

Series: The Born Identity

Lesson 2: Heroes

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Define a Christian disciple as someone who imitates Christ
- Identify a quality of Jesus that they would like to imitate and make a plan for doing so

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Board and markers
- ☐ scrap paper
- ☐ pens
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Divide the room into true and false sides (see Task One)

Lead In:

Have students turn to the person next to them and share who they wanted to be like when they were children and what actions they took towards being like that person. For example, “I wanted to be like Superman and so I always wore a cape.” Have the partners decide who was more extreme in their pursuit of being like their hero. Have the partners share the more extreme example with the whole group.

Task One:

Tell the students that you are going to read a series of statements about Jewish people and faith in the time of Jesus. Tell them that they must vote true or false by moving across a divider line that you create in the room. For example, the left wall of the room is true and the right wall is false. In other words, they are going to vote with their feet. Read the following statements one by one, allowing students to vote. At the end of each vote, announce the correct answer.

- Galileans (Jews in the northern part of Israel) were well educated about the Bible.
<True>
- Jesus was a Jew who lived in Jericho. <False; Jesus was a Jew but he lived in Galilee>
- Jewish boys and girls began learning Scripture when they were 8 years old. <False; They started at 4-5 years of age>
- Everyone became a rabbi. <False>
- An educated Jew would have memorized the entire Torah (the first five books of the Bible) by age 10. <True>
- Only some students went to the second stage of education called Beth Midrash.
<True>
- Students who completed Beth Midrash memorized the entire Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament). <True>

- Everyone who graduated Beth Midrash automatically became a talmid (a disciple of a rabbi). <False; very few made it>
- A talmid was a follower of a rabbi who was totally devoted to becoming like the rabbi and would have spent his entire time observing the teacher to know how to understand Scripture and how to put it into practice. <True>
- “Disciple” and “student” were synonymous. <False; a student just wanted to know what the teacher knows whereas a disciple wanted to be like the teacher in thought, action and character.>¹

Task Two:

Transition by asking the students, *Based on the last task, how would you define a disciple of Jesus?* Look for an answer such as, “a disciple of Jesus is one who imitates Jesus or tries to be like Jesus.” *Good!* Now give these instructions.

In your group, take four minutes to compile a list of the character qualities and actions of Jesus (e.g. patient, kind towards less fortunate, solid prayer life, wept when his friend died, etc.). Tell the students that they may be asked to prove that their answer is really in the Bible. Provide scrap paper and pens for this task.

Have a representative from each group verbally report the group’s answers to the whole class. Have a volunteer scribe record these on the board. Ask for the biblical references to some answers. Ask the students if there are any qualities or actions on the board that they disagree with. Make sure that all the answers are valid and then move on.

¹ Answers taken from an article by Ray Vanderlaan (can be found at <http://www.followtherabbi.com/Brix?pageID=2753>).

Task Three:

Keep the scrap paper and pens available. Have each student look at the list individually and identify an item from the list that they are most interested in imitating. Have them turn this item into an action statement that they will commit to trying this week. For example, “Jesus wept at his friend’s death. I have a friend who just lost her brother. I can go to her house and sit with her for a few minutes to show that I care about her grief.” Tell them that you are going to hold them accountable. When they are done, they are going to write their name on the piece of paper and you are going to collect them. The following week you are going to hand them back and ask who accomplished theirs.

Closing:

Say something like, *As kids we always imitate people we want to be like. To be a disciple is the same: we imitate Jesus as best as we can. To do so, we need to know who he is, what he does, and how he does it do it. Then we can imitate Christ and shine his light in the world.*

End by praying that students would have the courage to complete their actions.