

READING ABOUT JESUS

- DAY 1 Luke 1: Preparing for Jesus' arrival
- DAY 2 Luke 2: The story of Jesus' birth
- DAY 3 Mark 1: The beginning of Jesus' ministry
- DAY 4 Mark 9: A day in the life of Jesus
- DAY 5 Matthew 5: The Sermon on the Mount
- DAY 6 Matthew 6: The Sermon on the Mount
- DAY 7 Luke 15: Parables of Jesus
- DAY 8 John 3: A conversation with Jesus
- DAY 9 John 14: Jesus' final instructions
- DAY 10 John 17: Jesus' prayer for his disciples
- DAY 11 Matthew 26: Betrayal and arrest
- DAY 12 Matthew 27: Jesus' execution on a cross
- DAY 13 John 20: Resurrection
- DAY 14 Luke 24: Jesus' appearance after the resurrection

FOLLOW THE LEADER
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[Jesus said,] "Come, follow me."

—Mark 1:17

INTRODUCTION

If you want to be good at a sport, you have to learn the strategies that will help you win the game. In every sport, there are secrets you need to know that will give you an advantage and help you achieve victory. According to the apostle Paul, being a Christian is a lot like competing in a sport. He compared being a Christian to running in a race—and he encouraged people to do their best to win the race so they will get the prize! What he meant was that we should live our lives well as Christians so that we will get all the rewards God wants to give us. In this race, as in any sport, there are things you can do to increase your chances of winning. The most important strategy is the one we're going to focus on today.

Our devotion this time is based on Mark 1:17, in which Jesus told Simon and Andrew, "Come, follow me." The devotion is called "Follow the Leader."

DEVOTION

At the NASCAR race, Corbin watched the cars roar past. They were traveling in a tight pack as they headed into the curve. "Why do they follow each other so close?" Corbin asked.

"That's called drafting," said his dad. "The lead cars have to cut through the air as they go around the track. By staying right behind the lead cars, the other cars have it easier. A lot of the air goes around them. Their drivers are trying to save fuel, so they won't have to make many pit stops."

As the cars thundered past again, Corbin said, "Wow, Dad. You should drive like that! We'd save money on gas."

His dad laughed. "If I did, I'd get a ticket. The police have another word for that kind of driving. They call it tailgating."

A NASCAR driver follows the car ahead of him closely to save fuel. In Jesus' time, a disciple followed his teacher closely to learn from him. The disciple would follow his teacher everywhere. He'd listen to his teacher's words, watch his actions, and try to be like him. Are you following Jesus that closely?

LIFE IN BIBLE TIMES

An old Jewish proverb said, “Follow the rabbi, drink in his words, and be covered with the dust of his feet.” Faithful disciples followed their rabbi, or teacher, very closely. They walked in the cloud of dust he kicked up!

QUESTIONS

1. When Jesus was here on earth, his disciples literally followed him as he walked around. How can we follow Jesus today?

Answer: we can follow what he says and does as we read about him in the Bible; we can follow his commands, such as “Do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12); we can follow Jesus’ voice as we live our lives, listening carefully for him to speak to us through his Spirit.

2. If you’ve been following Jesus for a while, how can you begin to follow him more closely?

Some answers: spend more time reading your Bible every day; spend more time praying; make more of an effort to follow Jesus’ commands; be more involved at church; serve people and minister to them, because that’s what Jesus would do (in fact, that’s what he *is* doing today, through Christians like you!).

3. Do you think that by following Jesus more closely, people can become more like him? Why or why not?

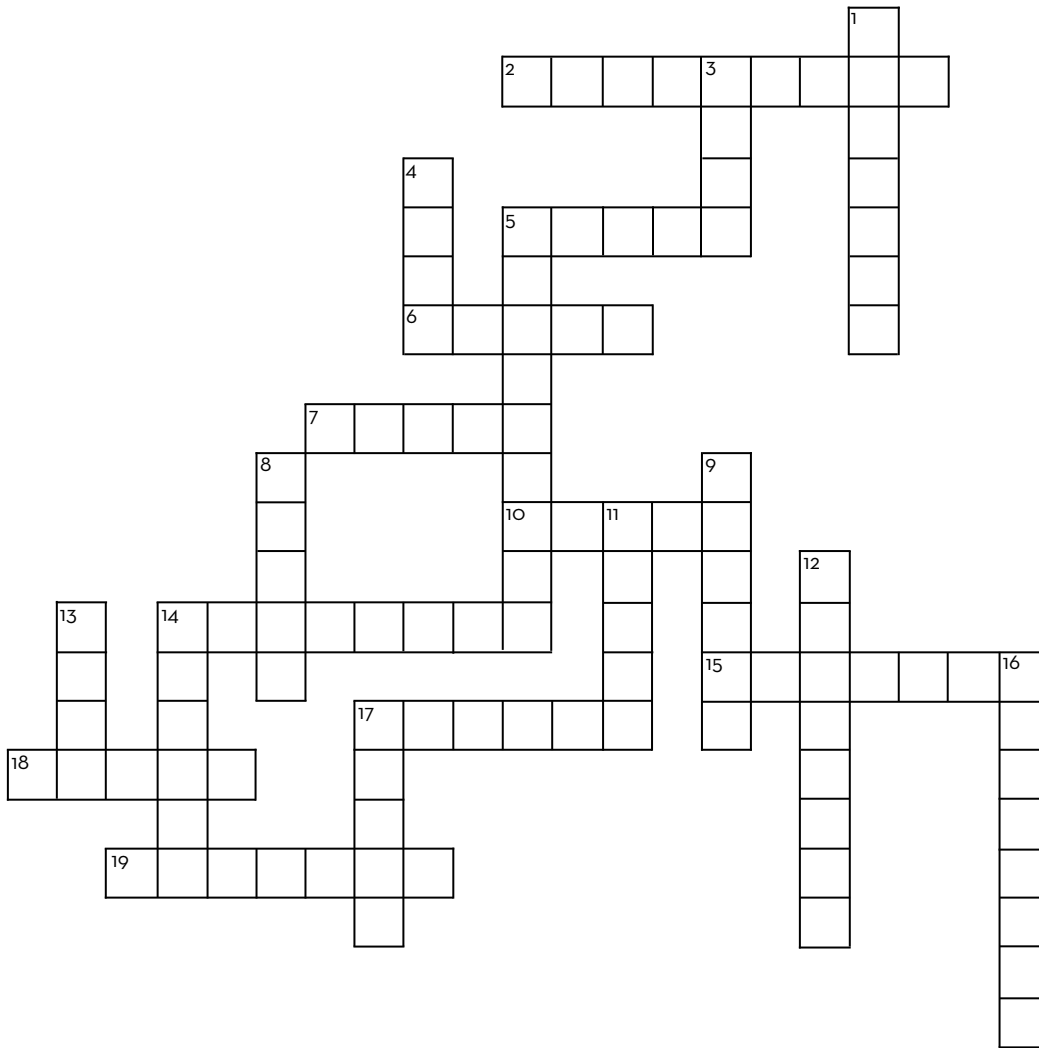
For a clue, either have children look up Luke 6:40, which says, “The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher,” or read this verse to them.

4. Do you have a little brother or sister who follows *you* around, trying to be like you? What kind of example do you think you should set for them, and how can you do it?

Answer: You should set a good example for them by doing your best to follow Jesus and be like him. That way, you’ll be helping them follow Jesus too!

5. Are you aware that many other people, such as your classmates, teammates, and neighborhood friends, are closely watching your behavior and carefully listening to your words? Often Jesus’ followers become leaders themselves. They influence others to say and do the right things, and they lead them toward Jesus. Do you think this is the way Jesus meant for it to be?

JESUS'S LIFE



Can you figure out the crossword puzzle?

ACROSS

2. Jesus was born in the town of _____ (Luke 2).
5. Forty days after he rose from the dead, Jesus went back up to heaven, and a _____ hid him from the disciples' sight (Acts 1).
6. In the desert, Jesus fasted for _____ days before the Devil began to tempt him (Matthew 4).
7. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountaintop and some of the disciples saw his glory, his clothes became dazzling _____ (Mark 9).
10. While Jesus was on trial, Peter disowned him _____ times, saying that he didn't know Jesus (Mark 14).
14. At the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples gathered in an upper room to share a special meal called the _____ (Luke 22).
15. After his friend _____ died, Jesus raised him from the dead (John 11).
17. Jesus was baptized in the _____ River by his cousin, John the Baptist (Matthew 3).
18. To escape from King Herod, Jesus's parents took him to _____ (Matthew 2).
19. Peter said that Jesus was the _____ (which means "the anointed one") and the Son of God (Matthew 16).

DOWN

1. Jesus performed his first miracle at a _____ in the town of Cana, where he turned water into wine (John 2).

3. Jesus taught that the most important command is to love the _____, and the second most important one is to love your neighbor (Mark 12).
4. When some men with a paralyzed friend could not get into a crowded house to see Jesus, they dug a hole through the _____ (Mark 2).
5. Joseph, who raised Jesus as his son, was a _____, and Jesus became one too (Matthew 13; Mark 6).
8. Jesus told his disciples that he was going away to prepare a place for them in his Father's _____, (John 14).
9. When Jesus was twelve years old and his parents were looking all over for him, they found him in the courts of the _____ (Luke 2).
11. When the women went to Jesus's tomb on Sunday morning, an angel told them, "He is not here; he has _____" (Matthew 28).
12. After King Herod died, Jesus's parents took him home to _____, and he grew up there (Matthew 2).
13. As Jesus was crucified, the sign above him read, "This is Jesus, the _____ of the Jews" (Matthew 27).
14. When Jesus called some fishermen to be his disciples, he told them, "From now on you will fish for _____" (Luke 5).
16. During a terrible storm, Jesus was _____ in the back of the boat; then he calmed the wind and the waves (Mark 4).
17. One of Jesus's disciples, named _____, betrayed him by guiding soldiers and officials to a garden so they could arrest him (John 18).

