

*Get Ready!***Blessed Be. . .**

By: Myra Montgomery

**Text**

Matthew 5:1-12

Key Quest Verse

Memorize the Beatitudes

Bible Background

Here is Matthew's understanding of the central points in Jesus' teaching. Just as Moses went up the mountain to bring a new law to the people, so Jesus from the mountain describes the way God wants us to live now. Jesus commends the meek, the merciful, those with undefiled hearts, and those who work for peace. These are virtues we have come to know throughout our whole history with God. Others in the list are more surprising. Jesus blesses the poor, the hungry, and the weeping as well as the virtuous, recognizing the injustice of their situation and assuring them of God's care.

Get Ready!

Lesson Quest

What I want my students to:

Know: The Beatitudes are guidelines for our daily living.

Feel: God blesses those who follow Jesus

Do: Jesus' followers are gentle, kind and peaceful

Leader's Devotion

1. Trust God
2. Be open to God's presence
3. Be humble
4. Fight for right
5. Forgive
6. Be steadfast
7. Be calm
8. Be courageous

Put this list in a place where you can see it often. Sometimes we try to live our life without referring to the guide book "God's Word". Ask the Lord to give you the faith and courage to become all that He wants you to be.

Get Set!



Option A

Materials: A hand held computer game

Do any of you like to play computer games? [Show the hand-held computer game.] My children like to play these games when we are taking a long trip in the car or on a rainy day when they cannot play outside. I am not very good at playing this game. It is hard for me to make it past the first level. My children are better at playing it. They can make it past the first level and on to the higher, more difficult levels. Today I want to tell you about a time when Jesus wanted his followers to make it to the next level in understanding God's laws. Jesus may have taught these sayings to his followers in many places. One passage of Scripture Matthew 5:1-12 says he went up to a mountain and taught his disciples. That is how these sayings became known as "the sermon on the mount."

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

Materials: A hand held computer game

Remember how I told you about moving from the beginner level to a harder, more advanced level in this game? In a similar manner, the Lord Jesus wants us to have a better understanding of God's laws. When God gave these laws to Moses, He gave the people some basic rules to live by. It was a beginner level. For example, Moses taught them to stop killing their enemies and only take revenge equal to the harm done ("an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"). Jesus taught them to **Love your enemies**. (verse 27) That took them to a higher level. We are still learning that very radical truth. Jesus moves us from harming to helping, from hating to loving. It is not enough to simply put up with each other (tolerate). Jesus teaches us to get along with each other peacefully.

Jesus says things that are the opposite of what the world teaches. He turns the ways of the world upside-down. He makes statements that begin "**Blessed are...**" and then surprises us. Blessed are you who are poor, who hunger now, who weep now, who are hated because you follow Jesus. You are blessed! Jesus teaches that God will lift up the humble, **the last shall be first**, the merciful will receive mercy. He moves us beyond strict rules and teaches us that the heart of the law is to have mercy. He teaches us to love one another.

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!



Bible Story

Advanced Preparation: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles.

It has now been some time since Jesus' forty days in the wilderness, and it is time to begin his ministry. He went to Galilee, and settled in Capernaum, a busy village filled with farmers, fishermen and trading, located near the Sea of Galilee. His decision to stay there was not entirely his choice, it also fulfilled a prophecy: "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles -- the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:1, 2) It was there Jesus called His first disciples.

Word of Jesus' teaching and healing had begun to spread throughout the region, and crowds of people, in all stages and conditions of life followed Him, either out of curiosity or perhaps hope for themselves.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to him." (Matthew 5:1) At first glance, one might think Jesus sat because He was weary from all the healing, but actually it is Jewish tradition for the rabbi to sit while teaching. Whether the crowd was large or small, His position on the hill ensured that all would hear His message.

If we would read the Scriptures a little more carefully, we would get an idea of how Jesus will direct His message. One example is found in Luke 15: "Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling ...". Jesus proceeds to tell a parable of the Lost Sheep (for the sinners), the Lost Coin (for the tax collectors), and the Prodigal Son (for the Pharisees). It was actually one story, but Jesus just changed the example so that all the participants would understand it. That is what Jesus does here -- He sizes up the crowd and uses examples they can understand: poor, mourning, etc. They have numerous needs, so they need a message of encouragement.

Matthew 5:2-11: "Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". In the Hebrew language a word is defined in layers. "Poor" is 'ani, or ebion. These words have a four-stage development of meaning:

- a) They begin by meaning simply poor
- b) Because poor, therefore having no influence or power, help, prestige,
- c) Because having no influence, therefore downtrodden and oppressed by men,
- d) Because he has no earthly resources whatever, put his whole trust in God.

Get Set!



Bible Story cont.

In other words, "I can't do it alone, I need help".

2) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." It's tempting to think of this only in terms of death, but one can mourn a job loss, a divorce, and a spouse or loved one being deployed to a war zone, or a child leaving home. In these moments we come face-to-face with a newfound strength, and sometimes through that comfort God leads us to new and exciting opportunities.

3) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." This is a tough one—one might define "meek" as weak, spineless. If that were true, then inheriting the earth seems a daunting responsibility. Fortunately, that's not the case!

To be meek is to be humble. Restraining one's anger; being in control of one's self, (leading a life of discipline) enables one to lead others. It is also recognizing our dependence on God to be in control. Numbers 12:3 describes Moses as meek (humble) but was certainly not weak. He humbled himself before God.

To inherit the earth: This is exactly what we are "seeking" the future Kingdom of God, when the earth will be made new!

4) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." It's not unusual to hear people say, "I'm starving!" when actually they are just feeling a few hunger pangs. Few people really know what true hunger is. The same for thirst—a turn of the tap, and water is available.

Jesus isn't talking about food and drink—He's talking about justice. Some of the injustices then still exist today. It isn't always enough to send a check to aid a worthy cause—we must FIGHT for right with as much passion as one who works for food and water. A commercial for a sports drink asks, "Is it in you?" The same question can be asked of us: "Is the hunger [for justice] in you?"

5) "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall see mercy." Webster's dictionary defines mercy as "kindness in excess of what is expected, kind or compassionate treatment, the power to forgive." As part of human nature, we get our feelings hurt, sometimes too easily. Rather than forgive and try to work things out, it's off to court we go. Mercy is when the victim's family forgives a murderer. In the Lord's Prayer we are instructed to "forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors". (Luke 11:1-4) To show us how, God sent Jesus—he lived with us, saw things with his own eyes, and felt the things we do. If Jesus can forgive his tormentors from the cross (Luke 23:34) should we do less?

Get Set!



Bible Story cont.

6) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Unblemished, perfect, flawless—these are the words that come to mind when one thinks of "pure". These words also remind us of Jesus' traits. Ivory Soap claims to be "99 & 44/100% pure"—almost, but not quite. What makes something completely pure? A life of Christian discipline, living out one's faith. It takes a lifetime of training.

The television program "Antiques Roadshow" is one example of "seeing" eyes. People bring their various items to be evaluated. One person may see a simple vase or painting, but one who is taught what to look for can determine an item's worth. In the same way, the "trained" believer sees God.

7) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." This Beatitude sounds simple, but there is more to it. Jesus is talking about right relations between people. In nearly any setting one can find a "troublemaker" and a "peacemaker". The troublemaker always seems to have a negative attitude or creates ill-will in some way, while the peacemaker is always trying to set things straight.

8) "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." If the disciples thought following Jesus would be easy, they are in for a rude awakening! This is probably the most important part of His message. Were they prepared to give up everything—their jobs, homes, families, and friends to follow Him? It will be hard, very hard to give these up, even to the point of death. Anything new can be a challenge and this new religion was no exception. But those who were willing to make that sacrifice would have eternal life. (Mark 10:17-31)

In other words, to be a true follower of Christ we must:

1. Trust God
2. Be open to God's presence
3. Be humble
4. Fight for right
5. Forgive
6. Be steadfast
7. Be calm
8. Be courageous

Go!**Act It Out!****DRAMA**

Materials: Small slips of paper, pens or pencils

Quest Connection

Procedure: See how many of the Beatitudes the students can remember. Then ... read the Beatitudes aloud with the class.

Then....Secretly assign one Beatitude to groups of two or three students. They then have 5 to 10 minutes to come up with a skit illustrating the Beatitude. They must also create a two to three sentence summary of what their Beatitude means to them as kids, how they can live it out. They can dress up in costumes and use props...but their skits must be SILENT SKITS.

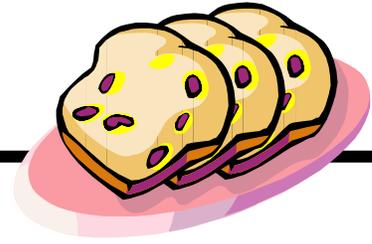
One by one each team puts on their silent skit. After the skit is over, each team secretly writes down which Beatitude they think the skit was about. They then read their guess (writing it down avoids cheating). If another team guesses it, both the skit team and guessing get 3 points. (The team with the 'closest' guess may only get one or two points depending on how close they got it right).

Then each team must give their explanation—life application of the Beatitude. Class or teachers decide to award one, two or three points for quality of explanation.

If time ... Pass the Beatitudes slips around for a second round of silent skits.

Close

We need to really practice “acting out” the Beatitudes in our own lives. Let us pray together and ask for God’s help.

Go!**Humble Breakfast****FOOD****Materials:**

Bibles, bowls, cups, napkins, plates, silverware

Variety of breakfast foods: bread, cheese, fruit, juice, milk, and so forth. Note: It is recommended that you NOT have very sweet items, donuts, sugary muffins, and sugary drinks.

Quest Connection

Seat students at tables where they can see the bounty of breakfast they will be hoping to soon eat.

Open Bibles to Matthew 5 and have students take turns reading aloud verses 3-11.

Ask the students if they know what the word "meek" means. Help them to define meek or humble. **Is it hard to let someone else be first? What makes that hard? Is it hard to care about someone else without worrying about yourself?**

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? How do we put our whole trust in God? When people need help, what are some of the ways that God helps them? (Possible answer—God uses us as Christians to help people in need.)

We are going to practice being humble: putting someone else's needs first, and also letting someone else help us today.

Explain the rules for breakfast:

- No more than two or three people may be preparing food at any time.
- You may not get any food for yourself.
- You may not ask for any food. This is NOT a restaurant, and you are NOT giving orders!
- You may only respond "yes" or "no" in response to a specific question, i.e. Do you want a bagel? "Yes." Would you like cream cheese? "No."
- No pointing or giving details.

Note to teacher: This may result in a student getting a plain bagel, instead of one with grape jelly. This would be a good thing for discussion purposes. DON'T rescue them. If a student sits there and no one asks that child if he/she wants anything, let that go on a while. If no one still notices, just ask if the students have noticed whether everyone has been cared for. This also applies if no one has thought to bring food to the teacher!!!

*Go!***Close**

1. Did everyone get exactly what they wanted? What happened?
2. How did you feel if you didn't get exactly what you wanted? How do you feel when God (or your parents) don't give you exactly what you want? What do the Beatitudes have to say about that?
3. Did everyone have the opportunity to serve someone else? How did that feel?
4. How can you practice serving God every day? How can you practice serving other people?

Variety:

Put out one donut and make it clear to the students that it is the ONLY donut. Do NOT have a stash in the kitchen for later—it will diminish the impact. Question students: If you are a peacemaker—what do you do about the donut? What is the way to keep right relations between us? How does this apply to your daily life? The world?

Go!**Blessed are the _____**

Fill In the Blanks**GAME**

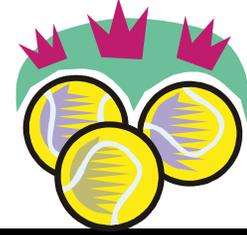
Materials: A copy of the fill-in the blank Worksheet for each student, pencils, timer

Quest Connection

Procedure: Divide the class into groups or pairs. Have them turn the Worksheets face down. At a signal they begin filling in the blanks. First team to finish stands up. They will read their answers to the class. A prize could be rewarded to the winners.

Close

Let us try to live our daily Christian lives as Jesus has described in the Beatitudes.

Go!**Peer Pressure**

Material: Bible, sheet or blanket, balls like tennis balls, scissors, felt marker, name tags

Quest Connection

Ahead of time: Cut a hole slightly larger than the tennis balls, in the sheet.

Procedure: Give each student a ball and a name tag and have them gather around the sheet.

I am going to place the balls on the sheet and we'll begin bouncing them. Imagine the bouncing balls are pressures you face in life to do the wrong thing. When one ball remains on the sheet, we'll see who survived the pressure and we'll all shout, "Good for you! You survived!"

Have kids place their balls on the sheet. Next, have students grab the edge of the sheet with both hands and begin pumping the sheet up and down. This action keeps the balls bouncing in the air and allows them to fall through the hole in the sheet, one at a time. Bounce until one ball remains. Call out the number on the ball, and have that person raise both fists in the air, as in a victory gesture. Have all students shout "You survived!"

Close

Play several times, put away the supplies and gather the students in a circle.

It is VERY difficult not to always follow the crowd. Everybody wants to fit in, no matter what it takes. Too many times, it takes something that can change your life forever!

Jesus gave us guidelines on how to treat people in the Beatitudes. Do you think it would be a way to fit into the crowd you hang out with?

Play the game again, have the remaining person give a way we can have a positive influence on our friends.

Go!**Present Day People****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Pens or pencils, Resource Page “Present Day People”, magazines, paper or construction paper, scissors, glue

Quest Connection

Procedure: Give each student a copy of the Resource Page “Present Day” people. Have them list or find a picture in a magazine a person that would fit to the description given. They can glue their pictures to the piece of paper, or a bulletin board could be created with the description written on a piece of paper. Let your students’ imagination be put to use! Items here are to assist you with the Current Day People and the Beatitudes as well as defining the words within the objectives.

- 1 - The "poor in spirit" does not refer to monetary poverty, but to those who have a spirit of humble love for God.
- 2 - "Those who mourn" may be mourning the sinful nature of people and the injustices of this world.
- 3 - "The meek" "are nonviolent people, who are humble and gentle in their dealings with others because they have humbled themselves before the greatness of God." (Hare, page 39)
- 4 - This statement may refer to people who hunger for God to do right for them as individuals and/or for all who suffer.
- 5 - We are called to be merciful in the same way which God is: patient, gracious, and steadfast.
- 6 - No one is truly pure (clean and without sin) except for Jesus. Here, he is speaking about a love for God that is 100% pure: total and undistracted by other desires.
- 7 - "It is clear that ‘peacemakers’ designates not those who live in peace, enjoying its fruits, but those who devote themselves to the hard work of reconciling hostile individuals, families, groups, and nations." (Hare, page 42)
- 8 - This refers to those who are persecuted for their beliefs and/or their behavior as a result of those beliefs.
- 9 - Note the different format, and therefore emphasis, for this Beatitude ("Blessed are you"). Serious Christians must take a stand on moral issues that are sometimes controversial or unpopular, just as the prophets spoke the truth in spite of its unpopularity.

Close

Let the students share their people with the rest of the class.

This activity proves once again that the lessons of Jesus are meant for us in today’s world too.

Go!**Wipe It Away!****OBJECT LESSON****Materials: Kerosene lamp, matches, wiping cloth****Quest Connection**

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

When you bring the lamp to class have it all shiny and clean. Light the wick and replace the glass globe. Talk about how this light was the light of Jesus in our heart for all to see. Slowly turn up the wick and have it burn too brightly so that the glass will become sooty and black. Explain that it is the sin that creeps into our lives, bad language, stealing, lying, teasing others and things that hurt others and God. Try to wipe this away from the outside by saying I will do better, I'll try to stop, etc. . .but the dirt will remain deep down in our heart. Now our light is so dull and barely visible for others to see that we are Christians, and we can't shine for Jesus. The only way to clean this sin away is to ask God to forgive us, and to ask others to forgive us too. God then cleans the inside of our hearts (remove the globe and allow to cool for a moment while you talk and now clean the inside with a cloth). As it becomes clean talk about how only God can forgive our sins and clean our hearts .We need to ask for forgiveness often and not let our light become so dull. We are examples for God and other people are watching us to see if we mean what we say. We need to keep our lives clean so others will be drawn to God by our example and love for Him, and we can tell others so they can have the light of Christ in their lives too!

Close

These are the words to live by—to be faithful disciples—a light to everyone in this great big, sometimes scary world.

JOURNAL

Today I will show mercy or comfort to...

Today I will be humble about...

Today I will make peace with...

Today I will help the poor by...

When someone calls me a name or treats me badly I will...

Today I will follow and obey God better by...

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

- **God blesses those people who depend only on Him.**

They belong to the Kingdom of heaven.

- **God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!**
- **God blesses those people who are humble. The earth will belong to them!**
- **God blesses those people who want to obey Him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want!**
- **God blesses those people who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy!**
- **God blesses those people whose hearts are pure. They will see Him!**
- **God blesses those people who make peace. They will be called His children!**
- **God blesses those people who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the Kingdom of God.**
- **God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago.**

Present Day People

Come up with a list of who these people are in the present day...

the poor in spirit (for example, people who are depressed)

those who mourn (for example, someone whose best friend has moved)

the meek (for example, people who are very shy or frightened)

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (for example, civil rights' workers)

the merciful

the pure in heart

the peacemakers

those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

1. What is the blessing for the humble person who is poor in spirit?

2. How is the sad person blessed?

3. How are the meek blessed?

4. What happens to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

5. How are the merciful blessed?

6. What is the blessing for those who are pure in heart?

7. What is the blessing for the peacemakers?

**8. What is the reward for those who suffer even when they are
doing right?**

FILL IN THE BLANKS

Name _____ Date _____

Lesson 42 - The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

1. Blessed are the _____ in spirit, for theirs is the _____ of _____.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be _____.
3. Blessed are the _____, for they shall inherit the _____.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and _____ after _____, for they shall be filled.
5. Blessed are the _____, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the _____ in heart, for they shall _____.
7. Blessed are the _____, for they shall be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are _____ for _____ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of _____.

(Use these words to help with spelling. You will use some words more than once, and there are extra words that you will not use.)

pure	merciful	peacemakers	faithful
poor	meek	thirst	world
righteousness	kingdom	see	heaven
comforted	earth	God	persecuted