



**The Gospel of Matthew**  
**Wk 1/3: Raising the Bar**  
**March 21 & 22, 2020**



## LEADER PREP

### GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To encourage students to understand themes in Matthew, and to start reading it!

### SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:21-22; Matthew 5:27-28;  
Matthew 5:38-39

### THINK ABOUT THIS

Sadly, we as Christians don't spend a lot of time in the Bible. You can even say we're biblically illiterate. That goes for students, too. This series is an entry step to reading the Bible. The goal of this series is to help students see that the Bible is worth reading, and that the gospels are a great place to start. Feel free to use the reading plan as part of the journey for your small group! Do it together!

### GOSPEL MOMENT

THERE IS A NEW SECTION IN YOUR LEADER GUIDE THAT WILL APPEAR ONCE A SERIES. Sadly, some of our students still see church only as a good thing they are doing to be good people. This is NOT the point of church. The point is to come to know we are sinners, we need a Savior, Jesus is that Savior, believing in Him gives us eternal life and starts a life-long relationship with God, which can always grow. Take time to remind your students today of the Gospel. If your group needs, spend your whole time together here.

*This guide is a suggestion, not a formula. Adjust the questions and activities as needed, and don't feel like you need to do, or ask, everything you see here. Let the students and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation, too.*

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

### MAIN POINT

**Jesus wants more than the bare-minimum; He raises the bar in the Sermon on the Mount.**

### GET THEM TALKING

What is your favorite Easter tradition you and your family do?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think people do the bare-minimum when it comes to following Jesus?
2. Do you think following Jesus should be taken as seriously as getting A's in school or playing travel sports? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Jesus raises the bar when it comes to sin?

**READ Matthew 6:24 and answer the following questions:**

4. Read that verse again, but leave the 'money' word blank. Ask students "what would you put in that blank instead of the word 'money'? What is something you put as a higher priority than God?"
5. Would you say you prioritize following Jesus at the same level as school or sports? If not, what is holding you back?
6. Do you agree that a lot of us try to get as close to 'sin' as possible? Do you think this is a good way to live? Why or why not?
7. What are some ways we can start to prioritize our relationship with God, even when we don't feel like it?

### NEXT STEP

What are action steps you can take at home, at school, etc. to keep God as your number one priority?

### GOSPEL MOMENT

**Jesus did more than the bare-minimum for us. He actually gave up everything for us, even His life** He gave up everything for us on the cross so our relationship with God can be restored and when we believe in Him as our God and Savior, we are gaining eternal life with God. This is the most important thing for us to understand: it not only effects our life, but our afterlife. If you don't know that you know you are going to heaven today, you can believe and pray right now! (More details on Go5pel guide)

### PRAYER GUIDE

Ask your students to share their prayer requests. Close your time together in prayer.

## SCRIPTURE

MS students are concrete thinkers, so opening your Bible to read the Scripture with them is a preferred visual cue versus just reading off of this sheet of paper.

### MATTHEW 6:24

“You cannot be a slave of two masters; you will hate one and love the other; you will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”