

THE BLACK LETTERS OF JESUS

PARENT GUIDE: *JESUS LIKE ME*

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 *JESUS LIKE ME* (4 Lessons)

In *Jesus Like Me*, we discover the great range of emotions Jesus displayed during his time on earth. The Gospels capture moments of him weeping, angrily clearing out the temple courts, loving people, and confronting others. Following Jesus does not mean putting on a smile and just being nice to everyone. Instead, Jesus invites us to bring our whole selves as we draw closer to him.

MAIN TOPICS AND SCRIPTURE COVERED

FOR YOU TO KNOW:	FOR YOU TO ASK:
<p>1: Giving Up (Mark 10:17-31)</p> <p>In this lesson, we see Jesus lovingly sharing a hard truth with someone whose wealth has become their god. Students will be presented with Jesus’ tough challenge, while realizing that he spoke out of love. They’ll focus on how to respond to the call Jesus has placed on their lives.</p> <p><i>The Black Letters of Jesus:</i> <i>Jesus challenges a rich young ruler to rethink what really matters.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What, if you had to give it up, would make you really sad? ▪ When have you looked at someone with love and acted on their behalf or spoken truth to them?

<p>2: Angry Jesus (John 2:13-25) In this story, Jesus was filled with righteous anger when he saw people taking advantage of others and using the temple system for their own benefit. This lesson will help students connect Jesus’ righteous anger with things in the world that stir up their own righteous anger.</p> <p><i>The Black Letters of Jesus:</i> <i>Jesus shows righteous anger toward sin.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How is regular anger different from righteous anger? ▪ When have you felt righteous anger towards something or someone? (*righteous anger is anger towards a sin, an injustice, or something)
<p>3: It’s Okay to Cry (John 11:17-44) Sometimes a crisis can reveal the depth of one’s faith. This lesson contrasts the trust (or lack thereof) between Mary and Martha when their brother dies. We’ll see how Jesus’ actions show how deep his love for people runs, and that sometimes not giving others what they think they need or want is better for their faith. Students will learn that the Christian life is not perfect nor free from sadness or confusion.</p> <p><i>The Black Letters of Jesus:</i> <i>Jesus feels our pain.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When have you wept or shown deep sadness for something or someone? ▪ What do you think God is trying to accomplish in our times of pain and hurt?
<p>4: Reach Out to the ‘Unlovable’ (Acts 9:1-19) We will look at Jesus’ call to Ananias to reach out in love toward Saul, a known persecutor of Christians. Students will be challenged to consider how to live this call today. How can we show God’s love to those we normally view as not “love worthy”? In what ways are we challenged with the same commission given to Saul to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the world?</p> <p><i>The Black Letters of Jesus:</i> <i>Jesus calls us to pray for and minister to our enemies.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why is it difficult to show mercy to someone who has wronged you greatly?

ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO TOGETHER

EFFECTIVE COMPASSION

Our priority as parents is to build a family that is dedicated to following Jesus. Have you ever felt moved by compassion together as a family? Or had to give something up? Ever had an experience where your whole family felt righteous anger? Use this experience to start practicing those emotions together. As the parent, be ready to show how to express these emotions in a way that shows love to the people involved and honors Jesus.

1. Do an internet search for "Hope Award for Effective Compassion." This will bring you to the World News Group's archive containing a directory of over 11 years of finalists for WORLD's Hope Award for Effective Compassion. This award honors a few of the self-sacrificing Christian helpers in neighborhoods throughout the United States.
2. Read (separately or together) about stories of compassion and what moved different people to action.
3. There are many different categories: babies, community, disabilities, homelessness, immigration, medical, prison, etc. What category tugs at your heart the most?
4. What story impacted you the most? As a family, read through a few of the stories and discuss what stood out to you.
5. What could you/your family actually do to make a difference?

MEMORY VERSES

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

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV)

JESUS LIKE ME 1:
Giving Up

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?"
1 Corinthians 6:19a (ESV)

JESUS LIKE ME 2:
Angry Jesus

I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
Psalm 40:1-3a (ESV)

JESUS LIKE ME 3:
It's Okay to Cry

"But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 5:44-45a (ESV)

JESUS LIKE ME 4:
Reaching Out to the 'Unlovable'