

Confirmation 8th Grade

Session 4 Make Up:

Why Are People Attracted to Jesus?

Introduction

So far in our sessions, we have talked about God, especially God the Creator of All. We talked about people who listened to God – Abraham and Moses. Then last week we thought about the Holy Spirit. Today's let's focus on Jesus.

People in the Gospels and throughout history have been fascinated by Jesus of Nazareth. They have found him and his message so attractive that they have been willing to change their lives and follow him. Today we will have an opportunity to explore what Jesus said and did that people found so fascinating and attractive.

Qualities of Jesus

Make a list of qualities of Jesus that you think attract people to him and lead them to accept his call to follow him.

Read:

What Fascinates People about Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus comes at life with energy and purpose.

Aren't we all more attracted to someone with good energy and purpose? This active quality means that Jesus influences the course of events more than the course of events influences him. He is proactive, rather than reactive. We see this in his focus on his mission in life and in the way he shapes situations according to his perspectives and values. His assertiveness can be seen in how he called the disciples to follow him. He met them where they were at – fishing or collecting taxes, or whatever they were doing. He came into their lives.

Jesus finds himself in many different situations which he must quickly evaluate and respond to. Circumstances such as the disciples not understanding, or hungry people with nowhere to go, etc. may be pushing events in a certain direction, or people sent to trap and test Jesus may be manipulating the situation for their own ends. But once Jesus intervenes, the situation is reshaped according to his will.

The stories about people “coming at” Jesus often end with Jesus “coming at” them. Would-be challengers find themselves challenged. The ability of Jesus to reverse challenge is a part of his active rather than reactive style. Even during Jesus’ arrest, trial, passion, and crucifixion he is portrayed as the predominant influence in the events he is undertaking.

The outcome of this powerful way of living, is that Jesus is an explosive power that must be reckoned with. He is a force because the Kingdom he proclaimed and served is a force.

Choose one of these to read:

Gospel Examples of Energy and Purpose

Mission of Jesus: Luke 4:16-21

Woman Caught in Sin: John. 8:3-11

Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

Jesus demonstrates great care and compassion.

Jesus is a man of care and compassion.

Jesus is attentive to the people around him. He notices short people in tall trees, the humble, secretive hand of a widow donating her last coins, the hunger of a twelve year old girl raised from the dead. He notices unimportant street children shoved away whom he invites to sit with him. He feels a touch on his cloak that is different from all the rest, a touch which communicates a little more panic, a little more pleading, from a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years.

Jesus embraces both the joy and the pain of life. He celebrates and cries; he rejoices and is angry. His care makes him receive each moment as if it were the only moment. He does not suffer from world-weariness. He isn’t burnt out. This sensitivity to everything as new was part of Jesus’ make-up. Every time he breathed in, he was conscious that God had breathed out. At every moment everything came from the love of God.

Compassion is the experience of feeling the other’s life as one’s own. Jesus’ most powerful stories turn on the experience of compassion. Think of the story of the Good Samaritan, who looks on the man in the ditch with compassion and an action occurs that changes the world of the story and the world of the listeners to the story (Luke 10:25-37)

Compassion is where God, the self, and the neighbor join. It is so great that it does not stop at the feeling of solidarity but galvanizes the person into works of solidarity

Choose one of these to read:

Gospel Examples of Care and Compassion

A Widow's Son: Luke 7:11-16

Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-37

Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-31

A King Who Forgives: Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus' care moves him to heal.

A leper says to Jesus, "If you will to do it, you can cure me." Jesus responds, "Of course, I will it!" In the bible, he is seeking out the sick. But, once word gets out, they seek him out. Often someone comes to him with a request to come and heal someone he or she loves. In the end, Jesus is waiting for people to heal them. While they were looking for him, he was seeking them.

Choose one of these to read:

Gospel Examples of Healing

Blind Man: John 9:1-7, 35-38

Sick Man: John 5:1-8

Official's Son: John 4:43-53; Luke 7:1-10

Crippled Man: Luke 5:17-25

Two Blind Men: Matthew 20:29-34

A Dying Girl and a Sick Woman: Luke 8:40-55; Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43

Jesus' compassion moves him to forgive.

In the stories of Jesus there is a very close link between compassion and forgiveness. Think about the prodigal son. Once the prodigal father experiences compassion, he is moved to forgive the son; Think about the Good Samaritan and the lawyer who heard the story of the compassionate Samaritan understands his action not merely in terms of help but in terms of mercy. Since it is assumed that the man in the ditch is a Jew, and more precisely, is the listening lawyer himself, the Samaritan has to overcome the history of hostility between them. His care flows from his ability to forgive and to get beyond racial hatred. It must be stressed that the father and the Samaritan, had been wronged by the people they forgive and help. There is something in the experience of compassion that facilitates the most difficult and yet the most creative of all human actions – heartfelt forgiveness.

In the Gospel portrait Jesus' stories and teaching about forgiveness are matched by his actions. He forgives his disciples and those who crucified him. His major emphasis is to offer divine forgiveness to all who have sinned.

Choose one of these to read

Gospel Examples of Forgiveness

Woman Caught in Sin: John 8:3-11

Healing a Crippled Man: Luke 5:17-25

A Man with Demons: Luke 8:26-39, Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1-20

Jesus offers and lives freedom.

Jesus' words and deeds offered freedom *from* the power of evil, from crippling disease, from debilitating worry, from greed, from imprisonment in social categories, from economic hardship. The reverse side was a freedom *for* obedience to God's rule, for bodily health, for a life of trust, for other-centered concerns, for genuine encounters with people, and for a more just economic order. Jesus' presence was liberating in the physical, interpersonal, social, and spiritual realms.

Jesus' love and compassion include everyone.

Jesus' compassion and inclusiveness challenged the prevailing social order of his day. Jesus interacts with all levels of Jewish society, from religious leader to social outcast. No one seems automatically excluded from his concern or company. Those whom the societal leaders spurned, Jesus embraced. Jesus ate and drank with "tax collectors and sinners," an umbrella category for the religiously unclean and the socially unacceptable. The leaders saw this table fellowship as blurring the boundaries between the righteous and the sinner.

Jesus also reached out to the poor. He preached to them that they had a dignity which no societal estimation could compromise. The opening line of the Beatitudes is as startling today as in Jesus' time. "Blessed are you poor" (Luke 6:20). He challenged the leaders of the day because they neglected the plight of the poor. Jesus afflicted the comfortable and comforted the afflicted.

Women were also severely constricted by society. Jesus' relationship with women broke many of the customs and conventions of his day. He talked to women in public; he had close women friends and some of his disciples were women.

The overall picture is that whatever society had dismissed, devalued, or forgotten, Jesus pursued. Jesus did not exclude anybody on the basis of group affiliation or on the unchosen givens of the human condition. Jesus is not prejudiced; he takes each person on his or her merits. What is fascinating and liberating about Jesus is that he encountered the next person met as precisely that, the next person met – unique with a dignity given by God.

Read: Gospel Examples of Inclusion

The Great Banquet: Luke 14:15-23 and Matthew 22:1-10

Project: A Jesus Marketing Campaign

Work with your sponsor or family. Imagine you work for a marketing agency that has been asked to develop a *proposal* for a marketing campaign which invites young people, like you, to follow Jesus. Use what you have learned about the qualities of Jesus that fascinated and attracted people to create a marketing approach that will work with teenagers and young people. Your task is to develop a proposal and present it.

Step One: Describe the Benefits of Following Jesus

- What would today's teenagers find attractive about Jesus?
- What are the benefits of following Jesus for young people today?

Step Two: Select Your Marketing Approach

Select an approach or method. Here are several marketing methods to consider.

- A website page
- A photo collection on Instagram
- A 30 second TV or radio ad
- A song
- Poster advertisement
- A billboard
- Writing pads: phone message pad, memo pads, school pad
- Magnet for the refrigerator
- Clothing: T-Shirt, Caps, etc.
- Buttons
- Other

Step Three: Design Your Marketing Idea

Create a marketing proposal to describe the actual marketing idea. You do not have to create the actual product. You need to give enough information so that they can create a proposal.

Combine the benefits (Step One) with the marketing method (Step Two) to create their unique idea. They should develop their idea by:

1. writing the content for their marketing approach (e.g. script for a commercial or magazine ad, text for the cap or T-shirt, etc.)
2. identifying artwork, symbol, images, photos, etc. to accompany the content and developing a rough sketch of the actual product, if possible

Close in Prayer

Complete the form at

<https://forms.gle/tvvqTf85kuuDtRKP8>