

## Day 1

### S.O.A.P. – "Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer" Conversation Starter

What images come into your mind when you hear or read the word "church"?

### Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

#### Scripture:

'When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ["Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.] "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."** Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means 'rock') and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

Then he sternly warned the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!" Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom." [Curious about what this looked like? Read the following chapter!] [Matthew 16:13-28 NLT \(Bible.com\)](#)

#### Sermon Insights:

"Capital C Church" is the body of Christ, rooted in eternity, spread through all time and space, a community of men and women with Jesus as the head, being redeemed by God and on mission. The lower case "c" "church" is what we can see with our eyes: buildings, seats, programs, denominations, and parking lots. The danger is this: if all we see is lower "c" church, then we miss out on the staggering, eternal, Jesus-fueled mission in the world.

### Application (5 minutes)

How do you answer that question: "Is anything worth more than your soul?"

Have you confessed Jesus as your Lord and Savior, like Peter did?

What is your next step in giving up your own way, taking up your cross, and following Jesus?

### Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, I am humbled not only that you listen to me, but that you want to. Thank you for making me. Thank you for re-making me into a new creation when I surrender to you. Help me give up my own way, take up my cross, and follow you!

## Day 2

### S.O.A.P. – "Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer" Conversation Starter

Did you ever take a trip during which the totally unexpected happened?

### Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

#### Scripture:

One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. "Take nothing for your journey," he instructed them. "Don't take a walking stick, a traveler's bag, food, money, or even a change of clothes. Wherever you go, stay in the same house until you leave town. And if a town refuses to welcome you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate."

So they began their circuit of the villages, preaching the Good News and healing the sick. When Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, heard about everything Jesus was doing, he was puzzled. Some were saying that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. Others thought Jesus was Elijah or one of the other prophets risen from the dead. "I beheaded John," Herod said, "so who is this man about whom I hear such stories?" And he kept trying to see him.

When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had done. Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of Bethsaida. But the crowds found out where he was going, and they followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick. Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, "Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this remote place."

But Jesus said, "You feed them." "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. "Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for this whole crowd?" For there were about 5,000 men there. Jesus replied, "Tell them to sit down in groups of about fifty each." So the people all sat down. Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people. They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers! [Luke 9:1-17 NLT \(Bible.com\)](#)

#### Sermon Insights:

It is interesting to me that Jesus never said, "Go to church." What Jesus did say was, "Follow Me."

Christianity is not a "come and watch" type of movement, but actually is a "go and do" movement.

It doesn't take perfect people to do God's work, just willing people.

Jesus is not looking for spectators, but he is looking for passionate followers who will go and do.

### Application (5 minutes)

What can be a difference between "go to church" and "follow me"?

What is your next step?

Does it surprise you that God does not look for perfect people, only passionate and willing followers?

### Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, you use the completely unlikely to accomplish the impossible. I am willing—use me for great things!

## Day 3

### S.O.A.P. – "Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer"

#### Conversation Starter

If God gives you safety, security, and health, what is the purpose—to hang on to your life or to pour it out for Him?

#### Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

##### Scripture:

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. These were his instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road.

"Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house.' If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what they provide. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay.

"If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—the Kingdom of God is near!' I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day.

"What sorrow awaits you, Korazin and Bethsaida! For if the miracles I did in you had been done in wicked Tyre and Sidon, their people would have repented of their sins long ago, clothing themselves in burlap and throwing ashes on their heads to show their remorse. Yes, Tyre and Sidon will be better off on judgment day than you. And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead."

Then he said to the disciples, "Anyone who accepts your message is also accepting me. And anyone who rejects you is rejecting me. And anyone who rejects me is rejecting God, who sent me." When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!" "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. **But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.**" [Luke 10:1-20 NLT \(Bible.com\)](https://www.bible.com)

#### Application (5 minutes)

Why would Jesus say it is more important to rejoice that your name is registered in Heaven than that evil spirits obey you?

By not taking provisions, what do you think the disciples learned on the journey?

What was Jesus' main purpose in providing miracles?

Are you holding out on repenting from something in your life?

#### Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you for using many forms of kindness to help us see the bigger picture, repent of our sins, and turn to you. Use us to bring your light, life, and love to the people in our lives!

## Day 4

### S.O.A.P. – "Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer" Conversation Starter

What are children good at seeing that adults sometimes forget?

### Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

#### Scripture:

At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way. "My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Then when they were alone, he turned to the disciples and said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you have seen. I tell you, many prophets and kings longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it." [Luke 10:21-24 NLT \(Bible.com\)](#)

Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." [Matthew 9:35-38 NLT \(Bible.com\)](#)

#### Sermon Insights:

This is our day, and the Lord of the harvest is looking for workers, NOT people who will just come and watch somebody else do something while they pursue the American dream of success, security and comfort.

Jesus' heart breaks for sheep who need a Shepherd. Eternity is at stake.

### Application (5 minutes)

If God reveals his wisdom to the childlike and hides it from those who "think themselves wise and clever," what attitude do you need to grow in?

What privileges do the most basic Christians experience that the most powerful and successful non-believers cannot even fathom?

How do these passages describe 1) Jesus' heart for people, and 2) Jesus' description of people?

### Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, thank you so much for having a heart of compassion towards me, a simple sheep. Teach me to let go of my own "wisdom" and trust you like a child!

## Day 5

### S.O.A.P. – "Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer"

#### Conversation Starter

How do you know when you can trust a leader?

#### Scripture Observation (5 minutes)

##### Scripture:

"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [*or Comforter, or Encourager, or Counselor*] who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.

No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. **My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.** Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid. Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe. "I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going. [John 14:15-31 NLT \(Bible.com\)](#)

#### Application (5 minutes)

Are you aware that following Jesus makes you an enemy of Satan and of those under his influence? Christians are at odds with the world—misunderstood, suspect, and unavailable to promote what the world loves most. Do you love Jesus enough to obey him?

That is truly amazing that God himself would be intimate with his creation: not only loving us but making his "home" with each one of us. Do you feel "at home" with God? Are you trusting or resisting? Why?

Jesus himself obeyed the Father. It cost him his comfort and ultimately his life. Yet out of that sacrifice, God was able to accomplish freedom for you and me. We live because Jesus lives! Christianity is not about becoming a better person. It is about living WITH God and letting him live through you. Are you embracing this awesome adventure?

#### Prayer (5 minutes)

Lord, you are absolutely amazing. Teach me to trust your love and presence in my life. Fill me with your joy and peace. And help me be a conduit for others.