

Finding Jesus

Gospels



"...these are the very scriptures that testify about me." John 5:39

Victorious Light

Finding Jesus

Gospels

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Jesus the King

Who is Jesus and what is the Bible really about?

The Bible is one story that leads to Jesus. Jesus is at the center of every part of the Bible.

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. He is woven like a tapestry throughout the entire Bible.

God created the world by words. He created man in His own image (Genesis 1:28) and man was meant to rule and reign over the earth as part of the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God.

When Adam and Eve ate of the tree, sin entered the world. Man lost his right to rule; he had voluntarily turned over his domain to the enemy.

But God had a plan of redemption

Jesus was always the plan. He was the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8) He was the "seed" spoken of by God in Genesis 3:15. The reader follows this "seed" through the Bible, looking and waiting for the One who will come and save the people and restore God's kingdom on earth.

Prophecies of Jesus

Throughout scripture we see repeated themes and patterns that all point to Jesus. Words were spoken throughout the centuries prophesying about this "seed," this Messiah, who would come to save his people. The prophecies were hidden and spoken in mysteries (1 Corinthians 2:6-8) so that the rulers of this world would not be able to prevent His coming.

The Word

God created the world with words, and all the prophecies of Jesus had to be through words. Everything was prophesied, in a mystery, but it all led to exactly who Jesus would be. But when the fulness of time was come, these words came together and formed the seed, that combined with a young virgin (seed of a woman) became the Son of God, the Word. (John 1:1)

This WORD, Jesus, through his death and resurrection, conquered death and the principalities of darkness. He restored the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. We reign with Him as the body of Christ. And we can reign in this life with him and in the life to come. (Romans 5:17, 21)

This curriculum, *Finding Jesus*, is designed to do just that. He can be found from Genesis to Revelation.





READ THIS FIRST!

Teaching the Lessons

This guide is meant to be a Bible study for the instructor.

These lessons are not written as a script, nor designed to tell you exactly what to say. The lessons are written to help you gain a better understanding of the passages in the Bible.

Each lesson is designed to put the Bible into perspective by showing the historical context, Biblical context, and what was happening on or around that time. Some lessons refer back to the original meaning of the words - the original Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written, or the Greek in which the New Testament was originally written. Each lesson has multiple cross-references to take the teacher to other places in scripture that are relevant to the story, and also to the message being taught. The author of this curriculum is not attempting to write theology, but to tell the reader a story and highlight other scriptures within the Bible so that the reader can decide. The Bible is meant to be interpreted by the Bible. It is the most complex piece of literature ever written, and contains over 63,000 cross-references.

1. Study the material.

Before the lesson, read the Bible passages first. Then **study** the notes and re-read the passage, multiple times if necessary. If the references give the accounts in more than one book or passage, familiarize yourself with versions in all passages. When you study, always read a few verses before and a few verses after for context. See if there is something that the Lord shows you that will enhance your telling of the story.

The gospels can be challenging to teach, as there are multiple accounts in different gospels. Read and study all the passages in each gospel. Take notes, combine the information in a way that will be helpful to you. Then choose the gospel from which you prefer to teach that particular story. Each lesson may have a different gospel that holds more information or present a more clear narrative, and is up to you as the teacher to choose the passage that speaks to you.

This teacher guide contains many cross-references. These are not-necessarily intended to be read to the students. The cross-references are included for personal study of the material, and designed to help the teacher gain a deeper understanding of the material so they can give a better explanation to the students.

2. Teach **ONLY** from the Bible.

Read the lesson and know the material, but **always** teach from the Bible. You do not need to read the Bible passage word for word, but can paraphrase it for your audience *without changing the meaning*. It is possible to put it into words that your audience will understand without changing the Word of God. When you teach directly from the Bible, it allows the Holy Spirit to speak directly to the teacher and the students. It gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to emphasize what is in the passage that is specifically relevant to the listener. The Word of God is alive and powerful!



Teaching the Lessons:

3. Help create a mental picture of the scene.

Picture it like you were there. This material is designed to tell the story in such a way that helps the listener imagine what it be like if they were there. Elaborate on the story, and help them think about what the characters would have been thinking, doing and feeling, but also being careful to distinguish between what might be speculated, and the definitive details told in the Word.

4. Ask a lot of questions.

The lessons are designed to be interactive; they are not intended to be a lecture. Ask a lot of questions, and allow your students to ask questions also. Questions and discussions make the listeners think.

You know your students! Do not limit yourself to the discussion passages suggested in the material. Feel free to make up your own questions, begin your own discussions. Discuss things in the story that would be relevant to situations with which your students can understand. And ask questions that encourage discussion. Let the kids participate in the study of the Word of God.

5. Relate to the characters.

Remember that the Bible is a real story about real people doing real things. Help your listeners to not see it as a distant story, but a story with characters with which they can relate.

Finding Jesus in every lesson.

Every lesson ends with "Jesus in the Story." The lessons in the gospels will point back to prophecies of Jesus. The lessons in the Old Testament will point forward to the prophecies of Jesus. He IS the Word of God, and the central core, focus, theme and meaning of the entire Bible. Tell the story first, and incorporate the Jesus in the Story themes into the lesson, being sure to make Him the ultimate focus of everything you teach.

Multiple Age Levels:

This material is for ages 3-99. You are the teacher. A story you know is a story you can tell. These lessons can be adapted to any age level. If you are teaching to very young children, tell them the story in a way that they can understand. If you are teaching to older children, give them more information. And if you are teaching to young people, you can bring in some of the cross-referenced scriptures, and discuss how they connect with the story. If you teach to adults, use it as a full study guide to look up all the scriptures and discuss. Always teach a little above what you think they can understand; you may be surprised at the comprehension of your audience.



Teaching the Lessons:

Weekly Lesson:

1. Begin each week by discussing the lesson from the previous week. Ask questions, see what the students remember from the last lesson.
2. You do not have to teach the lessons in the order in this guide. It is up to you if you would like to teach a certain theme, a certain story, or a certain time frame. This is your classroom.
3. Feel free to lead children to Jesus after each lesson or if you feel led by the Holy Spirit to do so. You can tell by the response to the lesson if they are ready. And remember, you know your students!

Memory Verses and Questions:

The lessons are designed with a memory verse and questions for the teacher to display to the class. If you choose, you may ask the students to bring a “church notebook” where they may write down the memory verse every week. Writing down the scripture will definitely help with memorization, and this will help the child learn the responsibility of keeping the notebook and bringing it every week.

The teacher may also choose to give the children the questions on the display page. The children can write down the questions and take them home to look up the answers, or simply write the answers in their book. It is completely up to the teacher how to use these resources.

Coloring Pages:

Each lesson has a black and white coloring page. If you have the ability to print copies, feel free to make copies and distribute these to the younger children. If not, you may choose to have them recreate the illustration with their own drawing in their notebook.

Get Creative!

So many of the stories in the Bible can be acted out. Many of the Psalms can be acted out.

Have fun with it! Creating a play or drama from a story helps the children remember the story.

Let them help you design the play. Let them put their own interpretation into the characters.

Make it fun, and make the Bible memorable!





MEMORY VERSE

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

Romans 5:20



When the Rooster Crows

Matthew 26:33-35; 69-75

Mark 14:29-31; 66-72

Luke 22:31-34; 55-62

John 13:36-38; 18:15-27; 21:1-19

Trial & Crucifixion

This story is found in all four gospels of the Bible. Each gospel tells where Jesus prophesied that Peter would deny him, and each tell the story of Peter's denials. But only John gives the story of redemption after Jesus' resurrection.

The entire story of the trial and crucifixion of Christ is too long for one lesson. This lesson will focus only on Peter's denial and Christ's response. Be sure to frame the story to your class and explain the context in which the events took place.

Discuss and give a brief overview to summarize recent events:

Triumphal entry:

Jesus entered Jerusalem with a triumphal entry, and was greeted by cheering crowds who laid branches and clothes over the path.

What did Jesus ride on? A colt; a young donkey that no one had ever ridden on.

The people welcomed him into Jerusalem, singing, Hosanna!

(Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-44; John 12:12-19)

They called him the King, coming in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38)

Last Supper:

He shared his last supper with his disciples in an upper room. (Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12)

The gospel of John tells many things that Jesus spoke to his disciples. He tells them about his death and resurrection, and to not be troubled, but they do not understand. He even tells them to buy a sword. (John 14:1; Luke 22:36-38)

Communion: He shares a meal with them that we now call communion.

Jesus washes the feet of the disciples.

He tells them that one of them will betray him.

Mount of Olives:

They left the upper room and went into the mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26)

At the mount of Olives, Jesus tells his disciples that they will be offended. He references the prophecy in Zechariah 13:7 that the shepherd will be killed and the sheep will be scattered (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27) but he tells them he will rise again.

Jesus told Peter that Satan asked for him, and he wanted to sift Peter like wheat. (Luke 22:31)

Discuss:

What do you think that means? If Satan asked for him, do you think Satan saw something in Peter?

Did he think that Peter was going to do something powerful?

Jesus told Peter that he prayed for him so that his faith would not fail, and when he returns to Jesus that he would bring strength to his brothers.





When the Rooster Crows

What do you think Peter said?

Peter tells Jesus, "I will never be offended," saying he was ready to go to with Jesus both to prison and death. (Matthew 26:33-35; Mark 14:29-31; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:36-38) He told Jesus he would lay down his life for him; but Jesus said, "Will you?" And tells Peter that before the rooster crows twice that day, that Peter will deny him three times. (John 13:37-38; Mark 14:30) Peter then becomes even more insistent, saying he would never deny him, and all the disciples agree. (Mark 14:31)

Jesus and the disciples keep walking until they come to the Garden of Gethsemane.* Jesus prays, and the disciples fall asleep. Jesus asked them the first time if they could stay awake and pray; and the next time he told them it was okay; they needed rest.

Then Jesus is arrested by the priests and scribes (yes, the church leaders!) It was not the Romans; they actually did not want to crucify him.

Peter has his sword with him, and he cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. (Mark 14:47; John 18:10) Peter was probably trying to kill the man. He was passionate, but does not understand. Jesus had told them to have a sword, and Peter was ready to fight to the death. What he failed to grasp was that Jesus was saying that two swords were enough; everyone did not need to have their own sword. Jesus was he was trying to prepare them for conflict; but they did not understand that this would be a spiritual battle.

How did Jesus respond to the servant's ear? He said, "No more of this." (Luke 22:51)

He healed the man's ear. This is not the response that Peter was expecting; he thought he was defending Jesus.

Look at this from the perspective of the disciples; they have been with Jesus for three years.

They knew him to be the Messiah; they believed he was the one that was prophesied about throughout the scriptures. But the Jews believed that when the Messiah came, he was going to take over. He was going to get an army, overthrow the government, and bring Israel back to their place in the world as a supreme power. This is why Peter most likely thought it was time to rise and fight, to bring Jesus into power and be the king over Israel.

Jesus has been telling them what was going to happen. He told them he was going to die, he told them he would rise again, but they simply did not understand. They had no concept of what he was saying, and they did not understand until after he rose again.

They're probably wondering what is happening. They were convinced this was the Messiah. He was going to rule over the nation, with them at his side. They had even asked who would sit at his right hand in his kingdom. Now, they're probably thinking, is this how this ends? Jesus dies; there is no Messiah, no kingdom?

Jesus is arrested, and all the disciples run away. (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50) Jesus is taken to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest.**

*The details in the Garden of Gethsemane and the arrest of Jesus are covered in Finding Jesus: Gospels: Arrested!

**The trial of Christ is covered in Finding Jesus: Gospels: Falsely Accused.





When the Rooster Crows

Discuss: What did the disciples do?
What did the disciples say they would do before this happened?
What would you do?
Do you think Peter is confused?
Why?

The gospel of John says that Peter followed Jesus, and so did "another disciple." In the gospel of John, the writer, John, frequently refers to himself in the third person. He calls himself the "other disciple," or "the disciple who Jesus loved." Scholars have determined that when John refers to another disciple who followed Jesus, he is referring to himself.

Discuss: All of the the other disciples, who also said they would never abandon Christ, have run away. Only two of the disciples, Peter and John, have followed Jesus to the palace of the high priest.

John knew the high priest (John 18:15) and he went in with Jesus into the palace. But Peter is reluctant; he stands outside the door trying to get warm, probably trying to figure out what is going on. John talks to the girl who is keeping the door, and he must have told her to get Peter, because she brings Peter into the palace. Reading all four gospels helps the reader get a better understanding of the events. (Matthew 26:69; Mark 14:66-67; Luke 22:55) It appears that as the girl brought Peter in, she said to him,

"You were with Jesus of Nazareth, aren't you one of this man's disciples?" (John 18:16-17)

The girl looked earnestly at him. (Luke 22:56) Have you ever stared at someone? Have you ever thought you recognized someone but you weren't sure? You're looking at them closely trying to figure out how you know them. It seems like that is what she is doing. She's thinking, I've seen this guy, I think I recognize him.

How does Peter respond? It says, he denied before them all, saying,

I don't know what you're saying. I do not know him! (Matthew 26:69-70; Mark 14:67-68; Luke 22:55-57)

And then the rooster crowed.

What about John? Did he even have an opportunity to deny Jesus? We don't know. It seems that John wasn't afraid to associate himself with Jesus. John knew the high priest, and the priest probably knew that John was one of his disciples. We don't know for sure, but it seems that John was not afraid to be known.

It appears that after Peter was admitted into the palace, and he went out into the porch area. It was cold, and he was warming himself by the fire. (John 18:18)

When Peter went out to the porch, another girl saw him and spoke to the other people that were there. She said,

"This man was with Jesus of Nazareth," they said "He is one of them."

This second time Peter said, "I do not know the man; I do not understand what you're saying."

(Matthew 26:71-72; Mark 14:69; Luke 22:58) It says he denied it with an oath, which means he said, "I swear, I don't know him."





When the Rooster Crows

Everyone who was there that night probably knew what was going on. Jesus was very well known, the people in the city would have seen his grand entrance just days before. This was the big news of the day; people were waiting around the high priest's house to see what would happen. It would be very unlikely to have never heard of him.

Then a relative of the servant of the high priest - the one whose ear was cut off - said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?"

If he was a relative of the man with the ear, he probably heard what happened. The man's ear was cut off, and the man he came to arrest healed his ear? The people standing around joined the conversation, and said,

'Surely you are with them, your accent (speech) sounds like you are from Galilee, you must have been with him.'

Then the third time Peter responded. This time he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know this man."

Then the rooster crowed again. (Mark 14:72)

Remember, at this time Peter was inside the door. He was in the interior porch and he could see what was happening. Jesus was nearby, being questioned by the priest. As soon as the rooster crowed the second time,

Jesus turned around and looked at Peter.

Can you imagine? A few hours before you told this person that you would never leave them, and you would die for them.

As soon as Jesus looked at Peter, he remembered what Jesus had said. He remembered that Jesus said before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Peter was devastated. He went out and began weeping bitterly. What does it mean to weep bitterly?

Briefly summarize the rest of the events of the crucifixion and death of Christ. After the trial with the high priest, Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate, and crucified later that day. The only disciple mentioned throughout the rest of the crucifixion is John, who is at the foot of the cross. (John 19:26) Three days later, Jesus rose, and the disciples saw Jesus and began to understand the resurrection.

John is the only gospel that gives the story of the redemption of Peter.

How long was Jesus on the earth after his resurrection before he ascended to heaven? Forty days. During that time he proved himself alive, visited with his disciples and shared with them truths about the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:1-3)

This is the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples. Peter and several of the other disciples had been fishing all night and caught nothing. (John 21) In the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize him. Jesus asked them if they had any meat, and they told him they had caught nothing. Then he told them to put the net on the right side of the boat, and they would find fish. They do this, and the net was so heavy they cannot even lift it because there are so many fish.

Then, the disciple who Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

Who is this disciple that Jesus loved? John. Jesus loved all the disciples; but John had an understanding of Christ's love for him and always referred to himself this way.





When the Rooster Crows

John probably remembered another time that this happened; the first time they followed Jesus. John was with Simon, whose name was changed to Peter, on a day when they had fished all night and caught nothing. (Luke 5:1-11) Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and let down his nets. Peter let down a net, and he caught so many fish that his net broke.

On this day when John saw the nets full of fish, he must have remembered this and knew it was Jesus.

When Peter heard this, he jumped in the sea and swam to the shore. Peter is passionate, he is excited, he cannot wait to see Jesus. The other disciples followed in the small ship, dragging the net of fish.

Jesus already had some fish and was cooking breakfast for the disciples.

No one dared to ask Jesus who he was because by this time they knew it was the Lord.

After they ate, Jesus said to Peter,

"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?"

The word Jesus used here for love was "agape". This is usually the highest form of love: selfless, unconditional, and sacrificial.

Peter responded, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." But the word for love that Peter used was "phileo." This meant brotherly love, a close friend.

Then Jesus responded, "Feed my lambs."

Then again, Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?"

Again, Jesus used the word for love, "agape".

Peter responded, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." But again, Peter used the word for love, "phileo."

Then Jesus responded, "Feed my sheep."

The third time, Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?"

But this time Jesus used a different word for love, "phileo."

This time Peter is grieved; he is sad, uneasy. **Peter said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."**

But again, Peter used the word for love, "phileo."

Then Jesus responded, "Feed my sheep."

Why did Jesus ask Peter this three times? Probably because Peter denied him three times. But he also did this to show Peter his love. Peter responded differently than he had weeks before. He was not so bold; he hesitated to say he had selfless, unconditional love. But Peter changed dramatically and became bold later through the Holy Spirit, when he received strength from the Lord, not his own strength.

Jesus did this in front of all the disciples. Peter's denial may have brought doubt to his relationship with Jesus, and the way others saw Peter. Jesus was intentional in showing his forgiveness in front of all the disciples. Jesus confirmed to Peter that he still has authority in the kingdom of God.

Peter has a purpose and a commission from Jesus to "feed my sheep."

Jesus then went on to tell Peter how he would die. Jesus said he would stretch out his hands and be taken where he did not want to go. History tells us that Peter was also crucified; but he did not consider himself worthy to die the same death that Jesus did and asked to be crucified upside down. But by then, Peter had developed the agape, unconditional love for Christ, and by understanding the selfless, unconditional, sacrificial love of Christ for him, he was willing to give everything to Jesus.



Jesus in the Story



Look at the power of what love can do. Understanding the love of God changed Peter's life.

Jesus loved us so much that he had the agape; the unconditional, selfless, sacrificial love for us.

John called himself "the disciple who Jesus loved."

Did Jesus love John more than all the other disciples?

No. Jesus did not love John any differently.

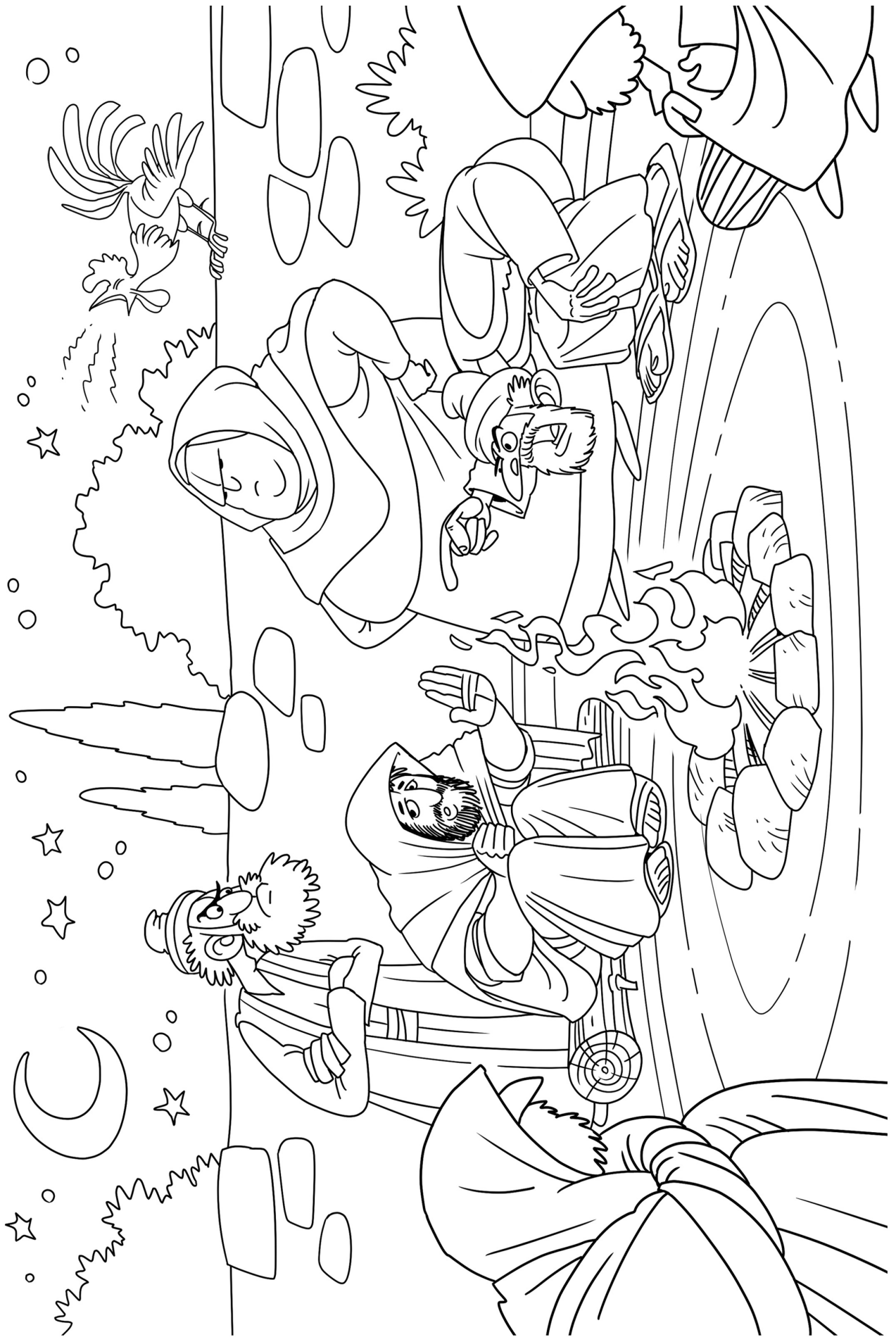
But John knew he was loved; he had an understanding of the love of Christ that perhaps not all the disciples understood.

John knew he was loved; his whole gospel speaks of the love of Christ, and John's writing is evident of his understanding of God's love. The Bible is a book of balance, and it has counterparts. Jesus fulfilled the scriptures in the Old Testament, and gave it a New Testament counterpart.

The three denials of Peter are balanced by the three questions that Jesus poses to Simon Peter.

Jesus told Peter that Satan "asked for you, that he may sift you like wheat." But Jesus said he prayed for Peter and when he returns to Jesus, he would strengthen his brethren. (Luke 22:32) That is exactly what happened. When Peter returned to Jesus, he understood his own mistakes and experienced the grace of Christ.

Jesus is "the Word made flesh....full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)





Finding Jesus

is a curriculum designed to help children find Jesus in every story of the Bible. Because the Bible is one continuous story that leads to Jesus, He can be found from Genesis to Revelation. Finding Jesus is a Bible study designed for the teacher. This one-year Gospels volume includes 52 lessons which can be adapted to teach any age from 3-99. The instructor customizes the lesson for their audience, using only the Bible as a text. The teacher decides how to relay the information to their students, with regard to their background and level of education.

Jesus IS the Word of God.

***Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
He is woven like a scarlet thread throughout the tapestry of the Bible.***

VICTORIOUS LIGHT

About the Author



Laura Baca is a lifelong student of the Bible with a heart for reaching the next generation with the truth and love of God's Word. Over ten years ago, while teaching in children's church, she began to recognize a gap in the way that biblical truths were being communicated to young hearts. This sparked the idea to write a curriculum designed to help children

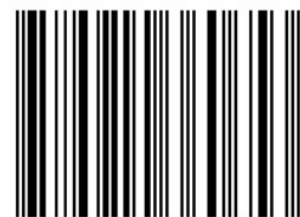
connect deeply with Scripture and find Jesus in every story of the Bible. Once her children were grown, she prayerfully developed this curriculum to speak to children across different cultures and backgrounds. In September 2024, a divine meeting with a Kenyan woman on a layover in Istanbul led to the formation

of Victorious Light, a non-profit organization established in 2025 with a desire to make this resource available to all. Laura is committed to offer materials freely to anyone, anywhere in the world. Through Victorious Light, children around the globe can encounter the transformative love of Jesus Christ through the stories of the Bible.

www.victoriouslight.org

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