

13 ESSENTIAL LESSONS

FOR YOUTH AGES

14-18

FROM THE

Conversational, experiential lesson themes reveal the heart of Jesus, and how teenagers can live out a relationship with him each day.

NO. 02

JESUS-CENTERED

100%

NEW TESTAMENT

- ☒ EASILY REPRODUCIBLE
- ☒ OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
- ☒ FLEXIBLE FOR ANY SIZE GROUP
- ☒ WRITTEN USING THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION
- ☒ ENGAGING ACTIVITIES

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13 Essential Lessons From the New Testament

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HOW TO USE THESE LESSONS...

This collection of *13 Essential Lessons From the New Testament* is a taste-test overview of crucial topics, threaded through a narrative that is always pointing forward to Jesus. The lessons are structured simply, using an “inquiry based” method that maximizes conversation and engagement with your teenagers. This question-focused structure gives you the flexibility to tailor these lessons to your time slot, and go as deep as your group is able to go. We believe healthy discussion is essential to help students own their faith. Even more, you don’t have to be a theologian to lead these lessons. We’ve crafted them specifically to emphasize discussion and deeper connections among students. If you love God and love teenagers, you can easily lead these lessons.

Each lesson is built on Group’s REAL teaching imperatives: Relational, Experiential, Applicable, and Learner-based. Each week, your kids will build relationships with each other, and with God, through interactive experiences and challenging questions that will spur them to dig deeper. And every lesson is threaded-through with a Jesus-centered focus that reveals and elevates the Messiah, no matter what the topic or scriptural foundation. In addition, we include ideas for connecting what kids are learning to their everyday

lives with every lesson. The lecture (or “talk”) strategy that so many use as a default setting has proven to be the least effective way for people—not just teenagers—to learn. In fact, more and more learning experts are now branding the talking-at-you method so popular in churches as “educational malpractice.” With these lessons, you get a “best practice” approach that will plant growth in your students.

As an added resource, we’ve included a short “background” segment that will help you quickly get up to speed on the topic focus of each lesson. And we’ve included two suggested “Tweet-able” invitations you can send out to teenagers in advance of each lesson.

Now, just like that, you’re ready to lead these lessons. Follow the flow from start to finish, or cherry-pick the lessons that fit your scope. We’re so grateful you’ve picked up this resource, and honored to partner with you in your ministry to teenagers.

Grace,

Rick Lawrence

Editorial Director

Group/Simply Youth Ministry Resources



13 ESSENTIAL LESSONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

LESSON

THE LOST SHEEP

No.01

BIBLE VERSES

Luke 15:1-7

Psalms 23

Isaiah 53:6

ACTIVITY

Say: Imagine for a moment that one of your family members has disappeared. It's quite likely that everyone in your family would search everywhere and do whatever it took to find that person. In this clip from the movie *Cheaper By the Dozen*, the Baker family realizes that one of the children, Mark, is missing. The whole family begins to search for him, looking everywhere they can. Eventually they find him on a train headed to the city where their old home was located.

Play the clip.

Ask:

- How is this family's reaction similar to or different from the way your family would respond in this situation?
- Think back to when you were younger. How did it feel when you got lost or didn't know where your parents were?
- Who was responsible for finding you? How long did it take?
- What emotions did you experience after you were reunited with your family?
- Have you ever been the one who was searching for a lost person? If so, what happened?
- If Jesus is just like a shepherd searching for lost sheep (us!), how do we typically make it hard for him to "find" us?

Say: We may not like being compared to sheep, but the care our parents provide is similar to what shepherds do for their sheep. That's right—sometimes you're like sheep! We all are, in fact, according to the Bible.

DIGGING IN

Have students take turns reading aloud Luke 15:1-7.

Say: Let's explore what this relationship between a shepherd and a sheep looks like.



Things you need...

- ☐ A video clip from *Cheaper By the Dozen*, from 1:20:45, as the family pours out of the house, to 1:23:45, as Tom and Mark hug
- ☐ An Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens or pencils



BIBLE BACKGROUND

Read Luke 15:1-7.

As a teacher, Jesus knew he could effectively connect with his audience by using familiar ideas and images—including sheep and shepherds. Most of us don't have much interaction with sheep these days, but it was a common occupation in Jesus' time, especially in Israel.

Sheep and shepherds were also central to the religious heritage of Jesus' audience, thanks to stories and characters from the Old Testament (the only part of the Bible written at that point). David was a shepherd boy long before he became king of Israel. Moses tended sheep for his father-in-law, Jethro. Before Rachel met and married Jacob, she was a shepherdess. Amos was a shepherd before God called him to be a prophet. So Jesus' listeners would have had some understanding of the role, importance, and dedication of a shepherd.

Sheep aren't always the easiest animals to lead. The key is helping them become familiar with their shepherd's voice. It's almost like a child's ability to recognize a parent's voice in a large crowd. Ultimately, a shepherd's job is to protect the sheep, take care of them, lead them to food and water—in short, do whatever they need to thrive.

THE SHEPHERD CARES

Ask:

- Why does Jesus describe himself as a shepherd?
- Why does the shepherd in the parable leave the 99 to find the one? What makes that one sheep so important?
- Think of a specific time when Jesus has acted like a shepherd in your life. How did Jesus care for you? What did you learn from that experience?

Say: Jesus often describes himself as a shepherd, and sheep and shepherds appear many times in the Gospels. Just as a shepherd provides care for sheep, Jesus wants to take care of us. He wants us to know his voice and listen and obey; that way, he can guide us out of danger and lead us to “green pastures.” Jesus meets our needs and knows what's best for us.

THE SHEPHERD SEEKS

Ask:

- When have you experienced Jesus' love for you in an unmistakable way?
- In your life, how have you felt pursued by Jesus? Think of a time you felt kind of lost in life; what helped you feel “found”?
- Read Isaiah 53:6. Why do we leave God's paths to pursue our own?
- What are some consequences in your life if you choose to leave God's path?

Say: When sheep get separated from their shepherd, they can feel alone and end up in trouble. The same is true in our relationship with Jesus. When we wander from him or ignore his voice, we feel alone and sometimes find ourselves in situations that aren't the best for us. When we read Isaiah 53:6, we can take comfort in knowing that Jesus loves us so deeply he'll do whatever it takes to find us when we're lost and then care for us as a shepherd lovingly cares for his sheep.

DIGGING DEEPER

Ask:

- Think of a time when you experienced something you didn't necessarily like but that produced something positive in your life. How did you sense Jesus' involvement in that experience?
- When have you been frustrated in your relationship with Jesus? When has he seemed silent? What was that like?
- Sometimes we turn to “shepherds” we know aren't good for

us or who invite us into bad habits, instead of depending on “shepherds” who want the best for us. When have you turned to other “shepherds” besides Jesus to meet your needs, and why?

Have students form pairs. Give each pair paper and a pen or pencil.

Say: **With your partner, read Psalm 23. Identify and write down all the different shepherd tasks and images included in this Bible passage.**

After a few minutes, bring the group back together.

Ask:

- What shepherd tasks and images did you find in these verses, and what’s the spiritual significance of each?
- Why does David compare God to a shepherd?
- If David were writing this psalm today, what other character or analogy might he choose instead of describing God as a shepherd? Explain.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Ask:

- What’s the theme or big idea from this parable?
- What story from your life is similar to the story Jesus tells?
- This week, when you feel yourself getting anxious, pause and do something simple to remember your “Good Shepherd.”
Simply say, under your breath: “I’m just a sheep, and I need you Shepherd.”

THINGS TO REMEMBER



TEXTS & TWEETS

What do you have in common with sheep? See you soon to talk about it!

Feeling a little lost? Come hang out for some help in getting back on track.

Make texting your group easier. Consider using Simply Text. To try it FREE go to <https://secure.symt.us/signup>



13 ESSENTIAL LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

If you liked doing these lessons from the New Testament, then you'll love the next in the series. Available online and at your local Christian bookstore.

13 ESSENTIAL LESSONS

FOR YOUTH AGES
14-18

Conversational, experiential lessons reveal how the Old Testament narrative points to Jesus' redemptive mission—and how these ancient truths impact teenagers' everyday lives.

FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT

No. 01
JESUS-CENTERED
100%

AVAILABLE NOW!

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ISBN 978-1-4707-4289-8

13 ESSENTIAL LESSONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus' ministry. Bold followers. Transformational parables. Give your teenagers an opportunity to explore the profound accounts of the New Testament. These 13 intentionally selected lessons capture the magnitude of Jesus' words, the radical obedience of his followers, and other important teachings that will equip you to guide students toward a faith-filled life.

ALL 13 LESSONS INCLUDE

- Brief overviews designed to help with preparation
- Primary and secondary Scripture references
- Open-ended questions for authentic discussions
- Objectives to help drive home what, why, and how
- Flexible guidelines with opportunities to go deeper

13 Essential Lessons From the New Testament provides an exciting overview that will build a strong biblical foundation for students to thrive in their relationship with Jesus.



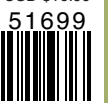
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helping youth workers with what matters most

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