



NINJA

Kids Club 2017

DEVOTIONAL

For Volunteers and Parents

DEAR PARENTS AND VOLUNTEERS,

In our world today, we hear from a variety of voices claiming to offer meaning and life. Media sources tell us that a bigger house, a thinner body, a new job, a different love interest will surely make us happier than we are now. Our discontented hearts are prone to chase after the newest, next, best things in hopes to fill a void they were never meant to satisfy. While the individual messages may look slightly different, our children are bombarded with these things as well. Where will I find my purpose and worth? What/who will I look to and follow for meaning and value? Can these things be found in the world around me or was I made for something else?

This year at Kids Club, we're excited to see that the meaning, worth, and satisfaction we all long for can only be found through Jesus. Each night, we'll take a closer look at a Bible story that shows us why Jesus is worth following and what it looks like for us to do so today. Together we'll learn that **because Jesus is worth following, we live for him and not for ourselves.** This Big Idea, rooted in our memory verse from Luke 9:23 (NIRV), is where true meaning, worth, and significance is ultimately found.

Whoever wants to follow me must say no to themselves. They must pick up their cross every day and follow me. - Luke 9:23 (NIRV)

We hope that children and adults alike walk away thinking, "It's not easy to follow Jesus, but it is so much better." Our Bible stories, skits, and even our theme song by Crossing Music will remind us that choosing to "pick up our cross daily" leads us to a bigger life.

While we will do our best to maximize our time with each child, we believe Kids Club is a place for the conversation to start. **We've developed this resource for parents and volunteers to prepare for important follow-up discussions during and/or after Kids Club week.** This short devotional briefly walks through each night's storyline and main idea, giving our hearts time to digest these truths.

We will also provide additional information each night through our Crossing Kids Facebook page. Please know that we are praying for you and your family. Thank you for partnering with us!

Sincerely,

The Crossing Kids Staff Team

GENERAL KIDS CLUB OVERVIEW FOR THE WEEK

Night:	Bible Story:	Scripture:	Lesson Objective:
Monday	Disciples Being Called	John 1:35-51	Because Jesus is the <i>Savior of the world</i> , we respond to His call by saying no to ourselves and choosing Him.
Tuesday	Mary and Martha	Luke 10:38-11:4	Because Jesus is <i>God</i> , we listen to him more than anyone else.
Wednesday	Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet	John 13	Because Jesus <i>lays down his life for us</i> , we can serve others.
Thursday	Jesus Restores Peter and Appears to Thomas	John 18:15-27, 20:19-29, 21:1-19	Because Jesus <i>loves us and has the power to forgive</i> , we can go to him when we mess up or have doubts

DAY 1: THE DISCIPLES ARE CALLED

(John 1:35-51)

All of us are tempted to look for meaning or worth by following someone or something.

What/who do we look to find these things? What/who do we often follow?

Countless cultural aphorisms provide more than pithy advice—they offer promises and a worldview counter to the Gospel. From “follow your own heart” to “look out for number one” to “live now, for tomorrow we die,” we are fed a constant diet of lies rooted in the belief that the way to life is rooted in living for ourselves and following our own desires. Many of us have spent countless years chasing one source and then the next. Our hearts constantly search for more, believing that if I just had _____, I’d be happy.

There’s a reason that this longing is part of the universal, human experience. As Augustine writes, “Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.” C.S. Lewis echoes this idea by writing, “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.” This restless discontent is rooted in the fact that we were made for *more*. But, this *more* is something that the world cannot offer; this *more* can only be found in Jesus.

To one degree or another, the disciples must have felt this ache, this discontent, this desire as well. As members of the human race, they were also searching for someone or something to fill these voids, to give meaning, value, and purpose to rather ordinary lives. They too lived in a broken world that failed to make good on its promises for fulfillment. They too lived with broken, sinful hearts that failed again and again. Perhaps this is why they recognized Jesus was worth following, no matter the cost.

Read John 1:35-51. As you read, underline/highlight any words or phrases the disciples use to describe Jesus.

What did the disciples recognize about Jesus? What made them want to follow Him?

What do the disciples do when they recognize who Jesus is?

Do you think answering Jesus’ call to follow him was easy for the disciples? Why or why not? What did they have to sacrifice to follow Him?

DAY 1: THE DISCIPLES ARE CALLED (continued)

(John 1:35-51)

Like the disciples, everything changes when we recognize that Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is worth following because He is the only one with the authority and the ability to heal the brokenness of our sin and the brokenness of the world around us. He is the only person that can truly satisfy our restless hearts, the only one who provides what our other-worldly desires are after.

Like the disciples, Jesus' invites you and me to follow Him as Savior of the world, not just once but every single day. Like the disciples, this invitation involves sacrifice.

Read Luke 9:23 (NIRV) and fill in the empty blanks of our memory verse.

Whoever wants to _____ me must say _____ to themselves. They must pick up their _____ and _____ me. – Luke 9:23 (NIRV)

Writing on these verses, John Piper explains,

Jesus was fully human and fully God. He was not God with a human veneer—like a costume. He was a real, flesh-and-blood man, a carpenter's son. So when he said to fishermen or tax collectors, "Follow me," their obedience was a concrete, physical act of putting their feet on the ground and walking behind Jesus and being part of his traveling team...He calls us to follow him in his sufferings because this life of joyful suffering for Jesus' sake shows that he is more valuable than all the earthly rewards that the world lives for. If you suffer with Jesus in the pathway of love because he is your supreme treasure, then it will be apparent to the world that your heart is set on a different fortune than theirs. This is why Jesus demands that we deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow him...Jesus has no desire to trick you into following him with a kind of bait and switch. He is utterly up front about the cost. In fact, he urges you to count the cost.¹

What does it look like for you and me to respond to Jesus' call by saying no to ourselves and choosing Him today? What kind of costs/sacrifices might we experience today for following Jesus?

Read the following passages. What makes Jesus worth following, regardless of what it costs?

<p>Romans 8:18 Philippians 3:8 2 Corinthians 4:17</p>	
--	--

Because Jesus is the Savior of the world, we respond to His call by saying no to ourselves and choosing Him. As we've seen, any sacrifice or cost that we endure for Him ultimately pales in comparison to what Jesus offers. As we'll find out later on this week, Jesus doesn't ask us to do anything He hasn't already done Himself, including literally taking up His cross.

Jesus is more than just a good moral teacher, though. He is ultimately the one who gives us the power and desire to follow Him. We don't just need His example, we need His power and His help to lay down our lives and follow Him. We need Him to give us an eternal perspective that really does view earthly trouble as light and momentary compared to what awaits us in Him. Let's pray and ask for this now.

Pray: Ask for God's help to respond to His call in this way. Pray that the kids you meet at Kids Club and/or your own children will do the same.

¹ Piper, J. (2006). What Jesus Demands of the World. p. 68; 73-74.

DAY 2: MARY AND MARTHA **(Luke 10:38-11:4)**

Each night at Kids Club, we will learn why Jesus is worth following and how we can follow Him today. Yesterday that meant, **“Because Jesus is the Savior of the world, we respond to His call by saying no to ourselves and following him.”**

Like the disciples, everything changes when we recognize that Jesus is the Savior of the world. He is worth following because He is the only one with the authority and the ability to heal the brokenness of our sin and the brokenness of the world around us.

When many of us think about what it means to follow Jesus, we often start creating a mental checklist of things we should do for him. Verbs like serving, sacrificing, giving, and doing start a perpetual hamster wheel of activity. While following Jesus very much includes those things, that’s not even close to where following Him should start. If we’re not careful, our cultural value of busyness and productivity can get in the way of what Jesus is after—our hearts. If we’re not careful, we can become so busy doing things that we miss Jesus himself.

Read Luke 10:38-42.

Describe the two sisters, Mary and Martha, that are mentioned in the text.

Who do you most easily identify with? What keeps you from spending time with Jesus?

What does this passage teach us about what God values/desires for us?

Preaching about this text, Keith Simon explains,

In these verses we have a picture of who we are and who we want to be...Martha is upset about many things, but Jesus says few things are needed, indeed only one. Many things upset us, few things are important, but one thing is most important... In some sense there is one thing to prioritize, to make sure that you get right and that one thing is what Mary is doing. Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus...The implication is that Martha wants to sit at Jesus’ feet too, but she’s distracted. She’s been dragged away by her busyness. She doesn’t have time to spend time with Jesus because there is serving to do. Here’s what Martha forgot and I think we too often forget. Jesus prefers our company to our service. We know that because Jesus told Martha that Mary chose what is better and that was Jesus....I get Martha. Our culture is one big Martha, it lives at a relentless pace, a sprint. Following Jesus cannot be done at a sprint. You’re sitting, not running.

Psalm 46:10 is a well-known verse that reminds us of this as well.

He says, “Be _____, and _____ that I am _____;
I will be _____ among the nations,
I will be _____ in the earth.”

DAY 2: MARY AND MARTHA (continued) **(Luke 10:38-11:4)**

What would our lives look like if we lived like Psalm 46:10 were true?

Immediately after Jesus' encounter with Mary and Martha, Jesus teaches His disciples to pray.

Read Luke 11:1-4.

What kinds of things does Jesus invite us to pray about? What does this passage say about how we relate to Him?

Based on Luke 10:38-11:4, why is Jesus worth following/listening to more than anyone else?

What do these passages say about why Jesus is worth following/listening to more than anyone else?

Colossians 2:2b-3	
Mark 9:7	
Matthew 28:18	
Matthew 11:28	
1 Peter 5:7	

Tuesday's Bible story shows us that, "Because Jesus is God, we listen to him more than anyone else." As we'll see tomorrow, following Jesus this way doesn't mean that we completely disengage from the world around us. It doesn't mean that we blow off responsibilities or fail to love and serve people in real, tangible ways because we've sequestered ourselves. Paul Miller describes this in his book, *The Praying Life*:

If we love people and have the power to help, then we are going to be busy. Learning to pray doesn't offer us a less busy life; it offers us a less busy heart. In the midst of outer busyness we can develop an inner quiet. Because we are less hectic on the inside, we have a greater capacity to love...and thus to be busy, which in turn drives us even more into a life of prayer...A needy heart is a praying heart. Dependency is the heartbeat of prayer.²

² Miller, P. (2009). *A Praying Life*. p. 24.

DAY 2: MARY AND MARTHA (continued) **(Luke 10:38-11:4)**

Pray: Spend a few minutes praying that God would give you a heart that knows its need and dependency of Him. Pray that the kids you meet at Kids Club or the kids you parent at home would ultimately do the same. Pray that because Jesus is God, we would all listen to him more than anyone else.

Optional Activity for Further Reflection: Dave Cover led a powerful meditation on how the Lord's Prayer can shape our prayer life after a recent sermon. Use this video clip as a way to guide your prayer this week.

<http://www.thecrossingchurch.com/media-feeds/the-lords-prayer/>

DAY 3: JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

(John 13)

Each night at Kids Club, we will learn why Jesus is worth following and how we can follow Him today.

Monday we learned that this means, ***“Because Jesus is the Savior of the World, we respond to His call by saying no to ourselves and choosing Him.”***

Yesterday, we learned that this means, ***“Because Jesus is God, we listen to him more than anyone else.”***

Tonight’s story takes place the night before Jesus dies on the cross. Jesus knew the time he had left with his disciples was limited. Just as someone on their deathbed might be strategic about how they spend their remaining moments, Jesus’ words and actions in tonight’s passage carry special significance.

Read John 13.

How does Jesus spend the night before his death? What might this tell us about what is important to him?

What is unusual or shocking about what Jesus does in this passage?

Reread John 13:1, 12-17, 34-35.

Why did Jesus wash his disciples’ feet? What do these verses tell us about who Jesus is?

Jesus washing the disciples’ feet was a picture of what he came to do for sinners like you and me. He came to lay down his life by dying on the cross and rising again so that all who trust Him can have new life. He came to wash us clean and to mend our broken relationship with Him forever.

What do these passages tell us about what it looks like for you and me to follow Jesus today?

Tonight’s story shows us that, ***“Because Jesus lays down his life for us, we can serve others.”*** If you’re like me, the idea of serving some people feels easier than serving others. I’m much more naturally inclined to serve people I perceive to be “deserving” of my care—people who are like me, who love me, who won’t take advantage of my kindness. This story and Jesus’ accompanying command to “love one another” convicts me of my tendency to qualify who deserves to be loved and served. As Elisabeth Elliot writes,

DAY 3: JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET (continued) **(John 13)**

*We see him (Jesus) move serenely through all the events of His life—when He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He knew that He would suffer many things and be killed in Jerusalem, He never deviated from His course. He had set His face like flint. He sat at supper with one who would deny Him and another who would betray Him, yet He was able to eat with them, willing even to wash their feet. Jesus in the **unbroken intimacy of His Father's love**, kept a quiet heart.³*

Why is it that Jesus—who is the Savior of the world and God himself—could humbly serve those who didn't deserve it? The answer: unbroken intimacy with His Father's love. That is why Jesus could face the unthinkable. That is why he could lay down his life. He knew his Father loved him and would never ask anything of his Son that wasn't for his ultimate good and God's glory.

Why is it, then, that we can serve others, even those whom we feel are least deserving of our sacrifice? It's because Jesus has given us the one thing we need the most. He has solved our greatest problem—the sin that separates us eternally from Him—when we least deserved it. Because of Jesus, we can now have “unbroken intimacy” with our Father in heaven.

Not only that, but we know that our sacrifices will someday end like Jesus' did. God the Father responded to His Son's humility and service by exalting him (Philippians 2). We are promised that those who “lose their life” for Jesus, too, will ultimately “find it” (Matthew 16:25).

With these truths in mind and with God's help, we can do what Jesus commands in our memory verse.

Luke 9:23, *Whoever wants to _____ me must _____ to themselves. They must pick up their _____ and _____ me.*

Pray: *Spend time praying for a transformed heart that truly loves and serves others. Pray that children at Kids Club would be captivated by the Servant King who came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.*

DAY 4: JESUS RESTORES PETER AND APPEARS TO THOMAS

(John 20:19-29, 21:1-19)

Each night at Kids Club, we will learn why Jesus is worth following and how we can follow Him today.

Monday we learned that this means:

Because Jesus is the Savior of the World, we respond to His call by saying no to ourselves and choosing Him.

Tuesday, we learned that this means:

Because Jesus is God, we listen to him more than anyone else.

Yesterday, we learned that this means:

Because Jesus lays down his life for us, we can serve others.

No matter how disciplined, focused, and eager we are to follow Jesus in these ways, you and I will always fall short. As we saw last night, this was true of Jesus' closest friends and followers. Even as Jesus washed their feet, Judas prepared to betray him into the hands of those who would murder him. Peter was moments away from denying him three times. Both failed to follow Jesus when it counted the most. Perhaps that's what makes tonight's message the most important of all: **Because Jesus loves us and has the power to forgive, we can go to him when we mess up or have doubts.**

Read Luke 22:60-62.

How does Peter respond when he sins?

Read John 21:1-19.

When Peter recognizes Jesus, what does he do? What might Peter's response teach us about coming to Jesus after we've messed up?

How does Jesus respond to Peter? What does He do? What does He say?

What does Jesus' response to Peter tell us about our own sin and failures?

Like Peter, you and I fail to love, serve, and trust Jesus perfectly. We deny him with our thoughts, words, and actions in ways that are both big and small each day. Peter's response to his sin can teach us a great deal about our own. Immediately after denying Jesus, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. He doesn't make light of his sin; he is deeply

DAY 4: JESUS RESTORES PETER AND APPEARS TO THOMAS

(continued)
(John 20:19-29, 21:1-19)

grieved by it. Yet, when he sees Jesus, Peter doesn't cower. He doesn't hide in guilt and shame. He jumps out of the boat and gets to Jesus as quickly as he can.

How does Jesus respond? He doesn't dismiss Peter or relegate him to marginal work and ministry. Instead, he uses Peter in a powerful way to "feed his sheep." Peter goes on to spread the Gospel after Jesus ascends into heaven. He writes several books in the New Testament. He's martyred for his faith by dying on a cross hung upside down. Jesus forgives, restores, and continues to use broken people like Peter and like you and me.

Jesus doesn't just respond to our sin this way, though. He also invites us to come to Him when we have questions or doubts. Just ask another disciple named Thomas.

Read John 20:19-29.

Why does Thomas struggle to believe that Jesus rose again? What does he say must happen for him to believe?

How does Jesus respond to Thomas' doubts?

What does Thomas do when he sees the risen Jesus?

If you and I follow Jesus today, we are those who have not seen and have yet believed. 2 Corinthians 5:7 describes this as living by faith and not by sight, while 1 Peter 1:8 says, "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy."

Yet even those of us with the most ardent faith wrestle with questions and doubts like Thomas.

What are some questions/doubts you've struggled with as you've followed Jesus? OR, what are some questions/doubts that are currently keeping you from following Jesus?

DAY 4: JESUS RESTORES PETER AND APPEARS TO THOMAS **(continued)** **(John 20:19-29, 21:1-19)**

When we wrestle with these questions and doubts, Jesus' response to Thomas should encourage us. He doesn't cast Thomas aside. Instead, He meets Thomas where he is and reveals himself to him. When we struggle to believe, trust, and understand Jesus fully, we can echo the words of the man who came to Jesus to heal his son and said, "I do believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

Tim Keller's words in *Reason for God* can also encourage us.

A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own, but their friends' and neighbors'. It is no longer sufficient to hold beliefs just because you inherited them. Only if you struggle long and hard with objections to your faith will you be able to provide grounds for your beliefs to skeptics, including yourself, that are plausible rather than ridiculous or offensive. And, just as important for our current situation, such a process will lead you, even after you come to a position of strong faith, to respect and understand those who doubt.⁴

As today's stories show us, **because Jesus loves us and has the power to forgive, we can go to him when we mess up or have doubts. Let's do that now.**

Pray: Take a few minutes to share your doubts, questions, and sin with Jesus. Pray that you, the kids, and the volunteers would know the great love and power of Jesus to forgive. Pray that we would come to him with our questions and our doubts.

⁴ Keller, T. (2008). *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. p. xvii.