

# THE BLACK LETTERS OF JESUS

## PARENT GUIDE: WALKING WITH JESUS

We realize that you, as parents, are the primary faith influencers in a young person's life. The best disciple making takes place when students' parents take the lead. That's why we've created this helpful guide for you to use at home with your child. It is designed to give you some basic information about what is being taught at church through *The Black Letters of Jesus* curriculum, along with some helpful tools, suggestions, and questions to help you reinforce this learning at home.

### WHAT ARE THE BLACK LETTERS OF JESUS?

A lot of studies focus on Jesus' words—the *red* letters of Scripture. But what would it look like if we focused on his actions—the *black* letters? *The Black Letters of Jesus* is a yearlong curriculum based on the things Jesus did while he was here on earth. Some themes may be familiar and some will allow students to see Jesus in a new way. These are lessons drawn from the life of the one who became flesh and lived among his creation.

*\*Each lesson has a **The Black Letters of Jesus** statement that describes the main action we're studying.*

### OVERVIEW OF WALKING WITH JESUS (4 Lessons)

Wherever Jesus walked, people followed. Some only wanted to see a cool miracle. But a few wanted to be his true disciples. In ancient Israel, disciples would follow a Rabbi (teacher) around wherever he went, listening carefully to everything he said to become as much like the teacher as possible. These four lessons focus on following Jesus wherever he went. Your child will learn about the basics of discipleship, and that the discipleship journey isn't without difficulties, but it builds a faith that perseveres. And at the end of the day, what Jesus wants most from us isn't pious performance, but a deep relationship with him.

## MAIN TOPICS AND SCRIPTURE COVERED

### FOR YOU TO KNOW:

#### **1: The Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25-35)**

This lesson will help teach students the difference between cheap and costly discipleship. Cheap discipleship is about following Jesus for what we can get out of it. Costly discipleship (true discipleship) is about recognizing that following Jesus won't always be easy, but it will always be worth it because Jesus is the only one worth following. Students will also think about how they can start preparing for potential difficulties they'll encounter on the road of discipleship.

#### ***The Black Letters of Jesus:***

*Jesus shows the crowd what it takes to follow him.*

### FOR YOU TO ASK:

- Does anything about following Jesus make you excited? Nervous?
- What's one thing you've had to sacrifice to follow Jesus? If you can't think of anything, what is one thing you might need to sacrifice in the future?

**2: Durable Faith (Hebrews 12:1-13)**

In this lesson, students will learn about the endurance required to live a life of discipleship. Our journey of faith isn't a sprint; it's a marathon. That means we will encounter plenty of disappointments, hardships, and failures. But, each of these moments is an opportunity to grow in faith and strengthen our relationship with him.

***The Black Letters of Jesus:***

*Jesus gave us the perfect example of perseverance.*

- Think over the last few weeks. What was one mistake you made and how (or what) did you learn from it?

**3: Walking in the Light (1 John 1:5-10)**

In this lesson, students will learn the difference between walking in darkness apart from Jesus and walking in the light by following him. Walking in the light is better than stumbling around in darkness, but it can also be painful because the light exposes the sins we try to hide from God, others, and even ourselves. Students will discover the freedom that comes with bringing their sin issues out into the light through confession to God and to trustworthy people. They'll see why it's easier to heal those wounds when they aren't hidden in the dark.

***The Black Letters of Jesus:***

*Jesus shines a light into our darkness.*

- Why do you think God wants us to be honest with him about our issues, even though he already knows everything about us?

**4: Just Be with Jesus (Luke 10:38-42)**

From school to sports, music to drama, extra-curriculars to youth ministry, students' lives are full to bursting. This can be intimidating, especially when we explain that they need to commit themselves to becoming disciples of Jesus. But the truth is, the best way to follow Jesus and become more like him isn't by adding more activities to a full schedule. It's through relationship: placing our faith in Jesus. This lesson will help students learn that quality relationship with Jesus beats outward performance every time.

***The Black Letters of Jesus:***

*Jesus shows us the best way to be with him.*

- Have you ever worried that God was disappointed in you because you didn't do enough good things?
- Why can it be easier to distract ourselves with busyness than to be still with God?

## ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO TOGETHER

### TRAVELING TOGETHER

This may seem simple, but walking together as a family is a great way to leave the distractions of work, school, chores, and TV behind to simply spend some time with each other. If you live near the mountains or woods, consider taking a day or half-day hike together. If you're looking for more of a challenge, take the family jogging. Just remember, this isn't a competition; it's an opportunity to do something outside the house to open up a dialogue. (Here are a few cold-weather options: snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or even hopping on treadmills or a track together at the gym.) You want to do something that will push the family a bit (travel a little farther than you normally would, walk a little faster than normal), but try not to go too high-intensity so you'll have a chance to talk as you go.

Jesus built relationships and did much of his teaching while traveling with his followers. Traveling together is a great opportunity to talk about following Christ because it leads to so many great metaphors: the life of a Christ-follower is a journey toward a goal. It requires perseverance and preparation. Some sections of that journey are smooth, while others are rough and likely to make us stumble. It's also a great opportunity to invest in your child and build a relationship. As you talk during or after the activity, use the traveling context to ask your child questions about discipleship.

Here are a few hypothetical options:

- Before starting out: "What would you be doing right now if we weren't going on the walk? Do you feel like your life is too packed right now, or do you wish you had more to do? How can I help with that?"
- During an easy section: What comes really easy to you? When it comes to following Jesus, what is easy for you?
- During a tough spot: Is there anything in your life that feels like this (really difficult) right now? If you persevere, where will you end up? When it comes to following Jesus, what's really hard for you?
- When you're tired: What is it that wears you out? What are some things you're just tired of? How does being tired affect you?

### MEMORY VERSES

Each lesson has a corresponding verse to memorize or meditate on.

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| <p>Whoever loves his life loses it,<br/>and whoever hates his life in this<br/>world will keep it for eternal life.</p> <p>John 12:25 (ESV)</p>                      | <p>God is our refuge and strength, a very<br/>present help in trouble. Therefore we<br/>will not fear though the earth gives<br/>way, though the mountains be moved<br/>into the heart of the sea, though its<br/>waters roar and foam, though the<br/>mountains tremble at its swelling.</p> <p>Psalm 46:1-3 (ESV)</p> |
| <p>WALKING WITH JESUS 1:<br/>The Cost of Discipleship</p>  | <p>WALKING WITH JESUS 2:<br/>Durable Faith</p>  |
| <p>The night is far gone;<br/>the day is at hand. So then<br/>let us cast off the works of darkness<br/>and put on the armor of light.</p> <p>Romans 13:12 (ESV)</p> | <p>Then they cried<br/>to the LORD in their trouble, and he<br/>delivered them from their distress.<br/>He made the storm be still, and<br/>the waves of the sea were hushed.</p> <p>Psalm 107:28-29 (ESV)</p>  |
| <p>WALKING WITH JESUS 3:<br/>Walking in the Light</p>  | <p>WALKING WITH JESUS 4:<br/>Just Be with Jesus</p>   |