone and not for the praise of other people.

Jesus tells the disciples that when they fast from food, they should not fast like the hypocrites. The hypocrites have sad faces and do not wash or take care of their appearance when they fast. Think about how you can show the hypocrites fasting without cleaning their faces. Hypocrites want other people to notice them fasting, and Jesus says that this is their only reward. God will not give hypocrites any reward for fasting in front of other people.

Then, in the last part of this scene, Jesus teaches the disciples the right way to fast. Jesus says the disciples should clean their faces and comb their hair so that no one knows they are fasting. Only God will know about their fasting, and God will reward the disciples for fasting in secret. Remember that God cares about the motivation for fasting. Jesus tells the disciples to fast without drawing attention to themselves like the hypocrites do. This scene finishes this series of Jesus' teaching on giving money to the poor, praying, and fasting.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples more about how to pray to God.

Second scene: Jesus teaches the disciples about how to fast.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- God
- People who do wrong things to the disciples
- Hypocrites
- Other people watching the hypocrites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. A crowd is also listening. Jesus tells the disciples this is how they should pray, and then he starts praying an example prayer to God. Jesus prays, "Our Father in heaven."

Stop the action.

- Surprised that I can call God my Father,
- Excited to learn how to pray to God in a new way, and
- Wondering if this is how I need to always pray to God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus prays that people would recognize God's name is holy. Jesus also prays that God's kingdom would come and that people would do God's will on the earth the same way that God rules and his will is done in heaven. Jesus prays that God would give them the bread they need for today.

Stop the action.

- Remembering how God gave his people manna, or food, in the wilderness when he rescued them from Egypt,
- Wondering why I need to ask God for bread every day, and
- Glad to depend on God for my food. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus prays for forgiveness for sins from God, in the same way the disciples forgive other people for doing wrong things to them.

Stop the action.

- Wondering if there is a limit to what I need to forgive others for,
- Not sure how to forgive other people, and
- Glad that God will forgive me for doing wrong things. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus also prays that God would keep us away from temptation and protect us from evil.

Stop the action.

- Yes! I need help because I feel like I always do wrong things,
- Happy to think God wants to protect me from being tempted to do wrong things, and
- Wondering how God can keep me away from temptation. [!end] Restart the action.

Then, Jesus explains more about forgiveness. Jesus wants the disciples to know how important it is to forgive other people when they do wrong things to the disciples. Jesus reminds the disciples that God will forgive them for their sins against God if they forgive other people for their sins against the disciples.

Stop the action.

- Surprised that the disciples forgave me,
- Wondering what kind of people they are because they forgave me, and
- Curious about their God because they forgave me. [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jesus teaches about fasting. Jesus says that when the disciples fast, they should not fast like the hypocrites. The hypocrites have sad faces and don't wash or clean up in the normal way. The hypocrites want other people to see them fasting so that other people will admire them for fasting from food. The only reward the hypocrites get for fasting is that other people notice them fasting. Jesus says God does not reward hypocrites for fasting in front of other people.

Stop the action.

- Confused about why my fasting is not good enough for a reward from God,
- Proud of myself for denying myself food today, and
- Glad that some people noticed me fasting.

Also, ask the actors playing the people watching the hypocrites, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Impressed at how the hypocrites do their fasting,
- Wishing I could be more holy like the hypocrites, and
- Wondering if this is all I need to do to please God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus then teaches the disciples the right way to fast. Jesus says the disciples should wash their faces and clean in the normal way so that no one will notice the disciples are fasting. Jesus says God can see that the disciples are fasting, and that God will reward the disciples for fasting in a secret way.

Stop the action.

- Glad my children are fasting to honor me,
- Happy my children want a relationship with me, and
- Ready to reward my children for fasting in a secret way.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus begins his example prayer by calling God their **Father** in heaven, meaning God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this. **Heaven** can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus prays that people would recognize that God's name is **holy**. Holy is the meaning of hallowed and honored, which is how some translations translate this. Holy means that God is perfect and separate from his creation. Translate holy the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word holy.

Jesus prays that God's **kingdom** would come. Often, Jesus uses the phrase **kingdom of heaven** to talk about God ruling in the hearts of his people rather than a physical place. You will remember the phrase "kingdom of heaven" from several previous passages. Translate the phrase the same here. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase kingdom of heaven.

Jesus prays that God would forgive us for our **sins** in the same way we forgive other people for sinning or doing wrong things to us. Two words for sin are used in this passage-debt and transgression. Debt is used as a metaphor for sin, and transgression is serious disobedience or rebellion. Both words mean sin and are often simply translated sin. Translate sin the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word sin.

Forgiveness means not punishing someone for the wrong things they did to you. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word forgiveness.

Stop and discuss as a translation team some examples of forgiveness in your life or in your community. What words or ideas do you use to describe forgiving someone when they do something wrong to you or someone else?

Jesus prays that God would keep us away from temptation and protect us from the evil one. "The evil one" means evil. This most likely refers to the devil himself. Translate **evil** the same as you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word evil.

Jesus taught his disciples about fasting. **Fasting** means not eating food and sometimes also not drinking water for a day or longer so that a person can pray to God. For Jews, it was traditionally a 24-hour period of no eating or drinking from sunset to sunset. Translate "fast" the same as you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word fast.

Jesus did not want his disciples to fast the way **hypocrites** fast. Hypocrites want people to notice their fasting, so they do not clean their faces. The word hypocrite in the original language means an actor in the theater that pretends to be someone they are not. In this context, a hypocrite means someone who looks good on the outside, but inside they do not truly love God. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hypocrite.

Jesus says "I tell you the truth" to emphasize that God will not give the hypocrites a reward for fasting in front of other people.

Stop and talk with your translation team about how you emphasize something in your language. What words do you use when you are about to say something very important?

Jesus says hypocrites will only have the attention from other people as their **reward**. God will not reward people for fasting in front of other people. This reward is a special gift from God that he gives his people in heaven.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 6:9–18

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4158965 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6935138 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 6:19–34

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 6:19–34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside, and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus taught them about giving money to the poor, prayer, and fasting. During these teachings, Jesus said that God will give the disciples a heavenly reward for giving to the poor, prayer, and fasting if the disciples do these good works in secret. Now, Jesus teaches more about this heavenly reward and about earthly treasures. Jesus also teaches about worry and about God meeting the disciples' needs.

Jesus teaches three different sayings on treasure, the eye, and slavery to show the disciples about how they must be fully devoted to God and how to have the right attitude about material possessions. First, Jesus says the disciples should not gather treasure on earth, which could be money, possessions, land, animals, or anything else that is valuable. During Jesus' time, people kept their money or treasure at home. Jesus shows that treasure on earth will not last. Moths can destroy or eat the treasure. Moths are flying insects that make worms and eat holes in clothes.

Show and show a picture of a moth.

Also, rust can destroy the treasure. The word in the original language for "rust" means "eating." It can mean destroying metal or also destroying other kinds of treasure. Another way that it's not good to gather treasure on earth is because thieves can break in and steal the treasure. The word in the original language for "break in" is "dig through." In Jesus' time, most Jews had homes made of dried mud bricks. Thieves needed to dig a hole in the side of the mud wall to enter and take the treasure.

Show a picture of some metal with rust on it.

Stop and discuss with your translation team what kinds of earthly treasure people value in your culture. Talk about how people show what is most valuable to them, whether it is money, possessions, land, animals, clothing, jewels, or some other kind of treasure.

Jesus uses the same three phrases again to show how storing treasure in heaven means that the treasure will last forever. When a disciple is part of the kingdom of God, the good works that they do-like giving to the poor, praying, and fasting-are like gathering treasure for themselves. Moths and rust cannot destroy treasure in heaven, and thieves cannot steal treasure in heaven. Jesus finishes this section by saying a person's thoughts and actions-the person's "heart" in the Jewish culture-will be focused on the things he values most.

Next, Jesus uses special language about light and darkness. Many believe Jesus was teaching both about the importance of being devoted to God and about generosity to others. Jesus says the eye is like a lamp for the body. A person's eyes help them understand spiritual things about God. A lamp was a small clay container with oil in it. People lit a wick in the lamp to give light. The lamp helped people see when it was dark.

Show and show a picture of a lamp.

Someone with a healthy eye can think clearly about God and it would be like having light in their whole body. This person also thinks clearly about money and is generous with other people. If a person's eyes are bad, it will be like the person's whole body is in darkness. This means he cannot see well spiritually, and he does not understand truth about God. During Jesus' time, bad eyes often represented someone who was not generous with others. Jesus tells them if the light they think they have is actually darkness, their whole body is in great darkness. It will be impossible to understand truth about God, and the person will live in spiritual darkness.

Stop and discuss with your translation team how people in your culture talk about light and darkness. What other symbols do you use for understanding and truth? Also, what ideas does your culture use for generosity or selfishness, like "bad eyes" in Jewish culture?

Next, Jesus shows that a person who loves both God and money is like a servant who serves two masters. During Jesus' time, Romans had servants or slaves and it was impossible for a slave to be owned by a second master. A servant was totally devoted to their one master, and the owner did not allow them to serve another master. The owner knew that the slave could not be completely loyal to both. Jesus shows the disciples must be devoted to God and not be distracted by earthly money and treasures.

Jesus continued teaching by telling the disciples not to worry, or be anxious, about food, drink, or clothes. He is showing how God will meet their needs as they follow God. Jesus shows the disciples there are more important things in life than food and clothing. Jesus uses the examples of birds and flowers to show the disciples that God will care for them.

Stop and talk with your translation team about worry in your culture. What kinds of things do people worry about? Describe a situation in your life or a friend's life where you were worried about food, drink, clothes, or something else.

First, Jesus wants the disciples to know that God will provide food for them. Jesus shows them that birds do not plant seeds, harvest crops, or gather food to store for later. However, their Father God in heaven still provides food for the birds. Jesus shows that if God cares for the less important birds, of course he also cares for the disciples because they are more important than birds. Jesus does not want them to worry because worry cannot make a person live even one day or one hour longer.

In the second example, Jesus wants the disciples not to worry about clothing. Jesus describes the flowers in the field and how the flowers do not work to make clothing for themselves. Jesus says not even the wealthy King Solomon had clothing as beautiful as these flowers. King Solomon was the richest of all Israel's kings. King Solomon was the son of King David. King Solomon was very wealthy and wise, and he lived more than 900 years before Jesus' time. The disciples listening to Jesus knew who Solomon was.

Jesus says that God causes the flowers to be beautiful even though they are alive for a short time before they die, and people burn them. People often burned dead grass and weeds in an oven for fuel. Since God provides clothes for less important flowers, of course he will provide clothing for his people. Jesus then says the disciples don't trust God enough because they worry about what clothes they will wear instead of trusting God.

Jesus reminds his disciples that Gentiles, or non-Jewish people, worry about their daily needs. But Jesus' disciples have a father in heaven-God himself-who will take care of them. God wants them to spend their time and energy on living under God's rule in his kingdom instead of trying to gain more food and clothing. As king, God will supply his disciples with all that they need when they focus on following him completely.

Finally, Jesus tells them not to worry about tomorrow, which means not to worry about what they will need in the future or what problems will come later. We should not add worries about tomorrow to the troubles of today.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches the disciples about being fully devoted to God and about being generous to others. He uses examples of treasure on earth and in heaven, the eye, light, and darkness, and serving God and not money.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about not worrying about food, drink, or clothing. He uses examples of the birds and the flowers to show why the disciples should not worry.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- A person storing treasure in their house
- A thief
- God
- A slave and two masters
- Pagans or unbelievers

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. Jesus already taught about giving money to the poor, prayer, and fasting. Now, Jesus teaches about the heavenly reward the disciples will have for doing these good works. Jesus also teaches them about not worrying.

The first scene is all about being fully devoted to God and about being generous to others. Remember that in the first part, Jesus tells the disciples not to store up earthly treasure. He says three ways that earthly treasure will not last. Moths will eat it, rust will destroy it, and thieves will steal it. Think of how you can represent a person storing treasure on earth, and how you can show a moth eating it, rust destroying it, and a thief stealing it.

Then, Jesus contrasts treasure in heaven with treasure on earth. Jesus uses the same three ways to show that treasure in heaven will last. Moths won't eat it, rust won't destroy it, and thieves won't steal it. Then Jesus says something very important—he explains the reason that the disciples should store up treasures in heaven instead of treasures on earth. He says that the disciples will spend their time thinking about the treasure that's most valuable to them.

Then, Jesus teaches about good eyes and bad eyes. Remember that Jesus is using special language to show how good eyes represent a person who understands the truth of God. Think of how you can show good eyes that bring light into the person's whole body like a lamp shines light. Also, think about how to show bad eyes that do not bring light into a person. That person lives in darkness which means they do not understand truth about God. Remember to show the contrast of good eyes bringing light, understanding, and generosity, and bad eyes bringing darkness, no understanding, and no generosity to others.

In the last part of the first scene, Jesus compares God and money to two masters. Jesus compares his disciples to slaves or servants. Remember that Jesus says no slave can serve two masters. If the slave tried to serve two masters, the slave would hate one master and love the other master. In the original language, Jesus says this in a poetic way. He says the same things again in another way to emphasize that the slave would be devoted to one master and despise the other master. Jesus concludes this scene by saying that a person must choose to serve either God or money. It is not possible to love money the most and love God the most at the same time.

In the second scene, Jesus continues to teach the disciples about how they should view earthly possessions and money. Jesus does not want his disciples to worry about food, drink, or clothing like the non-Jews who do not follow God worry about these things. There are three parts to this scene. First, Jesus talks about the birds and how God provides food for the birds. The birds don't plant seeds, harvest, or store food, but they have enough

to eat. Think about how to show birds getting the food they need to live. Of course God will provide food and drink for the disciples, who are more important than birds.

Next, Jesus gives the example of the beautiful flowers and how they do not work to make clothing for themselves. Jesus says that even King Solomon did not have as beautiful clothing as the flowers. The flowers do not live long, but God provides clothes for them. Of course God will provide clothing for the disciples, who are more important than flowers. Jesus directly talks to the disciples and rebukes them. Jesus says they have little faith because they don't trust God to give them clothing.

Jesus asks, "Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" Jesus does not want an answer to this question. Jesus uses a question to show food and clothing are not the most important parts of our lives.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of statement?

Jesus also tells the disciples that God clothes and cares for the flowers of the field. Jesus says, "I say to you" to emphasize what he will say next. Jesus says this when he wants his disciples to listen closely because the next teaching is very important.

Stop and talk with your translation team about how you emphasize something in your language. What words do you use when you are about to say something very important?

The last part of the second scene is a summary of the scene. Jesus tells the disciples that because God cares for them more than birds and flowers, the disciples should not ask where they will get their food, drink, or clothing. People who don't know God, or unbelievers, seek after food, drink, and clothing, but the disciples do not need to worry like the unbelievers worry. God will care for the disciples' needs. Jesus says the disciples should live in a different way than the unbelievers live. The disciples should seek God's kingdom and seek what is good, and God will provide everything they need. Think of how you can show a contrast between how unbelievers live and how the disciples should live.

The last statement Jesus says is a conclusion to this section. Jesus reminds the disciples not to worry about problems in the future. Every day will have troubles and problems, so the disciples should not add troubles from other days.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- A person storing treasure in their house
- A thief
- God
- A person with good eyes
- A person with bad eyes
- A slave and two masters
- Pagans or unbelievers

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. The disciples are sitting close to him. A crowd is also listening. Jesus teaches the disciples about not storing up treasure on earth. Jesus says treasure on earth will not last. Moths will eat it, rust will destroy it, and thieves will steal it. Instead, the disciples should store treasure in heaven. No moths will eat it, no rust will destroy it, and no thieves will steal it.

Stop the action.

- Wondering what "treasure in heaven" is,
- Glad to know there is treasure that no one can destroy or steal, and
- Wondering what I should do with my treasure on earth. [!end] Restart the action.

Next, Jesus teaches about the eye, light, and darkness. He says a person with good eyes understands truth about God, has light in all their body, and is generous. A person with bad eyes does not understand truth about God, lives in darkness, and is not generous.

Stop the action.

- Happy to understand spiritual things about God,
- Full of light,
- Devoted to God, and
- Ready to share with others.

Also, ask the actor playing the person with bad eyes, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Full of darkness,
- Confused about why I can't understand truth about God, and
- Unwilling to be generous with others. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches about slaves and masters to show how the disciples must choose to serve either God or money. Jesus says it is impossible for a slave to fully serve two different masters. The slave will love and be devoted to one master and hate and despise the other master. Jesus wants the disciples to fully serve God and not money.

Stop the action.

- Confused about who to serve,
- Exhausted by trying to serve both masters, and
- Loving one master more than the other one. [!end] Restart the action.

Next, Jesus teaches about not worrying about food, drink, and clothing. Jesus says the birds don't plant seeds, harvest, or store food, and God provides food for the birds to eat. Jesus says that God will certainly provide food and drink for the disciples since God cares for them more than he cares for the birds.

Stop the action.

- Glad that God will provide my food and drink,
- Wondering how to stop worrying, and
- Realizing that even the birds have to work to find the food that God provides for them. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus also says the flowers in the field do not work to make clothes, but they are more beautiful than the wealthiest king in Israel's history. God clothes the flowers even though they are only alive a short time. Jesus says God will certainly provide clothes for the disciples as well since God cares for them more than he cares for the flowers. Jesus says the disciples have little faith because they worry about what clothes they'll wear.

Stop the action.

- Happy that God promises to give me clothes to wear,
- Offended that Jesus said my faith is small, and
- Wanting to have more faith and trust God to provide for me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the disciples that the pagans, or unbelievers, are worried about getting enough food, drink, and clothing. Jesus wants the disciples to seek after God and God's kingdom instead of seeking food, drink, and clothing. Jesus says God will give them what they need.

Stop the action.

- Frustrated that Jesus says we're not seeking the right things,
- Glad to get the food, drink, and clothing that we do, and
- Looking down on the disciples for not trying harder to get more food, drink, and clothing in this life. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says the disciples should not worry about tomorrow, or the future. Every day will have enough trouble, so they should not add troubles to another day.

Stop the action.

- Hopeful that my disciples will obey my teaching,
- Loving toward my disciples, even if they seem to always worry about unimportant things, and
- Glad that God provides for all of their needs.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus says the disciples should store treasure in **heaven** and not treasure on earth. Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus says that where a person's treasure is, that's where their heart will also be. In Jewish culture, "heart" was the word to show the inner life and thoughts.

Stop and talk about what word is most natural in your language to represent the inner life and thoughts. Use the same word that you translated before when Jesus taught the saying "blessed are the pure in heart."

Jesus says a person's eyes are like a lamp for their body. Their eyes bring either **light** or darkness for their whole body. If a person is "full of light," it means they understand truth about God. Translate light the same as you have previously.

Stop and show the picture of a lamp again if needed.

Jesus says no **servant**, or slave, can serve two masters. "Serving two masters" does not mean working two different jobs for two different employers. In Jesus' time, people owned slaves and the slaves or servants were completely under the control of the master who owned them. Translate servant or serving in the same way you have previously and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the words servant.

Jesus says their **heavenly father** cares for the birds and feeds them. Jesus calls God their heavenly father because God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this.

Jesus says the disciples have "little faith" because of their worry. **Faith** means having trust and confidence in God. Someone with "little faith" means they do not trust God to meet their needs. Translate faith in the same way you have previously and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word faith.

Jesus says the **Gentiles**, or pagan unbelievers, seek after food, drink, and clothing. Jews did not have a high opinion of Gentiles because Gentiles were not a part of God's family in their view. Jews traditionally viewed Gentiles as immoral and ungodly. Often the term Gentiles refers to the Romans. In the original language, the word Gentiles is translated as pagans, foreigners, or "those who do not know God." Jesus wants the disciples to live differently than the Gentiles. Translate Gentiles the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word Gentiles.

Jesus says the disciples should seek the **kingdom of God** instead of seeking food, drink, and clothing. The kingdom of God is the same as the **kingdom of heaven**. The kingdom of heaven is about God ruling in the hearts of his people rather than a physical place. You will remember the phrase kingdom of heaven from several previous passages. Translate the phrase the same here. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase kingdom of heaven.

Jesus also says the disciples should seek God's **righteousness**. Jesus means the disciples should do what God says is right and good. This should be translated the same as in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word righteousness.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 6:19-34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4754167 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7928218 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 7:1-12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 7:1-12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is sitting on a mountainside, and he is teaching his disciples, or close followers. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus taught them about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus also taught them about treasure in heaven, about worry, and about God meeting the disciples' needs. Now, Jesus teaches about not judging others and about how to be persistent in prayer to God.

Jesus starts this section of teaching by telling his disciples not to judge others. "Judge" means to declare someone is guilty or to condemn them. Jesus is talking about everyday relationships the disciples have with others. Jesus uses a common saying at that time to show that if the disciples judge someone harshly, God will also judge them harshly. If the disciples judge others fairly, God will also judge the disciples fairly. During Jesus' time, people used a measuring cup to sell a certain amount of grain or a measuring stick to measure the length of a product. If you fill up the cup full when you sell something to others, then other people will also fill up their cup full when they sell something to you. If you are generous with others, they will be generous with you. And if you are not generous with others, they will not be generous with you. The standards you use with others are the same standards God will use with you.

Stop and show a picture of a measuring cup and measuring stick from Jesus' time.

Next, Jesus tells a short story to teach something important about God. He asks them two questions, and he does not want an answer to the questions. He is showing it is wrong to pay more attention to a small speck of dust in their brother's eye when they have a log in their own eye. A speck was a small piece of straw, dust, or wood, and a log is a large, heavy piece of wood people used to build a house. "Brother" means a fellow disciple and not a brother by blood. Both a speck and a log were common in Jesus' time.

Stop and show a picture of a log.

Also, discuss with your translation team a time when you had a speck of dust in your eye or imagine what it would feel like. If possible, visit someone who builds houses and see how big a log is compared to a small speck. If people do not use wood to build houses in your community, find other large materials they use and compare them to a speck of wood or dust.

The speck represents a small sin or problem in a disciple's life. A log represents a large sin or problem in a disciple's life. Jesus wants the disciples to pay more attention to the big sins in their own lives than the smaller sins in their fellow disciples' lives. Also, it is impossible to help someone remove the speck, or small sin, from a brother's eye, until you take care of the log, or large sin, in your own eye. Jesus calls the disciples hypocrites because they do not use the same standards for themselves that they use for others. He wanted the disciples to take care of their own, larger sins before trying to help their brothers with their smaller sins.

Next, Jesus teaches a saying using special language about dogs, pigs, and pearls. Jesus does not want the disciples to give holy things to dogs or throw pearls to pigs. Dogs and pigs probably refer to people who reject the teachings of Jesus. Both dogs and pigs were unclean animals in Jewish culture. Pearls are small, beautiful beads that people use for jewelry. Pearls and "what is holy" mean the truth about God.

Stop and show a picture of a pearl, a dog, and a pig.

Jesus was saying the disciples should not continue to teach the holy things about God to people who continue to reject these teachings. It would be like pigs walking on the valuable pearls, or wild dogs turning and attacking

them with their teeth. Jesus wanted his disciples to be careful in not sharing God's truth with people who did not value it.

In the next section, Jesus teaches more about prayer. Jesus uses three ways to say that the disciples should keep praying to God for what they need. Jesus says the disciples should ask God for things in prayer, seek from God what they need, and knock on the door to ask for God to open it. In Jesus' time, people knocked on a wooden door to see if the person inside would open the door. In each case, Jesus says that God will open the door for the disciples, or give them what they ask for.

Jesus uses the example of a father and son to teach more about prayer. Jesus says that God will give the disciples good things in the same way a human father gives his children good things. Jesus asks two questions, and he does not want an answer to these questions. He is showing that no human father will give his son a stone if the son asks for bread. Bread was the common food that Jewish people ate every day, and the son was asking for bread because he was hungry. A stone may have looked like a round loaf of bread.

Stop and show a picture of some bread.

Jesus' second question shows that no father will give his son a snake if the son asks for a fish. Fish was also a common food that Jewish people ate, and the son was asking for a fish because he was hungry. Jewish law said the people could not eat snakes, so no father would give his son a snake. A snake may have looked like some kinds of fish common in Jesus' area, but a snake could bite someone and hurt them.

Stop and show pictures of a snake and a fish.

Stop and discuss parents giving good gifts to their children. Tell a story about a time you or someone you know gave a child a good gift.

Jesus compares people and God and the kinds of gifts people and God give. Jesus says that people are evil, and they still can give good gifts like bread and fish to their children. All the people listening to Jesus knew that God is good, and so God certainly will give good gifts to his children when they ask him. Jesus calls God their Father in heaven because God cares for his people like a father cares for his children.

Jesus finishes this section of teaching with an important statement. It is not a summary of the previous teachings about prayer to God because this statement is about how to treat other people. Instead, this is a conclusion of the *entire teaching* Jesus has given on the mountain so far. Jesus tells the disciples they should treat other people the way they want other people to treat them. This was similar to a common saying that other Jewish teachers also taught. Other Jewish teachers taught, "Do not treat other people the way you hate being treated." Jesus gave the disciples a higher standard when he said they should treat others the way they want to be treated. Jesus said when the disciples treat other people this way, they are doing the main thing that Moses' law and the prophets taught people to do.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples about not judging others.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about how to pray persistently to God.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- Other people
- A brother with a log in his eye
- A brother with a speck in his eye
- People who reject God's truth
- A father and a son
- God

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. Jesus taught about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus also taught about not worrying. Now, Jesus teaches about not judging others and about how to be persistent in prayer to God.

In the first scene, it is important to remember that Jesus begins with the statement that the disciples should not judge others. The reason not to judge others is because God will judge the disciples the same way. Jesus gives several ways to describe this idea. He talks about a measuring cup or stick, and he tells a story about a speck and a log. Remember that God will use the same standards and measures to judge you that you use to judge others. Think about how you can show this idea using a picture or an actual cup full of grain, water, or something else.

Jesus asks several questions to emphasize that his disciples should look at their own sins instead of their brother's sins. Jesus does not want an answer to these questions. Jesus uses questions to emphasize that it is impossible to help a fellow disciple with their smaller sin until you remove the larger sin from your own life.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use questions here, or some other form of statements?

Also, remember that Jesus uses strong language when he calls the disciples "hypocrites." This is the only time in the book of Matthew that Jesus calls his own disciples "hypocrites." Jesus wants his disciples to stop judging themselves by different standards than they judge others.

The second example Jesus uses to talk about judging others is the story about the speck and the log. Remember that Jesus was using the idea of a very large log in a disciple's eye to show how incredibly big that sin was compared to a very small speck of dust, straw, or wood in the other disciple's eye. Remember that Jesus asks two questions to show how impossible it would be for a disciple with a log in their eye to help remove the speck in a fellow disciple's eye. Jesus also wants each disciple to pay more attention to their own sins than to the sins of the other disciples.

Stop here and as a translation team discuss: Put a small piece of dust in front of your face, and then a log in front of your face. Which one hinders your eyesight more? This is an example of how big sins affect us and how we need to get rid of them.

In the last part of the first scene, remember that Jesus teaches the disciples they should be careful who they continue to teach God's truth to. Jesus compares God's truth to pearls. Jesus says that people who continue to reject God's truth are like dogs and pigs, which are both unclean animals. Jesus says that pigs will walk on the pearls and dogs will attack you. In the original language, Jesus says these two phrases in the opposite order, but most people believe the pigs are the ones who would walk on the pearls, and the dogs would attack. Jesus says "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs." They, meaning the pigs, will walk over the pearls and they, meaning the dogs, will turn to attack you. This is a poetic form in the original language. It might be more natural to use the poetic form in your language, or it might be better to keep the phrases about the dogs together and the phrases about the pigs together. Think of how you can represent

people who do not care about God's truth. Try using toy animals to represent the "pigs" and "dogs" that Jesus is talking about.

In the second scene, Jesus says the disciples should pray to God for things, and God will give them the things they ask for. Remember that Jesus lists three ways to keep praying: ask, seek, and knock. Jesus uses these three ways to say the same thing. Jesus wants the disciples to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. Jesus says when the disciples do this, God will answer their prayers, and it will be like God opens the door they are knocking on. Think about how you can show a disciple praying to God and "knocking on the door" for God to answer. If there is another, more culturally appropriate way to "knock on the door" and "answer," try showing that using a picture or toys. For example, maybe people in your culture clap their hands or call out to announce their presence.

Next, Jesus teaches a short example about a father and son. Jesus asks two questions to emphasize that no father would refuse to give his son bread or fish if the son was hungry. No father would give a stone to his son instead of bread and a snake to his son instead of a fish.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use questions here, or some other form of statements?

Even though people are evil, they know how to give their children good gifts that they need. God is good, so we know he will certainly give good gifts to his children. Think about how you can show the scene with a son asking his father for bread and a fish, and the father giving him those things.

It is important to remember that the final part of the second scene is a summary statement for everything Jesus has taught on the mountain so far. Everything about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, all the teachings about how to pray, fast, and give to the poor, and all the other teachings are summarized in this one statement: "Treat others as you would want them to treat you." Remember that this concluding statement is also a summary of everything in the law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.

Stop and talk as a team about how you show in your language that someone is giving the main point of a teaching. Try telling a story that has a main point. How do you say it? How do you talk about the main point? Do you slow down your speech? Do you use different words?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- Other people
- A brother with a log in his eye
- A brother with a speck in his eye
- People who reject God's truth
- A father and a son
- God

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. Jesus teaches them not to judge others because God will judge the disciples the same way the disciples judge others. Jesus says God will use the same standard for the disciples that the disciples use with others.

Stop the action.

- Surprised that God is not proud of me for seeing the wrong that other people do,
 - shocked that God would judge me with the same standards I use for others, and
 - Humbled that I need to use the same standards on myself that I use for other people. [!end]
- Restart the action.

Jesus tells a parable about a speck and a log. Jesus says one disciple has a speck in his eye and one disciple has a log in his eye. The disciple with the log tries to get the speck out of the other disciple's eye. Of course, the disciple with the log cannot see to help the disciple with the speck. Jesus wants the disciples to first pay attention to their own sin before trying to help others.

Stop the action.

- Just wanting to help my brother get rid of his speck,
- Mad that God would say I have bigger sins than my brother with the speck in his eye, and
- Confused about why anyone even says there's a log in my eye-I don't see it or feel it.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Sad that my disciples always look at others' sins more than their own,
 - Hopeful that my disciples will listen to and follow my teaching, and
 - Patient with my disciples because I know they will fail over and over as they learn to follow me. [!end]
- Restart the action.

Jesus says the disciples should not give pearls to pigs and dogs because the pigs and dogs will destroy the pearls and tear the disciples to pieces. Jesus means the disciples should not continue to share God's truth with people who continue to reject the truth.

Stop the action.

- Offended that those disciples think they know everything about me and how I should live,
- Ready to laugh at the disciples for the way they live and the things they say, and
- Fine with my life and not wanting anyone to tell me what to do with my life.

Also, ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Confused about how to tell if someone is a "dog" or a "pig" and is rejecting the "pearls" of God's truth,
- Discouraged that people do not accept God's message of truth, and
- Confused about how this statement fits with the teaching about not judging others. [!end]
Restart the action.

In the second scene, Jesus teaches about prayer. Jesus says the disciples should ask, seek, and knock, and that God will answer their prayers and open the door to them.

Stop the action.

Next, Jesus teaches a story about a son and a father. The son is hungry, and he asks his father for bread. Of course, the father will give the son bread, and not an inedible stone. Also, the son asks for fish, and of course the father will give the son fish to eat and not a dangerous snake. Jesus shares this story to show that even imperfect human fathers want to give their children good gifts. God in heaven is perfect and good, and he will of course give his children good gifts.

Stop the action.

- Of course I would give my son bread and fish, and not a stone or a snake,
- Understanding more about how much my father God in heaven cares for me, and
- Full of love for my son and glad to provide for him, even if I'm not perfect myself. [!end]
Restart the action.

Finally, Jesus finishes this teaching with a summary statement from his entire teaching on the mountain. Jesus says that the disciples should act toward others in the same way they want others to act toward them. Jesus says this is a summary of all the laws of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.

Stop the action.

- Confused about how such a simple statement can summarize all the laws of Moses and the teachings of the prophets,
- Amazed at Jesus' wise words, and
- Thinking that it would be hard to live this way. This is much harder to do than just follow all the rules!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus calls his disciples **hypocrites** because they judge others with different standards than they use for themselves. Jesus previously used the word hypocrite to describe people who fast, pray, or give money to the poor on the outside, but inside they do not truly love God. The word hypocrite in the original language means an actor in the theater that pretends to be someone they are not. In this context, a hypocrite means someone uses different standards for themselves than with others. This hypocrite is unaware of their inconsistent behavior. Translate hypocrite the same as you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hypocrite.

Jesus also says the disciples should not give what is **holy** to dogs or throw pearls to pigs. Something that is holy is something that is set apart for a special purpose to God. Holy things can mean the truth about who God is. Jesus did not want the disciples to continue to share holy things about God with people who continued to reject the truth of God. Translate holy the same as you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word holy.

Dogs lived on the streets, were wild, and attacked other animals. Jesus is not talking about dogs that people kept in their homes. In Jewish culture, dogs were unclean animals and lived outside. Dogs represent people who continue to reject the truth about God.

Stop and show a picture of a dog again if needed.

Pearls are valuable jewels that are found in shellfish called oysters. Pearls are small, round, and beautiful. People often wear pearls in necklaces or other jewelry. Jesus does not want the disciples to continue giving pearls, or what is valuable and holy, the truth about God, to people who continue to reject this truth.

Stop and show a picture of a pearl again if needed.

Jesus says that people are **evil**, but they still know how to give good gifts to their children who are hungry. In this case, evil means sinful or someone who does bad things. Jesus is showing a contrast between people who sin and God who is good and never sins. Even people who sin and do wrong things can be capable of giving good things to their children. Translate evil the same as you have in previous passages.

Jesus says "your father in heaven" will give good gifts to the disciples. God created his people and cares for them like a **father** cares for his children. God is also Jesus' Father, so make sure to translate "your Father" to show this. **Heaven** can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

Jesus finishes this teaching by saying that the disciples should treat others the way they want others to treat them. This is a summary of everything taught in Moses' law and the teachings of the prophets. The **law of Moses** is the rules from God that Moses shared with the Jewish people to tell them how to live. Sometimes the word **law** is mentioned alone, but it refers to the law God gave the Jews through Moses. Translate law the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word law.

Jesus also said this statement is a summary of the teachings of the **prophets**. The prophets, or messengers in the Old Testament, spoke messages from God. Translate prophets the same way you have in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a full definition of the word prophet.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 7:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4887324 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (8100759 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 7:13-29

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 7:13-29 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This is the final part of a long teaching Jesus gave his disciples. A crowd of people is also listening. Jesus taught about not judging others and about how to pray to God. In this last section of his teaching, Jesus warns the disciples about how to respond to his teaching. Jesus tells four stories to show the difference between a right response and a wrong response.

First, Jesus teaches about how to enter God's kingdom. He uses roads and gates to show two different ways people choose to live. During Jesus' time, it was common for people to describe two ways to live. Some people

walk through the narrow gate and on the narrow road or path, which leads to eternal life in heaven. A gate is a door or entrance. It is difficult to walk on this narrow road, and only a few people find it. Walking on God's narrow path means following the teachings Jesus gave them. Jesus contrasts the narrow gate with the wide gate and the wide road, which leads to destruction, death, and hell. This road is easy to follow, and most people find it. Jesus is telling the disciples they should choose to follow God's path that leads to life. The world's path leads to death.

Stop and show a picture of a gate. Tell about a time you or someone you know walked on a narrow road or through a narrow gate. Talk about walking on a wide road or through a wide gate. How was that experience different?

Next, Jesus warns the disciples about false prophets. False prophets are religious teachers who claim to have messages from God, but they do not have real messages from God. Sheep is a common way to describe God's people in the Old Testament. On the outside, false prophets try to look like sheep, or look like God's people. They try to look harmless and gentle. They are intentionally deceiving people. On the inside, false prophets are like hungry wolves that want to attack and eat the sheep. Wolves are like large, wild dogs. False prophets are dangerous like wolves because they pretend to be true believers, but their false teaching is dangerous to the sheep, God's people.

Stop and show pictures of a sheep and a wolf.

Jesus uses special language to show that the fruit from a tree is like the good or bad things a prophet does. Jesus asks a question to emphasize that no one can pick grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles. Grapes are fruit that you can eat, and they grow on a vine with no thorns. Figs are also fruit you can eat, and they grow on fig trees. Thorn-bushes and thistles are both bushes with thorns, and they are not useful. Farmers plant grapevines and fig trees so they can pick the good fruit, but thorn-bushes and thistles do not make any fruit to eat. Farmers cut down bad trees like thorn-bushes and thistles and burn them in a fire.

Stop and show pictures of grapes and grapevines, figs and fig trees, and thorn-bushes and thistles.

Also, talk about what kinds of fruit trees are present in your context. If possible, find some fruit trees and compare the fruit with the kind of tree it grows on. Also, find some weeds or thorn-bushes in your context and talk about what the farmers do with these weeds.

Good trees and good bushes produce good fruit. The disciples can look at the fruit, or the things a person does, to know if the person is teaching truth from God or not. This is the same as seeing grapes or figs and knowing what kind of tree or bush made this fruit.

In the third story, Jesus talks about people who think they know Jesus but do not know him. Jesus warns the disciples that on the day of judgment, some people will call Jesus "Lord, Lord," or "master, master," but Jesus will tell them "I never knew you." These people claim that they follow Jesus' authority. The day of judgment is when Jesus will say who can enter the kingdom of heaven, which is God's rule. The only people who will enter the kingdom of heaven are those who do the will of our Father God who lives in heaven, meaning those who obey God.

Some people who say "Lord, Lord" believe that they did good things that they saw Jesus' disciples do, like give messages from God, make evil spirits stop controlling people, and do miracles. They do these things in Jesus' name, or with his power and authority. However, Jesus responds strongly and says to "Go away!" He calls these people who break God's laws lawbreakers, or people who do evil.

The last story Jesus tells is about people close to Jesus-some will respond by obeying and some will not. Jesus compares these reactions to two men who build different kinds of houses. In the Old Testament, several books of the law end with blessings and curses, and this last story ends Jesus' entire teaching on the mountain with a promise and a warning. Jesus says both men hear Jesus' teaching. First, Jesus says the man who hears the teaching and obeys what Jesus says is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock, or solid layer under the ground. The wise man knew that people often built their homes on this rock to make their homes strong. Jesus says when the rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew against the house, this strong house did not fall because the man built the house on the rock. The rain, the floods, and the wind are all ways that the weather could destroy a house.

Jesus contrasts the wise man with a foolish man. The foolish man did not think about the future. He built his house on the sand in an unsafe place. During Jesus' time, it was not wise to build a home on the sand because there was no rock layer underneath. This time, when the rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew against the house, the house fell. The house was completely destroyed because the house did not have a strong foundation. Most people believe Jesus is talking about the day when God judges people based on if they follow him, and that the man who builds on the rock will enter God's kingdom. The man who builds on the sand will not enter God's kingdom.

Stop and talk about how people build houses in your community. Do they build on rock, or do they do something else to make their houses have a strong foundation?

Jesus now is finished teaching this long message. His disciples and the crowd listened the whole time, and the crowd was amazed at how Jesus taught. In the original language, the word "amazed" can mean wonder and fear. Some think the crowd was also amazed at Jesus' words, but it is more accurate to say the crowd was amazed at the way Jesus taught. Jesus taught with true authority and power. The crowd often heard the scribes teach the law of Moses. The scribes quoted other Jewish teachers when they taught, but Jesus taught without quoting others. Jesus taught with confidence, and this amazed the crowds of people.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has five scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches about the narrow gate and the broad gate.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about false prophets and how to recognize them by their bad fruit.

Third scene: Jesus teaches about who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Fourth scene: Jesus tells a story about a man who builds his house on the rock and a man who builds his house on the sand.

Fifth scene: Jesus is finished with the long, important teaching on the mountain. The crowd is amazed at the way Jesus was teaching.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- People walking on a narrow road and a wide road
- False prophets
- People who say "lord, lord" but do not know Jesus
- A wise man who builds his house on the rock
- A foolish man who builds his house on the sand

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the mountainside. Jesus taught about how to be more righteous than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Jesus also taught about not judging others and about how to be persistent in prayer to God.

In the first four scenes, it is important to see that the stories are four different contrasts between people who are saved or lost. It is important to see that each scene becomes more and more specific about who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

In the first scene, it is important to see there are only two choices here-the narrow gate or the wide gate. No one can partly follow God's ways. Jesus uses poetic language when he describes the narrow gate and road, and the broad gate and road. Jesus describes each gate and road with opposite words and phrases to show the contrast between the two ways of living.

In the second scene, remember that Jesus compares false prophets to both wolves and to trees with bad fruit. First, Jesus shows that false prophets look like harmless sheep on the outside, but inside they want to attack and eat the other sheep. False prophets are dangerous.

Next, Jesus talks about fruit and fruit trees. He asks if the disciples can get grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles. Jesus does not want an answer to this question. He says this to emphasize that of course no one can get grapes from a thornbush or figs from thistles.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of a statement?

Jesus says that good fruit like grapes or figs can only come from a grapevine or a fig tree.

Jesus also repeats the same idea again by saying that a good tree cannot have bad fruit and a bad tree cannot have good fruit. Repeating an idea in the opposite way was a common way Jews taught during Jesus' time. Jesus is showing how the disciples can recognize false prophets. The disciples should look at the life of a person to see if the person is teaching truth from God or not.

In the third scene, remember that some people who say "lord, lord" to Jesus will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Some people believe this part belongs with the section about the false prophets, but it is better to see this as a new section because the disciples saying "Lord, lord" are not like wolves. These disciples believe they are doing right, and they are not trying to deceive anyone. Remember that this is about what will happen on judgment day. Jesus says the people will say "Lord, lord" twice as a way to show that the people were honoring Jesus. Jesus says these people will ask "didn't we do many good works in your name?" The people asking this said it as a question to emphasize they did many good works in Jesus' name. They prophesied, drove out demons, and did miracles.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of a statement?

Remember that talking in someone's name means you are doing something with their authority.

Stop and talk about what it means in your language to do something in someone's authority or power. Do you use the phrase "in his name," or something else?

In the fourth scene, Jesus tells the final story. Remember this story is about two men who both heard Jesus' teaching. One man obeyed the teaching, and one man did not obey. Remember that the house built on the rock did not fall down when bad weather came. In contrast, the house built on the sand fell when the rains, floods, and wind came. Remember this is the most specific description of who will enter God's kingdom. This is also the last part of Jesus' teaching, and it is a warning that people who do not obey Jesus' teaching will not enter God's kingdom.

Finally, in the fifth scene, we see the crowd's reaction to Jesus' teaching. Remember that at the beginning of his teaching, Jesus sat down on the mountain and the disciples sat close to him, and the crowd was also listening. Now we see how amazed and surprised the crowd is about Jesus' way of teaching. This is the end of the first long section of teaching in the book of Matthew.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has five scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples and the crowd
- People walking on a narrow road and a wide road
- False prophets
- People who say "lord, lord" but do not know Jesus
- A wise man who builds his house on the rock
- A foolish man who builds his house on the sand

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits and teaches his disciples. Jesus teaches them about the narrow gate and the wide gate. Jesus tells them they should enter the narrow gate and road because it leads to life. It is a difficult way to walk, though, and few people find it. The wide gate and road are easy and most people find it, but it leads to death and destruction.

Stop the action.

- Glad that I found God's way to live,
- Feeling like this is a hard road to walk on, and
- Sometimes wishing my life was easier like the people walking on the wide road.

Also, ask the actors playing the people walking on the wide road, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Happy that my life is easy,
- Wondering why Jesus says this path leads to death, and
- Curious how this can be the wrong way to live when most people live this way. [!end]
Restart the action.

In the next scene, Jesus describes false prophets. Jesus says false prophets are like wolves who wear sheep's clothing. They look harmless, but they want to attack the other sheep, or disciples.

Stop the action.

- Cunning so no sheep will think I'm really a wolf,
- Hoping to trick the sheep with my false teaching that's not from God, and
- Glad that none of the sheep suspect me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus also compares false prophets to fruit trees that have bad fruit. Jesus says no one can get good fruit like grapes or figs from a bad tree, like a thornbush or a thistle. You can only pick grapes and figs from a grapevine

or a fig tree. In the same way, the disciples should recognize the false prophets by the things the prophets do. The things the prophets do is like the good or bad fruit that a tree has.

Stop the action.

- Confused about how I will recognize good fruit and bad fruit in someone's life,
- Happy that Jesus used special language about fruit trees that I can understand, and
- Wondering why people choose to be false prophets to deceive God's people. [!end] Restart the action.

In the next scene, Jesus warns the disciples about people that think they are following Jesus, but they don't really do what God says. These people do good works like giving messages from God, casting out demons, and miracles, but they are not true followers of Jesus. Jesus will tell them on the day of judgment to go away from him because he never knew them. They are evildoers.

Stop the action.

- Shocked that Jesus says he never knew me,
- Upset that none of my good works were good enough for me to enter the kingdom of heaven, and
- Confused about why I cannot enter the kingdom of heaven when I did many good things in Jesus' name.

Also, ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Wondering if I will enter the kingdom of heaven,
- Worried that Jesus will say "I never knew you" to me too,
- Glad that Jesus knows me, and
- Secure in being a part of God's kingdom. [!end] Restart the action.

In the next scene, Jesus contrasts two men who both build houses. Both men hear Jesus' teaching. The wise man who builds his house on the rock is like someone who hears the teaching and obeys Jesus. When rain, floods, and wind come, the house still stands because it is built on a strong rock. The foolish man who builds his house on the sand is like someone who hears Jesus' teaching and does not obey Jesus. This time, when the bad weather comes, the house falls down completely because it does not have a strong foundation.

Stop the action.

- Happy that I worked hard to build my house on the rock,
- Safe inside my house during all the bad weather, and
- Ready to obey what Jesus says.

Also, ask the actor playing the foolish man who builds his house on the sand, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Regretting my choice to build my house on the sand,
- Wondering where I will live now that my house is completely destroyed, and
- Wishing I built my house on the rock like the wise man. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus is now finished with his long teaching. The last scene is a description of the crowd's reaction to the teaching. The crowd is amazed at how Jesus taught. The crowd sees that Jesus teaches with authority and power, which is different from how their scribes teach.

Stop the action.

- Surprised that Jesus taught with authority when he's from Galilee,
- Wondering how Jesus learned all of the things he taught us, and
- Wanting to hear more of Jesus' teaching.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus warns the disciples about false **prophets**. Prophets were messengers in the Old Testament, and they spoke messages from God called **prophecy**. Translate prophets the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a full definition of the word prophet.

Jesus compares false prophets to **wolves** who wear sheep's wool. Wolves are large, wild dogs, and they usually hunt at night. Sometimes they hunt in a pack, or group of wolves, but other times they hunt alone. Shepherds who took care of sheep needed to protect their sheep from wolves attacking the sheep.

Stop and show the picture of the wolf again if needed.

Sheep are animals with a thick wool coat, and they are usually white. They eat only grass and the shepherds that care for them need to move the flock, or group of sheep, to new grass when the sheep finish eating all the grass in one field. During the summer months, the shepherds cut off the sheep's wool coat and sell the wool. People can use wool to make clothing. Sheep cannot survive without a shepherd to help them.

Stop and show the picture of the sheep again if needed.

Jesus also warns the disciples they can recognize false prophets by their fruit. **Grapes** grow on grapevines, and figs grow on fig trees. Grapevines and fig trees were some of the most important fruit trees for Jews during Jesus' time. Grapes are small, round fruit that grow in bunches on a grapevine. A grapevine does not have thorns. People ate grapes or used them to make wine.

Fig trees produced figs, which were medium sized fruit that people ate or pressed into cakes they could sell. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of the phrase fig tree.

Jesus described both **thorn-bushes** and **thistles**. They may have beautiful flowers, but they never produce fruit like grapes or figs to eat. They also have sharp thorns that can be dangerous. Farmers need to remove the thorn-bushes and thistles from their crops.

Stop and show pictures of grapes and grapevines, figs and fig trees, and thorn-bushes and thistles again if needed.

Jesus says some people will say "lord, lord" to him. **Lord** means master, owner, or someone with authority. People used lord as a term of respect, to talk about God, and to address Jesus. In this story, lord is used to show that Jesus has authority over these people. Translate lord the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word lord.

Jesus says only people who obey God will enter the **kingdom of heaven**. The kingdom of heaven is about God ruling in the hearts of his people rather than a physical place. You will remember the phrase "kingdom of heaven" from several previous passages. Translate the phrase the same here. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says that people who obey his **Father in heaven** will enter the kingdom of heaven. God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children. Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God lives. Translate heaven the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word heaven.

The people who call Jesus "lord, lord" but do not obey Jesus will say they **prophesied** in Jesus' name, meaning they spoke messages from God. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition for the word prophecy.

They will also say they cast out **demons** in Jesus' name. Demons are evil spirits that can control and harm a person. In the New Testament, demons often lived in tombs, deserts, and desolate places. Casting out demons means telling the demons to leave a person and not control or harm that person anymore. Jesus often cast out demons from people, and he gave his disciples authority to also cast out demons in his name. Translate demon the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word demon.

The people will also say they did **miracles** in the name of Jesus. Miracles are powerful actions that only God can do. Translate miracles the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word miracles.

Jesus says that these people who claim to prophesy, cast out demons, and do miracles in his name will not come into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus will tell them to go away because he never knew them. Jesus will call these people **lawbreakers**. In the original language, "lawbreakers" means someone who practices lawlessness, or does not do the **law** of God. The law means the **law of Moses** that Moses shared with the Jewish people to tell them how to live. Lawlessness can also mean not loving your neighbor as yourself, according to the new teaching Jesus gave. Translate law the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word law.

People who listen to Jesus' teaching and obey the teaching are like a man who builds his house on a **foundation** of rock. A foundation is under a house. It makes the house strong so it does not fall when bad weather comes.

After Jesus finished teaching, the crowds were amazed at how Jesus taught differently than their scribes, or **teachers of the law**. They wrote down the law of Moses, and they also taught the people how to follow the law of Moses. Translate teachers of the law the same way you have in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase teachers of the law.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 7:13-29

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4526149 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7534109 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 8:1-17

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 8:1-17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Before this passage, Jesus had just finished His "Sermon on the Mount." Jesus taught the crowd for a long time. This passage is a true story of events. Matthew gives some examples of ways that Jesus demonstrated his authority. Some who heard about Jesus, approached Him so that they could be healed. This shows that God has compassion for those who have faith in Jesus Christ.

Show a picture of the hills in Galilee.

Jesus came down from the hill where He was teaching, and crowds were following behind Him. Suddenly, a man with the skin disease of leprosy came to Him. A person with leprosy was ritually unclean according to Jewish law. Unclean means unfit for the service of God. So, the man with leprosy would not have been allowed to live in the community. It is most likely that the man with leprosy approached Jesus while the crowd was at a distance, because they would not have tolerated the presence of an unclean man. However, they would have still witnessed Jesus' encounter with the man.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, what are some reasons that someone would be thought of as unable to live in the community? Discuss reasons why it is difficult for you, or others, to interact with them.

The man knelt down in front of Jesus. The man addressed Jesus as Lord. In this instance, Lord is a term of respect meaning "master." This is a respectful way to address a leader. The man asked if Jesus was willing to make him clean. This means to heal him of his skin disease. Jesus reached out and touched the man. The man was instantly healed of the skin disease. Jesus' reaction to the man was unexpected because the man was unclean. Other people would have called the man unclean and stayed away from him. Jesus did not call the man unclean. Jesus showed the man compassion by healing him. After the man was healed, Jesus instructed him to go and show himself to the priest. According to Jewish law, the priest needed to perform the purification ritual and publicly declare the man to be clean. Then, the man could live in the community again.

Jesus traveled to a town called Capernaum. Capernaum is the town by the Lake of Galilee. Jesus based His ministry for Galilee in Capernaum. Then, a Roman centurion came to Jesus. The Roman empire occupied the land and controlled the government. A centurion is a Roman military officer who commands a group of one hundred soldiers. The centurion went to Jesus to seek healing for his sick servant. The centurion cared greatly for his servant. The servant was sick in bed and could not move. It is thought that the servant was just a boy, and the boy was about to die.

Show a picture of a centurion.

Stop and talk about a time when someone you cared about has been very sick. What did you do to help the person?

Jesus said that he was willing to go to the centurion's house and heal the servant. The centurion understood that Jesus had great authority. He responded to Jesus by saying, "I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed." The centurion may have thought that Jesus was too respectable to come to his home. It is also possible that the centurion said this because he was a Gentile. A Gentile is a non-Jew. Jews were not permitted to enter the home of Gentiles. The centurion believed that his servant would be healed if Jesus would speak a few words. This showed that he had faith.

Stop and discuss: Who are people with authority in your community? How do people respond to them? Describe the relationship between the person in authority and those under their authority. Tell a story of a time when someone either obeyed or disobeyed an authority figure. What were the results of their actions?

Jesus spoke to the crowd before He responded to the centurion. Jesus spoke very highly about the faith of the Roman. Jesus said that the faith of His own people in Israel was not as strong as the faith of the Roman centurion. The Roman centurion was a Gentile, a non-Jew. Jesus said many will come from the east and the west, meaning from all over the world. This included Gentiles. Jesus said that they would recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Reclining at the table means to have a meal with. This refers to the feast that will happen in the kingdom of heaven. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the forefathers of the nation of Israel. A kingdom is a place where a king rules a group of people. Heaven is the place where God lives. Heaven is also the ultimate destination of believers of Jesus Christ. Jesus also said, "But many Israelites, those for whom the Kingdom was prepared will be thrown into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Outer darkness is the eternal separation from God that awaits all who reject Jesus. Weeping refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. Gnashing of teeth refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness. Those eternally separated from God will be overwhelmed with grief. Their grief will cause them to cry uncontrollably and grind their teeth in pain. Jesus said this about the distant future.

Jesus told the centurion, "Go back home. Because you believed, it has happened." Jesus was pleased with the centurion. "Go," was a polite command. When Jesus made this statement, the servant was healed.

Then, Jesus went to Peter's house. Peter also lived in Capernaum. Jesus saw Peter's mother-in-law, the mother of Peter's wife, lying down, and sick with a fever. Jesus touched the mother of Peter's wife, then the fever went away. The woman began taking care of Jesus' needs and serving Him food, after the fever went away.

People of that town brought demon possessed people to Jesus at sunset. They did this because the Sabbath day ended at sunset and they wanted Jesus to do the work of healing. The Sabbath day is the Jewish day of rest and worship. Work is not permitted on the Sabbath day. Demons are spiritual beings who were once angels, but they rebelled against God. They are unclean spirits. Demon possessed people are people who were being

controlled by the demons. Jesus spoke a few words. This caused the demons to leave the people and stop controlling them.

Jesus healed the people. This showed that Jesus fulfilled the things the prophet, or messenger, Isaiah, told the people. God spoke to Isaiah and Isaiah told the Jewish people long ago that God would send a Promised Savior. This Savior would take away our diseases.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus comes down the mountain after teaching the crowd. A man with a skin disease asks Jesus to cleanse him of leprosy. Jesus heals the man.

Second scene: Jesus goes to Capernaum. A Roman centurion begs Jesus to heal his servant. Jesus speaks and the servant is healed.

Third scene: Jesus goes to Peter's home. Peter's mother-in-law is sick and Jesus heals her.

Fourth scene: That evening, people come to Jesus bringing others who need healing. Jesus heals many people.

The character in this story include:

- Jesus
- Crowds of people who were listening to Jesus teach and watch Jesus heal others
- A man with leprosy
- A Roman centurion
- The Roman centurion's servant
- Peter's mother-in-law
- Demon possessed people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that Jesus has just finished teaching a large crowd on the mountain.

Remember that the Jewish people were afraid of touching someone with leprosy because it meant that they would become ritually unclean.

Remember how the Roman centurion showed his faith and trust in Jesus.

It is important to remember what happened at Peter's house.

It is important to note that this story begins with Jesus healing an unclean man and it ends with Jesus causing demons (unclean spirits) to leave people whom they were controlling.

This story displays the power and authority of Jesus to heal the sick and clean that which is unclean, which proves that Jesus is the promised Messiah from the Old Testament.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Crowds of people who were listening to Jesus teach and watching Jesus heal others
- A man with leprosy
- A Roman centurion
- The Roman centurion's servant
- Peter's mother-in-law

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

After Jesus preached the "Sermon on the Mount," He walked down from the hill upon which he was teaching. Jesus was followed by a large crowd of people who were impressed by His teaching.

Stop the action.

- Tired,
- Hungry, and
- Ready for some rest. [!end] Restart the action.

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and kneeled down in front of Him. The man wanted Jesus to heal him and make him clean. Jesus touched the man, healed him of the leprosy and made the man clean.

Stop the action.

- Happy,
- Grateful, or
- Relieved.

Jesus continued to travel to the town of Capernaum. A Roman soldier who was a leader of others came to Jesus because the soldier's servant was very sick and could not move. The soldier shows great faith in Jesus by trusting that Jesus could just speak a word and heal the servant. Jesus was impressed by the faith of the soldier. See Master Glossary for definition of faith.

Stop the action.

- Happy,
- Grateful, or
- Relieved.

Jesus traveled to Peter's house. Jesus heals the mother of Peter's wife once he sees that she is sick in bed. Peter's mother-in-law shows Jesus that she is grateful by caring for Jesus' needs. She likely served food to Jesus.

Stop the action.

- Pleased,
- Comforted,
- Relaxed.

The crowd began to bring people who were being controlled by demons to Jesus. The crowd wanted Jesus to heal the demon possessed people. Jesus made the demons leave the people by speaking a few words.

Stop the action.

- Like I am not being controlled anymore, or
- Thankful that Jesus has healed me.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus came down from the hill where He was teaching. A man with **leprosy** knelt down in front of Jesus. Leprosy can refer to different types of skin disease. These skin diseases made a person **unclean**. Jewish law said that a person with leprosy had to wear torn clothes, and shout out "unclean!" in public. The man with leprosy asked Jesus to make him **clean**. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of clean/unclean and leprosy. Remember to use the same words for leprosy, clean, and unclean as previously used.

The man called Jesus "Lord." **Lord** was a term of respect used when addressing a man. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of lord.

A Roman **centurion** came to Jesus. See Master Glossary for definition of centurion. A centurion is a Roman military officer who commands a group of one hundred soldiers.

The centurion was a **Gentile**, a non-Jew. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of Gentile.

Jesus said about the centurion that "I have not found anyone in Israel with such great **faith**." Faith describes people's responses to God. People who have faith agree with the person with whom they have faith. They trust or have confidence in that person. Faith describes people's response to God's promises. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more complete definitions of faith.

Jesus said, "Many will come **from the east and the west** and sit down with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** at the feast in the **kingdom of heaven**."

"Many will come from the east and the west" refers to people from all over the world, including Gentiles. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the forefathers of the nation of Israel.

A **kingdom** is a place where a king rules a group of people. **Heaven** is the place where God lives. Heaven is the ultimate destination of believers of Jesus Christ. The **kingdom of heaven** is God's kingdom. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, "But many Israelites, those for whom the Kingdom was prepared, will be thrown into **outer darkness**, where there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**."

Outer darkness is the eternal separation from God. Outer darkness is eternal torment and punishment. Outer darkness is hell. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of hell. People in outer darkness are suffering because they are separated from God.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth: **Weeping** refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. **Gnashing of teeth** refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness. Use the same word that you did in previous passages.

Jesus went to Peter's house in Capernaum. Jesus healed Peter's **mother-in-law**, who was sick with fever. Mother-in-law is the mother of a person's spouse.

Later that evening, people of that town brought **demon possessed** people to Jesus so he could heal them. Use the same word for demons as you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 8:1-17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3152019 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5495664 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 8:18-22

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 8:18–22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus had just finished healing many people and there were crowds gathered around Him. Jesus told His twelve disciples to leave with Him in a boat. They were going to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Show a picture of a small fishing boat.

Stop and discuss how students trust their teacher. How do they feel about their teacher? What kinds of things might they do for their teacher?

Before Jesus and His disciples got in the boat a scribe, a teacher of religious law, who wanted to be one of Jesus' disciples, approached Jesus and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." The scribe called Jesus "teacher." The title, "Teacher," is a polite term for a Jewish man who had authority to teach things about God. Scribes, or teachers of the law, were usually opposed to Jesus' ministry and teachings. But this scribe wanted to follow Jesus. This meant that he wanted to go with Jesus and become one of His disciples.

Jesus answered the scribe by saying, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head." "Lay his head" is an expression that means to rest or sleep. Foxes are a kind of small dog that lives in the wild. Birds also live in the wild. Jesus and his disciples had no home to sleep in, but the animals did. Jesus called himself, "Son of Man." The Son of Man, in the Bible, is the person to whom God gives all authority and power. Son of Man is referred to by the prophet Daniel in his vision. All the Jewish people knew about the prophet Daniel and about his vision. Jesus calls Himself Son of Man because He was human and represented all people. But Jesus also had the nature and authority of God.

Show a picture of a desert fox and a fox den.

Stop and discuss what it is like to sleep in a safe place and what it is like to sleep in an unsafe place. How does the place where you sleep affect your life?

Another disciple, who was not one of the twelve, said to Jesus "Lord, first let me return home and bury my father." In Jewish custom, a son had duties to his father for many years before his father died. Jesus wanted the man to follow Him immediately, so Jesus said, "Follow me, let the dead bury their own dead." The first time that Jesus says the word "dead" he is speaking of people who are spiritually dead. Spiritually dead means a person who does not have a spiritual life and does not know God. Jesus was saying that spiritually dead people should bury those who are physically dead. Jesus said this to tell the man that he should not allow customs to hinder him from following Jesus.

Stop and discuss the importance of a funeral in your culture. What are your traditions? Why are your traditions important?

Jesus' answer to both of these men shows us that following Jesus will sometimes mean that we have to give up things in our lives that we care about.

Stop and discuss a time when you had to give up things in your life that you care about for the good of yourself or others.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Before Jesus and the twelve disciples cross the Sea of Galilee, a scribe wants to follow Jesus.

Second scene: Before Jesus and the twelve disciples cross the sea of Galilee, another disciple wants to go and bury his father before he will follow Jesus further.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' twelve closest disciples
- A teacher of the law/scribe
- Another disciple

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus and his disciples are near the shore of a lake. There are many people around them. Jesus tells his 12 disciples that they should cross to the other side of the lake. But before they can get in the boat, a teacher of religious law stops Jesus and asks him a question. Then another man in the crowd asks Jesus a question.

Remember that there are twelve closest followers of Jesus that go with him everywhere.

Remember that a scribe is a teacher of Jewish law. Scribes usually did not like Jesus' teaching, and they did not want to follow Him.

It is important to remember what the scribe asked Jesus and what Jesus replied to him.

Remember that Jesus and His disciples were traveling and had no permanent home.

Remember the Jewish custom is that a son had duties to his father for many years before his father died. It is important to remember what Jesus said to another disciple who wanted to follow Him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- A teacher of the law/Scribe
- Another disciple

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is near the shore of the lake and he sees a large crowd around him. He tells his 12 closest disciples to cross the lake, the Sea of Galilee. Before they enter into the boat, a scribe says that he wants to follow Jesus.

Stop the action.

Jesus said, "Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head."

Stop the action.

- Disappointed that Jesus did not say, "follow me,"
- Confused about what Jesus meant, or
- I would not want to live in a fox den. [!end] Restart the action.

Before Jesus and the disciples got into the boat to cross the Sea of Galilee, another disciple wants to go and bury his father before he will follow Jesus further.

Stop the action.

Jesus said, "Follow me, let the dead bury their own dead."

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing another disciple "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Disappointed because Jesus wants me to go now instead of caring for my father," or "Insulted that Jesus said this."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus told His **disciples** to leave with Him in a boat. Disciple means "learner." Disciples were people that followed Jesus. Jesus called twelve men to be his disciples. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of disciple.

Before they got into the boat, there was a **scribe/teacher of the law**. This is a scholar and expert on the interpretation of Jewish law. These interpretations were not written down but memorized and taught orally by the teachers. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of scribe/teacher of the law. The scribe called Jesus "Teacher."

The title, **Teacher**: This is a polite term for a Jewish man who had authority to teach the things about God. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of teacher.

The scribe said that he wanted to **follow** Jesus. Follow, means to go with someone, and to become a disciple of that person. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Jesus said to the scribe "Foxes have dens to

live in, and birds have nests, but the **Son of Man** has no place even to lay his head." **Foxes** are a kind of small dog that lives in the wild. They have orange, red, or gray fur. **Birds of the air** are any kind of bird.

Son of Man: The Son of Man, in the Bible, is the person who God gives all authority and power. Son of Man can refer to an ordinary human being or a supernatural human being. Son of Man is referred to by the prophet Daniel, a messenger of God, in a vision. All the Jewish people knew about the prophet Daniel's vision. Jesus calls Himself "Son of Man" because He was human and represented all people. But Jesus also had the nature and authority of God. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of Son of Man.

Another disciple said, "**Lord**, first let me return home and **bury my father**." "Another disciple" refers to a man who was one of the larger group who was following Jesus. He was not one of the twelve disciples. Translate disciple the same way as before. In this instance "Lord" is a term of respect used when addressing a man. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of Lord.

Jesus said, "Follow me, let the **dead** bury their own dead."

The first time "dead" occurs, it is used in a spiritual sense. It refers to people who are **spiritually dead**. "Spiritually dead" means a person who does not have a spiritual life and does not know God. Use the same word that you did in previous passages. The second time "dead" occurs, it is used in its normal sense. It refers to physically dead people.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 8:18-22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2208818 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3829985 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 8:23–27

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 8:23–27 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus or God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this true story, Matthew gives an example of the power that Jesus has over nature and why we can trust what Jesus says.

In the previous passage, Jesus healed many people and there were crowds gathered around Him. Jesus told His twelve disciples to leave with Him in a boat. They got into the boat and began to cross the Sea of Galilee. The boat was about 8 meters long and 2 1/2 meters wide. It was about 1 1/4 meters deep. A boat of that size would have fit thirteen people comfortably. The Sea of Galilee is a large body of water, about 21 kilometers long by 10 kilometers wide. This story happened near Capernaum.

Show the map of the Sea of Galilee. Show where Capernaum is on the map.

Stop and discuss what kind of things people will do for those whom they trust.

Show a picture of a fishing boat. Possible activity: Draw an outline of a small fishing boat about 8 meters long and 2 1/2 meters wide. Have people get inside of the outline. The boat was about 1 1/4 meters deep.

Jesus and the disciples were a good distance from the shore. Suddenly, a storm began to blow on the Sea of Galilee. "Suddenly" or "behold" is a word that Matthew uses to let us know that something incredible is about to happen. Sudden violent storms occurred often on the Sea of Galilee. This is because it was surrounded by high mountains and situated below sea level. Some of Jesus' disciples, who were fishermen, knew about the possibility of these dangerous storms.

The unexpected storm had very strong winds. The boat was being swamped. Swamped means that the winds blew the water into large waves. The boat was being repeatedly struck by giant waves and water was filling the boat. The boat was in danger of sinking, but Jesus was sleeping in the boat.

Some of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They were familiar with being in boats. The disciples were terrified, thinking that the storm would sink the boat. So they woke Jesus from His sleep. The disciples said to Him, "Lord, save us! We're going to die!"

Show a picture of the sea of Galilee. Point it out on the map.

Share stories about how storms have affected the area in which you live. Discuss what you do in a bad storm.

Jesus answered them, "Why are you afraid, you don't believe in me?" Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that there was no reason to be afraid. Jesus wants those who follow Him to have faith, or believe in Him. Faith describes people's response to God.

Jesus rebuked, or commanded, the wind and the sea. Jesus caused the storm to suddenly stop, and become calm. Jesus did this by simply speaking to the wind and the seas.

The disciples were amazed that Jesus had the power to command the wind and sea. They asked themselves, "What kind of man is this?" They answered their own question: "Even the winds and the sea obey him!" This question was not asked to receive an answer. The question was asked because they were so amazed that Jesus was in control of the weather. Obey indicates that the winds and the sea did what Jesus commanded them to do. The disciples were amazed because Jesus' authority was much greater than they realized before this event.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus and His disciples get into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.

Second scene: A sudden storm begins on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is sleeping in the boat. The disciples are terrified of the storm sinking the boat. So, they wake Jesus from His sleep.

Third scene: Jesus wakes up. He causes the storm to stop by speaking to the wind and the sea.

Fourth scene: The disciples are amazed that the wind and the sea obeyed Jesus' command.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The Sea of Galilee

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that the Sea of Galilee is very large and that sudden storms are common.

It is important to remember that the storm started suddenly. The storm was causing water to fill the boat. It is important to remember that Jesus was sleeping on the boat.

It is important to remember the disciples were afraid the boat was going to sink. It is important to remember that some of the disciples were experienced fishermen. They had been in boats before.

It is important to remember what the disciples said to Jesus when they woke Him from sleep.

It is important to remember that Jesus asked His disciples why they did not believe in Him before He rebuked the storm.

It is important to remember what the disciples said after the wind and the sea obeyed Jesus' command.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The Sea of Galilee

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus and His disciples get into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.

Stop the action.

Jesus and the disciples were a good distance from the shore. Suddenly, a storm began to blow on the Sea of Galilee, but Jesus was sleeping in the boat.

Stop the action.

The disciples woke Jesus from His sleep. They said, "Lord, save us! We're going to die!"

Speaking to the disciples, Jesus says, "Why are you afraid, you don't believe in me!"

Stop the action.

- These guys still don't trust me,
- Why do they not believe in me? or
- I was not afraid. Why are they? [!end] Restart the action.

Then Jesus rebuked the storm and everything became calm.

Stop the action.

The disciples are amazed, or surprised, that Jesus can control the wind and seas. They said, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!"

Stop the action.

- I am afraid because I did not know Jesus was so powerful,
- I am comforted because Jesus is so powerful, or
- I have more confidence in Jesus now.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus told His **disciples** to leave with Him in a **boat**.

Disciples refers to Jesus' closest followers that went with Him everywhere. Use the same word that you did in previous passages for disciples. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciple.

The **boat** was a fishing boat, possibly with a sail. It had enough room for thirteen people to fit inside comfortably. The boat was 8 meters long and 2 1/2 meters wide. It was about 1 1/4 meters deep. Use the same word that you did in previous passages for boat. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of boat.

Show your translators the photo of the boat, if needed.

Behold, or suddenly, a **storm** appeared on the **sea**. "Behold," or "suddenly," indicates that something unexpected or incredible is about to happen. The storm had very high winds and large waves. Sudden violent storms occurred often on the Sea of Galilee. This is because it was surrounded by high mountains and situated below sea level. Some of Jesus' disciples, who were fishermen, knew about the possibility of these dangerous storms.

Jesus and the disciples were on the **Sea of Galilee**. The Sea of Galilee is a very large lake, about 21 kilometers long by 10 kilometers wide. Use the same word for sea that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Sea of Galilee.

Show the translators the map and photos of the lake if you have not already. Discuss what word you would use for this body of water.

The boat was being **swamped**. "Swamped" means that the storm was blowing the water into large waves. The boat was being repeatedly struck by giant waves and water was filling the boat. The boat was in danger of sinking. The disciples who were experienced fishermen were familiar with being in boats. The disciples were terrified, thinking that the storm would sink the boat and they were about to die. So, they woke Jesus from His sleep. They said to Him, "**Lord**, save us! We're going to die!" In this instance, "Lord" means owner or someone we owe allegiance to. Use the same word that you did in previous passages for Lord. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Lord.

Jesus answered them, "Why are you afraid, you don't believe me!" Jesus wants those who follow Him to have **faith**, or believe in Him. Faith describes man's response to God's promise. It probably implies more than mental agreement, but putting one's faith/confidence in God. In this case, the followers should trust Jesus himself. Use the same word for faith that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of faith.

Jesus **rebuked** the winds and the sea. "Rebuke" means to give a command as a threat. The wind and the sea became calm. The disciples were **amazed** because Jesus stopped the storm. "Amazed" here means impressed or astonished. Use the same word for amazed that you have used in previous passages.

The disciples said, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea **obey** him!" Obey indicates that the winds and the sea did what Jesus commanded them to do. This question was not asked to receive an answer. The question was asked because they were so amazed that Jesus was in control of the weather.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 8:23-27

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2848181 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4981202 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 8:28-34

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 8:28-34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus or God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this true story, Matthew gives another example of the power of Jesus, but this time over evil spirits.

In the previous passage, Jesus and His disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee. A sudden storm was about to sink their boat, but Jesus commanded the storm to stop and the storm obeyed Jesus.

Jesus and the disciples arrived in the land of the Gadarenes near the town of Gadara. Non-Jews lived in Gadara. There were two violent men who were possessed by demons, or evil spirits. These men wanted to hurt others, and no one could pass through the area. There were cliffs on the side of the lakeshore. People cut caves into the rocks and buried dead bodies in the caves. These men were living in the caves. The men came out of the tombs and approached Jesus.

Show a picture of caves in cliffs.

Show a map that shows Jesus' route from Capernaum on the northwest side of the lake to the Gadarenes.

Stop and discuss what it is like to be around violent people. What kind of things might they say or do? Share stories of your encounters with violent people.

Behold, or suddenly: This word tells us that something unexpected or incredible is about to happen. The demons were talking through the men. They shouted at Jesus. "Do not bother us, Son of God!" The demons were afraid and did not want Jesus to send them out of the men. The demons knew that Jesus is the Son of God. The Son of God has the same nature and character as God. The demons also shouted, "Have you come here to torment us before our time?" They were not asking this question to receive an answer. They did not want Jesus to punish them before the time that God had set to punish the demons. So, the demons begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs. The pigs were eating. They were far away from Jesus and the two men, but the pigs could still be seen. The herd of pigs was a large group of livestock, also called hogs or swine. Pigs were considered unclean by the Jewish people. This is one way we know that non-Jews lived in this area.

Show a picture of a herd of pigs.

Jesus gave the demons permission to go into the pigs by commanding them to go. The demons came out of the men and entered the pigs. So, the demons were no longer controlling the men. Suddenly, the entire herd of pigs ran down a steep bank on the hillside, and into the sea. The pigs drowned and died in the water.

Show picture of a steep hill next to the Sea of Galilee.

The herdsmen, men who took care of livestock, ran to the town. The herdsmen told everyone what happened to their pigs and the demon possessed men. Nearly everyone from that town went to talk to Jesus and begged Him to leave.

In Mark's gospel we are told that the people from the town were afraid. Matthew does not tell us why the people told Jesus to leave. One possible reason is that the people were upset because they lost their pigs.

Stop and discuss what it is like to lose something that you care about. Share stories about a time when you lost something or something has been taken away from you. What kinds of things did you say, or do after that loss?

This event is a good example of the ultimate authority and power that Jesus has because he is the Son of God.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus came to the other side of the lake. Two men who are possessed by demons come out of the tombs. The two men are violent and will not let anyone pass by them. The demon possessed men approach Jesus.

Second scene: The demons speak through the two men. Suddenly, they shout at Jesus. The demons do not want Jesus to punish them. So, they beg Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs that were at a distance, but the pigs could still be seen. Jesus commands the demons to leave the two men.

Third scene: The demons did as Jesus commanded. They left the men and entered into a herd of pigs. Suddenly, the pigs run into the sea and drown in the water.

Fourth scene: The herdsmen run to the town and tell the people what happened. Suddenly, the people go to the lakeshore and beg Jesus to go away.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Two demon-possessed men
- A herd of pigs
- The herdsmen
- The people in the town

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus had just crossed the Sea of Galilee in a boat. Jesus had just calmed a storm. Remember that the disciples are with Jesus and they arrived in a non-Jewish region. It is important to remember that these demon-possessed men lived in the burial caves that are near the shore.

It is important to remember that the demons shouted at Jesus. Remember what the demons said to Jesus.

It is important to remember that Jesus commanded the demons to go. Then, the demons left the two men and entered into the pigs. It is important to remember what the pigs did after the demons went inside them.

It is important to remember what the herdsmen did after they saw what happened to the pigs. It is important to remember what the people in the town did, after they heard about the pigs and the demon possessed men.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Two demon-possessed men
- A herd of pigs
- The herdsmen
- People in the city

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus came to the other side of the lake. Two demon-possessed men who were violent came out of the tombs and began to shout at Jesus.

Stop the action.

The demons begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs and not to punish them.

Stop the action.

Jesus commanded the demons to leave the two men. The demons obeyed Jesus by leaving the men and entering into a herd of pigs. Suddenly, the pigs ran into the sea and drowned in the water.

The herdsmen ran to the town and told the people what happened. The people went to the lakeshore where Jesus was.

Stop the action.

Suddenly, the people in that town went to where Jesus was. They begged Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing people in the town, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "The pigs are gone, what will we do for food?" "Why would Jesus kill our pigs?" or "What happened to the two men?"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus arrived in the land of the **Gadarenes**. Gadarenes refers to the land on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. It was near the town of Gadara where non-Jews lived. Two **demon-possessed** men came out of the **tombs**.

A **demon** is an evil spirit. Use the same word for demon that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of demon.

The **tombs**: There were cliffs on the side of the lakeshore. People cut caves into the rocks and buried dead bodies in the caves. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of tomb.

Behold or suddenly: Something unexpected or incredible is about to happen.

The demon-possessed men shouted at Jesus. The demons called Jesus the **Son of God**. Son of God is a title for Jesus indicating that Jesus has the same nature and character as God. Son of God indicates that the relationship between God the Father and Jesus, his Son, is similar to the relationship between human fathers and sons. Use the same word for Son of God that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of God.

The demons told Jesus not to bother them and not to **punish them before their time**. "Punish before the time" refers to a time that God has planned to punish all evil and sin. The Jewish people knew that God will one day come and judge the world.

The demons begged Jesus to send them into a herd of pigs that was close enough to be seen. Jesus told the demons, "Go." **Go** was a command given by Jesus to tell the demons to leave the men.

The demons did as Jesus commanded. The demons left the men and entered into the pigs. Then, the pigs ran down the hill and into the sea. They died by drowning in the water.

The **herdsman** ran into the town. Herdsman are men who take care of livestock. In this instance, the livestock was the pigs.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 8:28-34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2813794 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4936819 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 9:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 9:1–8 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this true story, Matthew gives an example of Jesus' authority to know the thoughts of people and to forgive our sins.

In the previous passage Jesus was on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. He commanded many demons to leave two men. Jesus entered into the boat. He crossed the sea and went back to Capernaum where Jesus lived.

Matthew uses a word that is sometimes translated "behold." It means that something incredible, or unexpected is about to happen. The unexpected thing that happens in this part of the story is: Some people brought Jesus a paralyzed man. The paralyzed man most likely could not move most of his body. The man was carried to Jesus on a mat. The mat refers to any piece of furniture that is used for lying on. It was light enough for someone to carry a person on. Jesus saw that the people who brought the man had faith, or they believed in Him. Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Take heart, or have courage, my son, your sins are forgiven." Jesus called the man "my son." This does not mean that Jesus was the man's father. It is a friendly way to address the man. Jesus forgave, or took away, the man's sin. The man would not be punished for his sin.

Show a photo of a bed or sleeping mat.

Stop and discuss different times and situations when you have shown faith in God.

Some of the scribes, teachers of Jewish law, said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." Said to themselves means that they were thinking it in their minds. Blasphemy is to intentionally say something that harms a person's reputation. When someone blasphemes against God, they dishonor God and make God less majestic. To blaspheme is to insult God.

Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" Jesus did not ask this question to receive an answer. He said this because He greatly disapproved of what they were thinking. Only

God can take away our sin, but Jesus has the authority of God. So, Jesus can forgive all sin. Jesus sternly advised the scribes that they were wrong for thinking that He had blasphemed God.

Stop and discuss the words or actions of others that you would disapprove of. What kinds of things might you say to them? What kinds of things might you do?

Then Jesus said, "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'" Jesus did not ask this question to receive an answer. Jesus asked this question to compare two statements. "Is it easier to tell someone that their sins are forgiven," or "Is it easier to tell someone to get up and walk?" The reason it is easier to say to someone, "Your sins are forgiven," is because the forgiveness of sins cannot be seen. But if the man gets up and walks, everyone will clearly see him walk. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," he then said to the paralytic, "Rise, pick up your bed and go home." God gave the Son of Man authority in the prophet Daniel's vision long ago. Jesus called Himself Son of Man to show that He had been given authority from God. The man stood up, picked up his mat, then walked home. This shows that Jesus had healed the man and had forgiven his sins.

Stop and discuss with your team how you would compare two statements in your language.

When the crowds saw that Jesus healed the man, they were afraid. In this instance afraid means the fear of God. This means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. The people honored God in this way. They praised and glorified, meaning they honored God, because God had given this authority to Jesus.

Stop and discuss a time when people in your community saw something amazing happen. Describe how the people responded.

This passage shows us that Jesus has authority to forgive sins and heal sickness.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus and His disciples cross the sea and go back to Capernaum. Unexpectedly, some people brought a paralyzed man to Jesus. Jesus speaks to the man.

Second scene: Some scribes think that Jesus is wrong for telling the man his sins are forgiven.

Third scene: Jesus speaks to the scribes. Then, Jesus heals the paralyzed man.

Fourth scene: The man picks up his mat and leaves.

The characters in this story include

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The people in the area
- A paralyzed man
- Scribes/Teachers of the law

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus saw the faith of the people who brought Him the paralyzed man. Remember what Jesus said to the paralyzed man.

It is important to remember what the scribes thought about Jesus after He told the man that his sins are forgiven.

It is important to remember that Jesus knew what the scribes were thinking and what He said to them. It is important to remember what Jesus said to the paralyzed man.

Remember how the people responded after the paralyzed man got up and walked.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The people in the area
- A paralyzed man
- Scribes

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus and His disciples cross the sea and went back to Capernaum. Capernaum is where Jesus lives. A paralyzed man is carried to Jesus on a mat because the people in the area believe that Jesus can heal the man.

Stop the action.

- I hope Jesus heals me,
- I hope these people do not drop my bed, or
- I know Jesus can heal me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the man that his sins are forgiven. The scribes think that Jesus dishonored God.

Stop the action.

- I am surprised about what Jesus just said,
- How could Jesus say this? Only God can forgive sins, or
- I feel like Jesus just insulted God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus knew the thoughts of the scribes. He sternly advised the scribes that they were wrong. Then Jesus healed the paralyzed man.

Stop the action.

- I am relieved that my sins are forgiven,
- I am happy that I can walk, or
- God is good. [!end] Restart the action.

The people felt fear and great reverence for God. They praised and glorified God because He gave this authority to Jesus.

Stop the action.

- I am amazed that Jesus can forgive sin,
- I am happy that Jesus healed the man, or
- I want to praise God because Jesus is with us.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

"Behold," some people brought Jesus a **paralytic** man. **Behold** or **suddenly** means that something extraordinary or unexpected is about to happen. The unexpected thing that happens here is: Some people brought Jesus a paralytic on a **bed** or **mat**.

A **paralytic** is someone who cannot move either their legs, or their arms, or both. Sometimes a paralytic cannot move at all. Use the same word for paralytic that you did in previous passages.

The **mat** refers to any piece of furniture that is used for lying on. It was light enough for someone to carry a person on. Most poor people in Israel slept on woven mats that could be rolled up. This is the type of mat that is probably referenced in this story.

Jesus saw that the people had **faith**-they believed in Him. People who have faith trust or have confidence in God. Use the same word for faith that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of faith.

Jesus told the paralytic man, "**Take heart, or have courage, my son, your sins are forgiven.**"

"**Take heart**" or "have courage" means cheer up or be encouraged.

Jesus called the man "**my son.**" This does not mean that Jesus was the man's father. It is a friendly way to address the man.

"Your sins are forgiven" means that Jesus took away the man's **sin**, or acts of disobedience to God. In **forgiveness**, the one who was wronged sets aside his rights and does not punish the other as he deserves. Use the same words for forgiveness and sin that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definitions of forgiveness and sin.

The **scribes**, teachers of Jewish law, **said to themselves**, "This man is **blaspheming**."

Use the same word for **scribe** that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of scribe.

"**Said to themselves**" means that they were thinking it in their minds. In your language, you may need to use a different body part or expression to describe where someone thinks.

Blasphemy is to intentionally say something that harms a person's reputation. When someone blasphemes against God, they dishonor God and make God less majestic. To blaspheme is to insult God. In this instance, blaspheme is referring to Jesus showing the same authority of God by forgiving the sins of the paralytic. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of blasphemy.

Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking. So, He said to them, "The **Son of Man** has authority to forgive sins." Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man because He was human and represented all people. But Jesus also had the nature and authority of God. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of Son of Man.

The crowds saw that Jesus healed the paralytic man and they were **afraid**. In this instance, "afraid" means the "fear of God." **Fear of God** means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. It shows either holy reverence or the dread of punishment. People may fear God in a positive way in that they honor Him greatly and obey Him because He is majestic. People may fear God in a negative way because they are afraid that if they disobey Him, He will punish them. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of fear of God.

The crowd "praised and glorified God." This is in response to their positive fear of God. They honored God because God had given this authority to Jesus. Use the same word for **glorify** that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for more complete definition of glorify.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 9:1–8

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3104113 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5412615 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 9:9-13

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 9:9-13 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus healed a paralyzed man in Capernaum. When the people saw that healing, they praised God and gave Him glory for giving such authority to Jesus. In this passage, Matthew, the writer of this book of the Bible, describes how he met Jesus and became one of Jesus' closest followers.

In this true story, Matthew gives an example of Jesus inviting sinners to stop sinning and start following Jesus.

Jesus passed on from there, was leaving Capernaum, and was probably walking on the lakeshore. Jesus saw Matthew sitting in the tax booth. Matthew was a Jewish man who collected taxes for the Roman government. Tax collectors probably took money from merchants and fishermen who were selling their products in the market. The tax booth was probably a small table under a shelter where tax collectors received taxes from people. Jesus said to Matthew, "Follow Me." Jesus wanted Matthew to go with Him and become His disciple. Matthew rose, stood up, and followed Jesus.

Show a picture or drawing of a tax booth.

Jesus and His disciples reclined at table. In the Jewish culture, people would lay on their side on a low couch or cushion next to the table where they were having a meal. They probably had their head propped up on one elbow. They were probably in Matthew's house. As they were eating, "behold," many tax collectors and sinners came. Behold is a word that Matthew used to indicate that something incredible or unexpected is about to happen. In this instance, it is unexpected that Jesus and His disciples were having a meal with many tax collectors and sinners. No one liked tax collectors because they were usually dishonest and took more than their share from people. Tax collectors were considered to be in the same category as murderers and thieves. Sinners were people who were sinful, or immoral. Both tax collectors and sinners were considered outcasts, or undesirable, in the Jewish society.

Stop and discuss reasons why a person would be considered to be an outcast, or undesirable, in your culture. What types of activities do they do? Where would they go? How would others respond to them?

Some of the Pharisees, who walked by, saw Jesus in Matthew's house. They said to Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" The Pharisees were one of the most influential groups of religious leaders in Israel. The Pharisees considered anyone who did not follow their strict laws of religious cleanliness to be sinners. The Pharisees believed that they would become unclean by associating with tax collectors and sinners. To the Pharisees, anyone who willingly ate with tax collectors and sinners accepted them. By doing this, Jesus looked as though He was one of them. The Pharisees did not ask this question to receive an answer. They were criticizing Jesus. The Pharisees wanted everyone to think that Jesus was wrong for having a meal with the outcasts. The Pharisees wanted everyone to know that they did not approve of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.

Stop and discuss what having a meal with someone means in your culture. What is the importance of having a meal with someone? Is there a special significance to being invited to someone's house? What kind of things are talked about while you eat?

Jesus heard what the Pharisees asked His disciples. Jesus answered the Pharisees question with a proverb, a wise saying that contains a teaching. He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Jesus used physical illness to represent spiritual needs. A sinner needs Jesus to care for their spiritual needs, just like someone who is sick needs a doctor to treat their illness. Jesus quoted the prophet Hosea when He said, "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." "Go and learn what this means" was commonly used by Jewish teachers. It means that the student should look closely at the true meaning of a passage. Mercy is to show compassion for those who are suffering or in need. A sacrifice is something given to God to thank Him or ask for forgiveness. It could be a blood offering, killing and burning an animal, or a non-blood offering like grain. Jesus uses Hosea's words to show that God desires people to place higher value on love and mercy than on ritual cleanliness or religious rules. Jesus also said, "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Righteousness refers to right standing, or lack of guilt. In the Bible, people can never be righteous on their own, or by doing enough good things. Only a right relationship with God can make someone righteous. Jesus wanted the Pharisees, and everyone else, to know that the purpose of His ministry was to invite sinners to stop sinning and to become one of His disciples.

Stop and discuss what it means to show compassion. Share stories about a time when you or someone you know were suffering or in need. What kinds of things were causing the suffering or need? How did someone show compassion to the suffering person? How did the suffering person respond to compassion?

This event teaches us that Jesus wants everyone to follow Him including outcasts, people that society considers undesirable.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus is walking along the lakeshore. He sees Matthew, and tells him, "Follow Me." Matthew left the tax booth and followed Jesus.

Second scene: Jesus and His disciples are having a meal in Matthew's house. Some of the Pharisees criticize Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners.

Third scene: Jesus responds to the criticism of the Pharisees.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Matthew
- Tax collectors and sinners
- Pharisees
- Jesus' closest disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that Jesus was probably walking on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

It is important to remember what Matthew did when Jesus said "Follow Me."

It is important to remember that Matthew uses the word "behold" to show that something unexpected or surprising will happen. In this instance, many tax collectors and sinners coming to eat with Jesus was unexpected.

It is important to remember that tax collectors and sinners are outcasts.

It is important to remember that the Pharisees were not eating the meal in Matthew's house. It is important to remember that the Pharisees are one of the most influential groups of religious leaders in Israel. Remember what they said to Jesus' disciples.

Remember that Jesus responded to the Pharisees with a type of proverb, or wise saying that contains a teaching.

It is important to remember that Jesus told the religious leaders to go and learn what it means that God wants mercy and not sacrifices. "Go and learn" was a common way that Jewish teachers would tell students to look more closely at the meaning of a passage.

It is important to remember that when Jesus said, "For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus wants to show that He is fulfilling what Hosea's prophecy says.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Matthew
- Tax collectors and sinners
- Pharisees
- Jesus' closest disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

As Jesus is walking along the lakeshore, He sees Matthew in a tax collector's booth. Jesus tells Matthew, "Follow Me." So, Matthew stands and begins to follow Jesus.

Stop the action.

- I am excited that Jesus wants me to follow Him,
- I am surprised that Jesus wants me to follow Him, or
- I have heard Jesus teach. I am so glad he has called me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus and His disciples got to Matthew's house for dinner. Some of the Pharisees see Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.

Stop the action.

- I did not expect Jesus to eat with sinners
- Does Jesus know what kind of people He is eating with? or
- Why is Jesus at a tax collectors house? [!end] Restart the action.

The Pharisees tell Jesus' disciples that it was wrong for Jesus to eat with tax collectors and sinners.

Stop the action.

- Why are we eating with tax collectors and sinners?
- We are not going to question Jesus, or
- Jesus is our leader. He has a good reason to be here.

Ask the actor playing Jesus "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- The Pharisees do not know why I came, or
- These are the people who need me most. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus responds to the Pharisees by telling them to study and learn the meaning of Scripture and that He came to call tax collectors and sinners.

Stop the action.

- I can't believe Jesus just told us to go study the Scriptures,
- Do we need to learn this? or
- Jesus is brave for talking to us this way.

Ask the actors playing the tax collectors and sinners, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Did Jesus just say that he wants us to follow Him too?
- I want to follow Jesus, or
- I wonder if Jesus will let me follow Him?

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is walking by the lakeshore and sees Matthew. **Matthew** is the writer of this book in the Bible. Matthew is one of the twelve disciples who followed Jesus everywhere. Jesus said to Matthew, "Follow me." Matthew stood up and followed Jesus. This means Matthew immediately started to be one of Jesus' disciples. Use the same word for **follow** that you did in previous passages.

"Behold, tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus."

Behold indicates that something incredible or unexpected was occurring. Tax collectors and sinners reclining with Jesus was unexpected.

Reclined at table means to have a meal with someone. In the Jewish culture, people would lay on their side on a low couch or cushion next to the table where they were having a meal. They probably had their head propped up on one elbow. This position was especially used when they were having a special meal. Use the same word for "reclined at table" that you did in previous passages.

A **tax collector** was considered to be a traitor, by other Jews, because they worked for the Roman government. Tax collectors could no longer be a judge or witness in court, they could no longer worship in the synagogues with others, and they were considered a disgrace or shame to their families. Tax collectors and sinners were often grouped together because tax collectors were corrupt, and sinners were immoral. Use the same word for tax collector that you used in previous passages.

Sinner refers to Jews who were immoral and did not follow the Jewish law. The sinners in this story did not follow the strict laws of the Pharisees about ceremonial purity. The Pharisees saw this as a sin. Use the same word for sinners that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of sin.

The **Pharisees** told Jesus' disciples that it was wrong for Jesus to eat with tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees were the most influential group of religious leaders in Israel. They recognized both the written and oral religious traditions and law. Use the same word for Pharisees that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Pharisees.

"Go and learn what this means," means that the student should look closely at the true meaning of a passage. In this instance it was what the prophet Hosea wrote in the Old Testament. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice."

Mercy is to show compassion for those who are suffering or in need. Use the same word for mercy that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of mercy.

Sacrifice is something given to God to thank Him or ask for forgiveness. It could be a blood offering, killing and burning an animal. Animal sacrifice was a common practice in the Old Testament. There were also non-blood sacrifices like grain or incense. Use the same word for sacrifice as you have used previously. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of sacrifices.

"For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

In the Old Testament, **righteousness** is based on relationship between God and man. Righteousness is a right relationship with God. Righteousness refers to right standing with God, or lack of guilt. In the Bible people can never be righteous on their own, or by doing enough good things. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of righteousness.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 9:9–13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3490720 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6045153 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 9:14–17

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 9:14–17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus invited Matthew to follow Him. Then, Jesus and His disciples went to Matthew's house for a meal. Some Pharisees saw Jesus and asked His disciples why He was eating with tax collectors and sinners.

In this true story, Jesus uses comparisons that show what He teaches is the new way of being devoted to God.

After the Pharisees questioned Jesus' disciples, the followers of John the Baptist approached Jesus. They asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" Fasting is going without food as a way to show devotion to God. People fast to humble themselves, or to show sadness for sins, or to seek God. The followers of John the Baptist were indirectly accusing Jesus' followers of not showing devotion to God. Jesus answered them with a comparison. He said, "Certainly, you do not expect the wedding guests to mourn, or be sad, as long as the bridegroom is with them." Jesus described Himself as a man who is getting married, the bridegroom. Jesus described His disciples as the wedding guests who are celebrating His wedding.

Stop and discuss weddings in your culture. Tell stories about ways people celebrate weddings. Are there any traditions that are important to keep?

Jesus was with His disciples. So, there was no need for them to fast. Jesus also said, "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." This implied that Jesus would be taken away from His followers one day in the future. His disciples would fast when He is gone to show their sadness.

Stop and discuss showing sadness in your culture. What sort of things cause sadness? Tell stories about ways in which you show sadness.

Jesus continued to teach by speaking in parables. A parable is a special story told by Jesus. He used everyday things to describe deeper things about God. Jesus compared the old teachings, and the old way of showing devotion to God, to an old piece of clothing. He compared His new teaching about right living with God to a patch cut from a new piece of clothing. When someone washed the clothing with a new patch on it, the patch would shrink and tear away from the old clothing. But an old patch would not shrink when washed. So, an old patch will stay connected to the clothing.

Jesus also compared the old way of showing devotion to God, and the old teachings, to old wineskins. A wineskin is a container made out of animal skins that people used to store wine. Jesus compared His new teaching about right living with God, to new wine. Wine is a fermented drink made from grapes.

Jews knew that when new wine is put into old wineskins, the wineskins would break open. New wine expands as it ferments, and new wineskins will expand as the new wine ferments. But the old wineskins had already been expanded. So, new wine will always expand and break open the old wineskins. Jesus was comparing the old ways of living to the new teaching from Jesus as not always compatible, or able to work together. These comparisons show us that what Jesus was teaching was the new way of devotion and right living with God. The teachings of Jesus are pleasing and acceptable to God, but what Jesus teaches about right living with God cannot be added to a person's old way of living.

Show a picture of wineskins.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: The followers of John the Baptist ask Jesus why His disciples do not fast like everyone else does. Jesus begins to teach them about fasting.

Second scene: Jesus tells stories to explain that His teachings are different than old Jewish traditions.

The characters in this story include:

- The followers of John the Baptist
- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

One day, the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus. It is important to remember the question they asked Jesus.

It is important to remember that people fast to humble themselves, or to show sadness for sins, or to seek God. By asking Jesus' disciples why they do not fast, the followers of John the Baptist were questioning if Jesus' disciples were devoted to God.

It is important to remember that Jesus compared himself to a man who is getting married and His disciples as wedding guests who are celebrating as long as Jesus was with them.

It is important to remember that Jesus is using parables to teach. A parable is a special story told by Jesus. He used everyday things to describe deeper things about God.

It is important to remember that Jesus was comparing the old ways of living to the new teaching from Jesus as not always compatible, or able to work together.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The followers of John the Baptist
- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

After Jesus invited Matthew to be His disciple, the followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus.

They asked Jesus, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

Stop the action.

- Are they even devoted to God?
- I thought Jesus' disciples were devoted to God, or
- Isn't Jesus the Messiah? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus answered their question with a question comparing Himself to a bridegroom and His followers to wedding guests.

Stop the action.

- Now I know why we do not fast like they do, or
- Why would they question Jesus? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus begins to teach by telling parables about clothing and wine.

Stop the action.

- I want them to understand what devotion to God really is, or
- God wants them to pay attention to the new way of living that I am introducing. It's much better than before!

Ask the actors playing the followers of John the Baptist, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Now I understand why they do not need to fast,
- I have never heard anyone teach like this before,
- Jesus' teaching must be like a new patch, or
- Jesus' teaching must be like the new wine.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

The **disciples of John the Baptist** asked Jesus why His disciples did not **fast** like they and the **Pharisees** did.

A **disciple** is someone who follows a teacher and learns from them. Use the same word for disciple that you used in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciple.

John the Baptist began preaching before Jesus did. John the Baptist had disciples who followed him and were committed to his teachings.

Pharisees were one of the most influential groups of religious leaders in Israel. The Pharisees also had disciples. Use the same word for Pharisee that you used in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Pharisee.

Fasting is going without food as a way to show devotion to God. Use the same word for fast that you used in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of fast.

Jesus answered the question by comparing Himself to a bridegroom, or a man who is getting married. Jesus compared His disciples to the wedding guests who cannot show sadness by fasting as long as the bridegroom was with them.

Jesus compared the old ways, and the old teachings, to old **wineskins**. A wineskin is a container made out of animal skins that people used to store wine. When a wineskin is new it can expand easily because it is soft. When a wineskin is old it is tough so it will not expand. Jesus compared His new teaching to new **wine**. Wine is a fermented drink made from grapes. Wine is made in a winepress. People dug a pit into rock. They put grapes into the pit, then walked on them to crush them. The juice runs out of a hole in the bottom and is stored in new wineskins until the juice ferments. New wine expands as it ferments, and new wineskins will expand as the new wine ferments.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 9:14–17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2498886 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4354172 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 9:18–26

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 9:18–26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this true story, Matthew gives examples of Jesus' power over illness and death. This passage also shows us that faith, believing in Jesus, is important.

In the previous passage, Jesus was asked why His disciples did not fast like everyone else. Jesus answered the question with comparisons that show His teachings were a new way of showing devotion to God.

As Jesus was talking to John's disciples, behold, or suddenly, a Jewish official, or ruler, knelt down in front of Jesus. "Behold" indicates that something incredible or unexpected will happen. It was unexpected that a Jewish official came to Jesus. The Jewish official was probably the leader of a synagogue, or a Jewish place of worship. Kneeling before someone was a way to honor them. It also shows humility and a desire to have a request accepted.

Stop and discuss ways you show honor to someone in your culture. What are some reasons you would show them honor?

The Jewish official's daughter who died, probably died a few minutes before he came to Jesus. He said to Jesus, "My daughter has just died, but you can bring her back to life if you will simply lay your hands on her." He wanted Jesus to touch his daughter and make her live again. Jesus stood up from where they were and followed the Jewish official to his house.

While Jesus and His disciples were walking with the man to his house, a woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years got close enough to Jesus to touch the edge of His clothes. She touched the strings, or threads, of the bottom of His coat. The woman was constantly bleeding. This bleeding was probably from her womb.

Stop and discuss in your culture how this kind of bleeding would be described in an appropriate way.

The woman said to herself, or thought this in her mind, "If I touch His garment, I will be made well." Jesus looked at her, after she touched the threads of his coat, and said, "Take heart, or be encouraged, daughter." Jesus was not the woman's father. Calling the woman "daughter" is a polite way to address the woman. Jesus said to her, "Your faith has made you well." This indicates she was cured of her frequent bleeding because she believed in Jesus. The woman was made well instantly. She was cured as soon as she touched Jesus' clothes. The bleeding woman would have been considered religiously, or ritually unclean. Unclean means unfit to serve God or be in the community. In the Jewish culture, anyone who comes in contact with someone who is unclean will become unclean. But Jesus made her clean because she was cured.

Show a picture of a traditional Jewish outer garment.

Stop and discuss what it means to be unclean in your culture. Are there people who are unfit to serve God or be in community? What makes someone unclean in your community? How do people treat them in your community?

Flute players and a crowd making noise, or wailing and mourning, were at the Jewish official's house when Jesus and His disciples arrived. A flute is a pipe with holes in it. People blow into one end of the flute to make music. Flute players were paid to play sorrowful music when someone dies. The crowd making noise, or wailing and mourning, was a group of people who were paid to cry and make other noises when someone dies. This was the traditional way people mourned for the dead, in the Jewish culture.

Show a picture of a flute. Stop and discuss the way people in your culture respond to death. What kind of things might they say or do to show sadness?

Jesus told those people to leave because the girl was only sleeping and not dead. Jesus knew that the girl was dead. He did not mean this literally, but Jesus used symbolic language because He knew that He was about to make her live again. When they laughed at Jesus this was to ridicule, or make fun of Him.

Stop and discuss the use of symbolic language in your culture. What are some words or phrases that are used to describe or symbolize death? What are some other situations where someone might use symbolic language?

After the people left the house, Jesus walked over to where the girl was lying. He held her hand. The girl arose, or she stood up, because she returned to life. The daughter who was dead would have been considered unclean. In the Jewish culture, anyone who comes in contact with a dead body will become unclean. But Jesus made the daughter of the Jewish official clean by touching her and raising her to life. Report, or news, about this event was told to everyone in the area.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: A Jewish official comes to Jesus and asks Him to raise his daughter from the dead. Jesus and His disciples go to his house.

Second scene: A woman with severe bleeding touches Jesus' clothes. She is healed. Then, Jesus talks to her.

Third scene: Jesus and His disciples arrive at the Jewish officials house. People are in the house playing music and crying. He brings the little girl back to life. People spread the news about the event.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Jewish official
- A woman with blood disease
- Flute players and people mourning
- A girl who died
- People spreading news

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus was teaching John's disciples when the Jewish official unexpectedly came. It is important to remember that the Jewish official kneeled down in front of Jesus. It is important to remember that the Jewish official's daughter died probably a few minutes before he came to Jesus. Remember what he said to Jesus. Jesus and His disciples went with him to his house.

It is important to remember that Jesus and His disciples were on the way to the Jewish official's house. While they were walking on the road to the Jewish official's house, the woman who suffered from bleeding for twelve years unexpectedly touched Jesus' clothes. It is important to remember that she touched the threads at the bottom of Jesus' coat. This means that she must have been leaning down. Remember what she was thinking before she touched Jesus' clothes. It is important to remember what Jesus said to her. Remember that she was healed as soon as she touched Jesus' clothes.

It is important to remember that flute players and a crowd making noise were at the Jewish official's house when Jesus and His disciples arrived. The household was mourning the death of the girl. Remember that Jesus told them to leave and they left, but what Jesus said about the girl sleeping was symbolic and an exaggeration. The flute players and people mourning laughed at Him because of what He said. It is important to remember that Jesus held the girl's hand before He brought her back to life.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Jewish official
- A woman with blood disease
- Flute players and people mourning
- A girl who died
- People spreading news

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

A Jewish official unexpectedly comes to Jesus. He kneels down in front of Jesus and asks Him to raise his daughter from the dead. Jesus and His disciples start going to his house.

Stop the action.

- I am sad because my daughter just died,
- I believe Jesus can bring my daughter back to life, or
- I hope Jesus comes with me.

Ask the actor playing Jesus "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I am glad this man believes in Me, or
- I want My disciples to go with Me.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I wonder if Jesus can bring the girl back to life.
- If Jesus touches the girl, will He become unclean? or
- A lot of people are starting to believe in Jesus. [!end] Restart the action.

A woman with severe bleeding touches Jesus' clothes. She is instantly healed. Jesus looks at her.

Stop the action.

- I think I was just cured!
- I wonder if Jesus knows I touched Him? or
- Is Jesus about to speak to me? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says to her, "Take heart daughter, your faith has made you well."

Stop the action.

- This woman shows a lot of faith,
- I do not want this woman to be afraid, or
- I am glad the woman is healed. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus and His disciples continue to walk to the Jewish official's house. They arrive, people are in the house playing music and crying. Jesus says, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping."

Stop the action.

- Does He really think she is only asleep?
- He must not know what just happened, or
- Why is Jesus here? She is already dead. [!end] Restart the action

They laugh at Jesus, but leave the house anyway. Jesus holds the girl's hand and brings her back to life.

Stop the action.

- What just happened?
- Is this Jesus? or
- Praise God!

Ask the actor playing the Jewish official, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Praise God! My daughter is alive!
- I knew Jesus could do it, or
- Now, I want to follow Jesus. [!end] Restart the action

People spread the news about the event.

Stop the action.

- This is amazing,
- Jesus has great power, or
- No one else could possibly do what Jesus does.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus was talking to John's disciples and **behold**, or suddenly, a **Jewish official knelt down** in front of Jesus.

The **Jewish official**, or ruler, was one of the leaders in the area whom people respected. He was probably the leader of a Jewish place of worship.

In this instance, **kneeling down** means putting one's face to the ground. This position showed humility and a desire for a request to be accepted. He requested Jesus to touch his daughter and make her live again.

Jesus rose, or stood up, and followed him with His disciples. Jesus and His disciples **followed** the Jewish official. They went with the man to his house. Jesus' **disciples** went with Jesus everywhere. Use the same word for disciple that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciple.

The woman who touched Jesus' garment, or clothes, **suffered from bleeding** for twelve years. "Suffered from bleeding" probably means that she was bleeding from the womb at times that were not normal. She probably bled most of the time during the twelve years that she suffered from bleeding. Luke's gospel tells us that the woman spent all of her money on doctors and none of them could cure her **discharge of blood**. Jewish law says that any **discharge of bodily fluids** makes a person unclean.

Jesus told the woman that her **faith** made her **well**.

Faith is a person's response to God. A person with faith has trust and confidence in God. Use the same word for faith that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of faith.

Well in this instance means to cause someone to become healthy after they have been sick for an extended period of time. It indicates a rescue from danger and a deliverance into safety. The same word is used in reference to God rescuing believers from sin.

Flute players and a crowd making noise, or wailing and mourning, were at the Jewish official's house when Jesus arrived. **Flute players** were paid to play sorrowful music when someone dies. The **crowd making noise**, or wailing and mourning, was a group of people who were paid to cry and make other noises when someone dies. Jesus told those people to leave.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 9:18-26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3256399 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5697918 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 9:27-38

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 9:27-38 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus healed a woman with a severe bleeding problem. He also brought a girl back to life. The news about the girl spread throughout the area.

In this true story, Matthew gives more examples of Jesus healing people with faith.

Jesus passed on from there. He left, and was walking away from the ruler's house. Two blind men followed, or walked behind, Jesus. Shouting, or crying aloud, means they were calling out to Jesus. "Have mercy on us, Son of David." Mercy is to show compassion. They wanted Jesus to cure them. "Son of David" is a title indicating Jesus is a descendant of King David. This title refers to the Messiah, or promised Savior. Jesus and the blind men went into the house where Jesus was staying.

Jesus asked the men, "Do you both believe that I am able to do this, or make you see?"

They answer, "Yes, Lord." Lord is a polite way to address a man.

As Jesus was touching the eyes of the men, He said, "Because you believe, or have faith in Me, it will be done for you." As soon as Jesus said this, they were able to see. Jesus warned them severely, but not angrily, "See that no one knows about this." But the men spread His fame, or the news about their healing, in all the nearby villages. It is not clear why Jesus gave this warning. Perhaps Jesus did not want them telling people that He was the Son of David, or promised Savior.

Stop and discuss blind people in your culture. What kind of things can they not do? What sort of things might they need help doing? What do people in your culture do to care for the blind?

While the men were leaving the house, behold, or suddenly, some people brought Jesus a demon-oppressed man who was mute. "Behold," or "suddenly," indicates that something incredible or unexpected will happen. A demon, or evil spirit, controlled the man's thoughts and actions causing the man to be mute, or unable to speak. Jesus probably gave a command to cast out the demon, or force the demon to leave. As soon as Jesus did this, the man was able to speak. The crowds marveled, or were amazed. "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel." This type of miracle, or powerful action that only God can do, had never happened in their country. But the Pharisees, or religious leaders, wrongfully accused Jesus of casting out demons using the power of the prince of demons. "Prince" refers to a leader, or chief. Satan is the prince of demons. Satan is a spiritual being who is the leader of evil spirits.

Stop and discuss the prince of demons in your culture. Tell a story from your culture about a leader of evil spirits. What kind of things would this spiritual being be responsible for doing?

Jesus was probably going through all the towns and villages in the area of the country called Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues, or Jewish places of worship. He proclaimed or preached the gospel of the kingdom. Gospel means good news. This good news was about the kingdom of God, the ruling of God in the hearts of people. The kingdom is the kingdom of heaven. A kingdom is the place where a king rules a group of people. Jesus healed every disease and affliction, or every type of illness and physical problem that people can have. This describes the work of Jesus as He traveled from place to place.

Show a map of Galilee. Discuss how storytellers in your language and culture give a summary of events in a large story. What special words or techniques of storytelling are used?

Jesus had compassion for the crowds of people. He felt sympathy, or understood and cared for them. They were harassed and helpless because they had many difficulties and no one to help them. Jesus said that the people are like sheep without a shepherd because he saw that the people are like sheep without someone to lead them to food and protect them from wild animals. A shepherd is someone who takes care of sheep and protects them.

Show a picture of a shepherd. How would you translate shepherd in your language? Show a picture of sheep. Stop and discuss what a shepherd does and what might happen to sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus was speaking to His disciples, the twelve men who traveled with Him everywhere. He made a comparison between two different things. People ready to come to God are compared to crops ready to be gathered. "The harvest is plentiful" means the crops are abundant and ready to be harvested. "The laborers" are the people who gather in the crops. To pray earnestly is to personally communicate with God. The Lord of the Harvest is God. The thing Jesus' followers are to be praying for is that God would send more people to gather the crops.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Two blind men are walking behind Jesus. They cry out to Jesus to heal them. Jesus asks if they believe. He touches their eyes and heals them.

Second scene: A demon-possessed man is brought to Jesus. Jesus heals him. Everyone is amazed.

Third scene: Jesus was teaching and healing in the towns and villages. His disciples are with Him.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Two blind men
- People who bring the demon-possessed man
- A demon-possessed man who cannot speak
- Some Pharisees
- Some people being healed
- Jesus' disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus was walking away from a house where He brought a girl back to life. Remember that the blind men were walking behind Jesus and calling Jesus "Son of David." They asked Jesus to have mercy on them. After the men followed Jesus into the house, Jesus asked them "Do you believe I can make you see?"

It is important to remember that some people brought a demon-possessed man to Jesus while the other two men were leaving. Remember that he could not speak. It is important to remember what the man did when Jesus forced the demon to leave. Remember what the crowds said and what the Pharisees said.

It is important to remember that scene 3 is referencing all that Jesus did in the area. Remember what Jesus was proclaiming. It is important to remember why Jesus had compassion for the people.

Remember how Jesus describes people ready to follow God as a crop ready to be harvested. Discuss with your team how you will translate this comparison that Jesus makes so that people will know it is a comparison.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Two blind men
- People who brought a demon-possessed man
- A demon-possessed man who is unable to speak
- Some Pharisees
- Some people being healed
- Jesus' disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus leaves the house where He made the girl live again. Two blind men are walking behind Him. They call out to Jesus: "Have mercy on us, Son of David."

Stop the action.

- We want to see,
- If Jesus can raise the dead, He can give us sight, or
- I hope Jesus hears us. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus goes into the house. The blind men also go inside. Jesus asks the men, "Do you (both) believe that I am able to make you see?" The men answer Jesus, "Yes, Lord."

Stop the action.

- These men must really believe if they followed me inside,
- I want to help them, or
- Since they believe, I will heal them. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus touches the eyes of the men and says, "Because you have faith, it will be done for you." The men are healed, and they begin to see.

Stop the action.

- I can see!
- Jesus healed me, or
- Jesus really is the Son of David. [!end] Restart the action.

The men leave the house. Unexpectedly, some people bring a demon oppressed man who could not speak to Jesus. Jesus gives a command to cast out the demon. The man begins to speak. The crowds are amazed, they say, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

Stop the action.

- Praise God! I can talk,
- Jesus is amazing, or
- Thank you Jesus.

Ask the actors playing some people in the town "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I have never heard the man speak before,
- I have never even heard of something like this happening, or
- Wow, Jesus just forced the demon to leave the man. [!end] Restart the action.

But the Pharisees wrongfully accuse Jesus. They say, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

Stop the action.

- This is too incredible to believe,
- There is no way He is good, or
- I have never seen anything like this.

Jesus was going through all the towns and villages in the area of Galilee. Jesus taught the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogues. He healed every type of illness and physical problem of the people. Jesus had compassion

for the crowds of people. Then Jesus says to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. So, ask God to send more people to gather in the crops."

Stop the action.

- What does this mean?
- I will pray to God for this, or
- Does this mean we are to be the laborers in the field?

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus left the house, and two blind men followed Him, **shouting**, or **crying aloud**. This does not indicate they were weeping, but shouting, so Jesus would hear them. They were shouting, in a polite way, "Have **mercy** on us, **Son of David**."

Mercy is to have compassion for those suffering or in need. Use the same word for mercy that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of mercy.

Son of David is a title indicating Jesus is a descendant of King **David**. David was the greatest king of Israel in the Old Testament. God promised that someone from David's family would rescue Israel from their enemies and be king. The Jews use this title to refer to the Messiah, or Christ. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of David.

Jesus said to the blind men, "Because you believe, or have **faith**, it will be done for you."

Faith is a person's response to God, showing they trust Him. Use the same word for faith that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of faith.

And their eyes were opened: As soon as Jesus said this, "their eyes were opened." This does not mean the men's eyes were closed. It means they were healed of blindness and were able to see.

People brought a **demon-possessed** man who was **mute** to Jesus. A **demon** is an evil spirit.

Mute is unable to speak. Use the same word for **demon** that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of demon.

The **Pharisees** said, "He casts out demons by the **prince of demons**."

Pharisees are religious leaders. Use the same word for Pharisees that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Pharisees.

Prince refers to a leader, or chief. **Satan** is the **prince of demons**. Satan is a spiritual being who God created. Satan is the leader of evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. Use the same word for Satan that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Satan.

Jesus was teaching in the **synagogues**. Synagogues were Jewish places of worship where people in villages could meet instead of the main temple in Jerusalem. Use the same word for synagogue that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of synagogue.

Jesus was teaching about the **gospel of the kingdom**.

The **gospel**, or **good news**, was about the kingdom of God, the ruling of God in the hearts of people. Use the same word for gospel or good news that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of gospel or good news.

Kingdom is the **kingdom of heaven**. A kingdom is the place where a king rules a group of people. Heaven is the place where God lives and the ultimate destination of believers of Jesus Christ. God is the King of heaven. Use the same word for "kingdom of heaven" that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said a comparison to His **disciples**. The disciples traveled with Jesus everywhere and learned from Him. Use the same word for disciples that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciples.

"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, **pray earnestly** to the **Lord of the harvest** to send out laborers into his harvest."

Pray means to personally communicate, or talk with God. Use the same word for pray that you did in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of pray.

Earnestly is to beg, or plead, or ask seriously.

The **Lord of the harvest** is God Himself. Jesus wants His disciples to pray that God will send more people to teach others about Him.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 9:27-38

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3713629 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6440313 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 10:1–15

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 10:1–15 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus has been traveling around Galilee. He was teaching people and healing the sick. Jesus has already chosen 12 men to be his special disciples. In this story, Matthew tells us that Jesus asks the 12 disciples to come to him, and he gives them the authority to drive out evil spirits, to make sick people better and to cure every type of illness. Jesus has always had the power to do these things-now he is giving the 12 disciples the right to use this power to do the same things as Jesus.

In this story, Matthew gives us a list of the names of the 12 disciples. Here they are also called apostles-it is the only time in Matthew's gospel that the 12 disciples are called apostles. Apostles are men sent with Jesus's authority. In other stories where Jesus sends the disciples out to talk to people about the kingdom of heaven, the disciples travel in pairs. This might be why the names in this list are in pairs:

- Simon and Andrew are brothers. We do not know why Simon is named first. "Simon" is his Jewish name, but Simon is also called "Peter," which is his Greek name.
- James and John are brothers. Their father is Zebedee.
- Philip and Bartholomew
- Thomas and Matthew "the tax collector." You will remember from a previous story that Jesus sees Matthew while he is collecting taxes and tells Matthew to follow him. Matthew probably stopped collecting taxes when he started following Jesus.
- James and Thaddaeus. James is the son of Alphaeus.
- Simon "the zealot," and Judas Iscariot. Simon is called "the zealot" so we know he is different from Simon Peter. A zealot is somebody who is very excited, or angry about something. We don't know what Simon "the zealot" was excited or angry about, but it might have been because he didn't like the Romans being in charge in his country. Later in the story of Jesus' life, Judas "Iscariot" is the man who will make it possible for the enemies of Jesus to arrest Jesus.

In the next part of the story, Jesus is going to send his 12 disciples out to do the same things that he, Jesus, has been doing-talking about the kingdom of heaven, making sick people better, and casting out evil spirits.

First, Jesus gives them some instructions. There is no story about the 12 disciples actually doing what Jesus told them to do. This probably means that what Jesus told his 12 disciples to do is very important, and is very important for us today. Jesus says that the disciples must not go into areas where Gentiles or Samaritans, who are non-Jews, live, but that they must go and speak to Jews. Gentiles were anybody who was not a Jew. The Samaritans were not pure Jews, and therefore partly Gentile. The Samaritans lived in Samaria-the land between Galilee and Judea. The Jews did not like the Samaritans for several reasons. The Samaritans said that they were descendants of Joseph. The Jews had built their first temple at Jerusalem, but the Samaritans wanted the centre of worship to be on Mount Gerizim, where it had been in the time of Joshua, one of the first Jewish leaders. A long time before Jesus, some foreigners called the Assyrians had invaded and conquered Samaria. The Assyrians intermarried with the people who lived in the region. So their descendants who lived in that region-the Samaritans-were not pure Jews.

Jesus calls the Jews "the lost sheep of Israel." This describes the Jewish people as a flock of sheep who are separated from their shepherd. God is like the shepherd, and the people are separated from him-they do not follow him.

Stop and show your team photographs of a flock of sheep, and a shepherd.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that they must talk to people about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus tells them to do all the things that he has been doing: making sick people better, including people with leprosy. In the Bible leprosy describes any disease that affected a person's skin. People with leprosy were thought of as "unclean" and not allowed to be part of the community.

Jesus also tells the 12 disciples to bring dead people back to life and to cast out evil spirits.

Stop and discuss with your team: People with leprosy and people with evil spirits were excluded from their communities. Jesus tells his disciples to cure those with leprosy and to cast out evil spirits. This is not just about making people better, it is about making the unclean "clean." It is about making it possible for them to rejoin their families and communities again. In your culture, are there people who are rejected, or excluded, from being part of the community? Tell a story about someone who was excluded from their community, but then was restored back to their community. What happened?

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that when he gave them the authority to do these things he, Jesus, did not ask for money in return. So the 12 disciples must not ask for, or expect to be given, money when they do these things.

Jesus also tells the 12 disciples that they must not take any money with them, or spare clothes. This shows that the 12 disciples have to rely on God to provide all that they need.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that when they get to a town or village they must look for someone who is willing to welcome the disciples into their house and look after them for as long as the disciples stay in the town or village. When the disciples enter the house they must say to the people of the house, "May God's peace be with you." If the people of the house welcome the disciples and treat them well, then God's peace will stay with the people in the house. But if the disciples are not welcome or treated well, then God's peace will not stay with the people in the house.

If the 12 disciples are not welcome, Jesus told his disciples to shake or remove the dust that was on their feet and sandals. They probably did this by shaking their feet or brushing off the dust with their hands. This was a cultural gesture that had a symbolic meaning. When a Jewish person shook the dust of a place off of his feet, it indicated that he did not have any relationship with the people in that place. It showed that he rejected those people.

Stop and discuss with your team how people in your culture show that you are ending a relationship, or rejecting someone.

Jesus says a very important thing. Jesus talks about Sodom and Gomorrah, two towns from very long ago. The people in these towns disobeyed God and God destroyed them. In the final days when God judges all people for the things they have said and done, God will not be merciful to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. But on that day, God will be even less merciful to the people who do not listen to the disciples.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus asks his 12 disciples to come to him. He gives authority to the 12 disciples to use the power that Jesus has.

Second scene: Jesus sends out his disciples. He gives his disciples specific instructions about where to go, what to do, and what to take when they go.

Third scene: Jesus gives his disciples instructions about what to do when they enter a town.

Fourth scene: Jesus tells his disciples what to do if the people in the town reject them.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The 12 disciples
- The Jews that the 12 disciples go and talk to
- Some people who welcome and listen to the disciples
- Some people who do not welcome or listen to the disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that the story starts with Jesus giving his authority to the 12 disciples to use his power.

It is important to note that the rest of this story is Jesus talking to the 12 disciples. In this list, sometimes just the disciple's name is given, sometimes we are given some more information about the disciple. The 12 disciples are listening to Jesus. Jesus gives the 12 disciples instructions about what they are going to do.

Stop and discuss with your team how you indicate that what you are about to say is really important and worth listening to.

It is important to note that there is no story about the 12 disciples doing what Jesus tells them to do. These are instructions that Jesus gives his disciples.

After Jesus gives his disciples instructions, Jesus says, "I tell you the truth." This means that what he says next is very important. Jesus then says that the cities that reject the disciples will be worse off than the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from long ago.

It is important to remember that Jesus does not stop talking to the 12 disciples at the end of this story. In the story that follows this story, Jesus is still talking and gives the 12 disciples more instructions.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The 12 disciples
- The Jews that the 12 disciples go and talk to
- Some people who welcome and listen to the disciples
- Some people who do not welcome or listen to the disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus asks the 12 disciples to come to him, Jesus tells them that he is going to send them out into the towns and villages. Then Jesus gives them instructions what they must say and do.

Stop the action.

- Scared,
- Excited,
- Impatient,
- Humble. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus gives the 12 disciples some instructions. Jesus says that the disciples must not go into areas where Gentiles or Samaritans live, but that they must go and speak to Jews. Jesus says, "Go to the lost sheep of Israel."

Stop the action.

- Sad, because some people won't hear about the kingdom of heaven,
- Impatient-there are so many people who need to hear about the kingdom of heaven and there are only 12 disciples and me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that they must talk to people about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus tells them to do all the things that he has been doing: making sick people better, including people with leprosy.

Jesus also tells the 12 disciples to bring dead people back to life and to cast out evil spirits.

Stop the action.

- I don't want to talk to unclean people,
- What happens if nothing happens and people don't get better?
- I don't believe that dead people can come back to life. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that when he gave them the power to do these things he, Jesus, did not ask for money in return. So the 12 disciples must not ask for, or expect to be given, money when they do these things. Jesus also tells the 12 disciples that they must not take any money with them, or spare clothes.

Stop the action.

- Scared-what happens if God doesn't provide all that I need?
- Excited to see what God will do." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that when they get to a town or village they must look for someone who is willing to welcome the disciples into their house and look after them for as long as the disciples stay in the town or village. When the disciples enter the house, they must say to the people of the house, "May God's peace be with you." If the disciples are not welcome or treated well, then God's peace will not stay with the people in the house. Jesus told his disciples to leave the house and shake or remove the dust that was on their feet and sandals.

The important thing that Jesus says is that on the final day of judgement, God will show less mercy to the people who don't listen to what the 12 disciples are telling them than he did to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. The final day of judgement is the time when God will judge all people for the things they have said and done on earth. Sodom and Gomorrah are the names of two towns from the time before Jesus. God destroyed these two towns and the people who lived there because they had disobeyed God and broken their relationship with God.

Stop the action.

- Fearful-If I don't speak well, people will not listen to me and they will die,
- Awe-what Jesus is telling me to do must be very important if people die because they have not listened,
- Impatient-I don't want to sit here and listen, I want to go and begin talking to people about the kingdom of heaven.

This story ends here.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus has already chosen 12 men to be his special **disciples**. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of disciples, and translate it in the same way you have before. In this story, Matthew gives us a list of the names of the 12 disciples.

In this story, Jesus asks the 12 disciples to come to him, and he gives them the **authority** to drive out evil spirits, to make sick people better and to cure every type of illness. Jesus has always had the power to do this-now he is giving the 12 disciples the right to use Jesus power to do the same things. **Power** is God's power, in Jesus, to do miraculous things. When authority is given to somebody, it gives that person the right to act-in this story, it gives the 12 disciples the right to do the things that Jesus did.

In this story the 12 disciples are also called **apostles**-it is the only time in Matthew's gospel that the 12 disciples are called apostles. Apostles are appointed by Jesus himself as his representative. Their main functions are to preach the good news, to be founders of the church, to hold spiritual authority in the church, and to be witnesses to the fact that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. If your language has an accepted term for apostle

that is readily understood by all, you may use that term here. However, if your audience is un-churched or new believers, they may need further explanation, and a different term may be helpful to them. Some suggestions are:

- representatives of Jesus Christ
- special messengers of Jesus Christ
- sent-people of Jesus Christ

Whatever term you choose should imply that these people are in a position of trust and authority.

One of the disciples, Matthew, is called **the tax collector**. Translate "tax collector" in the same way you did in previous passages.

Another disciple is called Simon **the zealot**. Simon is called "the zealot" so we know he is different from Simon Peter. A zealot is somebody who is very excited, or angry, about something. We don't know what Simon "the zealot" was excited or angry about, but it might have been because he didn't like the Romans being in charge in his country. If this was true, Simon the zealot would have found it very difficult to be friends with Matthew the tax collector who had worked for the Romans.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples not to go into areas where **Gentiles** or **Samaritans** live. Gentiles were anybody who was not a Jew. Samaritans were not pure Jews. Pure Jews did not like Gentiles or Samaritans. The Jews lived in Galilee and Judea.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that they must talk to people about the **kingdom of heaven**. Translate "kingdom of heaven" in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples to do all the things that he has been doing: making sick people better, including people with leprosy. This term in the Bible could refer to any of several types of skin disease. These diseases made a person unclean, or not able to live in the community. These people could only worship in the synagogue behind a screen, and if anyone touched them that person would become unclean also. The Old Testament law said that they had to wear torn clothes, not brush their hair, and shout out "unclean!" in public as they went places.

Jesus tells the 12 disciples that when the disciples enter the house they must give a **blessing of peace**, or say to the people of the house, "May God's peace be with you." See the Master Glossary for full definitions of bless and peace.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 10:1–15

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3943124 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6735854 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 10:16–25

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 10:16–25 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this true story, Matthew shares what Jesus taught the disciples about persecution, or hardship, that will come in the future.

In the previous passage, Jesus sent his 12 disciples on a mission to proclaim the kingdom of heaven, or when God comes to rule, to people in Israel. Jesus gave his disciples authority to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons.

Matthew uses a word like "behold" to indicate that something important or incredible will happen. In this part of the story, the important or incredible thing is the danger that the disciples will face. Jesus symbolically compared his disciples to sheep. He compared the people they will encounter to wolves. Sheep are in danger when they are among wolves. Wolves are a type of wild dog. They live in groups so they can attack other animals, such as sheep, and eat them.

Show a picture of wolves.

Because of this, Jesus gave the disciples two commands. He said, "Be shrewd, or wise, like serpents and innocent, or gentle, like doves." This is also symbolic. Wisdom is to think carefully before acting. In Jewish culture, serpents, or snakes, were thought of as careful and wise. Innocent, or gentle, refers to not harming your enemy. A dove is a small bird. In Jewish culture, doves were thought of as innocent or gentle.

Show a picture of snakes. Show a picture of doves. Stop and discuss how animals or other things in nature are used in your language to describe human characteristics or behavior. What animals are considered wise? What animals are considered gentle?

"Beware of men," means to be alert about people, not just men. This is a warning about people who will arrest the followers of Jesus and deliver them to local authorities. Jesus warns, religious leaders will take the disciples and beat them inside of synagogues, or Jewish places of worship.

Show a picture of a synagogue.

Jesus warns his followers that people would drag or lead them to governors and kings. These rulers would judge the followers of Jesus. Governors refers to government leaders of the area. Kings refers to people who ruled over an entire nation. Jesus said, "for my sake," he indicated that the trials and judgments would occur because the disciples follow Jesus. "To bear witness," or "give a testimony" indicated that God would allow the disciples to be arrested. This is so they could tell the leaders and the Gentiles, non-Jews, that Jesus came to save the world.

Jesus said, "When they deliver you over, or have you brought to trial for judgment, do not worry, or be anxious, about what to say or how to say it." He also said, "You will be given words to say."

"In that hour" means when the time comes. The Spirit of your Father is not their earthly fathers. The Spirit of your Father is God's Spirit, or the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of your Father will speak in you means that the Holy Spirit of God will tell you what to say. The Holy Spirit, or God's Spirit, enables people to do something. Holy Spirit will instruct the person or tell the person exactly what to do.

Jesus wanted his followers to understand that even family members, who do not believe in Jesus, could turn against them and hand them over to the authorities to be killed. "You will be hated by all because of my name" indicates that people will hate the followers of Jesus because they were loyal to Jesus.

Jesus said, "The one who endures to the end, will be saved." This is a person who remains loyal to Jesus even though people hate them. "To the end" could mean until the end of a person's life, or until the end of the persecution. "Will be saved" means rescued from danger or harm. In this instance, it refers to a follower of Jesus being saved by God from eternal punishment. They will go to heaven to be with God at the end of their earthly life.

Stop and discuss a time when 2 family members or close friends opposed one another. What was the cause of the disagreement? How did other members of the community or family react to this situation?

Jesus said, "When they persecute you in one town, flee, or run away quickly, to the next town." This refers to any of the towns or villages where the disciples will go. When Jesus is going to say something important, he will sometimes say, "truly," or "I tell you the truth."

Jesus said, "You will not finish going through the towns of Israel." This indicated that the disciples would not have enough time to carry the message to all the towns in Israel before the Son of Man comes. Jesus, the Son of Man, will come back to his disciples after his death and resurrection. He will also go back to his Father in heaven. And he will come back someday at the end of the earth to gather his people. Jesus may be referring to any or all of these events. The important thing here is that there is not much time to do everything that needs to be done. Jesus calls himself the Son of Man because he is the promised Savior.

Jesus said, "A disciple is not above his teacher." In this instance "disciple" refers to students in general, not just Jesus' 12 closest followers.

Jesus also said, "A servant, or slave, is not above his master." Servant, or slave, in this instance refers to someone who serves or works for another person. A disciple of Jesus is also a servant of Jesus. A follower of Jesus should be satisfied if they become like Jesus.

Jesus also said, "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign, or say worse things, to the members of his household." The master of the house is the person in charge of those who lived in the house. In this instance, it represents Jesus. Beelzebul is another name for Satan. Satan is a spiritual being who is the leader of evil spirits. In a previous passage, Jesus was falsely accused of casting out evil spirits by the power of Satan. The followers of Jesus are the members of the household. They should not expect to be honored more than Jesus. Since Jesus encountered difficulties, the followers of Jesus should also expect difficulties.

In this story we learn that followers of Jesus will encounter hardship if they are loyal to Jesus in every situation. But God will reward the followers of Jesus in heaven.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus is sending out his 12 disciples. After giving the disciples instructions about their mission, Jesus warns them about coming persecutions.

Second scene: Jesus continues to warn his disciples about persecutions. He gives them instructions about what to do if they are arrested.

Third scene: Jesus warns about family turning against his disciples and assures them that their mission will not end before the Son of Man comes.

Fourth scene: Jesus gives an explanation why the foretold persecution will happen.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Authorities who take, beat, and kill Jesus' followers
- Families who betray their family members

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is sending his disciples to tell other people in Israel about Jesus and why he came. Remember that Jesus uses symbolic language. He compares his disciples to sheep and the persecutors to wolves. This is why Jesus told his followers to be wise like snakes and gentle like doves. It is important to remember that Jesus is using symbolic language to tell his followers to be wise and gentle. They will be like innocent animals in a dangerous environment. It is important to remember that the disciples will get arrested because they are following Jesus. It is important to remember that God is going to allow hardship for a purpose. The purpose for the disciples was for them to tell the authorities about Jesus.

It is important to remember that Jesus told the disciples not to worry about what they would say to the authorities. Jesus said that the Spirit of God would tell them what to say when the time came and not before.

It is important to remember that Jesus said that unbelieving family members would betray the disciples by handing them over to authorities to be killed. It is important to remember that Jesus said, "Everyone will hate you because you follow me." Remember that Jesus told the disciples, when they are persecuted in a town they need to run to another town. It is important to remember that Jesus emphasized that the disciples' mission will not be completed before the Son of Man comes.

It is important to remember that Jesus said, "A disciple is not greater than his teacher." It is important to remember that the religious leaders called Jesus Beelzebul. Jesus compared what they said about him to what they will say about his followers. He said, how much more will they say things that are untrue about those who follow Jesus. This means they will definitely say worse things about the disciples.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Authorities who take, beat, and kill Jesus' followers
- Families who betray their family members

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is sending out his 12 disciples. After giving the disciples instructions about their mission, Jesus says, "I am sending you out just like sheep to a pack of wolves. So, be wise like snakes and gentle like doves."

Stop the action.

- Sheep get eaten by wolves. That does not sound good;
- Snakes are wise, they do not get eaten by wolves;
- Doves are always calm and gentle. That will be difficult to do; or
- Jesus is sending us. So, God will be with us. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells his disciples that they will be arrested and beaten for following him. But they will get to tell the authorities about him.

Stop the action.

- My disciples are brave. They can do this; or
- Surely my disciples will not be afraid to keep following me!

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I do not want to be beaten, but I will do anything for Jesus,
- I did not know that following Jesus was going to get us arrested, or
- I am ready to tell others about Jesus. I do not care if it gets me arrested. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus gives them instructions about what to do when they are arrested.

Stop the action.

- The Spirit of God is going to speak through us! That is amazing!
- I am glad I do not have to worry about what I am going to say; or
- I wonder what God will tell me to say. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus warns about family turning against his disciples and assures them that their mission will not end before the Son of Man comes.

Stop the action.

- It is hard to believe that my family will turn against me for following Jesus,
- It must be true if Jesus said it, or
- When will the Son of Man come? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus explains why the disciples will be persecuted. He tells them that since he was persecuted and wrongfully accused, they will be as well.

Stop the action.

- I cannot expect them to treat me well if they treated Jesus so badly,
- Jesus is worth it, or
- I am ready to do whatever it takes to serve Jesus.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Behold is a word used to indicate that something important or incredible will happen. Jesus is sending his disciples on a mission. Jesus symbolically compared his disciples to sheep, and the people they will encounter to wolves. **Wolves** are a type of wild dog.

Jesus said, "be shrewd, or **wise**, as **serpents** and innocent, or gentle, as **doves**."

Wisdom is to think carefully before acting. Wisdom refers to having good judgment in difficult situations. Use the same word for wisdom that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of wisdom.

Serpent is a snake. **Snakes** in the Jewish culture were thought to be good examples of being cautious, careful, or wise.

A **dove** is a small bird like a pigeon. In the Jewish culture, a dove was thought to be a good example of being gentle, innocent, or harmless.

Beware of men is a warning for the disciples to be careful, or watch out for people who are seeking to harm them.

"They will hand you over to the courts and scourge, or flog, you in their **synagogues**."

People will hand over, or arrest, the followers of Jesus. They would be beaten with a whip inside a **synagogue**. A synagogue is a Jewish place of worship. Use the same word for synagogue that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of synagogue.

The followers of Jesus were warned about being "**dragged** to **governors** and **kings**."

Dragged indicates being forced to appear before a judge.

Governors are rulers that are not as powerful as kings.

Kings are the supreme rulers of the land.

Jesus said God would allow those things to occur for the disciples to **bear witness**, or **give a testimony**, to the leaders and the **Gentiles**. To bear witness, or give a testimony, in this instance means to tell non-believers about Jesus. A **Gentile** is a non-Jew. Use the same word for Gentile that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Gentile.

Jesus told them not to worry about what they would speak to the authorities because it would be "the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." The "Spirit of your Father" is the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God in heaven. Use the same word for Holy Spirit that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that persecutions, or hardships, would even come through family members. Jesus told them they would be hated by all people because they follow him. Jesus said, "The one who endures to the end would **be saved**." **Be saved** means to be rescued from the danger of eternal punishment. It indicates **salvation** through belief in Jesus resulting in spending eternity in heaven with God. Use the same word for salvation that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of salvation.

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." The exact meaning of this phrase is not clear. Jesus will come back to His disciples after His death and resurrection. He will go back to His Father in heaven. He will come back someday at the end of the earth. Jesus may be referring to any, or all of these events. The title **Son of Man** indicates that Jesus is the promised Savior. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

Jesus said, "A **disciple** is not above his teacher, nor a **servant**, or **slave**, above his master."

In this instance **disciple** refers to any student or follower, not just Jesus' 12 closest followers. Use the same word for disciple that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciple.

Servant, or **slave**, in this instance refers to someone who serves or works for another person. A disciple of Jesus is also a servant of Jesus. Use the same word for servant or slave that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of servant or slave.

Jesus said, "If they have called the **master** of the house **Beelzebul**, how much more will they **malign**, or say worse things, to the **members of his household**."

The **master of the house** is the person in charge of those who lived in the house. Jesus is calling himself the master of the house because he is the master, or leader, of the disciples and everyone who follows Jesus. Use the same word for master that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of master.

Beelzebul is another name for Satan. **Satan** is a spiritual being who is the leader of evil spirits. Satan was created by God, but he rebelled against God. Use the same word for Satan that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Satan.

Malign, or say worse things, means to say unpleasant and untrue things about someone.

The **members of his household** are followers of Jesus. Use the same word that you did in previous passages for household. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of household.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 10:16–25

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4154132 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7125049 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 10:26–33

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 10:26–33 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this true story, Matthew recounts the teaching and encouragement Jesus gave the disciples. We learn about how valuable Jesus' followers are to God.

In the previous passage, Jesus tells his disciples about the persecution, or hardship, they will experience for publicly following him.

Jesus is telling the disciples, his 12 closest followers, about the people who will persecute them. Jesus tells the disciples to not be afraid of those people. When Jesus says, "Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known," Jesus repeats the same thought using different words to show the importance of what he said. We are not sure what this means: The things that are hidden are possibly the secret sins of the people persecuting Jesus' followers, or the difficult things to understand about God's Kingdom. Jesus said, "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." During that time, the top, or roof, of Jewish houses were flat and accessible by stairs. People used the roof of their house for multiple purposes. It was common for people to stand on the housetop to make important announcements.

Show a picture of a house with a flat roof.

Again, Jesus repeats the same thought using different words to show the importance of what he said. This time, Jesus probably means that his followers must tell everyone what Jesus has told them. Jesus tells his disciples to not be afraid of the people who can only kill their physical body, but cannot kill their soul, or inner life. The soul is the part of a person that continues to exist when the body dies.

Jesus said, "Fear Him, or fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell." In this instance, fear means to have reverence for God. When something is destroyed, it cannot work or be repaired. Hell is the place of eternal punishment. God is the only one who has control over a people's souls because He is the only one who can destroy or save people forever.

Stop and tell a story about what happens to a person when they die. What do you usually call the part of the person that still exists after they die?

Then Jesus teaches by using a parable. A parable is a special story told by Jesus using everyday things to describe deeper things of God. When Jesus asked, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny, or a small copper coin?" He did not ask to receive an answer. He was showing that people put little value on sparrows. A sparrow is a small bird. A penny is a small copper coin with little value.

Show a picture of a sparrow. Show a picture of a penny, or small copper coin.

Jesus said, a sparrow will not fall to the ground, or die, without your heavenly Father's permission. This is a comparison. It teaches us that, in the same way a sparrow will not die without God allowing it, a follower of Jesus will not experience hardship without God allowing it. Jesus calls God our Father to show that someone

who believes in Jesus is a part of God's kingdom. God cares for us like a Father cares for his children. Jesus said, "Even the hairs on your head are numbered." This means, God even knows how many hairs are on a person's head. This shows that God cares about even the smallest detail of a person's life. This is why Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." He explains that his followers are more valuable to God than many sparrows. This indicates that God will take care of the followers of Jesus.

Stop and discuss close personal relationships in your culture. Describe the special bond between parents and their children. What kind of words are used in your culture to describe this kind of relationship?

Jesus said, "So, everyone who acknowledges me before, or in front of, men, I also will acknowledge before, or in front of, my Father who is in heaven." Jesus said this because he told his disciples to not be afraid of the hardship that they will experience. Men, in this instance, refers to people, not just males. Jesus wants his followers to stay loyal to him in public. Even in front of those who will persecute them. Jesus will declare to the Father, or God, that a person belongs in heaven if the person remains loyal to him. But, if a person is not loyal to Jesus in public, Jesus will deny that person is a true follower of him.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus is continuing to tell his disciples about people who will persecute them. He tells the disciples not to fear those people.

Second scene: Jesus encourages his disciples that God cares greatly for them.

Third scene: Jesus teaches the disciples how important it is to tell others about him.

The characters in this story include:

- People who persecute Jesus' followers
- Jesus
- The disciples
- God
- Sparrows

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the previous passage, Jesus spoke about hardship and persecution. This passage begins with "therefore" or "so" as a way to connect it with what Jesus just told them. It is important to remember that Jesus is talking about the people who will persecute his disciples when he says, "Have no fear of them." Remember that Jesus said, "Nothing is covered that will not be revealed."

It is important to remember that Jesus repeats the same thought using different words to show the importance of what he said. "Nothing is covered" is the same thing as "that which is hidden." The things that are hidden are possibly the secret sins of the people persecuting Jesus' followers, or the difficult things to understand about God's Kingdom.

Jesus said, "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." Jesus repeats the same thought using different words to show the importance of what he said. This time, "What I tell you in the dark" and "what you hear whispered," both have the same meaning. This is what Jesus teaches his disciples in secret. "Say in the light" and "proclaim on the housetop," both have the same meaning. Jesus wants his followers to tell everyone what Jesus teaches them.

Remember that Jesus said, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

It is important to remember that in the second scene Jesus is using a parable to teach his disciples. A parable is a special story told by Jesus using everyday things to describe deeper things of God. In this instance Jesus speaks about sparrows having little value. But God still cares about what happens to sparrows. Remember that Jesus said, God even knows how many hairs are on your head. It is important to remember that Jesus told his disciples "do not fear" three times in this passage.

It is important to remember that Jesus said, "Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven." It is important to remember that Jesus wants his followers to tell others about him in public. Remember what Jesus said about those who do not tell others about him in public.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- People who persecute Jesus' followers
- Jesus
- The disciples
- God
- Sparrows

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is telling his disciples about people who will persecute them. He tells the disciples not to fear those people. Jesus says, "Nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known."

Stop the action.

- Jesus said to not be afraid, so I do not have to be afraid,
- I am still afraid, but I can do this because Jesus is sending me, or
- Even the things that are secret will be made known. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops."

Stop the action.

- Finally! Soon we will get to share with everyone the things that Jesus has told us.
- I wonder what he wants us to proclaim-everything he told us, or just some things? Or
- I am a little afraid, but Jesus said we don't need to be afraid. I'm praying that I trust him more. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus encourages his disciples that God cares greatly for them. He tells a parable about sparrows falling to the ground and God noticing.

Stop the action.

- God even noticed a little sparrow like me, or
- I am glad God even cares about sparrows. [!end] Restart the action.

Then Jesus says, "Even the hairs of your head are all numbered."

Stop the action.

- My followers need to know how valuable they are, or
- I want them to understand how much God loves them.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- God must really love us if he knows how many hairs are on my head, or
- I understand how much God loves us. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches his disciples how important it is to tell others about him. He says, "So everyone who acknowledges me in front of men, I also will acknowledge in front of my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me in front of people, I also will deny in front of my Father who is in heaven."

Stop the action.

- I want Jesus to acknowledge me to the Father,
- I will not deny Jesus in front of people, or
- I am glad Jesus is going to tell the Father that I belong in heaven.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus said, "What you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops." **Housetop** refers to the top of a house or other building, accessible by outside stairs. The housetop was used for many things, not just to provide shelter. A railing was built around the top of houses to prevent people from falling off.

Jesus says to not be afraid of the people who can only kill your physical body, but cannot kill your **soul**. The soul is a person's inner life and thinking. The soul is the part of a person that continues to exist when the body dies. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of soul.

Jesus said, "Fear Him, or fear only God, who can **destroy** both soul and body in **hell**." **Fear** is the **fear of God**. "Fear of God" means to have reverence for God. Fear of God is an essential component of faith in God. Use the same word for fear of God that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of fear of God. When something is **destroyed**, it cannot work or be repaired.

Stop and discuss the way you would translate "destroy" in your language. What kind of things cause something to be destroyed?

Hell is where unbelievers go at the end of the world to be punished. Use the same word for hell that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of hell.

Jesus teaches by using a parable. A parable is a special story told by Jesus using everyday things to describe deeper things of God. Jesus asked, "Are not two **sparrows** sold for a **penny**, or small coin?" A **sparrow** is a small bird that was sold for food. The sparrow had little value. Two sparrows were sold for a penny, or small coin. A **penny**, or small coin, refers to a Roman copper coin worth about one sixteenth of the coin which was used to pay a daily wage.

If necessary, show a picture of a sparrow. Show a picture of a penny, or small copper coin.

Jesus called God "your Father." This is because God is the heavenly Father of everyone who follows Jesus. **Father** shows the relational aspect of God to the followers of Jesus. Jesus calls God our Father to indicate that we can have a close personal relationship with God.

Jesus said, "So, everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven." **Heaven** is the place where God dwells and the ultimate destination of believers in Jesus. Use the same word for heaven that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of heaven.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 10:26-33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3214253 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5494543 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 10:34–42

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 10:34–42 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus tells his disciples about the hardships they will encounter and tells them how valuable they are to God. In this passage, Matthew recounts Jesus' teaching about what to expect if we follow Jesus.

Jesus said, "Do not think that I came to bring peace." Jesus is referring to his coming to earth from heaven. Bring peace refers to causing people to live in good relationships without fighting. Jesus said he came not to bring peace, but a sword. Jesus used the word sword as a symbol for war or conflict. A sword is a long knife used for fighting. Jesus was saying that his teachings would cause conflict and division among people.

Show a picture of a sword. Discuss symbolic phrases or words used in your culture to describe conflict.

When Jesus said that when one family member believes in Jesus and another does not, they will be set against one another, he was quoting the prophet Micah. They will rebel, or turn against one another. An unbelieving son will turn against his believing father. An unbelieving daughter will turn against her believing mother. An unbelieving daughter-in-law will turn against her believing mother-in-law. Jesus is beginning to describe the type of conflict that believing in him and following his teachings may cause. There will be conflict within close family relationships along with other relationships among those who believe in Jesus.

Stop and discuss in your culture what word you would use for someone who is a relative through marriage.

Jesus said, "A person's enemies will be those of his own household." Household refers to people who live in a person's house such as a relative or servant.

Tell a story of conflict between two family members in your family. How did the conflict affect the rest of the family?

Jesus said, if a person loves the members of their family more than they love Jesus, they are not worthy of him. "Not worthy" means they cannot follow Jesus.

Jesus said, "Those who do not carry their cross and follow me are not worthy of me." Romans used the cross to execute criminals. The prisoner was required to carry their cross to the place of execution. Then, the soldiers nailed the prisoner to the cross where they hung until they died. This describes the form of death that Jesus was going to suffer. Jesus was using symbolic language. Jesus was saying that people who follow him, or desire to be his disciple, must be willing to suffer and in some cases die for believing in him.

Show a picture of a cross.

Jesus said, "The person who finds his life, will lose it." This means that if a person tries to save their life, or is not willing to suffer for Jesus, they will miss out on the true life with God that lasts forever, or eternal life. Jesus said, "But, the person who loses his life for my sake will find it." This indicates that a person who is willing to suffer for following Jesus, will gain eternal life in heaven with God.

Stop and discuss: What do people in your culture believe about what happens after you die? How is this similar or different from the eternal life Jesus talks about?

Jesus begins talking to the disciples about hospitality. When Jesus said "whoever receives you" he was saying that when a person welcomes or shows hospitality to the disciples, it is as if they were welcoming Jesus. The disciples are messengers of Jesus. If they are welcoming Jesus, it is as if they were welcoming God, who sent Jesus. Jesus also talked about a person who takes care of a prophet, or a messenger for God. That person will be given the same reward that a prophet receives. A reward is a gift or wages given to someone for their actions. Whoever cares for a righteous person, or someone who lives by God's standards, will also be rewarded. If someone cares for people who follow God, it is a service to him. Jesus said if someone gives a cup of water to "one of these little ones," or "the least of these" because he is my disciple he will never lose his reward. Giving a cup of water is a small deed of hospitality. This shows that caring for any follower of Jesus is important to God, even if that follower is an ordinary person.

Stop and discuss hospitality in your culture. What kind of things might a person do for someone who is a guest in your home? What are some reasons a person in your culture would care for the needs of someone else? How does your hospitality change when someone is important, or representing an important person?

"Because he is my disciple" shows that the person knew they were giving water to a follower of Jesus. When Jesus says, "Truly I say to you," or "I tell you the truth," he is about to say something important and he wants his disciples to pay close attention. Jesus said, "He will by no means lose his reward." The person who cares for one of his disciples will most certainly receive a reward.

Stop and discuss a time when you or someone you know received a reward. What are the special occasions when someone might receive a reward? Are there any ceremonies connected to the reward? What kind of people receive rewards?

In this passage Jesus continued to expand upon the same basic teaching. The followers of Jesus must be willing to suffer through conflicts and hardships, even face death to follow him. Those who remain loyal to Jesus will receive the reward of living forever in heaven with God.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches about disagreements that will arise for his sake, or because people choose to follow him.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about the cost of following Jesus.

Third scene: Jesus teaches about the results of showing hospitality to followers of Jesus.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Family members

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is speaking to His disciples before sending them out to tell others about him. Remember that Jesus is teaching about the reason why he came from heaven to earth. He is quoting what was said by the prophet Micah.

It is important to remember that the sword is symbolic language for war and conflict. Remember that Jesus was telling them that believing in him could cause families to be divided in two. It is important to remember that a person may even have enemies who live in their own house.

It is important to remember that Jesus said, "If you love your father or mother more than me, you are not worthy of me." Jesus is not saying we should not love our parents, or children; he wants us to trust him more than we trust even our own family. Remember that carrying a cross is symbolic language that represents being willing to suffer because we believe in Jesus. It is important to remember that Jesus says those who lose their lives because they follow him will find their true life in God.

It is important to remember that if a person welcomes a follower of Jesus, they are welcoming Jesus symbolically. Remember that "reward" refers to a gift or wages given to someone for worthy actions or behaviors. It is important to remember that showing hospitality to even ordinary people who follow Jesus is important to God.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Family members

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus teaches about disagreements in the world. He says, "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."

Stop the action.

- I do not understand, I thought Jesus came to bring peace to the world, or
- A sword means there will be fighting. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Stop the action.

- This does not sound like a good thing,
- Families should not be against each other, or
- I am sure Jesus will explain what this means. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches about what should be most important to someone who follows him.

He says, "Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

Stop the action.

- I know this is not easy for them to understand,
- My followers are loyal to me. I know they can do this, or
- The life they will find because of me is much better than the life in this world.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Only prisoners are forced to carry a cross.
- Does this mean we will be crucified? Or
- The life we will find after we suffer must be amazing and perfect. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus begins to teach about rewards for those who follow him. He says, "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

Stop the action.

- It is good to know that some people will welcome us.
- Does Jesus mean that we are becoming like Him? Or
- God sent Jesus and now Jesus is sending us. This means we will have to suffer for believing in him. I am starting to understand. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward."

Stop the action.

- They need to know that showing hospitality to my followers is important,
- I know that some people will take care of my followers, or
- They should be able to understand now. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "If someone gives a cup of water to anyone who follows me, they will certainly receive a reward."

Stop the action.

- Some people will take care of us and they will be rewarded,
- Everyone who believes in Jesus is rewarded with a life that lasts forever in heaven, or
- I am ready to do what Jesus is asking us to do.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus said that we should not expect His teaching to always bring peace. **Peace** refers to harmony and unity among people. Use the same word for peace that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of peace.

Jesus compared His teachings with a sword. In this instance, **sword** is symbolic language that represents war and conflict. The swords used during that time were 60 to 120 centimeters long. Jesus said that family members will be **set against**, or **rebel against**, each other. This indicates that families will be divided in two. The conflict, or "sword," caused by believing in Him would cause families to be divided because they believe different things. This is why Jesus said, "A person's enemies will be those of his own **household**." Use the same word for household that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of household.

Jesus said, "Those who do not **carry their cross** and follow Me are not worthy of Me."

The **cross** was the Roman form of execution. They nailed together two pieces of wood to form a cross and stretched out the arms and legs of a prisoner on it. The prisoner **carrying the cross** probably carried the short piece of wood that was placed across the longer piece of wood. They would have carried this piece of wood up a hill that was far away from the city. The short piece of wood was where the prisoner's hands would be nailed to the cross. This is significant because it describes the way Jesus would suffer and die. Use the same word for cross that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of cross.

Jesus said, "Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

For My sake means for believing in Jesus and living the way He tells us to live.

Will find it means that the spirit, or **soul**, of a person will continue to live forever in heaven with God. This is called eternal life. The soul is a person's inner life and thinking. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of soul.

Jesus said, "The one who receives a **prophet** because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's **reward**, and the one who receives a **righteous** person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's **reward**."

A **prophet** is a messenger for God. Use the same word for prophet that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of prophet.

Righteousness is right standing, or lack of guilt, before God. Use the same word for righteousness that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of righteousness.

Reward describes something given as wages. The reward, or wages, of a person who loyally serves God is eternal life with Him in heaven.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 10:34–42

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3477438 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5961362 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 11:1–6

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 11:1–6 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus gives commands to His followers that they must remain loyal to Him during hardships. He teaches that God will reward the disciples for their loyalty. In this true story, Matthew recounts Jesus' answer to a question from the followers of John the Baptist.

After Jesus instructed, or gave commands, to His 12 closest followers, or disciples, He went on from there. Jesus left the place where He was speaking to the 12. This was likely the hills around the Sea of Galilee. Jesus went to teach in some towns in Galilee. You will remember from previous passages that Jesus sent the 12 to proclaim His teachings. We are not sure if Jesus' disciples are with Him in this passage, or if they had already gone to teach.

Show a map of Galilee which includes the Sea of Galilee.

John the Baptist, the messenger of God, was in prison, or jail, because the king was upset about John's teachings. John had not broken the law. We know from Luke's gospel that John is the cousin of Jesus. John heard about the powerful actions of God that Jesus, the Christ, was doing. John sent his disciples, or followers, to ask Jesus if He was the Christ, the promised Savior that they were waiting for. All of the Jews were expecting God's promised Savior to come. Many of them expected Christ to overthrow the Roman government. Jesus answered John's followers: "Go and tell John what you hear and see."

Long ago the prophet Isaiah had told the Jewish people what the Christ would do when he came. Jesus answered John's disciples' question by quoting Isaiah and telling them that He does all the things that Isaiah said the Christ would do. One thing that Jesus did was cleanse, or heal, lepers. Lepers are people with a skin disease which makes them unclean, or unfit to serve God. Jesus cured them, so they were made clean again. Then Jesus says that God blesses or makes happy the person who is not offended by Jesus or does not doubt Jesus. Jesus knows that He is doing things that people did not expect the Christ to do. He says that the people who believe in Him anyway are blessed.

Stop and discuss: Tell stories about kind and amazing things that people have done that cause others to pay attention to them. What are some things that people say about them?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus is finished instructing his disciples. So, he ministers to the nearby towns.

Second scene: John the Baptist sends his followers to ask a question to Jesus. Jesus answers the question.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- John the Baptist
- The disciples of John the Baptist
- People Jesus has healed
- The crowd of people (they are present, but they do not act in this story)

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus had finished giving instructions to his disciples. Now he is teaching in the towns of Galilee. Remember that Jesus' 12 disciples may not be with him in this passage.

At the time this story happens, John the Baptist was in prison at the king's palace in Galilee. John heard about all the things Jesus was doing. So, John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he was God's promised Savior. These disciples have traveled a long way to find Jesus.

It is important to remember that John the Baptist is a messenger sent by God. Remember what John's disciples asked Jesus. It is important to remember Jesus is the Christ, God's promised Savior. Remember that Jesus tells John's disciples that the blind see, the lame, or people who cannot walk, are now walking, the people with leprosy are clean, the deaf can now hear and those who are poor, or in poverty, have been told the good news about God's Kingdom. It is important to remember that these are the things that the prophet Isaiah said the Christ would do.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- John the Baptist
- The disciples of John the Baptist
- People Jesus has healed
- The crowd of people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is finished instructing His disciples. So, He begins to minister to the people in the nearby towns. You may want to act out that Jesus is making the blind see. He is making those with leprosy clean. He is making the deaf hear, and those who cannot walk to walk. He is raising the dead back to life.

John the Baptist is in prison and hears about what Jesus is doing. He sends his followers to ask a question to Jesus.

Stop the action.

- I am sure Jesus is the Christ.
- Am I doing wrong thinking there could be someone else?
- I need to know for sure that it is Jesus. [!end] Restart the action.

John's disciples ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Stop the action.

- After all I have done, they should know that I am the Christ, or
- I hope John is doing well.

Ask the actors playing the disciples of John the Baptist, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I think John already knows. I wonder why he wants us to ask this question,
- Jesus must be the Christ, or
- I wonder if Jesus is the Christ. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus answers the question by saying, "Go and tell John what you hear and see." Then Jesus reminds them that he has given sight to the blind, cured people with leprosy, and caused people who could not walk to begin walking again.

Stop the action.

- I knew He was the Christ!
- Jesus is God's promised Savior, or
- Does that mean yes He is?

Ask the actors playing people Jesus has healed, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Jesus has to be God's promised Savior because he made me see!
- I do not know if Jesus is the Christ, but I do know I can walk now! Or
- Jesus made me clean, only the Christ could have done that!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus gave commands to the 12 **disciples**. Use the same word for disciples that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciples.

John heard in prison about the deeds of **Christ**. John the Baptist is a messenger of God who began teaching before Jesus. John the Baptist is the cousin of Jesus. John was in prison for his disapproval of King Herod's marriage to Herod's brother's wife. One of Jesus' titles is the Christ because He is God's promised Savior. Use the same word for Christ that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Christ.

These deeds include making the **lame** walk, causing **lepers** to be **cleansed**. **Lame** means someone with bad, or paralyzed, legs who is unable to walk. Use the same word for lame that you did in previous passages. **Lepers** are people with one of several skin diseases called leprosy. Leprosy caused a person to be ceremonially **unclean**. Someone who is unclean is unfit to serve God or live in the community. **Cleansed** means that Jesus cured their leprosy, which meant they would be able to serve God and live in the community. Use the same word for leprosy and clean that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of leprosy and clean.

Jesus preaches the **good news**, or the news that God is coming to rule in the hearts of his people, to the poor people. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the good news, or gospel.

Jesus said, "**Blessed** is the one who is not offended by Me." Blessed is sometimes translated as "how happy." Bless refers to God helping, or doing good for someone. This is not the same as luck. Blessed is to be favored by God. Use the same word for bless that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of bless.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 11:1–6

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2430995 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4167757 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 11:7–19

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 11:7–19 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage the followers of John the Baptist came to Jesus. They asked Jesus if he was God's promised Savior, or the Christ. Jesus answered by quoting what the prophets said about the Christ long ago. John's followers left to go tell John what Jesus said. In this true story, Jesus is teaching the people that heard what he said to John's followers.

As John's disciples went away, Jesus began to focus on John. Jesus refers back to when John was teaching in the wilderness, or desert. He asked three questions to show that people took the time to go into the wilderness to see John because they thought he was a prophet.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, what type of person do crowds of people go to see? How do they dress or speak?

Jesus quoted what God said about John. Through the prophet Malachi God said, "Behold, or pay attention, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you." In Jewish culture, a king would choose a messenger to tell people that he was coming. Jesus is saying, John is that messenger. John prepared the people for God's promised Savior by telling them to repent, or turn back to God. John baptized people to show that they stopped sinning and wanted to obey God.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, how is the arrival of important people announced? What are some ways people prepare for their arrival? What kind of special signals or signs are given to show that they have arrived?

After Jesus quoted Malachi, he again calls attention to what he wants to say. Jesus tells them that no one who had ever lived had a more important role than John the Baptist. This is because John prepared the way for God's promised Savior by what he taught the people. Jesus said, "Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This means being a citizen in God's kingdom, where God rules, is even more wonderful than being the greatest prophet on Earth. This implies God is ruling and caring for people in a new way that is greater than the old way. "One who is least" refers to a person with the lowest position or rank.

Jesus said, "From the days of John the Baptist," meaning from the time that John began preaching until the present, the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence. Violent and evil people have attacked and tried to capture it or enter it by force. The Prophets and the Law are the books written by the prophets and the books that show the laws God gave to Moses for his people. These books prophesied, or told a message from God, about the kingdom. They also told about the coming of John the Baptist. Jesus said, "If you are willing to accept it, John is Elijah who is to come." The prophet Malachi said that Elijah would return. Elijah was a prophet who lived before Malachi and was taken into heaven by God. Jesus was telling the people that John is the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy. John was not the actual Elijah but John was a great prophet like Elijah. When Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," he is urging people to carefully think about what He said.

Jesus asked a question that he did not want them to answer-He asked, "To what can I compare this generation?" He wanted them to carefully think about what He was saying. Jesus answered His own question: "They are like children sitting in a marketplace, or a public place, calling to their friends." Jesus compared this generation, or the people of this day, to children playing in the market. One group of children shouted to another group who refused to play with them, whether they were playing happy music or sad music. The Jews played music on a flute at feasts and other happy occasions so people would dance. People usually sang a dirge at funerals or burials.

Show a picture of a Jewish marketplace. Show a picture of a flute. Discuss the kinds of games children play in your culture.

Just like the children said that their friends did not dance whether they played happy or sad songs, people criticized both John and Jesus. Jesus said that John showed his dedication to God because he did not eat normal food or drink fermented drinks. The people said that John has a demon. They did not believe that John was God's messenger. They thought a demon, or evil spirit, was controlling his actions because he did not act like normal people. Jesus called himself "Son of Man" because Jesus is the Christ, or promised Savior. Jesus ate bread and drank wine just like other Jews. But the people called him a glutton, or a person who eats too much food. They also called him a drunkard, or a person who drinks too much wine.

Jesus was friends with tax collectors and sinners. The Jewish people considered tax collectors traitors because they collected taxes for the Roman government. Sinners refers to Jews who were immoral and also Jews who did not follow the strict laws of the religious leaders. Jesus defends Himself and John with a proverb, or wise saying. He said, "Wisdom, or understanding, is justified by her deeds." This means, those who are truly wise will show their wisdom by the good results that will come from the way they live.

Stop and discuss those who are outcasts from society in your culture. What are things that people do which would make them an outcast? Talk about the kinds of jobs that people can do which would make them outcasts in your culture.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus finished talking to the disciples of John the Baptist. While John's disciples are leaving, Jesus teaches about the importance of John's ministry and how it relates to the kingdom of heaven.

Second scene: Jesus makes a comparison about the people. Jesus talks about what they said about John and Himself.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples of John the Baptist
- John the Baptist
- Children playing and singing and playing the flute
- Tax collectors
- People of this generation

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus begins to talk to the crowd of people while John's disciples are leaving. Remember that Jesus asked the crowd of people, "What did you do out into the wilderness to see?" He asked this question three times, but each time Jesus gave the answer by asking another question. The first time, Jesus said, "A reed shaken by the wind?" A reed is a tall plant. The image of a reed plant swaying back and forth in the wind is probably referring to a man who changes his opinions often.

Show a picture of a reed plant.

The second time, Jesus said, "A man dressed in soft clothing?" Soft clothing means expensive, or well-made, clothing. People with soft clothing do not live in or go to the desert. Instead, they live in expensive houses where they enjoy their riches. The last time Jesus asked the question, he gave the correct answer. A prophet. It is important to remember that Jesus said that none on earth is greater than John. But Jesus also said, "The one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John." It is important to remember that Jesus said that John was the fulfillment of what was told by the prophet long ago. Jesus quoted the exact words of the prophet Malachi.

Discuss with the translation team about how they show that someone is quoting a prophet or another important person.

It is important to remember that when Jesus says, "Truly," or "I tell you the truth," he is asking people to pay attention. Remember that when Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," Jesus wants people to carefully think about what He said.

Jesus compares this generation to children playing in the marketplace. It is important to remember that the people Jesus is making the comparison about falsely claimed that John had a demon. It is important to remember that people called Jesus many names. Remember that Jesus was a friend to tax collectors and sinners. Remember that what Jesus said about wisdom was a proverb, or wise saying.

Stop and discuss as a team: How do people in your culture talk about proverbs in the middle of a teaching?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples of John the Baptist
- John the Baptist
- Children playing and singing, and playing the flute
- Tax collectors
- People of this generation

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

This story starts with John's disciples leaving.

Jesus talked to the crowds of people about John. Jesus asks them, "What kind of man did you go to see in the wilderness? Someone who is like the reed that moves from one side to another?" Jesus says, "No." Jesus kept asking: "Someone who dresses like a rich person?" Jesus answered, "No." Then Jesus asked again, "Were you looking for a prophet?" Jesus says, "Yes." He says John is more than a prophet. John fulfills what the word of God says. No one is greater than John, but the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than John.

Stop the action.

- I am happy that John pointed us to Jesus.
- How can someone else be greater than John? Or
- How can I be in the kingdom of heaven? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus asked, to what can He compare this generation? Jesus compares them with children playing a game.

Stop the action.

- Jesus must be sad that this generation will not listen to him, or
- Jesus did so many wonderful things. Why will they not listen to him? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says John didn't eat bread or drink wine and the people say he has a demon. Jesus feasts and drinks and the people say that Jesus is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Jesus says, "Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

Stop the action.

- How can I help them to understand what they are doing?
- I have been showing them all the signs they need. Or
- I am sad they can't see clearly who John is and who I am.

Ask the actors playing the people in this generation, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I think Jesus really is God's promised Savior. He is saying such wise things,
- Jesus healed all of those people. Maybe He is the Christ, or
- I still do not understand what He means.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus asked, "What did you go out into the **wilderness** to see? A **prophet**?" A prophet is a messenger sent by God. John was an especially important prophet because John prepared the people for the Christ by telling them to repent, or turn back to God. Use the same word for prophet and wilderness that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of prophet and wilderness.

Jesus says that the **Scriptures** talk about John. Jesus says that "it is written" about John. This refers to the Jewish Scriptures. If you use the word for the Jewish Scripture here, use the same word for Scriptures that you have in previous passages, and remember that Scripture is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus said that **among those born of women**, none are greater than John the Baptist. But the one who is least in the **kingdom of heaven** is greater than John the Baptist. "Those born of women" is another way of saying everyone who is living or has ever lived. The kingdom of heaven is where God lives and rules. Use the same word for kingdom of heaven that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said that the **Prophets** and the **Law** talked about the promised Savior coming. The Prophets refers to the writings of the Jewish prophets, and the Law refers to the written law God gave Moses for his people. Use the same terms for prophets and law that you have used in previous passages, and remember that prophets and law are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus compared the **generation**, or people living during His time, to children sitting in a **marketplace** calling to their friends.

Use the same word for **generation** that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of generation.

A **marketplace** is a public place, or village square.

The Jews played music on a **flute** at feasts and other happy occasions so people would dance. A flute is a musical instrument. It is a tube closed at one end with holes along its length. People blow into the end of the flute to make music.

A **dirge** is a sad song people usually played at funerals or burials.

The people rejected John the Baptist and said he had a **demon**. This indicates that they believed a demon, or evil spirit, was controlling John's actions. A demon is a spiritual being who has rebelled against God. Use the same word for demon that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of demon.

The people also rejected Jesus. Jesus refers to Himself as the **Son of Man**. The Son of Man, in the Bible, is the person who God gives all authority and power. Son of Man is another title for the Promised Savior. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

Jesus was rejected because He was friends with **tax collectors** and **sinners**.

Tax collectors collected taxes from Jews for the Roman government. The Jews considered tax collectors to be traitors to their people.

Sinners refers to Jews who were immoral and also who did not follow the strict laws of the religious leaders. Use the same word for **sin** that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of sin.

Jesus defends Himself and John with a proverb, or wise saying. He said, "Wisdom is justified by her deeds." Wisdom is the ability to understand and act according to that understanding. Use the same word for wisdom that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of wisdom.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 11:7-19

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3602925 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6181552 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 11:20-24

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 11:20-24 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus affirms that He is God's promised Savior and that John is a great messenger sent by God. In this true story, Matthew records Jesus' disapproval of people in certain towns who have not turned from their sin.

Jesus probably started saying these things immediately after the previous passage. Jesus began to denounce, or criticize, the people in some of the towns where He did mighty works, or miracles that only God can do. The people did not repent, or stop sinning and obey God, even though they saw the miracles.

Jesus says, "Woe to you" when addressing the people in the towns. In the Bible, woe is a word used to indicate the coming, unavoidable judgment of God.

Show a map that includes Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Discuss warnings in your culture. What are some of the words used to warn others of danger? What kind of actions might bring about such a warning?

Chorazin and Bethsaida are both towns where Jews lived in northern Galilee. Both Chorazin and Bethsaida experienced Jesus' miracles. So, Jesus tells them that people in Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes if they had witnessed His miracles. Jesus referred to something that did not happen so He could prove a point.

Tyre and Sidon were towns along the Mediterranean coast where non-Jews lived. Sidon was about 40 kilometers south of Tyre. The Jewish people would have known about Tyre and Sidon's disobedience. God punished Tyre and Sidon for their disobedience hundreds of years earlier. At the time Jesus was speaking these words, Tyre and Sidon were still towns. But they had experienced many hardships and war. So, Tyre and Sidon were no longer strong and powerful.

Show a map of Assyria during Jesus' day that includes Tyre and Sidon.

People would show their repentance by wearing sackcloth, a scratchy uncomfortable cloth made of animal hair. And they would sit in ashes, or put ashes on their head. When someone repents, they are sorrowful, or feel remorse for their sin.

Show a photo of a sackcloth. Discuss ways people in your culture express sorrow and remorse.

Jesus says, "But I tell you," to show the importance of what he is about to say. Jesus said, "It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you." He compares the suffering of non-Jews in Tyre and Sidon to the suffering of Jews in Chorazin and Bethsaida. The Day of Judgment is when God will judge all people for the things they said and did on earth. On the day of judgment, God will punish the people of Tyre and Sidon less than He will punish the people in Chorazin and Bethsaida. This comparison implies that non-Jews were more likely to repent and believe in Him than the Jews were. Jesus wanted people in Chorazin and Bethsaida to repent and start believing in Him.

When Jesus finished addressing Chorazin and Bethsaida, He addressed Capernaum. Jesus used to stay in the town of Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee, when He was teaching and healing in that region. He says to the people there, "Will you be exalted to heaven?" A person who is exalted is honored or they have a high status. The implied answer to this question is "No." This is why Jesus said, "You will be thrown down to Hades, or hell." This indicates that they will be thrown down by force to the place where unbelievers go to be punished. Jesus again refers to something that did not happen. He tells them that the people of Sodom would have repented if they witnessed His miracles. Sodom was a town where non-Jews lived. Sodom was well known for their evil deeds and corruption. God completely destroyed Sodom hundreds of years earlier with fire and large stones from the sky.

Show a map of Israel which includes Jordan to show where Sodom was located.

Jesus compares the suffering of non-Jews in Sodom to the suffering of Jews in Capernaum. On the day of judgment, God will punish the people of Sodom less than He will punish the people in Capernaum.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus begins to speak to the people in towns who did not turn from their sin even though they saw Jesus perform miracles and heard Him teach. Jesus addresses the people in Chorazin and Bethsaida.

Second scene: Jesus addresses the people in Capernaum.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- People in Chorazin and Bethsaida
- People in Tyre and Sidon
- People in Capernaum
- People in Sodom

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus probably started saying these things immediately after the previous passage. Jesus began to speak on a new subject in this story. It is important to remember that Jesus is addressing the people in the towns because they did not turn from their sin and start obeying God. Remember that mighty works are the miracles, or powerful actions of God, that Jesus did.

It is important to remember that Jesus used the word "woe" to indicate the coming judgment of God upon the people in these towns. Remember that Tyre and Sidon were non-Jewish towns that God punished hundreds of years earlier for their sin. It is important to remember that Jesus said the people in Tyre and Sidon would have repented in sackcloth and ashes if they saw the miracles.

Remember that Jesus says, "But I tell you" to show the importance of what He is about to say.

It is important to remember that Capernaum is the town where Jesus did much of His ministry. Jesus asked Capernaum, "Will you be exalted to heaven?" Jesus did not ask the question to receive an answer. Jesus was making a point about the people. Jesus said the people in Capernaum would be brought down to Hades, or hell.

It is important to remember that Sodom was a town known for their evil deeds. Remember that God punished Sodom hundreds of years earlier. Remember that Jesus said the people in Sodom would have repented if they saw the miracles.

Jesus says the words "but I tell you" two different times in this story. He did this to explain how harsh the punishment was going to be for these towns.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- People in Chorazin and Bethsaida
- People in Tyre and Sidon
- People in Capernaum
- People in Sodom

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus begins to speak to the people in towns who did not turn from their sin even though they saw Jesus perform miracles and heard Him teach.

Stop the action.

- I really wanted them to believe in Me,
- I wanted them to turn from their sin, or
- It is too bad that they did not obey God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus addresses the people in Chorazin and Bethsaida. He says, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! Tyre and Sidon would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes if the mighty works you witnessed had been done for them."

Stop the action.

- I did not think we were as bad as Tyre and Sidon,
- I remember the miracles. I should have changed my ways, or
- Sackcloth and ashes would have meant they really changed.

Ask the actors playing people in Tyre and Sidon, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I wonder if Jesus will come do miracles in Tyre and Sidon? Or
- Too bad we did not get the chance to see those miracles long ago. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you."

Stop the action.

- This sounds bad for us, or
- Is it too late to repent? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus addresses the people in Capernaum. He says to them, "You will not be honored in heaven. You will be brought down to Hades. If the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

Stop the action.

- I do not want to be brought down to hades,
- Jesus lived among us. I thought we would be different, or
- Sodom was really bad. I have not done anything that bad.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- These people saw many of My miracles. They should have known better, or
- I only wanted good for them, but they did not listen." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

Stop the action.

- That means we are worse than even Sodom,
- There is no way we are worse than the people who were in Sodom, or
- I want to turn to God!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus began to **denounce** the people in some of the towns where He did **mighty works**.

In this instance, **denounce** means to say that someone has done something wrong or evil.

Mighty works refer to the **miracles** done by Jesus. A miracle is a powerful action that only God can do. Use the same word for miracle that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of miracle.

Jesus was denouncing the towns because they refused to **repent** after witnessing His miracles. A person who repents turns away from their sin, or disobedience, and turns to God. Use the same word for repent that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of repent.

Woe is a word used in the Bible to warn of God's coming judgment. In many cases "woe" indicates that the judgment cannot be prevented or stopped. This can include a state of intense hardship or disaster.

The Day of Judgment is when God will judge all people for the things they said and did on earth. The Day of Judgment occurs at the end of the world.

Jesus told the people in Capernaum they will be brought down to **Hades**, or **hell**. Hell is where unbelievers go, at the end of the world to be punished. Hades is a more general term for the place where the wicked dead are punished. Use the same word for hell that you did in previous passages. Both Hades and hell are in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 11:20-24

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2751724 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4707144 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 11:25-30

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 11:25-30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus announced the coming judgment upon people in towns who did not repent after seeing his miracles. In this true story, Matthew records Jesus' prayer to the Father and the invitation Jesus gives to those who are tired and need rest.

Soon after Jesus announced God's coming judgment, he begins to pray, or speak to God. Jesus has probably not left the place where he made the announcement. The people in those towns did not follow Jesus because they thought that they knew better than him. Jesus was grateful when he addressed God as Father, Lord of heaven

and earth. This is a normal way to address God in Jewish prayers. However, we see in this story that Jesus is beginning to show his followers that he addresses God personally as Father in ways that a normal Jewish person would not do. Jesus has a special relationship with his father. God the Father is the Lord, or ruler, over all people and everything in the whole universe. God has hidden things that Jesus taught from those who think they are wise and intelligent. God's gracious will is the thing that pleases God. It was pleasing to God to hide the meaning of Jesus' miracles and teachings from wise and intelligent people. Jesus compared humble believers to little children. Like children who do not think they know a lot about life and trust their parents, humble believers recognize that God knows more than they do. Humble believers, like children, are willing to learn from God and trust him like children trust a father.

Tell about a time when you were a child and received help from a parent or relative to accomplish something.

Jesus finished praying. He begins to speak to the crowd of people around him. When Jesus said, "My Father has given me all things," he was talking about God the Father giving Jesus all the authority, power and knowledge of God. This is why Jesus said, "No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son." In this instance, to "know" someone means to completely know everything about a person in a unique way which no one else can. Jesus referred to himself as the Son. The Son of God is a title for Jesus that shows Jesus has the same nature and authority as God. Jesus was saying that the special relationship between himself and God the Father is similar to the relationship between human fathers and their sons. Jesus said that he could choose to reveal, or show, the Father to anyone he desires.

Stop and discuss the relationship between parents and their children. In what ways is this kind of relationship different from other relationships? In what ways is it the same? If someone truly knows you, what do they know about you? What kinds of people truly know each other in your culture?

Now Jesus begins to invite people to follow him. Everyone who works hard, or is tired, and carries a heavy load probably refers to the hard work of obeying the Jewish law. Rest, in this instance, means that Jesus will give us relief from burdens.

Jesus compares being one of his followers to carrying a yoke. A yoke is a piece of wood crafted to fit over the shoulders of an animal. A person puts a yoke on an animal so that it can pull a cart or plow. A disciple has to submit to Jesus to follow him, like an animal has to submit to their master, to do their work.

Show a photo or drawing of a yoke on an animal.

Jesus tells them that they can take his yoke and learn from him because he is gentle, or patient and not forceful with his followers. Jesus is also lowly, or humble in heart, which means he does not have a proud attitude. Jesus promised that if they do this they will find rest in the soul, or their inner being. Again, Jesus gives a comparison using a yoke. Jesus gives a yoke that is easy to use. Jesus gives a load that is light to carry. This means that submitting to Jesus is easy and the work he gives is not hard.

Jesus invites all people to come and learn from him. But they must recognize that they need his help. This expands on what Jesus mentioned earlier that people who are like little children are more likely to think they need his help.

Tell stories about a time when you had to do some hard work. What kind of tools were needed for the job? What would have happened if you had the wrong tools? In what ways does having the right kind of help affect the outcome of the job?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Soon after Jesus pronounced God's coming judgment on people who would not repent, Jesus prays to the Father and thanks him for revealing the truth to ordinary people.

Second scene: Jesus finished praying. He teaches the crowd about the relationship between himself and the Father.

Third scene: Jesus invites everyone who is tired of the hard work it takes to obey the Jewish law to rest in him.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The Father
- Wise and intelligent people
- Humble believers of Jesus
- Tired people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The first scene begins soon after Jesus spoke of the judgment coming upon the Jewish people who did not repent after seeing his miracles. This scene also happens in the same place. It is important to remember that Jesus is praying, or talking, to God the Father who is the ruler of everything in the universe. It is important to remember that God chose to reveal the deeper meaning of Jesus' miracles to humble believers of Jesus. Remember that Jesus compares his followers to children who trust their parents.

It is important to remember that Jesus said, "Yes, Father! It pleased you to do it this way!" Jesus is expressing that God is happy to reveal the things that Jesus teaches to those who know that they need it.

In scene two, Jesus is no longer praying. It is important to remember that when Jesus stops praying, He is speaking to the crowd around him. He tells his followers about his relationship with God. Remember that God the Father gave Jesus, or the Son of God, all authority, power and knowledge. It is important to remember that Jesus can choose to reveal the truth about God to anyone he desires.

In scene three, Jesus is inviting people to rest in him, because Jesus can bring relief from burdens and troubles. Remember that the Jewish law was a heavy burden. It caused those who were trying to obey everything in the law to be tired. Remember that Jesus compares being one of his followers to carrying a light yoke. It is important to remember that Jesus compares following a teacher to an animal carrying a yoke. Jesus says that his yoke is light.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The Father
- Wise and intelligent people
- Humble believers of Jesus
- Tired people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus prays to the Father, he says, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to humble believers."

Stop the action.

- It is good for people to be humble and not proud, or
- The Father has done a good thing.

Jesus says it was pleasing to God that humble believers understood the deeper meaning of his miracles.

Stop the action.

- What are the things Jesus is talking about?
- I know more than they do. Why would God choose to show humble people more than he will show me? Or
- I do not think they know more than I do.

Ask the actors playing humble believers in Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- The actions of Jesus show that he is God's promised Savior,
- I am glad I know who Jesus is, or
- It is an honor to know these things about God. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus was finished praying. Then he teaches the crowd about the relationship between himself and the Father. Jesus reveals that God the Father gave him all the authority, power, and knowledge. Jesus said that he can choose to reveal the Father to anyone.

Stop the action.

- I miss being in heaven with my Father, or
- I want more people to know the Father like I know him. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus invites everyone who is tired of the hard work it takes to obey the Jewish law to rest in him. Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me." He tells them that he will teach them and give them rest from their burdens. Jesus tells them that he is gentle and humble. Then he says, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Stop the action.

- Jesus' ways sound better than the old ways,
- I am tired of trying to do everything exactly right. I want this rest,
- The Jewish law is hard to follow, but Jesus is gentle. I want to follow Jesus, or
- I want to learn from Jesus.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus declared to God that he was thankful. He addressed God as **Father**. God is the heavenly Father of everyone who follows Jesus. Father shows the relational aspect of God to the followers of Jesus.

Jesus also addresses the Father as **Lord of heaven and earth**. Jewish people often addressed God by this title when they prayed. God the Father is the **Lord**, or ruler, over all people and everything in the whole universe. Use the same word for Lord that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Lord.

Heaven is the place where God dwells and the ultimate destination of those who believe in Jesus. Use the same word for heaven that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of heaven.

God hid the deep meaning of Jesus' actions from the **wise and understanding**. These are the highly educated people who witnessed Jesus perform the special acts of God but still did not believe in him. **Wise** in this instance is not the same as wisdom from God. The wisdom here refers to **wisdom of man**. Wisdom of man is inferior to God's wisdom.

The deep meaning of Jesus' actions was made known to **little children**. This does not mean people who are not adults. "Little children" refers to ordinary people who are humble believers in Jesus. They trust God, or Jesus, like a child trusts their parents.

Jesus said to the crowd around him, "My Father has given me **all things**."

All things is the authority and power of God. "All things" also includes complete understanding and knowledge of God.

Jesus referred to himself as the **Son**. The **Son of God** is a title for Jesus that shows Jesus has the same nature and authority as God. Son describes the unique and special relationship of Jesus to the true God. Use the same word for Son of God that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of God.

Jesus said, "Take my **yoke** upon you, and you will find rest for your **souls**."

A **yoke** is a piece of wood crafted to fit over the shoulders of an animal so the animal can pull a cart or plow.

If necessary, show a photo or drawing of a yoke on an animal.

The **soul** is an individual's real self that does not cease to exist after death. Use the same word for soul that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of soul.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 11:25-30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3095641 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5354062 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:1-14

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:1-14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus talked about his relationship with God the Father. He also invited Jews who are tired from the law to follow him. In this true story, Matthew gives an example of how Jesus has authority over a Jewish law about rest on the Sabbath day that had actually become a burden to the people.

This passage begins probably a few days after Jesus invited everyone following the Jewish law to follow him. Jesus and his 12 disciples were walking through a grainfield on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath day was the last day of the week. This is the day that Jews are to rest and worship God. Jewish law said that people were not

allowed to do any work on this day. The disciples were picking the grains from the stalks and eating them. It is a Jewish custom for farmers to leave a path through their fields. Those passing through were allowed to eat the grain growing along the path. Some Pharisees, or religious leaders, saw them doing this. They said to Jesus, "Look," because they were surprised at what they saw. The Pharisees said, "Your disciples are breaking the law of the Sabbath."

Show a picture of a grainfield and a picture of raw grain.

In your culture, what are the special days that are set aside when things are done differently? Tell stories about a time when someone did not do things differently on those days. What kind of things are done differently? What would others say or do because of this?

Jesus responds to the Pharisees by asking two questions that he did not expect them to answer. In the first question, Jesus reminds them of an event from long ago. David was to be the next king of Israel. He and some of his soldiers were running away from an enemy. They came to the house of God, or a special place of worship. They were hungry. The priests gave them the bread of the Presence to eat. Bread was the main food of the Jews. The bread of the Presence was bread given as an offering to God. Only priests were allowed to eat this special bread.

Show a photo of Jewish bread.

In the second question, Jesus reminded the Pharisees about the work which the priests do on the day of rest. Priests, in the Jewish religion, connected the people with God by offering sacrifices to God for the people. The sacrifice was killing and cooking an animal. This was considered work. According to another Law of Moses, the priests were required to offer sacrifices on the Sabbath. By obeying one law, the priests were breaking another law. The priests profaned, disrespected or broke the law of the Sabbath. But the priests remained guiltless because they were obeying God.

This work was done in the temple. The temple was the most important place where Jews worshiped God. When Jesus said, "Something greater than the temple is here," he was referring to himself.

Show a photo of the temple courtyards. Show a photo of an altar used for sacrifices.

Jesus was condemning the Pharisees when he said, "if you had known what this means." They did not understand the meaning of what God said through the prophet long ago. "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," shows that mercy, or compassion for others, is more important to God than strict observance of religious rituals. The disciples were guiltless of breaking the Sabbath law because the Son of Man, or Jesus, is lord of the Sabbath. In this instance, lord refers to Jesus having the authority to determine what is or is not allowed on the Sabbath.

Stop and discuss compassion, or love for others: What kind of actions show compassion, or love for others? Tell stories about a time when you or someone you know showed compassion to someone instead of doing something else.

Following that, Jesus and his disciples went into the local Jewish place of worship, the synagogue. A man with a withered hand was there. "Withered" was another way of saying paralyzed, or that the man could not use his hand. It is not clear why the man's hand was withered. It could have been a result of an injury or it could have been something the man was born with.

The Pharisees must have thought Jesus would heal the man. So they asked Jesus, "Does the law permit healing on the Sabbath?" They wanted Jesus to say yes, because the Pharisees believed that healing someone was work. The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of breaking Jewish law. Jesus responded to them by asking a question that he did not expect them to answer. Taking care of a sheep that has fallen into a pit was an acceptable form of work on the Sabbath day because sheep were valuable to their owners. Jesus reminded them that human beings are more valuable to God than sheep. Then Jesus declared, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Show a photo of a synagogue. Show a photo of a sheep in a pit.

Then, Jesus commanded the man with the paralyzed hand to stretch out his hand. The man obeyed Jesus and Jesus restored, or healed, the man's hand. Then the Pharisees reacted in an unexpected way. The story says, "But the Pharisees went out." Instead of praising God, they conspired, or planned together, how they could destroy Jesus, or have Jesus killed.

This passage shows that Jesus has the authority to instruct us on what deeds are acceptable on the Sabbath day.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: This scene begins probably a few days after Jesus invited everyone who followed Jewish law to follow him. Jesus and his disciples were walking through a grainfield eating the grain on the Sabbath day.

Second scene: Jesus responded to the Pharisees because they told him that his disciples were breaking the law of the Sabbath. Jesus teaches about what was written long ago.

Third scene: As soon as Jesus finished speaking in scene two, Jesus and his disciples went to a synagogue. The Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the law of the Sabbath. Jesus responded to his accusers by teaching with a comparison.

Fourth scene: Then, Jesus heals a man with a paralyzed hand. After that, the Pharisees left. They began planning to have Jesus killed.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Some Pharisees
- David and his men
- The priest who gave David the bread
- A man with a paralyzed hand

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that scene one begins at least a few days after Jesus invited Jews who followed Jewish law to follow him and he would give them rest. Remember that Jesus' disciples were hungry. It is important to remember that it was the Sabbath day, the Jewish day of rest. Work was not allowed on the Sabbath day. It is important to remember that the Pharisees are the religious leaders of the Jews. They were surprised to see the disciples doing what they considered to be work on the Sabbath. Remember what the Pharisees said to Jesus.

It is important to remember that Jesus was responding to what the Pharisees said because the disciples did work on the Sabbath. Remember that Jesus responded by asking a question that he did not expect them to answer. His question referred to a story from long ago that the Pharisees knew. The story was about David, a respected king of Israel who ate the food that only the priests were allowed to eat. It is important to remember that Jesus asked the Pharisees, "Have you not read about the work the priests do on the Sabbath?" Jesus wanted them to carefully think about what he was saying. Jesus did not expect them to answer the question. Jesus was condemning the Pharisees when he said, "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" Mercy, or compassion for others, is more important to God than strict observance of religious rituals. Jesus explained why he can say these things. He says that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

It is important to remember a synagogue is a local Jewish place of worship. Remember that the Pharisees asked Jesus if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. The Pharisees want Jesus to say that it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath because they want to charge him with unlawful activity. It is important to remember that Jesus asked them, "Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?" Jesus did not want them to answer this question. Jesus knew the answer to this question was that all of them would care for their sheep on the Sabbath because even though this was work, it was permitted on the

Sabbath. Jesus uses the same words as the Pharisees but he makes a contrast. They ask if it is lawful to work on the Sabbath. Jesus responded by asking if it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

It is important to remember what Jesus told the man who could not use his hand. Remember that the man obeyed Jesus. It is important to remember that the man obeyed Jesus and was healed at that moment. The Pharisees did not thank God for the good thing that Jesus did. Instead, they began planning to have Jesus killed.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Some Pharisees
- David and his men
- The priest who gave David the bread
- A man with a paralyzed hand

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

A few days after Jesus invited people to follow him, he and his disciples were walking through a grainfield eating the grain. This was on the day of rest.

Stop the action.

- I am hungry. We are allowed to eat the grain in this field, or
- If it were not acceptable to eat this grain, Jesus would tell us. [!end] Restart the action.

Some of the Pharisees saw the disciples doing work on the Sabbath. So, they said to Jesus, "Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

Stop the action.

- They are not supposed to do any work on the Sabbath,
- These men are picking grain. This is not allowed on the Sabbath day, or
- Why is Jesus letting them do this work on the day of rest? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus reminded the Pharisees about what was written long ago by asking two questions that he did not expect to receive an answer for. He says to the Pharisees, "Have you not read what David and those who were with him did, when they went into the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence? Only the priests were allowed to eat this bread." Jesus also asked them if they remember reading about the priests working on the Sabbath day.

Stop the action.

- The religious leaders just do not understand, or
- Why are they questioning if this is the right thing to do? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus finished speaking to the Pharisees. Jesus and his disciples went to a synagogue. A man who could not use his hand was also there. The Pharisees ask Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" They did this so that they could accuse Jesus of breaking Sabbath law.

Stop the action.

- Surely, Jesus will say that it is permissible to work on the Sabbath, or
- We will get him to say the wrong thing now.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- The religious leaders really do not understand. This is not good, or
- I will tell them what they do not understand. [!end] Restart the action.

The Pharisees question Jesus and say, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus asks another question that he did not expect them to answer. Jesus says, "If your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath will you do the work it takes to rescue it?" Then, Jesus commanded the man with a paralyzed hand to stretch out his hand. The man obeyed Jesus.

Stop the action.

- I believe Jesus can heal my hand, or
- It will be hard to move my hand, but Jesus said to move my hand so I will obey him. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus healed the man. But the Pharisees left and began planning to have Jesus killed.

Stop the action.

- Jesus is breaking the Sabbath. We have to stop him.
- Why does Jesus not do what we think is right? Or
- I want Jesus to stop teaching the people.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus and his 12 **disciples** were walking through a grainfield on the **Sabbath** day.

The **disciples** went with Jesus everywhere and learned from his teachings. Use the same word for disciples that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciples.

The **Sabbath** day was the last day of the week. The Sabbath is the day that Jews are to rest and worship God. Jewish law said that people were not allowed to do any work on Sabbath. Use the same word for Sabbath that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Sabbath.

Some **Pharisees** saw the disciples pulling and eating the grain in the field. The Pharisees said to Jesus, "Your disciples are breaking the law of the Sabbath." Pharisees were the most influential group of religious leaders. Use the same word for Pharisees that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Pharisees.

Jesus tells a true story from long ago about David and the men with him eating the bread that only the **priests** were allowed to eat.

A **priest**, in the Jewish religion, connected the people with God and connected God with the people. Priests served in the house of God performing rituals and teaching people about God. Use the same word for priest that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of priest.

Jesus reminded the Pharisees that the priests work in the **temple** on the Sabbath. The temple was a large building containing many rooms and an altar for making sacrifices to God. The temple was the house of God during the time Jesus was living. Use the same word for temple that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of temple.

Jesus stated that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of what God said through the prophet long ago: "I desire **mercy**, not **sacrifice**."

Mercy means to show compassion. A **sacrifice** is something offered to God to thank him or ask forgiveness. Use the same word for mercy and sacrifice that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of mercy and sacrifice.

The disciples were guiltless of breaking the Sabbath law because the **Son of Man** is **lord** of the Sabbath.

Son of Man is a title for Jesus that indicates he is God's Promised Savior. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

In this instance, **lord** refers to Jesus having the authority to determine what is or is not allowed on the Sabbath. Use the same word for lord that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of lord.

Following that, Jesus and his disciples went into the **synagogue**. A synagogue was a local Jewish place of worship. Use the same word for synagogue that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of synagogue.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:1-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3829462 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6607222 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:15–21

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:15–21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this true story, Matthew records that Jesus healed many people. Then Matthew recites what the prophet Isaiah said long ago about the promised Savior.

In the previous passage, Jesus declared that he has authority over the Jewish law. Then he healed a man with a paralyzed hand on the Jewish day of rest. The Pharisees who saw Jesus do this went away. They began making plans to have Jesus killed.

Jesus knew what the Pharisees, the religious leaders, were doing. Jesus went away from the danger. Jesus did not leave because he was afraid. Jesus left because it was not yet time for him to die. A crowd of people followed Jesus to where he was going. So, Jesus healed all of them who were sick. After healing them, Jesus commanded the people not to tell others what he had done. This was to fulfill what the prophet Isaiah said about God's promised Savior, the Christ.

Matthew tells us that what Jesus did was to fulfill, or make happen, what God's messenger Isaiah had spoken long ago. Then, Matthew quotes what God said through the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah starts by getting their attention when he says "Behold," or "look." God chose the promised Savior, or Christ, to be his servant. A servant works for another person and submits to that person's desires. God said he loves the promised Savior, his servant, and that his soul is very pleased, or happy, with him. Soul is the inner being, thoughts and feelings of a person. Sometimes people refer to a person's soul as their heart.

Stop and discuss: Share stories with one another about a time when you have been very pleased with someone else. What was it about their actions that made you happy?

God said that he would put his Spirit upon his promised Savior. This meant that God would fill his servant with his power. Then, the promised Savior will proclaim, or tell the Gentiles, how they will receive God's justice. In this instance Gentiles refers to all people from every nation. Justice is when a person receives either punishment or reward for their actions. God's justice is his decision to reward those who accept him and punish those who are evil. God's decisions are always honest and fair.

Tell stories about someone who gave justice to someone else. What happened? Who is responsible for administering justice in your culture? In what ways is this done?

God's promised Savior will not quarrel, or argue with people. He will not cry aloud, or shout. The promised Savior will not make loud speeches in the streets. During Jesus' time, many people would gather in the streets. These were noisy public areas and areas where people might try to give speeches and teach.

God said that the promised Savior would not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick. A reed is a tall plant that grows in the desert. The Jews used the reed plant to measure the length of objects. A bruised reed is one that has been bent and is no longer useful for measuring things. So, the reed will be discarded. A wick is the part of a lamp that burns. If the wick is smoldering the flame is out but the wick still glows, and it gives off smoke. To quench a smoldering wick means to finish putting out the fire. Isaiah is using the reed and wick to make the same symbolic comparison. The bruised reed and smoldering wick symbolize a person who is hurt in some way or spiritually weak. Jesus, God's servant and promised Savior, would be gentle with people who are weak and need help. Jesus would continue to be gentle with these people. This is one of the ways that he makes sure that God's justice is done, or that God's justice wins over evil.

Show a picture of a reed plant. Show a picture of a lamp that has a wick.

God said that the Gentiles, or all people, will hope, or trust and have confidence, in the name of God's promised Savior. "Gentile" in the New Testament is sometimes used to refer to all nations. In this instance, a person's name is the person themselves. Trusting in the name of Jesus is to have confidence and believe in Jesus.

Stop and discuss trust in your culture. What are some things that people can do that will cause you to trust them? What are some things that a person can do to cause you to not trust them? Tell stories about a time when someone did something that caused you to begin trusting them.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus knew the Pharisees were planning to kill him. So he went somewhere else. Jesus healed some of the people who went with him because they were sick. Jesus told them not to tell others about him. He did this to make what God had said through the prophet Isaiah come true.

Second scene: Matthew quotes what Isaiah the prophet said.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowd that followed Jesus
- The prophet Isaiah
- Weak and hurting people represented by a reed or wick
- Gentiles, or all nations
- Matthew

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus knew that the religious leaders were planning to kill him. Jesus left because it was not yet time for him to die and not because he was afraid. A lot of people went with Jesus. Remember that Jesus healed everyone who was sick. But Jesus told them not to tell others about it.

It is important to remember that in doing this, Jesus is fulfilling what was spoken about God's promised Savior long ago.

It is important to remember that Matthew is saying the exact words of the prophet Isaiah. God chose Jesus to be his servant, or promised Savior. Remember that God filled Jesus with his power, or Spirit. And that Jesus tells Gentiles, or all people from every nation, how they will receive God's justice.

It is important to remember that God's promised Savior would not bring attention to himself by fighting with others or making loud speeches in public areas. Remember that God's promised Savior is someone who will not break a bruised reed or put out a smoldering wick. Remember that Isaiah is comparing a person who is hurt or spiritually weak to a bruised reed or smoldering wick. This shows that one of the ways that Jesus makes sure that God's justice is done is by being gentle to those who are weak and need help.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowd that followed Jesus
- The prophet Isaiah
- Weak and hurting people represented by a reed or wick
- Gentiles, or all nations
- Matthew

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus knew the Pharisees were planning to kill him. So he went somewhere else. Jesus healed some of the people who went with him because they were sick.

Stop the action.

- I am so glad that Jesus healed me. I want to tell other people about Jesus,
- I am impressed that Jesus healed all of the people who were sick, or
- Jesus is so kind to help all of these people. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus told them not to tell others about him. He did this to make what God had said through the prophet Isaiah come true.

Stop the action.

- I do not want a lot of attention,
- I do not want everyone to hear about me yet, or
- I still have more work to do so I need to be free to do it for a while longer.

Ask the actor playing the prophet Isaiah, if you were there right now to see this happening, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- It has been a long time. I am glad that God's promised Savior is finally here! Or
- Jesus is doing everything that God told me his servant would do. [!end] Restart the action.

Matthew says the exact words that Isaiah, the messenger of God, said long ago. He says, "Pay attention, I have chosen my servant. I love him and he is pleasing to me." I will fill him with my power and he will tell the Gentiles about my justice."

Stop the action.

- Jesus healed all of those people. That must be the power of God.
- Jesus will tell us about God. This is exciting! Or
- Life is unfair! There are so many evil people in the world. It would be good to have justice.

Ask the actor playing Matthew, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- God's justice is for everyone, not just for the Jews. God is always fair.
- Jesus is fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy right now! This is exciting!
- Now I understand what Isaiah was saying all those years ago. Or
- Jesus keeps doing all of these things. I know he is the promised Savior. [!end] Restart the action.

Matthew continues to say the words that Isaiah said long ago. He says, "My servant will not bring attention to himself by fighting with others or making loud speeches in public areas. He will make sure justice is done by being gentle with those who are weak and need help. The Gentiles will trust and have confidence in him."

Stop the action.

- I am so glad that the promised Savior is here. He will be gentle and help me.
- I have been waiting a long time for justice. Thank God that Jesus is here now! Or
- Jesus is gentle and kind. I wonder if he will help me too.

Ask the actors playing the Gentiles, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I want to hear Jesus teach.
- How long will Jesus do this? Or
- I am glad we can trust Jesus and believe in him.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus healed many people who were walking with him. He ordered them to not tell others about him. This was to fulfill what was said by Isaiah the **prophet**. A prophet is a person who takes God's message to people. Use the same word for prophet that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of prophet.

Matthew says the exact words of Isaiah to the people who were there. "God's **servant** who he has **chosen**" refers to God's **Promised Savior**, or Christ. A servant works for another person and submits to that person's desires. Use the same word for servant that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of servant.

God said that he loves his servant and his **soul** is well pleased with him. Soul is the inner being, thoughts, and feelings of a person. Use the same word for soul that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of soul.

God also put his **Spirit** on his servant. And his servant proclaims, or announces, justice to the **Gentiles**.

Spirit is the **Holy Spirit**. In this instance, the Holy Spirit refers to God's power. Use the same word for Holy Spirit that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Holy Spirit.

In this passage, **Gentile** is used in a general sense meaning nations of all people. Use the same word for Gentile that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Gentile.

God's promised Savior would be gentle and help those who are weak and in need **until he brings justice to victory** and the Gentiles will **hope in his name**. This does not mean that he will stop being gentle after God's justice is done. It means that being gentle is one of the ways that he makes sure that God's justice is done. Jesus is the person who makes this victory possible because he is a fair judge. Jesus will ensure that evil people are punished and righteous, or good, people will be rewarded. In this sense Jesus will cause God's justice to be victorious over evil.

In this instance **hope in his name** means to trust, have confidence, and believe in Jesus because Jesus is God's promised Savior.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:15–21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3101757 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5334484 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:22–32

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:22–32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this true story, a crowd of people bring a demon-possessed man to Jesus. So, Jesus heals the man. But some Pharisees think Jesus is using the power of Satan. Then, Jesus teaches about the Holy Spirit. In the last story, Jesus healed many people. Then, Matthew quoted what the prophets said about the promised Savior long ago. The things Matthew said were all things that Jesus was doing.

Matthew does not tell us when or where this story happens. A crowd of people bring Jesus a demon-possessed man. A demon, or evil spirit, was controlling the man, causing him to be blind and mute, or unable to speak. Jesus healed the man by causing the evil spirit to leave the man. Then, the man is able to see and speak. The people in the crowd are amazed, saying, "Can this be the Son of David?" Son of David was a title that the Jews often used for the Messiah, the promised Savior. The crowd was asking a question that showed both their surprise and uncertainty. They did not expect an answer to their question. But some Pharisees, or religious leaders, heard what the people said. So, the Pharisees said that Jesus is casting out demons by using the power of Beelzebul. Beelzebul is what they called the ruler of the demons who is also known as Satan. This would have meant that Jesus was a false prophet, or false teacher, and not using the power of God.

Jesus did not hear the Pharisees, but Jesus knew what they were thinking. Jesus defends himself by saying that if he was using Satan's power then Satan would be divided against his own house or kingdom. Satan would be fighting his own demons since Satan is the leader of all evil spirits. This division would destroy Satan's kingdom. When Jesus asks, "How can Satan's kingdom stand?" Jesus is asking how Satan's rule could continue to exist. Jesus did not expect his question to be answered. He wanted everyone who was listening to think carefully about what he was saying.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, who is the most powerful in the spiritual world? What kinds of people have power over evil spirits?

Jesus says that if he was using Satan's power to cast out demons then the Pharisees would need to explain why they were not accusing their followers of doing the same thing. Jesus is not saying that he used the power of Satan. Again Jesus wants them to think carefully about what he is saying. Jesus called the followers of the Pharisees their sons. This does not mean that their followers were children of the Pharisees. It means that their followers were members of the same group of religious leaders.

Stop and discuss: What kind words are used in your culture to describe someone who follows and learns from another person? What are some things that they would do for the person they were following? What are some things that would be expected from them?

The Pharisees believed that their followers cast out demons by using God's power. So, Jesus was saying that the Pharisees could not say he was casting demons out by using Satan's power. Those following the Pharisees would become judges by proving what the Pharisees said about Jesus was not true.

Jesus says that if he is casting out demons by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God has come near to the people. The Spirit of God is the Holy Spirit. In this instance, it means the active power of God. Jesus was saying that God has already begun to rule in the hearts of the people to whom he was speaking. God was using his power and authority through Jesus and that was why Jesus could cast out the demon.

Then, Jesus teaches more deeply about God's power being stronger than Satan's power by asking a question. The question was a way for Jesus to tell a story. In the story, the strong man is Satan. The strong man's house is Satan's kingdom. And the strong man's goods are the people that Satan is controlling. But Jesus is the one who is able to tie up the strong man and free those people. Jesus is showing that he is stronger than Satan because Jesus is able to stop Satan from controlling people.

Stop and discuss stories about the spirit world in your culture. What are some stories in your culture about the struggle between good and bad spirits? What kind of comparisons are used to show that good is overcoming evil spirits?

After using the comparison, Jesus said that anyone who is not with him, or is not his friend, is his enemy. Jesus also uses an example of gathering and scattering. Jesus may be saying that anyone who does not gather his sheep, pushes them away. Jesus could also be saying that anyone who does not gather the harvest of crops,

scatters the crops instead. Either way, those who do not help him gather people to God are actually pushing them away from God. Jesus said, "So, God will forgive every sin and the evil things that people say to each other, but God will not forgive blasphemy, or speaking evil, about the Holy Spirit." Sin is disobedience to God. Blasphemy is a type of sin that means to say evil things about God. The Pharisees had spoken evil about the Holy Spirit of God. So, they were guilty of committing this sin.

Stop and discuss speaking poorly about others in your culture. What kind of mean or evil things might people say to each other? What are some feelings that those evil things could cause people to feel? In your culture, how do people react to others who speak this way to them or about them?

Jesus said that God can forgive people for speaking against the Son of Man, or promised Savior. You may remember that Son of Man is a title that Jesus often used to refer to himself. Then Jesus repeats that God will not forgive blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. But this time Jesus adds, "Either in this age or the age to come." Religious teachers during that time would speak about two ages. The first age refers to the time of living now. Evil and sin are present in this age. The age to come refers to a future time of living in heaven. God will rule over everything and evil and sin are no longer present.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: The crowd brought Jesus a demon possessed man. Jesus healed the man. The people in the crowd are amazed. But some Pharisees think Jesus is using the power of Satan.

Second scene: Jesus knew the thoughts of the Pharisees. Jesus teaches that his power comes from the Spirit of God.

Third scene: Jesus teaches about the unforgivable sin.

The characters in this story include:

- A crowd of people
- A demon-possessed man
- Jesus
- Some Pharisees
- Some followers of the Pharisees
- A strong man in his house
- People who are freed from the strong man

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Matthew does not tell us when or where this story happens. But we do know that it happens after Matthew retells what was said about the promised Savior long ago. Remember that the demon-possessed man could not see or speak until after Jesus forced the demon to leave. It is important to remember that the crowd who brought the demon-possessed man was amazed and wondered if Jesus was the promised Savior.

The Pharisees were talking to each other and the people when they said Jesus is casting out demons by using the power of Beelzebul, or Satan. It is important to remember that Jesus did not hear them say this. He knew what they said because he knew what they were thinking.

Jesus explains that a kingdom or a house cannot be divided against itself otherwise it will be laid waste, or destroyed. Jesus also said that Satan cannot cast himself out or he would be destroying his own kingdom. Remember that when Jesus asks, "How can Satan's kingdom stand?" He did not expect an answer. He wanted people to think carefully about what he was saying.

Jesus says that if he was using Satan's power to cast out demons, then the Pharisees would need to explain why they were not accusing their followers of doing the same thing. Jesus is not saying that he used the power of Satan. Again, Jesus wants them to think carefully about what he is saying. Jesus called the followers of the Pharisees their sons. This does not mean that their followers were children of the Pharisees. It means that their followers were members of the same group of religious leaders.

It is important to remember that since Jesus was casting out demons by the power of God, then God had already begun to rule in the hearts of the people.

In scene three Jesus teaches by using a parable. A parable is a story that uses everyday things to explain deeper things of God. Jesus asked a question because he wanted them to think carefully about what he was saying. He asked, "Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder, or take, his goods?" The strong man in the story is Satan. The strong man's house is Satan's kingdom. And the strong man's goods are the people that Satan is controlling. But Jesus is the one who is able to tie up the strong man and free those people. This shows that Jesus is more powerful than Satan. It also shows that Jesus is fighting against Satan.

It is important to remember that Jesus said anyone who is not his friend is his enemy. He also said that God will forgive people for their sin, speaking evil about others, and even speaking evil about the Son of Man, or Jesus. But God will not forgive blasphemy, or speaking evil of, the Holy Spirit. It is important to remember that Jesus said they will not be forgiven in this age or the age to come.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- A crowd of people
- A demon-possessed man
- Jesus
- Some Pharisees
- Some followers of the Pharisees
- A strong man in his house
- Some people who are freed from the strong man

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

People brought a demon-possessed man who could not see or speak to Jesus. Jesus healed the man so that the man was able to see and speak again. The crowd is amazed by this. They said, "Can this be the Son of David?"

Stop the action.

- I can see! I am speaking! This must be Jesus, the promised Savior.
- I am so glad that I can see and talk. Thank you, Jesus! Or
- These people were so kind to me for bringing me to Jesus.

Ask the actors playing the crowd of people, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I have never heard this man speak. Jesus, must be the Son of David,
- This is incredible! The man can see and he is speaking, or
- This has to be the promised Savior. How else could he cast out demons? [|end] Restart the action.

But some Pharisees think Jesus is using the power of Satan. So they tell the people that Jesus was casting out demons by using the power of Satan. Jesus knows what the Pharisees said even though he did not hear them.

Stop the action.

- The people are amazed, but I do not believe Jesus is the promised Savior,
- Jesus cannot have the power from God. He is just a man, or
- They should not be saying that Jesus is the Son of David. I think he is using the power of Satan. He is not from God.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- The Pharisees do not know how awful what they just said really is, or
- Even though what the Pharisees said is wrong, now I have the chance to teach the people something new. [|end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus defending himself by saying that a house cannot stand if the people living in it are fighting each other. Jesus says it does not make sense for Satan to divide his kingdom by fighting against his demons. Then Jesus tells them that since he is casting out demons by the power of God, that means God has begun to rule in the hearts of people.

Stop the action.

- What Jesus says is good. I want God to rule in my heart.
- I believe Jesus is the promised Savior. What he is saying really makes sense, or
- The religious leaders cannot be right about Jesus. [|end] Restart the action.

Jesus questions why the Pharisees do not accuse their followers of casting out demons by using Satan's power.

Stop the action.

- Jesus always has a good answer. Hopefully, the people will not listen to him, or
- We are following the religious leaders. We have to be doing the right thing. [|end] Restart the action.

Act out the story Jesus told about entering a strong man's house and tying him up to free the people who he is controlling.

Stop the action.

- Thank God that we are free!
- I want to follow Jesus. He has the power to keep me safe, or
- No one is stronger than Jesus! [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches that anyone who is not his friend is his enemy. He also says that God will forgive people for their sin, speaking evil about others, and even speaking evil about the Son of Man. But God will not forgive blasphemy, or speaking evil of, the Holy Spirit.

Stop the action.

- I wonder why Jesus said that. Did the Pharisees commit that sin? Or
- The Pharisees will not like what Jesus just said.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

A crowd of people bring Jesus a **demon-possessed** man. A **demon** is an evil spirit. When someone is demon-possessed the evil spirit controls their actions. In this instance the demon caused the man to be blind, unable to see, and mute, unable to speak. Use the same word for demon that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of demon.

Jesus forced the demon to leave the man and the crowd of people was amazed. They said, "Can this be the **Son of David?**" This title is used for Christ, or the **Promised Savior**, because God said that someone from David's family would save Israel and be king. Use the same word for Son of David that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of David.

Some of the **Pharisees** heard this and said that Jesus forces demons to leave by using the power of **Beelzebul, the prince of demons**. The Pharisees were the main group of religious leaders in Israel during that time. Beelzebul is another name for **Satan**, the spiritual being who is leader of the evil spirits. Use the same word for Pharisee and Satan that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Pharisee and Satan.

Jesus defended himself by saying, "Every **kingdom** divided against itself is laid waste, or destroyed." A kingdom is a territory ruled by a king. Use the same word for kingdom that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of kingdom.

Jesus also said that since he was casting out demons by the **Spirit of God**, the **kingdom of God** had come upon the people. The Spirit of God is the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is God's power. The kingdom of God is God's kingdom. Kingdom of God refers to God ruling in the hearts of people rather than a physical place. However, the Jewish people of Jesus' day wanted God's perfect kingdom immediately and physically. **Kingdom of God** and **kingdom of heaven** are both referring to the same thing. Use the same word for Holy Spirit and kingdom of God that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Holy Spirit and kingdom of God.

Jesus said that God would forgive every **sin** and **blasphemy**, but God would not forgive the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Sin is disobedience to God. Blasphemy is a type of sin that means to say evil things about God. Use the same word for sin and blasphemy that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of sin and blasphemy.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:22-32

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3937791 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6740075 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:33-37

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:33-37 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, Jesus uses a comparison about trees to show that a person's words reveal if that person is good or bad. In the last story, some Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons with the power of Satan. But Jesus teaches that he is working against Satan. He also said that speaking against the Holy Spirit of God is the unforgivable sin.

This story probably happened immediately after the last story. The important thing here is what Jesus teaches. What people say and do shows the true nature of their relationship with God. In this instance, Jesus teaches with a proverb, or wise saying. Jesus is comparing people to trees and what they say and do to fruit. Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they needed to decide. Jesus wanted them to consider if the trees and its fruit are good, or the tree and its fruit are bad. You cannot say that a person's deeds are good, but the person is bad. You might remember from previous stories that Jesus used the same comparison to talk about people's actions.

Jesus compared the Pharisees to a brood, or children of, vipers. Viper refers to almost any kind of poisonous snake whose bite causes death. Also, Satan is often referred to as a snake. "Brood of vipers" is a common name that people used to abuse each other. Both Jesus and John the Baptist called religious leaders a "brood of vipers" at different times, perhaps because the Pharisees were like poisonous snakes because poisonous snakes are evil and dangerous.

Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can you speak good, when you are evil?" He did not want them to answer. He was teaching that what a person says reveals their true inner thoughts and feelings. Jesus is expressing surprise that they think they can cover up their evil actions with good words.

Show a picture or illustration of a poisonous snake.

Jesus said that what a person says comes from what fills and overflows from the abundance of the heart. In the Jewish culture, a person's heart is their inner being. It represents what a person thinks, feels, and makes decisions about. Then Jesus emphasizes the same point by comparing a person's words to treasure, or valuable possessions, that they bring out. This shows that a person's words reveal what is important to that person.

Stop and discuss a person's inner thoughts in your culture: In your language, how do you describe a person's inner life? What comparisons do you make or objects do you use to describe whether a person is good or bad?

Jesus says, "I tell you" because he wants people to pay attention to what he is about to say. Then Jesus says that everyone will have to explain every careless word they have ever spoken on the day of judgment, or when God judges all people. In this case, "careless" or "empty" means that someone said they would do something but then did not do it. God will judge and declare a person is either innocent of wrongdoing or guilty of wrongdoing because of the words they say.

This story shows us how important words can be to God even if the words seem meaningless. Our words show what we are thinking, feeling and intending to do.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus uses a comparison about trees and fruit to explain how a good person will do and say good things but a bad person will do and say bad things.

Second scene: Jesus teaches about the importance of words that people say.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A crowd of people
- People who are represented by trees
- Some Pharisees

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus had just finished telling the Pharisees and the crowd of people that speaking against the Holy Spirit of God is the unforgivable sin. Jesus teaches by telling a proverb, or wise saying. In this proverb, it may sound like Jesus is giving a command to people to make a tree good or bad. Jesus is not giving a command to people. He is telling this comparison in the way that people give proverbs. Trees represent people and the fruit of the trees represent the words that people say and their actions.

Remember that Jesus calls the Pharisees children of poisonous snakes. Jesus is talking about a type of snake that holds its poison in its lips. When Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can you speak good, when you are evil?" he did not want them to answer. He was teaching that what a person says reveals their inner thoughts and feelings.

Stop and discuss the way people use proverbs in your language: Tell as many wise sayings or proverbs as you can remember.

It is important to remember that Jesus used different comparisons to emphasize the same point when he spoke about a person bringing out good or bad treasure. The good heart is like a storeroom that holds treasure. But an evil heart is like a storeroom that holds evil things.

In the second scene, Jesus continues to teach by saying, "I tell you." Jesus says this because what he is about to say is important and he wants people to pay attention. It is important to remember that the day of judgment is a time in the future when God will judge all people for the things they have said and done. It is important to remember that God will judge and declare a person is either innocent of wrongdoing or guilty of wrongdoing because of the words they say. Jesus says that a judge will determine that a person is innocent if his words are true and good, and guilty if his words are not. Jesus is using the singular form of "you" because he wants each person in his audience to feel like he is talking directly to them. He wants each person to think about how their own lives need to change.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A crowd of people
- People who are represented by trees
- Some Pharisees

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Act out the comparison that Jesus gave about trees representing people. Jesus said that the words people say and their actions are like the fruit that trees produce.

Stop the action.

- I need to say good things because I want good fruit,
- If I say good things, it means that I am a good tree, or
- I hope that Jesus does not consider my words to be bad. [!end] Restart the action.

Now, Jesus says that the Pharisees are like children of poisonous snakes because their words are dangerous. He tells them that their words reveal that their inner thoughts and feelings are evil.

Stop the action.

- First Jesus said that people are like trees. Now he is saying we are like snakes. What does he mean by this?
- Jesus called us evil like snakes. He is really starting to make me angry. I am not a snake! Or
- I thought we were saying the right things. Maybe we should think about what Jesus is saying. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says that what a person says reveals what is important to them. Then Jesus teaches that God will judge people by the things that they say even if they say something good but do not do it.

Stop the action.

- Oh no! Sometimes I say or promise things, but then I don't do them.
- Sometimes I harm people with my words. I need to be more careful and only say kind things and do kind things! Or
- If my words reveal what is really important to me then I need to pay attention to what I am saying.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I want the people to speak kindly to each other,
- I do not want the people to say things like the Pharisees say, or
- What people think and say is more important than they realize.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus compares people to trees and the fruit of the trees to the words people say. He calls the **Pharisees**, or religious leaders, a **brood of vipers**.

Brood means children or offspring. **Viper** is any kind of poisonous snake whose bite can kill. In the Bible Satan is often referred to as a snake.

Jesus said that the religious leaders who speak **evil** can not be good. Evil refers to anything that comes against God. Evil is the opposite of good in that it is not right-it is a wrong thing to do or a bad thing. Use the same word for evil that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of evil.

Jesus said that a person will bring forth either good or evil things from their **treasure**. Treasure refers to something that is valuable to a person. In this instance, a person can either value good things or evil things.

Jesus says people will **give an account** on the **day of judgment** for every careless word they speak.

In this instance, **give an account** means that people will be required to tell God the reasons for what they said. The **day of Judgment** is a time in the future when God will judge all people for what they have said and done. Jesus said that a person will either be **acquitted** by their words or **condemned** by their words. When a person is acquitted, or justified, God considers that person innocent of wrongdoing. When a person is condemned, God considers that person guilty of wrongdoing.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:33-37

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2576450 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4434633 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:38-45

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:38–45 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, a conversation continues between Jesus and the religious leaders. Jesus and the Pharisees have been having a conversation that began when Jesus healed a man who could not see or speak. An evil spirit was controlling the man. The Pharisees accused Jesus of having power from Satan. Then, Jesus explained that the Pharisees were saying a horrible and sinful thing. Jesus explained that the words a person says reflect what is in their heart. After that, the Scribes, or teachers of Jewish law, and the Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign that proves Jesus has the authority to teach and do the things that he does.

The religious leaders call Jesus "teacher," which is a way that outsiders who were not Jesus' followers addressed Jesus. The religious leaders had seen Jesus do many miracles, or actions of God. But they wanted Jesus to do a sign, or special miracle, to prove that Jesus is who he says he is and that his authority comes from God. This shows that they still did not believe that Jesus is from God. So, Jesus called them an "evil and adulterous generation." Someone who is adulterous is unfaithful to their spouse. This is a symbolic way for Jesus to say that the people of his day, or generation, were unfaithful to God.

Jesus says that they will see the sign of Jonah. Jonah was a prophet of God who lived long before Jesus. God had told Jonah to go tell the people of Nineveh to turn back to God. But Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. So, he got into a boat going somewhere else. The other people on the boat threw Jonah into the water. That is when a giant fish swallowed him, but after three days, God caused the fish to vomit Jonah onto land. Jonah's experience is a comparison of what will happen to the Son of Man, or God's promised Savior, in the future. Jesus says the Son of Man, or promised Savior, will be three days and three nights in the "heart of the earth," or in the grave. Jesus is talking about how he will die and be buried for three days before rising back to life.

Jesus compares Jonah to himself, because God saved Jonah from dying, and God will save Jesus by causing him to live again. On the day when God judges all people for what they have said and done, the men or people in the town of Nineveh will stand up to accuse or tell how the people of Jesus' day had sinned.

Jonah went to the people of Nineveh and convinced them to turn back to God. So, they repented, stopped sinning, and turned to God. Jesus used the word "behold" or "look" to draw attention to what Jesus said. He said, "Something greater than Jonah is here." Jesus is more important than Jonah because Jesus is the promised Savior.

Jesus told the religious leaders that like the men of Nineveh, the Queen of Sheba would also judge them. Many years ago, the Queen of Sheba came from a foreign country in the south, far from Israel. She wanted to hear King Solomon's words. Long ago, Solomon was known for his wisdom. Jesus emphasized the point that he just made by telling them that he is also greater than Solomon.

Show a map of Israel, Nineveh, and Sheba.

Stop and discuss: Describe a time that you or someone you know went before someone to be judged in court. Who was allowed to speak to the judge and why? Who was not allowed to speak to the judge and why?

Then, Jesus spoke about people who are delivered from unclean, or evil, spirits. When an evil spirit is forced to leave a person, it wanders through waterless, or isolated, places and does not want to stay. Instead, the evil spirit wants to return to the person it was controlling before. Jesus compares a clean house to a person who is spiritually empty and available for a spirit, whether good or bad. When the evil spirit returns to the person it lived in before and finds that person spiritually empty, it goes and brings seven more spirits that are more evil than it is. All eight spirits take control of the person, or live in the house, and they cause even worse things to happen to the possessed person.

Stop and discuss: What do people believe about spirits in your culture? Where do spirits live? What kind of spirits are there and what do they cause people to do?

Jesus made this comparison to show that the end of life will be worse than the beginning of life for the people of his generation. He said this because those people had seen Jesus do many things that show he is the promised Savior. But these people would suffer if they saw everything Jesus did to show he was the promised Savior, but did not commit to following Jesus. They would need to take out the evil things and then replace them with God's power that Jesus brings.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus has just finished teaching that what a person says reflects what is in their heart. Then, some of the religious leaders who heard it told Jesus that they wanted him to show a sign that he was from God. Jesus gives them the sign of Jonah.

Second scene: Jesus talks about different times in the past to show that he is greater than the people from the past.

Third scene: Jesus teaches about what will happen to the evil people of His day.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Some teachers of the law and Pharisees
- The prophet Jonah
- A giant fish
- People of Nineveh
- The Queen of Sheba
- King Solomon
- 8 evil spirits

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus and the Pharisees have been having a conversation that began when Jesus healed a man who could not see or speak. Jesus had just taught that good people will say and do good things and bad people will say and do bad things. The teachers of Jewish law and the Pharisees called Jesus teacher but they were not his followers. Remember that the religious leaders saw Jesus do many miracles, but they still did not believe in him. They asked for a sign, or special miracle, to show that Jesus was really from God. It is important to remember that Jesus called them an "evil and adulterous generation" as a way of saying they are unfaithful to God.

In the second scene, Jesus explains why he is giving them the sign of Jonah. It is important to remember that Jonah was a prophet of God who lived long before Jesus. A giant fish swallowed him, but after three days, God caused the fish to vomit Jonah onto land. Jonah's experience is a comparison about what will happen to Jesus in the future.

Remember that the people of Nineveh turned away from sin and turned to God because of what Jonah told them. It is important to remember that when Jesus uses the word "behold" or "look" it means we should pay close attention to what follows. Remember that Jesus said something greater than Jonah is here.

It is important to remember that at the judgment, the people in the town of Nineveh will accuse the people of Jesus' day. Jesus said that he is greater, or more important, than Jonah. Jesus also reminded the religious leaders that the Queen of Sheba came from a foreign country that was very far from Israel. She wanted to hear Solomon's words. Long ago, Solomon was a Jewish king known for his wisdom. It is important to remember that Jesus said the Queen of Sheba will also accuse the people of Jesus' day at the judgment.

Jesus said that he is greater than Jonah and King Solomon. This would have been shocking to Jesus' audience, because Jonah and Solomon were well respected by the Jews. But since Jesus is the Son of Man, or God's promised Savior, he is far more important than both of them.

In the third scene, Jesus tells a story to make a comparison. It does not mean that this story was an actual event. It is important to remember that Jesus compares the inside of a person to a house. If a person is not the house of God's Spirit, then that person can become a house for evil spirits. The people Jesus was talking to needed to replace the evil in their lives with the power of God.

Jesus ends this passage with a summary. He says that people of his day will be like this house full of evil spirits if they do not change.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Some teachers of the law and Pharisees
- The prophet Jonah
- A giant fish
- People of Nineveh
- The Queen of Sheba
- King Solomon
- 8 evil spirits

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus has just finished teaching that what a person says reflects what is in their heart. Then, some of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees say to Jesus, "We want you to show us a miraculous sign to prove you are from God." Jesus tells them that they are evil and unfaithful to God. Jesus tells them that the sign of Jonah was the only sign they will get.

Stop the action.

- Why does Jesus say that asking for a sign is evil?
- When will this sign of Jonah be seen? Or
- Jonah was a great prophet. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jonah being swallowed by a giant fish. Jonah is inside of the fish for three days, and he is praying to God to rescue him. Then, God causes the fish to vomit Jonah onto land.

Stop the action.

- I was afraid inside of that fish. Thank you for rescuing me, God.
- I wonder where I am? Or
- I am so glad to be alive. [!end] Restart the action.

God causes the fish to vomit Jonah onto land. Then Jonah continues on to Nineveh and preaches to the people there to turn back to God.

Stop the action.

- Oh! I need to turn back to God!
- I should follow him! Or
- I think God is all-powerful! [!end] Restart the action.

Since the religious leaders did not believe in Jesus, Jesus tells them that the people of Nineveh will stand to accuse them on the day of Judgment. Jesus also reminded the religious leaders about the time when the Queen of Sheba wanted to hear Solomon's words. Jesus said the Queen of Sheba will accuse them on the day of judgment. Jesus tells the religious leaders that he is more important than Jonah and he is more important than Solomon.

Stop the action.

- Solomon was a great and wise king. If Jesus is more important than Solomon then people need to listen to him. Or
- If I am going to accuse the religious leaders, they must be doing something wrong.

Ask the actor playing King Solomon, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Jesus must be the promised Savior since he is more important than Jonah and me. Or
- Jesus is saying amazing things. I would not question him. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus teaches about what will happen to the evil people of His day by comparing the inside of a person to a house that an evil spirit has been forced to leave. If a person is not the house of God's Spirit, then that person can become a house for more evil spirits.

Stop the action.

- The religious leaders are supposed to help the people, but they keep trying to lead people away from God,
- One day the religious leaders will regret not believing in me, or
- I am glad that some people follow me even if the religious leaders do not.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Some of the **scribes**, or **teachers of the law**, and **Pharisees** say to Jesus, "**Teacher**, show us a **sign**."

A **scribe** was a person who studied the Jewish law and was respected by the people because they knew so much. The **Pharisees** were the most influential group of Jewish religious leaders. Use the same word for scribes and Pharisees that you did in previous passages. Teachers of the law and Pharisees are both in the Master Glossary.

Teacher was a polite way of addressing someone who was a teacher of the things of God. In the book of Matthew, only those who did not follow Jesus called him teacher. Use the same word for teacher that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of teacher.

A **sign** in the Bible is a signal or indication that something is true or will happen. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of sign.

Jesus responded to the religious leaders by saying they are an evil and adulterous **generation** because they asked for a sign. He also said that the only sign they will get is the sign of the **prophet** Jonah. In this instance **generation** refers to people who live at the same time as each other. A **prophet** is a messenger sent from God. Use the same word for generation and prophet that you did in previous passages. Both generation and prophet are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says the **Son of Man** will be three days and three nights in the "heart of the earth," or in the grave. The Son of Man is a title for Jesus that shows he is the promised Savior and that he has the same nature and authority as God. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

Jesus said that the people in Nineveh would accuse the people in his generation at the **judgment**. The judgment is a time at the end of the world when God will judge all people for what they have said and done. Jonah was sent to Nineveh hundreds of years before this story. God wanted Jonah to teach the people in Nineveh about him. The people in Nineveh repented of their sin after Jonah told them about God. **Repent** means to turn away from sin and turn to God. **Sin** is any act of disobedience to God. Use the same word for repent and sin that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of repent and sin.

Jesus also told them that the Queen of the south will accuse them at the judgment. The Queen of the south is the Queen of Sheba. Hundreds of years before this story, she traveled to Israel to hear the **wisdom** of King Solomon. Wisdom is thinking things that are true and doing things that are good. Use the same word for wisdom that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of wisdom.

Then, Jesus spoke about people who are delivered from unclean, or evil, spirits. When the **unclean spirit** leaves a person they travel to **waterless places**, or the **desert**. **Unclean** refers to someone or something that is unfit to be used by God. All **evil spirits** are unclean. Desert, or **wilderness**, refers to an area of land where no one lives and little grows. Use the same word for unclean, or evil spirit, and desert that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of unclean, or evil spirit and desert.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:38-45

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3762665 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6490088 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 12:46–50

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 12:46–50 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, Matthew records Jesus' conversation with a man about the people whom Jesus considered to be his true family. In the last story, some of the religious leaders asked Jesus to show them a special miracle to prove that his actions were from God. Jesus reminded them about how important the prophet Jonah and king Solomon were to the Jewish people. But Jesus told them that he is more important than both of them. He also made a comparison about an evil spirit who was forced to leave a house, but came back to the house because it was empty. Jesus made this comparison to teach them that they needed to replace the evil in their lives with the power of God, and be committed to following Jesus completely.

Other people heard the things that Jesus was saying to the religious leaders. Matthew uses the word "behold" to show it was unexpected that Jesus' mother and brothers were standing outside of the house where he was speaking. Jesus' mother, Mary, and his brothers came to see him and talk to him. The word used for "brothers" could refer to Jesus' literal brothers who were younger than him or it could also refer to Jesus' cousins. Luke's gospel tells us that Jesus' family could not meet with him because there were so many people surrounding him.

Stop and discuss: How often do relatives go to visit other members of the family? What are some reasons why relatives will go to visit one another?

A man who was in the crowd told Jesus that his family wanted to talk to him. We do not know who this man was. Then, Jesus asked the man, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Jesus did not want the man to answer this question. Jesus wanted the man and the other people to think carefully about what he was saying. Jesus pointed in the direction of his 12 closest followers to show the crowd who he was talking about. Then Jesus told the crowd, "These people are my mother and my brothers." This shows that Jesus loved his followers and they have become his family.

Jesus explains what he means by this when he said, "For whoever does the will of God, my Father in heaven, is my brother, and sister, and mother." Jesus referred to God as his Father, which emphasizes that those who

follow Jesus become the true family of God. People who do the will of God, do what God wants them to do. People did not have to be related to Jesus for Jesus to consider them family. They only have to do what he teaches them to do. Jesus added the word sister even though only his brothers and mother had come to see him. This shows that women who followed Jesus were also his disciples and part of God's true family.

Stop and discuss: Describe your family. How do you identify someone who is an immediate family as opposed to someone who is extended or distant family? How can someone outside of the family be considered part of a family?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus was teaching the crowd of people. Suddenly, a man told Jesus that his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him.

Second scene: Jesus replied to the man. Jesus said that whoever does what his Father wants them to do is a part of his family.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- People in the crowd
- Jesus' mother and brothers
- A man speaking with Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that in the last story, Jesus just made a comparison about an evil spirit who was forced to leave a house, but came back to the house because it was empty. Jesus made this comparison to teach them that they needed to replace the evil in their lives with the power of God and be committed to following Jesus completely, or else they would suffer.

Jesus was still speaking with the same people and was inside of a house. Matthew used the word "behold" to show that it was unexpected for Jesus' family to be standing outside of the house. A man who was there told Jesus that his mother and brothers were standing outside of the house.

In the second scene, Jesus asked, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" He did not want the man to answer. Jesus wanted the man and the other people to carefully think about what he was saying.

Then Jesus pointed to his 12 disciples and said that they are his family. It is important to remember that Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of God, my Father in heaven, is my brother, and sister, and mother." Remember that in this instance Jesus is referring to a younger brother or sister.

Stop and discuss: Which word or words in your language describe someone who is a younger brother or sister?

It is important to remember that Jesus added sister even though his sister did not come to visit him because women also followed Jesus. Remember that people who do the will of God, do what God wants them to do.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- People in the crowd
- Jesus' mother and brothers
- A man speaking with Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus was teaching the crowd of people. Suddenly, a man told Jesus that his mother and brothers wanted to speak with him.

Act out Jesus' mother and brothers standing outside of the house with some people from the crowd and asking a man to tell Jesus that they wanted to see him.

Stop the action.

Jesus asks a question to get the people to think carefully about what he was saying. He said, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Then Jesus pointed in the direction of the disciples and declared that they are his family.

Stop the action.

Jesus said whoever does what his Father wants them to do is a part of his family.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus was teaching and his mother and brothers were outside of the house where he was. A man told Jesus that his family was there, but Jesus said that his **disciples** are his family.

A disciple is someone who follows and learns from a teacher. Jesus had 12 closest followers. Use the same word for disciple that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciple.

Jesus said, "Whoever does the will of my **Father in heaven** is my **brother and sister** and mother."

Jesus refers to God in heaven as his **Father**. This is not Jesus' earthly father. God the Father is the spiritual Father of everyone who follows Jesus. **Heaven** is the place where God lives and rules. Use the same word for heaven that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of heaven.

In this instance, **brother and sister** refers to a younger sibling.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 12:46–50

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2253998 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3888085 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:1–9 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This passage is set on the same day as the previous passage. In the previous passage, Jesus has been teaching in a house. He leaves the house and goes down to sit by the lake. This lake is the Sea of Galilee. Jesus sits down just like a religious teacher in that culture would do to teach. A large crowd of people gather around Jesus, and he is prepared to teach them. Jesus gets into a boat which is in the water and sits down in it. The water amplifies Jesus' voice so the whole crowd will be able to hear Him. Jesus then begins to teach the large group of people who are standing on the shore.

Stop and discuss: How do religious teachers in your culture teach? Do they sit or stand? Where are they when they teach? Talk about a time when you went to hear a religious teacher teach.

Stop and show the team a map of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is near Capernaum in this story. Show the team Capernaum on the map.

Jesus begins teaching the crowd using stories called parables. This is the first time in Matthew that the word parable is mentioned. However, Jesus has used parables in His previous teachings. Parables are the use of everyday situations to give a deeper meaning about the point Jesus was trying to make. Parables are not easy to understand unless those who hear the story think and try to understand the true meaning. Not everyone will understand the parable. The parable in this passage is the first of 7 parables that Jesus tells.

Stop and discuss with your group how people in your culture use stories to make a point. Share a story that people in your culture might use to teach children an important lesson.

Matthew probably puts Jesus telling this parable here to explain why people in the previous stories responded in different ways to Jesus. The parable uses an example from farming, because the people in that part of Israel would understand it well. The farmer sows seed around a field. To sow is a way of planting seeds by scattering them over soil and then plowing the seeds into the soil afterwards. The farmer was not careless with the way he scattered seeds. He would not have known the different types of soils that were there until he plowed afterwards. The seeds fall in four different areas and four different outcomes occur. Some seeds fall next to the path, some on the stone ground that had a little soil on top of it, some among thorny areas, and some in good soil. Jesus' focus is not on the seed or the farmer, but on the areas that the seeds fall.

Stop and look at the pictures of the 4 different types of ground where the seeds fell.

Look at the picture of the farmer scattering seeds, as well as a picture of the field after it had been plowed.

The first three areas of the field are not beneficial to the seed. Birds eat all the seeds that fall next to the path. The seeds that fall on the stone ground sprang up because of the warm sun and the little bit of soil. The phrase "sprang up" means to grow quickly. However, that same sun dries up the young plant and it withers because there is nowhere for the roots to grow. Many believe that the third area, the thorns, was not full of full grown bushes with thorns. The parable says that the thorns grew, and so it's possible that the area had thorn bush seeds or roots that were about to grow. When both the thorns and the seeds grow, the thorns choke the young plants. The word choke means that the thorns made it impossible for the young plants to grow. The last area where the seeds fall is the good soil which treats the seeds as intended. These seeds grow into a large crop, some 100 times what was planted, some 60 times what was planted, and some 30 times what was planted.

Stop and discuss with your group: What areas in your farming communities might seeds fall on that would not produce a good crop? Discuss what is needed for the good soil to produce a good crop. Take the time to go outside and look at different types of soil. Look at the photo of a field that is ready to be harvested with grain.

Jesus ends this parable with the phrase, "He who has ears, let him hear." The phrase "he who has ears" does not mean people who literally have ears on their heads. This phrase indicates people who are willing to listen and try to understand what was said. Jesus wants the people to figure out and perceive the point that Jesus is making. Jesus also wants the people to take action when they understand the meaning. We notice that in this passage, the parable is not explained to the crowds. The lack of explanation may create different responses from the crowds as they attempt to understand the meaning.

Discuss with your group how you might feel hearing this parable with no explanation.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jesus leaves the house and goes to sit by the lake. A large crowd of people come to hear Jesus teach. Jesus gets in a boat and sits down and begins to tell stories.

Second scene: Jesus tells a parable about a farmer who scatters seeds. The seeds fall on four different places producing four different outcomes. Jesus ends the parable with the phrase, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Large crowd of people

The characters in the parable include:

- One who scatters seeds
- Seeds
- Birds
- Sun
- Young plants
- Growing thorns
- Crops that grow well

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story takes place in the daytime. Jesus leaves a house and goes down to the lake and sits down. The Sea of Galilee is a large body of water about 21 kilometers long by 13 kilometers wide. A large crowd of people follow Jesus. Jesus gets into a boat that is on the lake. This helps the large crowd hear Jesus. Jesus sits down to teach. The crowd is standing on the shore to hear Jesus.

Jesus tells the parable about seed that is scattered on different types of soil within the same field. The seed falls on 4 different types of soil. Some of the seeds fall near a path in the field. But birds come and eat it up quickly. Some of the seeds fall near a rocky area. The seeds begin to grow quickly but the sun dries up the small plants because there is no place for the roots to grow. Some seeds fall in an area where thorn bushes will grow with them. When they both grow together, the thorn bushes make it impossible for the small plants to grow. Some of the seeds fall on good soil and produce a crop that is 100, 60, and 30 times how much was planted.

Spend time outside looking at different types of ground and soil. Discuss what is needed for a plant to grow well.

Jesus finishes the parable by telling the people to think about the parable and discover its meaning. Jesus offers no explanation to the people.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Large crowd of people

The characters in the parable include:

- One who scatters seeds
- Seeds
- Birds
- Sun
- Young plants
- Growing thorns
- Crops that grow well

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story takes place in the daytime. Jesus leaves a house and goes down to the lake and sits down. A large crowd of people follow Jesus. Jesus gets into a boat that is on the lake. Jesus sits down to teach. The crowd is standing on the shore to hear Jesus.

Stop the action. Ask the some of the people playing the crowd how they are feeling. Listen for things like: "excited," "curious," "anticipating something great."

Jesus tells the parable about seed that is scattered on different types of soil within the same field. The seed falls on 4 different types of soil. Some of the seeds fall near a path in the field. But birds come and eat it up quickly.

Some of the seeds fall near a rocky area. The seeds begin to grow quickly but the sun dries up the small plants because there is no place for the roots to grow.

Some seeds fall in an area where thorn bushes will grow with them. When they both grow together, the thorn bushes make it impossible for the small plants to grow.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing the one who sows how they feel. Listen for things like: "frustrated," "discouraged," "disappointed."

Some of the seeds fall on good soil and produce a crop that is 100, 60, and 30 times how much was planted.

Stop the action. Ask the actor playing the one who sows how they feel. Listen for things like: "excited," "encouraged," "hopeful."

Jesus finishes the parable by telling the people to think about the parable and discover its meaning. Jesus offers no explanation to the people.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing the crowd how they feel now. Listen for things like: "confused," "curious," "unsure."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This story takes place in the daytime. Jesus leaves a house and goes down to the lake and sits down. This lake is the **Sea of Galilee**. Use the same translation that you have utilized in past passages in Matthew. The Sea of Galilee is also in the Master Glossary.

A large crowd of people follow Jesus to hear Jesus teach. Jesus gets into a **boat** that is on the lake. Translate boat the same way you have in previous passages. Boat is also in the Master Glossary. Jesus sits down to teach. The crowd is standing on the shore to hear Jesus.

Jesus tells a **parable** about seed that is scattered on different types of soil within the same field. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of parable.

The seeds fell on four different types of soil. The word for **seed** is in the singular in the original language, but it means many individual seeds of the same kind of plant. Seed is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus ends the parable by telling the crowd, "He **who has ears**, let him hear." This is not a literal translation of people who have actual ears. This is to be understood to refer to people who are willing to understand the point Jesus is trying to make.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:1-9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2569726 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4390474 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:10-17

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:10-17 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Many question the timeline of events in this passage. If this passage follows the previous passage, then Jesus was still in the boat and at least some of the disciples had to be in the boat as well. If Matthew put this passage here as a quick explanation as to why Jesus was using parables, then it is likely that Jesus had already gotten out of the boat and moved away from the crowds. Many think this is the case and this passage actually belongs chronologically after Jesus tells the parable of the mustard seed later. The disciples ask Jesus why Jesus is speaking in parables, plural, even though Jesus has only shared one at this point in the story.

The disciples, or followers of Jesus, come near to Jesus. The disciples ask Jesus why Jesus is talking to the people using parables. Remember that parables are stories that use everyday situations to teach a deeper meaning.

Jesus answers the disciples. Jesus explains that the disciples have been given the ability to understand the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is implying that God is the one who is giving the disciples the ability to understand. The secrets of the kingdom of heaven are the hidden truths, or the things not everyone knows, about the will of God and God's rule over the world. Jesus is saying that these hidden things are not revealed to just anyone, but those that follow Him. Jesus states that the people who are listening to the parables have not all been given the ability to understand the deeper meaning.

Stop and discuss with the team: Are there certain people in your culture that are believed to have knowledge and understanding of spiritual things? Talk about what your culture believes about these people. Tell of a time that any of you have encountered any of these people and how they seemed to you.

Jesus explains to his disciples that there are different types of people who hear the parables: those who have understanding and those who do not have understanding. Jesus probably means that the disciples, having faith or believing in Jesus, and being receptive, will receive more understanding. Jesus also means that others, lacking faith, will become more blind to God's truth. Some people will not believe the things Jesus says, and therefore, Jesus will not tell them more about the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

So Jesus uses the phrases, "While seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, or understand." Jesus is saying that these people have the ability to physically see and physically hear, but they do not have the ability to perceive or understand the deeper meanings of the things of God.

Right after that, Jesus quotes from a well known prophet, or messenger of God. A prophecy is an inspired message of God that is spoken or written from a prophet. This prophet was Isaiah.

Jesus says that the things Isaiah said will happen are happening now as Jesus speaks to the people. This passage in Isaiah starts with the plural form of the word "you," speaking to a group of people. Then it changes to "these people." The two words are referencing the same group of people.

The first reference of seeing means to see something like a person or object. The second reference of seeing means to not only see but understand the meaning of what is being seen. The same applies for hearing. The first reference means the physical act of hearing while the second reference of hearing means to comprehend what was heard. People who hear and see will not perceive or understand because their hearts have become dull. The term "heart" here is not the physical heart. In the Bible, the heart is the place where a person's feelings and decisions happen. The term "dull" could mean not recognizing truth. Jesus is using this prophecy to convey that people are closing themselves off to the truth of God. Otherwise they would understand and turn back to God and God would restore them into the right relationship with Himself.

Stop and discuss with the team groups of people in your culture who have turned away from God's Truth. Share about the people that you know whose heart seems hardened to God. Stop and pray for them together.

Jesus contrasts the disciples ability to see and hear, meaning understand, and calls the disciples blessed because of this. To be blessed means to have favor from God. Many of the prophets, who were the ones who took God's word to God's people, and the righteous men, or men who were set apart for God's purposes, wanted to live to see the time of the Messiah. But those men did not live to see that. The disciples are blessed to see God's fulfilled promise in Jesus and to hear and understand Jesus' teachings.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: The disciples come to Jesus asking about parables. Jesus gives them an explanation, quoting Isaiah 6:9-10.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Walk through the beginning of the story considering whether Jesus was still in the boat or if Jesus had already gotten out of the boat. Where would the disciples be in each setting? How do you think it would play out each way?

Jesus's disciples come to Jesus. They ask Jesus to explain why Jesus uses parables. Jesus says, "You've been given the ability to know the deep things about God. Others have not been given the ability to understand." Jesus is making a contrast between those who understand and those who do not understand.

Stop here and talk as a group about how you show contrast between different groups of people as you tell stories about them.

Jesus quotes Isaiah to explain why he tells parables-so that people who are not listening for spiritual things will not understand him.

Have the group visualize this discussion. Where are the disciples and where is Jesus in this scene? What is Jesus trying to explain to them?

Jesus starts this section with the phrase, "I tell you the truth." This phrase shows that Jesus is about to say something very important. Jesus calls the disciples blessed because they are seeing and hearing the Messiah who has brought the kingdom of heaven to earth. Many of the ancient prophets and men set apart wished they could see and hear the things the disciples are seeing and hearing.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

The disciples came to Jesus. They ask him why Jesus uses parables to speak to the people. Jesus replies, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God. Other people are not able to understand. But I use parables when I speak to people on the outside so that the prophecy of Isaiah may be fulfilled. The prophecy says, 'When they see what I do they will learn nothing, when they hear what I say they will not understand, otherwise they would turn to me and be forgiven.'"

Stop the action.

Jesus then tells the disciples, "You are blessed because God has given you the ability to understand. You are blessed because you are seeing and hearing what the prophets hoped to see and hear."

Stop the action. Ask those playing the disciples, "How are you feeling hearing that you are blessed?" You may hear things like: "honored," "special," "set apart" because they have been given an ability not everyone has.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The **disciples** came to Jesus to ask why He spoke in **parables** to the people.

Disciples are Jesus' closest followers who were with him for much of his public ministry, traveling with him everywhere, learning from him, and sometimes being sent out by him to preach the good news of the Kingdom and heal the sick. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of disciples.

Parables are stories using everyday situations to explain a deeper meaning. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of parables.

Jesus tells the disciples that they have been given the understanding of the **secrets** of the **kingdom of heaven**, but not everyone has. In this case, the secret is about the **kingdom of God**, or heaven. Because the kingdom will look so different than anything anyone could have imagined or expected, its secret is definitely something that only God can give. You should not use a word for secret that has a negative meaning or that is related to evil practices.

Matthew refers to the **kingdom of heaven** instead of the **kingdom of God** so that he doesn't have to say the name of God. A kingdom is a place where a king rules a group of people. In the Old Testament, God's kingdom was his people Israel. But the people of Israel disobeyed God all the time. Now God's Kingdom refers to all who follow him, but we know that everyone still disobeys God and his Kingdom is not yet perfect. But Jesus also came to bring part of God's kingdom now. God's Kingdom now is people following Jesus as king, helping each other, and spreading Jesus' love to others. Later God will bring the perfect kingdom. God will rule perfectly over his people, when there will be no more suffering or evil, and all people will obey him. God will come, judge the evil people, and the world will be perfect.

When Jesus talked about God's Kingdom, people did not understand that, so it felt like a mystery to them. They needed to really listen to Jesus to understand what he was saying. Jesus explained this mystery of God's Kingdom through his parables.

The kingdom of God in the New Testament refers to the time when God comes to rule-his reign and authority which begins its fulfilment with Jesus' ministry on earth and people's acceptance of him. Later, the perfect Kingdom will come. We experience God's Kingdom now when we listen to him and obey him by following Jesus. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of kingdom of God.

Jesus also says that He speaks in parables to fulfill the **prophecy** spoken by the **prophet** Isaiah.

A **prophecy** is an inspired written or spoken message of God's will for God's people. A **prophet** is someone who receives God's message and takes it to God's people. See the Master Glossary for a definition of prophet and prophecy.

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah about those who have eyes and ears but do not truly see or hear truth. This means that they do not understand what is being told to them. The prophet also said that people's hearts have become dull, otherwise they would understand the truth and turn back to God. Someone with a heart that has become dull is someone that is not willing to try to understand the truth.

Jesus tells the disciples that they are **blessed** for seeing and hearing things that the prophets and **righteous** men wanted to see and hear. God blesses people when he gives them favor. See the Master Glossary for a definition of bless. Righteous people are those who were found accepted by God. See the Master Glossary for a definition of righteousness.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:10-17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2767954 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4681612 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:18-23

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:18-23 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus explains the parable to his disciples. Some versions make the text sound like Jesus is going to tell the parable again when He says, "Hear the parable of the sower." But a better understanding is that Jesus wants the disciples to hear the explanation of the parable. The basic interpretation of the parable is that the seeds represent the message or word from God, the sowing represents telling the message to people, and the different kinds of soil represent the different ways people hear, or the different types of people that hear the message.

Jesus explains that the seeds that fall on the hard path are not understood by the people. The evil one then comes and takes away the seeds. The evil one is Satan or his demons. The phrase "what has been sown in his heart" means the message about God that he has heard. Then Jesus explains that the rocky soil represents the people that receive the message immediately with joy but only for a short while because they don't really follow the message. In the time of persecution or trouble because of the message, they stop following God. Persecution is when people hurt God's people or cause them to suffer. This is the only place in Matthew where the word persecution occurs. This soil starts out well but in the end it does not "prove fruitful." This means that over time nothing useful is produced from this seed.

Stop and discuss with your team. In your culture what kinds of persecution or trouble do people face because of God's word? Tell a story of someone you know who faced persecution.

Then Jesus explains that the seeds that fall among the thorns represent the people that hear the message but are overwhelmed by worries and riches, and so the word does not stay in their hearts.

Stop and discuss with your team. In your culture, how would you describe riches? What situations cause people to worry in your culture?

Then Jesus explains that the good soil are the people who hear the message, understand it, and as a result their life is like the plant that produces a crop.

Stop and look at the photos of the farmer scattering seeds, the different types of soil, as well as the photo of the crop ready for harvest.

It is important to note that there are many different interpretations about the meaning of the seeds after they are sown. Some scholars believe the seeds continue to refer to the message of God and the soils represent four different ways people hear and respond to the message of God. Other scholars believe that the soils refer to different kinds of people.

In the parable Jesus talks about how the farmer sows the seed. In Jesus' explanation of the parable, however, it's more about the seed and what happened to it. "Parable of the Four Kinds of Soil" or "Parable of the Seeds" might be a more appropriate title.

Jesus' interpretation of the parable is only a description of the symbolism in it, but not an explanation of exactly who the sower is, why the soils are different, or what the harvest looks like. Jesus doesn't explain if he is talking about Christians who need to grow spiritually, or about non-Christians hearing and accepting God's Word. Parables often have a wider meaning than just one specific situation or time period. Don't assign meaning or explanation to the parable that is not given in Scripture.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: Jesus explains that the farmer sowing seeds is like someone sharing God's message with people. The seeds represent God's message, and the different soils represent different ways people respond to that message.

The seeds that fall on a hard path represent people who hear God's word, but before they can even understand it, Satan takes it away.

The seeds that fall on soil with rocks beneath it are like people who accept God's message quickly, but their faith does not take root. When trouble comes, they fall away from God.

The seeds that grow along with weeds are like people who accept God's message, but begin worrying about life or looking at other things. They begin chasing after money. They produce no harvest.

But the seeds that fall on good soil are like people who accept God's message and grow roots. They are people who focus on God's word and put it into practice. These are the people who produce a harvest of 30, 60, or 100 times more.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples

The characters in the explanation of the parable include:

- Person representing the path
- Person representing the area with rocks
- Person representing the area with thorns
- Person representing the area with fertile soil
- Devil

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Have your team find a seed and talk about how the seed is like the word of God. Have your team go outside and look at the different types of soil around. What happens when the seeds fall on bad soil? Where would this seed best grow? If there is time, have your team talk to a local farmer about these questions. Ask the farmer if he can explain how the seeds grow after they are planted.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples

The characters in the explanation of the parable include

- Person representing the path
- Person representing the area with rocks
- Person representing the area with thorns
- Person representing the area with fertile soil
- Devil
- Possible other person to tell the message

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus explains that the farmer in the story represents someone taking God's message (or Word) to people, and the seeds represent God's message. When the seeds fall on the hard footpath and birds eat them, those are people who hear God's message but the evil one comes and takes it away. The seeds that fall on the thin soil with rock underneath, whose plants are scorched by the sun, represent people who receive the message but are not deeply rooted in faith. They do not last long when persecuted.

Stop the action.

The seeds that fall among the weeds represent those who hear God's message, but it is crowded out by the worries of life, the desire for things, and the lure of wealth. Those seeds have no harvest.

Stop the action.

- Disheartened because they are not receiving truth.
- Saddened because I want better things for them. [!end] Restart the action.

The seeds that fall on the good soil represent those who hear and accept God's word. They produce a harvest 30, 60, even 100 times what had been planted. Ask the team, "What do people who are like good soil do? Do you know people who are good soil?"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus explains the parable of the sower who scattered seeds in four different soils. A **parable** was a special kind of story that Jesus told. It was told using everyday things to describe deeper things about God. Parables were often hard to understand unless people really tried to listen. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of parable.

The hard ground where the seed fell represents the people who do not understand the message of God. **Seed** is in the singular in the original language, but it means many individual seeds of the same kind of plant. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of seed.

The **Word** or the **message of the Kingdom** refers to the teaching about God's Kingdom and how we can be a part of it when we follow Jesus. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of kingdom of God.

Those that do not understand the message have the seed eaten quickly by the evil one. **Evil one** refers to Satan or his demons. Use the same translation for evil one you have used in previous passages in Matthew.

The seed that falls on the rocky soil are those who receive it but then turn away from God when trouble or persecution comes because of the Word of God. **Persecution** is when others hurt the people of God or make them suffer because they follow God and Jesus. Persecution in this context is because the people hear the message and receive it. Persecution can come in many forms for any kind of religious or different beliefs. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of persecution.

God's Word are the sayings and teachings concerning Jesus and the good news of God's Kingdom that has come to earth.

The concept of "people **bearing fruit**, or a crop, from the good soil" may be difficult for your audience to understand if the metaphor doesn't make sense to them. It means to follow the ways of God's Kingdom. You may have to say something like "produce results, live according to God's Kingdom, or cause blessing."

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:18-23

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2227574 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3794114 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:24–35

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:24–35 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus begins to tell the crowds three more parables about the kingdom of heaven, without explanation. Remember that the kingdom of heaven was used instead of the kingdom of God so that Matthew didn't have to say the name of God. The kingdom of heaven refers to God's rule and reign in the world.

The first parable only occurs in the book of Matthew. This parable compares the kingdom of heaven to the farmer's action of sowing good seed in his field. The man, or farmer, in the beginning of the parable is also the landowner or master of the house. The idea is that this man owns the field that he planted good seed in. Remember that to sow seed is to plant or scatter seeds in a field.

While they were sleeping, the man's enemy came and sowed tares, or weeds, among the wheat. This was probably a specific weed that looks similar to wheat when it is a young plant. However, as they grow and the head of grain appears, they are easy to tell apart.

Many versions call the workers of the field slaves, servants, or even bondservants. They ask the owner of the house, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field?" They did not expect an answer because they already know the answer to this question. Their real question is, where did the weeds come from? What happened? The landowner states that it was his enemy that planted the weeds.

Stop and discuss, in your culture, what types of subtle things might someone's enemy do to cause problems? Tell a story of someone you know whose enemy caused them issues.

When the workers ask if they should go ahead and pull out the weeds, the farmer replies no. He wants to let them grow until they are ready to harvest in order to be sure to separate the two appropriately. This particular weed had stronger roots than the wheat and so pulling out the weed early could have accidentally pulled out the wheat that was still growing. So waiting until the wheat was ready to be pulled out of the ground as well would keep the wheat healthy and good.

Stop and look at the picture of the field with a good crop and weeds growing in it.

The land owner tells the workers that he will tell those who reap, or gather the crops, to bundle the weeds and burn them, and then bring the wheat into his barn, or storage house. Some believed the Savior would save them from the Romans who oppressed them. Jesus told this parable to help them understand that the people who believed and followed Jesus, and the people who did not follow Jesus would grow together. When God comes to judge the world is compared to the time of the harvest. Jesus is saying that when God comes to judge, he will determine who is following Jesus and who is not.

Now there are two parables that talk about how the kingdom of heaven grows. This is how the kingdom of heaven is starting with Jesus and His disciples. It might be unnoticed or even not appreciated by many. But Jesus started with a small group of men and the kingdom ended up growing throughout the region and into the whole world. The birds that come to nest find rest, comfort, and protection in the shade of the tree. People will come from everywhere to find rest and protection in the kingdom of heaven.

The parable of the mustard seed goes on to talk about how God makes a big harvest from a small amount. The mustard is not the smallest seed, but it was used to talk about things that are the smallest or have the smallest amount. This small seed grows into a great bush or shrub and eventually a tree 8 to 10 feet tall where birds can come and nest in its branches.

Stop and look at a picture of a mustard seed as well as a mustard tree. What is one of the smallest seeds in your culture? Do you have a way that you describe the smallest thing? Discuss what in your culture starts out very small and grows into something very large.

The third parable told in this section is that the kingdom of heaven is compared to a woman who has taken some yeast and worked it all the way through into a large amount of dough. Yeast is what causes the dough to expand. The large amount is said to be the equivalent of 50 pounds, or 23 kilograms of flour. To be leavened is when all of the dough rises.

Stop and look at the picture of the woman working the yeast into the dough. Discuss with your team how people in your culture make dough. Is yeast used in your culture, or is there something else that causes flour and water to rise?

Jesus told the crowd all of these things in parables. This was the custom for Jesus. The phrase stating that He did not speak to them without using parables does not mean that He told them nothing but parables and nothing else. It means that Jesus did not talk to the people about the kingdom of heaven unless He used a parable. This was to fulfill the prophecy from Psalms that Jesus would speak in parables and explain the things that had been hidden since the beginning of the world.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus begins to tell the crowds a parable about the kingdom of heaven that has become like a man who sows good seeds in his field. The man's enemy comes in the middle of the night and plants weeds among the wheat in the field.

Second scene: The wheat and the weeds started to grow and the man's workers noticed that there was weeds in among the wheat. They went to their master and asked him how it happened. The master said an enemy did it. Then a conversation continues about how to take care of the weeds.

Third scene: Jesus tells the crowd the parable about the kingdom of heaven being like the mustard seed that starts very small and grows into a large tree where birds come to nest. Jesus tells one more parable about the kingdom of heaven being like a woman who puts some yeast in a large amount of dough until all of the dough rises.

Fourth scene: There is an explanation by Matthew as to why Jesus told the crowds parables and how often Jesus told the crowds parables.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The large crowd of people

The characters in the parable include:

- The landowner
- The servants of the landowner
- The enemy
- The wheat
- The weeds
- The harvesters
- The mustard seed
- The birds
- The woman with the yeast

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus is telling parables about the kingdom of heaven to the crowds. The kingdom of heaven is God's rule and reign in the world. Based on the last passage, Jesus is most likely still in the boat so that the crowds can hear Jesus speak. However, we do not know this for sure. Jesus starts with the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

Talk about what kind of word you have to describe a weed that is similar to wheat or a crop.

The parable talks about how the kingdom of heaven has become like wheat and weeds that grow together until they are ready to be harvested.

The second parable that Jesus tells in this section is about the kingdom being like a mustard seed.

Look again at the picture of the mustard seed.

The kingdom of heaven started small but grew into something big.

The third parable is how the kingdom of heaven is like yeast that causes a lot of dough to rise. This is similar to the second parable in this passage, in that something small has a large effect.

Matthew then explains that Jesus spoke often in parables to the crowds, and that it was to fulfill a prophecy: "I will speak to you in parables. I will explain things hidden since the creation of the world."

Discuss as a team how you will introduce prophetic material into your storytelling.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The large crowd of people

The characters in the parable include:

- The landowner
- The servants of the landowner
- The enemy
- The wheat
- The weeds
- The harvesters
- The mustard seed
- The birds
- The woman with the yeast

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus tells the parable about the man sowing seed in his field and then the enemy comes at nighttime and sows weeds in the field. When the weeds start to show, the workers notice this.

Stop the action.

- Frustrated that now the crop could be ruined.
- Unsure, not knowing how to make it better.
- Afraid that the master might think one of us did it. [!end] Restart the action.

The workers come to the man or landowner and ask him how this happened. The landowner says that it was one of his enemies.

Stop the action.

- Angry because my crop is important and feeds people.
- Hurt that someone would want to hurt me and others. [!end] Restart the action.

The workers ask if they should pull up the weeds now and the landowner says no, but to wait until the crop is ready to be pulled as well. Then the weeds will be burned and the crop taken into the barn.

Stop the action.

Jesus tells another parable about the mustard seed and another parable about the woman working the yeast into the dough.

Stop the action.

- Starting to understand that we are part of something bigger.
- Still confused but trying to understand what Jesus is saying.

Matthew then explains the reason for Jesus' parables is to fulfill a prophecy.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus tells the crowd **parables**. Parables are stories using everyday situations to explain deeper meanings of God and God's word. Use the same word you've used for parables. See the Master Glossary for a definition of parables. The parables that Jesus tells are about the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew refers to the **kingdom of heaven** instead of the kingdom of God so that he doesn't have to say the name of God. A kingdom is a place where a king rules a group of people. The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God in the New Testament refers to the time when God comes to rule-his reign and authority which begins its fulfillment with Jesus' ministry on earth and people's acceptance of him. Later, the perfect Kingdom will come. We experience God's Kingdom now when we listen to him and obey him by following Jesus. Use the same phrase for kingdom of heaven as you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of kingdom of heaven.

The first parable is about the **wheat** and the **tares**. Wheat is any edible grain that is planted in a field. It could be barley. The tares are weeds that grow up exactly like the wheat until they start to produce the edible portion. Then it is easy to distinguish the two.

The second parable is about the kingdom being like a **mustard seed** which starts small and grows big. This seed is said to be one of the smallest that grows into a very large bush or tree up to 8 to 10 feet tall, or 2.5 to 3 meters.

The third parable that Jesus tells about the kingdom is about a woman who works **yeast** into her dough until the whole of the dough rises. Yeast is what creates gas in the dough and causes it to expand or rise.

Matthew says that Jesus speaks in parables to fulfill a **prophecy**. A prophecy is an inspired written or spoken message of God's will for God's people. Use the same word you've used for prophecy. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of prophecy.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:24–35

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2769625 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4797456 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:36–43

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:36–43 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?

5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus has been speaking to the crowds in parables. Remember that a parable is a story using everyday situations to teach deeper lessons about God. Jesus' disciples are with Jesus. In this passage, Jesus leaves the crowds on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus' disciples follow Jesus into a house. This house is probably the place where Jesus stayed while in Capernaum. The disciples ask Jesus to explain the parable of the weeds in the field to them. So Jesus explains it.

Look at the picture of the field with a crop and weeds in it.

Jesus left the crowds. The word "left" in this sentence has the understanding that Jesus is not just walking away from people, but that Jesus has dismissed the crowds and sent them away. Since Jesus was originally talking to the crowds from a boat, we believe that here Jesus gets out of the boat and walks into the house where He was before He got into the boat. This is probably Simon Peter's house where Jesus stays while Jesus is in Capernaum.

Jesus' disciples follow Jesus into the house and ask Jesus to explain the parable of the weeds that were planted in the field. Jesus focuses on the explanation of the weeds in this passage.

Jesus starts by explaining the seven main characters in the parable. The landowner, or one who sows seeds in his field, represents the Son of Man, or Jesus himself. The field itself represents the world, or the earth. This might have been surprising to the disciples, as Jesus is including not just the Israelites in this comment, but the whole world. The good seed represents the sons of the kingdom. Sons of the kingdom are those who follow Jesus and belong to Jesus' kingdom. The weeds represent those who belong to the evil one. The evil one is the devil or satan. The harvest is the end of the present evil age. The phrase "end of the age" is used because it was thought in that time that there were two ages: One was the present evil time on earth, and the second age was a glorious future age. Both Jews and Christians believed this, however the Christians knew the next age to be the time when Jesus reigns forever. The reapers, or harvester, are the angels of God. Angels are heavenly servants or messengers from God who carry out God's will.

Jesus explains what will happen at the end of time. The Son of Man's job is to come and judge the evil people and the righteous people. Jesus is the Son of Man. Jesus rules in his kingdom. At the end of time, Jesus explains that just like the farmer separates the weeds from the wheat at the harvest, God will separate people into those who do evil and those who are righteous, or follow God. Jesus, the Son of Man, will send out His angels to gather out of his kingdom all of those people who are wicked and cause sin, and will send them to their punishment. These wicked people are sometimes described as "stumbling blocks." "Stumbling blocks" are obstacles that keep people from moving forward. In this case stumbling blocks keep people from Jesus and cause people to disobey God. Those who commit lawlessness refuse to obey any of God's laws.

Stop and discuss with your team: What do people in your culture who are considered "bad" do? What do people in your culture believe will happen to those people at the end of time?

The angels will throw them into a furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The furnace of fire is thought to represent hell or eternal punishment. The phrase "gnashing of teeth" is used as an expression of anger, suffering, or pain.

Stop and discuss with your team whether or not your culture has a concept of hell and what your culture understands hell to be. Share stories used in your culture to try to get people to do the right thing. What are some of the things that someone in your culture would do that would cause others to think they will "go to hell"?

Jesus tell the disciples that the righteous, or those who do God's will, will shine brightly like the sun in the kingdom of their Father, or God. This means that these righteous people will receive honor and praise from God and everyone will see that. People will notice them just like they notice the bright sun. This kingdom of the Father is the same as Jesus' kingdom. This kingdom of the Father could mean the new world of the Father, or in the place where God's rule is established forever.

Stop and discuss with your team how your culture distinguishes between people they think will go to heaven and people they think will go to hell.

Jesus finishes the explanation with the phrase, "He who has ears, let them hear." Remember the phrase "he who has ears" does not mean people who literally have ears on their heads. This phrase indicates people who are willing to listen and try to understand what was said.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: Jesus leaves the sea shore and goes into a house. The disciples follow Jesus and ask Jesus to explain the parable of the wheat and weeds. Jesus explains the parable to the disciples.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples

The characters in the parable are:

- The Son of Man
- The devil
- The sons of the kingdom
- The sons of the evil one
- Angels

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus dismisses the crowds and goes into a house. The disciples follow Jesus and come to Him asking for an explanation of the parable of the weeds. Look again at the pictures of the field with crops and weeds in it.

Jesus answers them and explains what the key terms in the parable represent. Then Jesus explains to them that the parable is explaining what will happen at the end of time. Jesus will send the angels to gather the wicked and send them into the fire, where there will be weeping and suffering.

If there is time, go outside and find some weeds. In a safe place outside, or in a fireplace, build a fire and burn the weeds. Discuss among the team how you feel watching the weeds burn in the fire.

Jesus tells the disciples that then those who follow Jesus will shine brightly like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Jesus then asks those who are willing to listen and try to understand, to do so.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 1 scene.

First scene: Jesus leaves the sea shore and goes into a house. The disciples follow Jesus and ask Jesus to explain the parable of the wheat and weeds. Jesus explains the parable to the disciples.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples

The characters in the parable are:

- The Son of Man
- The devil
- The sons of the kingdom
- The sons of the evil one
- Angels

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. Act out the parts of the parable as Jesus tells it.

Jesus' disciples follow Jesus into the house and ask Jesus to explain the parable of the weeds that were planted in the field. Jesus answers them explaining the key representations in the parable. Then Jesus tells them how those who don't follow Jesus will be gathered together and thrown into the furnace of fire.

Stop the action: Ask the actor playing Jesus how he feels. Listen for things like, "Sad because they refused to follow me and so now they are suffering." Ask the actors playing the disciples how they feel. Listen for things like, "Scared, concerned, starting to understand why Jesus' mission is so important."

Then Jesus tells the disciples that afterwards, those who have obeyed Jesus will be radiant in God's Kingdom. Those who are willing to listen, let them hear and obey.

Stop the action: Ask the actors playing the disciples how they feel. Listen for things like, "Excited," "Ready to tell everyone what they need to hear," "Concerned that not everyone will follow Jesus."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus dismisses the crowds and walks into a house. Jesus' **disciples** follow. Disciples are the close followers of Jesus. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of disciples. Translate this word the same way you have in other passages.

The disciples come to Jesus and ask Jesus to explain the **parable** of the weeds. A parable is a story using everyday situations to make a deeper point about God. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of parable.

Jesus explains the main components of the parable. The landowner, or one who sows seeds in his field, represents the **Son of Man**, or Jesus. Translate the landowner and Son of Man in the same way you have in previous passages. The Son of Man is a term that Jesus uses often to describe Himself. Jesus used this term instead of Messiah to keep away from what people thought would be a military leader. Son of Man is a reference to being a descendant of Adam. It also refers to the humanity of Jesus as well as Jesus' uniqueness being fully God and fully human.

The weeds represent those who belong to the **evil one**. The evil one is the **devil** or **Satan**. Translate this in the same way you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Satan.

The harvest is the **end of the age**. The end of the age refers to the end of time, or the time when Jesus will come back and renew all things.

The reapers, or those who pull up the crop and the wheat, are **angels** of God. An angel is a supernatural being that is a messenger of God. Use the same word you have used for angels in the past. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of angels.

Jesus tells the disciples that just like the weeds were burned up, at the end of the age, so the angels will gather together those who do not follow Jesus and all things that cause **sin**. To sin is to disobey God. Use the same word you have used for sin in the past. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of sin. The angels will then throw all of those into the furnace of fire. This is meant to represent hell, or eternal punishment.

Jesus then tells the disciples that those who are righteous, or accepted by God by following Jesus, will shine brightly in the **Kingdom of the Father**. This can also be translated as the kingdom of God. Use the same word for Kingdom of the Father than you have used in the past for **kingdom of heaven** or **kingdom of God**. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of the kingdom of God.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:36-43

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2483107 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4294951 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:44–53

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:44–53 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is continuing to speak to his disciples in parables. Jesus and the disciples are still in a house in the area of Capernaum. Jesus speaks parables to help the disciples understand the kingdom of heaven. Jesus pairs the parable of the hidden treasure in the field and the parable of the pearl of great price together. Jesus often tells two similar parables together to emphasize an important point.

The parable of the treasure in the field and the parable of the pearl show how valuable the kingdom of heaven is. Jesus starts both parables with the phrase, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." Jesus describes the kingdom to be compared to a situation, not an object. The kingdom of heaven is similar to the situation where someone hid a treasure in a field. In the culture of the time it was very common to bury or hide valuable objects on property. The man who found the treasure in the field most likely found it by accident. However, if someone had found a treasure in a field and lifted it out of the field or off of the ground, it would automatically belong to the one who currently owned the field. So it is likely that the man who found the treasure did not lift it up. He may have just

uncovered the treasure. Then the man hid it again and walked away with incredible joy. The man sold everything he had in order to buy the field so he could then claim the treasure as his.

Discuss as a group: Are there valuable items in your culture that some people would be willing to give up all of their possessions for? Is there anyone you know who has given up a lot in order to gain something?

Jesus then tells the parable of the pearl. A pearl is a silvery white round jewel that special fish in the ocean create. People in that culture considered pearls to be more valuable than gold. The merchant in this parable goes to seek for the pearl. He does not come upon it by accident. He also sells all he has in order to get the pearl that is very valuable. Some people think that the kingdom of heaven is like the merchant and the people of God are the pearl since Jesus gave everything to purchase us. Not everyone agrees with this explanation. Since this parable is paired with the treasure in the field, most scholars believe that Jesus is showing the kingdom of heaven to be as valuable as the pearl in the parable.

Stop and look at the picture of pearls. Is there any jewel in your culture that is valued very highly? Tell a story of what people have done to gain that jewel.

Jesus tells another parable that the kingdom of heaven is like when a fishing net is thrown into the water and catches all kinds of fish. Then when the net is full, fishermen bring it to shore and keep the fish that are good to eat in crates or buckets. They throw out the bad fish. Jesus explains that this is how it will be at the end of the age. The phrase "so it will be at the end of the age" is a connection to the following statement. It could read more like, "Just like what happened with the fish, the angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous." Jesus says that the good and bad fish are like the righteous and the wicked people. The angels will throw the ones who are wicked into a furnace of fire where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The furnace of fire probably represents hell or eternal punishment. The phrase "gnashing of teeth" is an expression of anger, suffering, or pain.

Stop and look at a picture of the net with all of the fish. Do people in your culture eat fish? If so, how do people catch them?

Discuss a crop in your culture that is all pulled up together, and then the good and the bad are separated out.

Jesus asks His disciples if they understand all of the teachings. They say yes. Jesus says, "therefore" which connects the following idea to the question Jesus asked and the disciples answer. Jesus then tells them about scribes who learn about the kingdom of heaven. The word "learn" in some versions says "have been trained." The word scribe means teacher of the law. It is used several times in Matthew. However, this is the only time it refers to a scribe who believes in Jesus because he is learning about the kingdom of heaven. Those teachers of the law are like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure new and old things. We do not know what the new and old things are so keep this vague in your translation.

After Jesus was done with these parables, Jesus left for another part of the country.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells the parable of the treasure in the field.

Second scene: Jesus tells the parable of the pearl.

Third scene: Jesus tells the parable of the fishing net.

Fourth scene: Jesus talks to His disciples about their understanding.

Fifth scene: Jesus leaves for another part of the country.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples

The characters in the parables include:

- The man who finds the treasure
- The merchant who looks for the pearl
- The fisherman (though not actually mentioned)
- The bad fish
- The good fish
- The angels
- The wicked people
- The righteous people
- The teachers of the law
- Master of the house

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus is still in the house teaching the disciples when this story starts. Jesus tells the parable of the man who finds a treasure in the field and sells all of his possessions to buy the field. At the beginning of each parable, Jesus begins with "again," or "once again." Jesus does this to introduce a new parable about the same topic, the kingdom of heaven. Jesus then tells the parable of the merchant who finds the very valuable pearl and sells all of his possessions to buy it.

Look again at the picture of the pearls. Can you tell which one is more valuable than the other? What do you think makes one pearl more valuable than another?

Discuss how you will introduce a new parable in your language.

Jesus tells the parable of the fishing net.

Look again at the picture of the fish in the net. Can you tell which fish are good and which are bad? What are the differences between the good and bad fish?

If there is time and ability, bring in several of a nearby crop. Talk about the difference between which ones are good to eat and which ones are not good. Can you always tell from the outside if it is good or bad?

Jesus asks His disciples if they understand what Jesus has taught them. They say they do understand. Jesus then explains how the teachers of the law who follow Jesus are like the master of a house who brings out new and old treasures.

Jesus leaves for another part of the country.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples

The characters in the parables include:

- The man who finds the treasure
- The merchant who looks for the pearl
- The fisherman (though not actually mentioned)
- The bad fish
- The good fish
- The angels
- Wicked people
- Righteous people
- The teachers of the law
- Master of the house

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. Be sure to act out the parable that Jesus is telling.

Jesus tells the parable of the man who finds the hidden treasure, and sells everything to buy the field it's in. Jesus then tells about the merchant who finds the pearl of great price and also sells everything to buy it.

Stop the action.

- Curious if Jesus is going to ask us to sell everything we have.
- Wondering if the pearl or the treasure is really worth everything. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the parable of the net bringing in the fish which are sorted good from bad. Jesus then explains that this is what will happen at the end of the age. The angels will sort the wicked from the righteous and throw the wicked into the fiery furnace.

Stop the action.

- Sad,
- Heartbroken because the people wouldn't follow Me,
- Justified because true justice has been given.

Ask the actors playing the bad fish how they feel. Listen for things like:

- Scared,
- Terrified,
- Desperate for another chance.

Ask the actors playing the disciples and the good fish how they feel. Listen for things like:

- Sad that they didn't listen.
- Regretting that I didn't share with more people. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus asks the disciples if they understand and they say yes. Jesus then tells about those who are teachers of the law who become disciples are like the master of a house who brings out old and new treasures.

Stop the action.

- Confused by the last part of what He said.
- Trying to figure out what Jesus just meant.
- Glad to be part of Jesus' circle of good fish.

Jesus leaves that part of the country.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is in a house in Capernaum. Jesus tells His **disciples** several **parables** about the **kingdom of heaven**.

Disciples are followers of Jesus. Use the same word you have been using for disciples.

A **parable** is a story which uses everyday situations to explain a deeper meaning. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of parable.

The **kingdom of heaven** is when God rules and reigns over all things. Use the same word you have used for the kingdom of heaven in the book of Matthew. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of kingdom of heaven.

Jesus tells two parables about the value of the kingdom of heaven and that it is worth sacrificing all things to find and have. Jesus uses two items of value in the parables: a box of treasure and a **pearl**. A pearl is a jewel of great value that special fish in the ocean create.

Then Jesus tells a parable about how the kingdom will be at the **end of the age**. The end of the age refers to the end of time, or the time when Jesus will come back and renew all things.

The **angels** will separate the evil people from the people God accepts because they follow Jesus. Angels are supernatural beings that are messengers and servants of God. Use the same word you've used for angels before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of angels.

The angels will then throw all of the wicked people into the furnace of fire. This is meant to represent **hell**, or eternal punishment. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of hell.

Jesus checks with the disciples to make sure they understand everything He has said.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:44–53

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2559490 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4451369 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 13:54–58

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 13:54–58 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This is the end of the series of parables that Jesus had been telling to a crowd and to Jesus' disciples. After Jesus finishes the parables, Jesus leaves Capernaum and goes to Jesus' hometown.

Jesus arrives in His hometown. Some versions add that Jesus arrived in His hometown, Nazareth. However it could have been the area around Nazareth.

Stop and look at the map of the Galilee with Capernaum and Nazareth marked on it.

Jesus begins to teach the people in the synagogue, the local place of worship for the Jews. Jesus more than likely taught several times in this synagogue. This was not just one teaching. The people who were listening to Jesus teach were amazed at the wisdom of Jesus' teaching. They questioned each other about Jesus' source of wisdom and power to do miracles. Miracles are the powerful actions that only God can do to make people be in awe of God.

The people in the synagogue ask several questions about Jesus' family. These are rhetorical questions, not needing an answer. The meaning of all of these questions suggests that Jesus is someone that they think they know well. The questions imply that they grew up with Jesus' family and have known Jesus for a long time. The people know Jesus' family: Jesus' father, mother, brothers, and sisters. They call Jesus the carpenter's son, meaning they know Jesus to be uneducated, and following Jesus' father's trade. Unfortunately this familiarity with Jesus does not lead them to believe in Jesus. Instead, they are offended by Jesus. To be offended is to have anger or shock over something that was said or done. Some versions say that the people rejected or would have nothing to do with Jesus.

Discuss with the team: Are there families in your culture, your town, or village, that never move out of the area? Do you know the families well? Tell a story about a family that you have seen grow up over the years.

There is some debate over whether or not the brothers and sisters of Jesus in this passage are Mary and Joseph's children that they had after Jesus. Many believe this to be the case, but some believe that they were cousins of Jesus. In either case, they were Jesus' close relatives. The people questioning them being related to Jesus indicates that the people knew and lived among Jesus' family.

Jesus says to them that a prophet is honored everywhere except in his hometown and among his family. People thought Jesus was only a prophet. Jesus was not honored by the people in Nazareth who took offense at Jesus. So Jesus only did a few miracles there because of the people's unbelief. This is the only time that Matthew uses this word, "unbelief." This means their unbelief in Jesus. They refused to believe in Jesus even though they could plainly see Jesus' wisdom and miracles.

Discuss with your team: In your culture, who are the people who are considered wise, and why are they considered wise? Are these people respected in their own town? Are there people who do not respect wise people? If so, why not?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jesus arrives in Jesus' hometown. Jesus teaches in the synagogue and the people are amazed.

Second scene: The people question Jesus' source of wisdom and power. The people question Jesus because they know Jesus' family and have lived among them for a long time. Jesus tells them that a prophet is not without honor except in His hometown. Jesus only does a few miracles because they don't believe in Him.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The people in the synagogue

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Look again at the map from Capernaum to Nazareth.

The phrase "coming to his hometown" means that Jesus arrived at His hometown, or returned to his hometown. This was the town where Jesus grew up. Jesus began teaching in the synagogue which is probably where Jesus went when he was younger. The people that heard Jesus were amazed.

The people begin to question where Jesus got His wisdom and power from. These were people who knew Jesus when He was younger, and knew Jesus' family. It is not unreasonable to assume that they would have welcomed Jesus home before Jesus went to the synagogue to teach. Now these are the people who are rejecting Jesus and being offended by Jesus.

Jesus tells the people in the synagogue that a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own family. Jesus did not do many miracles because the people did not have faith in Him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The people in the synagogue

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus arrives in Jesus' hometown. Jesus starts teaching in the synagogue.

Stop the action.

- Excited to be home.
- Remembering coming here as a boy.
- Concerned that the people won't listen to me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus went to the synagogue and taught. The people were amazed and asked, "Where did this man get this wisdom and power from? Isn't this one of our own people who grew up here? Aren't these his family members?" They were offended at Jesus.

Stop the action.

- Because we knew Jesus when Jesus was young.
- Because we know Jesus was not educated to be a teacher of the law. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says to them that a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own home. Jesus did not do many miracles there because they did not believe in Him.

Stop the action.

- Sadness, because they did not believe, and because these are all people I know well.
- Frustrated, because they do know me and still don't believe me.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus arrives in Jesus' hometown. Jesus teaches people in the **synagogue**. The synagogue is a place of worship for the Jews. Use the same word you have used for synagogue. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of synagogue.

All of the people were amazed and began to ask questions about Jesus' **wisdom** and power to do **miracles**.

Wisdom is thinking things that are true and doing things that are good. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of wisdom.

Miracles are the powerful actions that only God can do to help people be in awe of God. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of miracles.

The people knew Jesus' family and referred to Jesus as "the carpenter's son." A **carpenter** is a person who builds using wood and possibly stone.

The people took **offence** at Jesus. Offence is being angry or shocked by something that is said or done. They rejected Jesus and had no faith in Jesus. Because of their lack of faith, Jesus did not do many miracles.

Jesus said that a **prophet** is only without honor in his hometown. A prophet is a messenger of God who brings God's word to the people. Use the same word you've used for prophet before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of prophet.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 13:54-58

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (1950529 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3379916 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 14:1-12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 14:1-12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?

5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This narrative uses a flashback, or explanation of events that happened earlier in time. Herod is responding to both what he has heard about Jesus, and what Herod did to John the Baptist. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, the son of Elizabeth. John was the one who prepared the way for Jesus, the Messiah, or promised Savior.

This passage starts with "at that time." This is not to be taken literally, but could be said to be "around the time" that Jesus was rejected in Nazareth. Herod the Tetrarch is the son of Herod the Great, the man who was king when Jesus was born. The title "the Tetrarch" meant that Herod was ruler over one fourth of the region, around Galilee. Herod the tetrarch is also known as Herod Antipas.

Herod heard reports about Jesus. Herod's area of rule went from near the Sea of Galilee to the area of Perea near the Dead Sea. Jesus' fame had grown in Galilee, so it is likely that Herod would have heard stories about Jesus.

Stop and look at the map of the region from the Galilee to Perea.

Herod told his servants, or his officers in his court, that Jesus must be John the Baptist that has been risen from the dead. In that culture, even Pharisees believed that prophets could come back from the dead and would possess special powers to perform miracles. Herod's belief that Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead would have made sense to Herod's officials. Here is where we first learn that John the Baptist is dead. Here is where we now get the story about how John died. Herod thought of John the Baptist when he heard stories about Jesus because he had arrested and imprisoned John before.

The story then looks back at past events. The story of John the Baptist's imprisonment and death happened before Herod was hearing reports about Jesus. John the Baptist confronts Herod many times on his marriage to Herodias. Herodias was Herod's sister in law. Herod's brother Phillip was still alive and yet Herod still married Phillip's former wife, Herodias. John made sure that Herod knew this was against God's law. Herod bound John and put him in prison. This does not mean that Herod did the action. It means that Herod ordered for John to be arrested, bound, and put in prison.

Stop and discuss as a team: Are there religious laws in your culture that government officials break? What happens when you point out the wrongdoing of government officials?

The Old Testament law that John referred to was not just that Herodias was divorced and then remarried. But the Levitical law also mentions that uncovering the nakedness of a brother's wife is immoral and makes them impure. Herod Antipas claimed to be a loyal Jew. It would be expected that John would have spoken out against this marriage. Some versions say that John said, "It is not lawful for you to have her." This means that it was not lawful for Herod to marry Herodias.

Stop and discuss as a team: What are the marriage laws in your culture? How do people react when people break the marriage laws in your culture?

Herod feared there would be a riot if Herod put John the Baptist to death. Herod knew that the Jewish people believed John to be a prophet. A prophet is a person who takes God's message to people.

Another shift in time happens. We are not told how long John was in prison before Herod's birthday celebration. Some versions start this part of the story with the word "but." This shows a contrast. Herod was afraid to kill John because of the Jewish people's belief that John was a prophet. But, Herod had him killed anyway, and we hear how this happened in the story about Herod's birthday.

At the celebration of Herod's birthday, Herodias' daughter danced and entertained Herod and all of the guests. This pleased Herod so much that Herod made an oath in front of all of the people. Herod promised Herodias' daughter anything she would ask for. This oath was not just a promise, but it called upon God to punish Herod if Herod did not keep his promise.

Stop and discuss: What are the ways to make an oath or a promise to someone in your culture? Tell a story of a time you made an oath and then didn't want to keep it. What happened?

Herodias had instructed her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. A platter is a serving tray for food. We are not sure where Herodias is during the celebration. The dancing and entertainment would have been focused for men, and unlikely that women would have been there, but it is not clear in this passage. It is possible that the daughter left to ask her mother's advice and then came back to the celebration. Or Herodias told her before the celebration. Either way it was because of Herodias that her daughter asked for John's head to be brought to her there.

Even though Herod was not a king, but a ruler, he is referred to as king in this passage. Herod was sad, either at the request, or because Herod had made the oath and now had to keep it. So Herod kept his oath in front of the guests and ordered for John the Baptist's head to be cut off. Beheading was unlawful in the Jewish culture. It was also unlawful in Jewish culture to execute a man without trial.

Stop and discuss: What are the laws regarding execution of prisoners in your culture? Are there specific crimes which call for execution? What are the laws about when someone deserves a trial? Is it lawful in your culture to execute anyone who has not had a trial?

John's head was brought, on a platter, to the girl who then went and gave it to her mother. John's disciples buried John's body and then went to tell Jesus about John's death.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Herod hears the reports about Jesus. Herod tells his servants that he believes it is John the Baptist that has come back from the dead—that is why Jesus can do miracles.

Second scene: Herod had John in prison but didn't want to kill John. John spoke out against Herod's marriage to Herodias.

Third scene: But, at Herod's celebration, Herodias' daughter danced and entertained everyone. Herod made an oath to give her whatever she wanted, since Herod was so pleased with her. Herodias told the girl to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. Herod was sad but kept his oath and ordered John to be beheaded. The head was brought to the girl who gave it to her mother.

Fourth scene: John's disciples buried the rest of John's body. Then they went to tell Jesus what had happened.

The characters in this story include:

- Herod Antipas (Herod the Tetrarch)
- Jesus is mentioned
- John the Baptist
- Herod's servants/officials
- Herodias
- Herodias' daughter
- Celebration guests
- John's disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that this story is not told in chronological order in the Bible. The majority of this story takes place in Herod's palace. It is likely that the prison where John was being held was much further south. Herod Antipas was thought to spend most of his time in Tiberias near the Sea of Galilee. Herod's region stretched from Galilee to Perea near the Dead Sea, and so Jesus's ministry happened in Herod's region. It is believed that John's prison was just east of the Dead Sea.

Stop and look at the map of Tiberias and Perea with the fortress of Machaerus. The fortress of Machaerus was in Herod's southern region. This held the prison where John was being kept.

Herod married his brother's former wife, Herodias. Herodias is Herod's sister-in-law and his niece from another brother. Herod claims to be a devout Jew. John the Baptist hears about this marriage and confronts Herod, telling him several times that it was not lawful for Herod to take Herodias in marriage. Herodias asks Herod to put John in prison. Herod arrests John, binds John, and puts John in prison as his wife asked. Herod wants to kill John but Herod is afraid of the Jewish people because they believe that John is a prophet.

However, some time later during Herod's birthday celebration, Herodias' daughter dances and entertains Herod and his guests. Herod is so pleased, he makes an oath, offering the girl anything she wants. Herodias tells the girl to ask for John the Baptist's head on a platter. The girl asks for this. The girl wants Herod to be surprised at her request, so she builds suspense when she asks. She says, "Give me, on a platter, the head of John the Baptist." She says the name of John the Baptist last so that Herod will not know who she is asking for until the end.

Stop and discuss as a translation team: Do you have a way to ask for something and make the thing you are asking for a surprise?

Herod is sad, but in order to keep his oath in front of his guests, Herod orders John to be beheaded. The head of John is brought to the girl on a platter. These celebrations were thought to go on for several days. Look again at the map of the region. It is possible that John's head arrived while the celebration was still going on, even if it was a few days later.

The girl gives the head to her mother. Later, John's disciples bury his body. They then go and tell Jesus about John's death.

When Herod hears about Jesus and the miracles Jesus is doing, Herod tells his servants that it must be John the Baptist who has come back from the dead. Herod believes this is why Jesus is doing so many miracles. This was around the time that Jesus was rejected in Nazareth.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Herod Antipas (Herod the Tetrarch)
- Jesus is mentioned
- John the Baptist
- Herod's servants/officials
- Herodias
- Herodias' daughter
- Celebration guests
- John's disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

At that time, Herod heard the reports of Jesus, and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist raised from the dead. That is why he can do so many miracles."

Stop the action.

- Guilty for putting John to death unjustly.
- Afraid of what this man might do if he is John the Baptist resurrected. [!end] Restart the action.

Herod had imprisoned John. Herod had wanted to kill John but didn't because the Jewish people believed John was a prophet. A prophet is a messenger of God.

Herod's birthday celebration begins a flashback, or a look back at past events.

How will you act out a flashback to a past event?

But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced for him. Herod was so pleased that he promised her she could have whatever she wanted. Her mother told her to ask for John's head on a platter. The girl did this.

Stop the action.

- A little disgusted at what I'm asking for.
- Confused if my mom truly wants this.
- Wondering if they will really bring this guy's head here.

Ask the actor playing Herod how he feels. Listen for things like:

- Regretting that I made this oath.
- Sad that I have to keep this oath because everyone heard me say it.
- Not sad enough not to do it because I don't want to look weak in front of my guests. [!end] Restart the action.

John's disciples took John's body and buried it and went and told Jesus what had happened.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Herod the **Tetrarch**, ruler over Galilee, heard about Jesus' fame. A tetrarch, similar to a governor, is a ruler that is lower than a king, but has been given Roman approval.

Discuss what word you will use to say ruler or tetrarch.

Herod must have believed that those who come back from the dead have special powers to do miracles. Herod had heard about Jesus' **miracles**. Miracles are supernatural acts that only God can do. Use the same word you've used for miracles in the past. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of miracles.

Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead. John was Jesus' cousin, who also prepared the way for Jesus by telling people to repent and be baptized. Use the same name for John that you have in previous passages about John the Baptist.

Previously Herod had put John in prison because John spoke out against Herod's marriage to his brother's former wife, Herodias. Herod wanted to kill John but the Jews thought John was a **prophet**. A prophet is a messenger sent from God. Use the same word for prophet that you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for the word prophet.

During Herod's birthday celebration, Herodias' daughter danced and pleased Herod. Herod made an **oath** to give her whatever she wanted. An oath is a way of being sure someone keeps their promise. Refer to the Master Glossary for the word oath.

Herod kept his oath and had John beheaded. Then later, John's **disciples** took his body and buried it. Disciples are followers of a certain person. Use the same word you've used for disciples. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 14:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3075093 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5346921 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 14:13-21

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 14:13-21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Most Bible scholars believe that this narrative picks up where the previous story of John the Baptist's death left off. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin, and was the one who prepared the way for Jesus by telling the people to repent and be baptized. The story of John the Baptist's death is a flashback, or a look at past events. We hear the story of John's death because Herod asks if Jesus is John the Baptist resurrected from the dead. Some people believe Jesus goes to a remote place because Herod is asking questions about Jesus. Others believe that Jesus goes to a remote place to grieve John's death. Either way we know that Jesus goes away to a remote place. Jesus is likely back in Capernaum when He hears the news.

Stop and look at the map of the region of Galilee and see where Nazareth is, as well as Capernaum. Look at the overhead picture of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus withdraws by boat to a place where Jesus can be alone. The boats of that time were about 8 meters long and could easily fit 13 people. Many scholars believe Jesus withdrew to the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is north of Jerusalem and is about 21 kilometers long and 13 kilometers wide. Jesus could have been in danger because Herod was asking questions about Jesus. When Jesus sailed to the other side of the sea, Jesus would have then been out of Herod's region and safe for now. Jesus would have been able to find a more desolate area on that side of the lake.

Stop and look again at the map of Herod Antipas' territory.

However, the large crowd of people either heard where Jesus was going, or they watched Jesus from the shoreline. The crowds then left their towns and ran around the shoreline to the remote place. The people arrived before Jesus did. When Jesus got out of the boat, Jesus saw the crowds and had compassion on them and healed the sick. Compassion is a deep love or affection for someone.

Stop and discuss with your team: In your culture, where do people go, or what do people do in order to have time alone? Is there a place in your area where it is easy to be alone? Talk about a time when you wanted to be alone but were not able to be alone.

That evening, the disciples came to Jesus. Jesus' disciples are those who follow Jesus closely. More than likely the disciples were already in the area with Jesus. More than likely the disciples had come over on the boat with Jesus. This could be said, then the disciples approached Jesus. It was not quite dark yet. Once it was dark it would be too late for people to go find food. The disciples notice that it is late and approach Jesus. The disciples tell Jesus to send the people to the nearby villages, which are not where the people have come from.

Jesus' conversation with the disciples is fairly straightforward. Jesus' response must have taken the disciples by surprise, since they respond with what seems to be lack of belief. It can be read, "How can we give them something to eat when all we have is five loaves of bread and two fish?" Bread and fish were very common food to eat for those who were poorer. The loaves of bread were small. Three loaves would have fed one person. So this amount of food was barely enough for 2 people.

Jesus told the disciples to bring the loaves and fish to Jesus. Then Jesus told them to have the people sit down on the grass. The word "sit down" is the word used when reclining at a banquet. Jesus took the loaves and fish, looked towards heaven, and blessed the food, broke the bread, and gave the food to the disciples to give to the crowd of people. When people bless something it usually means that they give thanks for it. Jesus probably said the traditional blessing, "You are blessed, Lord God, King of the universe who brings bread from the earth."

Matthew does not include an explanation of the miracle that happens, but only that the whole crowd ate until they were satisfied. Matthew also states that there was enough for twelve baskets full of leftover food. The crowd was five thousand men, plus women and children. The baskets were stiff wicker baskets used for carrying daily food.

Stop and look at the pictures of wicker baskets.

Stop and discuss with your team: In your culture, how many people would five small loaves and two fish feed? How much food would it take in your culture to feed and satisfy five thousand men plus women and children?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus hears the news of John's death. Jesus gets in the boat to find a place to be alone. The people follow Jesus on foot.

Second scene: Jesus gets out of the boat and sees that the crowd is already there. Jesus feels compassion for them. Jesus heals the sick.

Third scene: The disciples come up to Jesus and tell Jesus the hour is late and the people need to go get food. Jesus tells the disciples that the crowds don't need to leave. Jesus tells the disciples that they should feed the people. The disciples reply that they don't have enough food, they only have 2 fish and 5 loaves.

Fourth scene: Jesus asks for the food to be brought to Him. Jesus tells the crowds to sit down. Jesus blesses the food, breaks the loaves, and gives the food to the disciples. The disciples then hand it out to the crowd. The crowd eat and are satisfied. The disciples pick up 12 leftover baskets full of food.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowds (including those who are sick)
- The disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The passage begins, "Now when Jesus heard this..." The word "now" is a transitional word. It doesn't mean right here and now. It really means that when Jesus heard about the death of His cousin John, Jesus went away by boat on the Sea of Galilee to be alone. We don't know where exactly Jesus went, but we think Jesus went from Capernaum to the northeast side of the sea of Galilee. This would have taken Jesus to a desolate place and also taken Jesus out of Herod Antipas' territory. The crowds heard that Jesus was leaving, and so they followed Jesus on foot. The crowds of people probably watched Jesus from the shoreline and kept an eye on where Jesus' boat was going. It is important to note that most of the characters are on land and Jesus and the disciples are on a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

Look again at the map of Galilee and the picture from the air of the landscape on the northwestern side of the Sea of Galilee.

When Jesus got out of the boat onto the shore, Jesus saw the great crowd of people: five thousand men, plus women and children. Jesus felt great love for them and healed the sick.

Pause and talk through how this might have looked. Did the people crowd around Jesus? Did they get in a line? Did relatives bring their loved ones to Jesus? Did people come on their own?

Jesus is ministering to people all day until the evening. As the sun is starting to go down, the disciples come to Jesus and tell Jesus to send away the crowds so they can get food. A crowd that large would have had difficulty finding food in a desolate or remote place.

Jesus asks for the 5 loaves and 2 fish to be brought to Jesus. Then Jesus tells the people to sit down, and Jesus blesses the food. Then Jesus breaks the loaves and gives it to the disciples. The disciples hand it out to the large crowd. The whole crowd eats and is filled to satisfaction. Afterwards, the disciples pick up twelve baskets full of leftovers.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The crowds (including those who are sick)
- The disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus hears the news of John's death. Jesus gets in the boat to find a place to be alone.

Stop the action.

- Sad for my cousin's death. Need time to grieve.
- Concerned about Herod Antipas' belief about who I am. [!end] Restart the action.

The crowds run along the shoreline to follow Jesus who is in the boat. When Jesus gets out of the boat and sees the crowd, Jesus has compassion on them. Jesus begins to heal the sick until the evening.

The disciples come up to Jesus and tell Jesus the hour is late and the people need to go get food. Jesus tells the disciples that the crowds don't need to leave. Jesus tells the disciples that they should feed the people. The disciples reply that they don't have enough food, they only have 2 fish and 5 loaves.

Stop the action.

- Confused since we don't have food.
- Worried that we don't have enough money to pay for food for everyone.
- Confused if we can still do miracles ourselves.
- Tired and frustrated that Jesus is asking us to work when we are tired. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus asks for the food to be brought to Him. Jesus tells the crowds to sit down. Jesus blesses the food, breaks the loaves, and gives the food to the disciples. The disciples then hand it out to the crowd. The crowd eat and are satisfied. The disciples pick up 12 leftover baskets full of food.

Stop the action.

- Amazed at the miracle Jesus just did.
- I shouldn't be surprised that He did another miracle.
- Wondering why Jesus hasn't done this before for people who are hungry.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus got into a boat to go to a **remote** or **desolate** area to be alone. Remote or desolate means without people or even much vegetation.

The lake Jesus was on was the **Sea of Galilee**. The Sea of Galilee is 21 kilometers long and 13 kilometers wide. It is around this sea that Jesus did much of His ministry. Use the same word you've used before for the Sea of Galilee. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of the Sea of Galilee.

When Jesus got out of the boat, Jesus saw the large crowd and felt **compassion** for them. Compassion is a deep feeling of love and or affection. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of compassion. Jesus healed the sick.

When the sun started to set, the **disciples** came to Jesus to ask Jesus to send the people away to get food. Disciples are close followers of Jesus. Use the same word you've used for disciples in the past. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of disciples.

Jesus said the crowds didn't need to go away and the disciples could give them food. The disciples said they only had a little bit of food. Jesus asked for the food and told everyone to sit down. Jesus **blessed** the food, broke the food, and gave it out. When people bless something it means they give God thanks for the thing. Everyone ate and was satisfied. The disciples picked up 12 baskets full of leftover food.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 14:13-21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2563794 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4488529 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 14:22–36

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 14:22–36 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story follows the story of Jesus feeding more than 5,000 people with only 5 pieces of bread and two fish. People were amazed by the power of Jesus.

Soon after the event of feeding the large group of people, Jesus tells them to go to their homes. Jesus told the disciples to get into a boat and go to the other side of a lake, which was the Sea of Galilee. Jesus then goes alone into a hilly place to pray, or talk to God, getting away from the people.

Stop here and show a picture of the Sea of Galilee. Also show a picture of a boat with oars.

When it became dark, Jesus was still talking to God, and the disciples in the boat were far away from land struggling to get across the lake. There was a strong wind, and the waves were beating against the boat. Strong storms could come suddenly because of the location of the lake.

Tell about a difficult time in your life when things were so hard that you didn't know what to do.

Then, during the "fourth watch" of the night which was between 3:00 to 6:00 a.m., Jesus went to the disciples walking on the surface of the water! "In the fourth watch of the night" reflects the Roman custom of dividing time between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. into four equal periods of three hours each. Each one of these time periods was called a watch.

The disciples saw Jesus coming to them in the middle of the storm. They were very frightened and cried out, "It is a ghost!" This statement by the disciples possibly represents a superstition, and may reflect the popular belief that evil spirits lived in the sea, or that those who had drowned haunted the water.

Jesus immediately spoke to the disciples and said, "Don't be afraid; it's me." Some versions use the words "take heart," which can also be translated "Be courageous! I am Jesus. Do not fear!" or "Calm yourselves, it is me. Do not be afraid!"

Peter then said to Jesus who was still on the surface of the water, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." The word "Lord" in this instance can be translated as "sir," "lord," or "master." Peter wanted Jesus to confirm that the person on the water was really him. It was dark and stormy, and the disciples could not clearly see. But they had heard Jesus' voice. Peter believed that if it was really Jesus, he would enable Peter to walk to Jesus on the water. Jesus then told Peter to come to him!

Peter got out of the boat and began walking to Jesus on the surface of the water. But Peter became aware of the strong wind and the waves around him and he began to sink into the water. Peter quickly shouted to Jesus, "Rescue me from drowning, Lord!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand to help Peter and Jesus said to him, "Why didn't you trust me to help you walk on the water?" Jesus and Peter then got into the boat and the wind stopped. The disciples who were in the boat were amazed at what happened and worshiped Jesus, stating that he was the Son of God. The phrase the "Son of God" is a title for Jesus. This title indicates that the disciples see Jesus as having the same nature and character as God.

The disciples recognize that Jesus is no ordinary person. The disciples are surprised at what Jesus does. They are so overcome by emotion that they recognize that Jesus must be divine and call him the Son of God. In the last story of a storm on the water, they ended by asking "Who is this man?" Now they call him the Son of God.

Jesus and the disciples reached the other side of the lake and got out of the boat on land at a place called Gennesaret. Gennesaret was a village located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. But the name also applied to the fertile and densely populated plain west of the Sea of Galilee and south of Capernaum. By the use of the word "place" to describe Gennesaret, it is likely referring to the plain or territory of Gennesaret rather than to the village.

Show a map that includes Bethsaida and Gennesaret, where Jesus and the disciples landed.

The people saw that it was Jesus and they sent people to tell everyone in that region that Jesus was there. The people brought those who were sick to Jesus, begging Jesus to allow them to touch the fringe of his robe. And Jesus healed all the sick people who touched him, making them well. The people believed that the healing power of Jesus flowed into the fringe of his garment. Fringe can be "the bottom" or "the foot" or "edge."

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells the disciples to get into a boat and go to the other side of the lake. He sends the crowd to their homes. Jesus then goes into a hilly area to pray, talk with God. It became night while Jesus was praying.

Second scene: The disciples struggle in their boat because of the strong wind and large waves. Between 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m., Jesus went to the disciples walking on the surface of the water. The disciples wondered if it was a ghost!

Scene 3: Jesus speaks to them to encourage them telling them to not be afraid because it was him on the water. He said, "Don't be afraid; it's me." Peter speaks to Jesus saying, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." Jesus then tells Peter to come to him!

Scene 4: Peter gets out of the boat and walks on the surface of the water and begins to sink. He is afraid and calls out to Jesus to be rescued from drowning. Jesus takes Peter's hand and rescues him. Jesus asks Peter why he has such little faith and doubts.

Scene 5: Jesus and Peter get back into the boat and wind stops. The disciples were amazed and realized that Jesus is the Son of God and they worship him.

Scene 6: Jesus and the disciples make it across the lake to Gennesaret. The people in that area were aware that it was Jesus and soon the news spread to many other people that Jesus was there. These people brought those who were sick, begging Jesus to let them touch the edge of his robe. Jesus healed all of those who touched him.

The characters in this story include:

- The crowd from the previous miracle, feeding 5,000
- Jesus
- The disciples
- The wind and waves
- The people in Gennesaret, healthy and sick people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus has just fed the crowd of people with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. He sends his disciples back to the boat, and sends the crowd away. Then he goes to a hillside to pray. By now, it is nighttime and dark.

It is important to recognize that even though Jesus was not present with the disciples, he was praying and must have been aware of the disciples struggling in the boat because of what happens next.

Because this is a large lake, the wind and waves were making the disciples fearful, perhaps wondering if they would survive the storm. The wind and waves should move strongly against the boat.

Jesus comes to the disciples walking on the water. It is important to remember the reaction of the disciples and Jesus' response.

The expression of Jesus is to offer encouragement, meaning "Be calm" or "Don't be afraid" are common translations of this phrase.

It is important to remember Peter's response to Jesus.

It is helpful to notice that Peter quickly loses sight of Jesus and begins to look at the storm instead. This is when Peter begins to sink.

After Jesus and Peter get back in the boat, the disciples worship Jesus. Then, sometime later, the boat lands on the shore of the other side of the lake. Large crowds of people hear that Jesus has landed, and they come to see him. Jesus continues to show his power by healing all who were sick. The people came to Jesus believing that if they touched the edge of his robe, Jesus would make them well.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- The crowd from the previous miracle (feeding 5,000)
- Jesus
- The disciples
- The wind and waves
- The people in Gennesaret (healthy and sick people)

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus sending the crowd home, sending the disciples across the lake, and him going up a hill to pray.

Stop the action.

Act out the disciples struggling in the boat, fighting against the wind and the waves.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus how he feels as he continues to pray on the hillside while the disciples are struggling on the water. You may hear something like: "I see them, hear their cry, and hurt for them." [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus walking on the surface of the water, the disciples thinking that Jesus is a ghost, and Jesus telling the disciples to not be afraid. Also act out Peter saying to Jesus, "Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water," and then hearing Jesus say, "Come."

Stop the action.

Act out Peter stepping out of the boat to walk to Jesus on the surface of the water, then sinking as he sees the wind and waves, and finally being helped by Jesus.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm happy that Peter trusted me to walk on the water," or "I want him to learn to trust me, even when the storm around them is strong." [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the disciples seeing Jesus and Peter getting back into the boat and the wind and the waves becoming calm.

Stop the action.

Act out the disciples arriving to the other side of the lake and the sick people being healed when touching Jesus.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Soon after the event of feeding the large group of people, Jesus tells the **disciples**, the 12 men that Jesus chose to follow him, to get into a **boat** and go to the other side of a lake, the **Sea of Galilee**. Use the same word for disciples, boat, and Sea of Galilee that you have used in previous passages. For more information on disciple, boat, and Sea of Galilee refer to the Master Glossary.

Show a picture of the Sea of Galilee and the surrounding area, if your team needs to see it.

When it became dark, Jesus was still **praying**, talking with God, and the disciples were far away from land struggling to get across the lake. Use the same word for praying that you have used in previous passages. For more information on praying, refer to the Master Glossary.

Then, during the **fourth watch** of the night, which was between 3:00 to 6:00 a.m., Jesus went to the disciples walking on the surface of the water! The fourth watch in the night: According to the Roman custom of keeping time, they divided the time between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. into four equal periods of three hours each. Each one of these time periods was called a watch.

The disciples saw Jesus coming to them in the middle of the storm. They were very frightened and cried out, "It is a **ghost!**" Jesus immediately spoke to the disciples to comfort them saying, "Don't be afraid; it's me." Ghost here refers to what they believe to be a "spirit."

Peter then said to Jesus who was still on the surface of the water, "**Lord**, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." Jesus then told Peter to come to him! In this case, Lord is probably a polite term for "master" or "sir." Translate this in the same way that you have before. For more information regarding the term Lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

Peter got out of the boat and began walking to Jesus on the surface of the water. But Peter soon became aware of the strong wind and the waves around him, and he began to sink into the water. Peter quickly shouted to Jesus, "Rescue me from drowning, Lord!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand to help Peter and Jesus said to him, "Why didn't you trust me to help you walk on the water!" **Faith**, or trust, is important to the story because we see Peter's lack of trust in Jesus. For a better understanding of this term, see the term faith in the Master Glossary.

Jesus and Peter then got into the boat and the wind stopped. The disciples who were in the boat were amazed at what happened and **worshiped** Jesus, stating that he was the **Son of God**. To understand the title of Jesus being called the Son of God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Worshiped means more than just honoring Jesus. The disciples recognized that Jesus was the Son of God. We worship when we show awe and wonder about God. Translate this word in the same way you have in previous passages. For a better understanding of the word worship, see the Master Glossary.

When Jesus arrived on the other side of the lake the people brought those who were sick to Jesus, begging Jesus to allow them to touch the **fringe**, or edge, of his clothes. And Jesus healed all the sick people who touched him, making them well.

Fringe-edge-refers specifically to the part of the **robe** that reached down to the feet. For a person to touch the edge of Jesus' robe was to believe that Jesus was able to heal them. To understand more about robes that people wore, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 14:22–36

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3105013 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5211454 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 15:1–20

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 15:1–20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus and his disciples had crossed the lake of Galilee and had come to the area called Gennesaret. Jesus healed many sick people there. This new story happened sometime after this; Matthew does not say how much time passed in between.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were groups of religious leaders. We have heard in earlier stories also that they asked Jesus questions about the things he said and did. In this story, they have come all the way from Jerusalem, probably to check Jesus out some more.

Show the people a map and point out Jerusalem and Gennesaret.

These groups of religious leaders were very careful to obey everything that God had commanded. For hundreds of years, people belonging to this group had been discussing the laws of God that God had given to the Israelites through Moses. Because they were afraid that they might somehow disobey God, they had added more and more rules themselves. These rules became part of their tradition, and were just as important for them as the rules that God had given himself. There were by now so many rules, that it was very, very difficult for people to follow them all!

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: In your community, who makes the rules that people have to follow? Can you give some examples of rules that people have been following for generations? Can you tell a story of someone breaking one of these rules?

One of the many rules that they had made had to do with a special kind of washing that people needed to do before eating. The religious leaders noticed that Jesus' disciples were not washing their hands in this special way before they were eating. This probably means that Jesus himself was not doing this either. Maybe the religious leaders did not want to complain directly about Jesus, and therefore they are complaining to him about his disciples.

The religious leaders ask Jesus why his disciples are not washing their hands this way. They are not expecting Jesus to give an explanation. This is their way of telling Jesus that they are upset about this.

Jesus asks them a question back. He asks them why they themselves are disobeying God. He is not expecting them to answer; this is his way of telling them that they are disobeying God. He warns them that their tradition—which means all the rules that they and their ancestors have made themselves—has become so important for them, that this is actually making them disobey God. To prove this, Jesus then gives an example of the things that the religious leaders are doing. God had given the people a law that they should honor their father and mother. An important way for people to honor their father and mother is to take care of them when they have become old. But the religious leaders said that if someone did not want to help his parents, he could say that he wanted to give his money or possessions to God. Because his money then belonged to God, he did not need to spend any of it to help his parents. This was the rule that the religious leaders had made, and of course it was not a good rule!

Jesus shows them how bad it is to make the rules and traditions of people more important than the law of God. He calls the religious leaders hypocrites. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be good but who is not.

Jesus says that the religious leaders are just like the people that the prophet Isaiah talked about a long time ago. Isaiah had said that the people of Israel were only pretending to honor God. They were making human rules more important than the laws of God. This made their worship worthless. You cannot worship God but disobey him at the same time!

Jesus tells the religious leaders that this is exactly what they themselves are doing as well!

After Jesus said this to the religious leaders, he talks to the crowd. These people must have been listening to the conversation between Jesus and the religious leaders. The religious leaders had complained that the disciples had been eating without washing their hands in a particular way. According to the religious leaders, this would have made the disciples unclean. The words clean and unclean in the Bible have nothing to do with our bodies being clean or dirty. A person who is clean in the Bible is a person who is fit for service to God, who is acceptable for God. A person who is unclean is unfit for service to God.

Jesus now tells the people who are listening that the religious leaders were wrong. The disciples did not become unacceptable before God just because they put food in their mouth without first washing their hands in a certain way. Jesus tells the people that *nothing* that you put in your mouth can make you unacceptable before God. But things that come *out* of your mouth, these can make you unacceptable before God!

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Does your community have any rules about food? Can you tell a story about people who should not eat certain things for religious reasons?

The disciples do not understand what Jesus is saying, and they will ask him later what he means. But first, the disciples tell Jesus that the religious leaders were offended. The religious leaders must have been angry that Jesus had called them hypocrites and had told them that they were disobeying God's laws. The disciples may have been nervous and afraid because Jesus offended the religious leaders. The religious leaders had quite some power, and they could make life difficult for Jesus. Jesus tells the disciples that they should not be afraid. They don't have to worry about the religious leaders. He compares the religious leaders with a plant that doesn't belong in a garden. Jesus compares God with a gardener who pulls out plants that he did not plant himself. Just like a gardener will pull out the weeds, like that God will remove the religious leaders. Jesus makes clear by this that the religious leaders are not sent by God. Their power will not last.

Jesus also compares the religious leaders with blind people. One blind person cannot lead another blind person; they will both get lost and may fall off the road or in a hole. The religious leaders think that they are the leaders of the people, but they themselves are blind. They are not really physically blind, but they are spiritually blind. Therefore they cannot be good leaders of the people.

After this, the disciple Peter asks Jesus to explain what Jesus had said to the crowd about what makes a person clean or unclean. It is a bit understandable that Peter is puzzled, because God himself had given some laws to the Israelites about certain foods that they were not supposed to eat.

Still, Jesus scolds the disciples a little for not understanding. They have been with Jesus for some time now, they should understand! But Jesus still explains it to them. Food does not make people unacceptable before God; sin does! Jesus says that things that come out of our mouth make us unclean: This means, the things we say. Jesus does not mean that only *speaking* bad things makes us unclean, and that it's okay to think something bad but not say it. Speaking is only an example. What Jesus means to say is that it is pointless to worry about things that have only to do with the outside body. We should be worried about how we think, because thinking wrong things leads to sin.

Jesus gives examples of sin. He does not mean that only these things are sin, and other things are not. The examples that Jesus gives here can all be found in the law that God had given the Israelites through Moses.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

In the first scene: Jesus and the religious leaders are talking together. This scene has two parts:

Part 1: Jesus and the religious leaders are talking together. The religious leaders are complaining about the disciples not washing their hands in the proper way.

Part 2: Jesus responds by saying that the religious leaders are so eager to follow rules that are made by man, that as a result they are disobeying the rules that are made by God.

Second scene: Jesus is talking to the crowd. He tells them that what is going into a person's mouth does not make a person unclean, but what comes out of a person's mouth.

The third scene has two parts.

Part 1: Jesus and the disciples are talking. The disciples tell Jesus that the religious leaders are offended because of what Jesus has said, and Jesus compares the religious leaders with a weed that will be pulled out, and with blind guides.

Part 2: Peter asks Jesus for an explanation of what Jesus has told the crowd about being clean and unclean. Jesus scolds Peter for not understanding, and then explains that what a person eats will just leave the body again. It will not make a person unclean. But the sin in a person's heart will make a person unclean.

The characters in this story include:

1. Jesus
2. His disciples
3. Pharisees and teachers of the law (religious leaders)
4. A man, and his parents
5. The prophet Isaiah
6. The crowd
7. Peter
8. God

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the story, Jesus is still in the area called Gennesaret.

Jesus was healing many people, and many people had come to Jesus. There were probably crowds of people around Jesus the whole time. The religious leaders came all the way from Jerusalem—quite a long walk. This walk would have taken several days. The religious leaders have probably heard that Jesus was getting so much attention, and they wanted to check him out.

To remember Jesus' answer to the religious leaders, it might be helpful to visualize the example that he gives. Use three people: a man and his parents. The man can be holding something that reflects his wealth: a wallet, or a box, a bag that is full, or something that means wealth in your community.

You can first act out the situation that God intended: the man is behaving respectfully to his parents, and sharing his wealth with them; they're all happy.

Then you can act out the situation that the religious leaders had made possible: the man holds tight to his money, lifts it up to God as if he is giving the money away, and then turns away from his parents (while still holding his money). His parents are left hungry and helpless.

You may have one person speaking what Isaiah had said. Isaiah talks about people honoring God only with their lips. Can you find an object that has to do with lips, or a mouth, to help you remember this part?

When Jesus is done responding to the religious leaders, he calls the crowd to him. The people were already with Jesus, but they might have moved a bit away when the religious leaders began complaining to Jesus. When Jesus is speaking to the crowd, the religious leaders may still be there, but Jesus is not looking at them.

After Jesus had spoken to the crowd, the disciples come to Jesus. The disciples were with Jesus the whole time; but it seems that now some time has passed, the crowd and the religious leaders have moved away, and the disciples are now alone with Jesus.

If there is a garden nearby, you may want to go outside and look at it. Are there any plants in the garden that are not supposed to be there, that were not planted by the owner of the garden? Maybe you can practice Jesus' speech while he is standing in the garden, and he can take out a plant that doesn't belong! Keep the plant with you, because you can use it later to remember the order of the story.

You can play a game and blindfold two people, and see whether they are able to safely walk a certain distance together! Keep the blindfold; you can use it later to help you remember the order of the story.

Talk about what happens with food after you have eaten it. What are the appropriate words that people use in your language? Can you practice this part of Jesus' speech while standing next to the bathroom or latrine? When you go back inside again, take an object with you that belongs to the latrine, to help you remember the order of the story.

Jesus gives a list of examples of sin that come out of people's hearts.

Can you think of an object, or make a picture, for each of these examples, to help you remember them? Maybe you can make a little drama where you pretend that one person is vomiting out these pictures or objects. This will help you to visualize that these things come from the heart. Then pin the pictures on the person's dress, or make the person carry a bag with all the objects. Then act out God rejecting the person!

There are different conversations going on in the story, and it seems as if the topic is changing. To keep track of the flow of the story, you can lay out a line with objects, each object referring to part of the story:

Part 1 of scene 1 has to do with handwashing: use a bar of soap or a jug of water to remember this.

Part 2 of scene 1: Jesus responds to the religious leaders. Use a wallet and three objects that can be the man and his parents to remember this part. Use an object to remind you of lips, or a mouth, or an object that you use for worship to remind you of Isaiah's words.

Scene 2: Jesus explains to the crowd what makes a person clean or unclean. Again, use the object you used that had to do with handwashing.

Part 1 of scene 3: Use a plant or leaf from the garden to remember Jesus' words about the religious leaders. You can also include a blindfold or a pair of glasses.

Part 2 of scene 3: Jesus further explains what makes a person clean or unclean. Use the object for handwashing again, plus the objects or pictures that help you to remember the list of sins.

This will help you to see that what binds the conversations together is the discussion about being clean or unclean. Of course you can choose other objects as well, as long as they help you!

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

1. Jesus
2. His disciples
3. Pharisees and teachers of the law (religious leaders)
4. A man, and his parents
5. The prophet Isaiah
6. The crowd
7. Peter
8. God

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

It will be helpful to first act out the last part of the previous story, where many people are coming to Jesus and getting healed.

Act out the religious leaders traveling from Jerusalem to Gennesaret.

Stop the action.

- I'm worried about this person Jesus, whether he keeps God's laws.
- I want to find out what he is doing. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the religious leaders observing what is going on around Jesus. How do you think they were behaving? Do you think they were hanging behind in the crowd, observing quietly, or pushing their way to the front?

Act out the disciples eating without washing their hands in a special way.

Stop the action.

- If Jesus' disciples are breaking the rules this way, then Jesus may also be breaking the rules!
- I feel that Jesus is not respecting God enough. This hurts me, because I want to respect God. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the religious leaders complaining to Jesus about the disciples. Act out Jesus responding to them.

Stop the action.

- Frustrated that the religious leaders are not understanding God's laws,
- Angry that the religious leaders made such a bad rule,
- I don't like it that the religious leaders are criticizing my disciples, they are my friends! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus responding to the religious leaders.

Stop the action.

- Angry,
- Offended,
- Hurt,
- How dare Jesus say that we are breaking God's commandments, we are so careful!

Ask the actors playing the crowd: "What do you think of Jesus talking to the religious leaders like this?" You may hear things like:

- We are a bit shocked,
- Jesus is very brave,
- Jesus should not speak like that to the religious leaders,
- I'm so glad that Jesus is speaking the truth to the religious leaders! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus now addressing the crowds. Think about what the religious leaders are doing at this time: do you think they left, or do you think they are still standing there? If they are still there, how do you think they are looking? What expression is on their face?

Stop the action.

- I'm confused, I always thought that certain foods would make us unclean,
- I don't understand this. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the disciples telling Jesus about the religious leaders being offended.

Stop the action.

- I'm afraid of the religious leaders,
- I wonder if Jesus knows what he's doing,
- What will be the result of this? [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' response.

Stop the action.

- I'm very surprised that the religious leaders will be removed, like a weed,
- I'm encouraged that Jesus tells me that we don't have to be afraid of the religious leaders. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Peter asking Jesus for an explanation about what he had said earlier to the crowds.

Stop the action.

- Disappointed that they didn't understand me,
- Annoyed. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' response.

Stop the action.

- Now I understand, it makes complete sense!
- I understand now that God isn't interested in my outside, but in my inside.
- I now understand that sin makes me unclean before God, not food or lack of washing.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pharisees and scribes, or experts in the law, were two groups of religious leaders. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. These words are in the Master Glossary as well.

For **disciples**, use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word **disciples** is in the Master Glossary.

The religious leaders complain that the disciples disobey the **tradition of the elders**. The "elders" in this context means their ancestors. "Tradition of the elders" means the rules and customs that the ancestors had established.

The religious leaders complain that the disciples are not **washing their hands** before they eat. This had nothing to do with hygiene, but only with rituals. You may want to say something like "the disciples are not washing their hands in the right way," or "they're not washing their hands according to the rules that our ancestors have given."

Jesus tells the religious leaders that they are breaking the **commandments of God**. The commandments are the law of God. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word **commandment** or **law** is in the Master Glossary.

Honoring your father and mother means treating them with respect. **Insulting** them is the opposite. Insulting someone means speaking bad things against someone, or behaving in a way that makes a person feel very ashamed.

Jesus says that because of the rules the religious leaders made themselves, they have **nullified**, or canceled, God's word. This means that they disobeyed and ignored God's word.

Jesus says that Isaiah **prophesied** about the religious leaders. This means that what Isaiah had said about the people in Isaiah's time, a long time ago, was also true now for the religious leaders. Jesus makes it sound as if Isaiah had said these words especially about the religious leaders. To prophesy is in the Master Glossary. But in this story, you can also say that Isaiah "spoke," instead of using the word prophesy.

Isaiah had said that people honored God with their **lips**. This means that people spoke as if they were honoring God. You can also say that they honored God with their mouth, or with their words.

But Isaiah said their **heart** was far from God. In the Bible, the heart is the place where a person's feelings and decisions happen. If the heart is far from God, it means that people do not behave out of love for God. Use the same word for heart that you have used in previous passages. The word heart is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells the crowd that what people put in their mouth does not **defile** them, or make them **unclean**. Someone who is unclean is not acceptable before God. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The words clean and unclean are in the Master Glossary.

When one blind person leads another blind person, they may both fall into the **ditch**, or in a **pit**. You can use a word for any hole that a person can fall into.

Evil thoughts means thinking bad things in general. Thinking something bad will often lead to doing bad things.

Murder means to kill someone, for instance out of hate or jealousy. Killing someone in battle, or if the government executes someone after a proper court case, is not murder.

Adultery is when a person is married to one person, but then has a sexual relationship with someone else.

Sexual immorality means all kind of sins that have to do with sexual relationships, for instance, prostitution or rape, watching pornography, or having a sexual relationship with someone you are not married to.

Theft means taking something that doesn't belong to you.

Giving a false witness means lying about something in a court case.

Slander means speaking bad things about another person.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 15:1-20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4441614 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7623554 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 15:21-28

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 15:21-28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Up to now, everything that Jesus has done after he began preaching happened in the part of the country called Galilee. Now, for the first time, Jesus is leaving his own country. Together with his disciples he goes to the country called Phoenicia, which is north of Israel. Sidon and Tyre are two cities in this country. The people who live in this area are not Jews.

Show the people a map of Israel and Phoenicia. Point out where Gennesaret is, where Jesus was in the previous story, and where Tyre and Sidon are.

The Jews believed that if they had anything to do with non-Jews, they would become unclean. But in the previous story, Jesus was teaching the people that food, or anything on the outside of a person, does not make a person unclean, unacceptable, before God. Only sin makes a person unclean. And so, meeting non-Jews does not make a person unclean either! Jesus is probably going to this area especially to make this point clear.

Can you tell a story about people from one group not wanting to interact with people from another group?

The woman who comes to Jesus is a Canaanite. In the Old Testament, Canaanites are the enemies of the Israelites. They lived first in the country that God had promised to give to Abraham's descendants. The Canaanites were worshipping many different gods and did many things that were sinful according to God's laws. God had told the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites from this country.

The woman's daughter is not well. A demon is troubling her. Some demons made people deaf, or unable to speak, or caused people to have fits that made them fall and hurt themselves. The woman does not say what the demon is doing to her daughter, but she makes clear that her daughter is suffering very much.

The woman comes to Jesus, and even though she is not a Jew, she calls Jesus "Lord" and "son of David." Son of David means a descendant of David. David was the most beloved king of the Jews, who lived a long time ago. God had told the Jews that the Messiah, the special king and Savior who would come, would be a descendant from David. It is very surprising that this woman, who is not a Jew, knows about the Messiah. By calling Jesus "lord," and "son of David," she makes clear that she believes that Jesus is the Messiah. This is even more surprising! The religious leaders of the Jews did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but this foreign woman does.

The woman keeps calling, Jesus ignores her, and after some time the disciples are getting tired of the woman calling after them. They want Jesus to send her away. We do not know if they mean that Jesus would just send her away, or that Jesus would do what she wants so that she would go away.

Jesus responds by saying that he has been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This means Jesus is only sent to the people of Israel. Jesus compares them with lost sheep because the people of Israel need a Savior, just like sheep who have lost their way and need help.

What Jesus is saying here must sound very familiar to the disciples, because some time ago when Jesus gave the disciples instructions to go and tell the people about the kingdom of heaven, he told them not to go to the non-Jews, but only to the lost sheep of Israel! (You can listen to this again in Matthew 10:5-8).

But the woman does not give up. She comes to the front and kneels before Jesus. She is begging him again to help her. Jesus seems to give a very rude answer. He says that it is wrong to give the food that is supposed to be for the children to the dogs. He is using picture language here. The food of the children means the good things that God wants to give to the Jews. The dogs then mean anyone who is not a Jew. Dogs were considered unclean animals-just as people who were not Jews were considered unclean. Jesus is telling the woman that she does not deserve Jesus to do something good for her, because she is not a Jew.

But the woman is very brave! She does not become angry that Jesus insults her, and she does not give up. She gives a very smart reply: "But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall off the table!" She means that it is true that she does not deserve Jesus to do anything good for her, but that she also knows that Jesus has enough power to help all the Jews, and after that the non-Jews as well!

This convinces Jesus: Jesus tells her she has great faith, and tells her that he will do what she wants. Immediately, back home, her daughter is healed, even though the woman would not know this quite yet!

Jesus' response to the woman in this story seems a bit strange. Jesus is first responding to the Canaanite woman like any Jew would do-not very friendly! But it seems that Jesus wanted to test her, to see how much she

believed in him. Jesus might also have meant this as a lesson for the disciples. Jesus was beginning to teach the disciples that he had not come for the people of Israel only. This little story is marking a big change!

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus leaves the area of Gennesaret and goes to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Second scene: A conversation between Jesus and the Canaanite woman.

The second scene has four parts.

Part 1: The woman is crying out to Jesus from a distance; Jesus ignores her.

Part 2: The disciples complain about the woman; Jesus says he was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

Part 3: The woman bows down before Jesus; Jesus says it's not right to give the children's food to the dogs.

Part 4: The woman replies: "Even the dogs eat the crumbs!" Jesus then says she has great faith and that what she wants will happen.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The Canaanite woman
- Her daughter
- The Jews, the people of Israel
- People who are not Jews, "dogs"

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The story begins with Matthew saying that Jesus went away from there. "From there" means from the area of Gennesaret. Jesus and his disciples would have walked for several days or maybe even weeks before they reached the area around the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Matthew introduces the Canaanite woman by saying "See, a Canaanite woman came out!" This makes clear that this was unexpected or amazing.

Matthew says that the Canaanite woman came out to him. This means that she left her house, maybe even her village area, to come to where Jesus was. It seems that the people in this country had heard stories about Jesus and the things he had done in Galilee. Somehow, she had found out where Jesus was and went to him.

You could act out the little story about the children and the dogs.

Jesus says it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. He is using an example of a family. The father of a family would not take the food away from his children and throw it somewhere where dogs would eat it.

The woman continues with this little story that Jesus is telling and says that even dogs eat the crumbs, or the scraps, that fall off the table of their master. Though in Jesus' little story the dogs may well have been just stray dogs, roaming around wild and being kicked at by people, the woman makes the dogs sound like beloved pets, living inside the house with the family and sitting under the table when the family is eating.

Calling someone a dog was an insult. The woman turns the dog in the story into a house dog, cleverly softening the insult and calling up sympathy for the dog-meaning, for herself. Do you see how smart she is?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The Canaanite woman
- Her daughter
- The Jews, the people of Israel
- People who are not Jews, called dogs

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In this story we can see Jesus and the Canaanite woman coming closer and closer to each other.

- First, she is calling out to Jesus, probably from some distance behind Jesus.
- Then, the disciples and Jesus are talking about her; she is close enough to hear, but Jesus is not talking directly to her.
- Then, the woman comes very close to Jesus and bows down before him. By doing this, she is blocking his way, so that he is forced to stop! Jesus now talks to her directly, but his words are harsh.
- The woman speaks to Jesus again. Jesus responds by praising the woman for her faith, and tells her her daughter will be healed.

You can see the woman and Jesus coming physically closer, but their relationship is also becoming better. Think about how you can show this. Maybe Jesus can have his face turned away from the woman, and only turn his face to her at the very end? Or do you think that maybe Jesus was trying to hide a smile on his face, because he enjoyed the conversation but was trying to sound strict? How does Jesus respond after the woman's smart reply? Do you think that Jesus smiled, looked very happy, or maybe burst out laughing?

You need to think about what tone of voice Jesus has in the story. Experiment telling the story with Jesus having an angry voice, a friendly voice, or a neutral voice. How does it change the story for you if you do that?

Think about where the disciples stand in the story. How do their facial expressions change as they are listening to the conversation between Jesus and the woman?

Act out Jesus and the disciples leaving the area of Gennesaret and traveling the long way to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

You may want to act out the Canaanite woman and her daughter being in their own home. What might the daughter's situation have been like?

Act out the woman setting out to meet Jesus.

Stop the action.

- I am so desperate to get help for my daughter;
- I hope that this Jesus can help;
- I believe that this Jesus is the special Savior that the Jewish people are waiting for. [!end]
Restart the action.

Act out the woman following Jesus and the disciples and calling out to him.

Stop the action.

- I wonder what she will do if I ignore her;
- I wonder what my disciples will do;
- I am surprised that she knows I am the Messiah!

Ask the actors playing the disciples: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- This woman is very annoying;
- I wonder why Jesus is not doing anything;
- I wished that Jesus would heal her daughter;
- I wished that Jesus would send her away;
- I am very uncomfortable that this woman, who is not even a Jew, is so close to us. [!end]
Restart the action.

Act out the disciples walking up to Jesus and complaining about the woman. Act out Jesus responding to the disciples.

Stop the action.

- He is trying to send me away, but I am not going!
- I do not care how rude Jesus is, I will make him do what I want!
- I am so desperate, I will endure anything for the sake of my daughter.

Ask the actor playing the disciples: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- Jesus is right, the non-Jewish people are not important, they are unclean, Jesus should have nothing to do with them.

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- I wonder if my disciples will protest, and will tell me that I still should help this woman.
- I wonder what the woman will do? [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the woman falling at Jesus' feet. She kneels down before him and touches her head to the ground. She is humiliating herself before him and begging him to have mercy.

Act out the rest of the dialogue.

Stop the action.

- I am so happy that she believes in me so much.
- I am thrilled that I had the chance to heal her daughter.
- I am so encouraged that someone who is not a Jew believes in me.
- I am glad that I can teach my disciples that I have come for all the people, not just for the Jews.

Ask the actor playing the woman: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I am so excited!
- I believe that what he says is true.
- I want to go home as quickly as I can and see my daughter!

Ask the actors playing the disciples: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- I feel ashamed that I was thinking that Jesus did not want to help her.
- I am shocked that Jesus is also helping non-Jews.
- I am confused.

You may want to act out the mother coming home and finding her daughter well!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The Canaanite woman calls Jesus "Lord, **son of David**." David was the most beloved king of the Jews, who lived a long time ago. You have heard his name many times by now. The woman does not think that Jesus is the direct son of king David: "Son of David" here means "descendant of David." Use the same words that you have used in previous stories. The phrase Son of David is in the Master Glossary.

Lord can mean "master" or something like "respected sir." In the Bible, it is often used to address God. In this story, the woman may be using the word just as a respectful term. The word lord is in the Master Glossary.

The woman says to Jesus that her daughter is **horribly demon-possessed**. This means her daughter is controlled by a demon. Not just a little bit, but very much! The demon is causing great suffering to the daughter.

The word demon is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous stories.

For **daughter**, use a word that means a younger girl, one who is not yet married.

The woman is **crying out** to Jesus. This means she is calling loudly.

Jesus says it is not right to take the children's **bread** and throw it to the dogs. If people do not commonly eat bread in your area, you can use "food" instead of the word bread.

In the end, Jesus says to the woman, "**Oh woman!**"

"Woman" was a normal and polite way to address a woman. "Oh" means that Jesus is speaking with emotion.

Jesus tells the woman that she has **great faith**. This means that Jesus sees that she believes in him very much. The word faith is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says "**May what you want happen to you.**" This does not mean that Jesus hopes that it will happen; he means it *will* happen. Another way to say this is by saying, "I will do what you want."

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 15:21–28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3259771 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5622951 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 15:29–39

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 15:29–39 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus was in the area of Tyre and Sidon, which was in a different country. In this passage, he is coming back to Galilee.

If you want, you can look at the map again and point out these places.

Several weeks, or maybe months, may have passed since he left Galilee. But the people have not forgotten him, and soon there was a big crowd of people around him again! People bring him people with many sicknesses, and Jesus heals all of them.

The people are utterly amazed because of these healings, and they are praising the God of Israel. The people are praising God because they recognize that what Jesus is doing comes from God. It is interesting that Matthew says they are praising "the God of Israel," and not just "God." This probably means that these people are not Jews. Matthew does not say where in Galilee this story is taking place but it most likely is happening somewhere on the east side of the lake of Galilee. Many people who were not Jews lived there.

Can you tell a story about someone healing from sickness? What happened?

From what Jesus is saying to his disciples, we find out that the people stay with Jesus for three days. From the answer that the disciples give, we find out that this is an isolated place. There are no villages nearby and no shops. Any food that the people might have brought with them is finished by now.

Jesus tells the disciples that he has compassion with the people. He feels pity for them because they have run out of food. If he sends them home now, they may have to walk a long way before they can get any food. They may feel very weak and may fall down while walking.

Jesus does not ask his disciples what to do about the situation, but it is clear that he wants to hear what they think. The disciples would remember that there was a similar situation not too long ago, where Jesus gave five thousand people food to eat! But the disciples either do not remember, or do not think that Jesus could do something like this again. Instead, they ask Jesus where they could find enough bread to feed so many people in this remote place. They are not really asking this; they mean to say that where they are, it is impossible to find enough food for so many people.

Jesus asks them how many loaves of bread they have, and the disciples tell Jesus that they have seven loaves and a few small fish. Jesus tells the people to sit on the ground. The word that is used for "to sit" is a word that means something like "to sit down relaxed in order to eat." This means that the people can expect to get a good meal!

Jesus takes the loaves and the fish in his hands and thanks God for this food. Then Jesus breaks the loaves and the fish in smaller pieces and gives the pieces to his disciples. Thanking God for the food and breaking the bread in pieces was what every Jewish father did at the beginning of each meal.

Show your team a picture of bread, and a bread that is broken. If needed, show your team a picture of a fish.

The disciples take the pieces and begin handing them out to the people. Jesus keeps tearing and tearing the loaves and the fish, and the disciples keep taking the pieces from him and giving them to the people, and they do not run out of pieces! Everybody gets enough to eat, and there even is plenty left over. Seven big baskets of food remain uneaten!

Matthew tells us there were four thousand men. But there were also women and children. So there might have been something like ten thousand people together.

Can you imagine what it looks like to have so many people in one place? How many people live in your village, or city? How many people come to your church on a Sunday? What is the biggest crowd that you have been in?

If it is helpful, show the people a picture of a large crowd of people.

After the meal, Jesus tells the people to go home. Then Jesus himself goes into a boat and goes to another place. The boat may have belonged to one of his disciples. Jesus' disciples probably go with him in the boat as well, even though Matthew does not particularly say this.

Jesus then goes to Magadan. This was somewhere else in Galilee but we do not know exactly where.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has five scenes.

First scene: Jesus leaves the area of Tyre and Sidon and comes back to Galilee.

Second scene: Jesus is teaching and healing many people.

Third scene: Jesus talks with his disciples.

Fourth scene: Jesus gives the people food to eat.

Fifth scene: Everybody leaves.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The crowds
- People with all kinds of sicknesses

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The passage begins with "Jesus left there." This means Jesus left the area of Tyre and Sidon. Jesus then walks for some time beside the lake of Galilee. Then he walks up a mountain that was nearby.

The crowds are coming to Jesus when he is on the mountain. Maybe Jesus had been passing through villages on the way to this mountain, and people began to follow him. Soon, people in the neighborhood heard where Jesus was. Very many people came to him. The people lay sick people at Jesus' feet. This means they bring the sick people near Jesus. It does not mean that they made all these people lay down, even sick people who were able to stand. It must have taken a lot of effort to bring the sick people to Jesus. Imagine having to carry someone who cannot walk over a long distance, or to guide someone who is blind! There would also be families, children, and people carrying babies.

Jesus, his disciples, and the crowds stay on this mountain for three days. Even though Matthew does not say it particularly, Jesus must not just be healing people, but also teaching them. How do you think they slept at night? What sounds do you think would be there in the daytime, and at night? Did people maybe light fires at night, to have some light? Maybe to cook a little bit of food that they still had? What conversations did they have together while sitting around the fire? Why do you think that people are not going back home, even though they might be running out of food?

After three days Jesus calls his disciples to him. At that particular moment the disciples may have been somewhere among the crowd, maybe helping to carry sick people, or otherwise helping to manage the crowd. But now Jesus calls them close to him. Maybe he sent one of them to call the others.

When Jesus begins breaking the bread, how do you picture the disciples giving the food to the crowd? The disciples were probably carrying the bread and the fish in baskets. It would have taken the disciples a long time to walk back and forth and make sure everybody had enough to eat. Maybe other people began to help as well?

What do you picture that people began to say to each other when they noticed that the disciples were handing out food?

It can be easy to get this story confused with the story where Jesus feeds five thousand people. In the story where Jesus feeds five thousand people, there are twelve baskets left over; in this story, there are seven. In the story where Jesus feeds five thousand people, Jesus gets five loaves of bread and two fish; in this story, he gets seven loaves of bread, and some small fish - Matthew does not say how many.

At the end of the story, Jesus and his disciples are getting back into the boat and go to some other place.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has five scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples
- The crowds
- People with all kinds of sicknesses

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus returning from the area around Tyre and Sidon. Act out the people in Galilee finding out he is back, and following him to the mountain.

Act out Jesus sitting down and beginning to teach on the mountain.

Act out people bringing sick people to him.

Stop the action.

- I am so hopeful, now is my chance to get healing!
- I am afraid, what if Jesus will not heal me? [|end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus healing people. How do you think that Jesus did this? Do you think that Jesus was touching the people, or did he just tell them they were healed? How do you think that Jesus looked? What was his expression? Did he take the time to talk with people, asking their names, getting to know them, or was he too busy? When he was healing some people, were other people pushing to get his attention for their own sick people?

Stop the action.

- I am so excited;
- I am so surprised;
- Jesus must really be sent by God;
- The God of the people of Israel really is a powerful God!

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- I am so glad that I can heal these people!
- It makes me so happy to give people joy!
- I am getting a bit tired as well!

All this lasted for three days. Ask the actors playing the disciples: "What are you thinking as time goes by?" You may hear things like:

- I hope we have enough food!
- I think that Jesus should take a rest.
- How much longer are we going to stay here?
- This is such an exciting time, I do not want it to stop! [|end] Restart the action.

Act out the conversation between Jesus and the disciples. Jesus tells the disciples he has compassion for the people and the disciples wonder where they could get enough food.

Stop the action.

- I am curious what they will say; will they ask me to give the people food, as I have done before?

Ask the actors playing the disciples: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- I hope that Jesus does not mean that we have to go out and get food for all these people!
- Jesus should have sent the people home earlier.
- I remember what Jesus did some time ago, but I am not sure if he would do it again. [|end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus asking how many loaves they have and the disciples responding. Act out Jesus telling the people in the crowd to sit down. It would take some time for everybody to hear this and to sit! Some of the people might already have been sitting down, spread out over the side of the mountain. But now they are being told to sit down in order to eat.

Stop the action.

- What is going to happen now?
- It seems like we are going to eat, but where will the food come from?
- I have not eaten in a day, I am very hungry! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus taking the loaves and the fish. Act out Jesus thanking God for this food. Act out Jesus beginning to tear the food. Maybe he is doing this above a basket, and each time that he fills a basket, the disciples take the basket and start distributing.

Stop the action.

- This is just like the previous time!
- It was stupid of me not to think that Jesus could do this again.
- It feels so good to have so much food to give to people!

Ask the actors playing the crowd: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- I am so happy to get food!
- I wonder where all this food came from?
- Jesus is amazing, he did not only heal me but he also gives me food!
- Will there really be enough food for all of us?

Ask the actor playing Jesus: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- I cannot stop smiling, it is wonderful to see these happy people!
- I hope people will keep trusting me.
- My hands are beginning to get tired! [!end] Restart the action.

Everybody has eaten enough and still there is more food! You can act out the disciples going around with their baskets, but people telling them that they are full. In the end they have seven baskets left!

Ask the actors playing the disciples: "What are you thinking?" You may hear things like:

- God is so generous, he gave us more than we needed!
- We should give this leftover bread to some people so that they can eat it on the way home.
- I am very tired, but also very excited! [!end] Restart the action.

When everybody has eaten enough, Jesus tells them to go home. Do you think that Jesus healed all the sick people in the crowd, or are there still some people going home disappointed? When people who had been healed came home, what do you think happened?

Act out Jesus and the disciples getting into a boat and going to a different place.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This story is taking place on a **mountain**. A mountain is a place in nature that is higher up. Some mountains are very tall and rocky, and nothing will grow there. The sides of such a mountain can be very steep, and it can be difficult to walk to the top. Other mountains are not so tall, and they can be covered with grass. The mountains in Israel are like these mountains. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Show the team a picture of the mountains around the lake of Galilee.

Lame people cannot walk and cannot move their legs; sometimes they can also not use their arms. **Blind** people cannot see. Someone who is **crippled** can walk, but with difficulty. Someone who is **mute** cannot speak. These are only examples of the many kinds of sicknesses that the people had.

The people in the crowd are utterly amazed when they see that people who used to be lame are now walking, and see the people who had all these other sicknesses healed. When the people see this they praise the **God of Israel**. This means they praise the God whom the people of Israel worship.

Bread was common food for the Jews. It is made of grain that was made into flour and baked. A loaf of bread-meaning one whole bread-was round and a bit flat. It was easy to tear. One person could eat three or four of these breads in one meal. Use the same word for bread that you have used in earlier passages.

Jesus **breaks** the loaves and the fish. This means he tears them in smaller pieces.

Show your team again a picture of bread, and a bread that is broken.

If needed, show your team a picture of a fish.

The people eat and are **satisfied**. This means they eat until they are full and do not want anymore.

Seven big baskets with pieces of bread and fish are left over. Some translations say that the disciples are picking up the pieces of left over food, but it is better to say that seven baskets with food were left over. This was still good food and suitable for eating, not food that the people had touched and then spilled or left on the ground.

People made **baskets** by weaving twigs or other natural material together. People used baskets to carry things. The word that is used for baskets in this story makes clear that these baskets are larger than the baskets that were used in the story of Jesus feeding five thousand people. If you have different words for baskets, use a word that means a larger basket than the ones in the other story. Otherwise, you can say "large baskets."

Show your team a picture of the kind of baskets that people in Israel used-the larger and the smaller ones.

Jesus **sends away** the crowd. This means he tells them in a friendly way to go home.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 15:29–39

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3425105 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5912762 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 16:1–12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 16:1–12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In the previous story, Jesus gave a wonderful meal to more than four thousand people. After that, he and his disciples went away in a boat to a place called Magadan. We do not know where exactly this place is, but it is somewhere in Galilee. It seems that when Jesus is in that place, some people belonging to two different groups of religious teachers are coming to him. These are the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Pharisees and Sadducees disagree with each other about many things, but they agree with each other about not liking Jesus. This is the first time that the Sadducees are joining the Pharisees in a discussion with Jesus. The

Pharisees have already had many conflicts with Jesus, and had already begun to think how they might kill Jesus (Matthew 12:14). Therefore, we know that they do not come to Jesus with good intentions! They are coming to test Jesus, and they are hoping that he will fail the test.

The religious leaders ask Jesus for a sign from heaven. This means they want Jesus to ask God to do something very special—maybe make some lights flash from the sky, or make the ground shake, or do something else that is very spectacular and sudden. This would give proof that Jesus was indeed sent by God. They think that Jesus will not be able to do something like this, and then the people will stop following Jesus.

But Jesus refuses to give them a sign. Jesus does not need to prove himself! Jesus scolds the religious leaders. He says that the religious leaders are good at predicting the weather by looking at the sky. They know that when the sunset is coloring the evening sky red, this usually means that there will be good weather the next day. But if the sunrise in the morning is coloring the sky red and dark, this usually means that there will be bad weather that day. But though the religious leaders are good at recognizing what happens with the weather, they are not good at recognizing what God is doing!

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: People in different cultures and countries may make different predictions about the weather based on the color of the sky. In your community, what do the different colours of the sky mean to people? How do people make predictions about the weather?

Jesus calls the religious leaders a wicked and adulterous generation. A "generation" means the people who are living at the same time. Jesus calls the religious leaders adulterous because they are unfaithful to God. Just as a husband and wife who break their marriage are adulterous, just like that the religious leaders have broken their relationship with God.

Jesus tells them he will not give them a special sign. The only sign that he will give is the sign of Jonah. Some time ago we had another story where the religious leaders were asking Jesus for a special sign. At that time, Jesus gave the same answer. You may want to listen again to this story, in Matthew 12:38–45. In today's story, Jesus does not explain what he means by the sign of Jonah, but in the earlier story he does. Jonah was a prophet who lived a long time before Jesus. Jonah one time disobeyed God, and because of this he had quite an adventure! He ended up spending 3 days inside the belly of a big fish, almost dead, but the fish spit out Jonah on dry land after 3 days. Jesus knows that he himself is going to die and will be in the grave for 3 days. But after 3 days he will become alive again—just as Jonah came out of the fish after 3 days.

Of course, Jesus does not mean to say that he has been disobedient to God, as Jonah was!

So, Jesus will not give the religious leaders a sign now, but after his death he will rise up from the dead, and that will be a sign for them! That will give them proof that he really did come from God.

After this, Jesus and his disciples are going back into the boat and are going somewhere else. In the boat, the disciples discover that they forgot to bring bread, and they are busy thinking about that. But Jesus is busy thinking about the religious leaders. Jesus tells his disciples that they have to be very careful for the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Leaven, or yeast, was something that the Jews use for making bread. Bread is made by mixing flour and water to make a dough, and then baking the dough. Every time when someone made bread, they kept a little bit of the unbaked dough apart for next time. After some days, this little bit of dough would become bubbly and sour. When making their next bread, they would take some of this sour mixture and mix it in with the new dough. This would make air bubbles inside the dough and the bread would become bigger and lighter.

Show a picture of sour dough that is bubbly and ready to be added to fresh dough. Show a picture of bread made with sour dough.

In your community, do people have any food that they let spoil, or let become sour on purpose, in order to give it a good taste? What can you tell about that?

So Jesus tells his disciples that they have to be very careful for the leaven of the religious leaders. The disciples have no idea what Jesus is talking about! Maybe they are not really listening, because they are worried about what they will eat today. They think that maybe Jesus is saying this because they forgot to bring bread.

But Jesus scolds them for thinking this. He tells them they have very little faith. He asks them some questions: "Why are you talking about not having bread? Do you not understand? Do you not remember what happened when I fed five thousand people with just 5 loaves, and four thousand people with just 7 loaves? How can you not understand what I am talking about?" Jesus is not expecting them to answer these questions; he means to say that their thinking is wrong. It is silly of them to be worried about what they should eat after they have seen Jesus feeding so many people. When Jesus was feeding all these people there was even lots of leftover food! Therefore, they should be focused on other things instead-like the things that Jesus is teaching them!

Jesus repeats then what he said: "Be very careful for the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." And now the disciples understand! They understand that Jesus was using picture language. Jesus was not talking about real leaven and real bread. Jesus meant to say that the things that the religious leaders are teaching are like a bit of leaven in a bread dough. A little bit of leaven is enough to change a lot of bread. Like that, the teaching of the religious leaders can change the way many people think-but not in a good way! The disciples should not be influenced by the teaching of the religious leaders.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: The religious leaders are asking Jesus for a sign, and Jesus tells them he will only give them the sign of Jonah.

Second scene: Jesus is telling the disciples to be careful of the teaching of the religious leaders.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Some Pharisees and Sadducees
- Jonah
- The disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Matthew begins the passage with saying "now." This means that he is beginning a new story.

The previous story ended with Jesus and the disciples going into a boat. This story is also ending with Jesus and the disciples being in a boat. It seems that Jesus and the disciples come out of the boat in the beginning of the story, then the religious leaders come to them somewhere on the side of the lake, and then Jesus and his disciples go back into the boat.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Jesus. Not all the Pharisees and Sadducees came; but some people who belonged to these groups. We do not know how many they were. The Pharisees may have been from Galilee, or they may have come from Judea; but the Sadducees lived in Jerusalem, in Judea. So they have walked a long way to come and test Jesus.

Maybe you can go outside and look at the sky as you are thinking about Jesus' answer to the religious leaders.

Can you act out the story of Jonah being swallowed by a big fish, and being spat out after 3 days, to help you remember why Jesus talks about the sign of Jonah? Maybe at the same time you can act out Jesus being put in a grave, and becoming alive again after 3 days. This may help you to see the connection! But remember that Jesus is not dead yet; this is going to happen after some time only.

When Jesus has responded to the religious leaders, he leaves them. The religious leaders are still standing somewhere, but Jesus walks away.

Matthew does not say it, but Jesus and the disciples must have gotten into a boat after this. Matthew only mentions that the disciples went to the other side of the lake, but Jesus must have been with them as well. The conversation between Jesus and the disciples might be taking place as they are sitting in the boat.

At the end of the story they might have reached their destination and gotten out of the boat, but Matthew does not tell us. It was not important where they were going, only the conversation they had on the way was important. The next story begins with Jesus and his disciples arriving somewhere, so you may as well end this story with them still being in the boat.

Jesus warns the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees very strongly. He tells them to watch out and to be careful. This more or less means the same thing. By saying this twice Jesus makes clear that they have to be very, very careful indeed.

If people in your community eat bread-like products, or have any food that people leave to become sour on purpose, maybe you can keep a sample with you when learning this story!

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Some Pharisees and Sadducees
- Jonah
- The disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus and the disciples leaving by boat the place where Jesus fed more than four thousand people, and arriving somewhere else.

Act out the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where Jesus was.

Stop the action.

- I do not like to be with the people of the other group of religious leaders, but we need them to stop Jesus;
- We need to ask Jesus to do something really difficult, so that he will fail;
- I do not believe that Jesus is sent by God. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the religious leaders asking Jesus to give them a sign from God. Act out Jesus responding to them that they are good at predicting the weather, but not good at knowing what God is doing. Act out Jesus scolding them and saying they are wicked and unfaithful, and that he will not give them any sign apart from the sign of Jonah.

Stop the action.

- I am so frustrated that the religious leaders do not recognize that I have come from God;
- I wished they would listen to me;
- I wished that they would recognize what God is doing through me. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus leaving the religious leaders standing there.

Stop the action.

- I am offended that Jesus calls us wicked and unfaithful.
- I am confused what Jesus means by "the sign of Jonah."
- This did not quite go according to plan! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus and the disciples going into the boat again. Act out the disciples discovering that they forgot to bring bread. Act out Jesus telling them to be careful for the leaven of the religious leaders.

Stop the action.

- Why is Jesus saying this?
- Jesus seems to be talking about bread. Maybe this is because we forgot to bring any bread. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the disciples discussing about what Jesus said.

Stop the action.

- I am very disappointed that the disciples do not understand what I mean!
- I am disappointed that they are worried about bread even after I have done all these miracles for them.
- I wish that they will trust me more. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus scolding the disciples for believing in him so little. Act out Jesus reminding the disciples of the two miracles he did where he fed so many people. Act out Jesus repeating his warning about the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Stop the action.

- Oh, now I get it! Jesus was not talking about bread but was warning us not to believe the teaching of the religious teachers.
- I am ashamed that I was worried about bread even after Jesus has done these big miracles!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Pharisees and Sadducees were two different groups of religious leaders, or teachers. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. These words are in the Master Glossary as well.

The Pharisees and Sadducees come to **test** Jesus. This means they want to ask Jesus to do something that they think is impossible. Another way to say this is they want to trick Jesus.

The religious leaders ask for a **sign from heaven**. This means a sign from God. The Jews often said "heaven" instead of God. The word heaven is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages when heaven meant God. A sign means a miracle that happens in order to show people something important. The word miracle is in the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Jesus uses an example from nature. He talks about what will happen when the **sky** is red in the morning, or in the evening. The sky here means what we can see outside when we are looking up; it does not mean the place where God lives.

Jesus tells the religious leaders they do not recognize the **signs of the times**. This means they do not recognize what God is doing at this time.

Jesus calls the religious leaders a **wicked and adulterous generation**.

Wicked means bad and sinful. The word wicked is in the Master Glossary. Someone who is adulterous is unfaithful to his or her spouse. The prophets in the Old Testament often called the people of Israel adulterous because they were unfaithful to God.

Jesus calls the religious leaders an adulterous **generation**. A generation means the people who are living at the same time. Jesus means to say that the religious leaders are wicked and unfaithful people.

The word adulterous is in the Master Glossary. Make a decision with your team whether you want to use the literal word "adulterous," or a descriptive word like "unfaithful."

Jesus tells the religious leaders he will not do a special sign for them. They will only get the **sign of Jonah**. This has to do with the special miracle that God did for Jonah by rescuing him from the belly of the fish after 3 days. God is going to do something like that for Jesus, and this will be the sign for the people that Jesus is sent by God.

Jesus warns his disciples to be careful of the **leaven, or yeast**, of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Leaven, or yeast, was something that the Jews use for making bread. Every time when someone made bread, they kept a little bit of the unbaked dough apart for next time. After some days, this little bit of dough would become bubbly and sour. When making their next bread, they would take some of this sour mixture and mix it in with the new dough. This would make air bubbles inside the dough and the bread would become bigger and lighter.

If needed, show your team again the different pictures of the dough and the bread.

*Discuss how you are going to say this in your language. Some possibilities are: "the soured dough that the Pharisees and Sadducees use to bake bread," or "the stuff that the Pharisees and the Sadducees use to make bread rise, or become bigger." Use the same word for **bread** as you have used in previous stories.*

Jesus reminds the disciples about the miracles he did when feeding five thousand and four thousand people. He reminds them how many **baskets** they took up afterwards. He means the baskets filled with the extra, leftover food. Use the same word for baskets that you have used in these stories. A medium-size basket for the story of the feeding of five thousand people, and a larger size basket for the story of the feeding of the four thousand people.

The **teaching** of the Pharisees and the Sadducees means the things that the Pharisees and Sadducees are telling the people about God, and what they are telling the people to do.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 16:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3477136 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5959179 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 16:13-20

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 16:13-20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This story is taking place in "the region of Caesarea Philippi." Caesarea Philippi was a city some 40 kilometers north from the lake of Galilee. The story takes place somewhere in the region around this city. The people who lived in this area were not Jewish. Jesus may have gone to this place to have some rest from being surrounded by crowds and from being watched by the Jewish religious leaders. Now Jesus has some time for an important conversation with his disciples!

Show your team on a map where Caesarea Philippi is.

When Jesus talked about himself, he often calls himself "the Son of Man." In the Bible, the Son of Man means the person to whom God has given all authority and power. So Jesus asks his disciples: "What are the people saying about me? Who do the people think that I am?"

The disciples tell Jesus some of the things that the people are saying about Jesus. Some people think that Jesus was John the baptizer who had come to life again, or a prophet who lived a long time ago. Elijah and Jeremiah are both important prophets who lived a long time before Jesus. The Jewish people did not normally believe that dead people would become alive again, but they did think that in the future, just before God would be judging the whole world, the prophet Elijah or some other prophet would come back.

Then Jesus asks the disciples: "This is what the *people* believe that I am. But who do *you* believe that I am?" Simon, who is also called Peter, gives the answer. He says that Jesus is the Messiah-the promised king and Savior-and also the son of the living God. That Jesus is the son of God means that Jesus comes from God, and that he is God himself as well. Peter calls Jesus the son of the living God, because God is the one true God. God is not like the dead idols whom non-Jewish people worshiped!

What Peter says is very important! It shows that Peter has realized that Jesus is much more than a prophet. Jesus is happy with Peter's answer. He tells Peter that he is blessed, meaning that God has been good to Peter by teaching Peter this. Peter has not learned who Jesus is from any human person, but has learned it directly from God.

Jesus addresses Peter with the name "Simon bar Jonah," or "Simon son of Jonah." This was Simon's real name. But earlier Jesus had given Simon the name Peter as well. Now we are going to hear why Jesus did this!

In the language that the New Testament was written, the word Peter means rock. Jesus tells Peter: "You, Peter, you are a rock! And on this rock I will build my church." When the Israelites wanted to build a strong house, they would find a place where the ground was very hard and made of rock. Then they would cut some holes in this rock so that they could fix the walls of the house in the rock. This is called making a foundation. The house would be connected with the rock, and so it would be very strong: even if there would be a lot of rain or wind, the house would keep standing, because it had a good foundation.

Show your team a picture of a house that is being built on a rock. How do people build houses in your community? Stop here and tell a story about how people make a house strong.

Jesus is using an example of house building to talk about the church. A building with a good foundation will be strong. In the same way, the church will be strong because it has a good foundation. But Jesus does not mean that a *church building* will be strong, but that the community of believers will be strong. When the Bible talks about a church, the meaning is always the people and not the building.

Some people think that Jesus means to say that Peter will be like a rock for the community of believers. Peter will help this community to become very strong.

Other people think that not Peter, but what Peter said about Jesus is like a rock. If the church believes that Jesus is the promised Savior and the son of God, then the church will be very strong. Both options are possible, because Jesus says "*on this rock I will build my church.*" "This rock" can refer to Peter, or it can refer to what Peter said.

Jesus says that the gates of hell, or the gates of Hades, will not be able to win from the church. The gates of hell is another way to talk about death. The word that Jesus is using for hell means a place where dead people are. Once a person is dead, he cannot become alive again. It is as if there is a strong gate between life and death: The

gate is keeping people locked in this place of dead people. This is how powerful death is. But even though death is very powerful, the church will even be more powerful! Jesus' church, this community of believers, will be so strong that it cannot die. Nothing will be able to destroy the church.

Jesus tells Peter that he will give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven means the kingdom of God. Jesus is using picture language again. Someone who has the keys for a building has a lot of responsibility and authority. The person with the keys can open and close doors.

If needed, show your people a picture of a lock and key. In your community, how do people lock a building, or protect what is in it?

Some people think therefore that Jesus means that Peter can make the decisions whether a person can enter the kingdom of God or not. But Jesus also tells Peter that whatever he binds or loosens on earth will also be bound or loosened in heaven. When Jewish religious teachers talk about "binding" something, they mean to say that that thing is not allowed. Something that is "loosened" is allowed. So Jesus might be saying to Peter: "I am giving you the authority to decide what people are allowed to do, and what they are not allowed to do."

Jesus says that what Peter will bind or loose, will have been bound and loosened in heaven. This might mean that God will approve of the decisions that Peter will make. But it could also mean that God has already made these decisions, and that Peter will make decisions that God had made first.

Either way, this responsibility would mean that Peter-and the other disciples as well-will later help the other believers to apply Jesus' teaching in every situation of their life. A very big responsibility indeed!

In your community, who makes the decisions about what people are allowed to do? Can you tell a story about someone with authority to make such decisions?

At the end of his conversation with the disciples Jesus gives a stern warning to the disciples not to tell other people that Jesus is the Messiah. As we will find out in the next story, the disciples still have a lot to learn about what it means that Jesus is the Messiah!

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualise this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples arrive in the region of Caesarea Philippi.

Second scene: Jesus and his disciples are talking about who he is.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples, and particularly Peter
- The prophets: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, and other prophets

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualise the story and the action in it.

In the previous story, Jesus and his disciples had come back to Galilee after traveling to Phoenicia. In this story, they are leaving Galilee again and go to the province that is north of Galilee. Matthew begins telling this story by saying "now." This means he is going to tell a new story. He does not say how much time has passed since the previous story.

Matthew tells us only that Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, but it is clear from the story that his disciples were with him.

If people use keys in your community, you may like to have some real keys with you to help you remember the last part of this story. Maybe you can tell this story while standing next to a strong gate, or a door? Or, go to a funeral place while telling the story, to remind you that death cannot stop the church!

Maybe you can use some rope and tie some things together, and make them loose again to help you remember Jesus' speech. Or is there an object that you can use that has to do with whether something is allowed, or not allowed?

Do not forget to add Jesus' warning to the disciples at the end!

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- His disciples, and particularly Peter
- The prophets: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, and other prophets

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out Jesus and the disciples arriving in the area of Caesarea Philippi.

Act out Jesus asking the disciples who people say that he is.

Act out the disciples' response.

Act out Jesus asking the disciples who *they* think that he is.

Act out Peter responding.

Stop the action.

- I am so glad that he understands who I am,
- I am happy,
- I am glad that God helped Peter to understand this. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus' response to Peter.

Stop the action.

- It is very exciting that Jesus gives me this responsibility!
- Why me? Or is Jesus maybe talking to all of us?
- I am not really sure what Jesus means, but it sounds important! [!end] Restart the action.

Act out Jesus telling the disciples not to tell anyone that he is the promised king and Savior.

Stop the action.

- I do not understand why we should not tell other people that Jesus is the Messiah;
- I wish that everybody would know this!

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say that the **Son of Man** is?" Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

John the baptizer, or the **Baptist**, was the person who, shortly before Jesus began his work, told the people to repent of their sins and to take a special bath called baptism as a sign of this repentance. He was later killed by king Herod Antipas. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The term John the Baptist is in the Master Glossary.

Elijah was a **prophet** who lived about 800 years before Jesus. **Jeremiah** was a prophet who lived about 600 years before Jesus. A prophet is a person who gives messages from God to the people. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word prophet is in the Master Glossary.

Simon Peter is one of the disciples of Jesus. In other passages he is often just called Peter.

Simon Bar-Jonah means "Simon, the son of Jonah." Some translations say "the son of John." John and Jonah is the same name.

Peter says that Jesus is the **Christ**. Christ and Messiah mean the same thing. They refer to the special king and Savior that God had promised to send. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. These words are in the Master Glossary.

Peter also calls Jesus **the son of the living God**. We have heard the phrase "son of God" before, but this is the first time we hear "son of the living God." The Jews used the words "living God" to make clear that God was the only true God, the only God who really lived and existed.

Jesus calls Peter **blessed**. Someone who is blessed receives good things from God. God has done something good for Peter. God showed Peter that he was happy with him by letting Peter know who Jesus was. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word bless is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells Peter that **flesh and blood** have not revealed this to him, but "my father who is in heaven." Flesh and blood was a Jewish way to speak about a human. "My **father who is in heaven**" means God. Jesus means that Peter has not learned from any human person who Jesus is, but learned it directly from God. Use the same word for heaven as you have used in earlier stories. The word heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says to Peter, "On this **rock** I will build my church." A rock is a very large stone. In this story, it means a rock that is in the ground. It is somewhat flat and a good place to build a house on.

If needed, show your team a picture of a rock.

Be careful that you do not translate the word **church** as if it is a building. The word church in the New Testament always means the community of believers. It can be the community of believers in a particular place, or it can mean the whole community of believers in the whole world. In this story, Jesus is talking about all the believers in the whole world. Use the same word that you have used in previous passages. The word church is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that the **gates of hell** will not **prevail** against his church. To prevail means to win against. The gates of hell is another way to talk about death. Jesus means to say that death cannot win from the church. This means that the church will always stay alive. There will always be believers in Jesus; this will never stop. Even if the first believers will die, there will be new believers, and new believers, and this will go on for all generations! Other people, and even Satan, may try to stop the church, but they will never succeed.

In your translation you can say "gates of hell," or you can say "death." The word hell is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says he will give Peter the keys of the **kingdom of heaven**. The kingdom of heaven means the kingdom of God. Use the same word you have used in earlier passages. The phrase kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says, "Whatever you **bind** on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you **loose** on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Binding means to tie something up. Loosing something means to free something. The Jewish religious teachers used these words to either forbid or allow something. You can use words that mean binding or loosing, or you can use words that mean "forbidding" and "allowing."

Jesus says, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound **in heaven**." This means that God in heaven will bind this.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 16:13–20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3193428 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5489922 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 16:21–28

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 16:21–28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Then Jesus told His disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Christ, or the Promised Savior.

You will remember that Jesus and His disciples are traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem.

In this passage, Jesus says that He must go to Jerusalem, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and rise again from the dead. Before this time, Jesus had been teaching, healing, and doing miracles. Now, He is talking seriously about His death and resurrection.

When Jesus says that he must go to Jerusalem, he means that this is something that God requires. It is sometimes translated in English as "it is necessary."

The phrase, "From that time, Jesus began..." is a signal that Matthew wants to show his audience that Jesus will die, be buried, and resurrected. Jesus was preparing His disciples for these events. Matthew also points his readers to them. In spite of these predictions, the disciples still seem to have been unprepared for the event. It was the suffering and death that stayed in their minds rather than the resurrection.

Stop now and look at the map of Israel with your team. Point out the northern area of Galilee, and Jerusalem as it relates to the rest of the country. Jesus and His disciples were traveling toward Jerusalem now.

Next, Peter took Jesus aside. This means that Peter led Jesus a short distance from the other disciples. He did this so that they could speak in private. Peter began to scold Jesus, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." Peter did not believe that Jesus, the Christ should suffer or be killed by the Jewish leaders as Jesus had just stated. Peter thought that Jesus would become a ruler and no one would kill Jesus, the Messiah. Peter said the same thing twice in his statements. He is shocked and sad about the things that Jesus said would happen.

Jesus rebuked Peter in even stronger words. Peter tried to take Jesus to the side, to privately rebuke Jesus for saying the things He had said. But Jesus, "turned to him," likely in more of a public rebuke. Then Jesus used the same phrase when Satan tempted Him: "Get behind Me, Satan!" This was an incredible thing to say to Peter, one of Jesus' loyal disciples. Peter said in the last passage that Jesus was, "the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Peter was obviously a loving, devoted follower of Jesus. But now Jesus called him, "Satan." Jesus was rebuking Peter's suggestion that these things would never happen to the Messiah. Peter was wrong, and Jesus told him clearly. "Get behind me Satan," means that Jesus wants the idea from Satan to go away completely.

Stop and discuss these questions with your team: Tell a story of a time when a leader in your community was willing to give his life for their followers. What kind of Christ was Jesus planning to be? What kind of Christ did Peter expect?

After this, Jesus addressed the larger group of disciples and told them that following Him will cost them everything and be worth it all. He used several different ideas to teach this.

Jesus says potential followers must take up their cross. A cross is two wooden beams nailed together. In Roman culture, a convicted criminal had to pick up his wooden cross and carry it to the place where he would be put to death. The Romans then nailed the criminal on the cross to die. Jesus was really saying that anyone who wants to follow him must be able to refuse to please themselves daily. They must be willing to suffer in order to obey Jesus' teachings.

Stop and show your team a picture of a person carrying a wooden cross that was used for Roman crucifixions. How are criminals punished in your community? Which of these types of punishment is done in public?

Jesus says, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it." A person who loses his life for Jesus gives up his right to follow his own way of life and instead follows Jesus. If someone "saves his life," or is not willing to suffer for Jesus, they will eventually die and lose the opportunity to have true life with God on earth or in heaven.

Jesus then asks, "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit their very self?" Gaining the whole world literally means having everything you ever wanted. It refers to being very successful and earning a lot of money so that a person has many material goods. If a man loses his very self, it means he loses his soul, or the part of a person that never dies. Jesus asks this question to emphasize that the whole world is not valuable enough for a person to give up life with God forever. Jesus did not expect this question to be answered.

Then Jesus told the disciples that the Son of Man would come back with the angels to repay each person for what he has done in life. Jesus is referring to the prophet Daniel's prophecy that the Son of Man will come back with the angels to judge the Earth. Jesus is saying that he is the Son of Man.

Jesus told His disciples that He will be in His kingdom when He comes again. One day Jesus will come back and reign over the entire world and creation in God's perfect kingdom. In God's perfect kingdom there will be no more suffering or evil, and all people and all creation will obey him.

He also said that some of them standing with Him would not die before they saw Him coming in His kingdom. The point is that while some of them are still alive-they have not yet tasted death-it will be clear that Jesus the Son of Man is ruling as king. God shows that Jesus is king even before the disciples die. We'll soon see the story of Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah on the mountain. We'll also see Jesus telling his disciples that "all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" after he is raised from the dead.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus talks to His disciples about His approaching suffering, death, and resurrection.

Second scene: Peter and Jesus have a private conversation.

Third scene: Jesus addresses all of the disciples, including Peter.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- The other disciples (11)

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Because this section of scripture is a compilation of several teachings of Jesus, we do not know exactly when and where they happen. We only know that they happened as Jesus was preparing His disciples for his arrest, death, and resurrection in Jerusalem. Matthew records these together because they help the readers understand what Jesus said and did at this time.

The phrase, "From that time, Jesus began..." is a signal that Matthew wants to show his readers that Jesus will die, be buried, and resurrected. Jesus was preparing His disciples for these events.

In the first scene, Jesus is speaking to His disciples. He tells them that it is God's will that He will go to Jerusalem and suffer, be killed, and rise again on the third day.

In the second scene, Peter then takes Jesus to the side, away from the disciples and began to scold Jesus about these things. Peter emphatically told Jesus that this would never happen. Jesus then turned to Peter and rebuked him very strongly. He says that Peter is not thinking of this from God's perspective, but Satan's. This is a very strong rebuke.

In the third scene, Jesus then turns back toward the larger group of disciples. He tells them that in order to be His disciple, they must be willing to do difficult things. His disciples will suffer like Jesus Himself will suffer.

Jesus describes following Jesus like taking a cross on yourself. It will be very difficult. But it will be worth all of the difficult times coming. Jesus asks, "What is the benefit of gaining the whole world but you are lost or destroyed?" It is important to remember that when Jesus asks this question, it is used to emphasize that it is better to gain eternal life with God than gain everything in the whole world.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- The other 11 disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Act out the part of the story where Jesus tells the disciples that He will go to Jerusalem. The elders, chief priests, and scribes will make Him suffer.

Stop the action.

Act out the part of the story where Peter takes Jesus to the side to rebuke Him. After Peter rebukes Jesus,

Stop the action.

Act out the part of the story where Jesus rebukes Peter.

Stop the action.

- Indignant,
- I am alone in God's mission,
- Impatient,
- My mission is threatened.

Ask the actor playing Peter, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like:

- Hurt,
- Ashamed,
- Scared. [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the part of the story when Jesus told His disciples that they must be willing to do difficult things. He describes following Jesus like taking a cross on yourself. It will be very difficult. But it will be worth all of the difficult times coming. Jesus asks, "What is the benefit of gaining the whole world but you are lost or destroyed?"

Stop the action.

Act out the part of the story where Jesus tells about how He will come with the angels and would repay each person for what he has done in life. Jesus told them that He would be in God's perfect kingdom then. There will be no more suffering or evil, and all people and all creation will obey him. He also said that some of them standing with Him would not die before they saw Him coming in His kingdom. Jesus also said that some of them would "not taste death" until they see Jesus coming in His kingdom.

Stop the action.

- Hopeful,
- Confident,
- I am being obedient.

Ask one of the actors playing a disciple, "How are you feeling now?" You may hear things like:

- Confused,
- Worried,
- Excited, etc... [!end] Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus was traveling toward **Jerusalem** with his disciples, or close followers. Use the same word for **disciples** as previously used. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of disciples and Jerusalem.

At the beginning of this passage, the phrase, "From that time," Jesus begins to tell his disciples that He *must* go to Jerusalem, be rejected by the **elders, chief priests, and scribes**, be killed by them, and **rise again** from the dead. This is a change of tone and emphasis in the teaching of Jesus.

Use the same words to translate **elders, priests, and scribes** as you have previously used. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of elders, priests, and scribes.

Stop here and discuss what kinds of terms you use for religious leaders in your culture and use the same terms you have been using throughout the book of Matthew.

Rise Again, Resurrection: Resurrection means to rise from the dead as the same person. God will choose the time when everyone who has died will rise from the dead. Jesus was telling His disciples here that He would die, but rise again to life from the dead.

Next, there is a very interesting conversation between Peter and Jesus. Peter did not believe that Jesus should suffer or be killed by the Jewish leaders as Jesus had just stated. He says, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." Peter probably thought that Jesus would become a ruler, or political Christ, and in that case, no one would kill Jesus, the Christ. Peter said the same thing twice in his statements. He is emphasizing how much he is shocked and sad about the things that Jesus said would happen.

Jesus rebuked Peter saying, "Get behind Me, **Satan!**"

Satan refers to the spiritual being, whom God created, who is the leader of the evil spiritual beings who decided to rebel against God. Use the same term for Satan that you have used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of Satan.

"Get behind me Satan," means that Jesus wants the idea from Satan to go away completely.

After this, Jesus addressed the larger group of disciples and told them that following Him will cost them everything and be worth it all. He used several different ideas to teach this.

If you will follow Jesus, you must deny your own ways, desires, and plans and "take up your cross" to follow Jesus. "Take up your **cross**," refers to being ready to go through difficult times while we follow Jesus. Use the same word for cross as you have used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of cross.

Jesus says, "If you gain the world, but lose your **soul**, what good is that to you?" When Jesus mentioned, "soul," he was referring to a person's inner life and thinking along with their physical life. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of soul. You may even translate this word as "life," if your people understand that life represents our thoughts and emotions also.

Jesus told the disciples that he, the **Son of Man**, is going to come with God's power and angels and give each person the reward they deserve. The Jewish people understood that the Son of Man would come to judge the good and evil people and that God would make him king forever. Use the same phrase for Son of Man that you have in previous passages, and remember that Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

In the Old Testament, this phrase "son of man" simply meant a human being. Jesus uses this term as his favorite way to talk about himself. The "Son of Man" is the person to whom, in Daniel 7, God gives all authority and power. Jesus probably likes this term because the title can refer to an ordinary human being or to a supernatural being like it does in Daniel 7. The term Son of Man forces people to decide if Jesus is man or God. It also avoided the political term of the Messiah/Christ-the person that people wanted to make king.

Jesus speaks of himself in the third person when he gives himself this title. Be sure that it is clear by the way you translate this that Jesus is speaking about himself. Make sure that your audience understands that Jesus is talking about himself when he says "the Son of Man." You may need to add a short phrase to make it clear.

Angels are supernatural, spiritual beings. They are often messengers from God. Use the same word for angels here that you have used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of angels.

Glory refers to the power and splendour of God. Use the same word for glory as you have used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for a complete definition of glory.

The **kingdom of God** in the New Testament refers to the time when God comes to rule-His reign and authority which begins its fulfillment with Jesus' ministry on earth and people's acceptance of him. We experience God's Kingdom now when we listen to him and obey him by following Jesus. Be sure to use the same term for kingdom of God that you have used in other passages. See the Master Glossary for a complete definition of kingdom and kingdom of God.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 16:21-28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3104617 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5266330 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 17:1-13

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 17:1-13 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story takes place six days after Jesus tells the disciples that some who are standing with him will not die before they see the Son of Man "coming in his kingdom." He is saying that before they die, some of the disciples will see that Jesus is ruling as king. Jesus and his disciples have begun the journey to Jerusalem where Jesus will suffer and die, and God will raise Jesus from the dead.

You may want to look at a map that shows Caesarea Philippi and Jerusalem and the mountains between them to see the journey Jesus and his disciples are taking.

The disciples were surprised to learn that Jesus was going to die. They might have wondered if he was truly the promised Messiah, or promised Savior. This story emphasizes that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus leads Peter and James and James's younger brother John up a high mountain away from other people. While the disciples watched, Jesus' appearance changed. He did not become a different being, but his face became bright like the sun and his clothes became as white as light. God's presence is often described as light also. This shows that Jesus shares God's glory. Jesus did not become a different person at this moment. He always shared God's glory, but here he shows his disciples his glory so they will know he is the Messiah and king.

You might want to show a picture of Mount Tabor in southern Galilee. It might be the mountain where this story takes place.

Discuss what light represents in your culture.

Suddenly the disciples see Moses and Elijah there with Jesus. Moses was a well-known leader in Jewish history who led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. God gave Moses his law and Moses gave it to the Israelites. The Jewish people were waiting for a Messiah who would rescue them and be "the prophet like Moses." Elijah was

a famous prophet in Jewish history. The Jewish people were expecting Elijah to return and prepare the way for the Messiah.

Who are some people in your culture's history that everyone knows about? Why are they famous?

When Peter sees Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus, he says it is good the disciples are there, so he can serve them. He offers to make three shelters of branches and leaves for the three men. While he is talking, a bright cloud covers them and a voice from the cloud says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." When God spoke to the Israelites, he often spoke from a cloud with fire and glory. God said these same words from a cloud when Jesus was baptized. This time, he also says, "Listen to Jesus." In the past, the Israelites were supposed to obey, or listen to, the law God gave through Moses and the prophets. Both the law and the prophets told the Israelites about Jesus. Now they are supposed to listen to Jesus.

Stop here and show an image of what the temporary shelters may have looked like.

When the disciples hear the voice from the cloud, they fall and their faces touch the ground because they know it is the voice of God and they are very afraid. Then Jesus puts his hand on them and tells them to stand up and to not be afraid. When they look up, they see only Jesus standing there. Moses represented the law God gave through Moses. Elijah represented all the prophets God used to speak to his people. The two men representing the law of God and his prophets have gone. Now Jesus, the Messiah, has come.

You may want to show an image of people kneeling or lying with their faces touching the ground. The disciples fell on their faces because they feared and respected God. How does your culture show respect?

As they are going down the mountain, Jesus warns the disciples not to tell anyone what they have seen until God brings the Son of Man back to life after he has died. Jesus often calls himself the Son of Man, and it's a title that refers to the Messiah. The disciples know he is calling himself the Messiah. Jesus knows some people will want to stop him from being killed because they are hoping he will make the land of Israel free from Roman rule. He does not want people to stop him from doing what he came to do.

In your culture, how would people react if they knew someone was trying to kill their leader?

Then the disciples ask Jesus why the scribes, or teachers of the religious law, teach that Elijah must come before the Messiah comes. They might be wondering if Elijah's presence on the mountain fulfilled that prophecy. Jesus says the prophets were right when they said Elijah would come first and make everything the way it should be. He tells them Elijah already came, but the people didn't realize who he was. They chose to mistreat him. Jesus says people will mistreat him too. When they hear this, the disciples realize Jesus is talking about John the Baptist.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus leads the disciples up a high mountain away from people.

Second scene: Jesus' appearance changes while the disciples are watching. Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus. Peter offers to make shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. God speaks to the disciples from a bright cloud. They fall down with their faces on the ground.

Third scene: Jesus puts his hand on the disciples and tells them to stand up. The disciples see only Jesus standing there.

Fourth scene: Jesus and the disciples walk down the mountain and Jesus warns the disciples not to tell anyone what they have seen until God raises Jesus from the dead. The disciples ask Jesus why the scribes say Elijah must come before the Messiah comes. Jesus tells them Elijah has already come. They realize he is talking about John the Baptist.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- James
- John
- Moses
- Elijah
- God

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story starts 6 days after the last event recorded.

Jesus leads Peter, James, and John up the high mountain, so he is walking in front of them as they climb the mountain. They are not walking on flat ground.

The disciples are awake and watching when Jesus' appearance changes. It might be hard for the disciples to look directly at Jesus because he is so bright. "And behold" Moses and Elijah appear suddenly with Jesus. It is surprising to the disciples. Moses and Elijah are talking with Jesus, but Matthew does not tell us what they were talking about. The disciples might not have heard what they were saying.

Peter says it is good that they are all there. He offers to make some shelters for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. These would be shelters made out of whatever could be found on the mountain like branches and leaves. While he is speaking, a bright cloud covers them all and God's voice speaks from the cloud. When the disciples hear him they fall down and put their faces on the ground. They are too afraid to stand or to keep their eyes open.

Jesus puts his hand on the disciples and tells them to stand up and fear not. When they stand up and look, Moses and Elijah are not there anymore. Jesus is the only one there.

After that they walk down the mountain. They are not walking on flat ground. While they are walking down the mountain, Jesus warns the disciples not to tell anyone what they saw until after he has died and God has made him alive again.

Then the disciples ask him why the scribes teach that Elijah must come before the Messiah comes. Jesus tells them it is true that Elijah must come and make everything right, "but I tell you" Elijah already came and the people mistreated him. When he says, "but I tell you" it is important because Jesus knows more than the scribes. The people did not realize when Elijah came. When he describes it to the disciples, they realize he is talking about John the Baptist. He came before Jesus to make everything right by warning people to stop sinning and to get ready for the Messiah. Jesus also tells them that he will suffer like John the Baptist suffered.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- James
- John
- Moses
- Elijah
- God

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Act out the disciples following Jesus up the mountain. When you act this out, remember that Jesus is leading the disciples up the mountain, so he is walking in front of them and they are not walking on flat ground.

Stop the action.

Act out Jesus' appearance changing. The disciples should be watching with their eyes open when Jesus' appearance changes. His face and clothes would be so bright that the disciples probably squinted or shielded their eyes with their hands.

Stop the action.

Act out Moses and Elijah suddenly standing with Jesus. The disciples were surprised to see them.

Stop the action.

Act out Peter saying, "LORD, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three shelters here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." The bright cloud should come down on all of them while Peter is still talking. The disciples fall down because they are very afraid and also because they respect God. They might have been on their knees or lying flat. Their faces were touching the ground.

Stop the action.

Act out Jesus putting his hand on the disciples when he tells them to stand up. They look around. They are probably looking for Moses and Elijah but they do not see them anymore.

Stop the action.

Act out the disciples asking why the scribes say that Elijah must come first and Jesus telling the disciples that Elijah already came.

Stop the action.

Act out Jesus and the disciples talking with each other while they walk back down the mountain. Jesus is telling the disciples that he will be mistreated like John the Baptist was mistreated.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When Jesus' appearance changed, **his face shone like the sun** and **his clothes became white as light**. The disciples would have understood this to mean that Jesus shared God's **glory**.

Glory refers to God's majestic beauty and splendor. Glory is in the Master Glossary.

Moses appears with Jesus. Moses was a great leader of the Hebrew people who led them out of slavery in Egypt and gave them God's law at Mount Sinai. Moses prophesied that someday God would send his people another prophet like Moses.

Elijah appears with Jesus. Elijah was a great prophet, or **messenger from God**, in Israel who lived more than 500 years before Jesus was born. Elijah never died. God took him up into heaven in a strong wind with a chariot and horses of fire. The prophet Malachi said that Elijah would come again before the Messiah came, and that he would "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers."

Peter calls Jesus **Lord**, or master. Translate Lord in the same way as you have before, and remember that Lord is in the Master Glossary.

God speaks to the **disciples** in a **voice from a cloud**. This is not the first time God has spoken from a cloud. He spoke these same words from a cloud in the story of Jesus getting baptized. This time God adds, "Listen to him." Translate disciples the same way you have before. Disciple is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells the disciples not to tell anyone the **vision** they have seen until God raises the **Son of Man** from the dead.

A **vision** is an experience where God reveals something to a person by causing them to see something when they are awake. Vision is in the Master Glossary.

Son of Man is a title for the Messiah, who is Jesus. It refers to the truth that he is from heaven, that he has a mission on earth, and that he will come again with glory. Translate Son of Man the same way you translated it before. Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

The disciples ask Jesus why the **scribes**, or **teachers of religious law**, say that Elijah must come before the **Messiah** comes. Scribes were people who studied the Old Testament scriptures and made copies of them by hand. Translate scribes and Messiah the same way you translated them before. Scribes and Messiah are in the Master Glossary.

John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus. You will remember that he prepared the people for Jesus to come by telling them to stop sinning. He fulfilled the prophecy that Elijah would come before the Messiah came.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 17:1–13**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (2649821 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4453919 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 17:14–21*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 17:14–21 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Before this story, Jesus had already given his twelve closest disciples authority to cast out demons and heal people, and then he sent them out in pairs and they did cast out demons and heal people. You will remember that a disciple is someone who follows Jesus.

This story takes place immediately after Jesus' appearance changed on the mountain while Peter, James, and John were watching. On the mountain, away from people, the disciples saw who God says Jesus really is, but now they return to crowds of people and Jesus looks like an ordinary man again.

They are probably in Galilee at this time, and they are still traveling toward Jerusalem. As Jesus, Peter, James, and John reach the bottom of the mountain, they walk to a crowd that is already waiting for them. A man comes up to Jesus, kneels before him, and calls him "Lord," which means master. He does these things to show humility and respect.

Stop and show a picture of the base of Mount Tabor.

The man asks Jesus to have mercy, or take pity, on his son, because his son often shakes uncontrollably. The Jewish people saw the boy's behavior as crazy and understood that a demon caused the boy to go out of his mind and his body to shake all over. The boy suffers very much, because he often falls into fire and often into water when he is out of his mind. The water the boy fell into was large enough that he was in danger when he fell in. You will remember that a demon is an evil spirit.

The man says he brought his son to the disciples earlier, but they could not heal him. He probably brought his son to the nine disciples who did not go up the mountain while Peter, James, and John went up the mountain with Jesus.

When Jesus replies, he speaks to the crowd and to his disciples. He says the people are "faithless and corrupt." He means that they don't believe in God and they don't know right from wrong. He is also talking about the whole generation, all of the people living at that time.

When Jesus says, "How long must I stay with you?" he does not expect the crowd to answer his question. He is saying he hopes he will not have to stay with them much longer.

He also asks, "How long must I bear with you?" Again, he does not expect the crowd to answer him. He is saying that he hopes he will not have to endure their unbelief much longer.

Jesus says to bring the boy close to him, so they brought the boy to him. Then he sternly commands the demon inside the boy to come out of him and the demon obeys and leaves him. Instantly the boy is healed. Everyone can see from the boy's behavior that the demon no longer possesses him.

Some time later, all 12 disciples speak to Jesus when they are alone and they ask why they were not able to make the demon leave the boy.

Jesus answers the disciples, telling them they could not make the demon leave the boy because they had such little faith. They did not believe God would really heal the boy. Jesus had already given the disciples the authority to cast out demons, but here they learn that they must also have faith, or believe, in God.

Now Jesus tells his disciples something very important. He tells them that if their faith was even as small as the seed of a mustard plant they could say to that mountain, "move from here to there" and the mountain would move. He might have been talking about the mountain where he showed his glory to Peter, James, and John, because they are still near that mountain at this time.

The seed of a mustard plant was the smallest seed in that part of the world at that time. Jesus is saying that the size of a person's faith does not cause results. God's power causes results. A person who believes in God even a little bit can rely on God's power. Jewish people at this time used the saying, "move a mountain" to describe doing something impossible.

Jesus says that if they believed in God even a little bit they would be able to do anything.

Stop here and look at a picture of a mustard seed.

Discuss which is the smallest seed in your culture.

Discuss how your culture talks about something that is impossible to do.

Some Bible translations have an additional verse here. In those translations, Jesus tells the disciples this kind of demon only leaves by praying and fasting. You will remember that praying means communicating with God and fasting means going without food and drink for a period of time.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus, Peter, James, and John arrive at the bottom of the mountain and there is a crowd waiting for them. A man comes and kneels before Jesus and asks him to heal his son who is possessed by a demon. The man says he already asked Jesus' disciples to help him but they could not make the demon come out of his son. Jesus speaks to the whole crowd. He tells them they have no faith.

Second scene: Jesus speaks directly to the demon inside the boy and sternly commands the demon to come out of the boy. Instantly the demon leaves and the boy is healed.

Third scene: At some later time the disciples speak privately to Jesus and ask him why they could not make the demon leave the boy. Jesus tells the disciples they did not believe God enough. If they believed God even a little bit they could do anything.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The 12 disciples
- The man who kneels before Jesus
- The man's son
- The crowd

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the previous story, Jesus was on the mountain with Peter, James, and John. While they were there, a man brought his son to the other 9 disciples for healing.

In this story, Jesus and Peter, James, and John have just come down from the mountain. They walk toward the crowd, which is already waiting for them.

Right away, a man comes up to Jesus and kneels in front of him. He calls him "Lord," which means master. The man respects Jesus and he desperately wants help.

The man says that his son's body often shakes all over and he often falls into fire and into water. He brought his son to the other nine disciples earlier while Jesus, Peter, James, and John were on the mountain, but they could not heal him.

Jesus speaks to the whole crowd. He is angry because they do not believe God and they do not know right and wrong. He is tired of being with people who do not believe God. He uses the questions, "How long must I be with you?" and "How long must I put up with you?" to show his frustration.

Stop here and discuss how people in your culture show or talk about their frustration. How are questions like these used in your culture?

Jesus says to bring the boy to him. It is not clear who he is talking to, but he is talking to more than one person, so he might be speaking to the crowd or to his disciples. It might take more than one person to bring the boy to Jesus because he is probably difficult to control.

When Jesus commands the demon to leave, it is instantly clear to everyone that the boy has been healed. Everyone can see that the boy is different after the demon leaves.

Some time later, the disciples speak to Jesus privately. It is not clear where they are at this time. Only Jesus and his 12 disciples are together when they ask him why they could not make the demon leave the boy.

When Jesus says, "I tell you the truth," the disciples understand he wants them to listen carefully to what he is about to say. He wants them to remember the words he is going to say next.

Discuss what people in your culture say or do in order to make others listen carefully to what they are going to say next.

Jesus says if they had faith as small as the seed of a mustard plant, the smallest seed in their land, they would be able to tell that mountain to "move from here to there." He might have been talking about the mountain where he showed his glory to Peter, James, and John, and they might still be able to see it from where they are. He is saying that if they had even a little faith in God, they could do anything. Nothing would be impossible.

Some translations include another verse at this point. In that verse, Jesus tells the disciples that this kind of demon only leaves by praying and fasting.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The 12 disciples
- The man who kneels before Jesus
- The man's son
- The crowd

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Remember that the crowd is already waiting for Jesus, Peter, James, and John as they reach the bottom of the mountain. Jesus and his disciples walk toward the crowd and one man in the crowd comes up to Jesus, kneels before him, and says, "Lord," which means master.

Stop the action.

The man tells Jesus that sometimes his son's whole body shakes and he is in danger because he often falls into fire or into water. He says he brought his son to the disciples earlier but they could not heal his son.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm ashamed that we couldn't make the demon leave the boy" or "I wonder if Jesus is angry with us now?" or "I am confused about why we could not make the demon leave the boy." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus answers, speaking to the whole crowd, including his disciples. He says, "You faithless and corrupt people! How long must I put up with you?" He is saying that they do not have faith and they don't know right and wrong. He is tired of being with them, and he hopes he will not have to stay with them much longer.

Stop the action.

Jesus says to bring the boy to him. He is speaking to more than one person, so he might be telling the crowd or his disciples to bring the boy to him. When he commands the demon to leave, the demon obeys immediately. Everyone can see that the boy has been healed because he is different after the demon leaves.

Stop the action.

Later Jesus is alone with his disciples. It is not clear if they stayed in the same place and the crowd went away or if Jesus and his disciples moved away from the crowd to another place. When the disciples are alone with Jesus, they ask him why they could not make the demon leave the boy. Jesus tells the disciples they had too little faith in God. If they had faith as small as the seed of a mustard plant, they could tell that mountain to move from here to there and it would move. If they had even a little faith, they could do anything. Nothing would be impossible. Jesus might be pointing at the mountain where he showed Peter, James, and John his glory while he says this. They are probably still near that mountain at this time.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

When the man approaches Jesus, he calls him "**Lord**." You will remember that Lord means master. Use the same word for Lord that you have used before. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

The man says that his son has **seizures**. A seizure is when a person's body shakes all over for a period of time. Sometimes a sickness causes a person's body to shake all over, but for this man's son, a demon causes the seizures.

The man says he brought his son to Jesus' **disciples** earlier but they could not make the demon leave his son. You will remember that a disciple is someone who follows Jesus. Translate disciple the way you have translated it before. Disciple is in the Master Glossary.

Remember that a **demon** is an evil spirit who used to be an angel but who rebelled against God. Use the same word for demon that you've used before. Demon is in the Master Glossary.

The man says that when his son's body shakes, he **falls into water**. It is enough water that the boy is in danger when he falls into it. You could use your word for river or lake instead of water if you need to.

Jesus calls the crowd **faithless** or unbelieving. You will remember that **faith** means to agree with and trust in someone. Faithless is the opposite of having faith. Jesus is saying the people do not have faith in God. Faith is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus asks the crowd, "**How long** must I be with you?" but he does not expect the crowd to answer. He is saying that he does not want to be with the people much longer.

Jesus asks the crowd, "**How long** must I bear with you?" but he does not expect the crowd to answer. He is saying that he does not want to tolerate the people much longer because they do not have faith in God.

Jesus tells the disciples they have **little faith**. He also says "little faith" in the story about him walking on the water earlier in the book of Matthew. Translate "little faith" the same way you did in that story.

Jesus says that if the disciples had faith as small as a **mustard seed** they could tell the mountain to move from here to there and it would move. A mustard seed was the smallest seed in that area. Jesus is saying that even if their faith in God was very small they could do anything. Nothing would be impossible.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 17:14-21

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2708973 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4562862 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 17:22-27

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 17:22-27 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story takes place after Jesus and his disciples "gathered again in Galilee." Galilee refers to the northern region of Israel.

Stop here and show the team a map of the region of Galilee.

The disciples meet together with Jesus and Jesus tells them he, the Son of Man, is going to be delivered "into the hands of men" who will kill him. "Into the hands of men" is a Hebrew expression that means "to the power of men." Jesus is saying someone will betray him to men who will kill him.

This is the second time Jesus predicts that he will die and God will raise him from death to life on the third day, but this time he adds that he will be betrayed. When the disciples hear this, they are "filled with grief" or very sad.

Discuss with your team how people in your culture show and say that they are "filled with grief" or very sad.

The next story takes place at another time when Jesus and his disciples are in the town of Capernaum. Peter is outside when two tax collectors ask him if his teacher, Jesus, pays the temple tax. Peter tells them yes, Jesus pays the tax.

The temple tax was not a Roman tax. The Pharisees, a group of religious leaders, created the temple tax. All Jewish men paid this tax to support the temple.

You will remember that the temple was the house of God where the Jewish people worshiped him in Jerusalem. People who traveled to Jerusalem for Passover paid the tax at the temple, but tax collectors also went throughout the rest of the country to collect the tax during the month before Passover. Passover was a religious holiday celebrated by the Jewish people every year to remember when God led their ancestors out of slavery in Egypt.

Stop here and show the team a picture of the temple in Jerusalem.

Then Peter enters the house where Jesus is staying. The other disciples are somewhere in Capernaum at this time, but they are not mentioned inside the house. Before Peter has a chance to speak, Jesus asks him, "What do you think, Simon? Do human kings take taxes from their sons or from others?" You will remember that Peter is also called Simon. Jesus knew that the men asked Peter if Jesus paid the temple taxes even though Peter did not tell him.

Peter answers that human kings take their taxes from others who are not their sons. Jesus says, "then the sons are free." This tax is collected for the temple and God is the king of the temple, so the sons of God should not have to pay the tax. Jesus is saying that he and Peter are the sons of God, so they should not have to pay the temple tax.

Discuss with your team how people in your culture treat their family members different than people outside their families. What are some special privileges of being a son in your culture?

Then Jesus says he does not want to make the tax collectors angry with them, so he tells Peter to throw his fishing line into the lake and catch a fish. He instructs Peter to open the mouth of the first fish he catches and he will find a silver coin or a shekel. A shekel was 4 drachmas, and the temple tax was 2 drachmas, so 4 would be enough for both of them. Then Peter should give the coin to the tax collectors to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter.

In this situation, Jesus did not want to make the tax collectors angry because he is willing to give up his own personal freedoms, but there are other times when Jesus is willing to make people angry if they are causing harm to others.

Stop here and show your team a picture of a shekel.

Stop here and show your team a picture of a fishing line with a hook.

Discuss with your team: What are some things people do in your culture so they will not make religious leaders angry?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples are together in Galilee and Jesus again tells the disciples that he will die. He also adds that someone will betray him. The disciples are deeply saddened by this news.

Second scene: Peter is outside in Capernaum and some tax collectors ask him if Jesus pays the temple tax. Peter says yes, he does.

Third scene: Peter goes into the house and Jesus asks him who earthly kings take their taxes from, their own sons or other people. Jesus says that since God is the king of the temple, his sons, including Jesus and Peter, should not have to pay the temple tax. But Jesus does not want to make the tax collectors upset, so he tells Peter to catch a fish and he will find a silver coin in the fish's mouth that he should give to the tax collectors to pay both Jesus' and Peter's temple tax.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples, including Simon Peter
- temple tax collectors

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus and his disciples are together somewhere in Galilee, the northern region of Israel. Jesus and his disciples met together and Jesus told them a second time that he would be killed. This time he also adds that he will be "delivered into the hands of men," which means that someone will betray him. When the disciples hear this news they are very sad.

In the second scene, "they" have come to Capernaum, a town in Galilee. This probably means that Jesus and his 12 disciples were all staying together in Capernaum. Peter is outside when some collectors of the temple tax ask him if Jesus pays the temple tax. The temple tax was created by the Pharisees, a religious group in Israel at the time. All adult Jewish men paid the temple tax to support the costs of the temple in Jerusalem. Peter answers, "Yes."

In the third scene, Peter enters the house where Jesus is staying. The other disciples are also in Capernaum but they are not mentioned in this scene. Before Peter has a chance to speak, Jesus asks him, "What do you think, Simon? Do the kings of earth take their taxes from their sons or from others?" Jesus already knew what the tax collectors asked Peter even though Peter didn't tell him. Jesus asks Peter, "What do you think, Simon?" He already knows the answer to the question, but he wants Peter to think about the answer so Jesus can teach him something. Jesus asks if the "kings of earth," or human kings, take taxes from their sons or from other people who are not their sons. He is contrasting the kings of earth with the King of the temple, who is God.

Peter answers, "From others." Jesus says, "Then the sons are free," which means the sons should not have to pay the tax. Even though they should not have to pay, Jesus does not want to upset the tax collectors, so he tells Peter to "throw his line" or "cast his hook" into the sea to catch a fish. He is probably talking about the Sea of Galilee, because Capernaum is near the Sea of Galilee. He tells Peter to open the mouth of the first fish he catches and he will find a silver coin in the fish's mouth. The coin will be worth enough to pay both Jesus' and Peter's temple tax, and Peter should give it to the tax collectors.

Stop here and show your team a picture of the Sea of Galilee.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples, including Simon Peter
- temple tax collectors

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus and his 12 disciples meet together and Jesus tells the disciples, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and God will raise him on the third day."

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Are they still not hearing the full story?" or "When will they understand that God will raise me from death on the third day?" [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus and the disciples are in Capernaum. Peter is outside when the tax collectors ask him if Jesus pays the temple tax that all Jewish men pay to support the costs of the temple in Jerusalem. Peter answers, "yes."

Then Peter enters the house where Jesus is staying. The other disciples are in Capernaum but they are not mentioned in this scene. Before Peter has a chance to speak, Jesus asks him, "What do you think, Simon? Do earthly kings take their taxes from their sons or from others?" Peter says they take their taxes from others. Jesus says, "Then the sons are free."

Stop the action.

- Jesus is saying that I am a son of God!
- I am so happy to be a son of God!
- Should I still pay the temple tax? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells Peter he does not want to make the tax collectors upset, so Peter should go to the sea and catch a fish. He is probably talking about the Sea of Galilee, a large lake near Capernaum. Peter should "throw out his line" or "cast his hook" to catch a fish. He tells him to open the mouth of the first fish he catches and he will find a silver coin worth enough to pay the temple tax for both Jesus and Peter. Then he should give the coin to the tax collectors to pay their tax.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story takes place as the disciples meet again with Jesus in **Galilee**. You will remember that Galilee is the region of northern Israel. Galilee is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says the **Son of Man** will be delivered **into the hands of men** and they will kill him. You will remember that Jesus often uses the title **Son of Man** to refer to himself because it means Messiah. Use the same phrase for Son of Man that you used before. Son of Man is in the Master Glossary. Delivered "into the hands of men" is a Hebrew expression that means "to the power of men." Jesus is saying that someone will betray him to men who will kill him.

The **disciples** were **filled with grief**. You will remember that a disciple is someone who follows Jesus. Use the same word for disciples that you used before. Disciple is in the Master Glossary. "Filled with grief" means they are very sad.

The tax collectors ask Peter if Jesus pays the two-drachma temple tax. A **drachma** is a unit of money. It was worth about two days' wages.

Jesus says he does not want to **give offense** or to **cause offense**. He means he does not want to make the tax collectors angry or upset with him.

The sea Jesus mentions is probably the Sea of Galilee, a large lake near Capernaum.

Jesus says Peter will find a silver coin or a **shekel** in the fish's mouth. A shekel was a coin worth enough to pay the tax for both Jesus and Peter.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 17:22–27

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2117009 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3564121 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 18:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 18:1–9 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story takes place close to the time, or soon after, the story about the temple tax. Jesus said that kings do not tax their own sons, and that Jesus and Peter should not have to pay the temple tax. This discussion might be making the disciples wonder if they are important people in God's kingdom.

Jesus and his disciples are probably still in Capernaum at this time. The disciples come to Jesus and ask "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" You will remember that "kingdom of heaven" refers to the kingdom of God. They want to know who is the most important or most honored person in God's kingdom. Jesus asks a

little child to come close to him, and he places the child among him and his disciples where they can all see him. He says, "Truly, I say to you" which means he wants the disciples to listen carefully to what he says next.

Jesus tells them that if they do not turn, or change their thinking, and become like little children, they absolutely cannot become members of the kingdom of heaven. So anyone who humbles, or lowers, himself like that little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Children were the lowest people in Jewish society at that time. They did not just have small bodies, they also did not have authority or power or privilege. This shows that the kingdom of heaven is different than the kingdoms of earth.

Then Jesus says that anyone who receives, or welcomes, a child like this "in his name," or because of him, receives Jesus.

Discuss with your team how you know which people in your culture are the greatest. How do they look? How do they behave? How are they treated differently than other people?

Discuss with your team how you know which people in your culture are the lowest. How do they look? How do they behave? How do people treat those who are lowest differently than they treat other people? In what ways is your culture different than the kingdom of heaven that Jesus is describing?

But Jesus says if anyone causes one of the believers who are like little children to sin, it would be better if someone tied a large millstone around that person's neck and drowned him in the deepest part of the sea. A millstone was a large, heavy stone used for grinding grain. If a person had a millstone tied around his neck he would not be able to swim and would drown. Jesus is saying that the punishment for causing someone who trusts in him to sin will be much worse than having a millstone tied around your neck and being thrown into the deepest part of the sea. Jesus uses this shocking picture to help his disciples understand how important it is to not cause one of Jesus' followers to lose faith in him. Jesus' followers are not the powerful people of the world, but God is powerful and will punish anyone who tempts them to sin.

Stop here and show your team a picture of a millstone.

When Jesus says, "Woe to the world" he means "How terrible, how sad, for the people of the world" because they tempt believers to sin. People will always tempt others to sin but "woe," or sadness and pain, to the person who tempts others to sin. God will punish that person.

Discuss with your team how people in your culture warn others of danger.

Jesus says if someone's hand or foot tempts him to sin, he should cut it off and get rid of it. It is better for a person to enter eternal life with only one hand or one foot than to keep both hands and both feet but to have God throw him into the eternal fire of Hell. Jesus is not telling people to cut off their hands and feet. He is telling a parable to show how dangerous sin is. People should do everything they can to keep from sinning, even if they must give up many things to resist temptation.

Discuss with your team how your culture thinks about people who are missing parts of their body.

He also says that if a person's eye causes them to sin, they should take it out and get rid of it. It is better to have eternal life with God with one eye than to keep both eyes and have God throw them into hell, where the fire burns forever. Again, Jesus is not telling them to take out their eyes, but he is showing them how dangerous sin is.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The disciples come to Jesus and ask him who is the greatest or most honored person in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus asks a child to stand among him and his disciples and says the greatest in the kingdom of heaven is someone who is humble and without power like a little child. The disciples must turn or change their thinking and become humble like a little child or they will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Second scene: If anyone welcomes Jesus' followers, who are like little children, in Jesus' name, he welcomes Jesus. But it will be terrible for anyone who tempts one of his humble followers to sin. It would be better for that person if they had a millstone tied around their neck and someone threw them into the deepest part of the sea. God's punishment for tempting his followers to sin will be worse than that.

Third scene: Jesus gives strong warnings against temptations to sin. He says that great sadness and pain are waiting for those who tempt his followers to sin. Even though there will always be some who tempt others to sin, those who tempt others to sin will be punished severely. Sin is so dangerous that even if your own hand or foot or eye tempts you to sin, you should get rid of it. It is better to enter eternal life without one of your hands or feet or eyes than to keep your whole body but have God throw you into the eternal fire of hell.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- All 12 of Jesus' disciples
- A young child

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In this story, the disciples are listening to Jesus share several stories like parables. The setting does not change, but Jesus shares different parables.

First scene: The disciples ask Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They want to know who is the most honored in God's kingdom. When Jesus answers them, he uses the same words: Whoever humbles himself like this child is "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

The child was already standing close enough that Jesus could easily ask the child to come stand among him and his disciples where they could all see the child as Jesus spoke. The child continued to stand among them throughout this story.

Jesus tells the disciples they must "turn" or change their thinking and become humble like a little child or they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Children were the lowest in Jewish society, but in the kingdom of heaven, those who are humble are the greatest.

Second scene: Jesus is still talking about the child, but it is clear that the child is a symbol for his followers who humble themselves like little children. Jesus says that anyone who welcomes one of his humble followers "in his name" or because of him welcomes Jesus himself. But if someone causes one of his humble followers to sin it would be better for that person if someone tied a large, heavy millstone around his neck and threw him into the deepest part of the sea. Jesus uses this shocking picture to show that it is a terrible sin to cause one of his humble followers to lose faith in him.

Third scene: Jesus gives strong warnings, saying "Woe to the world" because the world tempts people to sin. Then he gives a second strong warning, saying, "Woe to the person who tempts others to sin." Then he gives a third warning. Sin is so dangerous that Jesus says even if your own hand or foot causes you to sin, it would be better for you to get rid of your hand or foot and enter eternal life without part of your body than to keep your body whole but have God throw you into the eternal fire of hell. And finally, he gives a fourth warning. If your own eye causes you to sin, get rid of it. It is better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to keep both eyes and have God throw you into the eternal fire of hell. Jesus uses these shocking examples to show how dangerous it is to give in to the temptation to sin.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- All 12 of Jesus' disciples
- A young child

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In this story, the disciples are listening to Jesus share several stories like parables. The setting does not change, but Jesus shares different parables.

Jesus' disciples come to him and ask, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus asks a child to come stand among him and his disciples and tells them that they must turn and change their thinking and become humble like a little child or they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who humble themselves like little children.

Stop the action.

Jesus says that anyone who welcomes someone like the little child in his name welcomes him. But if anyone causes someone like the little child to sin, it would be better if that person had a heavy millstone tied around their neck and someone threw them into the deepest part of the sea to drown.

Stop the action.

Jesus give many warnings against those who tempt others to sin: "Woe to the world" and "Woe to the person who tempts others to sin" and "get rid of your hand or foot or eye if they tempt you to sin."

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The **disciples** ask Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" and Jesus answers that those who humble themselves like little children are "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Use the same words to translate "the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" in both places. You will remember that "the kingdom of heaven" is the same as "the kingdom of God." kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary. When the disciples say **the greatest**, they mean who is the most honored or the most powerful. Don't forget to translate **disciples** in the same way as you have in previous passages, and remember that **disciples** is in the Master Glossary.

Remember that when Jesus says, "**Truly I say to you**" or "**Truly I tell you**," he is telling the disciples to listen carefully to what he says next. Use the same words you have used to translate this phrase in the past.

When Jesus says the disciples must turn from their **sin** and become **like little children**, he is saying they must lower themselves and humble themselves because children were the lowest in Jewish society. They had no power or authority or privilege. Translate **sin** the same way you have in previous passages. **Sin** is in the Master Glossary.

A **millstone** was a large, heavy stone used for grinding grain. It was so large that a donkey was usually tied to it to move it. If a stone this large was tied to a person and they were thrown into deep water, they would not be able to swim and they would drown.

Stop and show your team a picture of a millstone.

Jesus says "**Woe** to the world" and "**Woe** to the one..." These are strong warnings. They mean that great pain and sadness are waiting for the world and the person who tempts others to sin.

Jesus says it is better to enter eternal life **crippled** or **lame**. Crippled refers to a person who has a deformed or missing arm or leg. Lame refers to a person who has difficulty walking because one or both legs are missing or deformed.

Jesus says it is better to enter eternal life crippled or lame than to keep your body whole but have God throw you into **hell**, where the fire burns forever. Remember to use the same word for hell that you used in previous passages. Hell is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 18:1-9

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2406146 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4049153 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 18:10-14

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 18:10–14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, Jesus continues talking to his disciples. The setting is still in Capernaum like the previous story.

Jesus says, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones." He is still comparing the disciples to little children. He is saying that they should be careful that they do not think of Jesus' humble followers as being unimportant. He is asking them to be different than the people in the world around them, because the world despises those who are little or unimportant, but God treasures them.

Stop and discuss with your team how your culture thinks about those who are unimportant.

Jesus says, "For I tell you..." This expression, "I tell you" is repeated by Jesus many times in the book of Matthew. Jesus is showing that he has God's authority. He says that in heaven, the angels who guard or represent his humble followers are always seeing the face of God in heaven. Jews at this time believed that only the highest of angels were allowed into the presence of God. This shows that each humble believer is important to God.

Stop and discuss with your team a time when they have seen or interacted with an angel.

Jesus asks, "What do you think?" He wants them to consider something.

Then he tells them what to think about using an example, saying, "If a man has a hundred sheep" and one of the sheep wanders away from the flock. He asks, "Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, or on the hillside, and go searching for the one that wandered away?" He is certain that those listening would understand that if a sheep wandered away, the shepherd would go looking for the one lost sheep. In Jewish culture at this time, 100 sheep was an average sized flock. It would also be common for other shepherds to watch the 99 sheep while their fellow shepherd went looking for his one lost sheep, so the disciples might have assumed another shepherd would care for the 99 sheep. God rejects religious leaders who do not care for broken and powerless people, and God himself would seek after a broken and powerless person who wandered away from the rest of the flock.

Jesus says again "truly, I say to you," which he often says when he wants the disciples to listen carefully. If the man finds his sheep, or when the man finds his sheep, he rejoices over the one lost sheep more than he does over the ninety-nine that never wandered away. Jesus is using exaggeration here as he did when he talked about getting rid of your hands or feet or eyes if they cause you to sin. He is saying that a shepherd would be happy about the ninety-nine sheep that stayed together, but he is even more happy when he rescues the sheep that was lost. The Jewish people considered sheep foolish animals. Shepherds had to watch the sheep carefully because there were other animals who would try to eat them and the sheep would often wander away from the shepherd's protection where they would be in danger. Sheep had no way to protect themselves from predators. They depended on their shepherd to keep them safe. God's people are commonly compared to sheep throughout the Bible.

Stop and show your team a picture of a shepherd with his sheep.

Stop and discuss with your team who in your culture would be like the shepherd in this story? Are there animals in your culture that you watch over carefully?

Jesus says in the same way that a shepherd rejoices to find his one lost sheep, Jesus' Father, God, rejoices when he rescues one of his wandering followers. He does not want any of his little ones, his humble followers, to become lost from him eternally.

Discuss with your team: What sort of events would cause your community to rejoice together?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples are in Capernaum. He has just told the disciples that the greatest people in the kingdom of heaven are those who become like little children. Now he adds to that by warning the disciples not to look down on those who become like little children.

Second scene: He tells a story about a shepherd who owns 100 sheep. When one of the sheep wanders away, the shepherd leaves the 99 sheep to search for the one lost sheep. He says God is like that shepherd. Each one of God's little children is precious to him, so he will search for them if they wander away from the flock.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- All 12 of his disciples
- A little child
- A shepherd
- 100 sheep (99 and 1)

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus is talking to his disciples. The scene is the same as the previous story. The child from the previous story is probably still standing among them, because Jesus says, "one of these little ones." Jesus warns the disciples not to think that people like the little child are unimportant. The angels who watch over Jesus' humble followers always see the face of God in heaven because God cares about them very much.

In the second scene, Jesus tells them a story as an example of how important his followers are to God. There is a shepherd with his 99 sheep, and 1 sheep has wandered away. It might be hard to find 100 items or people to be the 100 sheep, but the point Jesus is making is that there is a large group of sheep who stay together and

only one sheep who wanders away. The group of sheep who stay together should be large. There should only be one sheep who wanders away.

The shepherd leaves the large group of sheep where they are and goes searching for the one lost sheep because each sheep is important to him. When he finds the sheep, he rejoices. Jesus says, "in the same way" or "similarly" to show that God acts the same way as that shepherd to bring back people who wander from him.

Stop and discuss with your team how you make comparisons like this in your language.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- All 12 of his disciples
- A little child
- A shepherd
- 100 sheep (99 and 1)

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

In the first scene, Jesus is talking to his 12 disciples and the little child is standing among them. He tells the disciples to be careful not to think of people like the little child as unimportant. The angels who watch over Jesus' humble followers always see God's face in heaven because God cares about them very much.

Stop the action.

In the second scene, Jesus tells his disciples a story about a shepherd who owns 100 sheep. Ninety-nine of the sheep stay together but 1 sheep wanders away. The shepherd cares so much about each of his sheep that he leaves the 99 and goes searching for the one sheep that wandered away. When he finds the one lost sheep he rejoices. Jesus says God is like that shepherd. God rejoices about all of Jesus' followers, but he rejoices most when he rescues the follower who has wandered away.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing the shepherd, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like: "My sheep is in danger. I must find him" or "My lost sheep is precious to me. I hope I find him before something hurts him" or "Even though it is only one sheep, I will go look for him because each sheep is precious to me."

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "I hope my disciples understand how precious they are to God" or "I hope my disciples will turn from their sin and value those who are little."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus tells the disciples to be careful that they do not despise, or look down on, one of these **little ones**. "Little ones" refers to the little child who is a symbol for Jesus' followers who should be humble like little children.

Jesus says their **angels** always see the face of his **Father** in **heaven**.

Use the same word for **angels** that you used in previous passages. Remember, angels is in the Master Glossary.

Father refers to God. Use the same word for **Father** that you have used in previous passages.

In this story, **heaven** refers to the place where God and his angels live and where believers in Jesus will one day live forever. Use the same word for heaven here that you have used before when referring to the place where God and his angels live. Heaven is in the Master Glossary.

When Jesus asks his disciples, "What do **you think**?" he is asking them to consider something. He already knows what they are likely to think, but he knows they will think more carefully if he asks this question.

When Jesus asks, "If a man has a hundred sheep... does he not...?" He already knows the answer to the question, but he is helping the disciples listen more carefully by asking a question rather than just telling them something.

Jesus uses the example of a **shepherd** with his **sheep** to teach about how God loves and cares for Jesus' followers. Sheep were foolish animals who often wandered away from their shepherd into danger. Sheep have no way to defend themselves from predators. Shepherds had to watch their sheep carefully to keep them safe.

Show your team a picture of a sheep and shepherd.

When Jesus says that the shepherd **rejoices over the one lost sheep more than over the 99** who never left, he is not saying the shepherd, God, does not rejoice over the 99 who stayed. He is emphasizing how much the shepherd, God, values each sheep and how much he rejoices to rescue the lost sheep.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 18:10-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2032346 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3431259 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 18:15–20

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 18:15–20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This conversation continues after the previous one about the sheep that wanders away from the flock. Jesus is telling the disciples how to bring a brother back when he has wandered away from the other believers by sinning. This passage uses the word brother to mean someone who shares the disciples' belief in Jesus. Brother refers to either a man or a woman, so some translations say "brother or sister."

Stop and discuss as a team how your culture refers to people who share the same beliefs about God.

Some translations say, "if your brother sins" and others say, "if your brother sins *against you*." The word "you" here refers to just one person. When it just says, "if your brother sins" the listener would understand that the brother sins against God, or disobeys God. When it says, "if your brother sins *against you*" the listener understands that the brother is also sinning against his fellow Christian. It is okay to use "sins" or "sins against you" here. The focus is on helping the brother who is sinning.

Stop and discuss with your team, what is the difference between sinning against God and sinning against another person who shares your belief in God?

Jesus says when this happens, his follower should go to his brother alone, privately, and explain to him how he has sinned. Jesus is speaking about any follower who notices that his brother is sinning, not to leaders only. All of Jesus' followers are little ones who must care for one another. He says if the brother listens to you, then you and he will be able to call one another brothers again. If the brother listens, he is like the sheep who the shepherd finds and brings back to the flock. The brother does more than just listen to your words. He also sees that you are right and admits his sin.

Stop and discuss as a team: How do you describe when two people are talking to each other alone, without anyone else hearing the conversation?

In your culture, how do people usually tell others that they have sinned against God or against a person or when they are doing wrong things? Why do you talk about it that way?

In your culture, how do you show that someone not only listens with their ears but also agrees with what someone has told them?

Then Jesus says if the brother does not see that you are right and admit his sin, go to him again and bring one or two other Christian brothers with you. Other parts of the Bible taught the Jewish people that if someone accused a person of sin, two or more witnesses needed to confirm the accusation in order for the person to be found guilty. In this case, the brother denies that he sinned, so Jesus says you need to talk to him again with one or two more people who can witness your conversation.

Stop and discuss as a team how your culture determines whether or not a person is guilty when someone accuses them of sin. How many people need to witness a sin in order for a person to be considered guilty?

If the brother still refuses to listen when witnesses agree with you, then you should tell the problem to the church, or the group of believers who worship together in the same place. And finally, if he refuses to listen even to the church, then you should treat him like you would treat a Gentile, or someone outside the community of believers, and a tax collector. The word Gentile means foreigner but the Jews used it to refer to those who don't believe in the true God. When Jesus says "you" should treat him as a Gentile, he uses the word "you" that refers to only one person. This command is not for the whole church.

The Jewish people believed tax collectors were some of the most sinful people in society, because they were often Jewish people who gathered taxes for the Romans who oppressed the Jews in Israel. Jewish people at the time did not treat Gentiles or tax collectors the same way they treated fellow believers in their community.

Stop and discuss with your team: Which people are considered the most sinful in your culture? Why are they considered the most sinful? How do people treat them or behave with them?

Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you" which means he wants the disciples to listen carefully to what he says next. This time the word "you" refers to all of Jesus' followers, not just one person. He says that whatever they bind on earth God will bind in heaven, and whatever they loose on earth God will loose in heaven. These words are very similar to the words he said to Peter when he told him he would build his church on Peter in a previous passage in the book of Matthew. This time, Jesus is saying these words are true for all of his followers, not only Peter. The binding and loosing are talking about Jesus' followers making a decision as a church about what is right and wrong. The word bind refers to forbidding something and the word loose refers to permitting something.

Then Jesus adds that when two of his followers who are on earth agree about anything they ask God to do, his father in heaven will do what they ask. In this situation, Jesus is talking about seeking wisdom about how to help a brother who has sinned, but the word "anything" means generally anything, so it is best to use a word that keeps that broad meaning. Jesus explains that this is because whenever two or three of his followers gather together in his name, or as his followers, he is there with them also. When Jesus says "two or three," he means two or more. When he says he is "there with them also," he is talking about being with them spiritually, so it was true at the time he said it and would still be true after he died and God raised him to life again.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells his disciples that if they see a Christian brother sinning, they should go to him alone, privately, and tell him about his sin. If the brother listens and admits his sin then you can consider each other brothers again.

Second scene: Jesus says that if the brother does not listen, you should get two other Christian brothers to come with you and talk to him again while they witness your conversation.

Third scene: Jesus says that if the brother still will not listen, you should tell the church about his sin. If he will not listen even to the church, then you should treat him like you would treat an unbeliever and a tax collector. Jesus says that whatever they bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever they loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. He also says that whenever two of them agree on earth about anything they ask for, his heavenly Father will give them what they ask for. And whenever two or more of them gather together as his followers, he is with them.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples (more than one)
- 1 sinful brother
- 2 Christian witnesses
- A group of believers who worship together in the same place

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus is having an ongoing conversation with his disciples following directly after the previous conversation, so he is speaking and they are listening. The setting does not change, but it might be helpful to have people visualize the advice he is giving.

When Jesus says "your brother" he is referring to a person who shares their beliefs about him. The person could be a man or a woman. When he says "sins against you" the word "you" is referring to just one person. Jesus says to go alone, privately, the first time you talk to him about his sin. No one else would be part of that conversation, just you and the brother who sinned. The brother would not only hear your words but would also admit his sin.

When Jesus says you have gained your brother, or you have won him back, it means that the brother is one of the group of believers again, like the sheep the shepherd finds and brings back to the flock.

If the brother does not listen, then that conversation would end and you would leave the brother and find two more Christian brothers to come with you and return to him and talk to him again about his sin while the two Christian brothers witness your conversation. There would be four people in this conversation: you, the brother who sinned, and two Christian witnesses.

If the brother still does not listen, then all of you leave and tell the situation to the church: that is, the group of believers who worship together in one place. It is not clear whether or not the brother would come with you when you talk to the church, but Jesus says that if the brother doesn't listen to the church, you should treat him like an unbeliever or a tax collector, so the brother is probably present when the church makes their decision. If the brother doesn't listen it means he has heard what the church says but he still will not admit his sin.

Jesus says, "I tell you the truth whatever the believers bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever they loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Jesus uses this phrase "I tell you the truth" several times throughout the book of Matthew to emphasize that what he says next is very important. This means whatever the church forbids on earth, God will also forbid and whatever they permit on earth, God will also permit, because wherever two or more believers gather as Jesus' followers, Jesus' spirit is with them.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples (more than one)
- 1 sinful brother
- 2 Christian witnesses
- A group of believers who worship together in the same place

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus says that if your brother sins against you, go to him alone, privately, and tell him how he has sinned. If he admits his sin, then you and he will be able to call one another brothers again. He will be like the sheep the shepherd found and brought back to the rest of the flock.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing the sinful brother, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like: "Does my brother think he's better than me to tell me about my sin? I won't listen to him" or "I want to keep living the way I'm living; I disagree with my brother that I'm sinning" or "Maybe this brother is the only one who thinks I am sinning. I'm not going to listen to him." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says if the brother will not listen to you, go and find two other Christian brothers to come with you to talk to him again, so they can witness your conversation.

Stop the action.

Jesus says that if the brother will still not listen after you bring two or more witnesses, bring the matter to the church, the group of believers who worship together. If he still won't listen to them, treat him as you would treat an unbeliever or a tax collector.

Stop the action.

Jesus says, "Truly I tell you whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Stop the action.

Jesus says that whenever two or more of his followers gather together as his followers, he is there with them in spirit.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus says that if your **brother sins** against you, you should go to him alone.

The word **brother** means a male who has the same mother or father as you, but here it refers to a person who shares the disciples' beliefs about Jesus. In this case, brother refers to either a man or a woman who shares the disciples' beliefs about Jesus.

The word **sin** means an act of disobedience to God. The word sin is in the Master Glossary.

If your brother will not listen to you even after you have two more witnesses with you, Jesus says to bring the matter to the **church**. Church refers to the group of believers who gather to worship Jesus together. Church is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says if the brother still will not listen to the church, treat him like you would treat a **Gentile** or a **tax collector**.

A **Gentile** was someone who was not Jewish and not part of God's family. Jewish people considered Gentiles immoral and ungodly, so they did not treat them the same way they treated Jewish people. Gentile is in the Master Glossary.

The Jewish people considered **tax collectors** some of the most sinful people in society. Tax collectors were either Gentiles or Jews who collected taxes from the Jewish people for the Roman government.

Truly I tell you is the same expression used many other times in the book of Matthew. Translate this expression the same way you have translated it before. In this case, the word "you" refers to more than one person.

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven: These are the same words Jesus spoke to Peter previously when he told Peter he would build his church on Peter. Translate these words the same way you translated them in that passage, but in this passage the word "you" refers to more than one person. Jesus uses the word **bind** to mean forbid and the word **loose** to mean permit.

Jesus says that whenever two or three or more of his followers gather together as his followers, **there he is among them**. He means that he is among them in spirit, so it was true when he spoke it and it would remain true forever, even after he died and God raised him from death-he would always be with his followers in spirit when they gathered as his followers.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 18:15–20**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (2710490 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4531880 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 18:21–35*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 18:21–35 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story takes place after the previous one. The setting might still be in Capernaum. Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive his brother who sins against him again and again. It is not clear if the other disciples are with Peter also, but in the final verse Jesus says, "each of you" or "all of you" so they are probably listening also. In the previous story, Jesus told the disciples how to bring a brother back into relationship with the church after he has sinned. This time, Peter is asking about one brother forgiving another. Again in this case, brother refers to either a man or a woman who is a fellow Christian.

In the previous story, Jesus focused on how to help the brother who is sinning. In this story, Jesus focuses on how the brother who is sinned against should respond.

When Peter asks if he should forgive seven times, that would have seemed like a large number to everyone listening. The religious leaders taught that they should forgive three times. The number seven represented perfection, so seven might have seemed like the largest number a person could possibly forgive.

Stop and discuss as a team, how many times does your culture expect people to forgive those who sin against them?

In some translations, Jesus says, "I tell you" in order to show that he is giving a new command that is greater than the commands the disciples have received from the scribes and Pharisees. In other translations he says, "I do not say to you" in order to show that Peter is wrong to think that seven times is enough. Jesus says Peter should forgive seventy-seven times, or in some translations "seventy times seven times," or 490 times. This would have sounded shocking to Jesus' listeners. Jesus is not suggesting that seventy-seven or "seventy times seven" is the literal number of times to forgive someone. He is saying there is no limit to the number of times his followers should forgive a brother who sins against them.

Jesus tells a story to explain what he is saying. His story shows what the kingdom of God is like. A king was checking what his servants owed him and he learned that one of his servants owed him ten thousand talents. This is an unbelievable amount of money for a servant to owe a king. In the culture at the time, ten thousand was the highest number used and a talent was the largest unit of money. Even if the servant had great authority, as this servant probably did, he would not be able to owe this much money. One talent would have been what a servant might have earned over half of his lifetime, so ten thousand talents is far more than he could ever owe the king. This means the servant owed the king an enormous amount of money.

Stop and show your team an image of a talent.

The king orders his officials to sell the servant as well as his wife and children and possessions in order to receive payment for the debt. Under Jewish law, a person could only sell a man if he stole something, and his wife could not be sold, so Jesus is using an example from a non-Jewish culture. The servant's debt is so great that even if the king sold him and his family and his possessions, the king would still not receive enough money from the sale to collect what the servant owed him.

Stop and discuss with your team: How does your culture describe a situation where one person gives money to another person expecting that person to pay him back later? What is the typical punishment in your culture when a person cannot repay a debt he owes?

The servant lay down in front of the king, begging him to give him some more time to pay the debt. Everyone listening would know it was ridiculous of the servant to tell the king he can pay him back all that he owed him. People's sins are like the servant's debt; they are so great there is no way they could possibly earn God's forgiveness no matter how hard they tried. In Jesus' story, the king doesn't just give the servant more time, he forgives the debt entirely because he pitied, or has compassion on, his servant.

Stop and discuss as a team: How would people in your culture respond if an important leader chose to forgive a great debt?

The setting of Jesus' story changes here to the area where the servants gather. The servant who was just forgiven by the king searches and finds a fellow servant who owes him a hundred denarii. Denarii is more than one denarius. One hundred denarii would have been worth about three or four months of wages, a large amount, but still very small compared to what the first servant owes the king. Instead of being generous, the servant who was just forgiven grabs his fellow servant by the throat and starts choking him and demanding he pay his debt. The fellow servant uses almost the same words the forgiven servant used to beg for mercy, but he does not show mercy. Instead, he brings him to prison. This was within his rights to do, but the king did not demand his rights with the first servant, and so the first servant should not have demanded his rights with the second servant. Jesus' story shows the disciples that they are not to demand their rights. God has not demanded his rights but has instead been extremely generous. He wants his children to be generous like him.

Stop and discuss as a team how people in your culture would respond to someone who was forgiven a great debt but refused to forgive a smaller debt against him.

Show your team an image of a prison in the region around Israel at the time of Jesus.

When the other servants tell the king what happened, the king is angry. Since the first servant was not merciful and demanded his rights, the king removes his mercy and demands his rights of the first servant. Now, instead of simply selling the servant, the king hands him over to the jailers to be tortured until he can pay his debt. This is the same punishment the first servant had given to his fellow servant, but he has no hope of ever paying back his debt so his punishment will be endless.

Jesus ends by telling his disciples this is how his heavenly Father will treat them if they will not forgive their brothers generously with their whole heart, or sincerely and completely.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive a brother who sins against him. He suggests as many as seven times. Jesus tells him no, he should forgive his brother seventy-seven times or seventy times seven times. The other disciples are probably listening too.

Second scene: Jesus illustrates his answer with a story. He says that his story shows what the kingdom of God is like. He tells about a servant who owed a king more money than he could ever repay in his entire lifetime, so he begs the king to give him more time to pay him back. Instead the king generously forgives the whole debt.

Third scene: Then the servant finds a fellow servant who owes him a much, much smaller amount of money. That servant begs for mercy, but the forgiven servant refuses to show mercy and has him thrown in prison. When the other servants tell the king what happened, the king changes his mind and has the first servant sent to prison to be tortured until he can repay his debt, which means he will be tortured for the rest of his life because his debt is far too large for him to ever repay it.

Fourth scene: Jesus ends by telling his disciples that God will treat them the same way the king treated the first servant if they refuse to forgive their brothers when they have been forgiven so generously by God.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Many disciples or only Peter
- A king
- 2 servants
- A group of other servants
- 2 or more jailers

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story takes place after the previous story, but it is not clear if it happens immediately after or if some time has passed. It is probably still in Capernaum. Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother who sins against him again and again. It is not clear here if the other disciples are with Peter and Jesus or not.

Peter asks if he should forgive his brother seven times, because that seems like a generous amount. Jesus answers him no, he should not forgive seven times but seventy-seven times or seventy times seven times (490 times). He means that Peter should keep forgiving over and over, however many times his brother sins against him.

Jesus then shares a story to explain his answer. He says the story shows what the kingdom of God is like. The setting does not change, but it might help to act out the story Jesus tells.

Jesus says there was a king who was checking how much money his servants owed him. The king was probably sitting on his throne in his throne room with attendants around him. Some of the attendants bring in a man who owes the king more money than he could ever pay back in his entire lifetime. The King tells his attendants to sell the man and his wife and children and all of his possessions in order to get some of his debt back, even though selling them would not be enough to get all of the money back. The verse says the servant "fell" on his knees, but he did not fall by accident. The servant kneels down in humility in front of the king and begs him to give him more time and he will repay all that he owes him, even though everyone knows he cannot possibly repay that much money. The king has pity on the servant and instead of just giving the servant more time, he actually forgives the enormous debt and lets the servant go free.

Then the servant leaves the king's throne room and searches and finds his fellow servant who owes him a much smaller debt. He grabs him by the throat and tells him to pay what he owes him. Again it says that the servant "fell" on his knees, but he did not fall by accident. The fellow servant kneels in humility and begs for mercy using almost the same words the first servant used with the king. But the forgiven servant refuses to show mercy. Instead, he brings his fellow servant to prison. There were probably other servants watching as this happened.

You might want to show your team an image of a man bowing before another man in humility.

The other servants, who either saw what happened or heard about it, go to the king and tell him what happened. The king is very angry and has the first servant brought to him. He calls him a wicked servant and asks him, "Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?" He assumes the answer to his question is obvious to the servant. The servant should know to have mercy on his fellow servant just as he received mercy from the king.

Then Jesus tells Peter that his Heavenly Father will treat Jesus' followers the same way the king treated the first servant if they refuse to forgive their brothers' sins fully, from their hearts.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Many disciples or only Peter
- A king
- 2 servants
- A group of other servants
- 2 or more Jailers

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Peter comes to Jesus and asks him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" and Jesus answers, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Peter, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like: "Can Jesus really mean that I must forgive so many times? That seems impossible!" or "It sounds like Jesus is saying I should keep forgiving every time my brother sins against me. That will be so hard!" or "Why should I forgive my brother so many times?" [!end] Restart the action.

The king is on his throne in his throne room when his servants bring him another servant who owes him ten thousand talents.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing the servant, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "I deserve to be sold, because there is no way I can back this money, but maybe if I promise the king to pay it all back he will have mercy on me" or "I know I cannot possibly pay back this money, but I will still beg the king for mercy because that is my only hope of saving myself and my family from being sold."

Ask the actor playing Peter, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "That is an unbelievable amount of money! There is no way that servant can repay the king" or "Why is the servant asking the king for more time so he can pay back all the money? There is no way he can repay that money even if he works for the rest of his life!" [!end] Restart the action.

The king has pity on the servant and forgives his entire debt.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Peter, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "I cannot believe the king completely forgave that huge debt!" or "That servant received so much mercy from the king; I am amazed!" [!end] Restart the action.

The first servant goes and finds his fellow servant who owes him a hundred denarii and grabs him by the throat and demands that he pay what he owes him.

Stop the action.

Ask an actor playing the other servants who are nearby, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "I cannot believe this servant is demanding to be repaid his debt when he was just forgiven a debt so much larger than this!" or "How can this servant be so stingy when the king was just so generous with him?" [!end] Restart the action.

The second servant kneels before the first servant in humility and begs for more time to repay his debt, using almost the same words the first servant used when he begged the king for more time.

Stop the action.

Ask an actor playing one of the other servants watching, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "Maybe the first servant will have mercy on the second servant since he begged for mercy the same way just a moment ago" or "Maybe now the first servant will have pity and realize he should have mercy like the king had mercy on him." [!end] Restart the action.

The first servant refuses to have mercy and instead brings the second servant to prison.

Stop the action.

The other servants tell the king what happened and he has the first servant brought to him. He calls him a wicked servant and reminds him that he had pity on him when he begged for mercy. He asks him, "Should you not have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Peter, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like: "I can understand the king's anger" or "I would not want to be that stingy servant!" [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells Peter this is how his Heavenly Father will treat any of his followers who are not willing to forgive their brothers' sins sincerely, from their hearts.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Peter says, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me and I forgive him?"

The word **Lord** here means master. Use the same word here that you have used before when Lord meant master. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Brother here means a fellow believer in Jesus and refers to either a man or a woman.

To understand what Peter is asking, you may want to hear about forgiveness in the Master Glossary.

In Jesus' story, he talks about **servants**, but the word he uses can also mean **slave**. The servants in the story are owned by the king, but some, like the first servant, could have important jobs for the king. The word servant and the word slave are both in the Master Glossary. Since the servants in this story are owned by the king, you might want to use the same word here that you have previously used for slave.

The first servant owes the king ten thousand **talents**. A talent was a measure of the weight of gold or silver that was exchanged as money. A talent was the largest weight used to measure money at the time of this story. It was worth 20 years' wages for a laborer.

In Jesus' story, both servants **fell** on their knees, but this does not mean they accidentally fell. In both cases, the men knelt down on purpose to show humility.

You might want to show your team an image of a man bowing before another man in humility.

The king forgives the servant's **debt**. The word for debt can also be translated as **loan**. A loan is money that one person gives to another expecting that person to pay it back later.

Denarii means more than one **denarius**, which was a Roman coin at the time of this story. One denarius was the typical wage given to a man for a day of labor. Denarius is in the Master Glossary.

You might want to show your team an image of a denarius.

The king calls the first servant **wicked**. Wickedness is when someone intentionally does something harmful against another person. Wickedness is in the Master Glossary. The word wicked describes a person who has done wickedness.

The king asks the first servant, "Shouldn't you have **mercy** on your fellow servant just as I had mercy on you?" The word mercy is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 18:21–35

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3380970 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5697349 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 19:1–12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 19:1–12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus was teaching about forgiveness. Matthew uses the word "now" to tell us that he is beginning a new story.

Discussion questions: In your culture, how do you end a story and begin a new story?

Jesus led his disciples out of the land of Galilee and traveled across river Jordan and came to the land of Judea. Because Jesus is a Jew, like other Galilean Jews would avoid going through Samaria. And many people or large crowds traveled with Jesus from the land of Galilee to the land of Judea for the purpose of being Jesus' disciples, while other people traveled with Jesus only to see what he was doing. And the large crowds who traveled with Jesus saw him heal those people that were sick among them.

Show a map of the land of Galilee across river Jordan into the land of Judea.

However, some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked a question about divorce. Pharisees are important members of religious leaders at the time of Jesus that are strict in observing Jewish religious law given by Moses. And divorce means to formally end or separate a marriage by sending either the wife or husband away.

Discuss: In your culture, who are the people that make laws or rules and regulations? Also discuss who are the people that observe those laws and make sure members of your community obey it?

Then the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Does Moses' law permit a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" Some religious leaders taught that a man could reject his wife after marriage if she was unfaithful sexually. But some religious leaders taught that a man could reject his wife after marriage if there was anything about her he didn't like, even the way she cooked her food! These Pharisees were expecting that Jesus would say that a man can divorce his wife only if she was sexually unfaithful. Any way that Jesus answered, the Pharisees would disagree with him and think it was against the law of Moses and accuse Jesus. This question made the Pharisees proud of their knowledge of the Scripture. But Jesus taught about divorce based on Scripture and responded with a rhetorical question. Jesus said, "You Pharisees had not really read the Scripture with understanding. Surely you have read in the Scriptures that when God made the world, He made people, male and female. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and the two will become one flesh, or united as one person. The word flesh means a man and his wife are united as one. So, Jesus wanted the people listening to understand that a couple that God has connected together or united together, no one should cause them to divorce.

Discuss: In your culture what are the reasons men divorce their wives? What are the rules and regulations of marriage in your culture that if broken can lead to divorce? What does a man give or do to his wife to indicate he has divorce her?

Then the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Why did Moses order a man to give his wife a certificate of divorce?" The Pharisees were referring to a passage from Moses' law that said that a man could divorce his wife simply because she did not please him. The man just had to give her a certificate of divorce, which was a legal writing that recorded the separation and the end of marriage between a man and a woman, and stated that the woman is free to marry again. The Pharisees did not understand that God just *permitted* men to divorce their wives, but did not *order* them to. However, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The reason why the law Moses received from God and wrote down long ago allowed you to divorce was because your hearts were hardened." A hardened heart means someone who is stubborn, sinful or has a disobedience attitude to accept God's teaching.

In your culture, how do you describe a person with a hardened heart? What name do you call someone who does not accept moral rules and regulations?

So, Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But it was not permitted to divorce from the beginning of the world when God made a man and a woman." Jesus emphasized that the reason for divorce is sin. The only acceptable reason for divorce is sexual immorality or marital unfaithfulness. And if the man marries any other woman he commits adultery. Sexual immorality means any unacceptable form of sexual relationships outside of marriage. Jesus made it clear that adultery is the act of sexual relationship with someone who is not your spouse. Therefore, in the law of Moses, adultery is totally condemned.

Discuss: In your culture, what are some unacceptable forms of sexual relationships?

Note that the topic of this paragraph has changed from divorce to marriage. Then the disciples said to Jesus, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." But Jesus said to His disciples, "Not everyone can do what you suggest," or not everyone will accept remaining unmarried, only those who have been given the ability or strength not to marry.

Discuss: In your culture, what are some of the reasons why men do not marry?

Then Jesus said, "There are different reasons why men do not marry." For example, there are eunuchs. Eunuchs means men who are born without sexual body parts from birth. These people are unable to have sexual relationships with a woman. The second reason is some eunuchs have their sexual parts cut off by other men, or men castrated them. In the non-Jewish cultures of that time when Matthew was telling this story, a king or ruler wanted men who were safe to take care of his wives. The king or ruler will have one of his servants remove the men's testicles. That made the men eunuch. Then the ruler or king would appoint such men to take care of his wives.

Discuss: In your culture, if you have examples of people who are born without sexual parts from birth. Discuss in your culture if there are castrated men?

However, Jesus said, "There are eunuchs who are actually men who choose to live like eunuchs." This means that they choose to not have sexual relations with a woman for the sake of the kingdom of God or to serve God better. "kingdom of God" means where God exercises power over creation and people. Then Jesus concluded by saying, "The person who is able to accept this way of life of being a eunuch should accept it."

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples traveled from Galilee to Judea and Jesus healed the sick in Judea.

Second scene: Pharisees approached Jesus about divorce.

Third scene: Pharisees further asked Jesus about certificate of divorce.

Fourth scene: Jesus and his disciples talk about those who do not get married.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples
- Crowd
- Pharisees

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Matthew tells us that when Jesus finished talking about a parable of the unmerciful servant, he led His disciples out of the land of Galilee and traveled across the river Jordan and came to the land of Judea. And many people traveled with Jesus, and Jesus healed those people that were sick among them.

Matthew tells us in this second scene that some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked a question if Moses' law permits a man to divorce his wife after marriage if she is sexually unfaithful. Matthew further tells us that the Pharisees were expecting that Jesus would say that his wife was sexually unfaithful to disagree with Jesus against the law of Moses and accuse Jesus. But Jesus responded by what he taught about divorce based on Scripture and said to the Pharisees, surely you have read in the Scriptures that when God made the world, He made people, male and female. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and the two will become one flesh. So, Jesus wanted the people listening to understand that a couple that God has connected together or united together, no one should cause them to divorce.

In this third scene, Pharisees further asked Jesus about the certificate of divorce in the law of Moses. Matthew let us know that the Pharisees asked such a question without understanding what was written in the law of

Moses. Then Jesus responded to the Pharisees saying, "The reason why the law Moses received from God and wrote down long ago allowed you to divorce was because your hearts were hard." Matthew further let us know that the Pharisees are stubborn, sinful and showing disobedient attitude when it comes to accept God's teaching and the only acceptable reason for divorce in the law of Moses is when sexual immorality has been committed. And if the man marries another woman he commits adultery. And the Jesus disciples came to understand that it is very difficult to just end a marriage, unless adultery is committed or else you just remain in the marriage even if you are not happy about the marriage.

In this last scene, Jesus let the disciples know that there are different reasons why men do not marry, and He compared men who do not marry to eunuchs. Some people are truly eunuchs because they are born without sexual organs and are unable to have sexual relationships with a woman. Some men become eunuchs when they have their sexual parts cut off by other men or men castrated them. Some men choose to live like eunuchs not to marry or decide not to have any sexual relationship with a woman because they feel like it will help them serve God's Kingdom better.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version

In this session the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples traveled from Galilee to Judea and Jesus healed the sick in Judea.

Second scene: Pharisees approached Jesus about divorce.

Third scene: The Pharisees further approached Jesus about given certificate of divorce.

Fourth scene: Jesus talk about those who do not get married.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples
- Crowd
- Pharisees

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story starts after Jesus finished telling a parable about the unmerciful servant. He traveled with his disciples from the land of Galilee across the river Jordan to the land of Judea and large crowds traveled with Jesus. In Judea, Jesus healed the sick people among the crowd.

Try to act out Jesus traveling with his disciples and large crowds followed him from Galilee to Judea and healed the sick people among the crowds.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Interesting."

Also ask the actors playing the large crowds that were healed, "How do you feel?" You may hear things like, "I'm no longer sick." [End] Restart the action.

In the second scene, some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked Him if Moses' law permitted a man to divorce his wife after marriage if found sexually unfaithful. But Jesus responded by what he taught about divorce based on Scripture. That when God made the world, He made people, male and female. This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and the two will become one flesh.

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing some Pharisees who approached Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I want to catch Jesus saying something that will get him in trouble."

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I feel sorry for them," "I have compassion for them," "I feel I need to educate them some more." [!end] Restart the action.

Then the Pharisees approached Jesus again with another question: "Why did Moses order a man to give his wife a certificate of divorce?" and Jesus responded by saying, "The reason why the law Moses received from God and wrote down long ago allowed you to divorce was because your hearts were hardened." The Pharisees are stubborn, sinful and showing disobedient attitude when it comes to accept God's teaching and the only acceptable reason for divorce in the law of Moses is when sexual immorality has been committed. And if the man marries another woman commits adultery. So, Jesus' disciples came to understand that it is very difficult to just end a marriage, except adultery is committed or else you just remain in the marriage even if you are not happy about the marriage.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the Pharisees, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I feel I'm rude," "I feel this time around he should fall into the trap."

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I feel disrespected," "I feel that Pharisees are getting back at me." [!end] Restart the action

In this last scene, Jesus' disciples thought and said to Jesus, "It is better not to be married at all." But Jesus let the disciples know that there are different reasons why men do not marry and remain eunuchs. Some people are eunuchs because they are born without sexual organs and unable to have sexual relationships with a woman. While some eunuchs have their sexual parts cut off by other men or men castrated them and Jesus concluded that there are eunuchs who chose not to marry or decided not to have any sexual relationship with a woman for the sake of the kingdom of God or to serve God better.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm happy they get to hear and know the truth."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Matthew tells us that when Jesus finished talking about this parable of the unmerciful servant, Jesus led his disciples out of the land of Galilee and traveled across river Jordan and came to the land of Judea.

Then some **Pharisees** approached Jesus, and asked a question about **divorce**. The Pharisees were a type of religious leaders. Translate Pharisee in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that Pharisee is in the Master Glossary and divorce means a permanent separation between a husband and wife.

When Jesus said, "Haven't you read," he is asking them if they have read their Scriptures, which are the laws God gave Moses. The **Law of Moses** are the rules from God that Moses shared with the Jewish people to tell them how to live. Sometimes the word Law is mentioned alone, but it refers to the Law God gave the Jewish people through Moses. Note that there is a difference between the Jews' law and the Romans' law. The law is in the Master Glossary.

Adultery is when a husband or wife has sexual relationship with anyone other than their husband or wife. If a man had a sexual relationship with another man's wife, he was considered to have committed adultery and sin against the husband, not the woman. When a man had sexual relationship with unmarried women, this word for adultery was not used. However, anytime a woman had sexual relationship with a man who was not her husband, it was considered adultery. Jesus, however, considered that both men and women are guilty of

adultery when they have sexual relationships with anyone outside of their marriage. Refer to Master Glossary for complete definition of adultery.

Disciples means devoted followers of a teacher. Jesus' closest followers were with him for much of his public ministry. Translate disciples in the same way you have in previous passages. Disciples is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 19:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3851780 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6831447 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 19:13–30

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 19:13–30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

After Jesus finished teaching about marriage and divorce, some parents brought their little children to Jesus, so that Jesus would put his hand on the children and ask God to bless the children. In Jesus' time, it was normal for a religious leader to put his hands on someone's head and give them a blessing. But Jesus' disciples, or closest followers, told the parents to stop bothering Jesus and wanted to stop the parents from bringing the children to Jesus. But Jesus said to his disciples, "Permit the little children to come to me, and do not prevent the children, because people who are like these children belong to the kingdom of heaven." Jesus is saying that people should make themselves unimportant like children seem to be, or who are dependent on God like children who are dependent on their parents. When people make themselves like children in this way, they can truly allow God to rule over them as their king. That means that God's Kingdom truly belongs to them—they are a part of it. So, Jesus placed his hand on the children's heads and blessed them, then Jesus left the place.

Stop and discuss in your culture: How do little children receive blessings? Also discuss in your culture situations where people denied little children opportunities to receive blessing by a religious teacher.

Now Jesus talks with someone in a high position—the opposite of what the children were. A rich young man approached Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good things must I do to gain eternal life?" The rich young man believed that Jesus was a religious teacher. We know that because he called him "teacher," a title that refers to a religious teacher who has authority to teach the things about God. The rich young man wants to know what he needs to do in order to get eternal life, or life forever with God in his kingdom. And Jesus replied to the rich young man and said, "Why do you ask me what good things to do? God is the only person that is good. And if you want to have eternal life, obey the commandments of God." Jesus was referring to the laws that God gave to his people through Moses. Then the young man asked Jesus again, "Which of the commands should I obey?" Jesus listed the commands that are about keeping good relationships with other people. Jesus said, "Do not kill on purpose, do not have sexual relationship with someone who is not your wife, do not steal, do not say what

is not true about your neighbor, do and say what honours your father and mother and be kind to people around you as you are kind to yourself.

Stop here and discuss in your culture important rules and regulations about relationships with others that you should not break.

Then the rich young man said to Jesus, "I have obeyed all these commandments, what more do I need to do in my life?" Now Jesus gives the man something even harder to do. He says that the man should be perfect, or fully mature and complete in his relationship with God. Then the man should sell all his property and give the money to the poor. The man will have riches in heaven, or eternal life forever with God, if he does that. But then Jesus tells him to do more than just be kind to poor people-Jesus says he should act on his belief and come and follow Jesus. When the rich young man heard this, he became sad and left because he was a rich young man, and he cannot sell all his properties.

Stop here and discuss in your culture things rich people find difficult to give poor people.

So, Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth," or "Listen very carefully," it will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven." Then Jesus said to his disciples again, "A camel can go through the hole in a needle more easily than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." When Jesus' disciples heard this, they were very surprised and said, "In that case, then no one can be saved," or have eternal life and enter the kingdom of heaven. It seems like Jesus is saying it is impossible to enter the kingdom of God if someone is rich. Jesus' disciples were probably shocked, because in Jewish tradition people thought that rich people must have been followers of God if they were rich. So, Jesus looked at his disciples and said, "It is not possible for people to save themselves, but with God all things are possible, including saving people."

Stop here and show the translation team a picture of a camel and the hole in a needle.

Peter, one of the disciples, reminded Jesus that the disciples are different from this rich young man. Peter says, "We have abandoned everything we owned to become your disciples, so what will be our reward?" Jesus said to his disciples, "I assure you that when God makes the world new again in the final days of this earth, I, the Son of Man, will rule as king in God's kingdom." Jesus uses the picture of a king sitting on a throne to rule. Then Jesus says that his twelve disciples will rule over Israel or make decisions about the actions of the people of Israel.

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what positions in society does a religious leader give as a reward for following him?

And Jesus said to his disciples, "All believers who have left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children, properties for my sake will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life. But many people who are respected low now will be respected high in the future.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Parents brought their children for Jesus to bless them.

Second scene: The rich young man approached Jesus.

Third scene: Jesus spoke to his disciples about the kingdom of heaven.

Fourth scene: Peter asked Jesus what will be the reward of following Jesus.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Parents
- Little children
- Rich young man
- Disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

We don't know how long this was after the last teaching of Jesus. Matthew tells us that some parents brought their children to Jesus so that Jesus will lay his hand on the children and bless the children, or express wishes for good things for them. Jesus' disciples wanted to stop the parents and their children from receiving their blessings from Jesus. But Jesus told the disciples to allow the children to come to him, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like children.

In the second scene, Jesus goes away, and then sometime later, a rich young man approaches Jesus to know what good things he needs to do to have eternal life. Jesus asked a question: "Why ask me about what is good?" Jesus did not expect an answer to this question. Instead Jesus is rebuking the man for referring to something besides God as good. God is the only truly good thing or person. Then Jesus' disciples used a question to show their surprise. They say: "Then who can be saved?" They do not expect an answer; instead, they are saying that they think no one can be saved. Jesus told the rich man if he wants to have eternal life, he should obey the commandments of God such as, do not kill on purpose, do not have sexual relationship with someone who is not your wife, do not steal, do not say what is not true about your neighbor, do and say what honours your father and mother and be kind to people around you as you are kind to yourself. These commandments all referred to the way people relate to others around them. That's probably why Jesus chose these commandments from the many Jewish laws. The rich young man told Jesus that he has obeyed all the commandments mentioned. Then Jesus told the rich young man to sell all his properties and give the money to the poor in order to receive riches in heaven. The rich young man became sad and left.

Then Jesus said to his disciples in the third scene that it will be difficult for a rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven. And that it will be easier for a camel to go through the hole in a needle more easily than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says this twice for emphasis. First he says it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and then he gives a word picture to illustrate this. When he says it will be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, he says it will be easier to do this than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. Here, kingdom of heaven and kingdom of God refer to the same thing. Jesus' disciples used a question to show their surprise. They say: "Then who can be saved?" They do not expect an answer; instead, they are saying that they think no one can be saved. But Jesus told his disciples that, it is not possible for people to save themselves, but with God all things are possible including saving people.

In the fourth scene, Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, asked Jesus, "We have abandoned everything to follow you Jesus, what will be our reward?" Jesus said to his disciples, when God makes the world new again, the disciples will sit on their throne beside Jesus' glorious throne and judge the tribes of Israel. Then Jesus further said to his disciples, "All believers who have left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children, properties for His sake will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life."

Then Jesus summarizes his teaching. He says that many who think they are important will be least in God's Kingdom. And many who are the least now in God's Kingdom will be the most important. This is Jesus' summary of everything he has been saying in this passage.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualise this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Parents
- Little children
- Rich young man
- Disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story. The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story started with some parents who brought their little children to Jesus for Jesus to lay his hand on the children and bless the children. But Jesus' disciples told the parents to stop bothering Jesus and wanted to stop the parents from bringing the children to Jesus. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Permit the little children to come to me, and do not prevent the children, because people who are like these children belong to the kingdom of heaven."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing some disciples, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "We were shocked and felt we just wanted to help Jesus. He's so busy that we didn't want small children to bother him, because they are not important." [!end] Restart the action.

The team should continue to act out. In the second scene a rich young man approached Jesus and said, "Teacher, what good things must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to the rich young man, "Why do you ask me what good things are to do? God is the only person that is good. And if you want to have eternal life, obey the commandments of God." Then the young man asked Jesus again, "Which of the commands should I obey?" And Jesus said to the rich young man, "Do not kill on purpose, do not have sexual relationship with someone who is not your wife, do not steal, do not say what is not true about your neighbour, do and say what honours your father and mother and be kind to people around you as you are kind to yourself." Then the rich young man said to Jesus, "I have obeyed all these commandments, what more do I need to do in my life to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to the rich young man, "If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your properties and give the money to poor people and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and be my disciple." When the rich young man heard this, he became sad and left.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "I'm full of compassion for the rich young man." [!end] Restart the action.

In the third scene, Jesus said to his disciples, "Listen very attentively, it will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven and it will be easier for a camel to go through the hole in a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing disciples, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "We were very surprised how difficult it will be for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven," "We thought wealth showed that the man was a follower of God! We are surprised that it's not!" [!end] Restart the action.

In this fourth scene, continue to act out the scene. Peter said to Jesus, "We have abandoned everything we owned to become your disciples, so what will be our reward?" Jesus said to his disciples, "I assure you that

when God makes the world or earth new again, the son of man will sit on the glorious throne. You, my twelve disciples, will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And all believers who have left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children, properties for my sake will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life. But many people who are respected low now will be respected high in the future."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "I'm happy to give the disciples an assurance."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

But Jesus' **disciples** told the parents to stop bothering Jesus and wanted to stop the parents from bringing the children to Jesus. "Disciples" refers to Jesus' closest followers who travel with Jesus, learning from Jesus and sometimes being sent to preach the good news. Translate disciples in the same way you have before, and remember that disciples is in the Master Glossary.

But Jesus said to his disciples, "Permit the little children to come to me, and do not prevent the children, because people who are like these children belong to the **kingdom of heaven**." Kingdom of heaven means where God rules over people. Translate kingdom of heaven in the same way you have before, and remember that kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary.

After Jesus left the place, then a rich young man approached Jesus and said, "**Teacher**, what good things must I do to gain **eternal life**?" The word teacher refers to a religious teacher who has authority to teach the things about God, and the word eternal life means unending life in the kingdom of heaven. Translate teacher and eternal life in the same way you have before, and remember that teacher and eternal life are in the Master Glossary.

"If you want to have eternal life, obey the **commandments of God**." The word commandments of God means laws that God gave to his people through Moses.

Jesus says that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the **kingdom of God**. Kingdom of God means the same things as kingdom of heaven. The word heaven is often used when people did not want to say the name of God. However, here Jesus says the name of God and says the kingdom of God instead of kingdom of heaven.

"I assure you that when God makes the world or earth new again, **the son of man** will sit on the **glorious throne**." The words "son of man" means Jesus himself and "glorious throne" means king's chair to rule, or reigning with Jesus. The words Son of Man and glory are in the Master Glossary.

"You, my twelve disciples, will also sit on twelve thrones **judging** the twelve tribes of Israel." The word judging means ruling or governing in deciding whether people are guilty or innocent with Jesus.

"All believers who have left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or properties for my sake will receive a hundred times more and will inherit **eternal life**." Eternal life is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 19:13–30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3955689 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6994920 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 20:1–16

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 20:1–16 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?

5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the last passage, Matthew tells the story of how a rich young man did not expect to have to give up everything to follow Jesus. In this story, Jesus tells his disciples a story, or a parable, that explains how God's Kingdom works differently than we would expect. Jesus wants his disciples to understand how the kingdom of heaven works.

In a kingdom, a king rules a group of people. In God's kingdom, God rules his people. God's rules are just and fair and loving. In this parable Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went to the public area of his town very early in the morning. He was looking for some men to hire and work in his vineyard. A vineyard is a field where grapevines are planted. Grapevines are long, woody vines that produce a fruit called grapes. In this story, the vineyard owner is like God. The vineyard is like God's kingdom. This land owner and the workers agreed that he would pay each of them the normal denarius for a day's work. A denarius refers to the Roman coin made up of silver, and it is a day's payment for hard work. And the land owner sent the hired workers into the vineyard to work. Then about 9 o'clock in the morning, the land owner went back to the public square and saw other men standing around with no work to do. The land owner said to the workers, "You men also can go into my vineyard and work, and whatever is fair for your wage, I will give it to you. So, the men agreed and went to work in the vineyard. In this story, the time period of hiring workers for a day is from sunrise to sunset.

Stop here and show a picture of a vineyard.

Stop here and discuss what kind of people seek a daily job you can find in your culture.

The owner of the land went out again at about 12 o'clock noon and again at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and hired more workers to go work in his vineyard. And about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the landowner went to the public square and found still other people standing around. The land owner asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" The people standing around said, "Because no one gave us work to do." These people were probably hired last because they were not the most desired workers. These were truly the least of all the workers. Then the land owner said to the people standing, "You also can go into my vineyard and work." And when it was evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call all the workers and give them their wages beginning with the last workers hired and ending with the first workers hired."

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what is the amount paid to people who work for a daily pay or who do a daily job?

So, when the men who started work about 5 o'clock in the afternoon came, each of the workers received the same denarius. When the workers who were hired first came to get their pay, the first hired workers expected they would be paid more than the hired workers who came last, but each of the hired workers also received the same wage. However, when the first hired workers received their denarius, the first hired workers began to grumble against the land owner and said, "These men whom you hired last worked only an hour and you paid these last hired workers the same wages you paid us the first hired workers. We the first hired workers have done all of the hard work all day and in the hot sun." But the land owner said to one of the first hired workers, "My friend, I have not cheated you, remember, you and I agreed that I would pay you a normal day's denarius. Now take your pay and go home. It is my wish to pay these last hired workers the same pay I also gave you the first hired workers. I have the right to choose what I want to do with my own money and don't be jealous because I am good to these last hired workers." Jesus then said to his disciples, people who are low now will become high and the people who are great now will become humble. Jesus is again reminding his disciples that in God's Kingdom, the roles are not what we would all expect.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has five scenes.

First scene: The land owner hired workers very early in the morning.

Second scene: About 9 o'clock in the morning, the vineyard owner sent workers into the vineyard.

Third scene: At 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, and 5 o'clock, the vineyard owner hired more workers into the vineyard.

Fourth scene: The manager paid all the hired workers the same wage.

Fifth scene: The land owner responded to the hired worker grumbling.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Hired workers
- Land owner
- The foreman, or manager of the vineyard

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like an owner of the land who went to the public square very early in the morning. The public square is the public area of his town. So, the owner of the land went to the public area very early in the morning when the sun was rising and hired men to work in his vineyard. So, the hired men agreed to work in the vineyards of the land owner for a daily wage.

Thereafter, in the second scene Matthew tells that the land owner went back to the public square at around 9 o'clock in the morning and saw other men standing without having any work to do. And the men standing agreed to be hired for a fair wage to work in the vineyard.

In the third scene, the owner of the land went out again to the public square at 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, and 5 o'clock in the afternoon to hire more workers to work in his vineyard. The owner of the land was surprised to find some people still standing and he asked, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" Then the people standing said, "Because no one gave us work to do. Then, the land owner sent them into his vineyard to work.

In the fourth scene, when it was evening time, the owner of the vineyard sent his manager to call all the workers, and the owner of the land paid the workers their wages, beginning with the last workers hired and ending with the first workers hired. Then the first hired workers began to grumble against the landowner: "Why did he pay all workers the same wages after we, the first hired workers, had done all the work in the sun?"

In the fifth scene, the first hired workers became angry because the landowner paid everyone the same amount. The landowner asked, "Friend, didn't you agree to work all day for the usual wages?" The landowner expects them to say "yes" here. The landowner uses the term "friend" to politely address the hired workers. "You agreed to work all day for the usual wage." Then the landowner asks, "Is it against the law for me to do what I want with my money? Should you be jealous because I am kind to others?" The landowner means that he can do whatever he wants with his money. The people should not be jealous of his kindness to others. The landowner is reminding the workers that he has the right and authority to do whatever he wants. Then Jesus closes the story with a statement of the main point of the story. Jesus is changing the way people think about God's Kingdom. It is different from the kingdoms in this world. Jesus says that the last, or those who seem to be unimportant, will be first, or most important. The first, or those that seem to be important now, will be last, or least important, in God's Kingdom.

Stop here and discuss as a team: How do you summarize the main point of a story? Does it come at the end or beginning of your story? How do people know it is the main point?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Hired workers
- Land owner
- Manager or foreman

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story. The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story started with the land owner who went to the public square very early in the morning to look for some men to hire and work in his vineyard. The land owner and the workers agreed that payment would be the normal wage for a day's work. And the land owner sent the hired workers into his vineyard to work.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the hired workers, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "We are so happy to be employed." [!end] Restart the action.

Act out the second scene. Then around 9 0'clock in the morning, the owner of the land went back to the public square and saw other men standing around with no work to do. So the land owner said to the workers, "You men also can go into my vineyard and work, and whatever is fair for your wage, I will give it to you. So, the men agreed and went to work in the vineyard.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the hired workers, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "We are so happy to find work to do." [!end] Restart the action.

Let the actors continue with the third scene, the owner of the land went out again at about 12 o'clock and again at about 3 o'clock and hired more workers to go work in his vineyard. And about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the landowner went to the public square and found still other people standing around. The land owner asked them, "Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?" The people standing around said, "Because no one gave us work to do." Then the land owner said to the people standing, "You also can go into my vineyard and work."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the hired workers, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "We are very lucky and happy to find someone willing to give us work to do." [!end] Restart the action.

In the fourth scene, continue to act out the scene and when it was evening, the owner of the vineyard asked his manager to call all the workers and give the workers their wages beginning with the last workers hired and ending with the first workers hired. Then when the men who started work at 5 o'clock in the afternoon came,

each of the workers received the same wage. So, the workers who were hired first came to get their pay, the first hired workers expected they would be paid more than the hired workers who came last, but each of the hired workers also received the same wage. So, when the first hired workers received their wages, they began to grumble against the land owner and said, "These men whom you hired last worked only an hour and you paid these last hired workers the same wages you paid us the first hired workers. We the first hired workers have done all of the hard work all day and in the hot sun."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the hired workers, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "This is an unfair payment after doing all the work in the hot sun. This owner of the vineyard is a straight out cheat." [!end] Restart the action.

In the last scene, the land owner said to one of the first hired workers, "My friend, I have not cheated you. Remember, you and I agreed that I would pay you a normal day's wage. Now take your pay and go home. It is my wish to pay these last hired workers the same pay I also gave you the first hired workers. I have the right to choose what I want to do with my own money and don't be jealous because I am good to these last hired workers."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the hired workers, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "This is an unfair payment, and can't you figure out the time difference? How can one be paid the same wages after burning out in the sun? No one appreciates the hard work we did!" [!end] Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus said that the **kingdom of heaven** is like a landowner who went to the public square very early in the morning to look for some men to hire and work in his **vineyard**.

The **kingdom of heaven** refers to a place where a king rules a group of people. **God's kingdom** is now people following Jesus as their king, helping each other, and spreading Jesus' love to others. Translate the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God in the same way you have in the previous passages, and remember the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

A **vineyard** is a field where grapevines are planted. Grapevines are long, woody vines that produce a fruit called grapes. People used sticks to hold the vines off the ground so that the fruit hung down without touching the ground. Refer to the Master Glossary for complete definition of vineyard.

This land owner and the workers agreed that he would pay each of them the normal **denarius** for a day's work. A denarius refers to the Roman coin made up of silver, and it is a day's payment for hard work. Refer to Master Glossary for complete definition of denarius.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 20:1–16

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3006507 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5289621 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 20:17–28

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 20:17–28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story happens after Jesus told his disciples the parable of the vineyard workers. It is close to Passover time, the important Jewish festival where the Jewish people remember when God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. Many people are going to Jerusalem for the festival. Jesus and his twelve disciples are traveling with a larger crowd of pilgrims. They are traveling "up" to Jerusalem because Jerusalem is at a higher level than where they are. Jesus takes his disciples aside to speak to them privately. He wants to warn them about what is going to happen to him. Jesus says that the Son of Man will be delivered, or betrayed, to the chief priests and teachers of the religious law. The disciples know that Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, or the promised savior that the Jews have been waiting for. Jesus goes into great detail about what will happen. The Jewish authorities will decide that Jesus is guilty, and then they will "hand him over," or give him to the Gentile, the non-Jewish, authorities to carry out the execution. In those days, the Roman Empire ruled over the land of the Jews and surrounding areas. The Romans were the only ones allowed to execute criminals. Jesus tells his disciples that these Gentiles, or non-Jewish people, would mock him, flog him, and crucify him. Crucifixion was the common way to execute low criminals. It involved nailing victims to two pieces of wood and hanging them up until they died. Then Jesus reminds his disciples that he will be raised back to life.

Stop here and show a map of the road from Jericho to Jerusalem.

Discuss in your culture how those in power would put someone to death if found guilty of a crime.

James and John were two disciples of Jesus. Their father was Zebedee. Their mother came to Jesus and knelt down to show Jesus respect and to ask him a favor. "What is it you want?" Jesus asked the mother of James and John. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." We do not hear about James and John's mother after she asks this. The seats on a king's right and left side are traditionally places where those in high positions of honor and authority sit. Then Jesus said to James and John, "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" Jesus uses a cup as a symbol of suffering. Here Jesus is asking if James and John have the strength or power to suffer like Jesus will soon suffer. Jesus knows that he will become king through his suffering on the cross. "We can," James and John answered. So, Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." Jesus is simply saying here that only God, his father, will make the decision about who will have places of honor and authority in God's Kingdom. We do not know who he will choose or how God will make the decision about who sits there. What we do know is that Jesus is not the one who will make the decision.

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what characteristics does a person have, or what does a person do, who has high honor or power?

So, when the other ten disciples heard about what James and John asked, they became angry with the two brothers. The other disciples were likely angry because they also wanted places of high honor in God's Kingdom. Jesus called his disciples together. He now explains the contrast between the way authorities in the world use their power and the way that God's Kingdom works. Jesus says that the rulers of the Gentiles, or non-Jews, harshly rule over their people. Then Jesus gives a command: "You must act differently." Jesus' disciples who want to be a leader must serve others. His disciples who want to have the highest position must be like a slave, the lowest type of person in society. This is the opposite of what rulers in the world do. But Jesus shows us an example of how to serve others. Even though Jesus is the Son of Man, or promised savior, Jesus serves people by dying to set people free from their sin.

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what do people do to become the most important person in the community? Also, in your culture, discuss how rulers and their people work together. Talk about who serves who? Who has power? Tell a story about a time when a ruler did something to serve one of the people in his area. Do rulers serve their people or are the people that serve their rulers?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his twelve disciples were on their way up to Jerusalem and Jesus tells them again that he will die there.

Second scene: The mother of James and John came to Jesus and asked Jesus to make her sons sit in places of honor next to him in his Kingdom.

Third scene: The remaining ten disciples became angry with James and John.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Twelve disciples, including James and John
- Mother of James and John

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus and his twelve disciples and a large crowd were on their way up to Jerusalem. Jerusalem was at a higher elevation than the surrounding countryside, so people said they went "up" to Jerusalem when they traveled there. Jerusalem was the center of Jewish religious activity, so there are many people walking to Jerusalem on the road. At some point, Jesus takes his twelve disciples aside and speaks to them privately. He warns them that he, the Son of Man, will be killed in Jerusalem. It is important to remember that someone will betray Jesus to the chief priests and teachers of religious law. Then the chief priests and teachers will send Jesus to the Roman government authorities. Then the government authorities will mock, flog, and crucify Jesus. Jesus explains this in great detail.

In the second scene, the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons. The mother kneels down, with her face on the ground, to show respect to Jesus. Jesus asks her what she wants, and she responds. She asks Jesus to let her sons sit on Jesus' right and left side-the two places of great honor. Then Jesus said to James and John, "You don't know what you are asking. Do you have strength or power to suffer like Jesus will soon suffer?" It is important to remember that the cup was a symbol of suffering. You may need to say, "Can you drink from the same cup of suffering that I drink from?" or "Can you suffer with me as though we both drank suffering from the same cup?" Jesus uses a question to emphasize that people do not get to high positions in his Kingdom in the normal ways that people get to high positions in the world's kingdoms. "We can," James and John answered. So, Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."

In the third scene, when the ten disciples heard that James and John were asking for seats of honor, they became angry with James and John. But Jesus called his twelve disciples to gather around him. Jesus made a strong contrast between the way the rulers in the world governments show their power and the way Jesus' disciples should act. Jesus first tells his disciples that they know how leaders in the world act. It is obvious everywhere. Then Jesus says two similar things to emphasize what happens in the world. He says that rulers in the world lord or impose their power over people, and that officials show great authority over their people. Then Jesus makes a strong contrast. He gives a command: "You will not act that way." He again says two similar things to emphasize what his disciples should do: If they want to be a leader, they should serve and take care of others. If they want to be in highest position, or "first," they should be like a slave, a person in lowest position. Then Jesus gives an example. He says he is the same way: Jesus himself serves others. He is the Son of Man, but he came and suffered so that many people can be free from the punishment for their sins.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Tell a story where you are making a strong contrast between the way one person or group of people acts and the way another person or group acts. Pay attention to the way you tell this story. What do you emphasize?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his twelve disciples were on their way up to Jerusalem.

Second scene: The mother of James and John came to Jesus and beg for favor.

Third scene: The remaining ten disciples became angry with James and John.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Twelve disciples
- Mother of James and John
- James and John

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story. The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In this story, start acting when Jesus and his twelve disciples were going up to Jerusalem during the Passover festival. Jesus and his twelve disciples are traveling with a large crowd of people all going to the festival. Jesus talks to his disciples privately. He says that people will betray the Son of Man to the chief priests and teachers of religious law. They will condemn him to death. They will give him to the non-Jewish authorities who will mock Jesus, flog him, and crucify him. Then on the third day Jesus will be raised back to life.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing twelve disciples, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "Oh no! This is very surprising and unbelievable that someone among us will betray Jesus." [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons. She bows in front of Jesus with her face to the ground and asks a favor. "What is it you want?" Jesus asked the mother of James and John. She said, "Grant, that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." Then Jesus said to James and John, "You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink from the cup of suffering I am going to drink?" "We can," James and John answered. So, Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father God."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the mother of James and John, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "I hope Jesus will give my sons some kind consideration. I want to be proud of my family."

Ask the actors playing James and John, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "Our mother is a good fighter. We are happy she spoke to Jesus. We have been with Jesus for a long time. We have worked hard. We deserve to be treated well in God's Kingdom." [!end] Restart the action.

In the third scene, continuing to act, when the other ten disciples heard about what James and John had asked, they became angry with the two brothers. Then Jesus called the twelve disciples together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over their people, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not

so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom to rescue many people from their sin.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing James and John, "How do you feel?" You might hear things like, "Please take it easy my fellow disciples. Kindly put my mother out of this matter and don't be angry with us and our mother." Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How you are feeling?" You might hear things like, "Please enough of this, these are simple matters I can easily respond to, and you all will have a good answer. I am so sad that my disciples still do not understand how my kingdom is different from the world." [!end] Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Now Jesus and his twelve **disciples** were on the road up to Jerusalem. Disciples are Jesus' closest followers, learning from him and devoted to the teaching of Jesus. Translate disciples in the same way that you have in previous passages, and remember that disciples is in the Master Glossary. Some translations only say "the Twelve," but this is referring to the twelve disciples.

Jesus then says that someone will betray him, the **Son of Man**, to the **chief priests and teachers of religious law**. Remember that the "Son of Man" is one of Jesus' favorite ways to talk about himself. In the book of the prophet Daniel, God gives all authority and power to the Son of Man. Jesus probably likes the term because the title can refer to an ordinary human being or supernatural. Translate Son of Man, chief priests, and teachers of the law in the same way that you have in previous passages, and remember that these words are in the Master Glossary.

The mother of James and John comes to Jesus and asks, "Promise me that one of these two sons of mine will sit at your right hand and the other at your left hand in your **kingdom**." She knows that Jesus will become king in God's kingdom, the time and place where God rules his people. Remember Kingdom or kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

But Jesus called his twelve disciples to gather around him and said, "You know that the ruler of the **Gentiles**, or **non-Jews**, rules over the people and those in higher position also rule or govern their people." Gentiles refers to any non-Jewish person. In most of the Gospels "Gentiles" refers to the Romans. Translate Gentile in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that Gentiles or non-Jew is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that whoever wants to become great must be a **servant**, or someone who does things for others. And whoever wants to be most important should be a **slave**, or like someone who is owned by someone else and has no ability to make their own choices. Translate servant and slave in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that both servant and slave are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that the Son of Man has come as a **ransom** for many. Here Jesus says that he serves people by rescuing them from having to pay the punishment for their sins. Jesus does this by dying on the cross. Be sure that the word you use for ransom does not mean that Jesus paid money. This word for ransom means that Jesus did an action that allowed people to be free.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 20:17–28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3317082 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5753131 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 20:29–34

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 20:29–34 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus challenged his disciples that whoever wants to be the greatest must first be like a servant. Jesus and his disciples are on their way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. The Passover is a major Jewish religious festival, so many people were traveling on the same road to Jerusalem at this time. Sometime later, Jesus and his disciples arrived at a town called Jericho and a large crowd followed as they were leaving. Remember that Jericho was the last village or town the traveler to Jerusalem would go through. Anyone going to Jerusalem from the east would go through Jericho.

Stop and show a map of Jericho to Jerusalem.

Then two blind people were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, the two blind people shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" The Son of David is a title that means that Jesus was a descendant of the well-known Jewish King David. The Jews used this title to refer to the Messiah, or Promised Savior, because God promised that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. David became the second king of Israel. He united Israel after he defeated Israel's enemies and restored the worship of God in Jerusalem. The two blind people were showing great respect for Jesus by calling him Lord, or master. They showed that they believed he could heal them by calling him Son of David. That meant that they believed he could be the Promised Savior, or Messiah.

It was a culture in Jerusalem for people to give to or to help poor people during the Passover celebration. That meant that the Passover celebration was a good time for the blind people sitting by the roadside to beg Jesus to help them. The blind men knew who Jesus was, expected him to be able to heal them, and felt it appropriate to address him as Son of David. The crowd did not want the blind people to bother Jesus. They made a great effort to warn the two blind people to be silent, but the two blind people refused to keep silent. The two blind people shouted even louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us."

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, talk about how leaders and people treat those who are sick or different. What happens in a public place when these sick people call out for help? How do people treat them?

Jesus heard them and stopped walking. The moment Jesus heard the two blind people, he stopped and gave the two blind people attention and responded to their request. Again this shows that in the kingdom of heaven, God gives high value to the kind of people that others do not consider to be valuable on earth. And many people would be surprised in heaven to see that what men least value or give honor to, that's exactly what God values and gives honor to the most. So, Jesus called the two blind people to come and Jesus said to them, "What would you like me to do for you?" The two blind people said to Jesus, "Lord, let our eyes be opened, or let us see again." Here the blind men speak to Jesus in a respectful way when they call him Lord. Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they were able to see again and followed Jesus. These two blind men probably started to follow Jesus as his disciples. At this time, Jesus might be concerned about his arrival in Jerusalem and about his death, but he still has compassion to help the two blind men asking for his help. Many people do not believe in Jesus' power to heal. But now, after Jesus heals the two blind men, these people now have no doubt that Jesus has the power to heal.

Stop here and discuss in your culture: What would someone in need of help say or do to receive help from someone who has authority or power?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho.

Second scene: The blind people call out to Jesus and the crowd rebukes them.

Third scene: Jesus had compassion for the blind people.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The crowd
- The two blind people.

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus and his disciples arrived in a town called Jericho. Then they left the town, and a large crowd followed as they were leaving. Then two blind people were sitting beside the road when they heard that Jesus was passing by. The two blind people shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David."

Scene two: Then the crowd rebuked the two blind people. They told them, "Be quiet!" but the two blind people shouted even louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

In scene three, Jesus heard them and stopped walking. So, Jesus called the two blind people to come. Someone probably brought the two blind people to Jesus. Jesus said to them, "What would you like me to do for you?" The two blind people said to Jesus, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they were able to see again and they followed Jesus.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples are leaving Jericho.

Second scene: The blind people call out to Jesus and the crowd rebukes them.

Third scene: Jesus had compassion for the blind people.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples
- The crowd
- The two blind people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story. The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus and his disciples arrived in a town called Jericho. Then they left the town, and a large crowd followed as they were leaving. Then two blind people were sitting beside the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, the two blind people shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the blind people, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like: "We have heard about Jesus' miracles and now is our time to also experience our own miracles of receiving our sight." [!end] Restart the action.

In the second scene, continue to act. Then the crowd rebuked the two blind people, telling them to be silent. The two blind people shouted even louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like: "We thought the blind people are less important people seeking for attention and distracting Jesus. We never knew they could fight back to gain Jesus' attention. And they succeeded!" [!end] Restart the action.

In the third scene, Jesus heard them and stopped walking. So, Jesus called the two blind people to come and Jesus said to them, "What would you like me to do for you?" The two blind people said to Jesus, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they were able to see again and they followed Jesus.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the blind people, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like: "We don't know how to express our joy and gratitude to Jesus. Our ability to see now makes life more meaningful to us. We must keep following Jesus to the end." [!end] Restart the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

Two blind people were sitting beside the road when they heard that Jesus was passing by. The two blind people shouted, "**Lord, Son of David**, have **mercy** on us."

Lord is a respectful way to say that someone is your master, or in authority over you. Translate Lord in the same way you have before, and remember that Lord is in the Master Glossary.

The men called Jesus **Son of David**! This phrase is a title that means that Jesus was a descendant of King David. The Jews used this title to refer to the Messiah, or Promised Savior, because God promised that the Messiah would be a descendant of David. Translate Son of David in the same way you have before, and remember that Son of David is in the Master Glossary.

The men asked Jesus to have **mercy** on them, or to show them compassion. Translate mercy in the same way you have before, and remember that the word mercy is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 20:29–34

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2152195 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3754927 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 21:1–11

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 21:1–11 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This passage tells a story that begins a new section of the book of Matthew. This section will be about Jesus' time in Jerusalem in the last few days before he dies on the cross. Jesus and his disciples have been traveling to Jerusalem, the capital city of Judea, so that they can take part in the festival of Passover. In the Old Testament, God told all Jewish men to gather in Jerusalem three times a year to celebrate festivals in God's honor. So Jesus and his disciples were part of a huge crowd of people who were all gathering in Jerusalem.

The Passover festival was a time when Jews remembered how God saved them when they were slaves in Egypt. At that time, all the oldest sons of the Egyptians died, but God told his people to sacrifice a lamb so that their sons would not die. The lamb died instead of the oldest sons of God's people. In this section of Matthew, Jesus is coming to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. But he is also coming to fulfill the Passover. He will be like the lamb who dies in the place of God's people.

This story starts by telling us that Jesus and his disciples are now very near Jerusalem. They have reached a village called Bethphage, which was outside the city of Jerusalem but close enough that someone could walk to the city in less than an hour. Matthew mentions that Bethphage was on the Mount of Olives, a mountain to the east of Jerusalem.

Show the team a map of Jesus' route from Galilee to Jerusalem. Point out Bethphage and the Mount of Olives on the map.

Jesus and his disciples have walked all the way to this point from Galilee. But at the moment when he enters Jerusalem, Jesus chooses to ride on a donkey instead of walking. He sends two disciples to untie and bring him two animals: an adult female donkey and her colt, young donkey. If anyone asks them why they are taking the animals, Jesus tells the disciples to simply say that the Lord needs them.

Show the team a picture of a female donkey with a colt.

Coming into Jerusalem in this way was like saying, "I am your king and savior," even though Jesus did not say those words. It would have reminded people of the Old Testament King David returning to Jerusalem after winning a battle against people who were rebelling against him. Even though David won the battle, he came back peacefully. He did not take revenge on the people who had fought against him. Jesus riding a donkey into Jerusalem would also remind people of a passage from the prophet Zechariah. Matthew quotes this passage to make his message more clear. The passage starts by saying, "Say to the Daughter of Zion," or "Say to Daughter Zion," depending on which translation you read. "Daughter of Zion" is a common phrase in the Old Testament that means the people of Jerusalem. In his prophecy, Zechariah promised that the king of Jerusalem would come to Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The king would be gentle or humble. A donkey is a peaceful animal, not like the strong horses that kings would ride when they went to fight against other tribes or peoples. So Jesus is showing that he is king and messiah, or savior, but he is not like human kings who want to crush and dominate people.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your team: In your culture, how does a leader look and how does he act? How can you see or know that someone is a leader? What does it look like when a leader is traveling from one place to another?

After giving this quotation from Zechariah, Matthew tells us that the two disciples did what Jesus told them to do. They brought the mother and baby donkey, and they put clothes over their backs for Jesus to sit on. Matthew does not tell us which of the donkeys Jesus actually rode. Mark and Luke's Gospels tell us that Jesus rode on a young donkey on which no one had ever sat before. That would mean the donkey could easily become afraid and panic in a large crowd. So it is possible that Jesus told them to bring the mother too because that would help the young donkey to stay calm.

Jesus sits on the donkey and begins to ride over the top of the mountain and down the other side towards the city of Jerusalem. There is also an enormous crowd with Jesus. They are other Jews who are traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover. Many of them could have come from Galilee like Jesus. There may have been many people in the crowd who had been following Jesus and listening to his teaching for some time. They honor him as their messiah and king by putting clothes and branches of trees on the road where he is about to come. They

shout out praises that come from the Psalms: "Hosanna," and "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They call Jesus "the son of David," a title which people understood meant the king from David's family whom God promised would rescue Israel.

Show the team a picture of the Mount of Olives as seen from Jerusalem.

At this moment, Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem. Like other cities in ancient Israel, Jerusalem had a large wall around it to keep enemies from getting into the city. There were gates in different places that the people in the city could close if they heard that an enemy was coming. Jesus and the other travelers had to go through one of these gates to get into the city.

Show the team a picture of city walls with a gate where people can enter.

After he enters the city gates, Matthew tells us about the reaction of the people who lived in Jerusalem. There was a big commotion, and people were wondering, "Who is this?" People might have been worried that someone coming into the city as a king could bring trouble with the existing rulers of Jerusalem. The people also might have been doubtful about Jesus because he was an outsider from Galilee, not a native of Jerusalem like they were.

The crowd of travelers who are with Jesus answer the question that the people of Jerusalem are asking. They say, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." By calling him a prophet they show that they believe God has sent him. By telling the name of his village and province, they show that Jerusalem is not his home. This sets up the tension with the people and especially the leaders in Jerusalem that will continue to increase in the stories that come after this one.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples have been traveling for some time, and now they are close to Jerusalem. They reach a village called Bethphage. Jesus sends two disciples to bring a donkey for him to ride as he enters Jerusalem.

Second scene: Jesus sits on the donkey and the crowd traveling with him spreads out their clothes and branches on the road as he rides from the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem. They shout praises to God as they go.

Third scene: Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem, still riding on the donkey and with a huge crowd around him. The people of Jerusalem are disturbed and ask who he is. The people in the crowd of travelers answer, "He is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Two disciples of Jesus
- The other 10 of Jesus' 12 closest followers
- People traveling to Jerusalem for the festival
- The people in Jerusalem

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

When the story starts, Jesus and his disciples have been traveling for perhaps a week to get to Jerusalem from Galilee. They reach the last village before Jerusalem, which is on the side of a mountain near Jerusalem. In between where they are and Jerusalem there is a valley.

It is important to remember that all Jewish men were expected to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. So the roads would have been very crowded. There were not enough places in Jerusalem for all the visitors to stay, so people would sleep in tents all around the city during the festival. Matthew says that the "large crowd" around Jesus has now become an "enormous crowd."

When they come to the village of Bethphage, Jesus sends two of his disciples into the village. Bethphage was a village where between 50 to 150 people might have lived. Jesus gives the disciples instructions about where to find two donkeys, a mother and colt. He says to untie them and bring them to him. If anyone says anything to them, he tells them to say, "The Lord needs them."

The passage then includes a quote from the prophet Zechariah. Jesus is fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy of a peaceful king who will come into Jerusalem sitting on a donkey, not a powerful war horse. The people might have been thinking of this passage when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, because it would have been familiar for them.

The two disciples bring the donkeys, and Jesus' disciples spread clothes on their backs for Jesus to sit on. They then begin to travel the last 1 or 2 miles of their journey to Jerusalem. They would probably go uphill to the top of the Mount of Olives, and after coming over the hill, they would go down into the valley between Bethphage and Jerusalem. Then they would go up again toward the city gates of Jerusalem. The crowd walking alongside Jesus was enormous. They shouted praises as they went. And they spread out their clothes on the ground in front of him to show that they honored him as a king. They also spread branches from palm trees on the road. Everyone would certainly notice this enormous and noisy procession.

When Jesus and his disciples finally enter the city gates, they cause a commotion in Jerusalem. The people from the city start asking, "Who is this?" And the crowd with Jesus answers, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Two disciples of Jesus
- The other 10 of Jesus' 12 closest disciples
- An enormous crowd traveling to Jerusalem for the festival
- People in Jerusalem

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Make sure the team understands the different locations in the story. It starts out on the Mount of Olives, a mountain to the east of Jerusalem, near a village called Bethphage. Jesus sends two disciples into the village and tells them where to find two donkeys. He says to untie the donkeys and bring them to him.

Stop the action.

When Jesus sits on the donkey and starts the final journey toward Jerusalem, the crowd of travelers with Jesus is enormous. It is already an exciting time because they are arriving in Jerusalem for the festival. The team can act out what it might have been like to travel in such a huge crowd of people. In the center of the crowd is Jesus, riding on a donkey like Zechariah promised the Messiah would. Matthew tells us that most of the people took off their cloaks and spread them on the ground in front of Jesus. Imagine how many cloaks would have been there! The people are shouting praises and calling Jesus, "Son of David."

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I love these people," or "I am happy to hear them praise God," or "I am a little sad because I know they will all run away when I am arrested." [end] Restart the action.

The crowd goes up over the top of the hill, down into the valley, and then up again toward the city of Jerusalem. The people in Jerusalem were probably watching. They would be able to see the whole procession.

Stop the action.

Make sure the team acts out the moment when Jesus passes through the city gates and arrives in the city of Jerusalem. Now the crowd in Jerusalem and the crowd of travelers come together. Matthew says there was a commotion in the city. What would that have looked like? The people of Jerusalem start to ask, "Who is this?" The crowd of travelers answers, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowd of travelers, "What are you thinking?" You might hear answers like, "I'm worried about what might happen next," or "I'm proud that such a great prophet has come from Galilee."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus, along with many other travelers, is very close to arriving in **Jerusalem**. Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. See the Master Glossary for more information about Jerusalem.

The travelers reach the **Mount of Olives**, where there is a village called Bethphage. The Mount of Olives was the name of a large hill near Jerusalem where olive trees grew. Jesus sends two of his **disciples** into the village and tells them to bring him two donkeys they will see there. Disciples were Jesus' closest followers, who were with him for much of his public ministry. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description of this term. Use the same word that you have used in other places in the gospels.

Jesus also tells the two disciples that if anyone questions them about taking the animals, they should say, "The **Lord** needs them," and then the person will send them right away. Lord can mean master, supreme head, or owner. At a surface level, this is a title for a respected man, such as sir. See the Master Glossary for a fuller definition. Some people believe that another way to understand this sentence is, "Their master needs them." If you use the word "Lord," make sure to use the same word that you have used in other places.

Then the story tells us that through these events Jesus **fulfilled** the words of the **prophet** Zechariah.

Fulfill means to complete something. The words that Zechariah spoke many years ago are now coming true.

Prophet means someone who receives messages from God and gives them to people. For a fuller definition, see the Master Glossary. Use the same word for prophet that you have used in other places.

Matthew now quotes the prophecy. It starts by saying, "Say to the **Daughter of Zion**." Zion is another name for the city of Jerusalem. "Daughter of Zion" is a common phrase in the Old Testament. It means all the people of Jerusalem, not just the young women or one young woman.

The next line of the prophecy says, "**Behold**" or "Look!" This word shows that the next words are very important and that people need to pay attention to them. The reason they need to pay attention is that the king is coming. He is **humble**, which can also be translated as "meek" or "gentle." Then it says he is "riding on a

donkey," a word that means an adult female donkey. And finally it says he is riding "on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The word **colt** means a young male donkey. "Foal" also means a young horse or donkey.

The story continues as the two disciples follow Jesus' instructions and bring the animals back. They put their coats on the animals' backs and Jesus sits "on them."

"Them" could mean three different things. It could mean he sat on both animals, one at a time, as he was riding to Jerusalem. It could mean he sat on the clothes, which were on top of one of the animals. Or it could mean that he sat on only the young donkey, but since the mother was also nearby, the text says "he sat on them" to show that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah about a donkey and its colt. Most scholars think this last way is the right way to understand "he sat on them."

The story goes on to say that "most of the crowd" spread their coats on the road ahead of Jesus, and then they cut branches from the trees and spread them in front of him. They did this to show that they were honoring him as a king. Crowds walking into Jerusalem ahead of him and behind him were shouting, "**Hosanna!**" Hosanna comes from a Hebrew word that means "save now," but at this time it appears that people used it as a way of praising God.

Son of David is a phrase that people used to talk about the king from David's family that God promised would rescue Israel. David was the greatest king of Israel in the Old Testament, and God promised that one of his descendants would save Israel. See the Master Glossary for a fuller definition. Use the same phrase here as the phrase you used in the story of the two blind men.

The people also shout, "**Blessed** is the one who comes in the **name of the Lord!**"

Bless refers to when God helps, does good to, or favors someone or something. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description. Use the same word here as you have used in other places.

In the name of the Lord was a common expression that means someone is representing "the Lord," a title for God, or doing something with authority from God.

Finally, the people also say, "**Hosanna in the highest!**" Saying "in the highest" refers to heaven, where God lives. It was a way of praising God without mentioning his name. Jews believed that saying the name of God was disrespectful, so they used many other phrases to talk about him.

The story next tells us that when Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was **stirred up**, or in a commotion, or in an uproar. This probably means huge numbers of people were coming to see what was happening, and it was very noisy and disorganized. The people in Jerusalem are asking, "Who is this?" And the crowd of people traveling with Jesus answer by telling Jesus' name, his village, **Nazareth**, and his province, and saying that he is a prophet. Nazareth was a small village in the region of Galilee. See the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 21:1–11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3739427 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6270923 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 21:12–22

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 21:12–22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This story is the first of a sequence of stories that talk about conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. In this story and the stories that follow it, Jesus is in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He does and says many things that the religious leaders do not like. Eventually, these stories of conflict will lead to the religious leaders arresting Jesus.

Jesus has just arrived in Jerusalem for the Passover festival, along with many other Jews who came from other provinces and countries to celebrate and worship God. In the Jewish faith, there was only one temple where people could offer sacrifices to God. God had commanded all Jewish men to come to Jerusalem three times a year for festivals. There would be enormous crowds of people worshiping God in the temple during those festivals.

Matthew tells us that when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem he goes to the temple. The temple building was surrounded by many areas that were not under the roof of the temple but were still within the walls of the temple complex. One of these areas was called the Court of the Gentiles, because this was an area where even non-Jewish people were allowed to come.

Show the team a picture of the temple layout at the time of Jesus.

In this area, there were many people who were selling animals. People would buy these animals and offer them as sacrifices to God. The text specifically mentions doves. Poor people would make an offering of doves if they could not afford a larger animal. Other animals that were used for sacrifice were sheep, goats, and bulls or oxen. Some scholars believe that the practice of buying and selling animals inside the walls of the temple complex was something that had only started a few years before this time, and that the high priest allowed it even though the other elders did not agree that it should be allowed.

Show the team a picture of the five kinds of animals used in sacrifices in the temple: a pigeon, a dove, an ox, a male sheep, and a male goat.

There were also people exchanging the kind of money people normally used for a different currency used in the temple. All Jewish men had to pay a tax every year to help with repairing and maintaining the temple. They could only use this special kind of currency to pay the temple tax. Some books written around the time of Jesus tell us that the merchants who sold animals inside the temple area charged prices for them that were much higher than normal. The money changers also would make a profit by charging for their service of exchanging money.

When Jesus arrives in the temple complex, he sends away the merchants who are selling animals and turns the tables of the money changers upside down. He explains these actions by saying, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it 'a den of thieves.'"

The first part of what Jesus says is a quote from Isaiah 56:7, "I will bring them to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer. I will accept their burnt offerings and sacrifices, because my temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations." In this passage, God promises to save Israel and also to welcome people from all nations to worship him. By using Isaiah's words, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," Jesus is telling people that the purpose of the temple is to provide a place where people can meet with God and pray to him. When people were buying and selling animals inside the temple complex, it would probably have made the area very noisy and could make it easy to get distracted from worshiping and praying to God.

The second part of what Jesus says comes from Jeremiah 7:11: "Don't you yourselves admit that this temple, which bears my name, has become a den of thieves?" In this passage, Jeremiah was warning the people of Israel not to think that they could commit all kinds of sins without God punishing them, just because the temple of God was in their city. Jeremiah tells the people that because of all the evil things they are doing, the temple itself has become like a place where robbers hide in order to not be caught. But God will punish the people for their sins, even if he has to destroy his own temple too.

By quoting the two Old Testament passages, Jesus is telling people that they are not respecting God's temple, just like people in Old Testament times did not respect it. They are not using it properly as a place of meeting with and worshiping God. Instead they are letting things like money and animals, which were supposed to be used to strengthen people's relationship with God, become a distraction from God. They are focusing on things

they can see and touch, not on God. This is an insult to God, because God wants deeply for people to know him, and he gave people the temple for that purpose.

Jesus' action of removing merchants from the temple shows that he is acting with the authority of the Messiah. In the Old Testament, the prophet Zechariah said that when God redeems his people, "There will no longer be a merchant in the house of the Lord."

Jesus then continues to act as the Messiah by healing blind and lame people who come to him in the temple complex. Some children start shouting the words that they heard people saying during Jesus' entrance to the city. The children say, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" When they hear these words, the religious leaders get very angry. They understand that the children are praising Jesus as the Messiah. So they ask Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"

Jesus answers with a simple, "Yes," meaning he does hear, and he accepts the children's praise. Then he quotes the words of a psalm that says, "You have taught children and infants to give you praise." Jesus does not quote the next part of the psalm, but the religious leaders must have remembered that the next words in the psalm are "silencing your enemies and all who oppose you."

After this first confrontation with the religious leaders, Jesus left the temple and went to spend the night in Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. As Jesus and the disciples return to the city early the next morning, Jesus sees a fig tree with leaves on it. At Passover time, it was not normal for fig trees to have all their leaves yet. The leaves would continue to grow after Passover was over, and the fruit would come at that time. But this fig tree already had so many large leaves that Jesus went to see whether it might have early fruit too, because he was hungry. But there were no figs on the tree.

Show the translation team a picture of a fig tree with leaves and figs on it.

The words Matthew uses in this story are very similar to words written by the Old Testament prophet Micah: "Not a single cluster of grapes nor an early fig can be found to satisfy my hunger." In this passage, Micah is talking about how evil the people of Israel are. Someone who desires what is good and right can't find anyone who satisfies that desire, just like someone who is hungry can't find any fruit on a fig tree after the harvest is over. The tree has no fruit. In the same way, Jerusalem, and especially the religious leaders, are not giving God the fruit of obeying him and pursuing him.

Jesus then does something very unusual. He says to the fig tree, "May you never bear fruit again!" The fig tree dies immediately. This is the only time in his life that Jesus does a miracle that causes death rather than life and healing. The miracle is meant as a symbol and warning of how God will judge his people if they do not bear the fruit of obedience to God.

The disciples are shocked when they see the fig tree die so quickly. Jesus takes the opportunity to teach them about faith. He says, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt... you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown in the sea,' and it will happen." Jesus is using a very vivid picture to make his point. Of course, the disciples don't actually need to make a mountain fall into the sea. But Jesus' point is that there are no limits to what God will do when his people trust him as they pray together.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Jesus arrives in the temple around the time of the Passover festival. He sees people buying and selling animals in the temple complex and exchanging money, and he sends them away. He explains what he is doing by saying, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it 'a den of thieves.'"

Second scene: After Jesus removes the commercial activities going on in the temple, blind and lame people come to him in the courtyard and he heals them. Children praise him as the Messiah by saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Third scene: The religious leaders get very angry when they hear the children's praises. They complain to Jesus. But Jesus accepts the praise and answers the religious leaders with another quote from the Old Testament. Jesus then leaves the temple for the day and goes to stay in the village of Bethany.

Fourth scene: Jesus is coming back to the city the next day with his disciples. He is hungry and sees a fig tree that has many leaves on it. It looks like it might also have fruit. But when he sees that there is no fruit, he speaks to the fig tree and it immediately withers.

Fifth scene: The disciples are amazed at seeing the fig tree wither so quickly. Jesus takes the opportunity to teach the disciples about how important it is to trust in God. He promises that if we have trust in God and don't doubt, miracles like what he did to the fig tree, and even larger miracles, will happen.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples (we can assume they are present during this whole story, although they are not mentioned during the part in the temple)
- People selling animals in the temple complex
- People buying animals for sacrifices
- Animals that are being sold for sacrifices
- People sitting at tables and exchanging money
- Blind and lame people
- Children
- Chief priests and scribes
- A fig tree

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The story starts with Jesus entering the temple complex a few days before the festival of Passover. It is important to realize that the temple complex was very large and had many different sections in it. The first area people entered when they came into the temple complex was the Court of the Gentiles, which is probably where this scene happened.

Jesus sees that people are busy buying and selling animals for sacrifices and exchanging money in this area. Jesus stops these activities and shows his authority as the Messiah. He throws out the people who are buying and selling and turns the money changers' tables upside down. It is important to understand that Jesus is not violent here. He did not hurt anyone. He did not get his disciples or other people to help him. But Jesus wants people to know that they are not using the temple in a way that honors God.

Then blind and lame people come to Jesus to be healed. The text does not say how much time passed between Jesus driving out the merchants and the blind and lame coming to him. This part of the story might have happened some time later. Blind and lame people were not allowed to go into the inside courts of the temple, but they were allowed in this outer area.

There are also many children in the crowd, and some of them start to repeat the words that they must have heard people saying about Jesus when he was riding into the city: "Hosanna to the Son of David." They probably did not fully understand what this meant.

The chief priests and scribes get very angry at the children's words, because the children's words show that people are calling Jesus the Messiah. They ask Jesus, "Do you hear what they are saying?" Jesus says, "Yes." Then he answers the religious leaders by quoting a psalm that talks about children praising God.

After this, Jesus leaves the temple for the day and goes to the village of Bethany for the night. It would have taken Jesus and his disciples about an hour to walk from the temple to Bethany.

The next morning Jesus and his disciples walk back to the city. It seems they have not had breakfast yet, because Jesus is hungry. Along the way, they see one fig tree by itself that has large leaves. Jesus goes to see if there are any figs on the tree. When he sees none, he says, "May you never bear fruit again," and immediately the fig tree dries up and dies. The disciples are shocked. Jesus tells them that when we trust in God without doubting, we can also see miracles like this and even bigger ones.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples (we can assume they are present during this whole story, although they are not mentioned during the part in the temple)
- People selling animals in the temple complex
- People buying animals for sacrifices
- Animals like doves, sheep, and goats
- People sitting at tables and exchanging money
- Blind and lame people
- Children
- Chief priests and scribes
- A fig tree

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. Act out Jesus entering the temple complex in Jerusalem with his disciples. When they come in, they see many people buying and selling animals. The people might be arguing about prices. The animals are making noise. There are also people sitting at tables and exchanging money.

Stop the action.

Act out Jesus making the people leave, then turning the money changers' tables upside down and turning over the chairs where the people selling doves are sitting.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the chief priests and scribes, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I'm very angry," or "I can't believe he did that!" [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says to the leaders like the priests and scribes, "It is written, 'My Father's house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves!'" Now act out people going back to praying and worshiping. Maybe the religious leaders start talking among themselves about what just happened. Jesus and his disciples stay in the temple, and some people who are blind and lame start coming to Jesus to be healed. Act out some children from the crowd watching Jesus and starting to chant, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the chief priests and scribes, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I'm extremely angry that he is letting the children call him Messiah!" or "This is getting worse and worse." [!end] Restart the action.

Extremely angry, the chief priests and scribes ask Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" Jesus says simply, "Yes." Then he asks a question, "Have you never read, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise?'" Now act out Jesus and his disciples leaving the temple. They walk out of the city and continue walking for about an hour until they reach the village of Bethany, where they will spend the night.

Now act out Jesus and the disciples going back to the temple the next morning. They are taking the same walk, and they are hungry. They see a single fig tree by the side of the road that seems to have many large leaves on it. Jesus goes to see if there is any fruit yet, but there are only leaves. Jesus says, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately, the fig tree dries up and dies.

Stop the action.

The disciples ask in amazement, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" And Jesus tells them, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and don't doubt, you can do things like this and much more." Jesus emphasized this point with a powerful image. The actor playing Jesus may want to use hand gestures or bodily movement to act out what he says next: "You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and be thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it."

Stop the action. Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I'm still confused," or "This sounds wonderful, but how is it possible?"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this story, Jesus and his disciples have just arrived in **Jerusalem** and go to the **temple**.

Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel. Three times a year, all Jewish men were supposed to come to Jerusalem to worship during special festivals. See the Master Glossary for a full description.

The **temple** was where people could come to make sacrifices to God as well as praying and worshiping him together. There was only one temple in Israel. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description of temple, and make sure to use the same word in your translation that you have used in other passages.

When he arrives in the temple, Jesus begins to drive out the people who are buying and selling animals for sacrifice. A **sacrifice** is something offered to God to thank him or ask forgiveness from him. It could be a blood sacrifice, which includes killing and burning an animal, or a non-blood sacrifice like giving God incense or grain. See the Master Glossary for a full description, and make sure you use the same word in your translation that you have used for "sacrifice" before.

Jesus also knocked over the tables of the **money changers**, people who were exchanging all kinds of coins for the kind of coins used to pay the temple tax. He also knocked over the chairs of people who were selling doves to be used as sacrifices.

Jesus said, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of **prayer**,' but you have made it 'a **den of thieves**.'"

Prayer in the New Testament refers to communicating with God. Be sure that the word you use here does not refer to only ritualistic communication, but something more personal. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description, and make sure to use the same word you have used elsewhere.

The word **den** means a place like a cave where dangerous animals such as lions lived. A "den of thieves," means a place where robbers come in order to hide, so that they will not be caught and punished.

After Jesus shut down the merchants, some blind and lame people came to him in the temple courtyard and he **healed** them. Healed means he made them well from their illness or disability so that they now could use the part of their body that was not working before. Use the same word that you have used in other passages that talk about Jesus healing people's disabilities.

The **chief priests** and **scribes** see the miracles Jesus is doing. "Chief priests" probably means several of the oldest and most powerful priests. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description of priests. Make sure to use the same word you have used for "priest" before. Scribes were people who studied the Old Testament scriptures and made new copies of them by hand. They were experts whom people respected because they knew so much about the Scriptures. Use the same word you have used for "scribe" in other passages.

The chief priests and scribes also hear some children in the crowd shouting, "**Hosanna to the Son of David!**"

Hosanna comes from a Hebrew word that means "save now," but at this time it appears that people used it as a way of praising God. Translate it the same way here as you have translated in the passage about Jesus riding into Jerusalem.

Son of David is a phrase that people used to talk about the king from David's family that God promised would rescue Israel. David was the greatest king of Israel in the Old Testament, and God promised that one of his descendants would save Israel. See the Master Glossary for a fuller definition of Son of David. Use the same phrase here as the phrase you used before.

The chief priests and scribes become extremely angry, and they ask Jesus, "Do you hear what these children are saying?" Jesus responds with a quotation from the Psalms: "Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies you have prepared **praise** for yourself."

"Out of the mouth of" is a poetic way of saying "from."

"Infants and nursing babies" can also be translated as "children and babies."

Praise means speaking well of or saying good things to or about someone, or honoring someone through words. Use the same word here that you have used for "praise" in other passages.

Jesus leaves the temple and goes to the village of **Bethany** for the night. Bethany was about an hour's walk to the east of Jerusalem. The next morning he is walking back to the city with his disciples when he sees a **fig tree** by the side of the road. A fig tree is a type of fruit tree that grows in Israel. It can grow to 10 meters in height and its trunk 1 meter in diameter. The leaves come in April or May, and the fruit usually ripens in June. The fig tree Jesus sees has a lot of large leaves on it. Jesus looks to see if there is any fruit, because he is hungry. But there is no fruit, only leaves. Jesus says to the tree, "May you never bear fruit again," and the tree immediately dries up and dies. The disciples are amazed, and they ask, "How did the tree wither so quickly?"

Show the team a picture of a fig tree.

Jesus answers, "**I tell you the truth**, if you have **faith** and don't **doubt**, you can do things like this and much more."

"I tell you the truth" is a phrase Jesus often uses in his teaching to show people that a saying is very important. It is meant to make people pay special attention to what he is about to say. Translate this phrase the same way that you have translated it in other passages.

Faith describes people's response to God's promise. See the Master Glossary for a fuller definition. Use the same word that you have used in other passages that talk about believing in or having faith in God.

Doubt is the opposite of faith. It means not being sure about something, not trusting someone, or not being able to decide what to do.

Jesus continues his teaching by saying, "You can even say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and be thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. You can **pray** for anything, and if you have **faith**, you will receive it." It is important to understand that in this passage, "you" means many people, not just one person: Jesus is talking primarily about people praying together, not about one person praying alone. Use the same words for "pray" and "faith" here that you used earlier in this passage.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 21:12-22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4705355 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7934104 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 21:23–32

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 21:23–32 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage gives another story about Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. In these stories, Jesus is in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He does and says many things that the religious leaders do not like. Eventually, these stories of conflict will lead to the religious leaders arresting Jesus.

We remember from previous passages that many people are in Jerusalem during this time in order to worship God during the Passover festival. Jesus and his disciples have returned to the temple after spending the night in a nearby village. Jesus begins teaching in the temple. Since the temple was very crowded at this time, there were probably many people listening to Jesus. While Jesus is teaching, a group of chief priests and elders come and challenge him. They ask, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"

"These things" probably means the things that have happened in the last one or two days: Jesus entered Jerusalem in a kingly procession and drove out the merchants from selling in the temple. The priests and elders may also be asking about his authority to teach the people. The chief priests and elders were the leaders in charge of the temple. They had not given Jesus authority. So they are asking who did give him that authority.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your team: In your culture, who gives people authority to become a spiritual leader? What makes people respect a leader? Talk about what happens when people disagree about whether someone should be a spiritual leader or not.

Jesus answers their question by asking another question. Rabbis or spiritual teachers in ancient Israel would often answer by asking a question. The question would help people to understand what was being discussed better. It might make them think about it in a new way. It might prepare them to understand the answer better than if the rabbi gave the answer right away. Jesus says, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Jesus then asks, "Did John's authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?" Jesus points the leaders back to John the Baptizer, because John and Jesus preached the same message: "Repent, or turn back to God, because the kingdom of heaven is near." John was sent by God to prepare people to receive Jesus the Messiah, or Promised Savior.

The chief priests and elders don't know how to answer Jesus' question. They already know what they think about John the Baptizer. When John was alive they did not pay attention to his message. They did not think he was really a prophet from God. But, there is a huge crowd of people listening to the conversation. The chief priests and elders know that the people loved John and believed he was a prophet. If they say his authority was not from God, the people may get angry. The people might not respect the priests and elders anymore if the priests and elders openly say that John was not a real prophet. The people might even get so angry that they become violent. So the priests and elders are afraid of the people.

After they talk together to try to decide how to answer Jesus' question, the chief priests and elders finally say, "We don't know." Since they publicly stated that they do not know who gave John authority, it means they also do not have the right to ask Jesus who gave Jesus authority. Jesus tells them he will not answer this question. By not giving a direct answer, Jesus did not give the leaders a clear reason to accuse him of being a false prophet. By specifically asking whether John's authority came "from heaven," which means from God, Jesus is saying indirectly that God sent John to prepare the people for the Messiah, and God also sent Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus then responds in a different way: He tells a parable, or teaching story. He starts by saying, "What do you think?" He is introducing a scene to them and telling them that he wants them to make a judgment about it. Then he tells a story about two sons. One son says he will not obey his father's instructions, but later he changes his mind, or repents, and does obey. The other son says he will obey, but he doesn't actually do what the father said to do. Jesus asks the chief priests and elders to decide which son really obeyed his father. They say, "The one who said he would not but later changed his mind and obeyed."

Jesus agrees that the chief priests and elders have answered correctly. The son who said no but later repented was the one who really obeyed. Jesus then uses the chief priests' and elders' own answer against them. They are like the other son, who claimed that he was doing what his father said but did not really do it. Then Jesus makes a shocking statement: "The tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you."

Religious people in Israel despised tax collectors as the worst kind of sinners, because tax collectors oppressed and cheated their own people in order to serve the Roman government. But, if possible, prostitutes were even worse than tax collectors. Religious people thought that both of these groups of people deserved to be completely rejected by God and the community. But Jesus is saying that God will save these people if they repent, as many of them did when they heard John the Baptizer's message. These people will lead the way in receiving God's help and salvation. The religious people will either have to humbly follow their lead, or perhaps they will not get there at all.

Jesus now brings the conversation back to John the Baptizer. He says that John preached "the way of righteousness" or "the right way." This means that John was showing people how to live in a right relationship with God by repenting of their sin and trusting in God. The chief priests and elders rejected his message. But many tax collectors and prostitutes accepted it and repented of their sins. The religious leaders could have changed their minds after seeing how much John's message had changed these people's lives. But they still did not repent. Therefore, they are excluding themselves from salvation and a relationship with God.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus and his disciples come back to the temple after spending the night in a nearby village. Jesus starts to teach a crowd of people in the temple courtyard.

Second scene: The chief priests and elders confront Jesus and ask him who gave him his authority. Jesus answers the chief priests and elders by asking them another question: "Who gave authority to John the Baptizer?" The leaders don't know how to answer, and eventually they say, "We don't know." Jesus then refuses to answer their initial questions.

Third scene: Jesus tells a story about a man with two sons. The story represents two kinds of people. Some people say they are righteous but do not truly follow God, and some people know they are sinners but repent of their sins and then do follow God.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples
- A crowd in the courtyard of the temple
- Chief priests
- Elders

The characters in the parable include:

- A father
- Two sons

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The story starts out when Jesus and his disciples return to the temple in Jerusalem after spending the night in a nearby village. The events in the story probably happen in the outer courtyard of the temple, the Court of the Gentiles.

If you have not already, show the team a diagram of the temple, including the Court of the Gentiles.

It is important to understand that the temple would have been filled with people at this time. Many of these people had come from Galilee, like Jesus, or from other places that were far away from Jerusalem. Matthew's gospel shows that many people from Galilee followed Jesus, but the people in Jerusalem, especially the religious leaders, did not accept him as the Messiah. Since many of the people in the temple right now come from outside of Jerusalem, the crowd is very favorable to Jesus.

While Jesus is teaching, some of the leaders in the temple, some chief priests and elders, come and confront Jesus. These would have been some of the most powerful people in Jerusalem. They were senior religious leaders who were highly respected. They ask Jesus two questions: what authority he has and who gave him the authority.

It is important to remember that in the last one or two days, Jesus has just done several controversial things. He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, just like the Old Testament prophet Zechariah said the Messiah would. He threw out the merchants and money changers from the temple, even though they had permission to do business there from the high priest. Now he is teaching people in the temple. The chief priests and elders are challenging Jesus and trying to show that he has no right to do these things. They hope that he will say something that will allow them to accuse him of being a false prophet. According to Old Testament law, people punished false prophets with the death penalty.

Jesus answers the chief priests' and elders' two questions by saying, "I will also ask you just one question." Before he gives them an answer, he wants them to answer his one question. He asks them whether John the Baptizer got his authority "from heaven" (from God) or "from men." Now Jesus has turned around the situation. The religious leaders were hoping to trap Jesus with their question, but now Jesus has trapped them. They don't think John was sent by God. But the huge crowd of people around them does think John was sent by God. If the religious leaders openly say that John was not really a prophet, people will get angry. They talk among themselves to decide what they should say. Eventually, they give a safe but weak answer: "We don't know."

By saying that they don't know whether John the Baptist was a real prophet or a false prophet, the chief priests and elders are admitting that they are unable to judge between true and false prophets. Therefore, Jesus does not need to tell them where his authority comes from. He says, "Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things."

Next Jesus tells a story. Throughout the story, Jesus is talking directly to the chief priests and elders. But his disciples and the crowd in the temple are still listening. In fact, it is easy to imagine that more and more people may be gathering to watch this scene when they see Jesus talking with some of the most powerful leaders in the temple.

Jesus introduces the story with a question: "What do you think?" He tells about two sons. One son says he will not obey his father, but in the end he does obey. The other son says he will obey, but he really does not obey. Jesus ends the story with another question: "Which of the two did the will of his father?" The chief priests and elders answer, "The first." This is the correct answer. But it shows that the chief priests and elders are in the wrong. Jesus implies that they are like the second son, who said he was obeying but was not really obeying his father. The first son was like the people who were not obeying God, but when John the Baptizer told them to repent, they changed their minds and started to obey.

Jesus tells the chief priests and elders that even corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes, the worst possible sinners, will get into the kingdom of heaven before the religious leaders do. These sinful people listened to John the Baptizer and repented, and they started obeying God. But the religious leaders did not listen or repent. They say they are obeying God, but God sent them a prophet who said they should repent, and they did not. Even after seeing many other people repent and start to lead a new life, the religious leaders still did not repent.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples
- A crowd in the courtyard of the temple
- Chief priests
- Elders

The characters in the parable include:

- A father
- Two sons

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. The story starts in the temple, when Jesus and his 12 disciples return and Jesus starts to teach a crowd of people in the temple courtyard. While he is teaching, a group of chief priests and elders comes to talk to him. They ask, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you the right?"

Stop the action.

Jesus answers, "I'll tell you by what authority I do these things if you answer one question. Did John's authority to baptize come from heaven, or was it merely human?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I'm impressed by Jesus' wisdom," or "I'm excited to see what will happen next." [!end] Restart the action.

The chief priests and elders start to talk together quietly. They say, "If we say, 'from heaven,' he will ask, 'then why didn't you believe John?' But if we say it was of human origin, we fear the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet." Finally they agree on an answer and say, "We don't know."

Jesus responds, "Then I won't tell you by what authority I do these things."

Stop the action.

Now Jesus tells a story to show that the religious leaders should have listened to John the Baptizer. He asks, "What do you think?" Then he tells the story: "A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.' The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he changed his mind and went anyway. Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go." After telling this story, Jesus asks the chief priests and elders, "Which of the two obeyed his father?" They answer, "The first one."

Now Jesus gives the teaching from the story. He says to the chief priests and elders, "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you do."

Stop the action.

Jesus explains: "John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling right now?" You might hear answers like, "I'm hopeful that normal people can be saved," or "I'm surprised by what Jesus is saying."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story happens in the **temple**. The temple was the home where God lived among his people. The temple was built so that people could worship God and special priests could bring sacrifices to God. See the Master Glossary for a full description. Translate temple the same way that you have translated it in other passages.

Jesus is teaching a crowd of people when some **chief priests** and **elders** come and ask him a question. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description of chief priests and elders. Make sure to use the same word you have used for "priest" or "chief priest" before. Elders were non-religious leaders in the community. They were usually older men who helped the community live together well. Translate the word "elder" the same way you have translated it in other passages.

The chief priests and elders ask Jesus where he gets his authority. Jesus answers by asking them a question. Was the authority for John's **baptism** "from **heaven**" or "from men?" In this context, "from heaven," is a respectful way to say, "from God." "From men" means human authority. These two ideas are contrasting with each other. John's baptism was done to show that a person wanted to stop sinning and obey God. See the Master Glossary for a full description of baptism. Use the same word here that you have used in other passages.

The chief priests and elders now have a problem. If they say John the Batpizer's authority was from God, the obvious question they will have to answer is, "Why didn't you **believe** him?" Belief describes people's response to God's promise. It is not just agreeing with someone, but putting your confidence and trust in God. Use the same word here that you have used in other passages to translate "believe" and "faith." Faith is in the Master

Glossary. If the chief priests and elders say John the Baptizer's authority was merely human, they are afraid of what the crowd will think and do. So they say, "We don't know."

Jesus responds, "Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things." Then he tells a story. "A man with two sons told the older boy, 'Son, go out and work in the **vineyard** today.'" A vineyard is a field where vines give fruit called a grape. Jesus continues the story, "The son answered, 'No, I won't go,' but later he **changed his mind** and went anyway." The word "changed his mind" comes from the same Greek word that is translated as "repent." So Jesus is comparing this son with people who heard John the Baptizer's message and repented of their sins, of not obeying God. Then Jesus says, "Then the father told the other son, 'You go,' and he said, 'Yes, sir, I will.' But he didn't go. Which of the two obeyed his father?" The chief priests and elders answer, "The first."

Jesus tells them, "**I tell you the truth, tax collectors** and prostitutes will get into the **kingdom of God** before you do."

"I tell you the truth" is a phrase Jesus often uses to introduce an important teaching. Use the same phrase here that you have used in other passages.

Tax collectors were considered the worst sinners in Jewish culture, because they betrayed the people of God to work for a corrupt foreign government.

In this passage, the **kingdom of God** represents being saved and accepted by God. It means being submitted to the will of God and enjoying a close relationship with him. Kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus also says, "For John came to you to show you the **way of righteousness**, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not **repent** and believe him." The "way of righteousness" means "the right way," and talks about a way of living in which people are in relationship with God and acting according to his will. Repentance was central to John the Baptizer's message as well as Jesus'. Repentance means to turn away from sins and turn to God, and to begin living a new life in following God's ways. Both righteousness and repent are in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 21:23–32**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (3905070 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6566663 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 21:33–46*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 21:33–46 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage tells another story about conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. In these stories, Jesus is in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He does and says many things that the religious leaders do not like. Eventually, these stories of conflict will lead to the religious leaders arresting Jesus.

In the last story, the religious leaders asked Jesus who gave him authority. Jesus answered by pointing to John the Baptizer, who prepared people to receive Jesus as the Messiah, or Promised Savior. In this passage, Jesus is still speaking to the religious leaders. A large crowd is also listening.

Jesus says, "Listen to another parable." Then he tells a parable or teaching story about a landowner who planted a vineyard, a field where people grow grapes, and then leased it to tenants and went away. At this time it was common for a landowner to lease his land out if he lived in another place. When the harvest came, the people working on the land, the tenants, would give him part of the fruit in exchange for the right to use the land. Jesus tells how the landowner spent time and money to plant this new vineyard. The landowner built a wall around it, to keep out animals or people who would want to steal the fruit; built a tower, a place where someone could sit and watch the vineyard to protect it from thieves or animals; and dug a wine press, a place where people would put the grapes to squeeze the juice from them.

Show the team a picture of a winepress and a vineyard with a wall and watchtower.

Discuss the following questions with your team: In your area, what do people have to do to start farming a new piece of land? How long does it take before they get a harvest? What do people do if they own land in a different place from where they live?

All of the actions that the landowner takes in the beginning of the story show that he is expecting a good harvest. All of these actions are also directly quoted from a story that the prophet Isaiah told about a vineyard. In Isaiah's story, the landowner, who represents God, planted a vineyard, made a wall, dug a winepress, and built a tower. He expected to get a good harvest after all his hard work. But the vineyard, which in Isaiah's story represents the people of Israel, gave sour grapes instead of good grapes. The vineyard failed to give good fruit, just like the people of Israel failed to obey God and maintain a relationship with him. So God destroyed the vineyard, which represents God's judgment on Israel when they kept disobeying.

The religious leaders of Jesus' time would definitely know this story from the book of Isaiah. When Jesus told a story that begins the same way, they would understand that the vineyard represents Israel. But in Jesus' story, the focus is not on the fruit but on the tenants, the people who are renting the vineyard. In Jesus' story, the tenants represent the leaders of Israel.

In Jesus' story, the harvest time finally comes, and the landowner sends some servants to collect the part of the fruit that the tenants owed to the landowner. But instead of giving the fruit, the tenants beat one servant, kill another, and stone a third, which means they threw stones at him in order to kill him. The landowner then sends another larger group of servants. But the tenants treat them the same way. In Jesus' story, the landowner's servants represent Old Testament prophets whom God sent to give messages to the people of Israel. These prophets were asking the people of Israel to give God the fruit of love and obedience. But the people of Israel ignored the prophets and even attacked and killed them.

Now Jesus comes to the crucial moment in the story. The landowner sends his son to collect the fruit from the tenants. The landowner thinks that the tenants will definitely respect his son, who acts with his father's authority. But the tenants instead think that if they kill the son, who will own the land after the landowner dies, they can take the land for themselves. They grab the son, drag him out of the vineyard, and murder him. In the story, the landowner's son represents Jesus, God's Son. God sent him as the final and best messenger to his people, but the people rejected him and treated him the same way they had treated the prophets. Specifically, Jesus shows that he knows the religious leaders will take him outside of the city and kill him there.

Jesus now asks the religious leaders what the landowner will do. They reply, "He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop." The religious leaders' answer is right. But now Jesus will use their own words against them. Before he gives the teaching from the story, however, Jesus quotes a passage from the Psalms, a part of the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus asks the religious leaders, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'" Even though the leaders reject Jesus, God is still going to put him in the place of highest honor. The cornerstone, or the chief stone in the corner, probably means the highest stone that was placed in the arch in a building. This stone kept all the other stones from collapsing.

Show the team a picture of a cornerstone or capstone in an ancient building.

Jesus then gives his conclusion about the story: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit." Here Jesus is talking about how God is going to recreate his people. Now the people of God will not be just Israelites. They will be people from any nation who trust in Jesus. This new people of God will finally give God the fruit of living rightly and knowing God.

Jesus' last words about the parable return to the stone image. Anyone who stumbles on the stone God placed as the cornerstone will be broken to pieces, and anyone who falls on it will be crushed. Jesus may be referring to a passage from the prophet Daniel, where Daniel talks about a stone that represents a new kingdom. That stone will crush all the previous human kingdoms and it will stay forever. Jesus is giving a warning that rejecting God's greatest servant, His Son, will lead to disaster for the leaders of Israel.

The religious leaders understand everything Jesus has said, and they are extremely angry. They want to arrest Jesus, but they know that many or most of the people in the crowd support him and think he is a prophet. So they are too afraid to do anything while the crowd is around Jesus.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

First scene: Jesus continues talking to the religious leaders and asks them to listen to another parable. He tells about a landowner who planted a new vineyard and then leased it to tenants and went on a journey.

Second scene: In the parable, the harvest time has come, and the landowner sends servants to collect the rent from the tenants. But the tenants beat and kill the servants.

Third scene: The landowner sends a larger group of servants. But the tenants beat and kill them too.

Fourth scene: The landowner finally decides to send his son to collect the rent. The tenants conspire together and decide to kill the son. They seize him, drag him out of the vineyard, and murder him.

Fifth scene: Jesus concludes by asking the religious leaders a question: "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" Jesus tells the religious leaders that God will give His kingdom to a new people who will give him fruit.

Sixth scene: The religious leaders are extremely angry at Jesus and want to arrest him. But they are afraid of the crowd, who support Jesus. So they don't do anything right now.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples (not mentioned in this passage, but they are still here)
- Religious leaders (earlier identified as chief priests and elders; later Pharisees are also mentioned)
- A large crowd of people in the temple

The characters in the parable include:

- A landowner
- Tenants
- A group of the landowner's servants
- A larger group of the landowner's servants
- The landowner's son

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus says, "Listen to a story." This is how he introduces a new story. The story sounds just like a story in the book of Isaiah. In the story, a landowner plants a new vineyard. He builds a wall and a watchtower to protect the vineyard from animals and thieves. He digs a winepress for making wine when the grapes get ripe. The landowner is investing a lot of time and money in this vineyard. Grapes do not give a harvest for the first four years, so it would take some time before he gets any fruit from his investment. This means he must be a wealthy man. Although Jesus does not mention the prophet Isaiah, the religious leaders would immediately remember Isaiah's story. Isaiah told that story to show why God was so unhappy with the people of Israel. The religious leaders probably know that this story is not going to have a happy ending.

Discuss the following question with your team: In your culture, how do people begin a story that has a deep meaning?

In the story, the landowner leases the land to tenants and goes away. The tenants agree to give the landlord a certain portion of the fruit when the harvest time comes. It seems that the landlord lives in another country, or in a place that is far away from the vineyard. Some time goes by, and the tenants work on the land. Finally the time for the harvest comes. The landowner is looking forward to getting some of the fruit from his vineyard. He sends some servants to collect it from the tenants. But the tenants beat, kill, and stone the servants.

The landlord sends a larger group of servants, but the tenants still do not give him the fruit. They beat and kill the servants just like they did the first time.

The landlord decides to send his son, because he thinks the tenants will respect his son. This part of the story would be very surprising for the people listening to Jesus' story. They understand that the landowner's servants represent the prophets. But Jews did not believe that God had a son. After the other conversations Jesus has had with the religious leaders, it is also clear that "the son" means Jesus in the story. Therefore, Jesus is indirectly telling people that he is God's Son, which would be very offensive to the religious leaders.

In the story, the tenants decide to kill the landowner's son so that they can take the land for themselves. They grab him, drag him out of the vineyard, and kill him. Jesus asks the religious leaders what the landowner will do to the tenants when he comes back to the land. The religious leaders answer that he will punish the tenants with death for murdering his son and lease out the vineyard to new tenants.

Before Jesus gives the point of the story, he asks the religious leaders another question and quotes from the Psalms: "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing, and it is wonderful to see.'" Jesus is pointing to the fact that even though the religious leaders reject him as the Messiah, God will still put him in a place of honor in the end.

Then Jesus tells them that God will indeed take His kingdom away from them (the leaders of Israel) and give it to "a new nation" who will produce fruit. In other words, God is building a new people of God from Jews and people of other nations who trust in Jesus. Jesus returns to the stone image and gives a warning: "Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces." In other words, people who continue to reject the person God has chosen will destroy themselves. The religious leaders are extremely angry at Jesus, but they are afraid to arrest him while he is surrounded by the crowds of people who follow him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 6 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' disciples (not mentioned in this passage, but they are still here)
- Religious leaders (earlier identified as chief priests and elders; later Pharisees are also mentioned)
- A large crowd of people in the temple

The characters in the parable include:

- A landowner
- Tenants
- A group of the landowner's servants
- A larger group of the landowner's servants
- The landowner's son

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. Start by acting out Jesus beginning to tell the parable. He asks the religious leaders to listen. Then he describes a landowner planting a new vineyard, including building a wall, a watchtower, and a winepress for it. He leases out the vineyard to tenants who agree to give him a portion of the fruit. Then he travels to a different place.

Then the harvest time comes, when the grape vines are finally mature and bearing fruit. The landowner sends some servants to collect his portion of the fruit from the tenants.

Stop the action.

When the servants arrive and ask for the landowner's portion, the tenants not only refuse to give them anything. They beat one servant, kill another, and stone another. The landowner hears about what happened.

Stop the action.

The landowner sends another group of servants. This time there are more servants than before. They also ask for the landowner's portion of the fruit. But the tenants also beat and kill some of them.

Finally, the landowner sends his son. He thinks that the tenants will definitely respect his son.

Stop the action.

While the landowner's son is on the way, the tenants see him coming. They start to talk to each other. They decide that if they kill the son, who is the heir of the land, they will be able to take the land for themselves. When the son arrives, they grab him, drag him out of the vineyard, and kill him.

Now Jesus asks a question to the religious leaders: "When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" The religious leaders answer, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants."

Jesus quotes from the Psalms and asks, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?'"

Stop the action.

Jesus tells the religious leaders that just like the landowner in the story, God is going to take the kingdom of God away from his disobedient tenants (the leaders of Israel) and give it to a nation who will bring him fruit. He ends by saying, "Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone it falls on."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the religious leaders, "How are you feeling?" You might hear answers like, "Angry," or "Offended."

The religious leaders want to arrest Jesus immediately. But they are afraid of what the people will do if they arrest him while the crowd is present. So they do not take any action right now.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The story starts with Jesus telling the religious leaders to listen to another **parable**. A parable was a special kind of story that Jesus told. It was told using everyday things to describe deeper things about God. See the Master Glossary for a full definition. Use the same word for parable that you have used in other passages.

In the parable, Jesus tells about a landowner who planted a vineyard, a field where vines give fruit called a grape. Grapes were a very common crop in ancient Israel. The landowner built a wall and a **watchtower** to protect the vines. See the Master Glossary for a description of a watchtower. He also dug a **winepress**. A winepress was an area where people would put the grapes and press them by walking on them in order to squeeze out the juice. See the Master Glossary for a full description.

Show the team a picture of a vineyard and a winepress.

The landowner leases the vineyard out to **farmers**, or tenants-people who would work the vineyard and send some of the fruit to the owner. When the landowner sends some servants to collect his portion of the fruit, the tenants beat one servant, kill another, and **stone** a third. Stoning means throwing stones at someone in order to kill him.

After sending another group of servants, the landowner finally sends his son to collect the fruit. When the farmers see the landowner's son coming, they say to each other, "This is the **heir**." A person's heir is the person who will receive their wealth or land when they die. In this case, the son is the heir of the landowner. He is the one who will own the land when the landowner dies. So the farmers decide to kill the son and take "his **inheritance**," the land that he is going to receive when his father dies.

Jesus asks the religious leaders, "When the landowner comes back, what will he do to those farmers?" The religious leaders say, "He will bring those bad men to a bad end." The same Greek word for bad or evil is used twice in this sentence. They also say, "He will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

Jesus then asks, "Have you never read in the **Scriptures**, 'the stone the builders rejected has become the **cornerstone**?'"

Scripture as used in the New Testament refers to the Jewish holy writings, most often what we now consider the entire Old Testament. See the Master Glossary for a full description. Use the same word here that you have used in other passages for "Scriptures."

Cornerstone has two possible meanings. One is that it was the last stone that was placed in the center of an arch. This stone kept that whole part of the building from collapsing. The other possible meaning is the first stone that was laid in a foundation. All the other stones would be laid next to or on top of the cornerstone. Either way, it is clear that "cornerstone" means the most important stone in the building.

Show the team a picture of a capstone in an ancient building.

Jesus quotes the next part of the psalm: "The **LORD** has done this, and it is marvelous **in our eyes**." In this context, Lord refers to God. It is the way the Jewish people referred to God when they did not want to say his name because they respected him so much. Translate "Lord" the same way you have translated it in other

passages where the meaning is "God." **In our eyes** is an idiom that means "to us." In other words, the psalm is saying that people are amazed at what God has done by taking the rejected stone and putting it in the most important place.

Jesus now gives the message of the story: "Therefore I tell you that the **kingdom of God** will be taken away from you." The kingdom of God in the New Testament refers to the time when God comes to rule-his reign and authority which begins with Jesus' ministry on earth and people's acceptance of him. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description. Use the same phrase here that you have used in other passages for "kingdom of God."

Jesus tells the religious leaders that the kingdom of God will be "given to a **nation** that will **produce its fruit**." The word for nation here means an ethnic group, a people who have a common identity. Jesus is talking about the new people of God who are going to come together out of all the nations when they believe in him. A nation "that will produce its fruit" means that these people, unlike the earlier tenants, will respect God-the landowner-and obey him-give him the fruit of the vineyard.

The **chief priests** and **Pharisees** understand that the parable is talking about them. See the Master Glossary for a definition of priest. Use the same word you have used for "chief priests" before. Pharisees were a sect or group of Jews who followed certain teachings. They thought that the way to be right with God was by keeping themselves separate from ordinary people and following hundreds of rules to stay pure. They looked down on people who did not follow their rules. At the time of Jesus, many-but not all-of the religious leaders in Jerusalem belonged to the Pharisee sect. See the Master Glossary for a full description. Use the same word for Pharisee that you have used in other passages.

The chief priests and Pharisees look for a way to arrest Jesus. But they realize it is too risky because the crowd around him believe that he is a **prophet**. A prophet is someone who receives a message from God and takes it to people. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description. Use the same word that you have used for prophet in other passages.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 21:33–46

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4175922 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6944341 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 22:1–14

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 22:1–14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage tells another story about conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. In these stories, Jesus is in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. He does and says many things that the religious leaders do not like. Eventually, these stories of conflict will lead to the religious leaders arresting Jesus.

In this story, Jesus tells a parable, a teaching story, to make his point to the religious leaders. This is the third parable he tells in a row. Like the other two parables, this parable warns that people who do not listen to God's

call will be left out of his Kingdom while others come in. This parable marks the end of one stage of the confrontation between Jesus and the leaders.

Jesus starts the parable the same way that he has started many of his earlier parables: "The kingdom of heaven is like..." This is a phrase Jesus uses over and over when he begins telling a story with a spiritual meaning. It means that this is a story about how God rules the world.

The story starts with a king giving a wedding feast for his son. In ancient Israel the bridegroom's father would arrange the wedding feast. It would happen in his house. Jesus often uses the image of a wedding celebration, with Jesus himself as the bridegroom, to talk about the time when God and his people will finally be together forever.

In the parable, the king sends servants to tell the wedding guests that the feast is ready. In the ancient world, a king's servants could hold very high positions and help him rule the kingdom. They were not necessarily the people who cleaned his house. To be invited to a prince's wedding was an enormous honor that no one would refuse. However, surprisingly, all the guests "were unwilling to come." This is an incredible insult to the king. In the parable, the guests represent the leaders of Israel whom God is inviting into his Kingdom. The servants are God's messengers, the prophets. But the leaders ignore the invitation and refuse to come.

Discuss the following questions with your team: In your community, who arranges a wedding celebration? How do they invite people to the wedding? How do people feel when they are invited? What are the guests expected to do before and during the wedding?

After the guests refuse to come, the king sends another group of servants to the guests. This time, he tells the servants to say that he has already killed the "oxen and fatted cattle" for the feast. These were the best kinds of food in ancient Israel.

Show the team a picture of an ox and a fattened calf.

But the guests continue to ignore the invitation. One goes to "his farm" and another to "his business." They are more interested in their own work than in honoring the king. Some of the guests even insult and kill the king's servants. Jesus does not explain why the guests do this. Some people think that the guests think the servants are deceiving them. What is more important is the meaning of this part of the parable: God sent prophets over and over to tell the leaders of Israel to come to him, but instead the leaders insulted and killed God's prophets.

The king is furious about what the guests did to his servants. Now he sends his soldiers to kill the murderers and burn their city. Because this story is a parable, it is not important for the people in the story to do exactly what a real person in that situation would do. The goal of the parable is to teach a clear message. This part of the parable would remind people of how in Old Testament times God finally allowed foreign soldiers to destroy Jerusalem because people kept insulting him. In the context of Matthew, Jesus is also warning that if the leaders do not repent, God will allow Jerusalem to be destroyed by a foreign army again. About forty years after this time, that is exactly what happened. The Roman army attacked Jerusalem and burned it.

Now the king sends another group of servants out. He tells them, "The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come." So he tells the servants to go to the streets and invite anyone they see to the feast. The servants invite everyone, "bad as well as good," until the banquet hall is full of guests. This part of the parable represents God freely inviting everyone to come into his Kingdom by trusting in Jesus. The people from the streets probably represent the people that the religious leaders despised: ordinary people and the notorious sinners like tax collectors and prostitutes whom Jesus mentioned earlier. These people don't have any special social standing. They don't deserve to be at a king's wedding feast. But at least, unlike the first group of guests, they come willingly.

At some point in the feast, the king comes around to see the guests. He notices that one man is not wearing proper clothing for a wedding. In ancient Israel, wedding guests would wear their best white linen clothing. People would keep these clothes clean and ready and use them only at special times. But it seems that this man did not think it was important to change into his best clothes for the king's wedding. The man's careless attitude shows that he does not respect the king or value the incredible opportunity the king gave him to attend his son's wedding.

Stop and discuss the following question with your team: At a special occasion, what kinds of things do guests do to show that they respect the person who invited them?

The king orders his servants to tie the man up and put him outside "in the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This last phrase appears in many of Jesus' parables in Matthew. It is a reference to hell or being eternally separated from God and all the good things that come from God. This is another part of the story where the characters' actions do not have to be realistic within the story. Instead they point to the meaning of the story. Everyone is invited to the wedding, just as everyone is invited to God's Kingdom through Jesus. But that does not mean people should have a careless attitude toward God or assume that they can continue to lead a dirty or sinful life.

Jesus ends the parable with a warning: "Many are invited but few are chosen." In the Old Testament, God's chosen people were Israel. But Jesus is saying that now there will be a new chosen people of God: People who accept his invitation—they might be from anywhere in the world—and show reverence or honor for him.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells a parable about a king giving a wedding feast for his son. The wedding guests repeatedly refuse to come and eventually kill the king's messengers. The king becomes angry and destroys the murderers and their city.

Second scene: The king invites all sorts of people from the streets in place of the guests who wouldn't come. These people willingly come to the feast.

Third scene: The king comes in to see the guests, and sees one person who is not properly dressed. He orders his servants to throw the man out of the banquet. Jesus explains, "Many are invited, but few are chosen."

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples (mentioned earlier in the passage)
- Crowds of people in the temple
- Religious leaders (chief priests, elders, and Pharisees)

The characters in the parable include:

- A king
- The king's servants
- People invited to the wedding
- The king's soldiers
- People on the streets

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that this is the third in a series of parables that Jesus is telling to the religious leaders. The religious leaders just challenged him and asked him who gave him authority. Jesus responds by showing through several parables that even though his authority comes from God, the religious leaders are

rejecting him just like the leaders in the Old Testament did. He is warning that as a result they are going to be excluded from God's people. Jesus' disciples and many other people in the temple are listening to his teaching. Jesus begins by saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like..." These are words he often uses at the beginning of a parable.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your team: In your culture, what words do people use to begin a story, especially a story that teaches something? How would people begin a story if they want that story to help people understand what God's rule (God's kingdom) is like?

In this parable, Jesus tells about a king who has prepared a wedding feast for his son. He sends servants to call the guests to the feast. Many people think that these guests have already accepted the king's invitation, but now the king is sending servants to tell them it is time for the feast. A few scholars think that this is the first time the guests are receiving an invitation. It is important to understand that attending the wedding of the king's son was an opportunity people would have once in their whole life. Not everyone in the kingdom could attend, so the king would honor only the most important people by inviting them. There would be a rich and elaborate feast, and of course, it would all be free for the guests. But for some reason, when the servants tell the guests that the feast is ready, the guests ignore them!

The king sends another group of servants. These servants try to convince the guests. The king tells them to say, "My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet!" In other words, all the preparations have been made for a wonderful celebration. In ancient Israel meat from oxen and fattened cattle was considered the most prized and delicious food.

Once again, the guests' response is surprising and insulting to the king! They ignore the king's servants. Some go on to their farms, others to their businesses. Some of the guests even grab the king's servants, start insulting and mistreating them, and murder them. Remember that these servants had a high position in the kingdom. People would not normally look down on them. The shocking actions of the guests show how crazy it is for people to refuse God's invitation to his Kingdom.

The king hears about what happened. Before he was very patient and kind, but now he is extremely angry. He sends soldiers to destroy the murderers and their city. Then he says to his servants, "The feast is ready, but those I invited were not worthy." He tells them to go gather people from the streets to be guests at the wedding. They go out to the streets and bring in all kinds of people until the hall is full of guests. These are ordinary people, unlike the first group of guests, who were people with high positions in the kingdom. They would never expect to be invited to the wedding of the king's son, although they would definitely know that it is happening. Now the king gives them that unexpected opportunity.

At a certain point in the feast, it was normal for the host to come see the guests. He himself would not take any food but would see who had come and talk to the guests. This may be some time after the feast has started. The king notices one man who didn't wear proper clothes. It is important to understand that one of the things wedding guests were expected to do was dress in their best white linen clothes. But one of the people who comes to the wedding decides not to wear his best clothes. He asks the man politely, "How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?" The man does not have any answer, because he knows that he has disrespected the king. Then the king tells the people serving at the feast, "Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus ends the story by warning, "For many are invited, but few are chosen." Jesus often ends his parables by saying a few words about what he wants people to learn from the story.

Discuss the following questions with your team: How do people end stories in your culture, especially stories that are for teaching? Do they ever make a short statement about the meaning of the story? How do people know what the story is teaching?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' 12 disciples (mentioned earlier in the passage)
- Crowds of people in the temple (mentioned earlier)
- Religious leaders (chief priests, elders, and Pharisees)

The characters in the parable include:

- A king
- The king's servants
- People invited to the wedding
- The king's soldiers
- People on the streets
- Attendants or waiters serving at the feast

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus starts telling another parable. He uses the opening phrase he often uses in parables: "The kingdom of heaven is like..." He tells about a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. When the feast was ready, he sent servants either to invite the guests or to remind the guests and tell them that everything was ready. But all the guests ignored his servants and didn't come!

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the king's servants, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "I'm shocked," or "These people are crazy!" [!end] Restart the action.

The servants must have told the king about the guests' response, because now he sends another group of servants. He tells them to give the guests this message: "My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet." But the guests ignore this message too. One of the guests goes on his way to his farm. One goes to his business. Then some of the guests grab the king's servants, mistreat them, and kill them.

Stop the action.

The king calls his army and sends them to the place where the murder was committed. They kill the murderers and set their city on fire. Then the king says to his other servants, "The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honor. Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see."

The servants go out and tell everyone they find on the street to come to the wedding feast of the king's son. They come into the wedding hall until it is full of guests.

Stop the action.

The king comes into the hall to see the guests. He notices one guest who is not wearing proper clothing for a wedding. He asks, "Friend, why aren't you wearing wedding clothes?" The man doesn't have anything to say in his defense.

Stop the action.

The king tells the attendants at the feast, "Tie his hands and feet and put him out in the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The servants obey. Then Jesus ends the parable by saying, "Many are invited, but few are chosen."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage starts by saying that Jesus "**again** spoke to **them** in **parables**."

"Again" can also mean he continued to speak or told them another parable.

From the passages that come before this one, we know that "them" means the religious leaders-the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees.

A parable was a special kind of story that Jesus told. It was told using everyday things to describe deeper things about God. Use the same word for parable that you have used in other passages, and see the Master Glossary for a full definition.

Jesus starts the parable by saying, "The **kingdom of heaven** is like..."

"Kingdom of heaven" is another word for "kingdom of God" that Matthew often uses in his gospel. The kingdom of God in the New Testament refers to the time when God comes to rule-his reign and authority which begins with Jesus' ministry on earth and people's acceptance of him. See the Master Glossary for a fuller description. When Jesus starts a parable with "the kingdom of heaven is like," it means he is describing an earthly situation that represents a spiritual reality. He is not literally comparing the kingdom of heaven to the king in the story. He is comparing the kingdom of heaven to what happened in the story. Use the same phrase for "the kingdom of heaven is like" that you have used in other passages.

In the parable, the king has prepared a wedding feast for his son. This does not mean that the king himself cooked the food, but that he made all the arrangements for the feast. The king sends his **servants** to tell the wedding guests that everything is ready. The literal translation of servant in this passage is **slave**, but this does not mean they were people of low status. A king's slaves could hold very high positions in the kingdom.

Most Bible scholars think that the king is sending the slaves to remind or give exact details to guests who have already been invited and said they will come to the wedding. In ancient Israel, people would plan for many months that a wedding was going to happen, but the bridegroom's father would finally decide when the right time had come. So the guests would wait to hear from him exactly when they should come to the feast. However, some scholars think this is the first time the king is inviting the guests. Either way, the king is honoring these people by inviting them to the wedding.

But the guests all refuse to come to the wedding. Then the king sends other slaves to say, "My oxen and my fatted cattle are butchered and everything is ready." This means that the king has made all the arrangements for the best feast people could imagine, including killing some animals that were raised especially to give the best meat. But once again, the guests refuse to come.

The king becomes enraged and sends his army to destroy the murderers and burn their city. Then he sends servants to invite people again, but this time he tells them that the original guests were not worthy or didn't deserve to come to the feast. So he tells them to go to the "intersections of the streets," the crossroads where two streets come together, and invite everyone they find there to the wedding. He is sending them to the place in the town where they are most likely to find a lot of people. The slaves do what the king says. They invite everyone they meet, "bad and good," and the wedding hall is filled with guests.

When the king comes in to see the guests, as a good host would do, he sees one man who is not wearing **wedding clothes**, which means the kind of clothes that were considered proper for someone coming to a wedding. This does not mean they were expensive or unusual clothes. Normal people would definitely own proper clothes. It would be very disrespectful to come to a wedding without wearing these clothes.

The king addresses this man as "friend," or "companion," a word that was used when politely addressing another person. The king asks, "How did you come in here without wedding clothes?" The king is not really

asking about how the man came in. He is saying that it is not appropriate for the man to be here dressed as he is. The man is speechless; he has no excuse to give to the king.

The king then talks to his **attendants** or servants. This may mean the same servants who are mentioned earlier in the parable. Or, since a different word is used here, it may mean the household servants, the people who are serving the meal to the guests. The king orders them to tie the man's hands and feet and throw him outside. This does not mean they literally picked the man up and threw him. The word "throw out" can also mean "drive out," or "send out," or "put out." The king says to put the man "in the darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth," or "there men will weep and gnash their teeth." This is a common phrase Jesus uses in parables to refer to people who do not get into God's Kingdom. It describes people suffering in Hell. "Gnash their teeth" means grinding the teeth together in pain or agony. Use the same phrase here that you have used in other passages where Jesus uses this expression.

Then Jesus concludes the parable by saying, "For many are invited, but few are chosen." God invites everyone into his Kingdom. But many people do not enter into the Kingdom, like the original wedding guests who refused to come or the man who came but did not come in a way that was appropriate. The ones who accept the invitation and also live up to it are the true chosen people of God.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 22:1-14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4039383 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6719640 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 22:15–22

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 22:15–22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage continues the story of Jesus talking to the religious leaders in the courtyard of God's temple in Jerusalem. A few days after this story happens, the religious leaders will arrest Jesus and have him killed. Jesus has just told three parables that show how the Pharisees are failing at listening to God and his prophets, even though they think that they obey God better than anyone else.

This story starts another set of three episodes: Different groups of religious leaders will come and ask Jesus difficult questions in order to trick him into saying something that will get him in trouble. The answers Jesus will give to these questions not only show how wise he is, and how no question is too hard for him. They also give important teachings for Jesus' followers.

In this passage, the first group of people who come to challenge Jesus are the Pharisees, along with some supporters of the ruler Herod. These two groups of people were very different. Pharisees were most concerned about not breaking any of God's laws. They wanted so much to be right before God that they even added many

more rules to try to make themselves more acceptable to God. The supporters of Herod were very different. They were not concerned about being holy and acceptable to God. They were people who wanted to get power and influence by being loyal to Herod, who was ruler of part of Israel at that time. He ruled under the authority of the Roman emperor, Caesar. Herod led a very unholy life.

These two extremely different groups of people had one thing in common. They both were afraid of Jesus and how much people loved him. They wanted to arrest and kill him. So they joined together to try to find a question that would force him to say something that was against the law.

The Pharisee disciples and supporters of Herod ask Jesus a question that people at that time argued about a lot. But before asking the question, they start by praising Jesus. They say he always tells the truth and doesn't try to please any one group of people. They probably hoped these nice words would convince him to say something bold that would put him in danger. Then they ask him their question: "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Around 15 years before this, the Roman government took full control of the Jewish homeland of Israel and made the Jewish people pay taxes to the Roman King, or Caesar. This meant that people would have to give a certain amount of money to the officials of the Roman king, and the money would be used for the king's government. Many Jewish people believed it was wrong to pay taxes that supported Caesar's evil rule, because Caesar did not obey God or his laws. They also did not like the coins used for paying the tax because the coins had an image of the king, who said that he was a god. Some rebels refused to pay the tax because they believed that paying the tax was an insult to God.

The Pharisees thought this question would be a perfect way to get Jesus in trouble, whether he answers yes or no. If Jesus says that yes, they should pay the taxes, he will be in trouble with the Jewish people. If Jesus says no, they should not pay the taxes, he will be in trouble with the Roman government. The Gospel of Luke tells us that the Pharisees planned to report Jesus to the Romans if Jesus said people should not pay the tax.

Stop and discuss this question with your team: What are things in your area that the authorities want people to do, but that Christians feel are wrong?

Jesus knows immediately what the Pharisees are planning, and he says so in front of the whole crowd. Jesus asks them why they are trying to trap him. He calls them, "You hypocrites!" Hypocrite is a word that means "actor," someone who is not saying what is true. A hypocrite says one thing but is really thinking something different. Before answering the question, Jesus tells the Pharisee disciples and Herod's supporters to show him a piece of the money that would be used for the tax.

Someone shows Jesus the coin for paying the tax. The coin has a picture of the Roman king on it.

Show the team a picture of a first-century denarius.

Jesus asks, "Whose picture is this?" They tell him it is the king's. Then Jesus gives his answer: "So give back to the king the things that belong to the king, and give back to God the things that belong to God." In other words, Jesus is saying that it is possible to obey both a human government, even one that is not based on God's laws, and also to obey God. This was a very new idea for people. The words "give back to God the things that belong to God" even remind us of the parable that Jesus just told about people who rented a vineyard and then refused to pay, "give back," the rent. He seems to be telling the Pharisees that they are not giving God what he really wants and deserves. In the earlier passages where Jesus was talking with the religious leaders, Jesus was telling them they should have repented, or turned back to God, when they heard John the Baptist's message. So he may be returning to that idea here. To have a right relationship with God, people must turn away from their sins. God deserves not just people's money, but their heart and the whole person.

The passage ends by saying that the people who asked the question were amazed at Jesus' answer. They did not expect him to say something like this. They thought they would certainly find a way to trap him, but he did not fall in the trap. So they go away.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Some members of the Pharisee group have a meeting to try to find a way to trap Jesus.

Second scene: The Pharisees who met together send some of their disciples, along with some supporters of Herod, to talk to Jesus. The disciples and supporters of Herod ask Jesus if it is right to pay taxes to the Roman emperor or not.

Third scene: Jesus asks to see one of the coins used for paying the tax. He tells them to give what belongs to the Roman emperor to him and to give what belongs to God, to God.

The characters in this story include:

- Pharisees
- Some of the Pharisees' disciples
- Supporters of King Herod
- Jesus
- A crowd of people in the temple
- Jesus' disciples (we can assume they are still there, although this passage does not talk about them specifically)

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Notice that at the beginning of this story, some Pharisees meet in private (away from Jesus and the crowds in the temple) to think of a way to trap Jesus. Their goal is to have a reason to arrest and kill Jesus.

The Pharisees who are making this plan send another group of people to Jesus, who are called "their disciples." The disciples of the Pharisees would probably be younger men who were learning from older Pharisees about the Scriptures and the Pharisee way of life. They also sent some supporters of king Herod, and the two groups of people approached Jesus together.

From the previous stories that Matthew has told, we can assume Jesus is still in the courtyard of the temple, the area where all the people, including women and foreigners, were allowed to come. The temple would have been very crowded, with many people listening to what Jesus and the religious leaders are saying.

The two groups of people, one who was loyal to the Roman government and one who hated it, approach Jesus together. They call him, "Teacher," a title of respect, and then say many nice things about him. "We know how honest you are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don't play favorites." Then they ask him to tell them what he thinks about this extremely difficult question: "Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

Jesus' answer shows that he is much wiser than they expected. They lied when they said that they knew he was truthful, because they were saying something they did not really believe. Now Jesus tells the truth, and he calls them liars. "You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me?" Then he does something they didn't expect. He asks them to show him one of the coins that would be used to pay the tax to Caesar. The coin was called a denarius. Someone gives Jesus one of these silver coins, and Jesus asks them, "Whose image and name are on the coin?" They say, "Caesar's." The image and name stamped on the coin show that it was Caesar who had the coin made. Jesus tells the people, "So give Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and give God the things that belong to God."

The people who asked Jesus the question are now completely surprised at his answer, and they have nothing else to say. So they go away. Perhaps they go back to the Pharisees who sent them to ask the question, and they might tell the Pharisees what Jesus said.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Pharisees
- Some of the Pharisees' disciples
- Supporters of King Herod
- Jesus
- A crowd of people in the temple
- Jesus' disciples (we can assume they are still there, although this passage does not talk about them specifically)

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points. The story starts when a group of Pharisees meet together to talk about how they can trap Jesus. They want to find a reason to be able to arrest him. They make a plan and then send some of their disciples, along with some supporters of the ruler Herod, to ask him a difficult question.

Stop the action.

The Pharisee disciples and Herod's supporters approach Jesus in the temple courtyard. They start out by saying a lot of nice things about him. They respectfully call him, "Teacher," and say, "We know that you are honest. You teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are."

Stop the action.

The Pharisee disciples and Herod's supporters now ask the difficult question: "Tell us what you think: Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear answers like, "I'm sad that they don't accept me," or "I'm angry at how they are trying to trap me." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus understands immediately what they are trying to do, and he says so. He says, "You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me?" Then he asks them to show him a piece of the money that would be used to pay the tax to Caesar. Someone brings a silver coin and hands it to Jesus. Jesus holds up the coin and asks the people who asked the question, "Whose picture and name are stamped on the coin?" They say, "They are Caesar's." Jesus tells them, "So give Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and give God the things that belong to God."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the Pharisee disciples and Herod's supporters, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm embarrassed," "I'm angry," or "I'm shocked that he found an answer." [!end] Restart the action.

And act out the Pharisee disciples and supporters of Herod leaving without saying anything else.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The story starts by saying that the **Pharisees** met together to make a plan about how they could trap Jesus. This does not mean that all the people who belonged to the Pharisee group were at this meeting. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who wanted to make themselves acceptable to God by carefully following hundreds of rules about staying pure. See the Master Glossary for a fuller definition. Use the same word that you have used to translate "Pharisee" in other passages.

The Pharisees who were at this meeting then sent some of their **disciples**, along with some **supporters of Herod**, to ask Jesus a question. Disciples were people who followed a religious teacher and learned from him. Use the same word in your translation that you have used to translate "disciples of the Pharisees" in other passages. Herod's supporters, sometimes called Herodians, were a group of Jews who supported Herod's family and were loyal to Rome.

These two groups of people come to Jesus and say, "Teacher," which is a word that means someone who teaches about God and faith. See the Master Glossary for a full description, and use the same word you have used in other passages where people call Jesus "teacher."

Then the disciples of the Pharisees and Herod's supporters ask Jesus, "What do you think, is it **lawful** to pay taxes to **Caesar** or not?" The word "lawful" can also be translated as right, correct, or allowed. It refers to an action that is allowed or approved by God. Caesar was the emperor or king of the Roman empire, a large nation that included many countries and people groups. See the Master Glossary for a full description, and use the same word for "Caesar" that you have used in other passages.

But Jesus knew **their evil**, or their bad reasons for asking this question. He replied, "Why are you **testing** me, you **hypocrites**?" The word "testing" in this context also means "tempting," or trying to find a way to make someone do the wrong thing. Jesus does not expect these people to answer his question. He is using the question just to point out that they are trying to trick him. Hypocrite means an actor or someone who is being fake; a hypocrite is saying something he doesn't really believe is true.

Jesus then says, "Show me the coin used for paying the tax." Someone brings a denarius, a Roman silver coin.

Show the team a picture of a denarius.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 22:15–22**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (3285175 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5542623 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 22:23–33*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 22:23–33 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, Jesus is in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. This is the second of three stories Matthew will tell about Jesus answering questions from religious teachers. These teachers are trying to shame Jesus and even find a reason to put him to death. The religious teachers are jealous of how popular Jesus is, so they are trying to get rid of him. These three questions are part of a longer conversation between Jesus and the religious leaders.

In the first of these three stories, some members of the Pharisee sect asked Jesus a difficult question that they thought he would not be able to answer. In this story, which Matthew tells us happened on the same day, the Sadducees are the ones asking Jesus a question. The Pharisees and Sadducees were two different groups of Jews who had their own teachers and their own teachings about God, faith, and life.

One question that Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed about was whether people would live again after they died or not. Most of the Old Testament references to life after death come from books that were written late in Old Testament history. People started to believe more strongly that people would be raised to life again after they died during the last 200 years before Jesus came to earth. But the Sadducees believed that only the first five books of the Bible, the books written by Moses, were the word of God. And they said that once people died, they would not come back to life again. Pharisees believed that the whole Old Testament was the word of God. They also believed that God would raise people to life again after they died.

Stop and discuss the following questions in your team: In your area, what do people believe happens to people when they die? What different teachings or beliefs are there about this question? Who do these teachings come from?

In his teachings, Jesus often talked about life after death, heaven, and hell. The Sadducees must be aware that Jesus agreed with the Pharisees about life after death. So now some Sadducees ask Jesus a question that they hope will make Jesus and his teaching look foolish. They may be doing this hoping that the crowds of people will laugh at Jesus and stop listening to his teaching.

The question these religious teachers ask is about a custom that Moses told people to follow in the Old Testament when a man died without any children. If the man was married and had a brother, Moses said that his brother should marry the dead man's wife. The first son they had together would be considered the son of the dead brother. He would be given the dead brother's name and land. This custom would allow a man's family line to continue even if he died before he had any children.

The Sadducee teachers tell Jesus a story about someone who followed this custom. They start by saying, "There were seven brothers among us." However, that does not necessarily mean this is a true story. They have probably made the story as an example of what they think is a problem with the teaching about life after death. In their story, the oldest brother died without any children, so the second brother married the oldest brother's wife. But the second brother also died without children, so the third brother married her. In fact, all the brothers married this one wife, one after another, and all of them died. Then the woman died too.

Now the Sadducees ask their question: "Whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her." They think that there is no good answer to this question. They are thinking that if people live again after they die, then all of these people would be alive again at the same time. The woman was the wife of all seven brothers at different times, but now she would be all of their wives at the same time. In the Old Testament, a man could have more than one wife, but a woman could never have more than one husband at the same time. The Sadducee teachers think they have made a point that will make Jesus' teaching look ridiculous.

Jesus answers by saying that the Sadducees are making a mistake by thinking this way. Jesus says that they do not know the Scriptures. This would be insulting to the Sadducees, who thought they followed the Scriptures better than anyone else. Jesus also says that they do not know the power of God. The Sadducees did not believe that God actively controls what happens to people or that God judges people for their actions. They did not believe in miracles. They focused on human life and things that we can see and touch. So Jesus is telling them that these ideas have led them to think about life after death in the wrong way. They cannot understand life after death without understanding the power of God, or things that are beyond what we see and experience on earth.

Jesus then explains how life after death is different from life on earth. He says that people will no longer marry and have children in that life. Instead, they will be like the angels in heaven, who live forever rather than marrying, having children, and dying.

Jesus finishes his reply by quoting a portion of the Old Testament that the Sadducees did accept as God's word. He says, "But now, as to whether there will be a resurrection of the dead," meaning he is now answering not just the specific question they asked, but their basic teachings about God and life that made them ask the question. Then Jesus quotes from the book of Exodus, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob were respected ancestors of the Jewish people. Jesus explains, "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." In other words, God lives forever, and he also makes covenants, or agreements, with humans that last forever. The life of God is so powerful that it even gives life to human beings after their physical life on earth is over.

Matthew does not tell us whether the Sadducees thought this answer was right. But he does say that the crowds in the temple who were listening were astonished at Jesus' teaching, which means they were so amazed they were almost overwhelmed. People might have been surprised that Jesus gave a reason for believing in life after death even in the books of Moses. They might have thought when the Sadducees asked their question that Jesus would not be able to answer them well. And they might be impressed and happy that he did defend the teaching about life after death, since most of the ordinary people, like the Pharisees, believed that people would live again after they died.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: A group of Sadducee religious teachers ask Jesus a question that they think he will not be able to answer. They tell a story about seven brothers who were all married to one woman before they died. They ask Jesus, "Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?"

Second scene: Jesus answers the question by telling the Sadducees that they are making a mistake for two reasons: They don't know the Scriptures, and they don't know the power of God. He says that in the life after death, people will no longer marry like they do on earth.

Third scene: Jesus addresses the Sadducees' teaching that says that people will not live again after they die. He quotes from the book of Exodus, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," and then he says, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

The characters in this story include:

- Some religious teachers who belong to the Sadducee group
- Jesus
- Crowds of people listening in the temple, probably including the disciples

The characters in the Sadducees' story include:

- Seven brothers
- The oldest brother's wife

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to understand the setting of the story. Jesus is in God's temple in Jerusalem a few days before the Passover festival. The temple would be full of people who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival. Many of these people love listening to Jesus' teaching. But the religious leaders in Jerusalem, both from the Pharisee and Sadducee groups, are jealous of how popular Jesus is. They are trying to find a way to shame Jesus and make people stop listening to him, or even to accuse him of a crime so that they can have him killed.

The conversation between Jesus and these religious teachers has already been going on for some time. Some religious teachers from the Pharisee group have just asked Jesus a difficult political question. To their surprise, Jesus gave a clear answer that did not get him in trouble either with the government or with the crowd.

This story happens on the same day. Now a group of Sadducee religious teachers ask Jesus a question they think he will not be able to answer. They are trying to show that Jesus' teachings about life after death are impossible

and foolish, because they did not believe that people live again after they die. The teachings of the Sadducees were not as popular with ordinary people as the teachings of the Pharisees. But many of the most powerful people in Israel, like the high priests and elders, were Sadducees. Now people from this group are trying to show in front of a large crowd of ordinary people that Jesus' teaching is wrong.

The Sadducees call Jesus, "Teacher." Outwardly they are showing respect to him as another teacher. But they are really trying to show that his teaching is not right. They start their question by talking about a custom that Moses told people to follow in the Old Testament, where a younger brother whose older brother died would marry the older brother's wife and have a child who would get the name and land of the older brother.

Then the Sadducees tell a story that they think shows that there cannot be life after death. It is probably a story they have made as an example. The story is about seven brothers who died, one after the other. Each of them married the oldest brother's wife while they were alive, according to the custom. The group of Sadducees ask Jesus, "Tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection?"

Jesus answers the question by saying the Sadducees have made a mistake in two ways: They don't understand the Scriptures or the "power of God." It is important to understand that the Sadducees did not believe in miracles or think that God actively takes part in human life. Jesus tells them that this is a mistake. He explains that the way they are thinking about life after death is wrong. Jesus says, "At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage." In New Testament times, people referred to men getting married as "marrying," and women getting married as "being given in marriage." So what Jesus is saying is that neither men nor women will marry in the next life. Instead they will be "like the angels."

Jesus quotes the book of Exodus, one of the first five books of the Old Testament, or Jewish Scriptures, to show that God does give people life that goes on forever. It is important to remember that the Sadducees only believed in the first five books of the Old Testament. Jesus says, "Have you not read what God said to you? I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Jesus does not really expect the Sadducees to answer his question, but he uses the question to make a strong point. He says, "Have you not read what God said to you?" which is like saying, "Surely you must have read what God said to you!" Notice that Jesus says that God said this "to you," even though this was something written down over 1000 years before. This again shows that Jesus understands that God lives forever and he speaks to everyone through the Scriptures, not just the people who were alive when they were written. Jesus ends by saying, "He is not the God of the dead, but the living."

We don't know what the Sadducees thought about Jesus' answer. But the crowds of people listening were amazed and probably impressed by what Jesus said.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Some religious teachers who belong to the Sadducee group
- Jesus
- Crowds of people listening in the temple, probably including the disciples

The characters in the Sadducees' story include:

- Seven brothers
- The oldest brother's wife

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Remember that this story happens on the same day that Jesus has answered another difficult question that some religious teachers asked him. Now another group of religious teachers come to talk to him. They belong to the Sadducee group, who don't believe that people will live again after they die.

The group of religious teachers call Jesus, "Teacher," and remind him of a custom from the Old Testament. If a man died without children, his brother would marry his widow and have children for him. The Sadducees tell a story about a brother who died, and all six of his younger brothers married his widow and then died. They ask Jesus, "Tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowds of people listening, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Curious," "Confused," or "Eager for Jesus to answer them well." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus speaks very directly to the Sadducees. He says, "Your mistake is that you don't know the Scriptures, and you don't know the power of God."

Stop the action.

Jesus says that when the dead rise, there will be no more marriage. "They will be like the angels in heaven." Then he addresses the basic question about whether people will live again after they die. He asks the Sadducees, "Have you not read what God said to you, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?' He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

At the end of the action, ask the actors playing the Sadducees, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Disappointed," or "I'm not convinced," or "I don't feel comfortable with the idea that God actively controls our lives."

Ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm amazed," "Relieved," or "Happy to learn from Jesus' wisdom."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, another group of religious leaders, this time from the **Sadducee** sect, comes to Jesus in the temple to ask him a difficult question. The Sadducees were religious leaders who believed that the Old Testament laws of Moses were the only necessary laws. They did not believe in the later oral teachings of the Pharisees. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of Sadducee.

Matthew tells us that the Sadducees did not believe in **the resurrection**, meaning they did not believe that God would give people life again after they died. This group of Sadducees comes to Jesus and calls him, "**Teacher**," a word that was specifically used for someone who taught people about God and the Scriptures. See the Master Glossary for a full description of teacher, and make sure to use the same word you have used in other passages.

The group of Sadducees remind Jesus, "**Moses** told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him." Moses was the prophet who wrote the first five books of the Bible, the only books that the Sadducees accepted as Scripture. In the original language, the word "raise up offspring" is related to the word "resurrection." The Sadducees are showing that they believe the only real kind of life people have after they die is through their children and the people who are still on earth.

Then the Sadducees tell a story about a woman who was married seven times. Now they ask their question, "Therefore, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?" In this sentence, "at the resurrection," means when God raises people who have died to life again. The Sadducees do not really believe there will be a resurrection, and they are asking this question in order to show one of the problems they think this belief creates.

Jesus answers, "You are wrong," which also means, "you have been misled," meaning they are wrong to not believe that people will live again after they die. Jesus says the reason the Sadducees made this mistake is "because you don't know the **Scriptures** and you don't know the **power** of God." Scripture as used in the New Testament refers to the Jewish holy writings, most often what we now consider the entire Old Testament. But the Sadducees only believed that the books of Moses should be considered Scripture. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages for "Scriptures." Jesus is saying that the Sadducees do not know what the Scriptures teach, or they do not know the meaning of what the Scriptures say.

He explains, "They will be like the **angels** in **heaven**." An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being who is a messenger from God. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word that you have used to translate "angel" in other passages. Heaven refers to the place where God and his angels live, and it is also the ultimate destination of believers. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used for heaven as "the place where God lives" in other passages.

Jesus then shifts to talking about the question of resurrection in general. He quotes from Exodus: "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "The God of Abraham" means the God whom Abraham worships. Then Jesus concludes, "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Matthew ends this passage by telling us that the crowds of people in the temple who were listening were astonished at Jesus' teaching.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 22:23-33

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3618635 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6092530 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 22:34–46

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 22:34–46 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this passage, Matthew tells another story about Jesus talking with the religious leaders in the temple. The religious leaders have already challenged Jesus many times by now. They are trying to find a way to make him say something that will get him in trouble. In this story, for the third time, some of the religious leaders will ask Jesus a difficult question that they hope he will not be able to answer. Then Jesus himself asks them a question, and they are not able to answer. Matthew tells us at the end of this passage that after this, no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

The first question Jesus answered came from the Pharisee group, and the second question came from the Sadducee group. The Pharisees and Sadducees were different groups of religious Jews who followed different teachings. There were many things the Pharisees and Sadducees did not agree about. But people in both groups wanted to get rid of Jesus. Now, the Pharisees come back to ask Jesus another question. Matthew tells us that the Pharisees were listening to what Jesus said to the Sadducees' question. The Pharisees realize that the Sadducees didn't have anything else to say after hearing Jesus answer their question. So now the Pharisees

meet together again to try to find a question that will be too difficult for Jesus. One person from the Pharisees comes forward to ask Jesus a question. This Pharisee is called a "lawyer," meaning someone who had carefully studied the Jewish religious laws in the Old Testament, the Jewish Scriptures that were also sometimes called "the Law of Moses."

This expert in Old Testament law calls Jesus, "Teacher," and then asks him, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" "The law" means God's laws in the Old Testament, specifically the first five books of the Old Testament. When he says "the great commandment," he is speaking in a style that sounds like the way people spoke in Hebrew, and the meaning is "the greatest" or "the most important commandment." Religious teachers at the time often argued about which laws and which kinds of laws in the Old Testament were the most important. This was a common question to talk about. But it was also a question that could get Jesus into trouble. If he answered that one law was the most important, people could accuse him of dishonoring God by saying that some of God's laws were not important.

Stop and discuss these questions with your team: In your culture, what do people think are the most important duties that people should follow? What do they think is the worst sin or sins? What do these ideas show about the things that are important in your community?

Jesus answered the question by quoting a command that comes from the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This quote was very familiar for Jews at Jesus' time, because they would recite the passage of Scripture it comes from twice every day. When Jesus says "with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," he is not saying that there are different kinds of love or different parts of a person that can love. He is making a strong statement that God wants people to love him entirely, with everything that they are. People should love God through everything that they think, feel, and do. Jesus says again that this is the greatest and first commandment, and then he adds, "The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." This is a quote from another book in the Old Testament.

Jesus' answer shows people that the way to start obeying God's laws is by loving God and other people. His answer does not mean that any of God's laws are not important, because all the other laws of the Old Testament give specific ways to show love for God and love for people. Jesus finishes by saying, "On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." The "law" meant the books of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament. "The prophets" were other Old Testament Scriptures. So Jesus is saying that these two commandments are the foundation of the whole Old Testament.

Matthew does not say what the Pharisees thought about Jesus' answer. Instead he immediately starts telling about Jesus' own question to the Pharisees. It was very common for Jewish religious teachers to ask questions as a way of teaching.

Stop and ask the following questions in your team: In your culture, how do religious teachers teach? What methods do they use? How do people interact with them?

Jesus asks the Pharisees a question about the Messiah, the savior God had promised to send. Jesus asks them whose son the Messiah is, in other words, whose family he would be from. The Pharisees answer that the Messiah comes from the family of King David. This was a very easy question to answer, because many Old Testament passages talk about the coming Messiah as a descendant of King David.

Then Jesus asks the Pharisees another question, which is not so easy to answer. He says, "Then how does David in the Spirit call him 'Lord,'" and Jesus quotes from Psalm 110, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet." Many religious teachers taught that this psalm was about the Messiah, the savior whom God would give victory over his enemies.

Jesus and other people at the time also accepted that King David himself wrote this psalm. Jesus says that David wrote these words "in the Spirit," meaning that the words of the psalm were given to him by God through the Holy Spirit. Whatever David wrote in the Spirit must be true. But it would be very strange for someone to call his son, or grandson, or other descendant, "my lord." Instead, it would be normal for the son to call the father "sir," or "my lord." Jesus asks the question, "If David then calls him, 'my lord,' how can he be his son?" With this question Jesus points to the fact that the Messiah is more than just a human descendant of David. The Messiah must be even greater than King David, if King David calls him "my lord." This is a way of pointing people to the

truth that Jesus is not only the Son of David, but also the Son of God, although Jesus is not using those words at this time.

The Pharisees do not have an answer for Jesus that fits with their understanding of who the Messiah is. So they cannot answer his second question. Now that Jesus has answered the three hardest questions the religious leaders could find to ask him, and he has also asked them a question that they could not answer, the debate is over. The religious leaders do not dare to ask him any more questions. Instead, they will begin looking for a different way to get rid of him.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: The Pharisees hear Jesus' answer to the Sadducees' question and meet together to try again to find a question that will be too difficult for Jesus to answer.

Second scene: One Pharisee, an expert in religious law, comes forward and asks Jesus, "What is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus answers by quoting two passages from the Old Testament books written by Moses, which command the people of Israel to love God wholeheartedly and to love the people around them.

Third scene: Jesus asks the Pharisees who are gathered there whose family the Messiah will come from, and they say, "David's." Then Jesus asks them why David calls the Messiah "my lord," if the Messiah is David's son. The Pharisees do not have an answer. After this exchange, no one is brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A group of Pharisees
- A Pharisee who is an expert in religious law
- Other people listening in the temple
- Jesus' disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that Jesus has just been talking with a group of Sadducees in the temple area. The Sadducees tried to trick him with a difficult question. Jesus' disciples and a large crowd of people are listening to Jesus talk with the religious leaders. Some Pharisees are also listening to what he says to the Sadducees. The Pharisees realize that Jesus was not tricked by the question the Sadducees asked. So the Pharisees get together again to try to trap Jesus. They come to Jesus, and one of them, who is an expert in Old Testament law, asks Jesus a question in order to test him, or try to make him say something wrong. The question is, "Which is the most important commandment in the law?"

Jesus answers by quoting from Deuteronomy, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Jesus says this is the greatest "and the first commandment." Then he says, "A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Then he tells them that in fact the whole Old Testament law, and the books of the prophets as well, are based on these two commandments.

Jesus then takes the opportunity, while the Pharisees are gathered together to talk to him, of asking them a question: "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They quickly answer, "He is the son of David." Then Jesus asks a much more difficult question: "Then why does David, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, call the Messiah, 'my lord'?" Jesus quotes from Psalm 110, where the writer of the psalm says,

"The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand,'" which was a position of great honor and authority, "'until I put your enemies under your feet,'" meaning that God will give him victory over his enemies. If someone was under another person's feet it meant that that person was humiliated and not able to fight against the other person. He would have to do whatever the other person told him to do.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your team: In your culture, how do people talk about someone winning a fight or battle? How do they talk about having authority over someone or something?

Jesus then asks his question to the Pharisees again: How can David call his son, or his descendant, "my lord?"

The Pharisees do not have an answer for this question. In fact, no one does. This last question of Jesus puts an end to the discussion, since it is now clear that he cannot be easily tricked even by difficult questions.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A group of Pharisees
- A Pharisee who is an expert in religious law
- Other people listening in the temple
- Jesus' disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The story starts with a group of Pharisees coming together to try to trap Jesus with a question. One of them, who knows a lot about Old Testament law, asks the question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Sad that they are still trying to trap me," or "Happy for an opportunity to teach." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus begins his answer by quoting from the Old Testament, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment." Then he brings in a second quote about love, but this time it is about loving people: "Love your neighbor as yourself." He says that this "second commandment" is like the first. He finishes by saying, "The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Stop the action.

Since all the Pharisees are surrounding Jesus, now he asks them a question: Whose descendant is the Messiah, the promised savior? The Pharisees easily answer this question: The Messiah is the descendant of King David. Then Jesus asks them why King David, writing a psalm by the power of the Holy Spirit, calls the Messiah, "my lord." Jesus quotes Psalm 110, "The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit in a place of honor at my right hand until I humble your enemies under your feet.'" After quoting this psalm, Jesus asks his question again: "Since David calls the Messiah 'my lord,' how can the Messiah be his son?"

Stop the action.

The Pharisees do not have an answer, and now people stop asking Jesus questions.

At the end of the action, ask the actors playing the other people in the temple, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "Impressed," "Curious," or "Intimidated."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The passage starts by saying that the **Pharisees** heard that Jesus had "silenced the **Sadducees**" with his answer to their question, meaning he had answered them in such a way that it made them stop asking him questions. Pharisees and Sadducees were two religious groups among the Jews who had different teachings about the Scriptures, God, and faith. See the Master Glossary for full definitions, and make sure to translate these words the same way you have translated them in other passages. The Pharisees now gather together and go to Jesus to ask another question of their own.

One member of this group of Pharisees, who is called an "**expert in the law**," asks Jesus a question. "Expert in the law" means this man had studied the religious laws written by Moses in the Old Testament very thoroughly. The word that means "expert in the law" is actually missing from several early copies of Matthew's Gospel, so some people think that it was added later. In any case, it is clear that this person was one of the Pharisees who had come together to ask Jesus another question. Matthew also tells us that he asked the question as a way of "testing Jesus." The word "test" can also mean "tempt." In other words, this man is asking Jesus a question in order to try to get him to say something wrong.

The expert in the law addresses Jesus as **teacher**, a word that was used for people who taught others about God and the Scriptures. See teacher in the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word here that you have used in other passages.

Then the man asks Jesus, "Which **commandment** is the greatest in the **law**?" Commandment means the instructions or rules that God gave the people of Israel in the Old Testament. Jewish religious teachers counted 613 different commandments in the books of Moses. "In the law" means in the first five books of the Old Testament, which were called the books of the law or the law of Moses. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of law, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus replies, "**Love the Lord your God** with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**."

The word Jesus uses for **love** means more than just feeling attracted to someone. It also includes being committed to the person, respecting the person, and wanting to please the person.

The Lord is a word that is frequently used for God in the New Testament. It literally means "master." See the Master Glossary definition of Lord God, and make sure to use the same word that you have used in other passages where the word "Lord" refers to God. "**The Lord your God**" means "The Lord, the God whom you worship."

In ancient Jewish thinking, the words **heart**, **soul**, and **mind** were used for similar ideas. People thought the heart was used for thinking and feeling. The soul was the person's inner life, including what the person wants, loves, and decides to do. The mind was another way of talking about someone's thinking, similar to the heart. Saying "with all" before each of these words is a strong way of saying that God wants people to love him with everything that they are, or with their entire self.

Jesus says, "This is the greatest and **first commandment**." In this case, "first commandment" means the most important. Then Jesus says, "And a second commandment is like it," which probably means that there is another commandment that is similar in how important it is. Jesus quotes this "second commandment" from the book of Leviticus: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Again, the word "love" in this passage means treating someone well and giving that person respect. In this statement, Jesus assumes that people already love themselves-they want what is best for themselves-and he reminds people that God says they should show the same kind of love they show themselves to other people. Jesus concludes, "The entire law and all the demands of the **prophets** are based on these two commandments." Just as the Law meant the first five books of the Old Testament, the Prophets was a word used for the rest of the Old Testament.

While the Pharisees are gathered together around him, Jesus asks them a question: "What do you think about the **Messiah**? Whose son is he?" The Messiah was the savior or rescuer that God told people he would send to Israel. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word that you have used in other passages. When Jesus says, "Whose son is he?" he is not asking about the literal father of the Messiah. He is asking whose family the Messiah was supposed to come from. In this context "son" means "descendant."

The Pharisees answer, "He is the son of David." Then Jesus asks why David, **speaking by the Holy Spirit**, calls the Messiah "**lord**." David was speaking by the Holy Spirit when he wrote the Psalms, because they are Scripture and therefore the words came from God through the Holy Spirit. In this context, "lord" is a term of respect that someone would use when talking to someone who is more important than himself. See Lord-master, supreme head, owner-in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word here that you have used for "lord" in other passages. Jesus quotes a passage from the Psalms where God "*the Lord*" is speaking to the Messiah, whom the writer calls "*my Lord*."

Then Jesus repeats his question: "Since David called the Messiah 'my Lord,' how can the Messiah be his son?" No one is able to answer Jesus' question. So after this conversation, no one tries to bring any more questions to Jesus in order to trick him.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 22:34-46

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3793733 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6380719 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 23:1-12

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 23:1-12 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is the beginning of a long speech Jesus makes while he is teaching in the temple in Jerusalem a few days before he is arrested. This part of the speech is a warning to Jesus' disciples and to the crowds of people in the temple. Jesus is telling the people not to do what the Pharisees do.

This speech comes after the Pharisees and other religious leaders have challenged Jesus' authority many times. The religious leaders have tried to trick Jesus into saying something that will give the religious leaders a reason to arrest him. But Jesus showed that he was wise enough to answer all their questions. He even asked them a question that they were not able to answer.

Now Jesus speaks out against the Pharisees and warns his disciples not to be like them. We know from other places in the Gospels that some Pharisees believed in Jesus. In this passage Jesus is not saying that there are no good Pharisees. But he is making strong statements about the group of Pharisees, who at this moment are trying to find a way to kill Jesus. In the ancient world it was very common for people to harshly criticize their

opponents. In many Old Testament books, the prophets made similar speeches about people that God was going to punish for their sin. Similarly, Jesus is going to tell the Pharisees what they are doing wrong. Jesus will also talk about how God is going to punish Jerusalem because of the people's sin.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your group: In your culture, how do people warn someone about something they think is wrong? How do they talk about people they do not agree with? How do the people listening know that what they are saying is important?

Jesus starts by telling his disciples and the crowds of people who are listening to him in the temple that the Pharisees and scribes "sit in Moses' seat." Some people think that this means there was a chair in synagogues that was called "Moses' chair." Other people think that it is an expression meaning that the scribes and Pharisees are the people who act for Moses by reading, memorizing, and telling other people what Moses wrote. Jesus tells the people to obey what the Pharisees say but not to follow the example of what they actually do, because the Pharisees themselves don't even do what they tell people to do.

Jesus illustrates this idea with a picture. He says that the Pharisees put heavy burdens on other people, but they themselves do not want to move these burdens with even one of their fingers. Jesus is probably talking about the many extra laws and customs the Pharisees added to the laws that God gave in the Old Testament. The Pharisees hoped that adding these extra laws and customs would help them to please God. But according to Jesus' teaching in the earlier part of Matthew's Gospel, obeying God's laws is much more difficult than people thought. God is concerned not just with how people look on the outside but with what is going on inside them—how they are thinking and feeling about God and other people. Jesus teaches that even though the Pharisees think they have become more righteous, or right with God, by adding extra laws and customs to the Old Testament, they are not truly obeying God's laws, because they are obeying only on the outside, not from the heart. So they are telling other people to do something that they do not even do themselves.

Jesus next focuses more closely on how the Pharisees, instead of loving and obeying God from their heart, do everything they do so that other people will see them and be impressed. Jesus uses the clothing they wear as an example. Jesus says the Pharisees wear extra wide boxes with Scripture verses inside. In the book of Deuteronomy, one of the books written by Moses with laws for God's people, God told the people of Israel that they should make His laws part of their daily life. God said, "Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads." In other words, God wanted the Israelites to constantly remember what he had told them in the Scriptures. Some time before Jesus was born, some Jews started to interpret this command literally instead of as a figure of speech. They would make small leather boxes that could hold some Scripture verses written in small letters inside. They would wear these boxes on their arms or on their foreheads.

Stop and show the team a picture of a tefillin/phylactery.

Jesus says the Pharisees make these boxes with Scripture inside especially large, thinking that would make them look more holy. Jesus also says they wear extra long tassels on the corners of their clothes. God told the people of Israel in the Old Testament to wear tassels on the corners of their clothes to remind themselves of their relationship with God. Here Jesus says that the Pharisees make their tassels extra long in order to show how holy they are.

Stop and show the team a picture of biblical dress, including tassels on the corners of the robe.

Jesus talks about three situations where the Pharisees like people to give them special honor. They like it when people give them the best place to sit when they are eating with a group of people. They like sitting in the best seats when they gather with other people to worship God. They also like when people show deep respect to them while greeting them on the street, and especially when people call them, "rabbi," a term of respect for a religious teacher.

Now Jesus warns his disciples not to try to get respect from other people like the Pharisees do. He says his disciples should not let anyone call them "rabbi." Jesus tells the disciples that instead of thinking that people should show them special respect, they should all think of themselves as equal, like brothers and sisters.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your team: In your culture, what sort of people do others treat with special respect? How do they show that respect? What words do they use when talking to religious teachers or other respected people? What sort of people do people treat as equals?

Jesus also tells his disciples not to call someone "Father." This does not mean that he doesn't want people to call their real father "Father." Most likely he is also not talking about the general respectful title used for an older man in ancient times and in many cultures today. In Jesus' time, some people were starting to add the word "Father" in front of the names of specially respected religious leaders. Jesus is warning his disciples not to use titles like this to distinguish one person as more important than others.

Finally, Jesus also tells his disciples not to use the title "teacher" or "tutor" for themselves. The word for "teacher" in this passage means a private tutor who would teach one student at a time. It was a word for someone who had a special relationship with the student and gave the student specific instruction. Jesus tells his disciples that they only have one tutor like this, the Messiah, or promised Savior, himself.

Jesus finishes his warning to his disciples with a saying that he uses several times with his disciples: "The greatest among you must be a servant. But those who humble themselves will be exalted, and those who exalt themselves will be humbled."

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus talks to the crowds of people in the temple and his disciples. He tells them to listen to what the Pharisees tell them about Old Testament law, but not to follow the Pharisees' example. He says the Pharisees put heavy burdens on people that they don't even carry themselves.

Second scene: Jesus gives two examples of how the Pharisees do everything they do for show. They wear clothing that is supposed to show how holy they are. And they want people to show them special honor at social gatherings, worship gatherings, and when meeting on the streets.

Third scene: Jesus warns his disciples not to try to get people to honor them with special titles like "rabbi" and "father." He ends by saying that in the community of his disciples, leaders should be the most humble people.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Crowds of people listening in the temple
- Jesus' disciples
- Pharisees and scribes, or teachers of religious law

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story happens right after Jesus has answered many questions from the Pharisees and other religious leaders in the temple. Now Jesus turns to the crowds of people listening and his disciples and talks to them. The religious leaders are probably still there and still listening, because Jesus will go back to talking to them in the next passage. It is important to understand that at this time it was common for people to speak very strongly about people they disagreed with in order to show why those people were wrong.

Most of the ordinary people highly respected the Pharisees, although it was difficult for ordinary people to follow all of the customs that the Pharisees had created to try to make themselves more pure. Jesus is giving the crowds and his disciples a strong warning that the Pharisees are actually missing some very important things about serving God.

Jesus says that the Pharisees and religious teachers "sit in the seat of Moses," which may mean that they are the ones who remember and interpret the Old Testament laws. He tells his disciples and the crowds to obey what the Pharisees teach but not to do what they actually do. Jesus says that the Pharisees put heavy demands on

other people but they themselves do not do anything to carry out those demands. The image he uses here is someone tying up a heavy object to put it on someone else's back. But the person who tied it up is not willing to carry it himself.

Jesus says that everything the Pharisees do is to show off in front of other people. For example, they make extra wide boxes with Scripture verses inside to wear (either on their forehead or their arm). They make extra long tassels on the corners of their robes to show how well they are obeying all the Old Testament laws. They want people to give them places of honor at dinner parties and worship services and to greet them with respectful titles like "rabbi" when they see them in the market.

Jesus shows that he is changing to talking about what his disciples should do by saying, "But you," or "But as for you." Then he tells his disciples not to ask people to call them "rabbi," because they have only one teacher. They should all think of themselves as brothers, in other words, as equals. Similarly, they should not call someone "Father" to show that one person is more important than others, because they have one Father in heaven. And they should not call anyone a "tutor," because they already have one tutor, the Messiah. In this passage, Jesus is talking about himself, but he refers to the Messiah without specifically saying that he is the Messiah. Jesus often referred to himself like this, as if he were speaking about another person. One reason could be that there were many people who did not believe he really was the Messiah, and they wanted to kill him. It would have been dangerous for him to say openly that he was the Messiah. In Jewish culture there were many times when people might talk about themselves as if they were talking about another person. Jesus says that among his disciples, the most important people should act like servants.

Jesus ends by telling his disciples, "If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored." Earlier in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus taught that people should think more about what God thinks than about what other people think. He said, "Your Father who sees you in secret will reward you openly." The statement he makes now about his disciples humbling themselves fits with this idea. It means that when people truly try to serve others without thinking about getting special honor for themselves, God still knows what they have done. Eventually, God will honor them.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Crowds of people listening in the temple
- Jesus' disciples
- Pharisees and scribes, or teachers of religious law

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The story starts with Jesus turning to speak to his disciples and the crowds of people in the temple. He tells them that the Pharisees and scribes are experts in the laws of Moses. For that reason, he tells his disciples and the crowds to obey what the Pharisees say. But he tells them not to do what the Pharisees do, because the Pharisees themselves don't actually do what they teach people to do. They are like people who tie up a heavy load and put it on someone else's back, but they themselves are not even using one of their fingers to help carry it.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the crowds and the disciples of Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Surprised" or "Relieved that there is a different way to be holy than what the Pharisees teach." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus continues to talk about the mistakes the Pharisees make. He says they do everything in order to show off. They make wide boxes with Scripture verses inside to wear, and they make long tassels on their robes to show how holy they are. They like to be treated with special honor at social gatherings, worship, and on the street. They like to be called "rabbi."

Now Jesus tells his disciples how they should be different. "But you, don't let anyone call you 'rabbi,'" he says, "because you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters."

Stop the action.

Similarly, Jesus tells them not to call someone "Father" as a sign of how important that person is, and not to call someone "tutor." Instead, they should think of God as their Father and the Messiah as their tutor. Jesus tells them that their leaders should act like servants to everyone else.

Stop the action.

Jesus ends by saying, "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

At the end of the action, ask the actors playing the scribes and Pharisees, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Annoyed," "Angry," or "This man is crazy."

Ask the actors playing the crowds, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Shocked," or "This is completely different from what I thought."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this passage, Jesus is talking to the crowds of people in the temple and to his **disciples**, a group of students that he taught, lived with, and traveled with. See the Master Glossary for more information about disciple, and use the same word you have used in other passages. If you use the word temple in your translation, see the Master Glossary for a definition, and make sure to use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus says, "The **Pharisees** and **scribes** sit on the **seat of Moses**." Pharisees were a sect of Jews who had many teachings about how to keep pure. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages. Scribe originally meant someone who copied the Old Testament Scriptures by hand, but also meant someone who had studied the Old Testament and knew many things about it. Many scribes belonged to the Pharisee group. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word that you have used in other passages. "Sit in the seat of Moses," could mean two things. It may mean that there was actually a chair in synagogues called "the seat of Moses," although no other books from ancient times talk about this. Or it could mean that the scribes and Pharisees act on behalf of or act like Moses by giving people the laws of Moses.

Then Jesus says that the Pharisees do everything for show. They wear extra large boxes with Scripture inside and extra long tassels on the corners of their robes. These were both things that religious Jews wore on their clothes because of commands God had given in the Old Testament.

Stop and look again at the pictures of a tefillin and tassels on an Israelite robe.

Jesus says the Pharisees also love when people give them a place of honor at a banquet and the best seats in the synagogue, the local place of worship and prayer where Jews would meet at least once a week. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and make sure to use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus also says that the Pharisees like when people greet them respectfully in the market and call them, "rabbi," a title for a religious teacher that means "my great one" or "my great teacher." See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Then Jesus tells the people he is talking to that they should not let people call them "rabbi," because they only have one Teacher, and they should all think of themselves as equals, like brothers. He says they should not give someone on earth the title "Father," because they have one Heavenly Father. And he says they should not call someone their "tutor," or private instructor, because they have only one tutor, the **Messiah**. Messiah, or Christ, means the savior God had promised to send to his people. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus tells his disciples that the greatest or most important person among them must be like a **servant**. A servant was someone who lived in the house with the master's family to serve them. When Jesus talks about being like a servant, he is teaching that people need to think about doing things to help other people before they think about helping themselves. See the Master Glossary for a definition of servant, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus says that anyone who tries to lift himself up, or show that he is important, will end up being humbled. In other words, when anyone tries to put himself above other people, God will put that person back in a lower place. Jesus also says that anyone who humbles himself will be lifted up. In other words, when anyone puts himself in a lower place by serving other people, God will raise that person to a higher position.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 23:1-12

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4075643 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6887550 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 23:13–22

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 23:13–22 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage is the beginning of a speech Jesus makes to the scribes and the Pharisees in the temple. This happens a few days before Jesus dies on the cross. The religious leaders, including the group called the Pharisees, have questioned whether Jesus has a right to teach people, and they have asked him many questions that they hoped would give them a reason to arrest him. Jesus answered all their questions, showing that he was much wiser than they thought. Now he is talking about what is wrong with the Pharisees' teachings and way of life. He spoke first to the crowds and the disciples and warned them about certain things the Pharisees do that he does not want his disciples to do. Now he begins speaking to the Pharisees and scribes themselves.

In the speech that begins in this passage, Jesus will speak seven "woes" over the Pharisees and scribes. This passage contains the first three of these seven sayings. Saying "woe to you" was a way of telling people that they were going to go through some terrible hardship or suffering. The word that is translated in some English versions as "woe" was often used to show that the person speaking was extremely sad. In the Old Testament, many prophets spoke "woes" against Israel and other peoples who had sinned against God when God was going

to allow them to go through a time of suffering. After Jesus speaks out against the religious leaders, Jesus will also prophesy about the suffering that is coming to Jerusalem because of the religious leaders' sins. He will tell people that enemies will destroy the city and temple, something that eventually happened about 40 years later.

Stop and discuss the following questions with your group. In your language, what words do people use when they are extremely sad? How do they talk about something terrible that is going to happen? What kinds of people in your culture are most likely to give warnings about things that will happen in the future?

Jesus uses very strong words in this passage to speak against the sins of the religious leaders. In some cultures, the words he uses would sound too strong and harsh. But other Jewish books from this time period have similar passages that speak very strongly against people whom they did not agree with.

The passage starts with Jesus saying, "Woe to you" or "alas for you!" to the scribes and Pharisees. Scribes were people who had spent a lot of time studying the Old Testament, or Jewish Scripture, and knew many things about it. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who followed certain teachings about staying pure, or ritually clean. They were very strict. Many scribes belonged to the Pharisee group. When Jesus says, "alas for you, scribes and Pharisees," it means that he knows that they are going to go through terrible pain in the future. He also calls them "hypocrites," or "actors." Hypocrite means someone who says something but does not really mean it, similar to an actor who is playing a role in a drama but is a different person in real life. In this passage, Jesus is saying that the Pharisees and scribes say they are holy, or set apart for serving God, but really they are not doing what God thinks is holy at all. They think holiness is about keeping a long list of rules. But Jesus teaches that to God, being holy is about loving God and people and obeying God from the heart.

Jesus says that the Pharisees and scribes are going to go through terrible suffering because they shut the entrance to the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. Jesus is talking about the kingdom of heaven as if it were an ancient city, which would have a wall around it with gates that could be locked. He is saying that it is as if the Pharisees decided not to go into this city, and not only that, they locked the gates so that other people could not get in either. Jesus is saying that the way the Pharisees teach, and especially the way they oppose Jesus, is not only keeping them from having eternal life with God. It is also keeping other people from receiving this gift from God.

A few Bible translations have another "woe" statement next about how the scribes and Pharisees take away property from widows. Most translations do not include this verse, because it is not present in most of the early hand-written copies of Matthew, and many people think that it was added later.

In Jesus' second "woe" statement, he says the Pharisees and scribes travel very far "over land and sea" to make a convert or proselyte, which means a non-Jewish person who decides to obey the God of Israel and live like a Jew. Most scholars think that Jesus is talking about the Pharisees working hard to convince non-Jewish people who were already obeying some of God's commands to become full Jews and learn to keep all the Jewish laws and customs, including the customs that the Pharisees had added. Jesus says that once the Pharisees make this one convert, they turn him into twice as much a "son of hell" as they are themselves. "Son of hell" is a figure of speech meaning a person who belongs to hell, a person who deserves punishment for his sins. In other words, Jesus says that the Pharisees are not helping the non-Jews that they are teaching. Because the Pharisees are so wrong about how they are trying to please God, they are also leading other people toward hell, not toward God. The non-Jews that they teach will learn to be like the Pharisees: proud, strict, and far from God.

In Jesus' third statement, he does not say "scribes and Pharisees," he simply calls them "blind guides." These leaders were trying to lead other people in knowing and serving God, but the leaders themselves were spiritually blind; they did not see what God really wanted them to do. Because of that, they could not lead other people in the right direction.

Jesus gives an example of how these leaders show people the wrong path to take. He talks about how the scribes and Pharisees say that people must keep certain kinds of oaths, or promises, but not others. An oath was supposed to show that the person making it was not lying. In the Old Testament, swearing an oath in the name of God was a way of saying, "If I do not keep my promise to you, I agree that God should punish me." By Jesus' time, people had started making oaths by other holy objects like the temple or sacrifices instead of directly saying that they were swearing to God, which was considered disrespectful in Jesus' time. Swearing oaths was extremely common, and many people believed that it was not important to tell the truth unless they swore an oath. People even became confused about whether it was important to keep all oaths, or whether they only

needed to keep oaths made by the most holy things. Some rabbis taught that people only needed to keep their oath if they swore by the name of God, if they used the word "oath," or if they used the word "gift," meaning a sacrifice to God. If they swore an oath using any other words, then they did not have to keep their promise.

Stop and discuss the following questions in your group: In your culture, how do people know if someone is lying? How do they know if someone is telling the truth? What do people do in order to show that they are telling the truth, or that they are very serious about something?

Jesus, on the other hand, taught his disciples that instead of swearing different kinds of oaths, they should tell the truth every time and do exactly what they said they would do. In this passage, Jesus tells the Pharisees that making rules about which promises people need to keep and which promises they can break is leading people in the wrong direction. Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees "blind" three times in this paragraph. Jesus says that any oath made by any holy object is really an oath made to God, since God is the one who makes things holy. This means that all promises are important and people need to do what they say they are going to do, no matter what words they use.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites and rebukes them for shutting the entrance to the kingdom of heaven so that neither they nor other people can go in.

Second scene: Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for trying hard to convince people to become Jews, and then making those people even worse than they are themselves.

Third scene: Jesus rebukes the scribes and Pharisees for trying to lead other people when they are spiritually blind themselves. He gives an example of how the scribes and Pharisees say that people need to keep some promises or oaths, but not others.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Religious leaders, including scribes and Pharisees
- Jesus' disciples
- Crowds of people in the temple

The characters in Jesus' first statement include:

- People who are able to open the entrance to the kingdom of heaven
- People who are trying to get into the Kingdom

The characters in Jesus' second statement include:

- Scribes and Pharisees
- Non-Jewish people
- A non-Jewish person who decides to become a Jew

The characters in Jesus' third statement include:

- A person who needs a guide
- A blind person who is trying to guide the other person
- Scribes and Pharisees
- People who are making oaths

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember the time and place when this story happens. Jesus is in the temple in Jerusalem a few days before he will die. He has had a very long talk with religious leaders from different groups such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, who tried their best to trap him into saying something wrong. But in the end, they had to stop because Jesus was wiser than they were.

Jesus is now warning the religious leaders (specifically the Pharisees) and the crowds of people in the temple about what the religious leaders are doing wrong. He is telling them that God is not pleased with what they are doing and that God will punish them. Jesus does this by saying one phrase over and over, "Woe to you," or "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" He is telling them through these words that they are going to face terrible suffering in the future. Every time he says this phrase, he goes on to give the different reasons that they are going to suffer.

It is important to understand that some scribes and Pharisees are in the temple with Jesus, and so is a large crowd of people who are listening to Jesus teach. Most of the common people highly respected the Pharisees. So they might be very surprised to hear what Jesus was saying.

In his first statement, Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees are keeping people from going into the kingdom of heaven like someone who has the keys to the gate of a city wall. They are able to help people get in, but instead they lock the gate so that no one can enter.

In the second statement, Jesus talks about how hard the Pharisees and scribes work to make non-Jewish people decide to become Jews. He says they travel over land and sea to gain one non-Jewish convert, but then they make that person deserve God's punishment even more than they do.

In the third statement, Jesus calls the people he is talking to "blind guides." In other words, he is saying that they are trying to show people the right path, but they themselves cannot see it. They are like blind people because they don't see who God really is and what he really wants them to do. Instead, they make up their own rules and think that those rules will help them reach God. For example, the scribes and Pharisees make rules about which kinds of oaths or promises made before God people need to keep and which ones they can break. They say that someone can break a promise if he swears by the temple, but not if he swears by the gold of the temple. "The gold of the temple" might mean the gold that was used to decorate the walls and ceilings of the temple. Or it might mean the golden objects that were used for worshiping God in the temple, like the incense altar and the gold lampstand.

Stop and show your team a picture of the inside of the second temple and the gold used to decorate it.

Show the team a picture of the gold lampstand, the altar of incense, the censer, the table of showbread, and the ark of the covenant.

Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees "blind fools" and asks whether the gold is greater, or the temple that makes the gold holy is greater. He does not ask this question because he doesn't know the answer. He asks the question as a way of saying that clearly the temple is greater than the gold in it, since the temple is what makes the gold holy.

Similarly, Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees teach people that they can break a promise made by the altar, but not one made by the gift on the altar. "The gift on the altar" means an animal that someone is sacrificing or offering to God. People sacrificed animals either because of sins they had done or as a way of thanking God for his goodness. Once again, Jesus asks whether the gift is greater or the altar that makes the gift holy. Once again, he is asking this question to show that clearly the altar is greater than the gift on it. Jesus says

that whenever people make an oath on anything sacred, they are making a promise to God, because God is the source of everything sacred.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Religious leaders, including scribes and Pharisees
- Jesus' disciples
- Crowds of people in the temple

The characters in Jesus' first statement include:

- People who are able to open the entrance to the kingdom of heaven
- People who are trying to get into the Kingdom

The characters in Jesus' second statement include:

- Scribes and Pharisees
- Non-Jewish people
- A non-Jewish person who decides to become a Jew

The characters in Jesus' third statement include:

- A person who needs a guide
- A blind person who is trying to guide the other person
- Scribes and Pharisees
- People who are making oaths

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The story starts with Jesus talking to the scribes and Pharisees. He tells them that terrible troubles will come to them because they were like the gatekeepers of the kingdom of heaven. Instead of welcoming people into God's Kingdom, they shut the gate in people's faces. You may wish to have several team members act out this illustration. Some people want to enter a city, but the gatekeeper shuts and locks the door in front of them.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Deeply sad that people are being turned away from the kingdom of heaven," or "Angry." [!end] Restart the action.

You may want to act out Jesus' next illustration as well. Jesus says the scribes and Pharisees travel over land and sea to win one non-Jewish convert. When they finally convince someone to become a Jew, they teach him to be twice as evil as they are themselves.

Stop the action.

You may also act out Jesus' third illustration, where he says that even though the Pharisees and scribes are supposed to be leading people, they themselves are blind.

Stop the action.

Jesus says the scribes and Pharisees tell people that it doesn't matter if someone makes an oath on the temple, but if someone makes an oath on the gold of the temple, the person has to keep his oath. Jesus calls the scribes and Pharisees blind fools for teaching like this. Then he asks them whether the gold of the temple is greater than the temple itself. He says it is the temple that makes the gold holy, which means that the temple is actually the greater thing to make an oath by.

Jesus says they also teach that it doesn't matter if someone makes an oath on the altar, but if someone makes an oath by the sacrifice on the altar, the person has to keep his oath. Jesus calls them blind again, and then he asks whether the gift is greater, or the altar that makes the gift holy is greater. He answers his own question by saying that anyone who makes an oath by the altar is also making an oath by the sacrifices that people put on the altar. Similarly, if someone makes an oath by the temple, the person is also making the oath by God, who lives in the temple. If someone makes an oath by heaven, the person is also making the oath by God's throne and God himself.

At the end of the action, ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Worried about how serious Jesus says this is" or "I finally understand this clearly!"

Ask the actors playing the Pharisees that Jesus is speaking to in the temple, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I'm extremely angry!" or "I can't believe Jesus would talk to us like this!"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this story, Jesus talks to the **scribes** and **Pharisees** and tells them that God is not happy with what they are doing. Scribes were people who studied the Old Testament scriptures and made new copies of them by hand. They were experts that people respected because they knew so much about the Scriptures. Some English versions translate this word as "teachers of the law." See the Master Glossary for a definition of scribe, and make sure you use the same word you have used in other passages for "scribes" or "teachers of the law." Pharisees were a group of Jews who thought the way to be right with God was by keeping themselves separate from ordinary people and following hundreds of rules about how to be pure. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of Pharisee, and make sure to use the same word you have used before.

Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees, "**Alas** for you," or "**woe** to you, scribes and Pharisees, you **hypocrites!**" The word that is translated as "woe" or "alas" shows that someone is extremely sad and that the person speaking knows that people are going to suffer a lot. Jesus says this because he knows that the scribes and Pharisees are not pleasing God. In fact, they are leading Israel in the wrong direction, especially in how they respond to Jesus and his message. Because they are choosing to reject the Messiah, the Savior God promised to send to his people, Jesus knows that God is going to punish them in the future. Hypocrite is a word that means an actor or a fake, someone who says he is one way but really he is not what he says he is. In this passage, Jesus is saying that the Pharisees and scribes say they are serving God, but they are not truly serving him. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Jesus says the reason the Pharisees are going to suffer is because they close the entrance to the **kingdom of heaven** in front of people. The kingdom of heaven means that God is ruling like a king in the hearts of his people. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of kingdom of heaven. In this passage, Jesus is talking about people trying to enter into knowing God in a way that saves them and gives them eternal life. Use the same word to translate "kingdom of heaven" that you have used in other passages.

Jesus repeats the phrase he first used to talk to the scribes and Pharisees: "Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" Use the same wording again that you used in that verse. Next, Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees work extremely hard to convince even one non-Jewish person to become a Jew. Jesus says they travel over land and sea, meaning they go to places that are very far away. Then Jesus says that when they do convince someone to become a Jew, they make him "**twice as much** a **son of hell**" as they are themselves. "Twice as much" is a strong way of saying even more. "Son of hell" is a Hebrew style expression for someone who belongs to hell or deserves to be punished in hell, the place where unbelievers will go and be punished at the end of the world. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of hell, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

The next statement Jesus makes is like the first two, except that instead of repeating "scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" Jesus says, "Alas for you, blind guides!" Then Jesus gives an example of how the Pharisees and scribes are like blind people trying to show other people the way. He says that they teach people, "If anyone **swears an oath** by the **temple**, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath." Swearing an oath means the person who speaks the oath asks God to punish him if he does not keep his promise. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of oath. To be bound by an oath means that God expects that person to do whatever he promised to do. The temple was the place where people in Israel came to worship and make sacrifices to God. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of temple, and make sure to use the same word you have used in other passages.

Similarly, Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees teach people that "If anyone swears by the **altar**, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the **gift** on the altar is bound by that oath." Jesus is talking about the altar of burnt offering in the temple, the place where priests would kill and burn animals as an offering to God. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of altar, and use the same word you have used in other passages.

Stop and show your team a picture of the altar of burnt offering in the temple.

Jesus says that anyone who swears by **heaven** is also swearing by "the **throne of God** and the one who sits on it," meaning God himself. Heaven means the place where God lives. See the Master Glossary for a full definition, and use the same word you have used in other passages. A throne was a special chair where only a king could sit. The king would sit in the throne to do business like talking to guests and officials or judging between people who had an argument. Many Bible passages talk about God sitting on his throne in heaven to judge and rule heavenly beings like angels and people on earth.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 23:13–22**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (4725317 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7973214 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 23:23–28*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 23:23–28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

In this story Jesus continues accusing the Pharisees and teachers of the religious law of trying to look good on the outside, even though they did not have good hearts. Jesus uses the phrase "Woe to you" to show that he is pointing out their mistakes. Jesus says that terrible things will happen to them when God punishes them for these mistakes. In this series of 7 "woes," or examples of the religious leaders' mistakes, these are the fourth, fifth, and sixth examples.

This story starts with the fourth example. In the fourth example, Jesus points out that the religious leaders follow the details of God's law that he gave to his people. One of those laws requires his people to give a tenth part of their harvest to God through giving it to the temple priests and religious leaders. This harvest would have been their grain, grapes in the form of wine, and olive oil. The religious leaders gave even more-they gave a tenth part of their herbs such as mint, dill, and cumin. However, these same men did not show justice, or treat people fairly. They did not show mercy, or have compassion on people. They were not faithful to God by following all his commands and being in good relationship with God himself. Jesus wants people to follow God's laws-even the laws about giving a tenth of harvest-but he also wants his people to do the more difficult things like having a good relationship with God and with other people.

Dill, mint, and cumin were important herbs used to spice food in that culture.

Stop here and show a photo of a dill plant, a mint plant, and a cumin plant. Pause this audio here.

Then Jesus uses an exaggeration, as he often does, to explain what he is saying. Jesus uses extremes. He compares the smallest insect in their area, the gnat, to the largest animal, the camel. Religious leaders were afraid to eat anything unclean, or unfit for God, so they used a strainer to strain the tiny gnats out of their drink. This is like when the religious leaders follow every part of God's law. But in focusing on the gnats, they don't even see the important parts of the law, which are like the camel-the biggest animal in that area.

Stop here and show your translation team photos of a gnat and of a camel. Pause this audio here.

Jesus calls the religious leaders "blind guides," because they are supposed to guide the people to follow God, but they cannot even see the important parts of God's law.

Jesus continues by talking about the idea of ritual purity, or being fit for service to God, in the fifth "woe" to the religious leaders. He compares the inside of a dish or cup that someone drinks from with people's thoughts and intentions. Then he compares the outside of the dish or cup with how a person's actions look. He says that the religious leaders spend time and energy on looking good by doing all the right actions, but they are greedy and just want things for themselves. Jesus calls religious leaders blind again-this time he emphasizes that by specifically naming a teacher of the law. Jesus says, "you Pharisee!" Jesus tells them to clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside will be clean too. In other words, Jesus is saying that when a person has good intentions and has a good relationship with God, they will also do good actions that people can see.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a cup and plate.

Stop here and tell a story about someone in your culture who acted nicely, but everyone knew that they were not really nice people. How did everyone know that they were not nice? What kinds of words do you use to describe these kinds of people? Pause this audio here.

Jesus really emphasizes the contrast between the outside and inside of a person in the sixth woe, or warning, to the religious leaders. He talks about tombs, which are where people put dead bodies. In Jewish culture dead bodies and tombs are unclean, or unfit for service to God. In Jerusalem, people would paint these tombs white in order to make them look clean and so that everyone could see them and be sure to not touch them. If people touched these tombs, they would become ritually unclean. That means they would not be able to worship God in the temple until they did certain rituals to become clean again. Jesus compares the Pharisees to the whitewashed, or cleaned, tombs. But even when someone cleans the outside of these tombs, they are still unfit for service to God because there are dead people inside. Jesus says that people are just like this-even we when do good actions, it is important for us to have good intentions and a good relationship with God. The Pharisees did righteous actions that followed God's laws, so on the outside they look righteous, or in a good relationship with God. However, their hearts or intentions were wicked or evil. They were hypocrites. They were like the whitewashed tombs.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a whitewashed tomb.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

In the first scene: Jesus warns the religious leaders that they have neglected the most important parts of God's law-to treat people justly and with mercy, and to have a good relationship with God.

In the second scene: Jesus says that the religious leaders look good on the outside by their actions, but their hearts are not good on the inside-they should first work on making their hearts follow God.

In the third scene: Jesus says that the religious leaders are like whitewashed tombs which look clean on the outside because of their good actions, but are not fit for service to God on the inside because of their bad intentions.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Teachers of the law
- Pharisees
- Other members of the crowd
- The disciples are also listening to this teaching

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that this passage continues Jesus teaching the religious leaders in the temple courtyards. Many people are in the temple during this time, so although Jesus is addressing the religious leaders directly, others in the crowd, including Jesus' disciples, would hear everything that Jesus says. Jesus has just given three woes, or warnings to the religious leaders because they are hypocrites-they teach people to follow God's laws, but they are not merciful or fair in their actions. They do not have a good relationship with God.

Jesus gives the next three "woes," or warnings, to the religious leaders. In the first woe of this section, Jesus again addresses who he is talking to-the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. He calls them hypocrites. Jesus says they do one thing, but they should instead do another thing. The religious leaders give a tenth part of their spices.

You may want to stop here and find a large plant with many leaves. Out of every ten leaves, take one leaf and put them in another pile. The pile represents a tenth part of that plant. This is what the religious leaders did with all their harvest. Pause the audio here.

The religious leaders should do the second thing Jesus mentioned-they should act justly, mercifully, and faithfully. Then Jesus compares the religious leaders to blind guides. Jesus uses exaggeration to clearly show that people have to pay attention to the most important thing: their relationship with God. Jesus uses the smallest animal and the largest animal to exaggerate his point and make people pay attention to this teaching.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Give examples of comparisons or exaggerations that you use in stories or proverbs to teach an important value. Pause this audio here.

In the fifth woe, Jesus addresses the religious leaders in the same way: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" Jesus says something similar, but in a different way. Jesus says that the religious leaders clean the outside of their cup, but not the inside of it. In the same way, they do good works to look good, but they are greedy and only care about themselves. Then Jesus emphasizes his point by talking as if he is addressing only one Pharisee: He says, "Blind Pharisee!" Then Jesus tells that Pharisee that he needs to clean the inside of the dish in order for the outside to be clean also. This is Jesus' way to make his warnings to the Pharisees personal-they need to stop and think about what they are doing and change their ways.

In the sixth woe, Jesus again addresses the religious leaders in the exact same way: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" Jesus addresses the same problem again, but in a different way again. This time Jesus uses a comparison of whitewashed tombs to show that the religious leaders look clean on the

outside, but on the inside they are unclean just like the tombs which contain dead bodies. They are unfit for service to God because they do not have good intentions or a good relationship with God.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Teachers of the law
- Pharisees
- Other members of the crowd
- The disciples are also listening to this teaching

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus is still in the temple courtyards teaching a crowd of religious leaders. Many others are there also, including Jesus' disciples. Jesus continues his teaching.

Jesus says, "Terrible things will happen to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth part of your spices-mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced justice, mercy, and faithfulness, and also given a tenth of your spices. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."

Stop the drama here.

Ask the actors playing the crowd, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I always knew something was wrong! The religious teachers don't have good hearts. I like Jesus," "Confused-I don't know how to live anymore." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus continues to say, "Terrible things will happen to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and they care only about getting things for themselves. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean."

Stop the action here.

Jesus continues to say, "Terrible things will happen to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."

Stop the action here.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Sad that they are dead on the inside. I wish they would follow me and have real life."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is still talking with the **teachers of the law** and the **Pharisees**. Translate the names of these religious leaders in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that teachers of the law and Pharisees are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus calls these religious leaders **hypocrites**, which mean that the actions they do are different from the intentions of their heart. Translate hypocrites in the same way as you did in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about hypocrisy.

Jesus says that the religious leaders give a tenth, or a **tithe** of their herbs to God. A tithe is a tenth of a certain possession that people gave as an offering or gift to God. People gave these tithes to show God that they realized that everything they owned belongs to God. Jesus specifies the herbs of mint, dill, and cumin, which are all special herbs used to season food. Use the same word for tithe as you have in previous passages and remember that tithe is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and show the translation team the photos of mint, dill, and cumin again. Pause the audio here.

Jesus tells the religious leaders that they ignore **justice**, **mercy**, and **faith**. Justice is treating someone fairly, according to the law. Mercy is similar to justice. Someone shows mercy when they show compassion for someone. Faith is trusting God and obeying him. Use the same words for justice, mercy, and faith as you have in previous passages, and remember that these words are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus uses exaggeration to tell the Pharisees that they strain a **gnat** out of their drink, a very small insect, but forget about the **camel**, a very large animal.

Stop here and show the translation team the photos of the gnat and the camel again. Pause this audio here.

Jesus again tells the religious leaders that they should clean the inside of their **dish** and **cup** first-meaning that their relationship with God is more important than the actions they do that everyone can see.

Stop here and show your translation team again the photos of the dish and cup. Pause this audio here.

The religious leaders are also like **whitewashed tombs**, which means that they are the places where Jewish people put dead bodies.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a whitewashed tomb. Pause this audio here.

These whitewashed tombs are like people who look **righteous** on the outside because they do good actions, but inside their hearts are not devoted to God. Inside they are full of **impurity** or **uncleanness**. People or things are impure or unclean when they are not acceptable for God to use. See the Master Glossary for a full description of clean and unclean. Translate righteous the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that righteous is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 23:23–28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3072907 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5084128 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 23:29–36

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 23:29–36 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus or God?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Crowds of people-including the religious leaders and Jesus' disciples-have been surrounding Jesus in the temple as he teaches. He has been warning the religious leaders that terrible things will happen to them because they are not sincerely devoted to God. Jesus has given the religious leaders a series of 6 warnings, and now he concludes with the seventh "woe," or warning to the religious leaders.

Jesus begins in the same way he has begun every other warning. In his seventh warning Jesus says, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" In Jesus' sixth warning, he says that the religious leaders are like whitewashed tombs. Jesus continues the idea of tombs in his seventh warning, but he now talks about how the religious leaders take care of the tombs and monuments of prophets and righteous people, or people who followed God. These people were buried in the tombs many years ago. Now the religious leaders paint the rock doors of the tombs and make them look pretty. However, throughout Israel's history Jewish leaders killed many of these prophets. Jesus reminds the religious leaders in Jesus' time that they say that if they had lived in the days of their fathers, or ancestors, they would not have killed the prophets like their ancestors did. The religious leaders in Jesus' day liked to boast that they would never kill prophets that God sent. But Jesus contradicts this. Jesus reminds the religious leaders that they are in the process of murdering prophets in their time, so they are proving that they are just like the Jewish leaders from before. The religious leaders are truly the sons of their ancestors-they do what their ancestors did! Jesus is probably saying that the religious leaders are murdering prophets from God now like John the Baptist and himself. Jesus tells them to finish what their ancestors started. Jesus knows that the religious leaders will soon have him killed.

Stop here and discuss as a team: Tell a story about someone who says that they behave in one way, but actually do something different. What do people think about them? How do people treat them?

Jesus harshly scolds the religious leaders. He uses similar phrases to John the Baptist. Jesus also calls the religious leaders a brood, or group, of poisonous snakes. Then he asks them a similar question to the one John the Baptist asked them, but he is even more harsh with them. He asks, "How will you escape being condemned to hell?" He does not expect them to answer. He is saying that they will be condemned to hell-which is judgment and separation from God for forever.

Then Jesus says that he is going to send more prophets and wise men and scribes, or teachers of religious law. We do not know why Jesus will send these men. Maybe Jesus wants the prophets and wise men to warn people of God's judgement on them for murdering the people God sent. Or maybe, Jesus is saying that he must send more prophets and wise men because the religious leaders will kill, sometimes by crucifixion, and persecute the prophets and wise men. They will flog or beat them in the synagogues, or places of prayer. This means that the religious leaders will become as fully guilty as possible of killing the people God sends. Jesus does not specifically say that the religious leaders will be killing Jesus' disciples that followed him, but this is probably who he is talking about, because Jesus' disciples are prophets, or people whom God sends, because they give messages from God. The disciples are also wise men because they have wisdom from God's Spirit. And the disciples are teachers of religious law because they help people understand Jesus' teaching and teach them how to follow Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Describe the people in your culture that you would call wise men or teachers. What kinds of things do they do? How do people treat them? When people treat wise men badly, what happens to the people who treat them badly?

Because of what the religious leaders do to the prophets, wise men, and teachers of the religious law, Jesus says that these religious leaders will be guilty of the deaths of all the righteous men who followed God, from the beginning of the earth. Jesus mentions Abel, the first man and woman's son. Cain was Abel's older brother, and he killed Abel because God accepted Abel's offering and not Cain's. This was the first murder of a righteous man, or a man that followed God. Then Jesus mentions Zechariah, the son of Berekiah. This may be the Zechariah that we know from 2 Chronicles who was killed in the temple. The murder of Zechariah is the last recorded death of a prophet in the Jewish Scripture. Jesus is saying that the religious leaders will be guilty of the murder of all the prophets, from the first to the last.

Then Jesus says that the bad things he is talking about will happen to even the religious leaders in their own lifetime, before they all die.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

In the first scene: Jesus gives the seventh warning, or woe, to the teachers of the law and Pharisees. He tells them that they are no better than their ancestors who killed the prophets many years ago.

In the second scene: Jesus calls the religious leaders a brood or group of vipers or snakes. He says that they will kill the next prophets, wise men, and teachers that Jesus sends them.

In the third scene: Jesus gives a judgement. The religious leaders will be guilty for all the deaths of the righteous people from the beginning.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples who are probably there listening
- Religious leaders, including the Pharisees and teachers of religious law
- Prophets from long ago, including Abel and Zechariah
- Righteous people from long ago
- Prophets, wise men, and teachers of religious law who are coming after Jesus dies, whom Jesus will send

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, and children's toys to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story continues Jesus' teaching in the temple. Many people are in the temple for the Passover festival week. Jesus is teaching, and he is continuing to speak directly to the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. Jesus has given six woes, or warnings to them. Now Jesus is giving the seventh woe.

Jesus begins this seventh woe in the same way he has begun every other warning. Jesus says, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!" Then Jesus continues the theme of tombs. He says two things that mean the same thing. First he says that the religious leaders build tombs for the prophets and then he says they will decorate the monuments, or big tombs, of the righteous people. Jesus is emphasizing that the religious leaders try to look like they honor the famous Jewish prophets. The religious leaders insist that they would not be like their ancestors-they would not have killed those prophets long ago. But Jesus confronts them strongly. Jesus implies that the religious leaders want to harm him, and therefore they prove that they are just like their ancestors who harmed the prophets before! Jesus then strongly tells them that he knows that they will kill him, even though he is also a prophet. Jesus tells them this by saying strongly: "Just go ahead and finish what your ancestors started!"

Jesus strongly rebukes the religious leaders by calling them a "brood of vipers," or a "group of snakes." Satan is often connected to the snake. What Jesus says here is a strong insult that implies that the religious leaders are evil like Satan.

Stop here and discuss as a team: Give examples of strong insults that people in your culture give to one another. How do people imply that others are evil or that others are doing evil things? Pay attention to how you say these insults-in what tone of voice or with what kind of emotion do they say these things?

Then Jesus asks a question that he does not expect them to answer. He asks, "How will you escape being condemned to hell?" Jesus is saying that these religious leaders are going to hell because of their actions. That is why Jesus will continue to send more prophets, more wise men, and more teachers. Then the religious leaders will continue to kill them. Jesus explains in detail how the religious leaders will kill these messengers: They will kill and crucify, or nail them to a cross. They will flog or beat these men in their synagogues or places of worship. They will chase these men from town to town and persecute them, or treat them badly. The religious leaders will be fully guilty for the death of every messenger that God sends. Jesus goes on to emphasize the fullness of their guilt. As they continue to kill messengers from God, they will become guilty of all the murders of God's messengers, from the first murder by Cain of Abel, to the last recorded murder of the prophet Zechariah. Jesus emphasizes this guilt by saying "*You murdered Zechariah,*" even though these men lived hundreds of years after Zechariah and could not have been the ones who murdered him. Jesus says that all the righteous blood of these men will "come on" the religious leaders, meaning that the religious leaders will be guilty of all their deaths.

Then Jesus wants the religious leaders to pay attention. He says, "Truly, I say to you..." Jesus says that all the disasters and warnings he has given them will happen to this group of religious leaders while they are still alive.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples who are probably there listening
- Religious leaders, including the Pharisees and teachers of religious law
- Prophets from long ago, including Abel and Zechariah
- Righteous people from long ago
- Prophets, wise men, and teachers of religious law whom Jesus will send

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus is still in the temple, and many people are gathered around him. Jesus is continuing to give warnings to the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees. Jesus says, "Terrible things will happen to you, teachers of religious law and you Pharisees!" Jesus reminds them that they build tombs for the prophets that their ancestors killed and decorate the monuments of righteous people that their ancestors killed. Jesus reminds the religious leaders that they say that they would not have killed the prophets if they were alive back then. But they are lying! They are actually showing that they are just like their ancestors. Jesus tells them that they should just finish what their ancestors started and continue with their plans to kill God's messengers.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the religious leaders, "What are you feeling or thinking?" You might hear things like:

- I'm so angry that Jesus thinks that I would do what my ancestors did!
- Confused-I'm trying to be a righteous person! [!end] Restart the drama.

Then Jesus says, "You brood of vipers, or snakes! How will you escape being condemned to hell? I'm going to keep sending you prophets, wise men, and teachers. But you will kill and crucify them, you will flog them in your synagogues, and you will chase them and treat them badly from town to town."

Pause the drama.

- I'm offended! I would never hurt God's messengers!
- How dare he call us snakes? Who does he think he is? He is a false prophet too!

Ask the people playing the prophets, wise men, and teachers that Jesus sends, "What are you thinking or feeling?" You might hear things like:

- I'm not surprised, this is how all of God's prophets have always been treated.
- Sad and frightened: I wish I didn't have to go because I know that people will reject me. [!end] Restart the drama.

Jesus goes on to say, "Therefore, you will be guilty of the deaths of all God's messengers from the righteous prophets like Abel to Zechariah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar to God. Listen carefully to me! All these horrible things will happen to you during this generation, before you die."

Pause the drama.

- I wish that they would learn from their mistakes and turn back to me.
- I'm sad to see my followers continue to die.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus continues to tell the **teachers of the law** and **Pharisees** that horrible things will happen to them because they are **hypocrites**. Translate teachers of the law, Pharisees, and hypocrites in the same way you have in previous passages. Teachers of the law, Pharisees, and hypocrisy are in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that the teachers of the law and Pharisees build **tombs** and decorate **monuments** or **graves**. Monuments and tombs in this instance refer to the same thing. Tombs or monuments are usually carved out of rock in the side of a hill and are where Jewish people put bodies. Translate tombs in the same way you have in previous passages. You may use the same word for both monuments and tombs if you do not have two different words.

Jesus refers to the tombs of the **prophets** and the monuments of the **righteous** people. Both prophets and righteous people refer to the same types of people. Translate prophets, or messengers from God, in the same way you have in previous passages and remember that prophet is in the Master Glossary. Remember that righteous refers to being in a right or good relationship with God. Translate righteous in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that righteous is in the Master Glossary.

Snakes and **vipers** refer to the same thing. If you do not have two words for snakes, you may say "You are just like a family of snakes!" If snakes are not usually considered bad in your culture, you may say, "You are just like a family of snakes-so dangerous and bad!"

Jesus asks the religious leaders a question that means, "You will be condemned to **hell**." Use the same word for hell that you have in previous passages, and remember that hell is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says he will continue to send prophets, wise men, and teachers of the law. **Wise men**, or **sages**, are people who have wisdom from God. They are able to help others apply God's Word to their lives.

Jesus says that the religious leaders will **crucify** some of the messengers he is sending. Translate crucify in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that crucifixion is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that the religious leaders will **flog** some of the messengers in their **synagogues**. Flogging refers to beating people with a whip made of leather. Often the leather had bones or metal tied to it. Translate synagogues in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that synagogue is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that the religious leaders from the past murdered Zechariah, the son of Berekiyah, between the **temple**, or main Jewish place of worship in Jerusalem, and the **altar**. Translate temple and altar in the same way you have in previous passages, and remember that temple and altar is in the Master Glossary. The altar here is the main altar where the priests offered the sacrifices just outside the main temple building in Jerusalem.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step. Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage. Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene. Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 23:29–36

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3146066 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5214322 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 23:37-24:2

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 23:37–24:2 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passages, Jesus spoke to a crowd, to the scribes and Pharisees, to the Sadducees, and to his disciples. In this passage, he is probably speaking to a crowd that includes each of these groups as well. He is speaking to them in the temple area because at the end of his teaching it says he was walking away from the temple.

Jesus is sad that the people of Jerusalem did not listen to his teachings, turn away from their sins, and accept him. When people are very emotional, they use language in special ways to express the emotion and give importance to what they are saying. In this passage, Jesus uses language in special ways. Jesus talks to Jerusalem as though it were a person. Jesus gives the picture of a mother hen to show how much he cares for the people of Jerusalem, and he uses words to get people's attention so they know what he is saying is very important.

Discuss and think about ways to translate the passage so that the emotions in the passage are clearly communicated.

Jesus says, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem..."! By saying "Oh" and repeating the word Jerusalem, he is emphasizing it and he is showing pity. Jesus is addressing the city of Jerusalem as though it was a person. He is talking to the people who live in the city. It may sound strange in some languages. Jerusalem is a very special place for all of Israel, including Jesus. God had chosen Jerusalem long ago as the place where his temple would be built and where the kings he appointed would govern his people.

Stop and discuss as a team how you talk about all the people who live in a place. How do you address them together?

He calls Jerusalem "the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers." At this time, Jewish leaders used to punish criminals by throwing stones at them and killing them. It was called "stoning." He uses the words "kills" and "stones" because it is not only something they have done in the past, but something they continue to

do. Jesus is very sad because he knows the people of Jerusalem will crucify him just as they have killed and stoned the prophets God sent before him.

Stop and discuss as a team: Do you have a story about a village or community in your culture that has a bad reputation? What happened in its history to give it a bad reputation? What things do they still do to have that bad reputation?

Jesus asks, "How often..." but he is not really asking a question. He is saying that he has often wanted to gather the children, or the people, of Jerusalem and protect them the way a mother hen protects her chicks by gathering them under her wings. But the people of Jerusalem refused to come to Jesus. They would not let Jesus protect them. The image of God as a bird who protects his young under his wings was also used several times before in the Bible. The Israelites were familiar with this image of a hen and her chicks as an image of protection and care.

Stop and discuss as a team: What image from nature would everyone in your culture understand as showing protection and care?

Show your team a picture of a hen with her chicks gathered under her wings.

He says "See" or "Look" because he wants them to listen carefully. He tells them their house is left desolate. This is a prophecy that is to come true in the future. Jesus refers to the city of Jerusalem as a house because the people of Jerusalem were supposed to live like a family in the place God gave them. And he calls it "*your* house" instead of "*God's* house," because God is going to leave it since they have rejected the savior he sent them. One of God's great promises to the people of Israel was that he would live with them, but now Jesus is saying that God will leave Jerusalem and the people of Jerusalem because they refuse to believe in Jesus.

Stop and discuss as a team: How do you tell people to listen carefully to what you are going to say next?

Jesus says "for," which means he is going to tell them why their house is left desolate. Then he says, "I tell you" which adds emphasis to what he's going to say. He says they will never see him again until they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" because this is the last time Jesus will enter Jerusalem before they crucify him and God raises him from the dead. The temple, the place of God's presence, will be destroyed but Jesus says "you will not see *me* again" because Jesus' presence is God's presence. Jesus' disciples had rejoiced and praised God saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" when Jesus entered Jerusalem just before this, but here Jesus is talking about a future event, which is probably the final salvation event.

When Jesus leaves and is walking away from the temple, his disciples point out the temple buildings to him. By saying both that Jesus "left" and "was walking away" Matthew emphasizes Jesus, God's presence, leaving the temple. The temple buildings were large and impressive. It was probably hard for the disciples to imagine that they might be destroyed when Jesus said Jerusalem would be desolate. But Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you" which means that what he is going to say will certainly happen, and he tells them not one stone of the temple buildings will be left on top of another that will not be thrown down. He uses the negative word "not" two times to emphasize that their enemies will completely destroy the temple buildings. Other prophets in Jewish history had also predicted the destruction of the temple. The prophecies came true when Rome destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Stop and discuss as a team: Do you have people in your community who talk about what will happen in the future? What do they say when they are talking about something very important?

Show your team a picture of the temple.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: Jesus is in the temple area speaking to a crowd and he mourns over Jerusalem. He says he wishes he could have gathered the people close to him like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them,

but Jerusalem refused. He prophesies that Jerusalem's house will be left empty, rejected by God, and they will not see Jesus again until they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Second scene: Jesus is leaving the temple and his disciples point out the temple buildings. Jesus prophesies that their enemies will so completely destroy the temple buildings that every single stone will be thrown down.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A large crowd including Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, disciples, and others

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus is in the temple area, which includes the temple and other buildings. He is speaking to a crowd that includes Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, disciples, and other people. He mourns over Jerusalem. He says he wanted the people of Jerusalem to allow him to gather them close to him like a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them, but the people of Jerusalem refused to come to him for protection. Jesus tells them God is going to leave their house, where he has lived among them, and they will not see Jesus, God's presence, again until they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

After that, when he is walking away from the temple, Jesus' disciples point out the nearby temple buildings to him. Jesus says, "You see all these buildings, do you not?" which is a way of telling them to look carefully at the buildings. He prophesies that their enemies will so completely destroy the temple buildings that not one stone will be left on another-they will all be thrown down. The stones of the temple buildings were as big as a typical village house, so this would have shocked the disciples.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- A large crowd including Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, disciples, and others

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is speaking to a large crowd in the temple area. The crowd included religious leaders like the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes, as well as Jesus' disciples and other people also.

Jesus says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" and he is very sad. He loves Jerusalem. He wishes the people had allowed him to gather them close like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings to protect them, but they refused. He prophesies that Jerusalem will be left empty, rejected by God.

Stop the action.

Ask an actor playing a person in the crowd, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "What is going to happen that we need to be protected by Jesus?" or "I don't see any danger. Why should we come to Jesus?" or "Why is he saying God will leave our house empty? I don't believe it."

Ask an actor playing a disciple, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Seeing Jesus so sad makes me sad too. What can it mean that God will leave our house empty? I am afraid of what is going to happen!" or "It seems like Jesus really is going to die. How can this be true? What will we do?" [!end] Resume the action.

Jesus tells the crowd they will not see him again until they say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

Stop the action.

Ask an actor playing a disciple, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I am confused. We just said these very words when Jesus came into Jerusalem, but he is talking about a time in the future. I wonder when the rest of Jerusalem will say these words about Jesus?" [!end] Resume the action.

Jesus is walking away from the temple area when his disciples point out the impressive temple buildings. Jesus says, "You see all these, do you not?" and he tells them their enemies will so completely destroy the temple buildings that not one stone will remain on another; they will all be thrown down.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus says, "**Oh** Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" The word "Oh" and the use of Jerusalem two times is a way of showing that Jesus's sadness about Jerusalem is very strong.

Jesus says **Jerusalem kills** the **prophets** and **stones** the messengers God sends them. He uses the word Jerusalem to talk about the people of Jerusalem. The words "kills" and "stones" show that this is something the people have done in the past and continue to do. At this time, Jewish leaders punished criminals by throwing stones at them and killing them. This was called "stoning." Use words that show the action was done in the past and still continues. **Prophets** receive messages from God and bring those messages to the people. Use the same word for prophets here that you have used before. Prophet is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says he has often longed to gather the people of Jerusalem near him as "a **mother hen** gathers her chicks under her arms **to protect them**." The image of God as a bird protecting his people with his wings is used several times in the Bible. It was a common picture of God's protection for the Israelites.

Show your team a picture of a mother hen protecting her chicks under her wings.

Jesus tells the crowd, "**Your house** is left desolate." He is probably using the word house to refer to both the city of Jerusalem and the temple. He calls it *your* house instead of *God's* house, because God is leaving both the temple and Jerusalem.

Jesus says they will not see him again until they say, "**Blessed** is he who comes in the name of the **Lord**." This exact phrase is in several other places in the Bible including a Psalm. Translate this phrase the same way in each place where it appears. Blessed and Lord are both in the Master Glossary.

Jesus' disciples point out the **temple** buildings to him. These buildings included the temple, which was the special building where God's presence lived, as well as additional buildings near it that were part of temple worship for the Israelites. The temple was a place where the Israelites worshipped God and brought him sacrifices. It was especially beautiful and made with impressively large stones. The Romans destroyed the temple in 70 AD. Translate temple the same way you have before when talking about this special building in Jerusalem. temple is in the Master Glossary.

Show your team a picture of the temple in Jerusalem.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 23:37-24:2

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2364653 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3983144 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 24:3-14

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 24:3-14 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus had been in Jerusalem, teaching and proclaiming judgment on the pride and hypocrisy of the religious leaders. Jesus also prophesied the destruction of the temple, saying to the religious leaders in Jerusalem, "Look, your house is left to you desolate."

In this passage, Matthew begins a new unit of Jesus' teaching. Matthew records Jesus teaching his disciples about the time period between Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension and his coming in glory and power to end the world as we know it. This time period is known as the time between the first and second coming of Jesus. This passage is only the beginning of a long section of Jesus' teachings. In this passage, Jesus gives his disciples an important warning and some general descriptions.

This teaching takes place during the last week of Jesus' ministry before he dies. During this week, he is teaching in the Jewish temple in Jerusalem every day and leaving Jerusalem every evening to spend the night on the Mount of Olives area. On one of these evenings, Jesus is sitting on the Mount of Olives after teaching in Jerusalem when Jesus' disciples take this opportunity to talk to him privately, or away from anyone else. Matthew does not name which disciples ask but refers to them as a group.

If needed, stop here and review with your team the picture of the area that is most likely the Mount of Olives.

Jesus had just said that one day enemies would destroy the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The disciples now ask Jesus, "When will these things happen?" The phrase "these things," sometimes translated "this," refers to what Jesus had prophesied about the destruction of the temple. The disciples also ask Jesus, "What will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?" The disciples' question introduces an important event. The word often translated as "coming" means "appearance" or "presence." The disciples knew Old Testament prophecies that said the Messiah, the promised Savior, would come as a conquering King with power and glory to end the world as they knew it and establish a perfect kingdom. When the prophets and Jesus talk about the end of the world, or sometimes translated age, they are talking about the end of time and history as we know it. It does not mean the destruction of all humanity.

The disciples believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the promised Savior, that the Old Testament prophets talked about. When Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple, the disciples likely thought this would happen when Jesus would appear to establish his perfect kingdom and end the world. Jesus teaches his disciples that the destruction of the temple and Jesus establishing a perfect kingdom at the end of the world will happen at different times. We know from history that what Jesus said came true. People destroyed the Jewish temple in the year 70 AD and Jesus did not appear at that time. Only God knows the timing of his plans.

The disciples also still did not understand that Jesus would first die and come back to life. We know more now than the disciples did because we know that Jesus died, God raised him from the dead, and Jesus returned to Heaven. Jesus is describing what will happen after he dies and rises from the dead but before he comes to end history and establish his perfect kingdom.

In this passage, Jesus corrects the disciples' assumptions and describes in a general way what the disciples can expect.

Stop here and discuss with your team: Tell a story about a time when you or someone you know wanted God to give a sign.

Jesus gives an important warning: "Watch out and do not believe lies." Jesus gives this command because people will come saying, "I am the Messiah," or the one chosen and sent by God. Jesus warns the disciples not to follow these pretenders who would lead them away from the truth.

Jesus describes in general terms what the disciples can expect will happen. But Jesus gives the disciples another command: "Make sure you are not alarmed." Jesus tells the disciples they should not be alarmed because these events must happen. God is still in control.

Stop here and discuss with your team: Tell a story about a time when an event has made you afraid or wonder if God is really in control.

When these things happen, Jesus says, the disciples should not think it means history is about to end. Nations and kingdoms will rise up, or fight and attack other nations and kingdoms. There will also be famines, which are times when there is very little or no food. And there will be earthquakes, which are times when the ground shakes, causing buildings to fall down and sometimes cracks the earth.

Jesus explains these sufferings are only the beginning of the birth pains. Jesus uses a metaphor of the pain a woman experiences while giving birth to describe these painful events. These birth pains can last for a long time or a short time. The point is that these kinds of painful events should not surprise the disciples because they will happen before the end of the world comes.

Jesus talks about the kinds of things that will happen "at that time," the time when all these sufferings will happen. During that same time period, Jesus now tells his disciples, people will arrest them, kill them, and hate them because they follow Jesus. We know from history that many of the disciples were arrested, tortured, and killed. But Jesus is not only talking about those specific disciples but includes disciples in every nation.

Also at that time, many people will stop believing in Jesus and betray one another. Jesus is saying that people from within Jesus' own disciples will stop believing in Jesus and betray other followers.

Stop and discuss with your team: Tell a story about a time when you or someone you know suffered because they believed in Jesus.

False, or lying, prophets will appear claiming to speak God's Word and many people will believe their lies. Because of the lies and evil in the world "the love of many will grow cold." The expression "love will grow cold" is a figure of speech that means people will stop loving one another. Another way to say it is, their hearts will no longer love.

Stop here and discuss with your team: Tell a story about a time when you or someone you know believed a lie or was influenced by someone to do something wrong.

Jesus knows hearing all this might cause the disciples to wonder if any followers of Jesus will remain. The sufferings, false messiahs, and false prophets all tempt God's people to stop believing and following the one true Messiah. Jesus assures his disciples that God will save all those who trust Jesus through the sufferings and do not believe the lies of the false prophets. These people will one day live in God's perfect kingdom. The disciples will not know the exact time when the end of the world will happen. But Jesus does tell his disciples that people will share the good news about God's perfect kingdom with every people group in the whole world before the end of the world comes. God will fill his perfect kingdom with people from every people group, nation, and language.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus is sitting on the Mount of Olives. The disciples come to him in private and ask him some questions.

Second scene: Jesus begins to answer the disciples by giving them a command and warning them about people who will come and deceive many people. Jesus tells his disciples about world events that will characterize the time period the disciples are asking about. Jesus says these events are only the beginning of the sufferings.

Third scene: Jesus continues telling his disciples what will happen but now describes what his followers will experience. Jesus also describes how unbelievers will behave. Jesus repeats his warning that people will come who will deceive many people.

Fourth scene: Jesus tells the disciples that God will save believers and true disciples will endure to the end. The good news about the kingdom will go throughout the whole world before history ends.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples
- False messiahs
- False prophets

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene, the story begins with Jesus sitting on the Mount of Olives. The disciples come to Jesus and ask him some questions. It is important to remember the disciples ask Jesus in private, away from anyone else. The conversation is only between Jesus and his disciples. We do not know how many disciples.

In the second scene, Jesus answers the disciples by commanding them to "watch out and do not let anyone deceive you." It is important to remember that Jesus is giving his disciples a command here. Jesus then gives the reason for his command: "*Because* many people will come and say, 'I am the Messiah' and many people will believe them.

Then, Jesus tells his disciples that there will be wars and many people will talk about war. Jesus then gives the disciples another command: "Make sure you are not alarmed." It is important to remember that Jesus gives the command and then gives the reason for his command: "*Because* these events must happen." Remember, this means the disciples should not be surprised or discouraged because God is still in control. But it is not yet the end. Nations and kingdoms all over the world will go to war against each other. Famines and earthquakes will happen in many places. But, Jesus continues, all these events are only the beginning of the birth pains or sufferings.

In the third scene, Jesus continues his warning by telling the disciples they themselves will suffer for being Jesus' disciples. It is important to remember that the persecutions will happen during the *same time period* as the previous events. Remember, Jesus is describing the characteristics of the time period before Jesus comes again.

It is important to remember the reason for the disciples' suffering. The disciples suffer because they believe and follow Jesus. Also, during this time period, many people will sin and hate one another. Many people will betray each other and give up believing in Jesus. Jesus explains that because more and more people will disobey God's law, many people will stop loving. Jesus again warns his disciples not to let people deceive them. False prophets will appear and deceive many people into following their evil ways.

In the fourth scene, Jesus changes topics to tell the disciples that God will still save his people. This is important. Being a true disciple of Jesus means enduring all these sufferings and not believing the lies of the false prophets and christians. People will share with every people group the good news that God saves them from the punishment for their disobedience and gives them his perfect kingdom. All people groups in the whole world will hear this good news before the end happens.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Disciples
- False messiahs
- False prophets

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

While Jesus is sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples come to Jesus and ask him, "When will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world?"

Stop the action.

Jesus answers the disciples by commanding them to "watch out and do not let anyone deceive you." Jesus tells his disciples many people will come and claim to be the Messiah, and they will deceive many people. There will be wars and people talking about war. Jesus then gives the disciples another command: "Make sure you are not alarmed because these things must happen, but this is not the end."

Stop the action.

Jesus continues describing what will happen. Nations will fight nations and kingdoms will fight kingdoms. There will be famines and earthquakes in many places. But these events are the beginning of the birth pains or sufferings.

Jesus continues that at that time, people will hand over Jesus' disciples to suffer and people will kill them. And people in all nations will hate followers of Jesus. Many people will stop following Jesus and will betray and hate one another. False prophets will deceive many people. Jesus explains that because more and more people disobey God's law, many people will stop loving.

Stop the action.

Jesus encourages his disciples that God will still save his people. True disciples will show their faith by enduring the sufferings of this time without falling away into wickedness and hate. People will preach the good news of the kingdom throughout the whole world and witness to every nation before God brings the end.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives and his **disciples** come to him away from anyone else and ask him, "When will these things happen? And what will be the **sign** of your coming and the end of the world?"

Translate **disciples** in the same way as you have in previous passages. Disciples is in the Master Glossary.

A **sign** is a signal that something is true or will happen. Here it refers to an event or signal that indicates something is about to happen. Translate sign in the same way as you have in previous passages. Sign is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus responds to his disciples by commanding them, "Watch out and do not let anyone deceive you." Jesus gives his disciples the reason why: Because people will come saying, "I am the **Messiah**." Messiah means someone whom God has anointed, or appointed, for a special task. In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were anointed for special tasks. Jesus is all of those things, but Matthew here is probably not saying people will claim to be Jesus himself but will claim to be chosen and sent by God. Translate Messiah in the same way as you have in previous passages. Messiah is in the Master Glossary.

Many people will follow the false messiahs and the disciples will hear about wars and threats of wars. Nations and kingdoms will fight one another. A **nation** is a tribe or ethnic group, or the people of a country. Translate nation in the same way as you have in previous passages. Nation is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus talks about the kinds of things that will happen "at that time." **At that time** does not refer to one specific time but the same general time period when these kinds of events happen. Jesus tells the disciples that people will arrest them and cause them to suffer. People will kill the disciples and hate them because they are Jesus' disciples. Also at that time, many people will stop believing in Jesus, betray one another, and hate one another.

False prophets will appear claiming to speak God's Word. A **prophet** is someone who receives a message from God and tells it to other people, often God's people. A false, or fake, prophet is someone who only claims, or pretends, to have a message from God. God did not give them a message or call them to be his prophet. Translate false prophet in the same way that you have in previous passages. Prophet is in the Master Glossary.

The false prophets will deceive many people. More and more people will sin. They will not care about God's law or doing what is right. **Sin** refers to an act of disobedience to God. Some translations use the word wickedness or lawlessness here. **Wickedness** means people doing evil, or bad, deeds. They disobey God's law. **Lawlessness** means people are not caring about obeying God's law and also disobeying it. Lawlessness and wickedness are both sin. Be sure that the word you use here does not mean that someone has failed to perform a religious act like ritual prayer or following certain religious rules. Whatever word you choose-lawlessness, wickedness, or sin-translate it as you have in previous passages. Lawlessness, wickedness, and sin are in the Master Glossary.

Because more and more people will sin, the love of many people will grow cold, or people will stop loving.

Stop here and talk about the phrase "love will grow cold" and how you can translate it into your language.

Jesus assures his disciples that God will save all those who trust Jesus, do not believe lies, and endure suffering to the end. **The end** here could refer either to the end of that person's life or the end of the world, whichever comes first.

People will proclaim the **good news**, or **gospel**, about the **kingdom** throughout the whole world so that all nations will hear it. The good news, or gospel, is that Jesus was on this earth, died for our sins, and was raised from the dead. In the New Testament, before Jesus died and was raised to life, the disciples and Jesus teach the good news of the kingdom. This means that they are teaching about God's rule through Jesus who came to save people and make them part of God's perfect kingdom. Translate good news, or gospel, in the same way as you have in previous passages. Gospel is in the Master Glossary.

The disciple Matthew used kingdom of heaven to talk about the kingdom of God. One day Jesus will come back to establish God's new and perfect kingdom. Here, Matthew uses the word **kingdom** to refer to the kingdom of heaven. Translate kingdom in the same way as you have in previous passages. Kingdom of Heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 24:3–14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4541937 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7772099 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 24:15–28

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 24:15–28 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?

5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of Matthew 24:15–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this passage, Jesus continues teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Remember that Jesus is in the last week of his life and will soon die, be raised, and return to Heaven. Jesus is preparing his disciples for life and discipleship after he returns to Heaven but before he comes back to gather his followers and establish his kingdom.

In the previous passage, Jesus' disciples had asked Jesus when people would destroy God's temple in Jerusalem, and what would be the signs of Jesus' second coming, and the end of the world. Jesus first responded by telling his disciples what life would be like in general, teaching them that they would not know the exact time of the end of the world. In this passage, Jesus continues teaching his disciples about the time before the end of the world, but now tells them about a specific event.

Jesus says, "So when you see the awful horror standing in the holy place, which the prophet Daniel spoke about..."

Jesus refers to an event God had spoken about many years before through the well-known Jewish prophet Daniel. The disciples would have known right away who the Jewish prophet Daniel was and what he said. Jesus uses the same description that the prophet Daniel recorded. Jesus is now confirming and further prophesying about what God said through Daniel. Like in other passages, Matthew wants his audience to understand that Jesus fits with and completes the Jewish prophets that God used many many years before to speak his word to the Jewish people.

Some translations say "awful horror," while other translations say "sacrilegious object that causes desecration" or "abomination that causes desolation." An abomination, or awful horror, is something God hates or makes God angry. Desolation, or desecration, means God's people cannot worship there. The holy place is most likely the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Remember that Jesus had recently told his disciples that some people at some time would destroy the temple. Probably, whatever event brings what God hates into God's holy place, would also destroy God's temple. The horrible thing is likely an object that a person set up, and not a person.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about holy or sacred places in your culture. What makes them holy or sacred? How would they become places that are not holy or what would make people stop worshiping there? Pause this audio here.

Matthew here comments: "The one who is reading, think carefully." During Matthew's time, a reader read letters and writings aloud to groups of believers because few could read. Matthew is telling the readers of his book to think carefully about what Jesus is saying to understand it. Jesus is not giving specific enough details about this event and when it will happen. It will take wisdom to know when this event is happening.

In another book of the Bible called the Gospel of Luke, Luke also records Jesus teaching his disciples about this event, including the detail that armies would surround Jerusalem. We know from history that there was a war in Israel after Jesus' return to Heaven. Enemies of the Jewish people attacked Judea, surrounded Jerusalem and worshiped their idols in the Jewish temple. It is possible that the "abomination that causes desolation" was set up during this time.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time something terrible or awful happened to you or someone you know. What words do you use in your language to describe something terrible? Pause the audio here.

Jesus continues, saying, "Then those who live in Judea must run away to the hills." Jesus gives this command to all the people living in a region of Israel called Judea, the region where Jerusalem is. So, when the people living in Judea see this unholy object standing in the holy place, they must run away to the hills, where enemies would have difficulty following them.

Stop here and look at a map of the region of Judea and a picture of the Judean hills as a group. Pause this audio here.

Jesus continues, "Someone on the roof of their house must not go down into their house to get belongings." Houses at that time had flat roofs accessed by a stairway outside their house. People often went on their roofs in the evenings to relax or pray.

Stop here and look at a picture of a house with a flat roof and a staircase on the outside as a group. Pause this audio here.

Likewise, "A person working in the field must not go back to pick up their cloak." Workers would usually take off their cloaks and put them on the side of the field while they were working. Cloaks, or coats, were an essential piece of clothing that a person would always take when traveling. Jesus uses these two examples to impress upon the disciples that this time will be a severe crisis or emergency.

Stop here and look at a picture of a man wearing a cloak as a group. Pause this audio here.

Jesus exclaims in distress, "How awful it will be at that time for pregnant women and mothers still nursing their babies." Women still carrying their babies in their wombs and mothers with young children are especially at risk during times of war and crisis.

Jesus continues with a command, "Pray that your escape will not happen during winter or on the Sabbath." Jesus uses a word that means to pray all the time, as a regular habit of praying, and not a one-time prayer. Jesus does not tell the disciples exactly when this event will happen, so they should pray regularly to prepare for it. Winter in Jerusalem and Judea means there would be rainy and stormy weather. Rain might cause flooding and prevent people from escaping. The Sabbath was the Jewish religious day of rest and worship. The Jewish people might have been very strict about obeying the Jewish laws forbidding people from walking far distances on the Sabbath. It is also possible that the city gates would be closed on the Sabbath. Running away would be more difficult or impossible.

"Because at that time, the suffering will be more severe than at any time since the beginning of the world until now. And it will never be so severe again. And if God did not reduce the number of those days, no one would survive. But God will shorten those days so that God's chosen people will survive." Another way to say it is, if God did not decide to make the time short, not one person would live. No one would survive because the suffering would be more terrible than at any other time. Jesus is using extreme language to emphasize how bad the suffering will be. But Jesus also reveals that God is still in control, cares for His chosen people, and acts to protect them.

Jesus continues, "At that time, if a person says to you, "Look, here is the Messiah, or promised Savior" or "There is the Messiah" do not believe that person. Because false Messiahs and false prophets will come, and they will perform great signs and wonders." Jesus shifts to a new warning but still talks about the same time. Jesus says that people will come and say that they are the Messiah-the promised savior-or a prophet. They are trying to deceive people. They will even try to deceive God's chosen people-the people who believe and follow God. But when Jesus says, "They will deceive, if possible, God's chosen people," Jesus is saying that it is possible for God's people to resist believing the lies of the false Messiahs and prophets.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time you or someone you know saw or heard about someone trying to perform an act to deceive people. Pause this audio here.

Jesus pauses his teaching to emphasize his point: "See, I have told you before these things happen." The disciples had asked Jesus what signs to look for. But if the disciples are not careful, they will believe the false signs. Jesus is preparing his disciples and again warning them not to believe false messiahs. A disciple of Jesus must know and remember Jesus' words to have the wisdom to see the lies of deceivers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time you warned someone about something or someone warned you about something. Pause this audio here.

Jesus continues his warning, "So if a person says to you 'There is the Messiah, in the desert,' do not go to the desert. Or 'Here is the Messiah in the inner, or hidden, rooms,' do not believe it." Some Jewish people believe the Messiah would appear in the desert or wilderness. The desert is empty and remote, and hidden rooms are

not visible. Jesus is saying false messiahs come secretly and gather followers in places where others cannot see them.

Stop here and look at the pictures of the desert and what is an inner, or hidden, room in a house as a group. Pause this audio here.

Jesus now explains why he warned them about the false signs: "Because the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning that comes from the east and lights up the sky to the west." Jesus is now talking about his coming again to gather his followers, which will happen at the end of the world. As he has done at other times, Jesus is talking about himself when he uses the name Son of Man. The Jewish prophet Daniel also spoke about the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus is teaching his disciples that he is the Son of Man the prophet Daniel spoke about.

Lightning is a flash of light that appears suddenly in the sky, often during a storm. Lightning is very bright, and people far away can see it. The East is the end of the sky where the sun rises and the West is the opposite end of the sky where the sun sets. Jesus is saying like lightning that lights up the whole sky, everyone everywhere will see him when he comes again. Unlike the false messiahs, the true Messiah will come suddenly and in a way everyone can see.

Stop here and look at a picture of lightning as a group. Pause this audio here.

Jesus adds a proverb: "Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather." Vultures are large birds that feed on dead animal bodies. In the time of Jesus, when people saw a group of vultures they would know there was the dead body of an animal. Jesus uses this proverb about vultures gathering around a dead animal body to emphasize that everyone will know when Jesus has come. It will be as obvious as seeing a group of vultures and knowing there was a dead animal body.

Stop here and look at a picture of vultures gathered around the body of a dead animal as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of a proverb in your language. Discuss the proverb and the meaning of the proverb with the team. Think about the meaning of the proverb Jesus tells his disciples and see if any proverbs in your language means the same thing. If there are not any, discuss how to translate the meaning of Jesus' proverb. Pause this audio here.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Matthew 24:15–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Jesus continues teaching the disciples. Jesus tells his disciples about an event that will happen, saying all the people in Judea must run away to the hills when they see it.

In the second scene: Jesus says this event will be terrible, especially for pregnant women and mothers still nursing babies. Jesus commands his people to pray they will not have to run away during winter or on the Sabbath.

In the third scene: People will say the Messiah is here or there because false messiahs and false prophets will arise in remote and secret places to try to deceive God's chosen people. But the Son of Man's coming will be like lightning that everyone can see.

The characters in this passage are:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- People who live in Judea
- A person who says, "the Messiah is here or there"
- False messiahs and false prophets

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting: Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

In the first scene, Jesus continues teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. Jesus says to his disciples, "So when you see the awful horror standing in the holy place, which the prophet Daniel spoke about, Reader: consider this carefully, **then** everyone living in Judea must run away to the hills." It is important to begin this story in a way that communicates this is a continuation of the teaching Jesus started in the previous passage. Translate it as if there was no stop or break between this story and the previous one. Jesus also uses a time marker word translated as "when," meaning what he is about to talk about will certainly happen. The outline of the sentence is, "When you see this event happen, **then** (meaning at that time) all the people living in Judea must run away."

Jesus continues, "A person on their roof must not go down to take anything out of their house. A person working in the field must not go back to pick up their cloak."

Second scene: Jesus exclaims, "**How awful** it will be **at that time** for pregnant women and mothers still nursing their babies. Pray that your escape will not happen in winter or on the Sabbath." Jesus uses an exclamation of distress or pity for the women. Remember, Jesus is still talking about one time period or event. Include a word that means "at that time" or "then" in your translation.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Jesus uses an exclamation word translated as "how terrible" or sometimes "woe." This word expresses pity and distress at what might happen to these women. Discuss with the team the kinds of exclamations they have in their language. What words do they use to express pity, grief, distress, or strong emotion? Is there one you can use here? Pause this audio here.

Jesus explains, "**Because, at that time**, the suffering will be more severe than at any time since the beginning of the world until now. And it will never be so severe again." Remember, Jesus here is giving the reason for his distress and his command to pray. Remember in this passage that the phrases "at that time" or "those days" refer to the same period or event. Including these phrases in your translation is important, even though it is repetitious.

Jesus adds, "And **if** God had not decided to reduce the number of those days, not one person would live. **But** God reduced the number of those days for the sake of God's chosen people." Remember, Jesus is contrasting two options here. Make sure you use a word that contrasts these two ideas: the first idea is God not reducing the number of days and the second idea is God did reduce the number of days.

In the third scene, Jesus warns his disciples, "**At that time** if a person says to you, "**Look**, here is the Messiah" or "There is the Messiah" do not believe that person. **Because** false Messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform signs and wonders **to** deceive God's people, if possible." Remember that Jesus is telling his disciples why they should not believe the person who tells them the Messiah is here. If someone tells them the Messiah has come, it will be a false messiah. Remember that the false prophets and messiahs perform miracles and powerful acts because they are trying to make God's people turn away from God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: The word translated as "look" is a word that draws special attention to a person, event, or speech. What are the words in your language that you use in stories to draw special attention to something someone says or does? Pause this audio here.

"**See**, I have told you these things before they happen." Remember to use a word at the beginning of this section that means "pay attention to this."

Jesus continues his warning, "So if a person says to you 'There is the Messiah in the desert,' do not go to the desert. Or 'Here the Messiah is in the hidden rooms,' do not believe it. **Because** the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning that comes from the East, and people in the West can see it. Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

Jesus begins this section about false messiahs in the same way he ends it. First Jesus commands the disciples not to believe people who say the Messiah is here. Then Jesus tells the disciples to pay attention to what is happening. Then Jesus commands his disciples again not to believe people who say the Messiah is here.

Remember that the section ends with the reason Jesus has spent so much time telling his disciples not to believe people who say the Messiah is here: **Because** the coming of the Messiah will be so obvious everyone will know it. The appearance of the Son of Man will be a separate event and not during the time of "those days" Jesus was talking about earlier.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of Matthew 24:15–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- People who live in Judea
- A person who says, "the Messiah is here or there"
- False messiahs and false prophets

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the story without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the story. Help each other remember every part of the story.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then restart the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Jesus exclaims in distress, "How awful it will be at that time for pregnant women and women still nursing their babies. Pray that your running away will not happen during winter or on the Sabbath."

Pause the drama.

In the first scene, Jesus says to his disciples, "So when you see the awful horror standing in the holy place, which God spoke about through the prophet Daniel, Reader: pay attention, then all people living in Judea must run away to the hills. A person on their roof must not go down into their house to take anything out of it. A person working in the field must not go back to get their cloak."

Pause the drama.

In the second scene: Jesus exclaims in distress, "How awful it will be at that time for pregnant women and women still nursing their babies. Pray that your running away will not happen during winter or on the Sabbath."

Pause the drama.

Jesus explains, "Because, at that time, the suffering will be more severe than at any time since the beginning of the world until now. And it will never be so severe again. And if God did not decide to reduce the number of those days, no one would survive. But God reduced the number of those days for God's chosen people."

Pause the drama.

In the third scene, Jesus warns, "At that time if a person says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah' or 'There is the Messiah' do not believe that person because false Messiahs and false prophets will rise and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, God's chosen people. See, I have told you these things before they happen."

Pause the drama.

Jesus continues his warning, "So if a person says to you 'There is the Messiah, in the desert' do not go to the desert. Or 'Here the Messiah is in the hidden rooms,' do not believe it. Because the coming of the Son of Man will be like lightning that comes from the East and lights up the sky to the West. Wherever the dead body is, there the vultures will gather."

Pause the drama.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of Matthew 24:15–28 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples, saying, "When you see what Daniel the prophet spoke about, the **awful horror**, standing in the **holy** place you should run away."

The phrase "awful horror" is also translated as "abomination of desolation" or "sacrilegious object that causes desecration."

An **abomination or sacrilegious thing** is something that God hates and is unholy and unclean. It is most likely an object, which is why one translation says "sacrilegious, or unholy, object." This thing is something that will bring **desolation**. A place that is desolate, or desecrated, is a place that people cannot use for sacred purposes anymore.

This object will make people horrified and will make the holy place unclean, or unholy and unfit to use.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "awful horror" or "sacrilegious object that causes desecration." You may want to use a descriptive sentence. Some examples are: the forbidden thing or idol that defiles God's holy place, the shameful thing that makes God's holy place impure, or the thing God hates that spoils God's holy place. Pause this audio here.

The **holy place** is probably God's temple in Jerusalem. Something **holy** is set apart for a special purpose for God. Use the same word for holy as you used in previous passages. For more information on holy, refer to the Master Glossary.

Matthew adds his own comment to the one reading his book, saying, "To the one reading, think carefully." Then Jesus commands, "All people living in **Judea** must run away to the **hills**." Judea was a region within the land of Israel. Use the same word for Judea as you used in previous passages. For more information on Judea, refer to the Master Glossary.

A person on the roof or on top of their house must not go down to get anything out of their house. A person working in a field must not go back and get their **cloak**. A cloak is an outer, long robe that a person put on over the clothing. They were often used as a blanket when a person traveled. Use the same word for cloak as you used in previous passages. For more information on cloak, refer to the Master Glossary.

Jesus exclaims with pity, "How terrible it will be for pregnant women and mothers who are still nursing their babies."

Jesus commands, "Pray that your running away will not be during the winter or on the **Sabbath**." Use the same word for Sabbath as you used in previous passages. For more information on Sabbath, refer to the Master Glossary.

Jesus tells them all this because the suffering will be more severe than at any time since the world began until now, and at any time after. If God did not shorten the number of those days of suffering, not one person would survive. But God will reduce the number of days for God's chosen people.

Jesus warns his disciples that if someone says, "Look, here is the **Messiah**," or "The Messiah is there," do not believe them. Use the same word for Messiah as you used in previous passages. For more information on Messiah, refer to the Master Glossary.

Jesus explains that false **messiahs** and false **prophets** will rise and perform great **signs and wonders** to deceive God's chosen people, if possible. **False messiahs** are people who claim to be the messiah but are not. Use the same word or phrase for false messiahs as you used in previous passages.

Use the same word or phrase for false prophets as you have in previous passages. For more information on prophet, refer to the Master Glossary.

Signs and wonders is a phrase that communicates one idea with two words that mean similar things. Both words refer to miracles and acts of power that amaze people. The phrase should be translated as one idea using two ways to talk about miraculous acts of power.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "signs and wonders." Look up signs and wonders in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

Jesus continues saying, "If a person says, look, the Messiah is in the **desert**, do not go there." A desert is an empty place without sources of food and water. Wild animals often roam in the desert. The desert was an important place in the Bible. It was a place that represented God's judgment but also God's provision and salvation. Many important people and events in the Bible are associated with the desert, such as the Exodus, Moses, prophecies, and John the Baptist. Some Jewish people thought the Messiah would appear again in the desert. Use the same word for desert as you used in previous passages. For more information on desert, refer to the Master Glossary.

Jesus again warns his disciples that, "If a person says, 'Look, the Messiah is in here in the hidden rooms,' do not believe that person." Jesus says this because the **Son of Man** will come like lightning that comes from the east, and people in the west can see it. Jesus adds this proverb, "Where there is a dead body, the vultures will gather."

Son of Man is the title Jesus uses to refer to himself. Use the same phrase for Son of Man as you used in previous passages. For more information on Son of Man, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 24:15–28

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (6378763 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (11088871 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 24:29–36

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 24:29–35 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is in the middle of a long teaching to his disciples. Jesus gives this teaching on the Mount of Olives. The purpose of this teaching is to answer two questions the disciples ask Jesus. Before he started this teaching, Jesus told the disciples that enemies will destroy the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and the disciples ask when this will happen. The disciples also ask a second question about the sign of Jesus' coming and of the end of the world. In the teaching so far, Jesus gave them warnings and he taught about false prophets and suffering. Now, Jesus teaches the disciples more about when these things will happen. He teaches using many Old Testament quotations and a parable, or short story, about a fig tree.

Stop and show your team the picture of the Mount of Olives again if needed.

Some people believe that Jesus is referring to the destruction of the temple when he says "the tribulation of those days." This means there will be suffering when people destroy the temple. The temple was destroyed in 70 AD, which was about 40 years later. Other people believe this section is about the future time of suffering right before Jesus comes back to the earth a second time.

Jesus says immediately after this suffering, there will be chaos in the heavens, or the sky. The sun and moon will lose their light, and the stars will fall from the sky. Jesus also says God will shake "the powers of the heavens," meaning the sun, the moon, and the stars. Jesus is quoting different prophecies, or messages from God that the prophets Isaiah, Joel, Amos, and Ezekiel gave the Israelites in the Old Testament. This special language about darkness and disorder was common in the Old Testament when God was judging Israel or other nations. Some people believe the special language about darkness refers to the temple destruction and others believe this is about the second coming of Jesus.

Stop and talk about prophecy in your language and culture. How do you introduce a prophecy in a religious teaching?

Jesus says the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. "The sign" could mean the Son of Man himself, or it could mean a sign that signals his coming. The Son of Man is a phrase that Jesus often uses about himself in the book of Matthew. "The Son of Man" is a reference to the prophet Daniel's vision of someone like a Son of Man being taken to God's throne. Jesus' audience would have understood that Jesus was describing the Son of Man as someone who was God himself. Jesus uses "Son of Man" here to show that he will come on the clouds with power and great glory. Glory means that Jesus will come with the great majesty of God. When this happens, all the nations, or different people groups, of the earth will mourn, which means they will be very sad. This may refer to people recognizing what they did to Jesus when they killed him and regretting it with sorrow when they see the temple destroyed. Others believe this means people will mourn when Jesus comes again because they were not ready for the time when Jesus will come to judge the world.

When the Son of Man comes, the angels, or messengers, will blow a trumpet to gather the elect, or the chosen people of God, from all over the world. A trumpet is a musical instrument that makes a loud noise, and it could be made from a ram's horn. Jews blew trumpets for important religious days. In the original language, Jesus says the angels will gather the people "from the four winds," which means the chosen people of God will come from every direction-the north, south, east, and west, or from all over the world.

Stop and show a picture of a trumpet.

Next, Jesus teaches the disciples more about "when these things will happen." Jesus uses the example of how a fig tree grows to help them understand his teaching. During the winter, or cold season, fig trees had no leaves, buds, or fruit. In the spring, new branches and leaves started growing, which showed the cold weather was over, and summer, or the warm growing season was starting.

Stop and show a picture of a fig tree before it has leaves and branches and a picture of a fig tree after it has leaves and branches.

Also, talk about the growing season for plants or trees in your community. What kinds of plants or trees are in your community and what are the signs that the warm weather is coming?

Jesus uses the example of a fig tree to show that when the disciples see "these things," they will know the destruction of the temple or the return of Jesus is near. It is "right at the door" is a way in the original language to say that something is almost here. There are several ways to understand what Jesus means by "these things." "These things" could mean the difficult times of suffering like the hated thing that causes destruction or the

arrest of Jesus' followers that happens right before Jesus returns. "These things" could also mean when the sun and moon lose their light and the stars fall from the sky. These events will happen, as sure as the warm summer comes after the cold winter and the fig trees grow new branches and then produce figs.

Jesus says "I tell you the truth" to emphasize that his next saying is very important. He tells the disciples this generation will not pass away, or the people living now will not die, before "these things" happen. Again, "these things" could mean the temple's destruction, which does happen during the lifetime of the disciples listening to Jesus' teaching. It also could mean the end of the world when Jesus comes back. Jesus did not come back when the temple was destroyed, and we know he will come back someday. The prophecy probably was partially fulfilled when the temple was destroyed, and it will be completely fulfilled someday when Jesus returns.

Jesus finishes this section of teaching by saying that even though heaven-the sky-and the earth disappear, Jesus' words and teachings will never disappear. All the words Jesus says are true, including the future events he talked about in this story. All these things definitely will happen in the future.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus teaches his disciples about when the sun, moon, and stars lose their light, and Jesus will come with power and great glory.

Second scene: Jesus uses the example of a fig tree starting to grow new branches and leaves as a sign of when these things will happen.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- All the nations on the earth
- Angels
- The elect, or God's chosen people

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. He already taught them about the hated thing of destruction that will happen, and he told them about the great suffering that would happen to the people. Jesus says immediately after this suffering, the sun and moon will lose their light and the stars will fall from the sky. Remember Jesus is quoting Old Testament prophecies about darkness and disorder.

Stop here and gather rocks or toys. Use them to show the sun and moon losing their light and the stars falling from the sky.

After this darkness happens, Jesus-the Son of Man-will appear in the sky. All the nations on the earth will mourn. Remember that Jesus will come with power and great glory. The angels will blow a trumpet to gather together the elect, or God's chosen people. These people will come from "the four winds," or all over the world. Think of how you can use objects to show people coming from all over the world.

Stop and discuss how your language describes people coming from all different directions like the phrase here "from the four winds."

In the second scene, it is important to remember that Jesus teaches an example from how a fig tree grows. People know the warm growing season is coming when they see a fig tree's leaves and branches starting to grow. In the same way, people know that when they see the sun and moon losing their light and the stars falling from the sky, "these things" are coming.

Remember that "these things" could mean the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem or the coming of Jesus at the end of the world.

Jesus uses the phrase "right at the door" to show that "these things" are very close to happening.

Stop and talk about how you would use a phrase like "right at the door" in your language to show that something will happen very soon.

Next, it is important to remember that Jesus says, "I tell you the truth." He says "I tell you the truth" when he wants his disciples to listen carefully to what he will say next.

Stop and discuss how your language shows that someone is emphasizing something important. What do you say in your language?

Jesus says this generation would not die before "these things" happen. It is important to remember that "this generation" means the people who were alive while he was teaching. Remember that many people believe Jesus means the destruction of the temple would happen while many of the disciples were still alive.

Finally, Jesus says the sky and the earth will end someday. In contrast, the teachings and words of Jesus will never end or disappear. Jesus' words are true, and they will never disappear.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- All the nations on the earth
- Angels
- The elect, or God's chosen people

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives and teaches his disciples. Jesus teaches them about what will happen immediately after the suffering they experience. Jesus says the sun and moon will be dark, and the stars will fall from the sky.

Stop the action.

Jesus says the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky. Jesus is the Son of Man. Jesus will come with power and great glory and all the nations on the earth will mourn.

Stop the action.

Jesus says someone will blow a trumpet and the angels will gather all the elect, or the chosen people of God. The elect will come from all over the world.

Stop the action.

Next, Jesus tells a story about a fig tree to help explain his teaching. Jesus says people know the warm growing season is coming when they see the new branches and leaves on a fig tree. The cold winter months are finished and the figs from the fig tree are coming. In the same way, when the disciples see all these things happening, they know that the destruction of the temple or the return of Jesus is coming soon. This will definitely happen.

Stop the action.

Jesus says that this generation will not be gone when these things happen. He means that some of the disciples listening to him will still be alive.

Stop the action.

Finally, Jesus says the earth and sky will end, but Jesus' words and teachings will never end. His words are true, and what Jesus says will definitely happen.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Wanting to comfort my disciples with the truth of my words," "Wondering if the disciples understand what I'm trying to tell them," and "Looking forward to when all these things happen."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus teaches about the suffering of those days. This may refer to the time when enemies destroy the temple of Jerusalem. Jesus says that after this suffering, the sun and moon will lose their light, and the stars will fall from the sky. All the powers of the **heavens** will shake, meaning the sun, moon, and stars. Heaven can mean the place God lives or the sky, and here it means the sky. Translate heaven the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for more information about heaven.

Jesus says the **sign** of the **Son of Man** will appear at that time. A sign is an event that has special meaning. The special meaning is that the Son of Man will come in power and great **glory**.

Jesus is talking about himself as the **Son of Man**. Translate Son of Man the same as in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase Son of Man.

Glory is the power and presence of God. Translate glory the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word glory.

Jesus says he will send his **angels**, or messengers, with a loud **trumpet** call.

Translate **angels** the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word angels.

A **trumpet** is a musical instrument that people blow to make music or announce something. Trumpets can be made from silver, bronze, or a ram's horn. People blow into the trumpet to make a loud noise. Jews used trumpets in battle, for religious ceremonies like a public fast or temple sacrifices, and for announcing a new king. In this case, someone blows the trumpet to send the angels to gather the elect, or God's chosen people, from all over the world.

Stop and show a picture of a trumpet again if necessary.

Jesus says the angels will gather God's chosen people from the four winds, or from one end of the **heavens** to the other. This is a way of saying that God's chosen people will come from all over the world. In this case, heavens does not mean the place where God lives. "From one end of the heavens to the other" means people from everywhere on the earth. Earth and heaven, or sky, was one way to talk about the whole world.

Jesus teaches an example about a **fig tree**. Fig trees were common in Jesus' time. In the winter, fig trees have no leaves or buds. When the colder weather is over, the branches of a fig tree become flexible because the sap starts flowing into the branches. New leaves start sprouting and growing, and then eventually fruit called figs also grows during the summer. Summer was the warm growing season where Jesus lived. See the Master Glossary for more information about fig trees.

Stop and show a picture of a fig tree before it has leaves and branches and a picture of a fig tree after it has leaves and branches again if necessary.

Jesus says this **generation** will not pass away before these things happen. Jesus means some of the people living now will still be alive when these things happen. Many of his disciples were still alive when the temple was destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Jesus says heaven and earth, or the whole world, could **pass away**, but Jesus' words will never pass away. The word in the original language for "pass away" means to disappear or not exist anymore. Jesus uses the phrase "pass away" three times to emphasize that his words, or teaching, will certainly never disappear.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 24:29-36

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3686946 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6143531 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 24:37-44

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 24:36–44 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus is in the middle of a long teaching to his disciples. Jesus gives this teaching on the Mount of Olives. Jesus has already taught about when the destruction of the temple will happen. Now, Jesus starts to answer their question about the sign of Jesus coming and the end of the world. Jesus doesn't tell them a specific time when it will happen-Jesus wants them to be ready for his return and the final judgment at any time. Jesus tells them three stories, all about how the disciples need to always be prepared for Jesus' return.

Stop and show your team the picture of the Mount of Olives again if needed.

Jesus says no one except their Father God in heaven knows "the day and hour" when all this will happen. In the Old Testament, "the day and hour" is often used to talk about the day of God's judgment. Jesus says not even the angels in heaven-God's messengers-or the Son of God, Jesus himself, know when the day of judgment will happen. This is an important statement because the Son of Man is the one who will judge people, and yet the

Son of Man, Jesus, does not know when this judgment is coming. Most people believe Jesus willingly set aside his ability to know everything while he was a man on the earth.

First, Jesus talks about Noah and the flood in the Old Testament. The disciples would have been very familiar with this story. God told Noah to build an ark, a large wooden boat, to hold Noah, his family, and many kinds of animals. At that time, people were living normal life—they were eating and drinking, men marrying women, and fathers giving their daughters in marriage. People were not thinking about God, and so they were shocked when God's judgment—the flood—came. God sent the flood to cover the whole earth, and God rescued Noah's family, who were on the ark. Everyone else in the world died.

Jesus says that when the Son of Man, Jesus, comes, it will be sudden and unexpected in the same way the flood was sudden and unexpected. When Jesus comes back, most people will also be living normal life and not thinking about God, so they will not be prepared for God's judgment. Jesus wants his disciples to be ready!

Stop and show a picture of an ark.

Talk about what normal, daily activities are in your culture.

Next, Jesus describes more everyday activities. He says on the day the Son of Man comes, people will be doing normal things like men working together in the field or women grinding grain together at a millstone. During Jesus' time, two women often worked together to grind grain like wheat or barley. They placed the grain on one flat millstone, or large round rock, and then put another flat millstone on top. Together they turned the top millstone to crush the grain. This crushed grain became flour that people used for making bread.

Stop and show a picture of millstones used to grind grain. Also, talk about how people grind grain in your culture. Do people use stones or something else to make grain? If possible, go watch someone grinding grain.

Jesus said when the Son of Man comes, if two men are working in the field, God will take one of the men working in the field, and one man will be left. Also, if two women are working at the millstone, God will take one of the women working at the millstone, and one woman will be left. Some people believe the people God takes will be safe with God, and God will punish the people left behind. Other people believe God will punish the people he takes away. It is important that there will be a separation between people, just like how the flood took away most people in judgment and only Noah and his family survived. Some people will be ready for God's coming judgment, and some won't be ready.

Stop and talk about how your culture describes the end of the world. What kinds of stories do people tell about judgment at the end of the world?

Jesus tells the disciples to be ready. They should stay awake, meaning they should eagerly watch for their Lord to return. Jesus calls himself "Lord," which means master or owner. Jesus did not tell them when exactly it would happen, so the disciples need to always live in a way that shows they're ready for Jesus to return.

Jesus tells one more story to show how important it is to always be prepared for Jesus' return at any time. Jesus says when a house owner is sleeping, a thief can break into his house and steal things from the house. The word in the original language for "break in" is "dig through." In Jesus' time, most Jews had homes made of dried mud bricks. Thieves needed to dig a hole in the side of the mud wall to enter and take things.

Stop and show a picture of a mud brick house. Also, stop and talk about a time you or someone you know had something stolen from you. What was stolen? How did you or your friend feel? What do people do in your culture to prevent thieves from breaking into their homes to steal things?

Jesus tells them if the owner of the house knew when the thief was coming, the owner could have stayed awake and stopped the thief from breaking into his house. In the same way, the disciples need to stay awake and be ready at any time for Jesus to come back. Jesus says the Son of Man—Jesus himself—will come back at a time when no one expects him. The disciples should live their lives today in a way that shows they follow Jesus and are ready for his return.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus gives the example about Noah and the flood to show how important it is to be ready for the Son of Man to return.

Second scene: Jesus shares examples about normal, everyday activities that people will be doing when the Son of Man comes and some people are taken away.

Third scene: Jesus says the Son of Man will return suddenly when no one expects him, just like a thief comes when the owner of the house doesn't expect him.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Noah
- Other people during Noah's time who died during the flood
- Two men working in the field
- Two women grinding grain at the millstones
- An owner of a house
- A thief

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. He already taught them many things about the end of the world. This new section starts with "but" to show Jesus is changing the subject to answer the disciples' second question about the sign of Jesus coming and the end of the world. Jesus tells them no one except God knows exactly when the day of God's judgment is coming. The angels don't know, and Jesus himself doesn't know. This is an introductory statement for this story-all three of the scenes talk about how important it is to be ready for Jesus to come at any time.

In the first scene, Jesus reminds the disciples about Noah and how God rescued Noah, his family, and all the animals from the flood that covered the earth. People were living their normal lives, and they weren't ready for the flood when it came and destroyed everyone. It is important to remember that people during Noah's time were living normal lives-eating, drinking, and getting married-and God didn't judge them because these specific activities were bad. God judged them because they weren't following God. Remember the people were not expecting the flood to come, so they didn't follow God. Jesus wants his disciples to be ready for the Son of Man's return like Noah was ready for the flood to come.

In the second scene, Jesus gives another example of how sudden and unexpected the coming of the Son of Man will be. Jesus says it will be like one man is taken away while working in the field, and one man is left behind. One woman will be taken away while she grinds grain at the millstone, and one woman will be left behind. It is important to remember that the two men and the two women are doing normal work for people during Jesus' time. One person will be punished by God, and one will be saved.

In the third scene, Jesus reminds them again to be ready and alert. They don't know which day their Lord is coming. It's important to know the phrase "but be sure of this" means Jesus is about to say something important and he wants them to pay attention and remember it.

Stop and talk about what you say in your language when you want someone to listen carefully and pay attention to your next words.

Remember that Jesus tells a story about the owner of a house and a thief. The thief breaks into the house because the owner is not awake and ready to protect his house. If the owner knew what time the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake, and the thief would not be able to break into the house. Try showing the two different scenarios-one with the owner sleeping and the thief breaks into his house, and one with the owner awake so the thief cannot break into his house. Remember Jesus is telling this story to remind the disciples again to stay awake, alert, and ready for the Son of Man to return at any time. This does not mean that disciples should never sleep; it means they should live their lives so they're always ready for the Son of Man to come back.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- Noah
- Other people during Noah's time who died during the flood
- Two men working in the field
- Two women grinding grain at the millstones
- An owner of a house
- A thief

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives and teaches his disciples. Jesus tells them no one except God knows when the day of judgment and the return of the Son of Man is coming. Not even God's angels or the Son-Jesus himself-know.

Stop the action.

Jesus reminds the disciples about Noah and the flood. People during Noah's time were living normal lives. God sent the flood, and they were all destroyed. None of the people were ready and none of them expected the flood to come. God saved Noah, Noah's family, and all the animals on the ark.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actors playing the people during Noah's time, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Living my normal life and happy with what I have," "Wondering why God would send a flood," and "Not ready for God's judgment." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says the coming of the Son of Man will be just like in the time of Noah. The Son of Man will come back unexpectedly, and many people won't be ready, just like most people weren't ready for the flood God sent.

Stop the action.

Next, Jesus says the coming of the Son of Man will be like two men working in the field or two women grinding grain at the millstone. God will take one man away, and one man will be left in the field. God will take one woman away, and one woman will be left at the millstones.

Stop the action.

Jesus says the disciples need to always be ready and waiting for the Son of Man to return. If the owner of a house is sleeping, he isn't expecting a thief to come, and the thief can easily break into this house and steal something.

Stop the action.

If the owner knows when a thief is coming, he can prepare and be ready for the thief. The thief won't be able to break into his house. Jesus says the disciples need to be ready for the return of the Son of Man just like the owner is ready for a thief at any time.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus says not even the **angels** in **heaven** know when the day of God's judgment is coming.

Angels are God's messengers. Translate angels the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for more information on angels.

Heaven can refer to the sky, or to the place where God and his angels live, depending on the context. In this context, heaven means the place where God and his angels live. See the Master Glossary for more information on heaven.

Jesus says the **Son** also does not know when the day of God's judgment and the return of the Son of Man is coming. Jesus is talking about himself as the Son. It is similar to calling himself the **Son of Man**. Translate Son of Man the same as in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the phrase Son of Man.

Jesus says only the **Father** God in heaven knows when all this will happen. Jesus calls God Father because God created his people and cares for them like a father cares for his children.

Noah lived thousands of years before Jesus' time. Noah was a righteous man who obeyed God and built an ark, a wooden boat, so that all of Noah's family and many animals could be saved from a flood. Noah, his family, and the animals all went inside the ark, and it rained for forty days and nights. All of the people on earth died during the flood. Noah was rescued by God, and later Noah, his family, and the animals came out of the ark. God promised Noah that he would never flood the earth like that again. All the people of the earth after that were descendants of Noah and his sons.

Stop and show the picture of the ark again if needed.

Jesus says his disciples should wait and watch for their **lord** to return. Jesus is talking about himself. **Lord** means master, owner, or someone with authority. People used "lord" as a term of respect, to talk about God, and to address Jesus. In this story, "lord" is used to show that Jesus is the disciples' master, and because Jesus next tells a story about an owner of a house. Translate lord the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word lord.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 24:37-44

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3393575 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5646845 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 24:45-51

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 24:45-51 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus is in the middle of a long teaching to his disciples. Jesus gives this teaching on the Mount of Olives. Jesus has been teaching about the sign of Jesus coming and the end of the world. He told them three stories about how the disciples need to always be prepared for Jesus' return. Now, Jesus tells a parable, or short story, about a servant and his master. This story also shows how important it is to be ready for Jesus' return.

Stop and show your team the picture of the Mount of Olives again if needed.

Jesus starts the parable with a question, but he does not want an answer to this question. Jesus asks "Who then is the faithful and wise servant..." to introduce his parable. In this story, Jesus talks about two different ways that servants behave. It is possible the story is about one servant who is first good, and then becomes wicked. Or, the story might be about two different servants. Either way, the message is clear that the master will reward a servant who is faithful and prepared for his master's return. The master will punish a servant who is not faithful and not prepared for his master's return.

Stop and talk about how you introduce a story in your culture. Is there a specific phrase or way of showing that you're starting a story?

In Jesus' time, it was common for the master, or owner, of a wealthy household to put one of his faithful servants in charge if the master went away on a trip. A household included all the servants who worked for the same master. The faithful servant was responsible for taking care of the other servants, and also for giving the other servants their allowance of food. Normally, a master gave his servants a measured amount of grain or food daily, weekly, or monthly.

Stop and talk about a time an employer or boss gave you or someone you know more responsibility while they were away or not working. What were your added responsibilities? How did you handle the extra responsibilities?

In the first part of the story, Jesus describes the faithful and wise servant. This servant is someone who is trustworthy, obedient, and dependable. The master knows he can give this servant a job to do, and the servant will do the job well. The master put the faithful servant in charge of the other servants, and the faithful and wise servant gave the other servants their food at the right time.

Jesus says this faithful servant will be blessed, or happy, because the master will return and see that the servant did well. The phrase "blessed is the servant" was the start of a common saying during Jesus' time. The master will give the faithful servant a reward for being responsible while the master was gone. Now, Jesus says something very important: The master will give the faithful servant responsibility for all the possessions the master owns.

Next, Jesus describes what will happen if the servant becomes evil or wicked, or if an evil servant is in charge. The master put the evil servant in charge of the other servants, but this evil servant does not do good like the faithful servant. The evil servant says to himself that the master won't be home for a long time, so he stops taking care of the other servants or his own responsibilities. The evil servant beats the other servants, meaning he mistreats them. He also eats and drinks with drunkards, or people who get drunk from alcohol. This probably also means the evil servant gets drunk as well. Overall, the evil servant doesn't take care of the other servants, and he even mistreats them and neglects his own responsibilities.

Jesus says the master will come back and punish the evil servant. The master will come back at a day and hour when the evil servant does not expect him. The master will severely punish the evil servant. In the original language, it says the master will "cut him into pieces." During Jesus' time, sometimes authorities punished someone by cutting a person into two or more pieces with a sword or saw. It's possible Jesus means the master would literally cut the evil servant into pieces, or it could mean that the master will punish the evil servant severely.

Stop and talk about what happens in your culture when someone is hired for a job, but they don't do their job. What kinds of punishment or consequences would this person have from their employer or boss?

Jesus says the master will treat the evil servant the same way he treats the hypocrites. Jesus has talked about hypocrites before in his teaching to the disciples. Hypocrites want other people to admire them for giving money to the poor, fasting, or praying. Jesus told the disciples that God will not reward hypocrites.

Jesus also says there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" in the place where God judges the hypocrites. Weeping is loud crying people do when they are grieving or sorrowful. Gnashing of teeth means grinding your teeth because of pain, anger, or bitterness. Jesus has used this phrase in other places to talk about people who are eternally separated from God, and how full of grief, pain, and sorrow these people will be.

Jesus wants the disciples to be like a faithful and wise servant who is prepared for his master's return. The master will punish an evil servant who isn't ready for his master to return. Jesus tells the story to remind the disciples to be ready for Jesus to return. Jesus is also warning them about the danger of not being ready for Jesus' return.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has two scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells about a faithful and wise servant who does his job well while the master is away from home. The master rewards the faithful servant when the master returns.

Second scene: Jesus tells about an evil servant who does not do his job well while the master is away from home. The master punishes the evil servant when the master returns.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- The master
- The faithful and wise servant
- Other servants
- The evil servant
- Drunkards
- The hypocrites

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, or children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that Jesus is still teaching his disciples on the Mount of Olives. He has been teaching them about signs of the coming of Jesus and the end of the world. He told them three stories about Noah, two

men working in the field and two women working at the millstone, and about a thief stealing something from a house. All of those stories were to tell the disciples how important it is to be prepared for Jesus' return.

Jesus continues with the same theme in the first scene of this story. Jesus wants the disciples to be prepared for Jesus' return. Jesus begins the story with a long question. Jesus asks them who is the faithful and wise servant who would be responsible when his master is away? He is introducing the story and asking the disciples to think about what the faithful and wise servant is like in this story. He does not expect an answer to this question.

Stop and discuss with your team how you would translate this. Would you use a question, or some other form of statement?

In the first scene, Jesus describes a faithful servant who gives the other servants their food at the right times. The master is away from home, and he knows he can put his trust in the faithful servant to do this role well. Jesus says the master will reward the faithful servant for continuing to follow the master's directions while the master was away. The faithful servant was prepared for the master's return at any time.

Remember that Jesus says "truly I say to you" before he says the master will reward the faithful servant with additional responsibilities. Jesus is reminding his audience to pay close attention to what he is about to say.

Stop and talk about what you say in your language when you want people to pay close attention to the next thing you will say.

In the second scene, Jesus describes an evil servant. This is either a separate servant or the same servant who becomes wicked. This servant does not follow the master's directions while the master is away. The evil servant says to himself, "My master is staying away for a long time." In the original language, "says to himself" means the evil servant "says in his heart." For the Jewish listeners, the heart was where a person's feelings and emotions are.

In your language, talk about what word describes your inner life, insides, or place of feeling and emotion. How would you communicate the phrase "says in his heart?"

The evil servant does not give the other servants their food at the right times, and the evil servant also mistreats the other servants and eats and drinks with drunkards. This time, when the master returns, the master severely punishes the evil servant. The evil servant is not expecting the master to return, and so when the master arrives, the evil servant is not ready and is not doing what he should be doing.

Remember that the original language says the master will "cut him to pieces." This is strong language to show that the master will severely punish the evil servant.

Stop and talk about how you can communicate severe punishment in your language.

Jesus says the master will also put the evil servant in the same place as the hypocrites, meaning the people who do good works only to look good in front of others. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in this place, meaning there will be deep pain and sorrow there.

The master will reward the faithful servant, and the evil servant will experience severe punishment.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- The master
- The faithful and wise servant
- Other servants
- The evil servant
- Drunkards
- The hypocrites

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

In the first scene, Jesus continues to sit on the Mount of Olives and teaches his disciples. Jesus tells the disciples about a master of a house and his faithful servant. The master of the faithful servant goes on a trip, and the faithful servant is responsible to give the other servants their food at the right time.

Stop the action.

The master returns and finds the faithful servant is giving the other servants their food at the right time. The faithful servant is obedient to the master, even when the master isn't at home. The master rewards the faithful servant with added responsibilities. The master puts the faithful servant in charge of all the master's possessions.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Hopeful that I can be like the faithful servant," "Wondering how to prepare for the master's return," and "Wondering why the master didn't say when he would return." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus tells the second half of the story. This time, Jesus describes an evil servant. The master gives the evil servant the same responsibility to give the other servants food at the right time. The evil servant mistreats the other servants. The evil servant also eats and drinks with drunkards. The evil servant is not prepared for the master to return home.

Stop the action.

This time, the master returns and finds the evil servant is not doing his job. The master comes back at an unexpected time, and so the evil servant was not expecting to see the master. The master punishes the evil servant severely and puts him in a place with the hypocrites where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Stop the action.

Also, ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Hopeful that my disciples will understand this story," "Wanting my disciples to be ready for my return," and "Wanting the disciples to be more like the faithful servant in this story."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus taught about the **master** of a household and his **servants**. In the original language, master is sometimes translated as "lord" when it refers to Jesus. Here, a master was a man of high status who owned many servants. Servants worked for the master for free and had no rights. They lived in the same house as the master. Be sure to translate master and servant in the same way you have before. Master and servant are in the Master Glossary.

The servant is described as faithful and **wise**. See the Master Glossary for more information on wisdom.

Household means all of the people living in the house. The father was the head of the household, and it also included his wife, children, unmarried daughters, married sons and their families, other relatives, and any servants or slaves in the house. The father was the master in the household, and all the servants worked for the master. The master was responsible for all those living in his household. Translate household the same as in previous passages and see the Master Glossary for more information on the word household.

Jesus says the master will **bless** the faithful servant. Bless means God will help, do good to, or favor this servant for his faithful work. Try to avoid using a word related to luck or games of chance. See the Master Glossary for a full definition of bless.

Jesus describes a **wicked** servant. This may be a different servant, or it may be the first servant who becomes wicked. This can also be translated as **evil**. See the Master Glossary for more information on wickedness or evil.

Jesus says the evil servant will be punished the same way God punishes **hypocrites**. Hypocrites want people to notice their good works like fasting, giving money to the poor, or praying. The word hypocrite in the original language means an actor in the theater that pretends to be someone they are not. In this context, a hypocrite is someone who looks good on the outside, but inside they do not truly love God. See the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of the word hypocrite.

In the place where God judges the hypocrites, there will be **weeping and gnashing of teeth**. Weeping refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. Gnashing of teeth refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness. Use the same word that you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 24:45–51

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3402781 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5684445 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 25:1–13

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 25:1–13 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Here Jesus shares a second parable about being ready when he returns. He is probably talking to his 12 closest disciples, because earlier it said the disciples came to him privately. Jesus says, "Then," meaning at the time when the events he was just talking about take place, when the Son of Man comes to rule as Lord. He says the kingdom of heaven, God's kingdom, will be like ten unmarried young women who took their oil lamps and went to a bride's home to wait with her for her bridegroom.

The unmarried young women were probably friends or relatives of either the bridegroom or the bride. In the culture at this time, the bride's family would entertain the wedding guests until the groom came to get the bride and bring her to his father's house where they would have the wedding ceremony and a feast. The young women were supposed to walk along with the bridegroom to his house, carrying their lamps to light the way. The word used for lamp here can also mean torches.

Stop and discuss as a team how your culture prepares for weddings. What are the different roles people have and what are their titles? What is the most important part of the wedding?

You might want to stop and show your team a picture of an oil lamp and a torch.

Jesus says five of the young women, or half of them, were wise enough to bring extra oil for their lamps, but five were too foolish to plan ahead and prepare with extra oil. The Bible often compares foolish people and wise people. In this case, a wise person is someone who plans ahead and prepares to be ready even if something unexpected happens. A foolish person is someone who does not plan ahead and prepare.

Stop and discuss with your team some stories in your culture about people being wise or foolish. How do wise people speak and act in your stories? How do foolish people speak and act in your stories?

In this story, something delays the bridegroom and the young women all become tired and fall asleep. In the middle of the night someone cries, or shouts, "Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him." Then all those young women prepare the wicks of their lamps, so they would burn well. The foolish ones ask the wise ones to give them some oil because their lamps are running out of oil and will soon stop giving light. The wise young women answer that since there will not be enough oil for all of them, the ones who did not bring extra oil should go find the people who sell oil and buy some for themselves. In this culture at this time, people would have kept their shops open during a wedding, so it would be possible to buy oil even in the middle of the night. While the foolish young women are away buying oil, the bridegroom arrives and the wise young women who were prepared go into his house with him for the marriage feast and his servants close the door.

Jesus often compares the kingdom of heaven to a wedding, and the feast is the most important part. Earlier in Matthew he also talked about how important it is to be ready for the feast, because after the servants close the door, it is too late to make any changes.

Stop and discuss with your team what wedding feasts look like in your culture. Who is invited? How does the host of the feast act? How do the guests act? What behavior might cause the host of a feast to turn someone away from his house?

After the servant's closed the door, the foolish young women came to the bridegroom's house and knocked on the door saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us." When they say Lord two times they are being polite and showing that the bridegroom is superior to them. But it is too late. The bridegroom says, "Truly I say to you" which means his words are true and final, "I do not know you." In Jewish culture at this time, a person would probably still be allowed into the wedding feast even if they arrived late, so the closing of the door here and the bridegroom's decision to not let the foolish girls into the feast would have been surprising. Jesus' story shows that there will come a time when it is too late to join him.

Stop and discuss with your team how your culture responds to a person who arrives late to a feast.

The bridegroom probably did know the young women because they would have been his friends or family or those of his bride. When he says, "I don't know you" here, it means more than not knowing who they are. The important thing in this story is that the bridegroom knows those young women who are ready when he arrives and he doesn't know those young women who are not ready. Also, when the bridegroom closes the door, it is too late to join in the feast. Earlier in the book of Matthew, Jesus used these same words "I don't know you" to describe people who say they follow Jesus but they are not his real followers.

Stop and discuss with your team if there are any situations in your culture where a person would miss out on something because they did not prepare or arrived late. How do people communicate to someone that they are not welcome anymore?

Jesus ends the parable by warning his disciples to watch carefully because they do not know the day or hour when Jesus will return, so they must always be ready. In this case, watching does not mean staying awake, because all the young women in the story fell asleep, but those who were prepared were still allowed into the

feast. Here watching seems to mean staying prepared, so that no matter when Jesus returns, his followers are ready. In other stories in Matthew and the other gospels, Jesus says more about how his followers can be ready for his return.

Stop and discuss with your team any stories from your culture about staying prepared for an event that might happen at any time.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Jesus is talking to his 12 closest disciples, explaining to them what it will be like when he returns to reign as Lord of God's kingdom. He tells a story to illustrate what it will be like.

Second scene: Ten unmarried young women took their lamps and went to wait for the bridegroom to get his bride and bring her to his house for the wedding ceremony and feast. The wise young women carried extra jars of oil for their lamps, but the foolish ones did not. Something delayed the bridegroom, so the young women all became tired and fell asleep. In the middle of the night, someone shouted that the bridegroom was coming, so the young women woke up and prepared their wicks so they could light their lamps. The foolish young women asked the wise ones for oil since they didn't bring any, but the wise young women said there wouldn't be enough for all of them, so they told the foolish young women to go buy oil from someone who sells it.

Third scene: While the foolish young women were away buying oil, the bridegroom arrived and the wise women walked with him to his father's house and went into the house to feast. The servants closed the door of the bridegroom's house.

Fourth scene: The foolish young women return from buying oil and knock on the door saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" but the bridegroom says, "Truly, I tell you, I don't know you."

Fifth scene: Jesus tells his disciples to watch carefully because you do not know what day or time the Son of Man will return to rule as Lord of God's kingdom.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' twelve disciples
- Ten young women
- A bridegroom
- Someone who shouts when the bridegroom arrives
- Servants

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that earlier Jesus' 12 disciples had come to him to ask him questions privately, so Jesus is speaking with them when he tells this story. Here he tells a second parable about being ready when the Son of Man returns to reign as Lord of God's kingdom.

The setting does not change but it would be helpful to act out the parable Jesus tells.

It is probably late evening when this story begins. Ten young women are waiting at a bride's house for the bridegroom to come get her for their wedding ceremony. The young women are dressed for a wedding and

they are all carrying oil lamps or torches. Five of the young women are also carrying an extra jar of oil for their lamps, but the other five are not.

Something delays the bridegroom, so all the young women become more and more tired and eventually they all fall asleep.

In the story, Jesus says that at midnight, or very late at night, someone cries, "Here comes the bridegroom!" The word cry here does not mean that the person was weeping in sadness but that the person shouts the words loudly.

In the story all the girls wake up and trim their lamps, which means they prepare the wick of the lamps so they can light them. In English, trimming a wick means cutting it shorter, but in this story, they probably did not cut their wicks, but adjusted them in some other way.

The five foolish young women who did not plan ahead and bring extra oil realize that their lamps will go out soon, so they ask the five wise young women to give them oil. The five wise young women reply that there will not be enough oil for all of them, so they tell the foolish young women to go find someone who sells oil and buy more from them.

While the foolish young women are away, the bridegroom arrives and the wise young women walk with him, holding their lamps to light the way. When they arrive at the bridegroom's father's house, they go in to feast with him and everyone who has gathered for the wedding. Then the servants close the door of the house.

Later, the foolish young women arrive at the bridegroom's house after buying oil, and they knock on the door saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us" but the bridegroom comes and says to them, "Truly, I tell you, I do not know you."

Now the story is finished and Jesus tells his disciples to watch carefully, because they do not know the day or the hour. He is speaking about the day or hour when Jesus will return to reign as Lord of God's kingdom.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus' twelve disciples
- Ten young women
- A bridegroom
- Someone who shouts when the bridegroom arrives
- Servants

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is speaking to his twelve closest disciples. He tells them a second parable about being ready for the time when the Son of Man will return to reign as Lord of God's kingdom. He says the kingdom of heaven is like ten

unmarried young women who took their lamps and waited for the bridegroom. Five of the young women were wise and brought extra jars of oil with them, but five were foolish and did not.

Stop the action.

Ask one of the actors playing a foolish young woman, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like, "I hope the bridegroom doesn't take very long" or "I wonder why the other young women brought extra oil? The bridegroom should be here soon" or "I do not have enough oil, but if I need more, I can probably get some from one of the other young women." [!end] Restart the action.

The bridegroom arrives and all the young women prepare their lamps. The foolish young women ask the wise young women to give them some oil for their lamps because they will soon run out.

Stop the action.

Ask one of the actors playing a foolish young woman, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like, "I wish I had brought extra oil. I didn't think the bridegroom would take so long" or "I should not have expected to get oil from the other young women. I should have brought my own" or "I hope I can buy more oil quickly so I'm not too late for the wedding!" [!end] Restart the action.

The foolish young women arrive at the bridegroom's house after buying oil and knock on the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us" but the bridegroom says, "Truly, I tell you, I do not know you."

Stop the action.

Ask one of the actors playing a foolish young woman, "How are you feeling?" You might hear something like, "I can't believe it! I know I didn't prepare well, but I didn't think I would miss out on the wedding!" or "I regret so much that I did not prepare in advance like the other young ladies! I wish I was inside enjoying the feast with the rest of the wedding guests, but now it's too late!"

After finishing the parable, Jesus tells his disciples to watch carefully because they do not know the day or the hour.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus says the **kingdom of heaven** will be like ten **virgins** who took their **lamps** and went to meet the **bridegroom**.

Kingdom of heaven is the same as kingdom of God. It is the place where God rules as king. In the Bible God's kingdom refers more to his people, first Israel and later the church, rather than to a place. Kingdom of heaven is in the Master Glossary.

Virgins means young women who are not married.

Lamps here might mean a special jar for oil with a wick in it that could be lit to make light, or it could mean a bundle of cloth wrapped onto the end of a carrying stick and dipped in oil that could be lit to make light.

A **bridegroom** is a man who is getting married. In Jewish culture at the time of Jesus, the bridegroom would go to his bride's house to get her and bring her to his father's house where they would have a wedding ceremony and a feast.

Jesus says that some of the virgins were **wise** and others were **foolish**.

The word **wise** describes people who use wisdom, which means thinking things that are true and doing things that are good. Wisdom is in the Master Glossary.

Foolish is the opposite of wise. It is thinking things that are not true and doing things that are not good. The Bible talks about wise and foolish people many times, so you will use these words often.

Some translations say that the wise virgins brought **flasks** of oil for their lamps. A flask is a container that holds a liquid. Some translations call it a jar.

In Jesus' story, someone **cries at midnight** that the bridegroom is coming.

Midnight is the middle of the night, but it might not have literally been the middle of the night. It was very late.

The word **cry** in this case does not mean to have tears of sadness. It means to shout loudly.

All the virgins in the parable "**trim** their lamps." To trim a lamp is to cut the wick shorter, but in this story the young women probably adjusted the wick length in a different way without cutting it.

The foolish young women call the bridegroom, "Lord, Lord" to show him respect. **Lord** means master, and in Jewish culture at this time, saying something two or three times was a way to emphasize it. The word Lord is in the Master Glossary.

The bridegroom says, "**Truly I say to you**, I do not **know you**."

The phrase **truly I say to you** appears many times in the gospels, but it is always said by Jesus. It means that what he says is a serious truth of God. He wants his listeners to pay careful attention and take his words seriously.

When the bridegroom says, "I do not **know you**" here, it does not literally mean he does not know who the young women are. They would have been friends or family of the bride or bridegroom. In this case, it means they cannot join him. Only those wise young women who stayed ready for the bridegroom's return can join him. Those are the ones he "knows."

When Jesus warns his listeners to **watch**, he does not mean they need to literally stay awake all the time with their eyes watching, but that they should stay ready for him to return. In the story all the young women fell asleep, but the wise ones planned ahead and prepared so that when the bridegroom came in the middle of the night, they were ready for him. "Watching" means staying ready for Jesus to return at any moment.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 25:1–13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2898660 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4840986 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 25:14–30

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 25:14–30 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This is the third of three parables, or short stories, that Jesus tells about being ready for the kingdom of heaven. Matthew does not tell us where this story happens. Jesus may have been near Jerusalem. The people who Jesus was talking to were probably Jews who believed in Jesus. His 12 closest followers were probably with him too. They thought that Jesus was going to cause the kingdom to appear immediately. However, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven was people following him as their king even now in their hearts and through their actions. So, he used a parable to correct their expectations.

Jesus told them that the kingdom of heaven will be like a man who plans to go on a journey far away from his hometown. We are not told where the man went or why he left. The man had servants and property. He put his servants in charge of his property until he returns from his journey. The man gave bags of gold or silver to three of his servants. Sometimes this is translated "talents" in English, but we need to understand that it is clear that the man gave his servants money in the form of gold or silver. The man gave five bags to one servant, two bags to another and one bag to another. Jesus said that the man gave to each of his servants according to their ability. They were probably leaders of other servants and knew how to manage money and business matters. Even though the man did not tell his servants what to do with the money, they are responsible for using money to make more money. The money still belonged to the man. The servants would give the man whatever prophet they make when he returns.

Show a picture of gold and silver coins.

After the man gave his money to his servants he left for his journey. As soon as the man left, the servant with five bags of money traded them. This means that the servant did business with his master's money. So, that servant made five more bags of money. The servant with two bags of money did business with what he had and made two more bags. But the servant with one bag did not want to risk losing the money or take the responsibility of doing business with the money. So, he dug a hole in the ground and hid, or buried, his master's money. Jewish teachers said that anyone who immediately buries money entrusted to him is no longer responsible because he has taken the safest action possible to protect the money.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, what kinds of things do people do with money to make more money?

When the man came home from his journey, he wanted to know what the servants did with his money. The servant who was given five bags of money and made five more came to his master first. He gave his master all ten bags of money that he had. His master told the servant "You have done a good job, you are a good and faithful, or trustworthy, servant. Since you were faithful in managing small amounts, I know I can trust you with large amounts. Come and celebrate with me in my house." The one who was given two bags of money and made two more came to his master second. He gave his master all four bags. The master of the servant treated the second servant the same way he did the first.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, what are some ways that employers or masters reward their employees for doing their job well?

The servant with only one bag of money said to his master, "I knew you to be a hard, or strict, man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. I was afraid and hid your bag of money in the ground." Reaping and gathering both mean to harvest crops. Sowing and scattering both mean to plant seeds to grow those crops. This is symbolic language that means the master of the servant gains wealth off of the work of others. The servant was afraid of taking a risk with his master's money because his master may punish him if he lost the money. So, the servant handed his master the same bag of money that the man gave to the servant.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, what kinds of people make wealth off of the work of others?

His master told the servant that he was wicked and lazy. The master turned his servant's own words back at him and put it in the form of a question. He did not expect the servant to answer. The servant's own words trapped him. The master was telling the servant that if he knew these things about the master, then why didn't he do something about it. The servant knew how strict his master is, and should have invested the money with the bankers. Then the master could have gotten the money back with interest. This means that the servant should have loaned the money to people who would be able to give him back more money later. Then he ordered that the money be taken away from the lazy servant and given to the servant who gave him ten bags of money. The lazy servant was punished because he did not do what a master normally expected of his servants-he did not try to make more money for his master. He did not try to please his master as he should have.

Then Jesus adds to the meaning of his parable. He says that the man told his servant that whoever uses what they have wisely, will get more. But people who do nothing with what they have will lose what they have. This implies that God gives people everything that they own whether it is little or much, it is given to them by God. People who do nothing with what they own will ultimately lose what they own. Then, the master told his other

servants, "Throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Here Jesus is using picture language or symbolic language. Outer darkness is the eternal separation from God that awaits all who reject Jesus. Weeping refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. Gnashing of teeth refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness. Those eternally separated from God will be overwhelmed with grief. Their grief will cause them to cry uncontrollably and grind their teeth in pain. Jesus shows the contrast between what the good servant received and what the bad servant received.

Stop and discuss with your team: How will you translate the picture language of Jesus in this passage into your language? Jesus wanted to describe the suffering that happens, so be sure to translate this in a manner that uses descriptive language.

Like the master of the servants, Jesus was going away and would not return until after his journey was completed. Jesus showed his followers that he expects that all people will use wisely whatever resources he gives them in order to make God's Kingdom even greater.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has three scenes.

First scene: Jesus has been teaching his disciples. He has already told two parables about the kingdom of heaven. This third parable about the kingdom of heaven is about a man who goes on a journey and puts three of his servants in charge of his property. The man gives each servant money to invest while he is away.

Second scene: Two of the servants invest the money and make their master more money. One of the servants digs a hole and buries his master's money.

Third scene: The master of the servants returns. He goes to each servant to see what they have done with his money. Two of the servants are faithful with their master's money. One of the servants is unfaithful with his master's money. The master of those servants rewards the faithful servants but punishes the unfaithful servant.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- A crowd of people following Jesus
- A man who goes on a journey
- 2 faithful servants
- Servant who hides his master's money
- People who do business with the servants
- Other servants

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that this is the third parable that Jesus tells about being ready for the kingdom of heaven. A parable is a story that Jesus uses to teach the deeper things about God. Remember that the kingdom of heaven is God ruling in the hearts of people, or people following God as king.

Jesus says that the man who was about to leave on a journey called, or asked, his slaves, or servants, to come to him. These are the man's servants who desire to do what their master commands them to do. In this story the man owns property and has much wealth. The man gave bags of gold or silver to his slaves. A talent is a bag of gold or silver coins. It is important to remember that the man gave one of his servants 5 bags of money, one servant 2 bags of money and one servant 1 bag. Remember that the amount the man gave to each servant

depended upon how skillful that servant was. Then he left on his journey far away from his hometown, but we do not know where he went or why he left.

In the second scene, as soon as the man left, the servant with 5 bags of money and the servant with 2 bags of money both traded, or did business with, their master's money. The servant with 5 bags of money made 5 more and the servant with 2 made 2 more. The other servant buried the money. We do not find out until later in the story why he did this.

In the third scene, the man who went on a journey came back after a long time but we do not know how long he was gone. He went to settle accounts with his servants. He wanted to know what his servants did with his money while he was gone. The first servant made 5 more bags of gold, and the second servant made 2 more bags of gold. It is important to remember that Jesus describes these two servants in the same way. Only the number of bags the master gave them was different. In both cases the master told the servants to come to his house to celebrate with him.

The storyline turns here. The servant with one bag of money comes to his master and makes an excuse. He is afraid of his master because his master makes money from the work of other people. So, the servant buried the bag of gold.

The man called the third servant wicked, and slothful, or lazy. Then the man used his servants' own words to ask a question that he did not expect his servant to answer. He was making the point that the servant should have loaned the money to people who would be able to give him back more money later.

Then, the man told his servant that whoever uses what they have wisely will get more. But people who do nothing with what they have will lose what they have. Then the man talks to his other servants. The servants could be the two with the bags of money, or they could be different servants. He told them, "Throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Remember that outer darkness is the eternal separation from God that awaits all who reject Jesus. Weeping refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. And gnashing of teeth refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- A man who goes on a journey
- 2 faithful servants
- Servant who hides his master's money
- People who do business with the servants
- Other servants

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is telling parables about the kingdom of heaven. This one is about a man who goes on a journey and puts his servants in charge of his property. He gives three of his servants bags of money to use to make more money. Act out the man calling his servants to him and giving each one bags of coins. He gave one servant 5 bags of money. He gave another servant 2 bags of money. And he gave one servant 1 bag of money.

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing 2 faithful servants, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "My master gave me 5 bags of money. I want to make him happy. I will do my best with what he gave me," or "I have 2 bags of money. I am glad my master trusts me. I will do the right thing with his money."

Ask the actor playing the servant who hides his master's money, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I only have 1 bag of money. What happens if I lose it all?" or "I want to please my master. I know I'm supposed to make more money, but I'm too frightened." [!end] Restart the action.

As soon as the man leaves for his journey, two of the servants start doing business with his money and making more. But one of the servants does not know what to do at first. So, the servant digs a hole and buries his master's money.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing the people who do business with the servants, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I am happy to do business with these men. Their master is an important man," or "I know the master of these servants. He will keep doing business with me if I help him make money."

Ask the actor playing the servant who hides his master's money, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "If I bury this bag of money, it will be protected," or "I cannot lose my master's money if it is in this hole I dug." [!end] Restart the action.

The master of the servants returns. He goes to each servant to see what they have done with his money. The first servant hands his master 10 bags of money and says, "Master, you gave me 5 bags. Look, I have made 5 more!" The man tells his servant, "You have done a good job, you are a good, trustworthy servant. Since you were faithful in managing small amounts, I know I can trust you with large amounts. Join me in my house and be happy."

The second servant hands his master 4 bags of money and says, "Master, you gave me 2 bags. Look, I have made 2 more!" The man tells his servant, "You have done a good job, you are a good, trustworthy servant. Since you were faithful in managing small amounts, I know I can trust you with large amounts. Join me in my house and be happy."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing 2 faithful servants, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I knew he would be happy! Now I get to enjoy being in his house with him!" or "I am happy that my master is pleased. He is always good to us!" [!end] Restart the action.

The servant with only one bag of money said to his master, "I knew you to be a strict man, who gains wealth from the work of others." The servant hands the bag of money to his master and says, "Here is the bag of money you gave to me before you left." His master told the servant that he was wicked and lazy. Then he ordered that the money be taken away from the lazy servant and given to the servant with 10 bags of money. He said, "Throw this useless servant into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Ask the actors playing other servants, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Wow. I cannot believe that he did not even try to make our master any money," or "Our master is really angry. I feel bad for the servant who is being punished."

Ask the actor playing the servant who hid his master's money, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Oh no! I should have at least tried to do something," "I feel bad for letting my master down but I do not want to go into outer darkness," or "I wonder how long I will have to be punished?"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus said that the **kingdom of heaven** can be compared to a man who goes on a journey and entrusts his slaves or servants with his property. In this instance the kingdom of heaven is God ruling in the hearts of people. Use the same word for kingdom of heaven that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of kingdom of heaven.

The man called three of his servants to him and gave each one **bags of gold or silver coins**. Some English translations call this bag of money a **talent**. One **bag of coins** is probably around one thousand coins. The amount the man gave to each servant depended on how skillful that servant was. Two of the servants took the talents that their master gave them and **traded** with them. In this instance, "traded" means to do business or invest the money in a way that will make more money.

The man came back after a long time and wanted to **settle accounts** with his servants. In this instance, "settle accounts" means that the man wanted to check on what the servants did with his money. He wanted them to give him the money that they made. Two of the servants were **faithful** to their master and he rewarded them. Faithful means trustworthy and dependable. People who are faithful can be trusted and show loyalty to others.

One servant did nothing with the money that his master gave to him. So, the man told that servant that he was **wicked** and lazy. Wickedness is when someone intentionally does something harmful against another person. Use the same word for wicked that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of wickedness.

Weeping refers to the loud sound people make when they have much grief or sorrow. **Gnashing of teeth** refers to grinding of teeth because of pain, anger, and bitterness. Those eternally separated from God will be overwhelmed with grief. Their grief will cause them to cry uncontrollably and grind their teeth in pain. Translate **weeping and gnashing of teeth** the same way you did in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 25:14-30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4377644 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7527417 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 25:31-46

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 25:31-46 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus is still talking to his closest 12 disciples. He has been telling them parables to show what it looks like to be ready when he returns. Now he tells them what his final judgment will be like. He makes several comparisons, but it is not really a parable like the previous several stories.

Jesus starts by saying, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne." This image sounds very much like prophecies about the final judgment from the books of Daniel and Zechariah in the Jewish scriptures from before Jesus was born. The disciples knew those scriptures

and would have made the connection between what Jesus is saying and what those prophets said hundreds of years before this. Before this, the Jewish people did not understand that those prophecies were about Jesus, but now Jesus is making it clear to his disciples that those prophecies were about him.

Stop and discuss as a team some stories from your culture that everyone is familiar with. Are there stories like this that you could share just a small part of the story and everyone listening would know which story it came from?

You will remember that Son of Man is a title for Jesus that is used many times in Matthew. This title was first seen in the book of Daniel and it referred to the person to whom God gave all authority and power. When the disciples hear this, they know Jesus is saying he is the one to whom God has given all authority and power.

Jesus is describing the throne room of God in heaven. A throne is a special, elevated chair where a king would sit while he performed his duties, such as hearing cases and giving judgment. Sometimes a throne would be so high, the king had to climb steps to reach it. The room where the king sat on his throne was called the throne room. In addition to being a physical chair where the king sat, a throne was also a symbol of the king's authority and kingdom. The image of all the nations gathered around the Son of Man on his judgment throne was first seen in the book of Joel in the Jewish scriptures from before Jesus was born. Again, by saying these things Jesus is telling his disciples that he is the Son of Man who was prophesied about in their scriptures. Jesus is the one who has God's power and authority to judge all the nations of the earth on the day of judgment.

Stop and discuss as a team what special things are used only by the most important leader in your culture. Are there certain items that only they are allowed to use or certain places only they are allowed to sit or sleep or enter into?

Jesus says he will separate the sheep from the goats. In that part of the world, sheep and goats look very similar and are often sent out to pasture together. A shepherd would be able to separate the sheep from the goats because he works so closely with them all the time, but it would be hard for someone else to see the difference between the two animals.

Stop and discuss as a team: Are there two animals in your culture that look so similar that you have to look carefully to see the differences between them?

You might want to show your team a picture of a sheep and a goat from this part of the world.

The shepherd, or King Jesus, will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. In Jewish culture, the right side was considered good and strong, so it is the side of favor. The left hand was considered bad and weak, so it is the side of disfavor.

Stop and discuss as a team: What are things in your culture that everyone understands as symbols for good and bad?

Jesus says the King will say, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father." This also shows that the King is Jesus because he is referring to God as "my Father." The word blessed here means more than just happy. These people enjoy God's good favor. The King tells them, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you since before the creation of the world." Those favored by God will not only be God's subjects who enjoy the blessings of his kingdom, they will rule with Jesus. Their kingship has been prepared for them since before the creation of the world. The phrase "before the foundations of the world" means before the creation of the world.

The word "you" here could refer to specific people God chose before they were born, or it could refer to whoever has responded to Jesus in faith by the time of final judgment.

Jesus says, "For" which means he is giving the reason for why these people are favored by God. He goes on to list things they have done for him, including giving him food when he was hungry, giving him a drink when he was thirsty, welcoming him when he was a stranger, clothing him when he was naked, and visiting him when he was sick and when he was in prison. The culture at this time and place expected people to do these things. They were part of showing good hospitality and being a kind person, but not everyone did these things as they were supposed to do.

Stop and discuss as a team: How does your culture expect people to treat one another in order to be considered kind and good? What behavior is considered good hospitality and what is considered bad hospitality?

The righteous people, those who are right in God's sight and accepted by him, are surprised when the King says this. They ask him about it, saying "Lord," which means master. They do not remember doing those things for him. The King says, "Truly, I tell you" which is a phrase Jesus uses often in the gospel of Matthew. It means he is telling them an important truth of God. He says that whenever they did any of those kind things for "one of the least of these my brothers" they did it to him. Jesus used these phrases "the least of these" and "my brothers" earlier in the gospel of Matthew to refer to his followers who trust in him. He is saying that whenever his followers show such kindness to each other, it is like they are showing kindness to Jesus himself.

Then the king says to those on his left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Those on the left receive the opposite of those on the right. Instead of being invited to come, they are told to depart, or to leave him. Instead of being blessed by his Father, they are cursed by his Father. Instead of receiving a kingdom prepared for them, they are sent to an eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Again Jesus says, "For" because he is going to explain why these people are cursed by God. He goes on to list all the same things the righteous people did, but the cursed people did not do any of those things. They did not give him food or drink or welcome or clothing. They did not visit him when he was sick or in prison.

Again he says, "Truly, I tell you" because he is telling them a serious truth of God. He says that just as these people did not do these things to "one of the least of these" they did not do it for Jesus either.

Jesus ends by saying the cursed people will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous people will go to eternal life.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus tells his disciples what the final judgment will be like, when the Son of Man comes to judge the nations. He says the Son of Man will come in his glory with his angels around him. He will sit on his glorious throne and all the nations will be in front of him, waiting for their judgment. He uses the image of a shepherd separating sheep from goats to help them picture the way the Son of Man will separate the people. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Second scene: Then he welcomes the people blessed by God to come receive the kingdom God prepared for them since the creation of the world. He tells the righteous people they are blessed by God because when they saw him in need, they helped him. The righteous people don't remember helping him, so they ask when they did that. The King says whenever they helped the least of these his brothers, they were helping the King.

Third scene: Then the King tells the people cursed by God to leave him and go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. He explains that they are cursed because when they saw him in need they did not help him. They do not remember seeing him in need and not helping, so they ask him when that happened. The King says that whenever they saw the least of these his brothers in need and did not help them, they did not help the King.

Fourth scene: Jesus says the cursed will go into eternal punishment but the righteous will go into eternal life.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus's 12 closest disciples
- Angels
- A King (Jesus)
- The nations (many different people)
- The devil
- The devil's angels (demons)
- Hungry person, optional
- Thirsty person, optional
- Naked person, optional
- Sick person, optional
- Person in prison, optional

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Jesus is talking to his 12 closest disciples, but it might be helpful to act out the scene he describes. In his story he speaks about the Son of Man as King. You may need to have a different actor playing the part of the Son of Man so that Jesus can continue to tell the story to his disciples, but remember that the Son of Man, who is Jesus himself, is the King in this story.

The scene Jesus describes seems to take place in heaven, in the throne room of God where Jesus is seated in his glory on his throne with all his angels around him and the nations in front of him, waiting to be judged. Jesus should look like he has the power and authority of God. Angels are supernatural, spiritual beings, so they look different than ordinary people. There should be a lot of people acting the part of the nations, because it will be all the people who ever lived since Adam and Eve.

Jesus says the Son of Man separates the people the same way a shepherd separates sheep and goats, but his story does not actually have sheep and goats in it. He is separating the people of the nations. Some of the people he sends to his right side and others to his left side.

Then the King says to the people on his right side, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And he explains to them all that they did to inherit the kingdom. Then the blessed people ask when they did all those things. He tells them that whatever they did for the least of these his brothers, they did for him.

At this point, you could have some actors play the part of people who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison, and have one or more actors play the part of a blessed person who helps each one. Or you could just have the King say the words.

Then the King says to the people on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels." And he explains what they did to be cursed, and they ask him when they saw him in need and did not help him. He says just as they did not help the least of these his brothers, they did not help him. He uses the same structure to speak about the cursed people that he used to speak about the blessed people except that the cursed people did the opposite of the blessed people.

Again, you could have some actors play the part of people who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison, and have one or more actors play the part of a cursed person who does not help each one. Or you could just have the King say the words.

Then Jesus speaks to his disciples and tells them the cursed people will go away to eternal punishment but the righteous people will go into eternal life.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Jesus's 12 closest disciples
- Angels
- A King (Jesus)
- The nations (many different people)
- The devil
- The devil's angels (demons)
- Hungry person, optional
- Thirsty person, optional
- Naked person, optional
- Sick person, optional
- Person in prison, optional

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus is telling his 12 closest disciples a story about what the final judgment will be like, but it might help to visualize what he describes, so you may want to have some people act out Jesus and his disciples and other people act out the people in his story. In Jesus' story, the Son of Man comes in his glory as King to judge the nations. The Son of Man in Jesus' story is Jesus himself, but you might want to have a different person act out the Son of Man so Jesus can continue to narrate the story. Just remember that the Son of Man is Jesus.

Jesus says the Son of Man will come in his glory with all his angels around him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will gather in front of him and he will judge them.

Stop the action.

Jesus says the Son of Man will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

Stop the action.

Then the Son of Man says to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then he tells them all the things they did for him, but the righteous people are surprised because they don't remember seeing Jesus hungry or thirsty or sick and helping him.

Stop the action.

Jesus tells them that whenever they helped the least of these his brothers, they helped him. At this point, you could have some people act the part of someone who is hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison and another person act the part of a righteous person who helps them. Or you could just have Jesus say the words.

Stop the action.

Then the Son of Man says to the people on his left, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

Stop the action.

The Son of Man explains that they are cursed because when they saw him in need, they did not help him. The cursed people are surprised because they do not remember seeing him in need and not helping, but the Son of Man explains that whenever they saw one of the least of these his brothers in need and did not help, they did not help him. At this point, you could have some people act the part of someone who is hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison and another person act the part of a cursed person who does not help them. Or you could just have Jesus say the words.

Stop the action.

Jesus tells his disciples that the cursed will go away into eternal punishment and the righteous will go into eternal life.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus said "When the **Son of Man** comes in his **glory**, and all the **angels** with him, he will sit on his glorious throne."

You will remember that **Son of Man** is a title for the Messiah, the one to whom God gives all authority and power. Use the same term for Son of Man here that you used in previous passages. Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

Glory refers to God's power and splendor. Use the same word for glory here that you used in previous passages. Glory is in the Master Glossary.

Angels are supernatural, spiritual messengers of God. Use the same word for angels here that you used in previous passages. Angels is in the Master Glossary.

A **throne** is a special chair used only by a king. Kings would sit on their thrones when making judgments. Use the same word for throne here that you used in previous passages.

Jesus says people will be separated "as a **shepherd** separates the **sheep** from the **goats**." Sheep and goats are both grazing animals. In Israel at the time of Jesus, sheep and goats looked very similar to each other. Throughout the Bible, Jesus' followers are often compared to sheep. Sheep are not smart animals and they have no natural protection, so they depend on their shepherd to guide them to food and water, and to keep them safe. Use the same word for sheep here that you used in previous passages. In the Bible, Jesus is often compared to a shepherd. A shepherd is a person who cares for sheep or goats. Use the same word for shepherd here that you used in previous passages. Shepherd is in the Master Glossary.

You might want to show your team a picture of a sheep and a goat.

Jesus says, "Come, **you** who are blessed by my **Father**, inherit the kingdom prepared for **you** from the creation of the world." Because he says the kingdom was prepared for them since the foundation of the world, some people believe "you" refers to people God chose from the time of creation, even before they were born. Others believe "you" refers to whoever trusts in Jesus by the time of the final judgement, but who are revealed only as they believe the gospel. The word "you" in this passage could mean either one. The word "Father" refers to God, the Father. It is a title for one person of the trinity. Use the same word for Father here that you have used previously when it is referring to God.

In Jesus' story, the **righteous** ask him, "**Lord**, when did we see you hungry?"

The word **righteous** refers to righteous people, those who are right in the sight of God and accepted by him. Use the same word for righteous here that you have used previously. Righteous is in the Master Glossary.

The word **Lord** here means master. Use the same word for Lord here that you have used previously when Lord means master. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says, "As you did it to one of the **least of these my brothers**, you did it to me." Jesus uses both of these phrases: "least of these" and "my brothers" previously in the book of Matthew. He uses "least of these" when speaking of anyone who "relaxes one of the least of these my commandments and teaches others to do the same." Use the same phrase for "least of these" here that you used previously. He uses the term "brothers" to refer to his followers. Use the term for brother here that you used previously when it meant a follower of Jesus.

The King says to those on his left, "**Depart** from me, you **cursed**, into the **eternal fire** prepared for the **devil** and **his angels**."

Depart means to leave or go away from someone. Use the same word for depart here that you used previously. The King is commanding those on his left to leave him.

A **curse** in the Bible is a punishment or judgement. These people have been judged by God and the King is sending them to be punished. Curse is in the Master Glossary.

Eternal fire is another way of speaking about Hell, which is the place of punishment where unbelievers will go at the end of the world. Use the same phrase for eternal fire here that you used previously.

Devil is another name for Satan, the evil one. Use the same word for devil here that you used previously.

His angels refers to the supernatural, spiritual messengers who rebelled against God along with Satan. These angels are often called demons. Demon is in the Master Glossary. Because they rebelled, they will also be sent to Hell with Satan and unbelievers at the end of the world. Hell is in the Master Glossary. Devil and angel are also in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 25:31-46

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3708452 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6194447 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:1-16

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:1-16 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus teaches about a time in the distant future.

In this true story, Matthew gives the account of Jesus' final days on Earth.

Jesus finished teaching. Then He told His disciples, or His closest followers, "After two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

"After two days" probably means the day after tomorrow. Passover celebrated the time when God rescued the Jewish ancestors from slavery in Egypt. The Passover was combined with the Festival of Unleavened Bread, or bread without yeast, to remember how their ancestors ate this bread before their rescue from Egypt. This was a seven-day celebration.

Stop and discuss important celebrations in your culture. What activities do you participate in to celebrate? What special foods do you eat during the celebration?

Jesus called Himself "Son of Man" because Jesus was human and represented all people, but also had the nature and authority of God. He knew He was going to be crucified. Crucifixion was the worst form of execution in Jesus' time. The victim's hands and feet were nailed to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross. Then, soldiers stood the cross upright, and the victim hung in pain for hours until they died.

Show a picture of a cross.

The chief priests, or leading priests, and elders, or non-religious leaders of the people, are gathered. These men met together in the palace, or house, of Caiaphas, the high priest. The high priest led the religious court of law. These men were part of the Sanhedrin, or high council of the Jewish people. So, they would listen to court cases and pass judgment based on religious law.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, how are people who listen to court cases and pass judgment described?

These men met together and planned to arrest Jesus by stealth, or by deceit, then convince the Romans to crucify Him. They did not want to arrest Jesus at the festival because the people would riot, or become violent. During the Passover celebration, there were more people in Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the official place where Jews went to sacrifice to God in their temple, or place of worship. Many of the people in Jerusalem probably supported Jesus. The people would have become angry if He was arrested.

Jesus was in Bethany at Simon's house. Bethany was about 4 kilometers outside of Jerusalem.

Show a map of Jerusalem that includes Bethany.

Simon used to have leprosy, a serious skin disease. People continued to call Simon "the Leper," even though he was cured of the disease. We know Simon was cured because a person with leprosy would not have been allowed in the home or host anyone. A woman came into the house with an alabaster jar of perfume, or good smelling oil. Alabaster is a kind of white or yellow stone. Only the most expensive, or well made, perfumes were stored in alabaster jars. People broke the jar to get out the perfume. When the woman poured perfume on Jesus' head, she honored Him. In the Jewish culture, people would honor important guests by pouring oil on their head. She did this while Jesus was reclined at table. People laid next to a low table where they ate their formal meals, on a cushion with their feet out behind them.

Show a picture of reclining at table.

Stop and discuss in your culture ways an important guest is honored. What kind of things are done for them? What feelings do people have when they are around an honored guest?

In this instance, the disciples who were indignant, or became angry, were some of the people in Simon's house. They said, "Why this waste? This could have been sold for a large sum of money and given to the poor." But Jesus, "aware of this": implies that this was said only to the other dinner guests. Jesus said, "Why are you bothering this woman?" Jesus was not asking to receive an answer. He was saying, "Stop bothering this woman." He called her actions beautiful, or good. There would always be a chance to give to the poor but the opportunity to do something for Jesus was brief because He was about to be killed. The Jews anointed dead bodies with perfume for burial. This is why the woman's actions were beautiful. Jesus said, "Truly," or "I tell you the truth." This indicated that what Jesus was about to say was important. The gospel, or good news, was about the kingdom of God, the ruling of God in the hearts of people. As the good news is shared, this woman's act of love and devotion will also be shared.

Show a picture of an alabaster jar.

After that, Judas Iscariot, who was one of Jesus' twelve closest disciples, went to the chief priests, or the religious leaders planning to have Jesus arrested and killed. Judas wanted to know what the chief priests would give to him if he helped them arrest Jesus. Judas agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. In the Old Testament,

this was the amount of money the owner of an animal had to pay if the animal killed a slave. After Judas made the agreement, he started to look for a good chance to betray Jesus, or get Jesus arrested.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: Jesus finished teaching about a time in the distant future. Then Jesus tells His disciples what is about to happen soon.

Second scene: While Jesus is talking to His disciples, all of the leaders of the Jews are planning to capture Jesus, and have Him killed by the Romans.

Third scene: Jesus and His disciples are in Simon's house. A woman anoints Jesus. Someone at Simon's house thinks it was wasteful to do this. Jesus says they are wrong.

Fourth scene: Judas agrees to betray Jesus.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- The chief priests and elders
- Simon the leper
- A woman
- Judas Iscariot

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This scene begins with Matthew writing, "When Jesus had finished all these sayings." This implies that Jesus' teaching ministry has now come to an end. It is important to remember that Jesus is predicting not only His death, but the way He is going to be put to death. It is important to remember what crucifixion is.

It is important to remember that the people planning to kill Jesus were the main leaders of the Jewish people. They are planning to kill Jesus at the same time that Jesus is talking to His disciples.

Jesus had been staying at Simon's house at night but traveling to Jerusalem during the day for the festival. Simon once had leprosy, which is a skin disease that makes a person unfit to serve God. He no longer had leprosy. It is important to remember what the woman did to Jesus. It is important to remember how the disciples reacted. Remember what Jesus said about what the woman did.

It is important to remember that Judas was one of Jesus' closest followers. Remember that Judas agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

It is important to remember that Judas started to look for a good chance to betray Jesus after the chief priests paid him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- The chief priests and elders
- Simon the leper
- A woman
- Judas Iscariot

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Jesus just finished teaching about a time in the distant future. Then Jesus tells His disciple what is about to happen soon. Jesus says, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Stop the action.

Ask the actors playing the disciples, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Did Jesus just say he was going to be crucified?" or "Is this going to happen during the Passover?" [!end] Restart the action.

While Jesus is talking to His disciples, the chief priests and elders are planning to capture Jesus, and have Him killed by the Romans.

Stop the action.

Jesus and His disciples are in Simon's house. A woman anoints Jesus. The disciples say among themselves, "Why this waste? This should have been sold to help the poor." Jesus says they are wrong.

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing the woman, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "This is Jesus. I want to honor Him," or "Why does this disciple think it is wasteful to anoint Jesus?" [!end] Restart the action.

Judas Iscariot goes to the chief priests and elders and plans to betray Jesus. They give him 30 pieces of silver so he would help them arrest Jesus.

Stop the action.

After Judas agreed to betray Jesus, he began to look for a good chance to have Jesus arrested.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Jesus told His **disciples** that after the **Passover** celebration the **Son of Man** was going to be **crucified**.

The **disciples** are the twelve men who followed Jesus everywhere and learned from His teachings. Use the same word for disciples that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciples.

Passover was a Jewish religious festival. In Jesus' time, the celebration was a combination of Passover and the seven-day **Festival of Unleavened Bread**. Passover celebrated the time when God rescued the Jewish ancestors from slavery in Egypt. God did this by sending an angel to cause the Egyptian king to allow the Jewish ancestors to leave. The angel killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. But the angel "passed over" the Jewish

firstborn sons and spared their lives. In the **Festival of Unleavened Bread**, people ate unleavened bread, or bread without yeast, to remind themselves of how the Jewish people ate unleavened bread before their rescue from Egypt. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Passover. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Festival of Unleavened Bread.

Jesus said the **Son of Man** would be crucified. Jesus calls Himself Son of Man because He was human and represented all people. But Jesus also had the nature and authority of God. The Son of Man, in the Bible, is the person who God gives all authority and power. All the Jewish people were familiar with this title because of what was written by the prophet Daniel. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

Before someone was **crucified**, usually the soldiers beat the victim with a whip. Then the soldiers nailed their hands and feet to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross. The soldiers stood the cross upright, and the victim hung in pain for hours until they died. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of crucifixion.

The **chief priest** and the **elders** of the people gathered in the house of Caiaphas, the **high priest**. The chief priests were leading priests who helped do administration in the temple in Jerusalem. The elders were usually non-religious leaders in the community. Use the same word for elders that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of elders. The high priest was the religious head of Israel. The high priest led the entire Jewish religious court of law. **Priests** were God's representative to His people and His people's representative to God. Chief priests helped do administration in the temple, or special house of God. Use the same word for priest that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of priest.

Jesus was in Bethany with His disciples in the house of Simon. Simon used to have leprosy. **Leprosy** refers to any of several skin diseases. The diseases made a person "unclean," or not able to live in the community. Use the same word for leprosy that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of leprosy.

A woman with an alabaster flask, or jar, came up to Jesus. **Alabaster jars** were the highest quality. **Alabaster** is a kind of white or yellow stone. Only the most expensive, or well made, perfumes were stored in alabaster jars. The jar had a long neck and no handle. They were sealed so no perfume could leak out and just big enough to contain one portion. The **ointment**, or **perfume**, that would have been inside of the jar was often made from nard. Nard was made from the root of the nard plant from India. In this instance, the nard was pure because it was not diluted or mixed with anything else. This made the nard more expensive.

The woman **poured it on Jesus' head**. This was called **anointing**. Anointing was done to someone to show that they had been appointed for a special task. There was also a special anointing that people did for dead bodies. They put special perfume on dead bodies to show honor. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of anoint.

The disciples were **indignant**, or became **angry**. Matthew tells us that they said this among themselves. The Gospel of John tells us that it was **Judas Iscariot** who spoke to the other disciples. Judas was the keeper of the money for Jesus' ministry. Judas Iscariot is also the disciple who was about to betray Jesus to the chief priests and elders.

Jesus said that wherever the **gospel**, or **good news**, was proclaimed or shared, what the woman did would also be remembered. Gospel, or good news, was about the kingdom of God, the ruling of God in the hearts of people. Use the same word for gospel, or good news, that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of gospel or good news.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:1-16

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3760736 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6467189 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:17-25

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:17-25 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus announced that He would be put to death soon. A woman anointed Jesus while He was eating. Then Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

In this true story, Matthew writes about the last Passover meal that Jesus ate with His disciples.

Matthew tells us when these events happen. It is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is unclear exactly which day this is, but it is either the traditional day of the Passover meal celebration, or the day before. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, or bread without yeast, was a celebration to remember how their ancestors ate this bread before they were rescued from Egypt. The disciples approached Jesus because they wanted to know where they would make the preparations for this celebration. The first day of this eight-day celebration was the Passover. Passover celebrated the time when God rescued the Jewish ancestors from slavery in Egypt. Jewish law stated that the Passover meal needed to be eaten within the Jerusalem city walls. Jesus said, "Go into the city to a certain man." Jesus and His disciples are outside of Jerusalem, possibly in Bethany where they stay when they are not in Jerusalem.

Show a map of Jerusalem and point out Bethany.

"A certain man" is probably a person that they all know. Jesus may have actually said the man's name. The man would have recognized "the Teacher" as a title for Jesus. Jesus said, "My time is at hand, or near." This suggests that the man knew about Jesus announcing that He would be put to death soon. It is likely that Jesus made plans with the man before He sent His disciples to the man. The disciples would have brought a lamb to the priest in the temple so he could kill the lamb in the traditional way for the Passover. The disciples would have prepared the lamb and the other food for the Passover meal at the man's house.

Show a photo of a roasted lamb.

Stop and discuss celebrations in your culture. Is there a special time of the year when you celebrate by having a meal with your family? What kind of things do you eat? Share stories with one another about your celebrations.

"When evening came," means some time after sunset. It was traditional for the Jews to eat the Passover meal at night. Jesus and the 12, His closest followers, were reclining at table. This means they were laying on one side on a low couch, or cushion, with their heads propped up on one elbow. This was the traditional position for having a special meal during that time. They eat the bread by dipping part of it into a bowl with bitter herbs, stewed fruit, and wine or vinegar.

Show a photo of people laying down next to the table to eat a meal. Show the translation team photos of unleavened bread and a bowl of bitter herbs and sauces with dried fruit.

Jesus and His disciples are eating this meal and probably re-telling the story of the rescue from slavery in Egypt. During the meal, it is customary for the head of the household to break the unleavened bread into pieces and pass it to those at the table. Probably around this point Jesus said, "Truly," or "I tell you the truth," to indicate that what He is about to say is important. He said, "One of you will betray Me, or help My enemies capture Me."

"They were sorrowful" means that each disciple was upset. So, each one asked Jesus "Is it I Lord?" They ask the question as if they expect Jesus to answer "no" to them. Lord is a polite way to address a respected leader. Lord is also a title used by the disciples to show that they were loyal to Jesus and He had authority over them. Jesus said, "It is the one who is eating from this bowl with Me." In Jewish culture, only people who trusted each other ate together. This is showing just how deep Jesus' betrayer's crime was.

Jesus said, "The Son of Man must die just as the Scriptures said about Him long ago." Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man because He was human and represented all people. But Jesus also had the nature and authority of God. Jesus predicted His betrayal and death as the fulfillment of what was written in the Old Testament. Jesus said, "But woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." Although it is necessary that Jesus will die, Jesus warns that the person who betrays Him will have terrible consequences.

Judas asked Jesus, "Is it I, Rabbi?" We know that this question was not sincere, or genuine. You will remember from the previous passage that Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus. He was probably trying to conceal the fact that he was the traitor. He was the only one to call Jesus "Rabbi." Those who were not one of Jesus' 12 closest followers would sometimes call Jesus "Rabbi." This is the only time one of the 12 called Jesus "Rabbi." Rabbi is a Jewish title that means my great one, or my great teacher. It is different from the word Lord. Jesus told Judas, "You have said so yourself." Jesus confirmed that Judas is the one who will betray Him. It was probably spoken so that only Judas heard Jesus say these words.

Stop and discuss betrayal in your culture. Tell a story of a time when someone in your culture was betrayed. How did people react when they found out about the betrayal? How did people treat the traitor?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: On the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples ask Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?" Jesus answers them.

Second scene: The disciples do as Jesus said.

Third scene: While they are eating, Jesus says, "One of you will betray Me." The disciples become upset. Each of them asks Jesus, "Is it I, Lord?"

Fourth scene: Jesus reveals the traitor to be Judas.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- A certain man
- Judas Iscariot

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that the first day of Unleavened Bread is Passover.

It is important to remember what Jesus told the disciples. It is important to remember that when Jesus said, "My time is at hand," it meant that he was going to be arrested and killed.

It is important to remember that the disciples prepared the Passover meal in the traditional way for the Jews.

It is important to remember that only the 12 closest followers of Jesus were eating with Him. Remember that Jesus was breaking the bread and handing it to the disciples. It is important to remember when Jesus says, truly, or I tell you the truth, He is about to say something important. Remember, Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. In Jewish culture, only the people who trusted each other ate together. It is the worst betrayal to eat with someone, leave the meal, and then betray that person. Jesus is showing just how deep His betrayer's crime was. It is important to remember what Jesus' answer was to the disciples' questions.

It is important to remember that Judas was the only one to call Jesus "Rabbi" instead of "Lord." It is important to remember that Judas had already agreed to betray Jesus. Remember that Jesus' answer to Judas was, "You

have said so (yourself)." This indicated that Judas' insincere question has expressed the truth about his intentions.

It is possible that Judas was trying to keep the other disciples from knowing about it. Jesus confirmed that Judas is the one who will betray Him. It was probably spoken so that only Judas heard Jesus say these words.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has four scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The disciples
- A certain man
- Judas Iscariot

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples ask Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal?" Jesus answered them, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, the Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will celebrate the Passover at your house with My disciples."

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "I am looking forward to celebrating with My disciples," "I am glad My disciples want to go prepare the Passover meal," or "It is good that the man is going to let us use his house." [!end] Restart the action.

The disciples do as Jesus said and prepare the Passover meal. While they are reclined at table, Jesus says, "One of you will betray Me." The disciples become upset. Each of them ask Jesus, "Is it I, Lord?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "It makes Me sad that one of My disciples will betray Me," "It is going to be bad for the man who betrays Me," or "I hope it is done quickly." [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says, "He who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me will betray Me." He also says, "It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Judas asks Jesus, "Is it I, Rabbi?"

Stop the action.

Ask the actor playing Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You may hear things like, "Did he really think I would be fooled?" "I knew it was Judas," or "Judas is supposed to love Me. It makes Me sad that he is going to betray Me."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The first day of Unleavened Bread: The **Festival of Unleavened Bread**, or bread without yeast, was a celebration to remember how their ancestors ate this bread before their rescue from Egypt. The first day of this eight-day celebration was the Passover. **Passover** celebrated the time when God rescued the Jewish ancestors from slavery in Egypt. God gave instructions to the Jewish ancestors for celebrating the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread just before He saved them from the tenth and final plague in Egypt. Use the same word for Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread.

The **disciples** approached Jesus. The disciples were Jesus' 12 closest followers. They went with Jesus everywhere and learned from Him. Use the same word for disciples that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of disciples.

Jesus instructed the disciples to go to a **certain man**. Mark's gospel tells us that Jesus sent two of His disciples to the "certain man," that the man was carrying a jar of water, and that the man would meet the disciples. It is likely that Jesus made plans with the "certain man" before He sent His disciples to the man.

Jesus said to tell the man, the **teacher** says, "**My time is at hand**, or near."

Teacher is a title used to show that Jesus was respected by the man as a teacher of the things of God.

My time is at hand indicates that Jesus is talking about His upcoming arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Jesus foretold His death to the disciples in the previous passage.

Jesus and the 12, or His closest followers, were **reclining at table**. This means they were laying on one side on a low couch, or cushion, with their heads propped on one elbow. Use the same word for "reclining at table" that you did in previous passages.

Jesus told His disciples that one of them would betray Him. Each one asked, "Is it I **Lord**?" Lord is a polite way to address a respected leader. Use the same word for Lord that you did in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Lord.

Jesus said, "The **Son of Man** must die just as the Scriptures said about Him long ago." The Son of Man, in the Bible, is the person who God gives all authority and power. Use the same word for Son of Man that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Son of Man.

Jesus reminds the disciples that the prophets have said the Messiah, or Son of Man, will die. Jesus said, "**Woe** to the man who betrays Him." **Woe** is a word used in the Bible to indicate a state of intense hardship. Although it is necessary that Jesus will die, Jesus warns that the person who betrays Him will have terrible consequences.

Judas asked Jesus, "Is it I, Rabbi?" **Rabbi** is a Jewish title that means my great one, or my great teacher. This title was never used by Jesus' disciples in the gospel of Matthew. Use the same word for Rabbi that you did in previous passages. Refer to Master Glossary for a more complete definition of Rabbi.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:17–25

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3561255 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6135421 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:26–35

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:26–35 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Matthew carries on from the previous passage where the disciples are eating the Passover meal together with Jesus. You will remember that the Passover meal was a celebration meal of the time when God rescued his people from slavery in nearby Egypt. Jesus was talking to them about how one of their group was going to betray him. The disciples were sad. Jesus is about to talk to his disciples about a new covenant he is going to make with them. The disciples are very familiar with the fact that God already has a covenant with his people—the Jewish people. God has promised to be their God and to never leave them. Jesus is going to give the disciples a new way to remember and celebrate this new covenant.

Whilst they were still eating the Passover meal, Jesus took some of the unleavened bread. It is likely that the bread would have been on the table and Jesus lifted it up off the table. Jesus then blessed, or gave thanks to God, for the bread. Jesus is recognizing God provided the bread in the same way God provided for Moses and his people when God rescued them from Egypt. In the Passover meal, the unleavened bread was not symbolically linked to the lamb that had been killed in order to provide the meat at the meal. However, when Jesus breaks the bread and identifies it as his body. The breaking of the bread is symbolizing his death. Jesus is about to fulfill all the predictions of his death in Jerusalem.

Jesus then broke the bread into pieces and handed the pieces to his disciples. Jesus said, "Take and eat, this is my body." We are not sure what Jesus meant in this statement; different churches and different bible scholars interpret this part of the story differently. Some believe that Jesus is not talking about his material body and blood. They believe Jesus means "This represents my living body" and "This represents my blood." In the Passover meal, the Jewish people would say over the bread "This is the bread... our ancestors ate as they came out of Egypt." They were not eating the actual bread their ancestors ate, as it would be centuries old, but they are eating bread which represents the bread that was eaten at the time. The key point is that Jesus is telling his disciples that his presence will be with them always and that he is going to be a sacrifice for them which in years to come they will celebrate.

Stop for a moment and show your translation team a picture of unleavened bread.

Stop for a moment and ask the translation team: What kind of symbolic rituals do you have in your area? Give examples of things you do, eat, or drink that symbolize important religious ideas or truths in your area. How would people understand the idea of bread symbolizing Jesus' body?

Then Jesus picks up a cup, which was most likely filled with red wine. He thanked God for the wine and passed it to his disciples. It is likely that each would have drunk from the cup and then passed it to the next disciple. The cup of wine in the Passover often symbolizes God's peace between his people and himself, it is a reminder of his covenant with his people. In the old testament, blood often symbolizes life.

Jesus tells his disciples to drink from the cup, and continues, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins." In the Old Testament, people were required to sacrifice animals when a covenant was made. The covenant was confirmed when people poured out or sprinkled the animal's blood. Jesus is doing something new here. He is saying that he is making a new covenant with his people. It is *his* blood that will be "poured out," not an animal's blood. Jesus is going to die as the sacrifice. "Poured out" means that the liquid is flowing from a vessel when it is tipped over, like the wine flows from a cup when it is tipped. In the same way, when Jesus dies on the cross he is describing his violent death, and the way his blood will flow from his body. It is as if Jesus' blood is poured out and Jesus is the sacrifice, so God can forgive his people of their sins. The prophet Isaiah describes the servant who will "pour out" his life when saving his people. Jesus is about to fulfil this prophecy. The concept of drinking blood symbolically, or in reality, would have been radical and shocking for the disciples to hear.

The prophet Jeremiah promised God's people a "new covenant" where he said that God will make his people understand his laws at a deep level. He will fully be their God and they will fully be his people. God says that he will "forgive their wickedness and remember their sin no more." It is this new covenant that Jesus is establishing here. Jesus says that his sacrifice will happen in order to forgive the sins of "many." This can mean either everyone who trusts in him, or everyone who has ever lived.

Stop here and discuss with the translation team: What are the rituals or promises which happen when two groups of people make a covenant in your culture?

Then Jesus says that he will not drink wine, or the fruit of the vine again, until he is able to drink it in a new way when God fully rules over his people, in his Kingdom.

At the end of the Passover meal, the Jewish people usually sang or recited verses from the Psalms. Psalm 118 is about how God is with his people and how his love lasts forever. Jesus and his disciples probably sing this song, and then they leave Jerusalem, walk through the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, and then back up the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of the Mount of Olives, including the valley between the mountain and Jerusalem.

Then Jesus tells his disciples that they are about to desert him, to "fall away." Jesus then quotes from the prophet Zechariah. Jesus says "it is written," meaning that he is quoting from a recognized Jewish Scripture. The prophet Zechariah says God is going to strike down the shepherd, who is Jesus. Jesus' followers, the sheep of the flock, will scatter. However, Jesus continues, that after he has been raised from the dead, he will later meet them in Galilee. His resurrection will bring a restoration to his disciples. Matthew is using the passages from Zechariah to show Jesus as the Messiah, the promised saviour, because Jesus is fulfilling the prophecies in the Old Testament.

Stop and discuss with the translation team: If someone from your area speaks badly about your leader, or if someone from your area leaves and doesn't want to be part of your people, what do people think about that person? How would people in your area understand the idea of Jesus being raised from the dead?

Peter then makes a statement that he will never desert or fall away, even if everyone else does. Matthew has consistently portrayed Peter as a leader and representative of the disciples. He shows him as a leader here also. Peter is declaring that he won't leave Jesus, even if all the other disciples do. Jesus replies that not only will Peter leave Jesus, but that very night, Peter will deny knowing Jesus 3 times before the rooster crows in the morning. A rooster is a male chicken which crows at sunrise.

Peter insists that he will never deny Jesus, and that he is willing to die with Jesus. All of the disciples say the same thing to Jesus.

Stop and ask the translation team: When people are friends, what kind of ways do they show this in your area? What kinds of things do trusted friends never do to each other?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

Jesus is with his disciples eating the Passover meal. They are eating at a low table, and are laying down next to the table as was custom at an important meal. They have been sharing the food, dipping their bread into the same bowls and sometimes drinking wine from the same cup. During the meal they are retelling the story of when God saved his people from slavery in Egypt. It is a happy time, celebrating together.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: The story follows on from the previous passage. Jesus and his disciples are eating the Passover meal in a room in Jerusalem. Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it to pieces and gives it to his disciples. Jesus says, "This is my body." The disciples are invited to share in the new covenant Jesus is setting up by sharing in eating the bread.

Second scene: Jesus then takes the cup with wine in it, gives thanks for it, and passes the cup to his disciples for them to each take a drink of the wine. Jesus says, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink... until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Jesus is inviting the disciples to be part of the new covenant he is making with them. Jesus is saying that the time of his death is near, but his death will not be the end of the story.

Third scene: Jesus and his disciples go out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus says to them that they will all leave him (fall away) this very night. Jesus quotes from Zechariah that the shepherd will be killed and the sheep will all scatter. However, Jesus says that after he has been raised from the dead, he will meet the disciples in Galilee.

Fourth scene: Peter declares that he will never leave Jesus. Jesus states that before sunrise the next day (when the rooster crows) Peter will deny knowing Jesus three times. Peter says that he would never deny knowing Jesus, even if that means Peter has to die. All the disciples say the same thing to Jesus. Jesus knows everything that is about to happen and he is trying to prepare his disciples for what they are about to see and do.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- The disciples
- A rooster

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that this action takes place in the evening, during the Passover meal, a very important meal for the Jewish people. The Passover meal is when God's people remember when God rescued them from slavery in Egypt. During their time in Egypt, a lamb was sacrificed and the blood was sprinkled on the doorframes, so when God's judgement came, God's people were all saved. Jesus is using this meal as a setting for establishing a new promise. In this covenant, Jesus' will be sacrificed and it is his blood that will save his people.

It is also important to remember that Jesus knows everything that is about to happen. He is wanting to prepare his friends for what they will see, hear, and do. Jesus has told them that he will meet them again. Jesus uses quotes from the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament to show that he is about to fulfil prophecies and to give people a way to have a right relationship with God again.

Whilst they were eating the Passover meal, Jesus takes the unleavened bread. He gives God thanks, he then breaks the bread into pieces and gives it to his disciples for them to eat. Jesus used his hands to tear or divide the bread into 2 or more pieces. He did not use a knife or implement to divide the bread.

Jesus tells them to take and eat-he says, "This is my body." The action word here is not clear. The text can either mean that the bread becomes Jesus' body, or that the bread symbolizes Jesus' body. Different scholars interpret this differently. The important thing to remember is to remind Jesus' followers that his body was broken on the cross.

Then Jesus takes a cup of red wine from the table. He gives God thanks for the wine, and gives it to his disciples for them each to take a drink of wine from the cup. He tells them the wine is his blood which seals the new covenant between God and his people. "My blood is poured out like wine as a sacrifice for many people." Jesus tells them to pay attention. He says that he won't drink wine again until God comes to rule and be with his people. The action word here is not clear. The text can either mean that the wine becomes Jesus' blood, or the wine symbolizes Jesus' blood. Different scholars interpret this differently. The important thing to remember is that Jesus' blood is about to be poured out during his violent death. Jesus is offering his life as part of the new covenant that God is making with his people.

After this Jesus and his disciples sing, then they go out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus tells his disciples that they are all about to abandon him and fall away. Jesus quotes from the prophet Zechariah, from Jewish scriptures. Jesus quotes that God will strike the shepherd and that the sheep will leave in many directions. Jesus means that God is about to kill Jesus, and that the disciples will all scatter. Jesus says that after he has been raised from the dead, he will go to Galilee and meet with his disciples. Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples for what is about to happen.

Peter says that he will never deny knowing Jesus. Jesus tells Peter that "this very night, before the rooster crows," Peter will have denied knowing Jesus 3 times.

"This very night, before a rooster crows" means tonight, before tomorrow. In that part of the world, roosters tend to crow at about 3 a.m., at the start of dawn. The exact time is not important, but Jesus is telling Peter it is going to happen very soon. A rooster is a male chicken.

Peter insists that he will not deny Jesus, even if that means he has to die. The other disciples say the same thing.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- The disciples
- A rooster

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus is with his disciples eating the Passover meal. They are eating at a low table, and are laying down next to the table as was custom at an important meal. They have been sharing the food, dipping their bread into the same bowls and sometimes drinking wine from the same cup. During the meal they are retelling the story of when God saved his people from slavery in Egypt. It is a happy time, celebrating together.

Jesus took some of the bread and thanked God for it. He broke it into pieces and passed the pieces to the disciples for them all to eat some. Jesus said, "Take, eat. This is my body."

Stop the action.

- Confused,
- Worried,
- Angry,
- Jesus is doing something that I don't understand,
- How can this be Jesus' body as he is still with us? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus then took the cup with wine in it. Jesus thanked God for it. Jesus gave the cup to his disciples for them to pass round and for each of them to take a drink of wine from the cup. Jesus said, "Drink from the cup. This is my blood of a new covenant. It is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus continued, "Pay attention! I will not drink the wine again until I drink it with you when God comes to rule and be with his people."

Stop the action.

- Confused,
- Frustrated as I don't understand what Jesus is talking about,
- What is about to happen to Jesus, is he going to die?
- What will happen to me?
- Shocked! This is crazy!
- I don't want to drink blood.

Ask Jesus how he is feeling. You may hear things like:

- Sad,
- Distressed,
- Overwhelmed,
- They do not understand the urgency of what I am saying. [!end] Restart the action.

They sang a hymn of thanksgiving and praise together, then they left Jerusalem to go across the valley to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus told his disciples, "You will all leave me tonight" for it is written, "I will strike down the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered." Jesus continues: "After I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead to you to Galilee."

Peter says to Jesus, "Even though everyone else will leave you, I will never fall away."

Jesus replies, "Truly I say to you, tonight, before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say three times that you do not know me."

Peter says, "Even if I have to die, I will not say that I do not know you." All the disciples said the same thing.

Stop the action.

- Angry that Jesus does not believe me,
- Hurt that Jesus would say these things about me in front of the other disciples,
- Confused-why would Jesus say these things about me?

Ask the disciples what they are feeling now. You may hear things like:

- Unsettled,
- Hurt that Jesus doesn't believe me,
- I'm frightened about what Jesus is saying,
- Even if others deny Jesus, I will always say that I know him,
- What is about to happen?

Ask Jesus how he is feeling right now. You may hear things like:

- Deeply sad,
- Alone,
- They are not understanding what I am telling them,
- Overwhelmed when I consider what is about to happen,
- I wish my friends did not have to go through what is about to happen,
- Father, please help them.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story continues from the previous story with Jesus and his **disciples** sharing a Passover meal together in Jerusalem. Translate disciples in the same way you did in previous passages. The names of these religious festivals are in the Master Glossary.

Whilst they were eating, Jesus **took** some of the **bread** and **blessed** it. Jesus thanked God for the bread and broke it into pieces.

"Jesus took some of the bread" means Jesus held the bread in his hands and lifted it up off the table.

The **bread** was unleavened, meaning it did not contain any yeast. It was probably a mix of flour, water, and oil. It would have been flat and round. Translate bread in the same way you have in previous passages.

Show your translation team a picture of bread used in a Passover meal if needed again.

Blessed in this instance means that Jesus is thanking God for providing the bread. Be clear in your translation that Jesus thanked God for providing the bread. Some versions of the text say Jesus "blessed it" or "gave thanks for it." Blessed is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus broke the bread into pieces and **gave** it to his disciples. He said, "Take, eat; this is my **body**." In the Aramaic, the language Jesus and his disciples spoke, there is no verb for "is." Jesus literally said, "This-my body."

Jesus then **gave** it-the bread-to his disciples. Jesus passed the pieces of bread to his disciples for them to each take a piece so that they could each eat a part of the bread.

"This is my **body**" refers to the bread being Jesus' living body. Body means living body, not a corpse or a dead body.

Then Jesus took the **cup**, gave thanks for it. Jesus gave it to his disciples saying, "**Drink from it...** this is My **blood** of the **covenant**, which is **poured out as a sacrifice for many** for the **forgiveness of sins**. Pay attention! I will not drink of the **fruit of the vine** again until I drink it in **My Father's kingdom**."

Jesus took the **cup**. This is a cup or bowl probably made of clay which would be used at a table to hold a drink. It was full of wine, usually diluted with water. Translate the word cup in the same way you have in previous passages.

Drink from it means that the cup of wine was passed to each disciple for them to either drink directly from the cup, or they would pour some of the wine into their own cup and drink from their own cup. The disciples were each drinking some of the wine and sharing it together.

Blood: Literally meaning Jesus' blood from his live body. See the notes above relating to Jesus' body and Jesus' blood. In the Jewish tradition, the blood of an animal would often represent the life of the animal. When sacrifices and offerings were made it was the sprinkling of the blood which led to the person making the offering being made right with God. Translate blood in the same way you have in previous passages.

Poured out as a sacrifice: In the same way that wine can be poured out of a cup, Jesus' blood will be poured out. Sacrifice is in the Master Glossary. Jesus will be the sacrifice which will allow **many** to have their sins forgiven. "Many" can mean "all people," including any people in the future who trust in Jesus.

Forgiveness of sins is when someone can have all of their wrongs forgiven so they can then have a right relationship with God again. Translate "forgiveness of sins" in the same way you have in previous passages. Forgiveness and sin are in the Master Glossary.

Covenant: Jesus is saying his blood will be confirming the covenant between God and those who follow him. A covenant is a binding agreement made between two persons or groups. It establishes a relationship of peace or loyalty between them. Each side agrees to be faithful to this agreement. Translate covenant in the way you have in previous passages. Covenant is in the Master Glossary.

Fruit of the vine refers to the wine in the cup which the disciples are each drinking. Wine is an alcoholic drink made from fermented grapes. In the old testament, wine is a symbol of death, but new wine is a symbol of joy and of all being well. Grapes grow on a vine, so you should use a word for vine that implies fruit grows on it.

My Father's kingdom is another way of saying the kingdom of God. Kingdom of God is in the Master Glossary.

When they had sung a **hymn** they went out to the **Mount of Olives**. A hymn is a song of praise to God, probably from Psalm 118. This psalm thanks God for his faithful love that lasts forever. **Mount of Olives** lies east of the city of Jerusalem.

Then Jesus told them that tonight they would all **fall away**.

Fall away means that the disciples will run away, they will flee from being associated with Jesus.

"After Jesus has been **raised**" means after Jesus has been given life again. Jesus will fully come back to life. Jesus will not come back like a ghost or vision.

Truly I say to you is a way of saying "listen up" or "pay attention." Matthew is highlighting that Jesus is about to say something important and that the disciples should pay special attention.

Jesus tells Peter that Peter will "**deny** me three times." Deny means to say you do not know someone or something, even though you do know them or the thing that is being talked about. Peter is going to say three times that he doesn't know Jesus. Translate deny in the same way you have in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:26–35

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4276750 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7352624 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:36–46

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:36–46 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

It is evening. Jesus and his disciples have just left the city of Jerusalem where they had been sharing a Passover meal together. They all walk about 15 minutes out of the city to the Mount of Olives, on the western slope opposite the city. They walked to a place called Gethsemane, which in Hebrew means "oil press." It is an olive orchard, a place where people plant, grow, and harvest olives. People likely pressed olives there to make olive oil.

Stop for a moment and show your translation teams a photo of the Garden of Gethsemane. Show a photo of olive trees.

Jesus tells his disciples to "sit here while I go over there and pray." Jesus takes Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, with him. It is interesting to note that these 3 disciples were the ones that saw Jesus in his divine glory on the mountain.

Jesus began to be emotionally distressed. He was sorrowful, troubled, and distressed. He said, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death." Jesus is saying his whole self, or soul, is overwhelmed with sorrow. He even feels as if a great weight is pressing down on him, to the point of death.

Jesus and the three disciples are close enough to the rest of the disciples for everyone to be able to hear what Jesus is praying. Jesus is used to praying alone with his father. It is surprising that Jesus is asking his disciples to be with him at this point. It seems that Jesus is longing for his friends' support at this time. Until now Jesus has been calm in difficult situations. Here, he is showing his distress and agony. Jesus' emotions are displayed openly and his whole body is reacting to what he is feeling inside. Jesus knows all that is about to happen. He is dreading the pain and suffering he has been preparing for. We are seeing the very real impact this is having on Jesus. We are seeing a very human Jesus at this moment.

Stop for a moment and discuss a time when you have been so overwhelmed with a feeling inside that you can't help but react physically. A physical reaction could be crying, being unable to stand up, falling down, being sick, or even crying tears of joy if it is a happy time. Stop and discuss the horror and anguish of Jesus' pain in the strongest possible terms.

Jesus then asks the disciples to keep watch and spiritually alert. They need to resist the temptation that will come. It is interesting that Jewish people would often stay awake late on Passover night talking about how God had rescued them in their history. So, it would not be unusual for the disciples to be awake late on this night. Jesus went a little further beyond all the disciples and he fell with his face to the ground. Jesus did not accidentally fall over. Jesus falling over is a deliberate act. It could be because he is so overwhelmed he is unable to stand up. The normal position for prayer was standing up with hands lifted. The Jewish tradition of praying with the face to the ground means someone is humbly begging for an answer.

Jesus prayed "My Father..." Jesus is highlighting that his relationship with God is a relationship between a father and a son. This closeness of relationship is about to be tested and reaffirmed. Jesus continues to pray that if it is possible, "may this cup be taken from me." In Jewish tradition "a cup" is often used as a symbol of punishment, revenge, and judgement. Here Jesus is using that symbolism but as an object of suffering. Jesus knows that he is about to face God's judgement, punishment, and separation from his father. Jesus is asking his father if there is any way he can avoid the suffering and execution he is about to experience. Jesus continues, showing he wants to be obedient but saying, "Yet not as I will, but as you will." Jesus is showing his inner conflict. Jesus doesn't want to go through the physical and spiritual suffering. However, Jesus knows that his father's plan is the ultimate victory. Jesus wants to submit to God's purpose.

Then Jesus returned to Peter, James, and John, and found them sleeping! There is a contrast being drawn between Jesus' active agony and prayer, and the disciples who were all asleep. Jesus says to Peter, who had just declared that he would die for Jesus, "Couldn't you watch with me for one hour?" By asking this question, Jesus is expressing his disappointment at finding them all asleep. Jesus was not expecting an answer. Jesus is also highlighting to Peter that Peter thinks he will die for Jesus, yet he couldn't stay awake for 1 hour. There is a difference between what Peter says and what he actually does.

Jesus continues, "Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak." Jesus is telling his disciples to keep looking out for what is happening around them, but also to look out for what is happening spiritually. The first time Jesus told them to watch out, this time he is telling them to pray, not for him, but for themselves. Jesus is reminding them that they can have good intentions, but if they aren't careful, they will abandon the good intentions and end up giving into temptations. Humans are weak, however with prayer, God's spirit can help them stand up against evil. Jesus had already taught the disciples to pray "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Stop for a moment and discuss with the translation team: Talk about a time that you had a good intention of doing something, but in reality you were not able to achieve your plan.

Jesus then goes a few meters away and prays the same prayer again. Jesus knows the answer to what he is asking his father. Jesus concludes, "Let your will be done." "Let your will be done" is also part of the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples when he was teaching them how to pray. Jesus is showing his disciples how they should submit to what God asks of them, even if it costs them dearly.

Jesus returns to the disciples again, and finds them asleep-again-because their eyes were heavy! This means that they were not able to keep their eyes from closing, so they could not stay awake. They may have found it hard to stay awake because it was late into the night, or because they were exhausted by the stressful situations that had occurred since the beginning of the Passover meal earlier in the evening.

Jesus left them again to go and pray. This time Jesus didn't ask the disciples to stay awake and pray. This is surprising. Maybe Jesus has realized that it will be just himself and his father that will go through the events that are about to take place.

Jesus returns to find his disciples asleep-again! Jesus says, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest." It appears that Jesus is telling them to rest now. We do not know exactly what Jesus is saying here. It is generally believed that Jesus is saying the opposite of what is meant or he is using an expression that means the opposite of what is said. Jesus is saying that they should be doing the exact opposite of what they are doing. He is saying to them, "Go ahead and sleep. Have your rest," when they should be alert and praying for themselves. In fact, the disciples should have been doing this the whole time they have been at Gethsemane.

Jesus continues, saying, "The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Up, let's be going. Look, my betrayer is here!" Jesus is calling himself the Son of Man, a title which links his human nature with divine origins. The Son of Man is the person to whom God gives all authority and power. This title has previously been used in the Jewish scriptures, particularly by the prophet Daniel. Jesus is saying that sinners who do not know who Jesus is will arrest him and sentence him to death, even though God has given Jesus all authority and power.

Jesus then tells them to get up, it is time to go, because Judas has come with the authorities to arrest Jesus.

Jesus' declaration is shocking because it implies that his betrayal is final. All that Jesus, and the prophets in the Jewish old testament have foreseen is now going to take place. It is a pivotal moment in history, the start of the series of events which will lead to Jesus' execution.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 7 scenes.

First scene: It is evening. Jesus and his 11 disciples (Judas had already left the group during the Passover meal) have left Jerusalem and walked to the Mount of Olives. They arrive at an olive grove which is called Gethsemane.

Second scene: Jesus takes Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, a little further on from the other disciples. Jesus becomes quite distressed. He tells them to remain and keep watch. Jesus went a few meters away and fell to the ground and prayed.

Third scene: Jesus returns to find the disciples asleep. Jesus asks Peter, "Couldn't you keep watch with me for even one hour?" Jesus tells them, "Watch and pray that you do not fall into temptation." He reminds them that in their spirit they want to do the right thing, but it is not always easy.

Fourth scene: Jesus leaves Peter, James, and John a second time. Jesus prays to his father, asking if it is possible may the cup be taken away from him. Jesus concludes, "Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Fifth scene: Jesus returned back to the three disciples. He found them asleep, again, because they could not keep their eyes open.

Sixth scene: Jesus leaves the disciples again to pray for a third time. He says the same thing again.

Seventh scene: Jesus returned back to his disciples and found them sleeping again! He says, "Are you still sleeping and resting?" Jesus tells them it is time for them to get up as he is about to be delivered into the hands of sinners. Jesus tells them the one who is going to betray him is about to arrive.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Jesus
- Peter
- James, Son of Zebedee
- John, Son of Zebedee
- Other disciples

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

The action takes place after Jesus and the disciples have shared the Passover meal in Jerusalem. One of the disciples, Judas, is no longer with the group, as he left during the meal. Jesus has just told Peter that Peter would deny knowing Jesus before morning. Peter and the rest of the disciples have said that they would be willing to die for Jesus. The disciples were wondering what was going to happen, and why Jesus had said some of the things that he had said.

The disciples are walking from the city, down through the valley and up the Mount of Olives to an olive grove called Gethsemane. The walk is about 15 to 20 minutes. It is important to note that it is night time, so it is dark. There would not have been much natural lighting. There were a lot of people in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, so it is possible that there were other groups of people on the Mount of Olives that evening. The passage does not tell us if there were others present or not.

When they arrive at Gethsemane, Jesus tells the disciples to sit and wait whilst he goes a little further on, probably just a few meters. The disciples would have been sitting amongst olive trees on the dusty and stony ground. Jesus takes Peter and the sons of Zebedee (James & John) with him. It is important to note the distance between the disciples, the 3 disciples (Peter, James, and John), and Jesus. The groups would not have been far from each other. The disciples would still have been able to hear what Jesus was saying, or if not exactly what he was saying, the disciples would have heard the distress in Jesus' voice.

Jesus became overwhelmed and distressed. It is important to note that Jesus has not displayed this behavior before. Jesus is revealing the inner torment he is going through at this moment. Jesus declares he is overwhelmed with sorrow and asks the 3 disciples to keep watch with him. This is the first time that Jesus has actually voiced what he is thinking and feeling about all that is about to happen. Jesus goes a small distance away (a few meters) and falls to the ground. Jesus deliberately falls to the ground; he does not fall over accidentally. Jesus is lying down with his face on the ground. Although Jesus is having a private conversation with God his father, he will know the disciples could hear. The prayer is both private and public. Jesus asks if it is possible for the cup of suffering to be taken away. He also says, "Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." It is important to note that Jesus is not talking about a literal cup. Jesus is using "cup" to represent the suffering and separation from his father that he is about to accept. Jesus is respectfully stating that he cannot avoid the suffering he is about to endure and chooses to carry out God's plan.

After about an hour, Jesus returns to Peter, James, and John and finds them asleep. Jesus speaks directly to Peter, even though James and John were also there. This could be because earlier in the evening Peter had said that he would never deny Jesus, even if he had to die for Jesus. Jesus says to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!" Peter knew that Jesus' question did not have an answer. Jesus was making a statement which contained an accusation that Peter could not even stay awake one hour for Jesus. The sentence is a mild rebuke. Jesus is reminding Peter that temptation is all around and Peter will need to be strong to resist it.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of statement?

Jesus again moves a small distance away from Peter, James, and John to pray for a second time. Jesus prays to his father, "If it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may Your will be done."

After some time, Jesus returns to Peter, James, and John and finds them asleep again. The disciples are having trouble staying awake, because their eyes were heavy. This means their eyes kept closing and they were unable to prevent this from happening. It is interesting that they may want to stay awake and pray with Jesus, but they seem unable to do so. This is an example of the spirit being willing, but the flesh is weak. The disciples desire to stay awake, but they cannot keep their eyes open as they are so tired.

Jesus again moves a small distance away from Peter, James, and John to pray for a third time.

Jesus returns to Peter, James, and John and finds them asleep again. This time Jesus speaks to all 3 of them. Jesus says, "Are you still sleeping and resting?" The exact meaning of the sentence is unclear. Jesus could be accusing them of still sleeping, when they should be awake. Regardless of the tone of the question, Jesus is saying that he does not want them to go on sleeping, as he did not want them to sleep before.

Stop here and discuss how you would say this in your language. Would you use a question here, or some other form of statement?

Jesus tells them they need to get up, as Jesus' betrayer is arriving.

It is important to remember this back and forth motion between Jesus and his three disciples. Jesus goes three times to pray. Jesus comes back and sees his disciples sleeping three times.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 7 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- God
- Jesus
- Peter
- James, Son of Zebedee
- John, Son of Zebedee
- Other disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

Jesus has just told Peter that he would betray Jesus this very night. Peter has said that he would die for Jesus and would never deny him. All the disciples said the same thing. It is night time. Jesus and his disciples (except Judas) leave Jerusalem and walk through the valley to the Mount of Olives. They arrive at an olive grove called Gethsemane. Make sure the team act out walking from Jerusalem, through the valley, and up the Mount of Olives.

When they arrive at Gethsemane, Jesus tells the disciples to "sit here while I go over there and pray." Jesus leaves most of the disciples, but takes Peter, James, and John with him.

Stop the action.

- Angry,
- Confused,
- Tired,
- Apprehensive.

Ask Peter, James, and John what they are thinking and feeling. You might hear some things like:

- I don't understand why Jesus doubts me,
- Jesus can rely on me,
- I wonder if we will meet some of the old prophets again like we did on the mountain before.
[!end] Restart the action.

The four of them walk a little distance away (probably a few meters). Jesus became anguished and overwhelmed with grief. Jesus said to them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point to death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Stop the action.

- I am frightened,
- Jesus has lost his mind,
- Why is Jesus acting so strangely tonight, I have never seen Jesus be this worried,
- I'm so tired and I don't understand what is about to happen.

Ask Jesus what he is feeling. You might hear some things like:

- Distraught,
- Distressed,
- Sick,
- Overwhelmed,
- So alone,
- Frightened,
- I need my father. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus went a little further, and fell with his face to the ground. Jesus said, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. But I want your will to be done, not mine."

Jesus returned to Peter, James, and John and found them asleep. Jesus said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"

Stop the action.

- I'm overwhelmed,
- I don't understand what is happening,
- I just can't keep awake,
- I'm always here for Jesus, I just need a bit of sleep and I'll be okay in an hour,
- I will die for Jesus, he can rely on me,
- Jesus will be better in the morning after he has spent some time with God.

Ask Jesus what he is thinking and feeling. You might hear some things like:

- They just do not understand,
- Father, I need you to be with them,
- Wake up! All of the evil in the universe is about to be focused on me and I cannot bear the separation from my father,
- I love them, but I can barely manage to carry this burden. [!end] Restart the action.

Then Jesus left Peter, James and John a second time. This time Jesus prayed to his father, "If it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, yet I want to do what you want, not what I want." Jesus chooses to accept what is about to happen.

Stop the action.

- If only there was another way,
- I am choosing to trust and accept what my father says I need to do,
- Desperation.

Ask God how he is feeling right now. You may hear things like:

- I wish there was another way,
- I love my son so much, I am feeling equally crushed. [!end] Restart the action.

When Jesus returned to his disciples, he found them asleep again. They could not keep their eyes open.

Stop the action.

- I cannot think straight because I am so tired,
- I feel overwhelmed,
- I feel embarrassed that I fell asleep as Jesus needs me.

Ask Jesus how he is feeling. You may hear things like:

- I am so worried for my disciples,
- If only they could stay awake, they would go into tomorrow knowing they were with me,
- Disappointed. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus left them for a third time, praying the same thing. Jesus then came back to Peter, James, and John and found them asleep-again! Jesus asks them, "Are you still sleeping?" or "Go ahead and keep sleeping!" Jesus then tells them, "But look-the time has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Let us go! Look, my betrayer is here!"

Stop the action.

- I love them so much, yet I can barely face all of this,
- At last. The time has come,
- Father, I need you.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The **disciples** and Jesus leave Jerusalem and walk to the **Mount of Olives**. They stop in an olive grove called **Gethsemane**. Translate disciples in the same way you did in previous passages. Disciples is in the Master Glossary. The Mount of Olives is a wide area to the east of the city of Jerusalem. Gethsemane is situated on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. It was considered to still be within the city of Jerusalem. Gethsemane means "olive press." The area had been planted with olive trees. There was an olive press in the garden used to press olives to extract olive oil from the fruit of the trees.

Jesus tells the disciples to sit whilst he goes a little further to **pray**. To pray means to talk to God. Translate "pray" in the same way you did in previous passages. Pray is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus took with him Peter and the 2 sons of Zebedee, James and John. Jesus became **overwhelmed** and **distressed**. These are vivid and strongly worded terms. These deep emotions can include confusion, anxiety, being fearful, grieved, and uncertainty. Jesus felt these emotions for some time; it was not just a momentary feeling.

Stop here and discuss how you would describe this overwhelming emotion. How would you translate "overwhelmed and distressed" in your language?

Jesus tells them "My **soul** is **crushed with grief**," or "my soul is very sorrowful to the point of death." The soul is the centre of someone's personality. Translate soul in the same way you have before. Soul is in the Master Glossary.

Keep watch means to stay spiritually alert. Jesus does not want his disciples to fall asleep. He wants them to pray and find strength from God.

Jesus **fell with his face to the ground** or **bowed with his face to the ground**. This means that Jesus intentionally fell to the ground. He did not fall by accident. It was showing an attitude of prayer, underlying the depth of Jesus' emotion.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team how you would say this in your language.

"Watch and pray that you may not enter into **temptation**." Temptation means to ask God that you are not tested-tempted-or when you are tested-tempted-that you will be strong enough to withstand the test and not fall into temptation.

"The **spirit** is willing, but the body is weak." The spirit refers to man's internal being, desires, or intentions. Translate "spirit" in the same way you have before. Spirit is in the Master Glossary.

"Look, the **hour** has come." An hour is a measurement of time. An hour is literally 60 minutes. In this instance, Jesus means that the time has come.

"The **Son of Man** is **delivered into the hands of sinners**." Jesus is calling himself the Son of Man, a title which links his human nature with divine origins. The Son of Man is the person to whom God gives all authority and power. This title has previously been used in the Jewish scriptures, particularly by the prophet Daniel. Translate Son of Man in the same way you have before. Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:36-46

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4376762 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7488574 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:47-56

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:47-56 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus had taken his disciples to the olive grove called Gethsemane. Jesus spent time praying, and in distress about the events which are about to take place. Jesus' disciples slept, despite previously saying they were willing to die for Jesus.

The story begins with "While he, Jesus, was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd." Matthew reintroduces us to Judas as "one of the twelve disciples." At some point, probably during the Passover meal in Jerusalem, Judas left the group and met with the Jewish authorities to tell them where Jesus would be that night. This is fulfilling what Jesus said was going to happen earlier in the evening.

The Jewish authorities sent a crowd of men to arrest Jesus. The Jewish authorities included the leading priests and elders of the people. These people are the governing body and court for Jewish people. The crowd was a group of men. In this context, a crowd would usually mean a chaotic group of people who are doing harmful things. We do not know how many men were in the group, but we know they wanted to hide from the people who liked Jesus, and did not want to draw attention to themselves. However, there were enough men to be certain that they could arrest Jesus quickly.

They arrived carrying swords and clubs. This shows that they were ready to fight anyone who tried to resist them. A sword is a long metal knife or dagger used for fighting. A club was a heavy piece of wood used for fighting.

Stop here and show your translation team photos of swords and clubs.

Judas had agreed to show the Jewish authorities which person was Jesus. This may have been because it was dark, and the men who were arresting Jesus may not have known what Jesus looked like. Judas arranged to show who Jesus was by greeting Jesus with a kiss. It was common practice for friends to greet each other by kissing on each cheek. It was common for men to greet each other with a kiss. To greet someone with a kiss would be to show respect to that person. A disciple would often greet their teacher with a kiss. Sometimes this would be on the hand, cheek, or foot. It would be shocking for Judas to greet Jesus with a kiss in order to betray Jesus. Judas went straight to Jesus and greeted Jesus by saying "Rabbi." Rabbi means "my master" or "my teacher."

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: In your culture, how would you greet someone you respect? In your culture what are the various ways that friends greet each other?

Jesus replies to Judas, "My friend, do what you have come for." Jesus is showing he knows exactly what is about to take place. It is interesting that Jesus is calling Judas a friend. A friend is someone who you care about and share things with. Friends look after and protect each other. Jesus is politely addressing Judas, but Jesus chooses to not use his actual name. Jesus is also implying that he himself is friendly and approachable. Interestingly, Jesus uses "friend" on only 2 other occasions. In both of these situations, the person Jesus was addressing had done something wrong.

The crowd then "lay hands on" or "seize" or "grabbed" Jesus. They physically took hold of him with their hands to make sure he could not escape. They arrested him.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How would you describe how Jesus was arrested? How would you make sure it was clear that the crowd took hold of Jesus in a physical way?

One of Jesus' disciples tried to resist the arrest. The disciple pulls out his sword or knife from where he usually keeps it hidden, and cuts off the ear of one of the men who came with the crowd. The man was a slave of the leading or high priest. We do not know which ear the disciple cut off.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: How are weapons used for protection in your culture? In your region, how do people protect their friends and families from other people who may want to harm them?

Jesus tells his disciple, "Put your sword back in its place." Jesus is telling his disciple the sword should be kept hidden and stored away. It should not be used for harming this servant. Jesus tells his disciples that those who will fight using swords will be killed by other people who fight with swords. Jesus is saying that it is better to have injustice done to you than to use violence as a way to protect or bring justice. There is a strong comparison between the way Jesus accepts his arrest, without violence, and the disciple who wanted to fight.

Jesus reminds all of those who could hear that using a sword was unnecessary because Jesus had much more power available if he needed it. Jesus could ask his Father to send thousands of angels to protect him and that God would send them immediately. Some translations use the words 12 "legions" of angels. A legion refers to a unit of soldiers in the Roman army. A legion is likely to have included about 6,000 soldiers. Jesus is saying that God could send more than enough angels to overcome the crowd, but that is not God's plan. An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being who carries messages between God and humans. However, Jesus wants the prophecies in Jewish scriptures to be fulfilled, and God to carry out his will.

Then, or at that time, Jesus speaks to the crowd asking them, "Am I a dangerous revolutionary that you need to arrest me with swords and clubs? Why did you not arrest me in the temple? I was in the temple every day teaching." Jesus does not expect an answer to this question. Jesus is highlighting the fact that they could have arrested him in public everyday, but that they had to come at night time. The men are treating Jesus like a dangerous criminal, even though Jesus had been teaching peacefully in the temple for at least 2 weeks.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: What was Jesus saying by asking these questions?

Jesus then reminds them, "This is happening to fulfil the words of the prophet as recorded in the scriptures." Jesus is highlighting God is in control. This is not happening by accident. We will see in the next several passages, the upcoming events will happen in a way that the prophets predicted many years before.

Then all the disciples ran away and left Jesus.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Jesus is talking with 3 of his disciples in the olive grove called Gethsemane. Judas arrives with a crowd who are carrying swords and clubs. Judas goes to Jesus and greets him by calling him Rabbi, and greets him with a kiss.

Second scene: Jesus replies "Friend, do what you have come to do." The crowd grab Jesus. One of the disciples pulls out a sword and cuts off the ear of the servant of the leading priest. Jesus tells the disciple to put away his sword. He says all who live by the sword will die by the sword. Jesus says, "Don't you know, I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them immediately?" Jesus says the scriptures must be fulfilled.

Third scene: Jesus speaks to the crowd asking why they are arresting him as if he was a revolutionary, when he has been teaching in the temple everyday. Jesus says this is happening so the words of the prophets in the scriptures will be fulfilled.

Fourth scene: All the disciples ran away.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Judas
- The disciples
- The disciple who draws his sword to cut off the man's ear
- The slave of the leading priest who has his ear cut off
- The religious leaders and Jewish elders who sent the crowd
- The crowd

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Remember that before this story takes place, Judas has left Jesus and the 11 other disciples to meet with the religious leaders to lead them to where Jesus will be. We do not know exactly when Judas left. It was at some point during the evening celebration meal, or shortly after it. Judas tells the religious leaders that he will take them to where Jesus is, and will show them who Jesus is by greeting Jesus with a kiss.

This passage, however, starts as Jesus has just woken up his 3 disciples again and told them to get up as his betrayer is here. Jesus is telling them that he knows Judas has arrived and he is about to be arrested. This story is still set in the olive grove called Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives.

This story starts at night time. Judas and the crowd, who have been sent by the religious leaders and Jewish elders, are coming into the olive grove. They are carrying swords (or long knives) and clubs. We do not know how many men were in the crowd, but Matthew reminds us it was a "large crowd."

Judas went straight to Jesus. Judas calls Jesus "Rabbi," and he greets Jesus with a kiss. The crowd now knows who they need to arrest. Jesus says to Judas, "Friend, do what you have to do." Jesus is telling Judas to get on and do what Judas has decided he will do, which is to betray Jesus. Some translations have Jesus asking, "Why are you here?" This is a question that does not require an answer, because both Jesus and Judas knew why Judas was there. The important point is that Jesus was in control of the situation, allowing Judas to betray him. The crowd then grabbed Jesus to arrest him. This means that Jesus could not escape.

Then one of the disciples pulled out his sword or long knife and struck the slave of the leading priest, cutting his ear off. In this passage we are not told which ear he cut off. If you need to say which ear is cut off, you can say the right ear. We know this from other passages in the scriptures.

Jesus tells the disciple to put away his sword. This means to put it back under his cloak, or to put it back in the protective covering it should be in. Jesus says, "Those who use the sword will die by the sword." It is important to remember Jesus is telling his disciples that to use violence only increases the use of violence in a situation. Jesus is choosing to suffer injustice and death, rather than fight back. "Don't you realize that I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly?" Jesus is saying that he has options to resist the arrest, but he wants to fulfil God's plan. Jesus continues, "But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?" This is a question that does not require an answer. Jesus is telling them that he knows everything that is about to happen, and he accepts it and will go through it all.

Jesus then speaks to the crowd. Jesus asks them, "Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the temple? I was there teaching every day." Jesus was not expecting them to answer the question. Jesus is telling them that they didn't need to come with the weapons to arrest him as he is not dangerous. Jesus is pointing out that they could have arrested him any day when he was teaching peacefully in the temple. Jesus is also showing that they are wanting to arrest him in secret. Jesus carries on speaking. Jesus says, "But this is all happening to fulfil the words of the prophets as recorded in the Scriptures."

Stop and discuss as a team how you would say: "Am I a dangerous revolutionary that you need to arrest me with swords and clubs?" so anyone hearing the story would understand the meaning of what Jesus was saying.

At that point, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Judas
- The disciples
- The disciple who draws his sword to cut off the man's ear
- The slave of the leading priest who has his ear cut off
- The religious leaders and Jewish elders who sent the crowd
- The crowd

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Before this story begins, Judas goes to the religious leaders and offers to take them to where Jesus will be that night. Judas tells them that the man he greets with a kiss will be Jesus. The religious leaders send a crowd armed with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus. Judas leads the crowd to the olive grove on the Mount of Olives. All of this happens before the story starts. You may act out this first scene if it will help you remember what happened.

The story starts with Jesus talking to 3 of his disciples. The crowd arrives at the olive grove, the garden of Gethsemane, carrying swords and clubs. Judas, who is one of Jesus' disciples, goes up to Jesus. Judas greets Jesus saying, "Rabbi," and gives Jesus a kiss.

Stop the action.

- Father, give me the strength I need,
- I wish Judas had not chosen this for himself,
- The time has come.

Ask Judas what he is feeling at this moment. You may hear things like:

- Oh no, what have I done?
- I suddenly feel sick and my stomach hurts,
- I hope I have done the right thing here, and the religious leaders are right. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus says to Judas, "Friend, do what you have to do." The crowd grab Jesus. One of Jesus' disciples pulls out a sword, or long knife, and cuts off the ear of one of the crowd. The man whose ear is cut off is the servant of the leading priest. Jesus tells his disciple to put the sword away. Jesus then asks, "Don't you realize that I could ask

my Father for thousands of angels to protect us, and he would send them instantly? But if I did, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that describe what must happen now?"

Stop the action.

- This is going to be so difficult,
- I am worried about how my friends are going to manage with all that is about to happen,
- I hope my friends remember what I have told them,
- Father, I am trusting you.

Ask the disciples how they are feeling right now. You may hear things like:

- Why doesn't Jesus do something?
- Afraid,
- I can't move, I am so worried,
- What has Judas done? [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus asks the crowd who have come to arrest him, "Am I some dangerous revolutionary, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Why didn't you arrest me in the temple? I was there teaching every day. But this is all happening to fulfil the words of the prophets as recorded in the Scriptures."

Stop the action.

Ask Jesus what he is thinking and feeling right now. You may hear answers such as "I am so sad that I am going to be separated from my father," "I wish they realized that my kingdom is to serve and lead people to God, not overthrow those in authority," "This crowd do not know what they are doing, and I still love them."

The disciples then desert Jesus and run away.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The story continues immediately from the previous story. Jesus is talking to 3 of his disciples in the olive grove which is called Gethsemane. Judas, one of the 12 **disciples**, came into the garden with a **crowd** of men.

The original language just says "Judas, one of the 12," however, we know that "12" refers to disciples, so many translations include the word "disciples" to make the story clear. Translate the word **disciples** in the way you did in previous passages. The word **disciples** is in the Master Glossary.

A **crowd** suggests a number of people who have gathered together. There would have been enough men to arrest Jesus using force if necessary. The crowd was planning to cause trouble. They were not a peaceful group of men.

The men were carrying **swords** and **clubs**. A **sword** is like a long knife. It would have been used in fighting, not to cut up food. Men would carry them in a covered place, maybe underneath their outer garment, or **cloak**. Cloak is in the Master Glossary. The men could have had a special place to hold the sword. A **club** is a heavy piece of wood that people would use to fight with.

Show your translation team the picture of the sword and club again to be reminded of what a sword or club looks like.

The crowd had been sent from the **teachers of the law** and **elders** of the Jewish people. The teachers of the law were the religious authorities. The elders are those in authority ensuring Jewish traditions and laws are kept. Translate teachers of the law and elders in the same way you have in previous passages. Teachers of the law and elders are in the Master Glossary.

Judas, who is a **traitor** or **betrayer**, had arranged with the crowd a prearranged **sign**, so they knew which man was Jesus.

A **traitor** or **betrayer** is someone who pretends to be a friend, but then does something that causes the person to get into trouble or harm. Judas was one of Jesus' 12 disciples, but he showed Jesus' enemies where they could find Jesus and arrest him.

A **sign** is an action or event which is a signal. In this case, Judas had agreed that he would greet Jesus with a kiss. The kiss was the sign showing which man was Jesus.

Judas went straight to Jesus and said "Rabbi," then greeted Jesus with a kiss. **Rabbi** is a Jewish title meaning "my great one" or "my great teacher." Rabbi is a title that shows respect to a religious teacher. In the book of Matthew, Judas is the only disciple who calls Jesus "Rabbi." Usually Jesus' disciples would have greeted Jesus with "Lord," which means "master" or even "divine being." In other books of the Bible, the other disciples also call Jesus "rabbi" or "teacher." Translate Rabbi in the same way you have in previous passages. Rabbi is in the Master Glossary.

The men gather around Jesus to arrest him. They **seized** him and **laid hands on** Jesus. To "seize" literally means to "lay hands on him." This means they grabbed him and held him so that he could not escape.

One of Jesus' disciples took his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's slave or servant. The high priest was the leading or head priest. A **slave** is someone who is owned by someone. A slave does not have any rights. Translate the word slave in the same way you have before. Slave is in the Master Glossary. Jesus tells the disciple to put his sword away.

Jesus tells his disciples that God is in control, and God could send "thousands of angels" to protect them. Some translations use the words 12 "legions" of angels. A **legion** refers to a unit of soldiers in the Roman army. A legion is likely to have included about six thousand soldiers. Jesus is saying that God could send more than enough angels to overcome the crowd, but that is not God's plan. Legion is in the Master Glossary.

An **angel** is a supernatural, spiritual being who carries messages between God and humans. Translate angel in the same way you have in previous passages. Angel is in the Master Glossary. Jesus reminds his disciples that the Jewish **scriptures** have already stated what will happen, and this must be fulfilled. Translate the word scriptures in the same way you have in previous passages. Scriptures is in the Master Glossary.

Then Jesus asks the crowd who are arresting him if he is a **revolutionary** or leading a **rebellion**. A revolutionary is someone who is trying to overthrow the authority or government. When Jesus asks, "Am I leading a rebellion?" this is Jesus saying that the crowd have come to arrest Jesus as if he was a dangerous criminal or an outlaw.

Jesus says that he was teaching in the **temple**. This means he was teaching in the temple courtyards. Translate this in the same way you have in previous passages. temple is in the Master Glossary.

Jesus says that all that will happen will be to fulfil what the **prophets** said would happen long ago. The prophets' words are recorded in the Jewish scriptures. A prophet is someone who has received a message from God giving information about what will happen at a future time. Translate the word prophet in the same way you have in previous passages. Prophet is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:47–56

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3771471 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6390651 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:57–68

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:57–68 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus was arrested by a crowd. This passage follows on immediately. The crowd led Jesus away. They leave the olive grove on the Mount of Olives, walk back through the valley into Jerusalem.

The crowd took Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. The high priest was the priest who ruled over all the other Jewish religious leaders. The high priest literally means "the most important priest." The high priest ruled over the Jewish council, so he would guide Jesus' trial. Teachers of the law, who are sometimes called scribes, and elders were gathered at Caiaphas' home.

When all of these groups of people meet together-the priests, teachers of the law and elders-this is called the Sanhedrin. This is the governing body for the Jewish people. They can rule on almost anything, either community or religious. The only thing they cannot do is to sentence someone to death. A Roman court is the only place that someone could be sentenced to death. The Sanhedrin would usually meet somewhere else when they are meeting formally. In this story, they meet at Caiaphas' home. According to Jewish law a trial could not be held at night. When charges are brought against someone which could result in them being condemned to death, the trial had to be held over two days. Any witnesses had to be questioned in private. The Sanhedrin ignored all of these rules for Jesus' trial. Maybe this is showing how quickly and secretly those in authority want to arrest and trial Jesus. The Sanhedrin were all together waiting for Jesus.

Stop for a moment and discuss with your translation teams: The people in your area are governed by whom and how? Explain who in your culture is responsible for ensuring the people follow cultural practices and who is responsible for law enforcement.

There is a second part of the story in this passage. Peter followed at a distance. Peter is keeping close enough to see where Jesus is going, but Peter is not wanting to draw attention to himself. He went right up to the courtyard of Caiaphas' house. The courtyard would be an uncovered area of the house where anyone could access. Peter sat down with the guard to see what the outcome of Jesus' trial was. Jesus is inside the house and Peter is in the courtyard just outside the house.

Stop here and show your translation team an image of a house with a courtyard. Show them the inside of the house where Jesus was being held and the courtyard where Peter was waiting.

Back at the meeting of the Sanhedrin, the leading priests and all the council were trying to find people who would give false testimony so they could put Jesus to death. At this point, the Sanhedrin did not have a charge which they could accuse Jesus of. They were trying to make up a false charge, which is why they were looking for false witnesses. False witnesses are people who would lie about what Jesus said or did. Jewish law required 2 witnesses to say the same thing for a charge to be made. The members of the Sanhedrin already knew what they wanted to accuse Jesus of, they were looking for false witnesses so they could actually charge Jesus with what they had already decided. There were many witnesses, but what they said about Jesus did not agree with each other.

Stop for a moment. Discuss how trials in your area are carried out. Discuss who would speak and what they would be responsible for.

Finally, 2 men said that Jesus had said that he could destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in 3 days. This is a serious statement against Jesus. In this area of the world, it is a crime to destroy a place of worship. The authorities would kill someone who destroyed a place of worship. This claim is also false. Jesus had not said that he would destroy the temple, but he had said that someone would destroy the temple one day. Jesus also said "this temple" meaning himself would be destroyed, and would then be restored 3 days later. Jesus was explaining that after he had died, he would be raised from the dead, he would be restored, after 3 days. The men accusing Jesus and the members of the Sanhedrin took Jesus' words and manipulated them to mean something different to what Jesus meant.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do people try criminals in your culture? Who leads the trials? How many witnesses do you need in trials?

Now, for the first time the high priest, or leading priest, stood up. By standing up, the high priest shows he is about to take control, and he will speak and question Jesus. He asks Jesus 2 questions, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" The high priest is not asking Jesus to give information about each of these questions. The high priest wants to see if Jesus will deny what the witnesses have said or to explain himself. The high priest makes it clear that he is expecting Jesus to answer.

It is surprising that Jesus did not say anything. Jesus remained quiet, even though the law required him to answer. Jesus' silence does not mean that he is guilty. In some cultures a person who remains silent would be considered guilty as they will not defend themselves. It is interesting that the prophet Isaiah had said that the Messiah would go to his death without defending himself. Jesus was not guilty. Jesus was not afraid. Jesus let events happen as God had said they would happen. The high priest did not expect Jesus to behave in this way.

In your culture, if someone remains quiet in a court and will not answer questions, how are they viewed? Would they be considered guilty or innocent? How would you expect an innocent person to behave in a court?

The high priest then says to Jesus, "I demand in the name of the living God-tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." This question is the crucial part of Jesus' trial. Prophets had told the Jewish people that God would destroy the temple. They also said that the Messiah would replace the temple with a new, perfect temple. The high priest did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. If Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the high priest would consider it very wrong. The high priest is wanting Jesus to state if he is the Messiah, the Son of God.

This time Jesus answers. Jesus is very clear. Jesus says, "You have said it" or "You have said so."

Jesus then continues to clarify his statement. Jesus has said that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, but he is explaining now that it is not in the way which they understand. Jesus continues, "And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven." Jesus is quoting from the Psalms and from the prophet Daniel. The Psalms state that God says his Messiah will sit at the place of honour, next to God, at God's right hand. The prophet Daniel talks about someone like a Son of Man coming on the clouds. Jesus is saying that one day he will prove he is the Messiah, the Son of God when he comes back in power at a later time. When Jesus says that one day they will see the Son of Man sitting in the place of honour, he is saying that one day he will have all authority from God. This is interesting, because Jesus says this in a court that believes that they have authority from God.

The high priest was shocked and horrified by what Jesus had said. The high priest tore his robes, or outer garments, and said "blasphemy!" When a charge of blasphemy is brought against someone in a Jewish court, the judges all stand and make a tear in a piece of their clothing which they are not allowed to mend. It is a sign of expressing anger and horror at blasphemy. Blasphemy is to dishonor God, and make God less majestic. It is to insult God. The Sanhedrin do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, which is why they call it blasphemy.

The high priest asks the rest of the Sanhedrin what their verdict is. They all shout "guilty!" and say "He should die." All of the members of the Sanhedrin are united in their verdict. They are saying that Jesus deserves the death penalty. In the scriptures the penalty for blasphemy is for someone to throw rocks or stones on the guilty person until the guilty person is dead. However, under Roman law, the Sanhedrin cannot carry this out or demand that this is how Jesus should die. Only Roman officials could carry out the death sentence.

Stop for a moment and discuss with your translation team: In your culture, how do people react if someone blasphemers, or dishonors God? If someone is heard to blaspheme, what kind of punishment might they expect to receive?

What follows is shocking. The Sanhedrin, who are meant to uphold the law and be the best members of society, seem to become like a mad crowd and act by physically abusing and insulting Jesus. They spit in Jesus' face and they beat him with their fists. Some of them slap him. They then mock him by asking him to prophesy who had hit him. The Sanhedrin were completely rejecting Jesus and his claims.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of Matthew 26:57–68 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has 4 scenes.

In the first scene: The crowd lead Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. Peter follows on behind. Peter waits in the courtyard of Caiaphas' home.

In the second scene: Jesus is before the Sanhedrin. Various witnesses bring false testimony, but none of their stories agreed. Eventually 2 witnesses are found who say the same thing. The high priest questions Jesus. Jesus remains silent.

In the third scene: The high priest questions Jesus again. This time Jesus answers clearly, that he is the Messiah. The high priest claims Jesus has blasphemed and makes a tear in his garment. All of the Sanhedrin are horrified and angry. They declare that Jesus deserves to die.

In the fourth scene: The members of the Sanhedrin spit on Jesus. They beat him with their fists and taunt Jesus.

The characters in this passage are:

- Jesus
- Peter
- Guards standing in the courtyard of the high priest
- The crowd
- The high priest
- Members of the Sanhedrin. This includes teachers of the law, leading priests, and elders of the Jewish people
- False witnesses

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

It is important to remember that in the previous passage it is night time, so the setting is dark. Jesus has been arrested by a crowd of men at an olive grove called Gethsemane. We know it is a large crowd, enough to arrest Jesus easily, but not too many people to draw attention to themselves. The crowd have gathered around Jesus and have arrested him. Jesus' disciples had seen Jesus being arrested. All of the disciples have run away, except for Peter, who we will see follows behind the crowd to see where Jesus is taken.

There are 2 pieces of action happening at the same time. The high priest, the teachers of the law, and the elders of the Jewish people are assembling together at Caiaphas' house. At the same time, the crowd are arresting Jesus and bringing him to Caiaphas' house.

The story starts with the crowd walking Jesus from the Mount of Olives, back through the valley to Jerusalem. Although we get the idea that the crowd is chaotic, they are not wanting to draw too much attention to themselves. They take Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest.

Whilst Jesus was being arrested, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council, had gathered at the home of the high priest. The members of the Sanhedrin included the high priest, teachers of the religious law, leading priests and elders of the Jewish people. In the room the members of the Sanhedrin are probably sitting in a semi-circle, or a half-circle. The high priest sat at the highest spot between the two halves of the semi-circle. In the middle of the semi-circle were false witnesses ready to tell lies about Jesus. The crowd brought Jesus into the room where the Sanhedrin were waiting. Jesus would have to sit in the middle of the semi-circle on a chair.

Stop for a moment. In your language, how would you describe the meeting of the Sanhedrin and who was there?

Peter had been following the crowd at a distance, all the way from the olive grove to the house of the high priest. Peter does not want people to see him, so he was following at a distance. Peter saw the crowd taking Jesus into the house of the high priest. Peter waited in the courtyard of the house. Peter sat down with the guards to wait to see the outcome of the trial.

Stop for a moment. Look at the image of what a courtyard outside of a house might look like.

It is important to remember that Jewish law requires 2 or more witnesses to agree in order to make a judgement. The whole council tried to find 2 witnesses who could agree with what they said about Jesus. However, the stories of the false witnesses did not agree. Some of the accounts the witnesses gave may have contradicted each other, or the accounts disagreed with what Jesus is meant to have said.

Eventually 2 witnesses said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" At this point the high priest stands up. When the high priest stands up, it shows that he is about to take control of the situation. He wants everyone to listen to him. The high priest probably stepped down into the area between the two halves of the semi-circle. That is where Jesus was. The high priest probably did this so that everyone would be able to see and hear him clearly. The high priest asks Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" The high priest thinks that Jesus is saying he will destroy the temple which is in Jerusalem. Jesus remains completely silent. Jesus is allowing events to take place. Jesus has previously told his disciples what must happen. Jesus knows he could do something about what is going on, but he is carrying out the will of God. The prophets said that he would be silent before his accusers, and this is exactly what Jesus is doing here.

The high priest then says, "I demand in the name of the living God-tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." The high priest is asking Jesus the same thing in two ways. The high priest is asking Jesus if he is the Promised Saviour. The high priest is desperate to charge Jesus, so he uses the most extreme language. He is demanding a response under ancient Jewish laws.

Jesus answers, "You have said so." Jesus is saying to the high priest, "That is your way of saying it." Jesus is saying that although he is, the high priest will interpret Jesus' answer in the wrong way. Or, Jesus is meaning, "That is your way of saying it, but I do not necessarily agree." Jesus continues, "And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven." These two images are both in the same sentence, possibly leading to the question how can Jesus be sitting at the right hand of God as well as coming on the clouds of heaven? One understanding of this might be to say, "You will see the Son of Man, the one who sits at the right side of Almighty God, coming to earth on the clouds."

Jesus is continuing to be completely truthful and explaining what is going to happen. However, the members of the Sanhedrin do not understand what Jesus is really saying. They are desperate to find a way to charge him.

Stop for a moment and discuss how you will say, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest is shocked and very angry. He believes that Jesus has just blasphemed and dishonored God. The high priest tears a piece of his clothing. Tearing a piece of clothing was a sign of mourning and making it clear you want distance from what you have just heard. The clothes were not torn into pieces, rather one tear was made in one of the garments which was being worn. What is interesting is that the priests were not ever allowed to tear their priestly clothes, even for the death of a close family member. Therefore it is surprising that the high priest tore a piece of his clothing, but it shows the depth of shock and horror at what he heard Jesus say. The high priest says, "Blasphemy!" The high priest asks those gathered what their verdict is. They all shout, "Guilty! He deserves to die." They then spit on Jesus. They hit Jesus with their fists. They taunt him, asking him to prophesy as to who has hit him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Jesus
- Peter
- Guards standing in the courtyard of the high priest
- The crowd
- The high priest
- Members of the Sanhedrin. This includes teachers of the law, leading priests and elders of the Jewish people
- False witnesses

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

There are 2 pieces of action happening at the same time. The high priest, the teachers of the law, and the elders of the Jewish people are assembling together at Caiaphas' house. At the same time, the crowd are arresting Jesus and bringing him to Caiaphas' house. You may act out the scenes in whichever order makes most sense to you. The action now begins.

Members of the Sanhedrin had sent a crowd to arrest Jesus. Meanwhile, the members of the Sanhedrin were meeting together to await Jesus' arrival. The high priest, the leading priests, the teachers of the religious law, and the elders of the Jewish people assemble at Caiaphas' house. They are sitting in a semi-circle, or a half-circle.

The crowd lead Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. Peter follows on behind. When Jesus is taken into the home of Caiaphas, Peter stays in the courtyard of the house. He sits near some guards.

Pause the drama.

Jesus is taken into Caiaphas' house. The witnesses tell lies about Jesus. None of the accounts of the witnesses agree.

After a little while, 2 witnesses come forward and they say, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" The high priest then stands up. The high priest asks Jesus, "Aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you say to defend yourself?" Jesus remains seated and completely silent.

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the high priest, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "I am so frustrated that Jesus is refusing to talk," or "We need to stop this man as he is causing such confusion to our people," or "We have all heard this man say dangerous things, now he is refusing to speak!" [!end] Restart the drama.

The high priest then says, "I demand in the name of the living God-tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

Jesus replies, "You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God's right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest cannot believe what Jesus has said. He is horrified. The high priest tears a piece of his clothing. He says, "Blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? You have heard this blasphemy. What is your verdict?"

The men of the Sanhedrin shout, "Guilty! He deserves to die!"

Pause the drama.

Ask the person playing the high priest, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like, "How dare he say he is the Messiah!" or "We can now get rid of this man once and for all."

Ask the people playing the members of the Sanhedrin, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like, "We have heard enough, he must die," or "We have been right all along, this man is dangerous and crazy." [!end] Restart the drama.

They begin to spit in Jesus' face. The men beat Jesus with their fists to cause Jesus pain. Some of the men jeered, saying, "Prophesy to us Messiah, who hit you that time?!"

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

The crowd takes Jesus to the home of **Caiaphas**, the **high priest**.

High priest: the priests in the Jewish religion connected the Jewish people with God by carrying out sacrifices for the people. The priests also educated the people and they took care of the temple, the place that Jewish people worshipped God. Priests were God's representatives to the people. The high priest was the religious head or authority for the Jewish people. The high priest led the Jewish religious court of law. Translate the word high priest in the same way you have before, which means "leading priest." Priest is in the Master Glossary.

Also in the home of Caiaphas were the **scribes** and **elders** who made up the members of the **Sanhedrin**.

Scribes were people who studied the scriptures and were experts in what they meant. Translate scribes in the same way you have before.

Elders are the non-religious men in the Jewish community who ensured that the Jewish community worked well together. Translate elders in the same way you have before.

The **Sanhedrin** is the name given to the governing body made up of the high priest, leading priests, teachers of the religious law, and elders.

Scribes, elders and Sanhedrin are all in the Master Glossary.

Peter followed the crowd at a distance. He went into the **courtyard** of the high priest's house. A courtyard is an area outside of the house which is enclosed on all sides by buildings or high walls. The courtyard does not have a roof, it is open to the sky above. A large house might have several rooms built around a courtyard.

Stop here and discuss: How would you explain the setting of the high priest's house? What words would you use to explain the courtyard of the high priest's house?

Peter sat down with some **guards**. The guards mentioned here were servants or attendants of the high priest and they helped guard and protect the temple.

There were various **false witnesses** also in the middle of the circle who were telling lies about Jesus. A false witness is someone who lies about someone else. A false witness might lie about what someone else said or what someone else did.

Finally two men came forward who said, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the **temple** of God and rebuild it in three days.'" The temple is the special place where the Jewish people worship God. Translate temple in the same way you have before. temple is in the Master Glossary.

The high priest then demands that Jesus declares if he is the **Messiah**, the **Son of God**.

The title **Messiah** means anointed one. Translate Messiah in the same way you have in previous passages. **Son of God** is a title which describes Jesus' close relationship with God and also Jesus being God. Translate Son of God in the same way you have in previous passages. Messiah and Son of God are both in the Master Glossary.

Jesus continues: "You have said it. And in the future you will see the **Son of Man** seated in the place of power at **God's right hand** and coming on the **clouds of heaven**."

The title **Son of Man** is taken from the prophet Daniel. Daniel is describing the "Son of Man" as the one to whom God will give all power and authority. Jesus is now saying that he is the Son of Man. Translate Son of Man in the same way you have before. Son of Man is in the Master Glossary.

To be seated at **God's right hand** is to be sitting at the place of honour, and the place of power.

Jesus says that he will come on the **clouds of heaven**. **Heaven** is the place where God and his angels live. It is the place where those who trust God believe they will go after they die. Translate the word heaven in the same way you have before. Heaven is in the Master Glossary.

The high priest is horrified by Jesus' answer and tears his clothing. He says, "Blasphemy!" **Blasphemy** is when someone says or does something which dishonors God. The idea is that it makes God less majestic. Translate the word blasphemy in the same way you have before. Blasphemy is in the Master Glossary.

He asks those present what their verdict is. They all shout, "Guilty! He deserves to die!"

They spat in his face and beat him with their fists. Some slapped him. They asked him to **prophesy** as to who had hit him. Translate the word prophesy in the same way you have before. Prophecy is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:57-68

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (4236793 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (7192366 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 26:69–75

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 26:69–75 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story is connecting action from previous passages. Peter followed the crowd arresting Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest's house. Peter sat with the guards. It is also helpful to remember that Peter has promised Jesus that even if the other disciples deny Jesus, that he never will. Peter said that he would die for Jesus.

This passage probably occurred at the same time as the previous passage. This story happens during the night of Jesus' trial before the high priest. It ends as the cock crows, to signify the night time is over and morning is coming. Whilst Jesus' trial is taking place inside the high priest's home, Peter is about to have his own "trial" in the courtyard.

The story begins, "Meanwhile Peter ..." or "Now Peter was sitting in an outside courtyard." This is an area surrounded by rooms, buildings, or walls which make up the high priest's house.

Stop for a moment and show the translation team an illustration of a house with a courtyard.

One of the servant or slave girls who works in the high priest's house comes over to Peter and says, "You were also with Jesus the Galilean." The high priest would have had several young women who take care of practical needs in the house. These would likely include cleaning, washing, and possibly cooking. The servant girl approaches Peter, she moves closer to him from where she was. She was a young girl who approached an older man. She should not be a threat to Peter, but he seems to react as if she is a great threat because he reacts defensively. The servant girl described Jesus as "the Galilean." She is pointing out that Jesus was not from their region, but that he was from Galilee, which is north of Jerusalem. People who lived in Jerusalem did not like people from Galilee. People from Jerusalem despised people from Galilee.

Stop for a moment. Tell a story about a group of people who other people despise.

Peter denied that he had been with Jesus. Peter denied it before them all. Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Stop and discuss with your translation team: How do people in your culture act when they deny something?

Peter then moved from the inner courtyard to the entrance to the courtyard. Peter has moved away from the girl who questioned him.

Later by the gate, another servant girl sees Peter and says to those standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Nazareth is a village in Galilee, so again, a servant girl is pointing out that Jesus was not from Jerusalem, and that people should not treat Jesus with respect. Peter again denies knowing Jesus with an oath. The oath would invoke the name of God. Peter says, "I don't even know the man." When someone in Jewish culture speaks an oath, they are saying that God can punish them if they are lying.

Stop and discuss with your translation teams: Describe how people make promises or oaths in your culture. When do they make a promise like this? How serious is it? What do people think will happen if you do not keep the promise or if you lie?

Peter would be speaking with an accent from the region of Galilee. His voice would show him to be "one of those from Galilee." By denying Jesus, it would be clear to all of those who could hear that Peter was, in fact, from Galilee.

After a little while some of those standing around came over to Peter and said, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent." This time it wasn't one person questioning Peter, this time a group approached Peter. A girl approached Peter the first time. Another girl spoke to those around her the second time. This time, the third time, Peter is approached by a group. The trial Peter is undergoing is increasing in intensity as more people question his relationship with Jesus. The group assumes that because Peter is from Galilee, he must be with Jesus.

This time Peter swore, or said very strongly, "A curse on me if I'm lying." There are two different ways to understand what Peter is saying here. The first interpretation suggests that Peter is cursing Jesus. Peter is doing this to try and disassociate himself from Jesus. The second interpretation is that Peter is putting himself under an oath to show what he is saying is true.

Stop here and discuss with your translation team: How would you say this in your language? If possible, keep the wording vague. If you do need to make it clear in your language, use the words in a Bible translation that is closest to your language.

Peter then says, "I don't know the man!" Immediately, or right away, a rooster crows. Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." A rooster is a male chicken that crows around the start of the day. A rooster crowing would show the previous day is over and a new day is starting.

Stop here and show your translation teams an image of a rooster.

Peter went outside and wept bitterly.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: Peter is sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant girl comes up to Peter and says, "You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean." Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Second scene: Peter is by the gate to the courtyard. Another servant girl says to the people standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter denied it, with an oath, "I don't even know the man."

Third scene: Some people said to Peter, "You must be one of them, we can tell by your Galilean accent." Peter swore, "A curse on me if I am lying—I don't even know the man."

Fourth scene: A rooster crows. Peter remembers Jesus' words, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." Peter goes outside and cries deeply.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- A servant girl
- A second servant girl
- A group of people waiting around the courtyard. This is a mix of guards and servants
- A rooster

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story is happening at the same time as the previous story.

Stop for a moment and discuss: How do you show that a story may happen at the same time as another story? If the timings and sequencing of stories are important in your culture, how do you show this?

Now, Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard of the high priest's home. The courtyard is an area which does not have a roof, and is open to the sky. It is surrounded by rooms, buildings or walls which make up the high priest's house.

Stop for a moment and show your translation team an illustration of a typical house with a courtyard. Discuss with your translation team: In your culture, how are houses built? How would you describe a house which had an open courtyard in the middle?

Peter is probably sitting with some guards waiting to see the outcome of Jesus' trial inside the house. A servant girl came over to Peter and said, "You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean."

Stop for a moment and show your translation team a map which includes Galilee, Nazareth, and Jerusalem.

The other people in the courtyard would be able to see a young servant girl approach Peter. The people in the courtyard would be able to hear what the servant girl said to Peter. They would also be able to hear Peter's response.

Stop for a moment and discuss: In your area, what terms would you use to describe a young servant girl? How are groups of people who may not be highly regarded spoken of in your culture—are there any particular words or phrases used?

Peter denied that he was with Jesus. Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about." Peter is saying that it is not true that he was with Jesus. Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about" in front of everyone. Peter wanted all of those who could hear what the servant girl said to know that Peter was not to be associated with Jesus.

Stop for a moment and discuss with your translation team: Tell a story about when someone has denied something. Discuss which words or phrases people may use when they are denying something.

Peter moves away from the crowded courtyard and closer to the entrance. Peter has evaded the questioning of the first servant girl, now he physically evades wanting to be questioned by removing himself from the courtyard.

Another servant girl sees Peter and says to those standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Nazareth is a village in Galilee, so again, a servant girl is pointing out that Jesus was not from Jerusalem.

Peter again denies knowing Jesus with an oath. Peter says, "I don't even know the man." By speaking an oath, Peter is promising that what he is saying is the truth, because if Peter wasn't telling the truth, there would be a consequence as a result of lying. Peter has denied knowing Jesus for a second time.

A little later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter. A little later means a little later in the evening. Bystanders are those people who are waiting in the courtyard. They may include the guards, the servants, and people who are in the courtyard. We do not know exactly who went to speak to Peter, but there were a few people. They said to Peter, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent." Peter swore, "A curse on me if I'm lying—I don't know the man!" Peter is saying, "May God punish me if I am lying!" It is surprising that Peter would not even use Jesus' name, it is as if he is trying to dissociate from Jesus. Peter just calls Jesus "the man."

It is interesting to see that Peter was initially approached by one girl. The second time he was questioned by one girl who spoke to those around. The third time a group approached Peter and questioned him. It is also interesting that as the number of people questioning Peter increases, so does the tone and severity of Peter's denial. Peter also physically removes himself further away from where Jesus is. He started in the courtyard, then moved from the courtyard to the gateway.

Stop for a moment and discuss with your translation team: In your culture, how do you use language or storytelling techniques or tone of voice to show an increase in activity? In your language, how would you show that the number of people questioning Peter is increasing, so the way he denies knowing Jesus increases?

As Peter denied Jesus for the third time, the rooster immediately crowed. Peter immediately remembered Jesus' words, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." This means that Peter immediately remembered Jesus saying that Peter would deny Jesus 3 times before the rooster crows. And Peter went away, weeping bitterly. Peter was deeply distressed that he had denied Jesus, the very thing that Peter said that he would not do.

Stop for a moment. Tell a story about you or someone who really disappointed someone else. What words or phrases might you use to express the deep feeling of regret and sadness?

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Peter
- A servant girl
- A second servant girl
- A group of people waiting around the courtyard. This is a mix of guards and servants
- A rooster

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

Remember, it is night time. This story takes place during the night, until morning when the rooster crows. In the previous story Jesus is undergoing a trial by the Sanhedrin. Jesus is inside the house of the high priest. Peter is waiting in the courtyard of the high priest's house to find out what the outcome of the trial would be. Jesus' trial is still taking place when this story occurs. Jesus's trial and this passage happen at the same time. You may act out this scene if it will help you remember the story.

The passage starts now.

Meanwhile-whilst Jesus' trial is taking place-Peter was sitting in the courtyard of the high priest. A young servant girl, who is a servant of the high priest, came over to Peter. She walked up to Peter and she spoke to him. She said, "You were one of those with Jesus the Galilean." But Peter denied it in front of everyone who could hear him speak. Peter said, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Stop the action.

Peter then moved from the gateway to the courtyard. Another servant girl, or a different servant girl, said to those people who were standing around in the courtyard, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." For the second time Peter denies knowing Jesus. This time Peter also uses an oath to say that he doesn't know Jesus. Peter said, "I don't even know the man."

Stop the action.

Ask one of the servant girls what she is thinking and feeling at this moment. You may hear things like, "He clearly is one of Jesus' friends, why is he pretending he isn't," or "What is this Nazarene hiding?" or "Maybe Jesus isn't such a good man that his friend is pretending not to know Jesus." [!end] Restart the action.

A little while later some of the other bystanders came over to Peter. They said to Peter, "You must be one of them; we can tell by your Galilean accent."

This time Peter swore. Peter said, "A curse on me if I'm lying, I don't know the man!" Peter had denied knowing Jesus for the third time. Immediately the rooster crowed.

Immediately Peter remembered Jesus' words, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." And Peter went away, weeping bitterly.

Stop the action.

Ask Jesus what he is thinking and feeling right now. You may hear things like, "I love Peter so much. I am so sad that he is experiencing such pain."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Meanwhile Peter was sitting in the **courtyard** of the **high priest's** house.

A **courtyard** is an area enclosed by buildings, rooms or walls. The courtyard of the high priest's house was open to the sky, it did not have a roof. Translate courtyard in the same way you have before.

The **high priest** is the most important priest who is in charge of all the other priests. Translate high priest in the same way you have before. Priest is in the Master Glossary.

A young **servant girl** came over to Peter. A servant girl is a slave or a domestic servant who works for the high priest in his house. Servant is in the Master Glossary. Translate servant in the same way you have before.

The servant girl spoke to Peter saying, "You were one of those with **Jesus the Galilean**." This means that Jesus came from Galilee. Galilee is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and show your translation team a map of Israel which includes Jerusalem and the region of Galilee, including Nazareth.

Peter denied it saying, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Later out by the **gate** another servant girl, or a different servant girl said to those people who were standing around in the courtyard, "This man was with Jesus of **Nazareth**."

A **gate** in this passage is an entrance way, a gateway between the courtyard and the street. It could be described as the "entrance to the courtyard."

Nazareth is a town in Galilee.

Peter again denies knowing Jesus strongly. This time Peter uses an **oath**. Peter says, "I don't even know the man." An oath is to swear or to promise what is being said is true. In this case, Peter is saying that before God, he does not know Jesus. Translate oath in the same way you have before. Oath is in the Master Glossary.

Peter denied that he knew Jesus a third time. Immediately the **rooster** crowed. A rooster is a male chicken, a fowl. A rooster makes a noise, called "crowing" around dawn, when the sun is beginning to rise. Roosters normally crow about 3 times between midnight and 3 a.m.

Stop here and show your translation team an image of a rooster.

Suddenly Jesus' words flashed through Peter's mind. This means that Peter immediately remembered Jesus' words very clearly. "Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me." And Peter went away, weeping **bitterly**. "Weeping bitterly" means to weep very much, to weep a great deal in great anguish.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 26:69–75

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3175817 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5359890 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:1–10

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 27:1–10 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This passage continues the narrative of Jesus' arrest and trial. All of the elders and chief priests, the religious leader of the Jews, makes up the high court of the Jews. This high court makes the decision on how to have Jesus executed. This happens in the early morning after Jesus is arrested. The Roman officials limited the power of the Jewish court, but they still could give someone the death penalty. However, the Jewish religious leaders could not carry out the death penalty. Only the Romans who were governing the area could put someone to death.

Matthew begins this passage in the early morning, or first light, following Jesus' arrest. This is possibly still part of the discussion the chief priests and elders were having the night before. It could also be a new meeting when the sun first comes up. Either way, the court came to a decision on how to have Jesus put to death by the Romans. In order to do this, the court would have to present Jesus as a political threat to the Romans.

Stop here and discuss as a team any religious groups in your culture that have some power over the people. How much power do they have? Are there things that they cannot do, only the government can do?

The chief priests and the elders had their servants bind Jesus, or tie Jesus in chains. The Jewish leaders probably tied Jesus in order to make Jesus look more threatening for Pilate. Jesus was not trying to escape so there was no other reason to bind him. Then the chief priests and elders took Jesus to Pilate. Pilate is the governor or prefect, which is a low ranking official, in the area of Judea. Typically Pilate lived in Caesarea, but Pilate was in Jerusalem to keep the peace during Passover.

Stop and look at a map of Judea and see where Caesarea and Jerusalem are.

Matthew switches the narrative to Judas, the betrayer's, final day. Judas learns about the decision of the chief priests and elders and is overwhelmed with remorse.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a time you did something that you truly regretted. How did you feel? How did you show your regret? What did you do to try to make it right?

Some versions say Judas repented, or changed his mind. We do not know the state of Judas' heart. It is possible that Judas truly repented as indicated by Judas' declaration of Jesus' innocence and attempt to give the money back. Judas' attempt to return the money to the chief priests probably did not happen until after Pilate condemned Jesus to death. Judas found the chief priests in the temple, so they had probably already returned from Pilate's. Judas acknowledges his mistake. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." The Jews commonly used the term innocent blood to refer to an innocent man. The Jewish law pronounced a curse on someone who betrayed innocent blood.

Stop and discuss: How does your culture know when someone is truly sorry for their mistakes? What does that person do? How do you refer to someone who is innocent?

The chief priests, however, do not recognize their sin and respond to Judas saying, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." These phrases mean, "Why do we care? That is your problem." In fact, it was the chief priest's duty to be the mediator between God and the people. The chief priests were supposed to make sacrifices for those who sinned. However, in this situation, the chief priests are not concerned with their duty. Judas throws the money into the temple, departs, and hangs himself by the neck with a rope, until he dies.

The priests pick up the money. The priests acknowledge that it was not lawful for them to put the silver coins with the money that belongs to the temple, because the money was used to betray Jesus. The priests agreed together and bought the field belonging to the potter, or someone who makes clay pots, so that foreigners could be buried there. The priests may be trying to look righteous because giving alms and burying the dead were important duties for the Jews. The priests would have had to take care of any foreigners that died in their area who needed to be buried. People call this field the Field of Blood because it was bought with money that paid for the death of Jesus.

Many years before, God had given two Jewish prophets, Jeremiah and Zechariah, information about how the promised savior or Messiah would suffer. Matthew realized that the information from these two prophets was coming true-the "sons" or people of Israel really did take the 30 pieces of silver and bought a potter's field with it. Now, the 30 pieces of silver was the price the Jewish religious leaders paid for the Savior-it was a small amount and showed that they did not think he was worth a lot. Although Matthew did not quote directly from

just Jeremiah, he is showing that all the things the prophets said about the Promised Savior are coming true in the situation with Jesus.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Early in the morning, the chief priests and elders decide how they will have Jesus put to death. They have their servants bind Jesus and take Jesus to Pilate.

Second scene: Judas hears of Jesus' verdict and is very sorrowful. Judas takes the 30 pieces of silver to the temple and tries to give it back to the chief priests. Judas acknowledges his mistake and declares Jesus' innocence. The chief priests do not care. Judas throws the money in the temple and goes and kills himself.

Third scene: The chief priests take the money and purchase the field that belonged to the potter. They turn this field into a cemetery for foreigners. The field is called The Field of Blood for many years. This fulfilled a prophecy written by one or more of the prophets of Israel.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Chief Priests
- Elders
- Pilate (mentioned)
- Judas
- Jeremiah

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Notice that there are several different settings for these scenes. Consider these settings as you visualize the story.

The chief priests and elders are meeting in the very early morning. It is possible that they are meeting in the house of the high priest, near the temple. They decide how to tell Pilate the charges against Jesus so that Pilate will execute Jesus. They tie Jesus up and take Jesus to Pilate, the local ruler. It is likely that Pilate's home was on the other side of the city. At some point the chief priests go back to the temple.

Judas hears that Jesus has been condemned to death and feels great regret for what Judas has done. Judas goes to the temple to confess his sin and declare Jesus' innocence to the chief priests. The chief priests are not concerned with Judas' guilt. They say, "What is that to us?" Judas throws the money down into the temple from where he is in the outer court.

The priests probably picked up the coins at that point, while Judas is walking out to an isolated place to hang himself. Those last two things are probably happening simultaneously. At some point later on the chief priests and elders go buy a field with the money.

Stop here and discuss: What would these settings look like in your context? Is there a place where important decisions are made by religious leaders? Is there a place where the local officials work? Is there a religious place of worship in your area? Where would someone go to be alone and unseen? What kind of fields do you have? If there is time, go to each of these settings in your area. Discuss how you will describe and translate each of these places.

The priests knew it was not lawful, by the law given by God, to put the money in the temple treasury, so the field is called the Field of Blood. This all fulfills what the prophet Jeremiah says.

Stop and discuss how you will translate this prophecy.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Chief Priests
- Elders
- Pilate (mentioned)
- Judas
- Jeremiah (mentioned)

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

The Jewish high court is meeting at first light the day after Jesus' arrest. They come to a decision on how to have Jesus killed. The servants bind Jesus and they take Jesus to Pilate, the governor.

Stop the action.

- Sad that these religious leaders do not understand what they are doing.
- Determined to go through with this. It is what I came for.
- Not looking forward to the rest of the day. [!end] Restart the action.

Judas is filled with remorse when he realizes that Jesus will die. Judas takes the money he was given back to the chief priests at the temple. Judas tells them that he was wrong to betray Jesus because Jesus was innocent. The chief priests do not care since they got what they wanted.

Stop the action.

- Overcome with guilt.
- In agony because I cannot undo what I did.
- Hopeless because the priests won't free me of my sin. [!end] Restart the action.

Judas throws the money into the temple, and goes and kills himself by hanging.

It was not lawful for the chief priests to put the money in the temple treasury. So, the chief priests take the money and decide to purchase a field owned by a potter. The field is called the Field of Blood for many years.

This all fulfilled the prophecy by Jeremiah that says, "They took 30 pieces of silver, the price at which he was valued by the people of Israel, and purchased the potter's field, as the Lord directed."

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

First thing in the morning, the **chief priests** and **elders** made plans to have Jesus put to death. The chief priests were the ruling religious leaders of the Jews. The elders were the older men in the community who helped lead the people. Together all of the chief priests and elders made up the Jewish high court. Use the same word for chief priests that you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of both chief priests-under priests-and elders.

The chief priests and elders have Jesus bound and they take him to Pilate, the **governor**, or local Roman leader.

Judas, the one who **betrays** Jesus, is filled with **remorse** and changes his mind when he hears that Jesus will be killed. Use the same word you have used for Judas before. To betray someone is to give them into the hands of someone else. Remorse is deep regret for something you have done.

Judas goes to the **temple** and tells the chief priests that Judas **sinned**, or was wrong to betray innocent blood. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of sin. The temple is the place where God's presence dwelt and where people would go to worship God. Use the same word you've used for temple before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of temple. The chief priests ask, "What is that to us?" and tell Judas to deal with his sin himself.

Judas throws the silver coins into the temple, and goes out to hang himself. The chief priests take the money and cannot put it into the temple treasury, so they purchase a field with the money. The **thirty pieces of silver** had been used to pay Judas to betray Jesus. So the field is called the Field of Blood. Translate the thirty pieces of silver the same way you have before.

This all happens to fulfill the **prophecy** given by Jeremiah and the prophets, as the **Lord** directed. A **prophecy** is the word of God given to the people of God. Use the same word that you've used for prophecy before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of prophecy. **Lord** refers to God Himself and how the Jews referred to God without saying God's name. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Yahweh, or Lord.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:1–10**Audio Content**[webm zip](#) (2560541 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4480676 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:11–26*Hear and Heart*

Hear Matthew 27:11–26 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Now the story shifts back to Jesus. Jesus now stands before Pilate, the governor. At that time, Israel, the Jewish homeland, was governed by the Roman Empire or kingdom. The Roman emperor, or king, appointed governors to govern smaller areas of land within his empire. Pilate governed the area where the Jews lived. As the Roman representative, only Pilate had the authority to condemn Jesus to death.

Stop and discuss: Who are the leaders in your area that decide whether criminals live or die?

In a Roman court of law, the people who are accusing someone of a crime bring their accusation to the Roman judge, and the Roman judge may ask any questions he wants to the person who is accused. The chief priests probably told Pilate that Jesus wanted to overthrow the Roman government and become king. So Pilate asked Jesus the question, "Are you the king of the Jews?" In a sense, the chief priests were correct-Jesus was king-but he was not a revolutionary who wanted to overthrow the Roman government.

Jesus knew that Pilate did not understand what kind of king Jesus was. Jesus answered, "You have said it," which means that Jesus is saying Jesus is the king, but perhaps different than Pilate expected. The leading priests and elders accused Jesus of many more crimes, and Jesus said nothing. Pilate questioned Jesus again and was amazed at Jesus' continued silence. Pilate did not believe Jesus was guilty. But because Jesus did not defend himself, it was more difficult for Pilate to say that Jesus was innocent.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: When someone is innocent how do they behave? When someone is guilty how do they behave? Jesus was silent, but we know he was innocent. In your culture, would people believe Jesus was innocent or guilty because he was silent?

The Roman governor had the authority to release one prisoner during the week of the Passover celebration, that was chosen by the crowd. Passover was a large celebration held in Jerusalem that remembered when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. The crowd of people asked Pilate to release a prisoner to them. Because Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent, he asked the crowd if they wanted him to release Jesus, the Messiah, or promised Savior. Pilate did not like the Jewish leaders. He knew that the Jewish leaders only arrested Jesus because they hated Jesus because everyone else liked him, not because he was really a revolutionary.

The Roman governor would make official judgments while seated on the judge's seat. Pilate may not have been sitting the entire time he was questioning Jesus. However, Pilate would have to sit when he made the final judgment. Early in the morning, Pilate's wife suffered greatly in a dream because of Jesus. Romans took dreams very seriously. Dreams were considered different kinds of messages, or signs. Pilate's wife sends an urgent message to Pilate while he is sitting on the judge's seat. She warns Pilate not to be involved with Jesus' condemnation, because he is innocent, or righteous.

Stop and discuss: What do dreams signify in your culture? Tell a story of a dream you have had that you knew was supernatural, or from God.

However, the chief priests and elders probably told the crowds to ask for Pilate to release Barabbas, a prisoner who had wanted to overthrow the government. The leading priests probably told the crowds that they had condemned Jesus to die for blasphemy in their court. Pilate asked the crowd which one should be released and the crowd cried out for Barabbas. Pilate, knowing Jesus was innocent, asked what should be done with Jesus. The crowd persistently demanded that Jesus die a terrible form of death: crucifixion, where Jesus' hands and feet would be nailed to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross. Pilate asked the crowds what Jesus had done wrong. The crowd did not answer, but continued to say, "Crucify him!" The crowd was starting a riot. Pilate must have determined that he would have to give the people what they wanted and crucify Jesus. Pilate performed a symbolic action of his own innocence, by washing his hands in front of the crowd. Pilate declared his innocence of Jesus' blood, or Jesus' death. This declaration would have been similar to Pilate admitting that he knew Jesus was innocent. Pilate then told the crowds that Jesus' death is their responsibility. All of the people in the crowd cried out that the responsibility for Jesus' death would be on them and their children.

Stop and discuss: How do people in your culture symbolically show that they are innocent?

Then Pilate released Barabbas. Pilate then ordered the soldiers to flog Jesus. The soldiers probably took Jesus inside the governor's palace to flog him in the courtyard, away from the people. The Roman soldiers flogged people by stripping them naked, tying them to a pole, and hitting them many times with a whip made of leather. They tied pieces of bone, glass, or lead to the leather in order to make the whip more harmful. Many people died from flogging. After the soldiers flogged Jesus, Pilate ordered the soldiers to crucify Jesus. Romans crucified people by nailing their hands and feet to two pieces of wood laid out in the shape of a cross. They placed the cross upright and allowed the person to die a slow and painful death.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a whip with lead, glass, and bones tied in it.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Discuss methods of execution in your culture. How are they the same or different from this method?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

First scene: Pilate questions Jesus about being the King of the Jews as Jesus stands before him. Jesus tells Pilate he is the King of the Jews. The chief priests make many accusations against Jesus. Jesus does not answer any of them. Pilate is amazed at Jesus' silence while Pilate continues to question Jesus.

Second scene: At the Passover the governor would release one prisoner that the people wanted released. The Romans held Barabbas, a well known prisoner, in custody. When the people gathered, Pilate asked who they wanted released: Barabbas or Jesus, the Messiah. Pilate knew that the chief priests and elders were jealous of Jesus' popularity.

Third scene: Pilate's wife sent Pilate an urgent message to have nothing to do with the innocent man. Pilate's wife had suffered much in a dream because of Jesus.

Fourth scene: But the chief priests and elders had persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and have Jesus crucified. The governor continued asking what they wanted to do with Jesus. They called out for Jesus to be crucified. Pilate asked what Jesus had done. The crowds did not respond except to call for his crucifixion.

Fifth scene: Pilate saw that the people were not listening. Pilate washed his hands of Jesus' blood, declaring Pilate's innocence in Jesus' death. Pilate puts the responsibility on the crowds. All of the people say that they and their children are responsible for Jesus' death. Pilate released Barabbas, had Jesus scourged, or whipped, and then handed Jesus over to soldiers to be crucified.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Pilate, the governor
- The chief priests and elders
- The crowds
- Barabbas
- Pilate's wife (someone to bring her message)
- Roman soldiers

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

Pilate starts the trial like any Roman trial, as Jesus stands before him. Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus says, "You say that I am." This may mean that Jesus is saying, "Yes, I am." Jesus may want to state in a gentler way that he is a king, but not a king in the same way Pilate is thinking.

The chief priests and elders accuse Jesus of many things. We do not know specific things they accuse him of. Pilate asks Jesus, "Don't you hear how many things they say against you?" Jesus does not give an answer to any of the charges, and Pilate is surprised or amazed. Pilate does not understand why Jesus does not answer, because most accused people want to convince the court that they are innocent.

Matthew stops the storyline to tell us some background information. Matthew says that there is a custom that the governor releases one prisoner to the people during the time of the Passover celebration. Then Matthew tells us that one prisoner was Barabbas, a well known prisoner who we know was a revolutionary who had killed people when he tried to help overthrow the government.

Stop here and discuss: How do you tell background information for a story? How does your audience know that this information is not part of the action of the story?

After Matthew gives us the background information, the crowd plays a larger part in the scene. It is possible that the hearing took place in public in front of Pilate's residence. Pilate believes that Jesus is innocent. Pilate believes that the chief priests brought Jesus to him because they hated Jesus. Pilate now asks the people gathered there, "Do you want me to release to you Barabbas or Jesus the Messiah?"

Pilate's wife sends an urgent message to Pilate. Pilate's wife had a terrible dream about Jesus and tells Pilate to have nothing to do with the innocent man.

The leading priests tell the people to ask Pilate to release Barabbas instead. Pilate asks the people, "What should I do with the one you call the Messiah?" The people shout, "Crucify him!" which means to kill Jesus by nailing him to a cross. The crowd is becoming chaotic. Pilate wants to satisfy the crowd so that they do not become dangerous. Pilate knows Jesus is innocent. Pilate does not want the responsibility of Jesus' death, probably because of his wife's message. Pilate symbolically washes his hands in front of the crowd stating that Pilate is innocent of Jesus' blood, or death. Pilate puts the responsibility of Jesus' death on the people. The people take the responsibility on themselves and their children.

At this point Pilate released Barabbas to the crowd. Pilate tells the soldiers to flog Jesus. The soldiers probably take Jesus into the palace itself, away from the public, for the flogging. We do not know exactly where the soldiers flogged Jesus. After the soldiers flog Jesus, Pilate tells them to crucify Jesus on a cross.

Stop here and if you would like to, take communion together. Spend time thanking and praising and worshiping Jesus together, for His broken body that was flogged and beaten and broken for you.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 5 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Pilate, the governor
- The chief priests and elders
- The crowds
- Barabbas
- Pilate's wife (someone to bring her message)
- Roman soldiers

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

The religious leaders bring Jesus in front of Pilate. Pilate begins a formal trial. Pilate asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus says, "You say that I am."

Stop the action.

- Determined,
- Calm,
- Sad.

Ask Pilate, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like:

- Curious about this man,
- Confused about why the religious leaders brought this man. [!end] Restart the action.

The chief priests and elders accuse Jesus of many things. We do not know specific things they accuse him of. Pilate asks Jesus "Do you not hear that they are accusing you of many things?" Jesus does not answer, and Pilate is surprised.

Stop the action.

- Confused why He doesn't answer
- Impressed that Jesus is so calm. [!end] Restart the action.

There is a custom that the governor releases one prisoner to the people during the time of the Passover celebration. The crowd of people ask Pilate to release a prisoner to them.

Pilate believes that the chief priests brought Jesus to him because they hated Jesus. Pilate asks the people, "Do you want me to release to you Barabbas or Jesus the Messiah?" Barabbas was a prisoner because he was a revolutionary who had killed people when he tried to overthrow the government.

While Pilate was on the judgment seat he received a message from his wife. Pilate's wife had suffered many things in a dream because of Jesus. She told Pilate to have nothing to do with the innocent man.

Stop the action.

- Concerned that I'm caught in the middle of something,
- Alarmed that my wife knows about this man,
- Wondering if the gods are trying to tell me something. [!end] Restart the action.

The chief priests and elders tell the people to ask Pilate to release Barabbas instead. "Give us Barabbas!" the people shout. Pilate asks the people, "What should I do with the one you call the Messiah?"

The people shout, "Crucify him!" which means to kill Jesus by nailing him to a cross. The crowd is becoming chaotic. Pilate wants to satisfy the crowd so that they do not become dangerous.

Stop the action.

Ask the people, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "We do not know what we are doing, we are just doing what everyone around us is doing."

Ask Pilate, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "Disappointed."

Ask Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like, "Sad that the crowds no longer listen to me," "Asking my Father God for strength." [!end] Restart the action.

At this point, Pilate releases Barabbas to the crowds. Pilate tells the soldiers to flog Jesus. The soldiers probably take Jesus into the palace itself, away from the public, for the flogging. We do not know exactly where the soldiers flogged Jesus. Probably after the soldiers flog Jesus, Pilate tells them to crucify Jesus on a cross.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus stands before Pilate, the **governor**. At that time, Israel, the Jewish homeland, was governed by the Roman Empire, or kingdom. The Roman emperor, or king, appointed governors to govern smaller areas of land within his empire. Pilate governed the area where the Jews lived.

Pilate questions Jesus, asking if Jesus is the **King of the Jews**. King of the Jews was a term that the Jewish ruler, Herod, used for himself. It was also the term the wise men used when they sought Jesus after Jesus' birth. The Jewish people were a group of people who were descended from their ancestor Abraham. Most of them lived in an area of land called Israel, that God promised to them. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Jews.

Jesus says it is as Pilate says-he is the Messiah-but he is not the kind of king Pilate is asking about. Jesus stays silent as the **chief priests** and **elders** make many accusations against Him. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of chief priest and of elders.

Matthew tells us that it was the custom at the **Passover feast or festival** to release a prisoner to the Jewish people. The **Passover** celebration was a 7 or 8-day celebration. Some versions use the specific name of the celebration, Passover, and some just say celebration or feast. You may use whichever term you would like, but choose the term that will help your audience understand the story clearly. If you say Passover, use the same term that you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Passover.

Barabbas was a prisoner in a Roman prison and was well known to the people. Pilate, knowing that the chief priests and elders hated Jesus, asked which prisoner he should release: Barabbas or Jesus, the **Messiah**. The Messiah is the one God anointed, or appointed to save His people. Use the same word you've used for Messiah before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Messiah.

As Pilate is on the judge's seat, Pilate's wife sends Pilate a message to have nothing to do with Jesus who is **righteous**. See the Master Glossary for a definition of righteous. Pilate's wife suffered greatly in a **dream** because of Jesus. See the Master Glossary for a definition of dream.

However, the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released. The crowd demands that Pilate **crucify** Jesus. Crucifixion was the worst form of execution in Jesus' time. Usually the soldiers flogged the victim, then nailed their hands and feet to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross. The soldiers stood the cross upright, and the victim hung in pain for hours until they died. Refer to the Master Glossary for crucify.

Pilate understood that the people were getting upset. He washed his hands in front of the people and declared his innocence over Jesus' blood, or death. Pilate claimed the people were responsible for Jesus' death. The people accept the responsibility.

Pilate released Barabbas and ordered the soldiers to **flog** Jesus. That means that they tied the victim to a pole, stripped him naked, and hit him many times with a leather whip that had glass, lead, and bones tied to it. Sometimes people could see the inside parts of a person after flogging. Sometimes people died from the flogging. Pilate gave Jesus to soldiers who would nail him to the cross.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:11-26

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3419643 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (6009763 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:27-31

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 27:27-31 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?

2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This story begins right after the soldiers flogged Jesus. We do not know where the soldiers flogged Jesus, but they probably took him to a courtyard inside the governor's palace near where the soldiers were living. Extra, non-Jewish soldiers usually came with the governor Pilate for the Passover celebration to help protect Jerusalem. Many Jewish people were in Jerusalem for the Passover, and sometimes the Jewish people started riots against the government. Therefore, a regiment of soldiers-about 200 to 600 men-were in the Praetorium, or their headquarters. The soldiers were probably very stressed because of the danger in Jerusalem during big celebrations like Passover.

Jesus was probably bleeding and very weak from the flogging. These soldiers knew that Jesus said he was King of the Jews. The soldiers mocked him, or made fun of him, by pretending to respect him as king. The soldiers took off Jesus' clothing. Soldiers from the regiment dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe. The color scarlet was typically more red which might have been the color the soldiers were wearing. It is possible they took one of the soldier's robes to put on Jesus. They twisted together thorny branches into a circle and pushed it down on Jesus' head. The soldiers might have been just trying to mock Jesus, but this would have been painful. They called the circle of thorn branches a king's crown. Then they put a reed, or stick in his right hand, like a scepter a king would carry to show his authority.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a purple or deep red robe, and a photo of a stick that would be used for beating someone, and a thorny crown.

Then the soldiers mocked Jesus. They knelt before Jesus, pretending to worship him, and cried out, "Hail, or honor to you, King of the Jews!" in a similar way to how they addressed the Roman king. The soldiers spit on Jesus and struck Jesus on the head with the stick. Spitting was one of the worst ways to insult or dishonor a person in Jesus' culture. Then the soldiers took off the purple robe and put Jesus' clothes back on him.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team. How do people insult other people in your culture? In this story, they hit Jesus and spit on him. They also made fun of him by pretending he was a king. What do people do in your culture?

Then they led Jesus away to execute Him. Usually a commanding soldier and 4 execution soldiers led the prisoner to the place of execution through the city. The place of crucifixion was just outside the Jerusalem city wall, probably alongside a busy road.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: In the first scene, the soldiers in the Praetorium, the governor's headquarters, mock Jesus as a king. The soldiers put a robe on Jesus and a crown on his head and a stick in his hand. Then the soldiers pretend to worship Jesus. Then the soldiers beat and spit on Jesus.

Second scene The soldiers take off the robe and put Jesus' clothes back on Him. Then the soldiers lead Jesus away to be crucified.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- Soldiers in the Praetorium

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

It is important to remember that this story starts right after the soldiers flog Jesus. At some point, either before or right after they flog Jesus, they take Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters. The regiment of about 200 to 600 soldiers come out to see Jesus and mock him. The soldiers pretend to treat Jesus like they would treat a king. They put a dark red robe on Jesus. They put a crown made of thorny branches on his head. The soldiers put a reed or stick in Jesus' hand. They kneel before Jesus and call out to him like a king, "Hail king of the Jews!" Then they hit him on the head with the stick and spit on him to insult him. When they are done mocking Jesus, then they take off the robe and put his clothes on him. It is important to remember that this is very humiliating for Jesus.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: What color do important people wear in your culture? Find a robe or piece of fabric like a robe in that color if you can. In your area, what kind of plant has thorns? Find some of that plant and use its branches to create a circle that could go on someone's head. Find a large stick that might have been used like a scepter. Once you have these, discuss how you will translate them as objects that created dishonor.

Then probably about 4 soldiers and one leading soldier start to lead Jesus to the place of execution. Jesus started this walk carrying the crossbeam of His own cross. The streets of Jerusalem were probably becoming busy in the morning as they walked to the place of execution outside the Jerusalem city wall next to a busy road.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has two scenes.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- Soldiers in the Praetorium

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story starts as or right after the soldiers flog Jesus. At some point, either before or right after they flog Jesus, they take Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters. The regiment of about 200 to 600 soldiers come out to see Jesus and mock him. The soldiers pretend to treat Jesus like they would treat a king. They put a purple, or dark red, robe on him. They put a crown made of thorn branches on his head. They salute him, or call out to him like a king, "Hail king of the Jews!" Then they hit him on the head with a stick and spit on him to insult him. They kneel down in front of him like they are bowing to him. Then they take off the purple robe and put his clothes on him.

Stop the action.

- This is a good way to relieve the stress of trying to protect Jerusalem during Passover,
- Surprised that Jesus does not say angry things to us or try to fight back.

Ask Jesus, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like:

- Sad, because they do not know that I am really a king,
- Ready, because it is time. [!end] Restart the action.

About 4 soldiers and one leading soldier start to lead Jesus to the place of execution. There is a place of execution outside the city wall of Jerusalem.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

The soldiers take Jesus to the **Praetorium**, which is the specific name for the governor's official residence and headquarters. Most likely, this story took place in the courtyards, the outside area surrounded by buildings.

The soldiers called the entire **company**, or **cohort**, or **battalion**, of soldiers out to see Jesus. A company of soldiers was usually about 600 soldiers, but this company could have been anywhere from 200 to 600 soldiers.

The soldiers put a **scarlet robe** or **outer garment** on Jesus. **Scarlet** is a color that is a deep, dark red. The soldiers probably put one of their own robes on Jesus. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of robe or cloak.

Stop here and show the photo of a scarlet robe again.

The soldiers put a **crown of thorns** on Jesus' head. The soldiers twisted together branches with thorns on them into a circle. This circle was like a special crown, or headpiece, that kings wore in Jesus' time. Kings wore a special circular ring on their heads to show that they were kings.

The soldiers then **mocked** Jesus, pretending like Jesus was a king. To mock is to make fun of someone. They cried out "Hail, King of the Jews!" and knelt before Jesus. Then they spit on Jesus and beat Jesus with the stick.

Then the soldiers led Jesus to be **crucified**. Use the same word for crucifixion and crucify that you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of crucifixion. Crucifixion is the act of crucifying someone.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:27-31

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (1855411 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3251058 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:32-44

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 27:32-44 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

This passage starts where the last passage left off, as the commanding soldier and 4 execution soldiers led Jesus to the place of execution through the city. Jesus would have been forced to carry the shorter cross-beam of the

cross on his way to the execution site. The place of crucifixion, called Golgotha, or the place of the skull, was just outside the Jerusalem city wall probably alongside a busy road.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of a cross, and point out the crossbeam of the cross.

Jesus was very weak after the flogging and he could not carry his cross the entire way. At the same time as Jesus was walking to the execution site, a man was coming into Jerusalem from the countryside. His name was Simon. Simon was a Jew who lived in or came to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration, but he was from Cyrene, a city in northern Africa. The Romans had the right to force locals into working for them, so Simon was forced to carry Jesus' cross for Jesus.

Stop and look at the map of North Africa, noting Cyrene, and the Middle East, where Jerusalem is.

It was custom in Jewish tradition for Jewish women to offer wine mixed with an herb that would reduce pain to those being crucified. Matthew does not tell us who offered Jesus this wine, but he says it was mixed with gall, which was a form of poison that would dull the senses. Jesus tasted it and then refused the wine and gall. It is possible the soldiers offered this to Jesus to be cruel and continue mocking Jesus. It is also possible that it was Jewish women who were trying to help reduce Jesus' pain.

Matthew does not give full details of how Romans crucified their prisoners, probably because his audience already understood the process very well. Normally the Romans stripped their prisoner naked. Jewish people did not like prisoners to be executed completely naked, so sometimes Roman soldiers allowed their prisoners to wear a loin-cloth around their legs. We do not know if Jesus wore one or not. The soldiers stretched his arms, and nailed or tied his arms to the cross-plank. The nail was probably driven through the forearm of the victim. The cross piece was attached to a stake or post then raised and sunk into the earth. The feet were then nailed to the upright stake. The feet were probably nailed together with one long nail. There may have been a block of wood fixed about midway up the post to support the body. Prisoners usually died from the exhaustion of trying to hold up their body to breathe. They were weakened by the flogging and loss of blood, so this process normally took a few hours.

Stop and discuss as a team: While this is not part of the story, discuss what term you will use to describe Jesus' execution. Is there a form of execution that is brutal and well known to your culture?

The height of the crosses raised up could have been just about the height of a man, but in Jesus' case it was probably a little higher so that more people could see him. Matthew does not focus on these details, but goes back to describing what the soldiers are doing. After the soldiers crucified Jesus, they divided Jesus' clothing by casting lots. To cast lots was to roll dice, or pick sticks, or throw stones, and whoever got the higher number, or longest stick, or the stone landed a certain way, won. Then the soldiers sat down and kept watch over Jesus. They probably kept watch to make sure no one tried to rescue Jesus.

Stop and show your translation team a photo of lots that would be cast.

Stop and discuss as a team: In your culture, how do people shame or humiliate other people? What kinds of things do people do in order to be treated in such a shameful way?

The soldiers placed the sign that told Jesus' crime—"King of the Jews"—on the wood above his head. The soldiers also crucified two men on crosses on either side of Jesus. These men are described as "robbers" or "thieves." Romans did not execute people for being thieves, so the more likely meaning of this description is that these men were also revolutionaries and had tried to overthrow the government. It is very likely that Jesus' cross was intended for Barabbas.

Some people passed by and shook their heads, or moved their heads in such a way to show that they were insulting Jesus. They said, "You said you will destroy the temple and rebuild it after three days. Save yourself." The religious leaders had charged Jesus with this blasphemy the night before. This was probably common gossip about Jesus' claim. The people also said, "Come down from the cross if you are the Son of God."

Stop and discuss as a team: What are some common insults that people in your culture say?

The members of the Sanhedrin, the leading priests and teachers of the law, talked among themselves in a sarcastic way. "He saved others, but he can't save himself. He's the "King of Israel." Let Him come down from the cross so we can believe him. He said he was the Son of God." They probably meant that Jesus saved other

people by healing them. Ironically, Jesus is able to save people spiritually because he didn't "save himself" by coming down from the cross. The religious leaders called Jesus the "King of Israel" rather than the "King of the Jews" as Pilate had done. The Romans called the people group living in Israel the "Jews." The Jewish people themselves liked to use the name of their land, Israel.

In the same way, the revolutionaries who were on crosses on either side of Jesus ridiculed him, which means that they said bad things about Jesus.

Defining the Scenes

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: Jesus begins to carry his cross-beam to the place of execution. He cannot carry it all the way, and Simon of Cyrene carries it the rest of the way to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

Second scene: Someone offers Jesus wine and gall, and the soldiers nail Jesus to the cross. The soldiers divide Jesus' clothing and keep watch. There are two revolutionaries crucified on two crosses on either side of Jesus.

Third scene: The people passing by, the leading priests, and teachers of religious law mock Jesus. The two revolutionaries on either side of Jesus mock Jesus.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- Simon of Cyrene
- Someone who offers Jesus wine and gall
- Soldiers who crucify Jesus
- Two revolutionaries crucified on either side of Jesus
- People watching the crucifixion
- Leading priests and teachers of religious law

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story starts as Jesus and the soldiers are going out to the place of crucifixion. There were probably about 4 soldiers and one leading soldier who put the crossbeam of the cross, which is a long piece of wood, on Jesus' shoulders. Jesus begins to carry the long piece of wood through the city of Jerusalem. Jesus cannot carry the wood anymore, probably because Jesus is weak after being flogged. The soldiers force a man named Simon, from Cyrene, to carry the cross.

Simon, the soldiers, and Jesus walk through the city and exit the city through a gate in the wall. There is a place of execution outside the Jerusalem city wall called Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

Some people, possibly the soldiers, offer Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance called gall. Jesus tastes the wine and then refuses to drink. The soldiers crucify Jesus by spreading Jesus' arms out on the cross beam that Simon has carried. They nail his arms, probably in the forearm area, to each end of the cross beam. Then they raise up the cross beam onto a vertical wooden pole. They probably nail Jesus' feet together onto the vertical piece of wood near the bottom. They place the sign that says "King of the Jews" above Jesus' head.

The soldiers cast lots, possibly by throwing dice, drawing straws, or by throwing small marked stones on the ground. The highest dice, longest straw or the way the stones landed determined who would get which pieces of Jesus' clothing. Then the soldiers watched Jesus.

Stop and look at the picture of someone holding sticks to cast lots. Find several sticks or blades of grass of different lengths-one for each person in your group. Play a game with the sticks or blades of grass. Have one person grab the sticks or grass with both hands, one on top of the other. Only let the top of the sticks or grass show. Determine what the person who gets the longest stick will have to do. Then have everyone pick a stick.

The soldiers crucify two men who were revolutionaries in a similar way and place their crosses, one on either side of Jesus. Jesus' cross was in the middle.

People passed by and insulted Jesus. They shook their heads to show their disgust and say, "You want to destroy the temple and build it in three days. Come down from the cross and save yourself!" The leading priests and teachers of the law spoke to each other and mocked Jesus. "He saved others, but he can't save himself! This Messiah, king of Israel, should come down from the cross so we can see it and believe in him." The two revolutionaries who were on the crosses next to Jesus also insulted him.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has three scenes.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- Simon of Cyrene
- Someone who offers Jesus wine and gall
- Soldiers who crucify Jesus
- Two revolutionaries crucified on either side of Jesus
- People watching the crucifixion
- Leading priests and teachers of religious law

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story starts when about 4 soldiers and one leading soldier take Jesus to be crucified. As they go out, they meet Simon from the city of Cyrene in North Africa. Jesus is very weak after he has been flogged. He cannot carry the cross anymore. The soldiers force Simon from Cyrene to carry the cross. Simon, the soldiers, and Jesus walk through the city and exit the city through a gate in the wall. There is a place of execution outside the city wall called Golgotha, the Place of the Skull.

Stop the action.

- I wonder who this man is,
- I would like to know more about him, he seems different,
- I am sad for this man.

Ask the people along the streets of Jerusalem, "How are you feeling?" Listen for things like:

- I am so sad,
- I wonder what horrible things this man did-he must be a bad man!
- I cannot watch, this is too sad,
- I am curious, I want to follow to see what happens. [!end] Restart the action.

They arrive at Golgotha. Some people offer Jesus wine mixed with gall. Jesus drinks and refuses the wine. The soldiers spread Jesus' arms out on the cross beam that Simon has carried. They nail his arms, probably in the forearm area, to each end of the cross beam. Then they raise up the cross beam onto a vertical wooden pole. They probably nail Jesus' feet together through the heels onto the vertical piece of wood near the bottom. They place the sign that says "King of the Jews" above Jesus' head.

Stop the action.

- I try not to think-this is cruel,
- He's getting what he deserves. I'm just doing my job. [!end] Restart the action.

The soldiers cast lots for Jesus' clothing. The soldiers crucify two men who were revolutionaries in a similar way and place their crosses, one on either side of Jesus. Jesus' cross was in the middle.

People passed by and insulted Jesus. They shook their heads to show their disgust and said, "You want to destroy the temple and build it in three days! Come down from the cross and save yourself!" The leading priests and teachers of the law spoke to each other and mocked Jesus. "He saved others, but he can't save himself! This Messiah, king of Israel, should come down from the cross so we can see it and believe in him." The two revolutionaries who were on the crosses next to Jesus also insulted him.

Stop the action.

- I am suffering, I wish everyone else would suffer too,
- I wish Jesus really were someone who could save us all-I'm disappointed again.

Ask the religious leaders, "How are you feeling?" Listen for things like:

- Happy that Jesus is finally out of our way!

Ask Jesus, "How are you feeling?" Listen for things like:

- Rejected,
- Sad that these people don't understand that I have to die in order to save them spiritually,
- It's my joy to bring salvation to the world.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The soldiers led Jesus to a place called **Golgotha**. Golgotha is the specific name of the place where the soldiers crucified Jesus. The name means "Place of the Skull." Matthew tells us both the specific name of the place and the meaning of the name. You will want to do the same thing in your translation.

Someone offered Jesus wine, a fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes, mixed with **gall**, a bitter poison. It is possible that the soldiers offered this to Jesus to continue being cruel. It is also possible that Jewish women offered this to Jesus to help dull his senses to the pain.

When the soldiers had **crucified** Jesus, they threw **dice**, or **cast lots**, to see who would get Jesus' clothes. Use the same word you have used for crucify before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of crucify. To "cast lots" means to throw dice, draw straws, or throw little stones that were marked in some way. The highest dice, the longest straw, or the way the stones fell determined who got which pieces of Jesus' clothes.

Stop here and show your translation team a photo of the lots again.

Two **robbers**, or thieves, were crucified on either side of Jesus.

The people insult Jesus and tell him that he said he would destroy the **temple** and rebuild it. Use the same word for temple that you have in previous passages in the book of Matthew, and remember that temple is in the Master Glossary.

The chief priests and teachers of religious law and elders mocked Jesus and said, "Let this **King of Israel** come down from the cross so that we can see it and believe him." Use the same words for chief priests, teachers of religious law, that you have in previous passages, and remember that these words are in the Master Glossary.

The religious leaders used the title **King of Israel** instead of **King of the Jews** because the Jewish people preferred to call themselves the nation of Israel, God's name for them since the time of their ancestor Jacob. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Israel.

The religious leaders also say that Jesus said, "I am the **Son of God**." Son of God was a name showing a special relationship that Jesus had with God. Refer to the Master Glossary for the definition of Son of God.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:32-44

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2994226 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5256772 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:45–56

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 27:45–56 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, the soldiers crucified Jesus in the morning. Jesus was suffering on the cross for hours. At the sixth hour, or noon, the sun became dark, even though the sun never becomes dark at this time of day. However, the people in Jesus' time would have believed that the darkness was a symbol for something bad. The Jewish prophet Amos said that the sun would become dark when God comes to judge the world. Other people believed that darkness was a symbol for the death of kings or cities. Before the very first Passover, when God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, there was a plague of darkness that symbolized God's curse over Egypt. The law of Moses says that God has punished or cursed those people that hang on a tree. The curse was not because they were hanging on a tree, but because those who died on trees were typically criminals. Jesus was not a criminal, but Jesus was carrying the sin of all of the people of the world. Perhaps that is why the sun became dark.

Stop and discuss: Talk about omens or symbols in nature that your culture believes are signs or judgments from God.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, three hours after the darkness started, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Jesus feels like he is completely cut off from God, so Jesus said the first part of a Psalm, or song, of lament. The Jews who were nearby would have understood this reference to the Psalm Jesus was quoting. In this song of lament, the singer begs God to help the person who suffers unjustly or wrongly. This Psalm also ends with the promise that God will be with them and help them in their trouble.

Jesus probably spoke the name of God-Eli, Eli-in Hebrew and the rest of the question in Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish Scripture, but Aramaic was the language that Jewish people spoke during Roman times. Some of the people around him may not have understood his first words. Jesus cried out for God, but the word he used for God sounded like the Hebrew name of the great Jewish prophet Elijah. Jewish people believed that the spirit of Elijah would come to rescue righteous people when they were in danger. It is understandable that the people believed Jesus was calling for Elijah instead of for God.

Jewish people thought that wine vinegar, which was cheap sour wine, refreshed and helped thirsty people. Someone heard Jesus call and wanted to help him. The person soaked the wine vinegar in a sponge, put the sponge on the end of a long stick, and held it up to Jesus. Others said to wait and see if Elijah would save Jesus. We are not sure if this was said mockingly, or if it was serious, as some may have thought that Jesus was righteous and undeserving of death.

Jesus remained strong enough to speak loudly until the end of his life. This was unusual-most men became weaker and unconscious near the end of their crucifixion and were not able to breathe well. Jesus cried out loud in agony again, and then Jesus breathed His last breath, or died. This is the climax of the story which is told in a simple phrase: "Jesus gave up His Spirit."

Matthew tells about an event that happens in a different place but at the same time as Jesus' death. The temple in Jerusalem has two big curtains hanging in it to cover doorways. The inner curtain is the curtain that hangs between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies is the place in the temple where God's presence lives, and only the high priest can go on a special day once a year to make a sacrifice for all of the people of Israel to forgive their sins. The outer curtain is the curtain that separates these very special areas for the priests from the courtyards for the non-priests. The public could see the outer curtain, but only a few priests could see the inner curtain.

Stop here and show your translation team a diagram of the temple, including the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the courtyards. Show the team where the two curtains would be in the temple.

God caused the temple curtain to be torn in two from top to bottom. We are not certain which curtain is divided in two from top to bottom. Some scholars believe that it was the outer curtain that was divided in two from top to bottom, because the general public could see it from the courtyards and tell others that it had happened. Most scholars believe it was the inner curtain that separated the Holy of Holies, suggesting that we all now have access to God's presence. In any case, the curtain ripping in two pieces symbolizes that Jesus is changing the original Jewish traditions of needing a temple and priests to make sacrifices in the Holy of Holies for the sins of the people. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice so there is no more need for the blood sacrifices in the temple.

God then caused the earth to shake and rocks to split apart and tombs to open. These tombs were tombs that are not dug into the ground, but were above ground with some sort of rock covering the opening. Some scholars suggest that the rocks that split open were the rocks covering the tombs. God then raised many of His people from the dead. After Jesus' resurrection, which happened a few days later, those who rose from the dead went into Jerusalem, and many people saw them.

Back at the cross, a centurion, or a Roman officer, and the other officers who were with him, had been with Jesus from the beginning of the crucifixion until his death. They became frightened or filled with awe by the earthquake when Jesus died. The Roman officers exclaimed, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" These Roman officers probably understood that Jesus is divine or a divine hero who accepted his fate from God. However, the Roman officers would not have understood the complete meaning of this statement.

Many women were there watching from a distance. These women had followed Jesus from Galilee and had been helping take care of the needs of Jesus. Mary Magdalene is one of the women named. Mary is a common woman's name in Israel. By calling her Magdalene, Matthew is saying that she is from the town of Magdala, a fishing village on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. The other two women named are Mary the mother of James

and Joseph, who could be Jesus' mother or possibly Jesus' aunt; and the wife of Zebedee who is the mother of John and James, Jesus' disciples.

Stop and discuss: Who in your culture comes to be with those who are dying?

Stop here and discuss: How do people in your culture talk about people who share the same name? Discuss the ways you might talk about them to help others understand exactly who you are talking about.

Show a map of Galilee that includes the town of Magdala indicated if the team is not familiar with this town.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has four scenes.

First scene: The sun becomes dark for three hours. Jesus calls out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" Someone tries to give Jesus sour wine.

Second scene: Jesus cries out loudly and dies. At the same time, in the temple, on the other side of Jerusalem, a curtain rips in two from top to bottom, the earthquakes and tombs are opened, the dead are raised.

Third scene: The Roman centurion and officers say, "This man must have been the Son of God!"

Fourth scene: Many women were watching from a distance.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- God (by His actions)
- People standing next to the cross
- Someone who brings sour wine on a sponge
- The dead who are raised
- The Roman centurion and officers who kept watch over Jesus
- The group of women
- Mary of Magdala
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- The mother of Zebedee's sons

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives to visualize the story and the action in it.

This story starts with Jesus suffering on the cross. Jesus has been on the cross for a few hours. At noon, or midday, darkness covers the whole area, probably just the area of Israel or even just the area around Jerusalem. Three hours pass. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cries out in a loud voice. It is important to remember that Matthew gives us Jesus' words in the original language: "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you show that you are speaking in another language in your stories?

The Prophet Elijah's name sounded similar to "Eli" and so some people nearby thought Jesus was calling for the Prophet Elijah. Someone-we do not know who-runs and soaks a sponge in sour wine. He puts the sponge

on a stick and holds it up to Jesus. Another man said, "Wait, Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down off the cross!" Jesus cries out in a loud voice and breathes his last breath. Jesus dies. It is important to make sure to translate in a way that people know Jesus died, and that Jesus' Spirit did not leave Him before He died. This is the climax, or most important part of the story.

At the same time that Jesus dies, God causes the temple curtain to divide in two, starting from the top and going to the bottom. The temple is on the other side of Jerusalem from where Jesus dies. The people next to the cross where Jesus dies do not know that the curtain in the temple has split in two. But then the earth shakes and rocks split. Many tombs open and God's people are raised from the dead.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: How do you tell information in a story that is happening at the same time, but in a different place?

After Jesus was resurrected, those who were raised from the dead went to Jerusalem and were seen by many. We hear this information here at Jesus' death. But it does not happen until the third day when Jesus is raised from the dead.

Discuss as a translation team: How will you translate this little bit of information that happens in the near future?

Back where Jesus has died, a Roman officer, or centurion, and other officers are standing near the cross because they are responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. They see everything that happens at the cross. The officers say, "Surely, or I am sure, that this man was the Son of God!" This is a very important part of the story when Gentiles understand that Jesus was different and divine.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When you tell stories, how do you show with your voice and your words that you are saying an important part of the story? Practice telling each other a true, special story in your culture, and note where the most important part of the story is. How do you talk about it? What happens to your voice and your words as you talk about the important part in the story?

Many women who followed and took care of Jesus were there watching from a distance. Matthew tells us who three of these women are: Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters include:

- Jesus
- God (by His actions)
- People standing next to the cross
- Someone who brings sour wine on a sponge
- The dead who are raised
- The Roman centurion and officers who kept watch over Jesus
- The group of women
- Mary of Magdala
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- The mother of Zebedee's sons

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

This story starts at noon with darkness covering the whole area, covering probably just the area of Israel or even just the area around Jerusalem. Three hours pass. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cries out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Stop the action.

- I've never felt so alone,
- Totally abandoned.
- I feel the weight of everyone's sin.

Ask the people standing nearby, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like:

- Wondering who he is talking to,
- Sad for him. [!end] Restart the action.

Someone-we do not know who-runs and soaks a sponge in sour wine. He puts the sponge on a stick and holds it up to Jesus. Then a man said, "Wait, Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down off the cross!" Jesus cried out in a loud voice and breathed his last breath. Jesus dies.

Stop the action.

Ask the people standing nearby, "How are you feeling?" You might hear things like:

- Sad,
- Relieved that it is over,
- Sad that Jesus died for no good reason. [!end] Restart the action.

At the same time that Jesus dies, the temple curtain divides in two, starting from the top and going to the bottom. The temple is on the other side of Jerusalem from where Jesus dies. God also causes the earth to shake and

rocks to split and tombs to open. Then God raises His people from the dead and on the third day they go to Jerusalem and are seen by many people.

A Roman officer, or centurion, and other officers are standing near the cross because they are responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. The centurions are afraid, or in awe, and say, "I am sure that this man was the Son of God!"

Stop the action.

- Jesus had more dignity than others who died,
- Jesus was not angry like others,
- Jesus died differently than others,
- I can feel that God is with this man. [!end] Restart the action.

Many women who followed and ministered to Jesus were there watching from a distance. Matthew tells us who three of these women are: Mary from Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Stop the action.

- I can't believe He is dead. How is this possible?
- What do we do now?
- I'm not sure what this means. He was going to save us all.
- I'm so incredibly sad and angry. Why did He die?

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

At noon **darkness fell** across the whole land until three o'clock. "Darkness fell" means that the sun stopped being light. This happened at noon, or the 6th hour of the Jewish time, and Jesus cried out at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, or the 9th hour. The 6th hour was considered halfway in between sun up and sun down. Some languages may not have the words to give an exact hour of time. If that is the case, you may say something like, "midday," or "the middle of the day," or however you talk about the times of day in your culture.

Jesus cried out, "**Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?**" This is Hebrew and Aramaic for "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" or "Why have you abandoned me?" Jesus probably says the name of God, **Eli**, in Hebrew, and then the rest of the question in Aramaic. Hebrew was the language of the Jewish Scripture, but Aramaic was the language that Jewish people spoke during Roman times. Matthew gives us both the Hebrew and Aramaic, and its translation into our language. You may need to do this as well. If so, try to say the Hebrew sentence in a similar way to the original Hebrew and Aramaic, and then translate it into your language just as Matthew does for his audience.

Some of the people thought that Jesus was calling out for the prophet **Elijah**. Translate Elijah's name in the same way you have been in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Elijah.

Someone gave Jesus **sour wine**, or **wine vinegar** to drink to try to help him not be thirsty. **Wine vinegar** is a cheap fermented drink that helps with thirst. Because the wine is on a sponge, you may say that they offered it to Jesus to suck.

Jesus **breathed his last**, or gave up His spirit, which means that he died.

Stop here and discuss as a translation team: Will your audience understand that Jesus died at this point, or do you need to make that explicit? Do you need to say "Jesus died"?

When Jesus died, the **curtain** in the **temple** was torn from top to bottom. There were two curtains in the temple, and we are not sure which one was torn. However, the main curtain on the inside of the temple was 20 meters

long, 10 meters wide. The curtain was made of cloth and people hung it up to cover an entrance. You could say "the curtain divided into two parts." The temple was the Jewish place of worship and sacrifice in Jerusalem. Use the same word for temple as you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of temple.

When Jesus died, the **centurion** and the officers who were responsible for his execution said, "Surely he was the **Son of God!**"

A **centurion** is a Roman officer in the army who commands one hundred soldiers. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of centurion.

Translate **Son of God** in the same way you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Son of God.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:45-56

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3276336 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5769964 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 27:57–66

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 27:57–66 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

This passage begins the evening after Jesus has died. In Jewish culture, the day started in the evening, when the sun went down, and went until sundown the following day. For the Jews, the day of Jesus' death has ended. A rich man named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus, came to the area.

Some details are given in this passage about the man called Joseph. He was from the town of Arimathea, which was located about 32 kilometers, or 20 miles, to the northwest of Jerusalem. Joseph was wealthy and a disciple of Jesus'. We also know from other Gospels that Joseph was a prominent or highly respected member of the Jewish religious council, called the Sanhedrin.

Romans typically threw criminals who had been crucified into a mass grave. Joseph wanted to honor Jesus by giving his body a proper burial. Joseph was courageous or brave and asked Pilate for Jesus' body. This means that Joseph asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus. You will remember that Pilate was the Roman governor who gave the order for Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate was willing to allow Joseph to take the body.

Stop here and discuss: How important is burial in your culture? What are the common burial practices among your people? How are the burial practices different when a person is respected as opposed to not being respected? Are there different practices for men and women? Old people and young people?

The passage tells us that Joseph prepared Jesus' body for burial. There was just a short time to accomplish this task and the task was not simple. Though Matthew does not tell us that Joseph had help, many people believe Joseph had assistance, possibly from his servants. Joseph wrapped Jesus' dead body in a long, clean linen cloth. Linen is a type of high-quality cloth made from the flax plant, similar to cotton. According to Jewish custom, people wrapped dead bodies in such a cloth before they buried the body. Matthew does not mention that Joseph washed the body before wrapping it, but scholars believe that Joseph washed the body. Washing a dead body is such an important part of Jewish burial custom that Jewish law permitted people to wash a dead body on the

Sabbath. After wrapping Jesus' body, Joseph placed the body in Joseph's own new tomb, a burial cave that he had carved from rock. Joseph then rolled a large stone over the entrance to the tomb.

Stop here and show a photo of linen cloth. Show a photo of a tomb carved from rock with a large stone at the entrance. Discuss the burial customs among your people. How do people prepare a dead body for burial? Where do you place the body after preparation for burial?

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, we assume the mother of James and Joseph, were there sitting across from the tomb, and saw where Joseph of Arimathea placed the body of Jesus. In Jewish culture, women were not valid eyewitnesses. However, the women were the only ones of Jesus' disciples who watched what happened to Jesus' body. Matthew shows that this account is a true story by giving us true details about what happened.

Stop here and discuss as a team: In your culture, what role do women have as witnesses of events? Who has authority to witness an event and tell what happened?

Jesus died on the day of Preparation for the Sabbath, the Jewish day of rest. The day after Jesus died, which was the Sabbath, the religious leaders, or the chief priests and Pharisees came before Pilate and asked that Pilate secure the tomb of Jesus. This would have been very odd, but not impossible. Typically they would not have defiled themselves by coming into the presence of the Roman governor on the Sabbath. They tell Pilate that the imposter, or liar, or deceiver, Jesus said that he would rise to life again after 3 days. The religious leaders do not want the disciples to come and steal the body and tell the people that Jesus rose from the dead. The religious leaders say that this deception or lie will be worse than the first, when Jesus said He was the Messiah.

Pilate gave the religious leaders access to guards, and they went to guard the tomb and make it secure. All together they put a seal on the stone. This also would have been odd, since this would have been considered work on the Sabbath. Many scholars think this seal means that there was some sort of mark on the stone that would indicate if the stone was moved. It could have been some clay that filled in the gap between the stone and entrance of the tomb. It could have been a specific mark that may have indicated either the Romans or the religious leaders. Then they posted the guards around the tomb to make sure no one would come and open the tomb or disturb the body.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

First scene: It is early evening a few hours after Jesus died. Remember that Jewish days started when the sun went down. Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate to get permission to bury Jesus' body. Pilate gives Joseph permission to bury Jesus' body.

Second scene: Joseph prepares Jesus' body for burial. He wraps Jesus' body in a long linen cloth. Joseph had carved his tomb out of a rock, and so Joseph put Jesus' body in the tomb. Joseph placed a large stone over the entrance. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, see where Jesus' body is put.

Third scene: The religious leaders ask Pilate to secure the tomb. Pilate gives them guards to be stationed near the tomb and they put a seal on the tomb.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Joseph of Arimathea
- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- Pilate
- Chief priests
- Pharisees
- Guards

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the evening, near the beginning of the Sabbath, or when the sun had gone down, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus' body. It is important to remember that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus', though not one of the close 12. Joseph probably wanted to take Jesus' body to keep it from hanging on a tree during the Sabbath. Jewish law required the dead to be buried before Sabbath.

Pilate gives Joseph permission to bury Jesus' body. Joseph took Jesus' body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and then put the body in his own new tomb. Tombs at that time typically had an opening about 3/4 meters above the ground. Inside there was a stone shelf or bench to lay a body. There may have been more than one shelf depending on the wealth and the members of the family. People would roll a large stone down a sloped groove to cover the entrance and to keep animals out. Joseph had a tomb that would have been similar to this as these tombs were owned by rich men. Joseph rolled a stone in front of the tomb and went away.

Look again at the picture of the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there sitting opposite from the tomb.

The day after Jesus died, also the day of Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked Pilate to secure the tomb of the "deceiver," or fraud, or liar. Pilate gives them guards to secure the tomb and they set a seal on the tomb.

Discuss how you will translate the "seal on the tomb." As a team, draw what you think the seal or mark of a religious leader would look like today. Draw what you think it would have looked like for the Jewish leaders, and also the Romans. Create what your seal or mark would look like.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 3 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- Joseph of Arimathea
- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- Pilate
- Chief priests
- Pharisees
- Guards

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

It is early evening the day before the Sabbath. Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate to get permission to bury Jesus' body.

Stop the action.

Pilate gives Joseph permission to bury Jesus' body. Joseph prepares Jesus' body by wrapping it in a long linen cloth. He then places Jesus' body in a tomb. A stone is moved over the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James are sitting across from the tomb.

Stop the action.

The next day, the beginning of the Sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees meet with Pilate to ask Pilate to secure the tomb of Jesus, who they call the "deceiver." They told Pilate that Jesus said He would rise from the dead and so they did not want Jesus' disciples to come and steal Jesus' body. Pilate gave them guards to put at the tomb to make it secure. Then they, with the guards, put a seal on the tomb.

Stop the action.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man who was a **disciple** of Jesus. The disciples were Jesus' followers. Use the same word for disciple you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of disciple.

Joseph asked **Pilate** for permission to bury the body of Jesus. Pilate was the governor of Judea and had ordered Jesus to be crucified. Use the same word you used to translate Pilate before.

Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth and placed it in a **tomb** that had been carved from a rock. A tomb is a burial place. It was Jewish custom to bury the dead in natural caves or in caves that had been carved from rock. A large stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb. Remember to use the word for tomb that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of tomb.

The next day after the **day of Preparation**, the **chief priests** and the **Pharisees** went to meet with Pilate. The day of preparation was the day before the Sabbath and the day that Jesus died. The chief priests and the Pharisees are the Jewish religious leaders who had come to Pilate to have Jesus sentenced to death. Use the same words that you have used for chief priests and Pharisees before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of chief priests and Pharisees.

The chief priests and Pharisees told Pilate the **deceiver** said that He would rise from the dead after 3 days. Deceiver is another word for liar. They asked Pilate to make the tomb secure. Pilate gave them guards and told them to make the grave, or tomb secure. They took the guards and put a **seal** on the tomb. A seal makes something secure or locked.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 27:57-66

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2464232 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (4352670 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 28:1-15

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 28:1-15 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

In the previous passage, Jesus had been killed by the ruling authorities. After his death, Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in Joseph's own tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, followed so they would know the place where Jesus was buried. The day of rest, the Sabbath, is now over and it is coming to sunrise on the first day of the week. This was the day after the Sabbath. These women come to look at Jesus' tomb.

Stop and look at the picture of the tomb with the rock in front of it.

You will remember that the tomb where Jesus was buried was closed with a large stone covering the entrance. The stones covering the entrance to tombs might be flat or round. Usually people could roll the stone in front of the entrance to cover it as the stone rolled down a groove that was sloped. However, moving the stone away from the entrance, up the slope, would have been too difficult for women to do.

Matthew uses the term "Behold!" as an indication that something happens suddenly, or all at once. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord, who is a messenger of God, came down from heaven, causing an earthquake, and rolled away the stone in front of Jesus' tomb and sat on the stone. The angel's appearance, or face was as bright as lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.

Stop and look at a picture of lightning and a picture of white snow. What in your culture is very white? How would you describe something that is very bright or very white?

The guards who had been keeping watch became very frightened of the angel. They fell to the ground like they were dead.

The angel ignores the guards and talks directly to the women. The angel tells them not to be afraid. He tells them that the person they are looking for, Jesus who was killed on the cross, is now alive because God raised Him from the dead, just as Jesus said God would. He tells them to look at where Jesus' body used to be, inside

the tomb. Matthew wants to clearly state that this real person in history, Jesus from Nazareth, was dead but is now alive. The angel then tells the women to tell the disciples that Jesus is alive. The angel said that Jesus will go ahead to the region of Galilee and that the disciples will see Jesus there, just like Jesus told them before He died. The women were afraid and filled with joy when they left to tell the disciples.

Stop here and show your team a map of Israel that includes Jerusalem and the region of Galilee.

On their way, Jesus meets the women and greets them. They take hold of Jesus' feet as an act of submission, and they worshiped Jesus. The fact that the women took hold of Jesus' feet means that Jesus was not a ghost or part of their imagination. Jesus had a physical body that the women could touch. Jesus tells them again not to be afraid. Jesus also tells them to tell his disciples, who Jesus loved like brothers, to meet him in Galilee. Women were not considered trustworthy witnesses in their culture, but Jesus gave them the honor of being the first witnesses of His resurrection.

Stop and discuss: What is the role of women in your culture? Are women considered trustworthy with important information? What are some important contributions of women in your culture?

As the women were going to tell the disciples, the guards went into Jerusalem and told the chief priests what happened. Remember in the previous passage that Pilate had given some guards to the chief priests and the Pharisees to secure Jesus' tomb. These guards were either Roman soldiers who were under the authority of the priests now, or they were actually Jewish temple guards. In any case, the guards felt like they should report to the chief priests as their authority in this matter.

The chief priests once again gather with the elders. This is the same group of religious leaders that paid Judas to betray Jesus. Now they are gathered together and decide to pay the guards a lot of money to lie about what actually happened. They tell the guards to spread the story that the disciples came at night while the guards were asleep, and stole Jesus' body. This was exactly what the chief priests were trying to stop from happening in the first place by placing guards outside of the tomb. In reality, the guards would not have fallen asleep or the government would have executed them for not doing their job. This is why the religious leaders tell them that if the governor, Pilate, hears about this, the religious leaders will keep the guards out of trouble. However, this is the story they end up telling and it is spread among the Jews even today.

Stop and discuss: Tell a tale that is regularly told in your culture, but that you either know is not true, or are not sure if it is true or not.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

First scene: The scene begins on the morning following the Sabbath, the religious day of rest. Mary and the other Mary walk to Jesus' tomb.

Second scene: An angel of the Lord, sent by God, appears, causing an earthquake, and rolls the stone away from Jesus' tomb and sits on it. The guards are afraid and fall down as if they are dead. The angel tells the women not to be afraid because Jesus who was crucified is alive. The angel tells the women to look where Jesus was laid and then to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

Third scene: The women leave the tomb. They are frightened and joyful. They meet Jesus on the way to the disciples and take hold of Jesus' feet. Jesus tells them the same thing the angel told them.

Fourth scene: While the women go to the disciples, the guards go to the chief priests and tell them what happened. The chief priests and elders decide to pay the guards to lie and say that Jesus' disciples came while the guards were asleep and took Jesus' body. The religious leaders tell the guards if the governor, Pilate, finds out, they will make sure the guards are safe. The guards go and tell the lie and it is believed by many Jews.

The characters in this story include:

- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- The angel of the Lord
- Jesus
- The guards
- The chief priests
- The elders

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

As the first scene begins, it is the first day of the week, right at or right before sunrise. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, probably the mother of James and Joseph, walk to the tomb where Jesus had been buried.

Stop and discuss: What day is considered the first day of the week in your culture? Do you have a designated day of rest? What are some things you can or should not do on your day of rest?

All of the sudden, an angel comes down from heaven, causing an earthquake, rolls away the stone in front of Jesus' tomb, and sits on the stone. The guards are so frightened that they fall to the ground and cannot move. They lie still just like dead men.

Remember that the angel says to the women, "Don't be alarmed, or afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, or God has raised him from the dead!"

Remember to make sure the angel shows the women the place where Jesus' body had been laid. The place where Jesus' body was laid was probably a stone shelf inside the tomb carved out of the rock of a hillside. Then the angel tells the women to tell the disciples, "He is going ahead of you into the region of Galilee. There you will see him. Behold! or pay attention and remember that I have told you this."

The women leave the tomb. They are frightened and joyful. On the way, Jesus greets them with a normal polite form of greeting that wishes people well, and they grasp Jesus' feet and worship Jesus. Jesus also tells them not to be afraid, and to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

Stop here and discuss: Talk about polite ways to greet people in your culture that also wishes them well.

As the women go to tell the disciples, the guards go to the chief priests to tell them what happened. The chief priests and elders decide to pay the guards a lot of money to lie about what happened. The chief priests and elders tell the guards to tell everyone that the disciples came at night while the guards were sleeping, and took the body. This is the story that the guards ended up telling and it spread among the Jews. Matthew is saying that Jews were still saying this about Jesus when Matthew wrote this book.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest-to-understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 4 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Mary Magdalene
- Mary the mother of James and Joseph
- The angel of the Lord
- Jesus
- The guards
- The chief priests
- The elders

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

As the first scene begins, it is the first day of the week, right at or right before sunrise. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, probably the mother of James and Joseph, walk to the tomb where Jesus had been buried.

Stop the action.

- I am sad and grieving,
- Helpless. How are we going to move that large stone?
- I just want to be near where Jesus is. [!end] Restart the action.

All of the sudden, an angel comes down from heaven, causing an earthquake, rolls away the stone in front of Jesus' tomb, and sits on the stone. The guards are so frightened that they fall to the ground like dead men.

Remember that the angel says to the women, "Don't be alarmed, or afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen, or God has raised him from the dead!"

Remember to make sure the angel shows the women the place where Jesus' body had been laid. The place where Jesus' body was laid was probably a stone shelf inside the tomb carved out of stone. Then the angel tells the women to tell the disciples, "He is going ahead of you into the region of Galilee. There you will see him. Remember that I have told you this!"

Stop the action.

- I'm not sure what to believe!
- Was that angel real, did we really see that?
- What is going on? Where is Jesus' body? [!end] Restart the action

The women leave the tomb. They are frightened and joyful. On the way, Jesus meets them and they grasp Jesus' feet and worship Jesus. Jesus also tells them not to be afraid, and to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee.

Stop the action.

- Excited! I can hardly believe that Jesus is alive!
- I can't wait to tell the disciples! They need to know!
- I'm afraid they won't believe us since we're just women. [!end] Restart the action.

As the women go to tell the disciples, the guards go to the chief priests to tell them what happened. The chief priests and elders decide to pay the guards a lot of money to lie about what happened. The chief priests and elders tell the guards to tell everyone that the disciples came at night while the guards were sleeping, and took the body. This is the story they end up telling and it is spread among the Jews even when this book was written.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest-to-understand version.

As the first scene begins, it is the morning after the day of **Sabbath**. The Sabbath is the day of rest for the Jewish people. Sabbath started when the sun fully went down on Friday and ended when the stars appeared in the sky the following night, on Saturday. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of Sabbath.

It is now Sunday or the first day of the week, right at or right before sunrise. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, probably the mother of James and Joseph, walk to the **tomb** where Jesus had been buried. A tomb is where dead people were laid. Most tombs were above ground, as opposed to a grave that was dug into the ground. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of tomb.

All of the sudden, an **angel of the Lord** comes down from heaven, causing an **earthquake**, rolls away the stone in front of Jesus' tomb, and sits on the stone. An angel is a heavenly messenger from God. Use the same word you've used for angel before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of angel. An earthquake is when the ground starts to shake and roll. Earthquakes still happen today. In an earthquake, buildings fall, and rocks break. The guards are so frightened that they fall to the ground like dead men.

Remember that the angel says to the women, "Don't be alarmed, or afraid. You are looking for Jesus who was **crucified**." To be crucified is to die a terrible death by being nailed to two pieces of wood in the form of a cross. Use the same word you've used for crucified that you've used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of crucify.

The angel then says, "He is not here. He has risen," or "God has raised him from the dead!" Then the angel tells the women to tell the **disciples**, "He is going ahead of you into the region of **Galilee**. There you will see him, just as he told you before." Disciples are Jesus' closest followers. Use the same word you've used for disciples before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of disciples. Galilee is the region around the Sea of Galilee where Jesus did most of His ministry. Use the same word you've used before for Galilee. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Galilee.

The women leave the tomb. They are frightened and joyful. On the way, Jesus greets them with a normal term of greeting. Use a normal, polite form of greeting in your language. The women hold onto Jesus' feet and **worship** Jesus. Worship is to give your whole heart in adoration to something or someone. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of worship.

Jesus also calls his disciples "brothers." They are not Jesus' actual brothers, but this is a term of affection that can mean close friends or people you love like brothers.

As the women go to tell the disciples, the guards go to the chief priests to tell them what happened. The **chief priests** and **elders** decide to pay the guards a lot of money to lie about what happened. The chief priests and elders are the main Jewish religious leaders. Use the same words that you've used for chief priests and elders before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of chief priests and elders.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 28:1–15

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (3059307 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (5347161 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

Matthew 28:16–20

Hear and Heart

Hear Matthew 28:16–20 and put it in your heart. Listen to the text three times (in three different translations, if possible). Then as a team discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this story?
2. What do you not like or not understand?
3. What does this story tell us about God or Jesus?
4. What does this story tell us about people?
5. How does this story affect our daily life?
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this story?

Setting the Stage

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

Jesus has just risen to life from being dead. Jesus instructed the two Marys to tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. The disciples had more than likely come back together after they separated when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The eleven disciples leave Jerusalem to go to Galilee to meet Jesus. Remember that Judas killed himself, and so there are only eleven of Jesus' closest disciples left. They all go together to Galilee to the mountain that Jesus told them to go to. There is no indication of the specific mountain where they were to meet Jesus. Rather the disciples probably expect Jesus to find them. In Jewish culture, God often revealed things about Himself on mountains.

Stop and look at the map from Jerusalem to Galilee. Look at the photo of the hills around Galilee. Discuss the places in your culture where people think God reveals information.

The walk from Jerusalem back to Capernaum was about 162 kilometers, or 100 miles. The disciples would have walked approximately 4 to 7 days to get back to Galilee. They had a lot of time to think about Jesus being alive and what that would mean for them.

When Jesus appeared to them, the disciples worshiped Jesus. This means the disciples bowed their faces to the ground in reverence and submission.

Stop and discuss: How does your culture show reverence or worship for others?

Matthew tells us when they saw Jesus they worshipped Him, but some of them doubted. However, most scholars believe that it is all the eleven disciples that have some doubt in their hearts. Doubt in this sentence is not unbelief, but it is hesitation or indecision. The disciples clearly believe it is Jesus before them, since they bow and worship Him. The last time the disciples saw Jesus they abandoned Jesus when He was arrested. Some scholars believe the hesitation in their hearts may be because they did not know how to act around Jesus. They had abandoned Jesus when He died. Now He is alive and has proved that He is all-powerful. They may be thinking, "How should we act around Jesus?" However, other scholars believe that their hearts may not completely understand how it was possible for Jesus to be standing before them. Either way the disciples are just like us when we do not fully understand or believe Jesus.

Stop and discuss: Tell a story about a time when you hesitated to trust Jesus, or felt two different ways about what Jesus was asking of you.

Jesus came close to the disciples as a comforting way to re-establish relationship with them. Jesus speaks to the disciples. Jesus does not rebuke them harshly for abandoning Him. Jesus tells the disciples that God, His Father in heaven, has given Jesus all authority not only on earth, but now also in heaven. Because Jesus has this authority, Jesus sends the eleven disciples to all of the nations to make more disciples of Jesus. Jesus wants not only Jews to know the good news He offers, but all people from all nations as well. The disciples are not to discriminate between Jew and non-Jew when they make disciples. Jesus tells them to make disciples, or followers of Jesus who obey the things Jesus taught.

The first step to following Jesus seems to be baptism in the name of, or by the authority of, God the Father, the Son who is Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Notice that baptism is by the authority of only one "name," but then the three names of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are given. This shows us that all three persons are

God himself as one God. Baptizing people, or washing them in water, shows others that these people have chosen to follow Jesus.

If we assume that Matthew records this information in order, the next step after baptism is to teach new disciples to obey everything that Jesus commands them. Most scholars believe that Jesus is telling the disciples to teach all people to obey, not just those who were baptized. In the culture of that day, being a follower or disciple of a Rabbi meant to follow them so closely that the dust of their feet would cover you. To be a disciple meant to enter into a deep relationship with the one that they were following and to learn to be exactly like them. Here the disciples are making disciples not of themselves, but are introducing people to a deep relationship with Jesus and teaching them how to follow Jesus closely. Jesus Himself promises to be with all of the disciples to the very end of the age, or the end of the world. Jesus does not mean that He will be with them in physical body but by His Spirit. It is Jesus' authority and His presence that gives the disciples strength to go and make more disciples.

Stop and discuss: Who in your life are you teaching to be a disciple and to obey the things Jesus taught us? How is that going? What difficulties have you encountered? How can you encourage one another? Who are the other people in your life that need to hear the teachings of Jesus? Stop and pray together for those people.

Defining the Scenes

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, you will help the group visualize this story. You will help the group define the scenes, setting, and characters of the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

First scene: The eleven disciples walk to Galilee to the place where Jesus told them to go. They see Jesus and worship Jesus. The disciples have hesitation or doubt in their hearts.

Second scene: Jesus declares His authority in heaven and on earth. Jesus then tells the disciples to go and make more disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that Jesus had commanded.

The characters in this story include:

- 11 disciples
- Jesus

In this session, have the group storyboard, draw out, or use some sort of manipulatives (objects that you can move around such as rocks, sticks, children's toys) to visualize the story and the action in it.

In the first scene the eleven disciples are walking to Galilee. Remember that this trip would have taken anywhere from 4 to 7 days. Jesus told them to go to the mountains, though we are not told which one. So, the rest of the scene takes place in the mountains of Galilee.

When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped Jesus by bowing down or laying on the ground in front of Jesus. However, some or all of the disciples doubted or had hesitation in their hearts because they did not know how to behave around Jesus.

Stop and discuss as a team: How does this look? Did Jesus appear to the disciples, or find them like He found the two Marys? Was Jesus waiting for the disciples at a specific place and they finally made it there? How will you translate the two feelings expressed here, worship and doubt?

Jesus comes towards the disciples in a way that reassures them. Jesus then speaks to the disciples and says to them that Jesus now has all authority in both heaven and on earth. Jesus then tells the disciples to go into all of the nations, or people groups, to help others follow Jesus by baptizing them and teaching them all of the commands that Jesus gave the disciples. Jesus then promises that His presence will be with them until the end of the age, or the end of the world.

Embodying the Text

Listen to the text once again in the easiest to understand version.

In this session, the team will dramatize the story.

This story has 2 scenes.

The characters in this story include:

- Jesus
- The eleven disciples

Have the team act out the story twice. They should act it out in the language they are translating into. First, have the team act out the story without stopping. The second time the team acts out the story, stop them at different points in the story.

As the team acts out the story the first time, pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the story. Look out for the important or difficult parts of the story or passage to be acted out and not skipped. Help the team remember parts of the story.

The second time the team acts out this story, stop them at certain points.

The disciples walk from Jerusalem to Galilee.

Stop the action.

- I don't know what to think! I can't believe this is real!
- I wonder if Jesus is upset with us.
- How is any of this possible? He must truly be the Messiah! [!end] Restart the action.

When the disciples see Jesus, they fall to the ground in worship of Him, but there was some doubt in their hearts.

Stop the action.

- I love these men like brothers. I am glad to see them again!
- I wish they wouldn't doubt me. [!end] Restart the action.

Jesus comes towards the disciples and speaks to them, telling them that He now has authority over all things in heaven and on earth. Then Jesus tells the disciples to go to all of the nations to make disciples by baptizing people in the authority, or name, of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus also tells the disciples to teach the people to obey all that Jesus has commanded them. Jesus will be with them until the end of the age, or the end of the world.

Stop the action.

- This feels so big and important. I can't believe Jesus still wants us to be a part of this.
- I am so thankful He will not leave us.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to the text once in the easiest to understand version.

The eleven **disciples** go to **Galilee** from **Jerusalem** to meet Jesus who has been resurrected from the dead. The disciples are Jesus' closest followers. This group is just missing Judas who has died. Use the same word for disciples you have used before. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of disciples. Galilee is a region in northern Israel where Jesus did most of His ministry while He was alive. Jerusalem was the city that was the religious centre for the Jews. Use the same words you have used before for Galilee and Jerusalem. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Galilee and Jerusalem.

When the disciples see Jesus they **worship** Jesus, though they have **doubts** in their hearts. To worship is to show honour and reverence to someone or something. In this case, this word means to bow down to the ground before someone in submission. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of worship. Doubt in this case is to have hesitation or lack of belief or understanding.

Jesus comes towards the disciples and speaks to them saying that all **authority** in **heaven** and on the earth has been given to Jesus. Because of that, Jesus tells them to go into all of the world, or to all of the **nations**, to make disciples who follow Jesus. Authority is God's supernatural role or control over all things. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of authority and of heaven. The nations means all of the tribes or ethnic groups. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of nation.

Jesus tells the disciples to make disciples by **baptizing** them in the name or authority of the **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**. He also tells the disciples to teach them to **obey** everything Jesus has commanded. To baptize is to put someone in water, or wash them spiritually, as a symbol of dying to themselves and living to follow Christ. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of baptism. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the trinitarian roles of God. Refer to the Master Glossary for a definition of the Holy Spirit. To obey is to continue or to keep doing the things that someone tells you to do.

Jesus then tells the disciples that He will be with them to the end of the age, or the end of the world.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

Matthew 28:16–20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (2280021 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)

[mp3 zip](#) (3978398 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
- [FIA Step 2](#)
- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
- [FIA Step 6](#)