

Winter Devotions 2025-26

Coach's Guide

This season we're covering nine stories of Jesus interacting with all kinds of people. As a reminder, each devotion should take 5-10 minutes of your practice time. In each devotion, there will be a brief introduction, a passage of scripture, a few discussion questions and a key takeaway for the week. There are two sets of questions, one directed towards levels two and three and the other directed towards levels four and five. If you have a level three team, you could probably use either set, or pick and choose questions from both sets. You should make that decision based on the makeup of your team. You may not get to every question every week. Please read the devotion ahead of time. We'd like you to keep to the key point, but if you have other thoughts about the passage, please feel free to bring those out. Putting the material in your own voice, in a way that's meaningful to your team, is good practice. The answers provided are not meant to be read verbatim, but hopefully give you an example of a useful answer. If you have any questions, please reach out to the leadership team.

1. Intro
2. Zaccheus - Luke 19:1-10
 - a. Key point: Jesus will interact with people that others won't
 - b. Memory verse: Luke 19:10
3. Nicodemus - John 3:1-21
 - a. Key point: patience with someone who was fearful
 - b. Memory verse: John 3:16
4. Rich young ruler - Mark 10:17-24
 - a. Key point: Jesus will challenge your status quo
 - b. Memory verse: Mark 10:21
5. The Canaanite Woman: Matthew 15: 21-28
 - a. Key point: the woman's humility, Jesus crosses societal borders
 - b. Memory verse: Matthew 9:13
6. Pharisees - Mark 7:1-23
 - a. Key point: it's what is on the inside that counts
 - b. Memory verse: Mark 7:14-16
7. Thomas - John 20: 24-29
 - a. Key point: Jesus shows patience with doubters
 - b. Memory verse: John 20:28-29
8. Jesus washes the disciple's feet - John 13:3-5, 12-17
 - a. Key point: Servant leadership
 - b. Memory verse: John 13:14
9. Jesus heals the paralytic - Matthew 9: 1-8
 - a. Key point: Jesus can heal the whole person: spiritual and physical
 - b. Memory Verse: Matthew 9:2

10. Little children - Matthew 19:13-15, Luke 9: 46-48
 - a. Key point: Jesus values those who aren't valued by others/come to Jesus like a child
 - b. Memory verse: Matthew 19:14
11. Conclusion

Week 1: Introduction

Welcome your players and lay out how you want to run devotions. Spend some time getting to know your players. You can ask them silly ice breaker questions or more serious questions to get to know more about them. It's a good idea to do a bit of both. Share your answers as well. I do think that it's a good idea to get a sense for what their church backgrounds are. You can ask where they go to church or if they go to Sunday School or youth group. Whatever their answers are, make sure that they feel welcome.

Week 2: Zacchaeus

Think of someone that is very unpopular, either with you or the rest of the world. Maybe they cheated people and mistreated them. Do you want the best for them or do you want bad things to happen to them to make up for all of the bad stuff that they've done? Today, we're going to talk about somebody who cheated his people and was probably considered a traitor.

Luke 19:1-10

19 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Levels 2-3:

Q: What did Zacchaeus do for a job?

A: He was a tax collector?

Q: What are taxes?

A: Money paid to the government.

Q: Which government did Zacchaeus collect taxes for?

A: The Roman Empire, not the local Jewish government

Q: So Zacchaeus collected taxes for a foreign government that took over Israel by force. That's bad enough, but verse 8 hints at Zacchaeus being even worse to his own people. What might he have done?

A: He likely overcharged people on their taxes and pocketed the extra money.

Q: Did Zacchaeus deserve Jesus's attention and forgiveness?

A: Of course not.

Q: What can we learn by Jesus meeting with Zacchaeus?

A: Jesus will forgive sinners who repent.

Q: What can we learn from Zacchaeus?

A: He sought Jesus out and repented. He paid back those that he stole from.

Levels 4-5

Q: Which government did Zacchaeus collect taxes for?

A: The Roman Empire, not the local Jewish government

Q: So Zacchaeus collected taxes for a foreign government that took over Israel by force. That's bad enough, but verse 8 hints at Zacchaeus being even worse to his own people. What might he have done?

A: He likely overcharged people on their taxes and pocketed the extra money.

Q: What can we learn by Jesus meeting with Zacchaeus?

A: Jesus will forgive sinners who repent. In fact, he actively sought out Zacchaeus.

Q: Has someone ever taken advantage of or mistreated you personally or "your people"?

A: (Don't necessarily need an answer here)

Q: Have you ever done something hurtful to a person or group of people?

A: (Once again, don't necessarily need an answer here)

Q: What does Zacchaeus' example tell us that we need to do?

A: Seek forgiveness and make amends.

Key takeaway: Jesus came to seek out imperfect, even bad people. It doesn't matter what you, or others, have done in the past. Jesus will still meet you, but he will call you to repent.

Week 3: Nicodemus

Have you ever clearly known what the right thing to do was, but you were afraid to do it because of what others thought? Or have you seen others do that? I'm pretty sure that we've all done that at some point in time. Today, we're going to talk about someone who really wanted to learn from Jesus, but he was afraid of what his friends would think.

John 3:1-21

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. **2** He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him."

3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.^[a]"

4 "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. **6** Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit^[b] gives birth to spirit. **7** You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You^[c] must be born again.' **8** The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Note to coach: you may skip verses 9-15 in the interest of time

9 "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10 "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? **11** Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. **12** I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? **13** No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.^[d] **14** Just as

*Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,^[g] **15** that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”^[g]*

***16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. **19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. **20** Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. **21** But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.*

Levels 2-3

Q: What does the Bible story say that Nicodemus was?

A: He was a Pharisee

Q: What was a Pharisee? Were they important?

A: A Pharisee was a religious leader and they were very important in Judea in Jesus’ time.

Q: Why did Nicodemus meet Jesus at night?

A: He didn’t want to be publicly seen with Jesus out of fear that his fellow Pharisees would be mad at him.

Q: Is Nicodemus being brave here?

A: No

Q: How does Jesus talk to Nicodemus? Does he make Nicodemus feel bad for only coming to him at night?

A: No, he still teaches Nicodemus and does not criticize him for his cowardice.

Levels 4-5

Q: Can someone quickly tell us who the Pharisees were and what they generally thought of Jesus?

A: Religious leaders who were important in Judea in Jesus's time. They generally opposed Jesus.

Q: Why did Nicodemus meet Jesus at night?

A: He didn't want to be publicly seen with Jesus out of fear that his peers would think less of him.

Q: How does Jesus talk to Nicodemus?

A: He still teaches Nicodemus and does not chastise him for his fear.

Q: What does this teach us about how we seek Jesus?

A: Despite our doubts and fears, we can seek him wherever we are. He will not push us away.

Q: What does this teach us about others who may not be boldly taking hold of Jesus the way that we think that they should?

A: We need to be patient with others in their search.

Key Takeaway: Jesus will meet us where we are even if we are lacking courage or other virtues. We also need to be patient and give grace to people who may be afraid to follow Jesus simply because they are afraid of what others think.

Week 4: Rich young ruler

What are some things that are really important to you? Are there things that you feel like you can't live without? Today, we're going to talk about someone who had a lot of stuff, and those things were more important to him than following Jesus.

Mark 10:17-24

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'^[a]"

20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is^[a] to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

Levels 2-3

Q: Was the man excited to meet Jesus? How can you tell?

A: Yes. He ran up to meet Jesus, fell at his feet and called him "good teacher".

Q: What kind of person does his response to Jesus in verse 20 show him to be?

A: The kind that has followed the rules his entire life.

Q: Why does Jesus next tell him to give away all of his wealth?

A: His wealth was far too important to him, even more important than Jesus and eternal life

Q: Is money the only thing that we can make more important than Jesus? What are some other things?

A: Various answers. Fame, power, doing what we want, etc.

Q: This story could be a sad one, but what does the last verse that we read say?

A: That all is possible with God.

Levels 4-5

Q: What can we gather about the man from the beginning of the passage?

A: That he was enthusiastic and excited to meet Jesus.

Q: How do you think the man is feeling after Jesus's first response to his question?

A: We can imagine that his excitement is growing since, in his mind, he's done all of these things.

Q: In verse 21, it says that "Jesus looked at him and loved him" before delivering a devastating command. How is this loving?

A: The man's idolatry of his wealth would hold him back and cause issues for him at some point in his life.

Q: Was it really about the money? What else could we (or others) place before Jesus?

A: Relationships, activities, the ability to do what we want at all times, etc.

Key takeaway: We need to be careful that we are not valuing other things more than our relationship with Jesus.

Week 5: The Canaanite Woman

Unfortunately, people have a long history of not treating other people well if they are different. There are many examples of this that we've probably learned about in school. Today, we're going to look at how Jesus treated a person who was different from Jesus and the other Jewish people.

Matthew 15:21-28

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

27 "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

28 Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Levels 2-3

Q: Was the woman a Jew from Israel like Jesus?

A: No, she was not Jewish and she was from a different country.

Q: What did she want from Jesus?

A: She wanted him to heal her daughter.

Q: Did Jesus help her right away?

A: No, he didn't.

Q: What did Jesus say was the reason that he didn't help her right away?

A: He said that he was sent first for the Jews, the "lost sheep of Israel".

Q: Why do you think that Jesus replied this way?

A: Could be various answers here, but probably to allow her to show her faith in her response.

Q: Did Jesus ultimately heal her daughter?

A: Yes.

Levels 4-5

Q: Was the woman a Jew from Israel like Jesus?

A: No, she was from the area of Tyre and Sidon.

Q: Did the woman ask once?

A: No, she was staying nearby calling out.

Q: What did Jesus mean in verse 26?

A: That he was sent first for the Jews, the "lost sheep of Israel".

Q: This doesn't seem like Jesus. Why do you think he interacts with her like this?

A: Testing her? Giving her a chance to show faith?

Q: How would you describe the woman's response?

A: It was humble and showed great faith.

Key takeaway: Jesus regularly preached to and helped people from different places and cultures. We need to act like Him and show kindness to all.

Week 6: Pharisees

So far, we've seen examples of Jesus being nice to people who didn't "deserve it". Today, we're going to talk about a time that Jesus had some hard words for a group of people. These were people that clearly felt that they deserved respect and honor from everyone else.

Mark 7:1-8

1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus

2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.

4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.^[a])

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

*"These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.*

*They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.'*^[b]

8 *You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."*

Levels 2-3

Q: Who were the Pharisees?

A: They were a group of religious leaders in Israel at the time.

Q: What were they criticizing the disciples for?

A: They criticized the disciples for not washing their hands, which was one of their many rules.

Q: Jesus calls them hypocrites. What is a hypocrite?

A: Someone who says one thing and does another.

Q: Why does Jesus call them hypocrites?

A: In this case, the Pharisees likely followed the rules, but missed the point of them.

Q: What are some ways that people today can "follow the rules", but really miss the point of Jesus's teachings.

A: multiple answers

Levels 4-5

Q: What were the Pharisees criticizing the disciples for doing? Why?

A: They were criticizing the disciples for not washing their hands. This was one of the many rules/rituals that the Pharisees taught.

Q: Why does Jesus in turn criticize the Pharisees?

A: They were more focused on the rules rather than the goodness that God really wanted from them.

Q: Does Jesus criticize the tradition of washing hands itself?

A: No, he doesn't. Rules, rituals and traditions aren't necessarily bad in and of themselves.

Q: Can you think of any examples that you've seen where people very carefully follow rules, but miss the heart of Jesus's message?

A: Multiple answers. An example could be not swearing (good), but still saying very unkind things.

Key takeaway: While there's nothing wrong with having rules and traditions, we need to keep the focus of our faith on Jesus himself and his teachings. We also need to be careful to do what we say and repent when we don't.

Week 7: Thomas

We probably know people who won't believe anything anyone tells them. Maybe you're one of them. While wanting evidence is a good thing in many cases, sometimes people can take that too far. Today, we're going to talk about one of Jesus's friends that was infamous for his doubting.

Thomas was one of Jesus' original 12 disciples. He had seen Jesus perform many miracles and had heard Jesus's teachings. He was there when Jesus told him that he would rise from the dead. Jesus had risen from the dead and appeared to most of the disciples, but Thomas was not with them. Let's see how Thomas reacts to his friends' stories of the risen Jesus.

John 20:24-29

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Levels 2-3

Q: Did Thomas believe the other disciples when they told him about seeing Jesus?

A: No

Q: What did Thomas say would convince him?

A: Seeing Jesus in front of him and touching the wounds from his crucifixion.

Q: What did Jesus do when he did appear in front of Thomas?

A: He showed him his wounds.

Q: How did Jesus treat Thomas for not believing?

A: He was patient with Thomas, but did point out his unbelief.

Levels 4-5

Q: Why do you think that Thomas did not believe the other disciples when they told him about seeing Jesus again?

A: There could be multiple reasons. Perhaps he never fully believed Jesus before, perhaps he was still grieving...

Q: What did Thomas say would convince him?

A: Physically seeing Jesus and touching the wounds of his crucifixion.

Q: How would you describe Jesus' response to Thomas?

A: He was patient with Thomas and actually showed him the wounds. He did not rebuke him in an overly harsh manner. He did also encourage Thomas to not doubt.

Q: Most people will struggle with doubt at some point in their life. What can Jesus's response to Thomas's doubts tell us about how he may respond to ours?

A: Jesus was patient and helped Thomas overcome his doubts. While his response to us will look quite different, he is still faithful.

Takeaway: Having faith is a virtue, a good thing, and we should try to be more faithful. Despite this, Jesus is patient with doubters and will meet them where they're at. We also shouldn't ignore our doubts, we should face them. Jesus is faithful, even if we aren't!

Week 8: Jesus washes the disciples feet

Even to people who don't believe that Jesus was God, they still see him as one of the greatest leaders in human history. When you think of a great leader, what do you think of? Often, we think of a great leader as someone who tells people what to do and they do it without question. People serve the leaders by doing the necessary things that are "beneath them". However, as we see today, that's not what Jesus teaches about leadership.

John 13:3-5,12-17

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

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12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Levels 2-3

Q: Knowing that these people walked around in sandals on mostly unpaved paths, what do you think their feet were like?

A: Really dirty and smelly. The streets were covered with dust, mud and animal waste.

Q: Who do you think normally did the foot washing back then? The leaders or the servants?

A: The servants, the poorest and least powerful group, did this.

Q: What was Jesus teaching his disciples by doing this?

A: He's teaching us that a true leader is humble and seeks to serve those who follow them.

Q: What is something that you can do now that would be like washing someone's feet back then?

A: various answers

Levels 4-5

Q: What were the streets like back then? How do you think that left peoples' feet?

A: Mostly unpaved, with dust, mud and animal waste. That would make peoples' feet really pretty gross.

Q: Who do you think did most of the feet cleaning back then?

A: The servants, the lowest social class, did this.

Q: What was Jesus teaching his disciples (and us) by doing this?

A: He's teaching them (and us) that a true leader is humble and seeks to serve those who follow them.

Q: How does a true leader serve their followers? Does this mean that they do all of the mundane tasks that need to be done?

A: A true leader serves their followers by seeking their benefit rather than just serving themselves.

Q: Can you think of a leader that models service over self? It could be someone that you know or perhaps someone that you read about.

A: various answers

Key takeaway: Jesus teaches us that true leaders are humble and look to the good of others before their own.

Week 9: Jesus heals the paralytic

Jesus cares about our whole person. He cares about our physical needs, like our health. He cares about our material needs, like if we have a place to live and food to eat. But he cares most about our spiritual life. Today, we see him taking care of a person's physical disability and their spiritual issues.

Matthew 9:1-8

Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. 2 Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

3 At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

4 Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? 5 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 6 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." 7 Then the man got up and went home. 8 When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

Levels 2-3

Q: What does it mean when someone is paralyzed?

A: It means that they can't move a part of their body. It could be one part, like an arm or multiple parts like their legs or even everything below their necks.

Q: What does Jesus say first to the paralyzed man?

A: Jesus tells him that his sins are forgiven.

Q: Why do you think that Jesus does this first?

A: Jesus knows that the man's greatest need was to be right with God.

Q: What does blaspheme mean?

A: In this case, it means to do something that only God can do.

Q: Why did the Pharisees consider what Jesus said blasphemy?

A: Because they correctly believed that only God could forgive sins.

Q: Did Jesus heal the man's body?

A: Yes he did.

Levels 4-5

Q: How would you have felt when the first thing that Jesus did was not to heal you, but forgive you?

A: This may seem somewhat confusing at first, maybe even disappointing.

Q: Why do you think that Jesus forgave the man first?

A: Jesus knew that the man's greatest need was to be right with God. He was also demonstrating that as the son of God, he had the ability to forgive sins.

Q: Why were the Pharisees upset at Jesus?

A: They rightly knew that only God could forgive sins, but they did not recognize that Jesus was the Son of God.

Q: How can we care for the spiritual and physical needs of those around us?

A: Various answers. Could be sharing the Good News with them. Could include helping them with various things, providing physical needs like food and shelter.

Key takeaway: Jesus cares about ALL of us. Our bodies and our souls. We also need to care about the spiritual and physical needs of those around us.

Week 10: Jesus and the little children

Have you ever heard the old saying “children are meant to be seen and not heard”? Maybe not, it’s a much older idea that dates back to before your parents were born. The idea behind it is that over history, children were not thought of as being worth all that much. Keep that in mind as we look at today’s two passages.

Matthew 9:13-15

13 Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” 15 When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Luke 9: 46-48

46 An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest.

47 Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. 48 Then he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest.”

Levels 2-3

Q: What did the disciples do when people brought children to Jesus?

A: They tried to send them away.

Q: What does the disciples’ reaction tell you about how important they think children are?

A: Like we talked about in the introduction, it shows that little children were not valued highly at that time.

Q: How does Jesus treat the children?

A: He welcomed them and said that the kingdom of heaven belonged to them as well.

Q: In the second passage, why does Jesus show them a child to demonstrate how we should act?

A: The child was humble and recognized that they could bring nothing of material value to Jesus.

Levels 4-5

Q: How does the disciples' reaction to the children reveal how important the children are considered to be?

A: By trying to get rid of them, the disciples show that they don't view the children as being worthy of Jesus's time.

Q: Why were children considered to be unimportant?

A: Children were an economic drain as they couldn't earn money or contribute much labor.

Q: How does Jesus value them?

A: Jesus makes time for them, even despite the large crowd of adults.

Q: What is Jesus trying to teach his disciples about in the second passage? What about the child does he want them to be like?

A: Humility; coming to Him knowing that they have nothing to offer.

Key takeaway: Again, Jesus demonstrates that he values those who everyone else doesn't. He also shows us that we are to approach him like a child, with humility and knowing that we have nothing to offer Him.

Week 11: Conclusion

Over the past nine devotions, we've seen how Jesus responds to different people and how they respond to him. We've seen some people show humility and honestly seek him, while others rejected him.

Q: What are some of the stories that we've covered this year?

Q: Are there any stories that you relate to the most?

Q: Are any of the stories challenging or harder than others?

Q: Did you learn anything new about Jesus?

You should definitely have been shown that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Spoiler alert: we've all been lost. It doesn't matter how good or bad we've been. Some people, like the rich young ruler we talked about, had been "good" their whole life, but they rejected Jesus because they loved other things more. Some, like Zaccheus or the Canaanite woman, knew that they didn't have the right to demand or deserve anything from Jesus. Nicodemus was cowardly. Thomas doubted. Jesus reached out to them regardless.

We'd love for you to learn even more about Jesus and trust in Him. If you would like to learn how to trust in Jesus, please ask your head coach. If you would like to learn more, please seek out Jesus in a church such as the host churches of this league or (coach's church).

Offer a closing prayer for the kids as the season winds to an end.

