



Jesus Said What?!
Wk 1 of 4: Straight to the Heart
April 25 & 26, 2020

LEADER PREP

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

For students to understand that the main goal of being Christian isn't good behavior but a heart transformation. When our hearts change, our behavior follows.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:27-30 &
Romans 10:9

THINK ABOUT THIS

Middle school students are in a very black and white "cognitive space." This means it is a stretch for them to understand that the main goal of being a Christian isn't good behavior but a heart transformation. This point is so important we want to repeat it often so students have time to grow to understand this point. Each time they hear this, their understanding may grow piece by piece until they understand the whole picture. As middle school leaders our goal is to help translate the idea that what we show the world often reflects what's in our hearts.

Another common misconception is that being a Christian equals being nice; this is not true. Being nice means being agreeable, and Jesus' ways do not always agree with culture's ways.

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 said what He said not to change our behavior but to transform our hearts.

GET THEM TALKING

What's one rule your parents have in your house?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do some people think being a Christian is just about following rules?
2. What do you think it means to be a Christian?

READ MATTHEW 25:27-30 and answer the following questions. FOR FUN read it in a way you think Jesus might have said it:

3. In your own words, what sin is Jesus talking about here?
4. This is a tough passage to understand. What questions do you have about it?
5. Does Jesus literally want us to gouge out our eyes? What does He want from us?
6. Why do you think Jesus used such an extreme analogy?
7. In your own words, what is the difference between changing our behaviors and transforming our hearts?

READ ROMANS 10:9 and answer the following questions:

8. What does it mean to believe God is in your heart?
9. How can someone be saved?
10. What does it mean to be saved?

NEXT STEP

What is one thing you can do this week to turn your heart toward Jesus?

PRAYER GUIDE

Jesus, thank you for loving us unconditionally. Thank you for saving us when we believe in You in our hearts. Jesus, help us understand that following you isn't first about changing our behaviors, but having faith in You in our hearts. Jesus, keep transforming our hearts and bringing them closer and closer to You. When we go astray, bring our hearts back to you.

Let's take a moment in silence to offer our hearts to God and list for God names of friends and family members whose hearts we want God to speak to.

SCRIPTURE

MS students are concrete thinkers, so opening your Bible to read the Scripture with them is a preferred visual cue.

MATTHEW 5:27-30 (NLT)

²⁷ “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

ROMANS 10:9 (NLT)

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”