

Keeping Faith First

An RCL Resource
Supporting the
Whole Community
of Faith

The Teachings of Jesus

Which Way Are We Going?

Life can be perplexing: We have so many paths from which to choose. We gain wealth in selecting one route, and fame or notoriety along another. Some of us are lured by power, others by security, peace, or romance. The best way to decide which path to travel is to make up our minds where we hope to arrive.

You are here on the road map of life—but but where do you hope to be? What is your desired destination?

Christians seek an eternity sharing in God's joy. Jesus teaches his followers how to achieve that goal by his word and example. He begins his mission by accepting John's baptism, the sign that leads the way from death to new life. Next, Jesus fasts, prays, and endures temptation toward self-preservation, power, and worldly honor—to be had at the cost of denying his Father—and refuses. Jesus enters public ministry by proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God. The kingdom remains at the center of his teaching.

The Beatitudes presented during the Sermon on the Mount most clearly reveal the way we are to travel if we are to enter into the kingdom ourselves. We must come *poor in spirit*; that is, in the spirit of humility. We are to *trust in God* in times of sorrow and loss. The *pursuit of righteousness* mirrors the just way of

God. The *practice of forgiveness* is to reflect on the divine mercy we receive. *Singleheartedness* in fidelity to God and dedication to the *way of peace* mirror our dignity as children of God. And, last of all, perseverance in the face of

opposition merits us the same welcome the prophets received. If we follow these teachings, we will surely arrive at our hoped-for destination.

Faith Sharing

What characteristics of our culture are detours along the route to everlasting happiness? Which of the Beatitudes challenge me to change my present course?



Faith Focus

Jesus enters public ministry by proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of God.

The Church Says . . .

The Beatitudes are central to the teaching of Jesus. They proclaim a message of hope for the trials often endured as a disciple of Christ. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1716, 1820

For More . . .

On Our Pilgrimage to Eternity: 99 Sayings by John Paul II (New City Press, 2004) proclaims the Good News of Jesus that goes beyond all religious boundaries and is in perfect harmony with our life and times.

For additional resources visit
www.FaithFirst.com
and
www.wholecommunitycatechesis.com

WE PRAY . . . THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS

Prayer for Gathering in the Parish and at Home

Gathering

LEADER: In the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

LEADER: Let us pray.
(Silence)
Master Teacher, Jesus Christ,
your teachings call us all to
be disciples of your way.
May we be worthy of
your call
and live out every intention
you have for us.
We praise you as the Christ
who reigns with the
Father and the Holy
Spirit, one God forever
and ever.

ALL: Amen.

Reading

READER: *Proclaim* Matthew 7:24–29

Reflection: What difference does faith make?

(This may be done one-on-one, in small groups, or at tables.)

What are some of the common themes in the teachings of Jesus? How can you live some of these themes?

Ritual/Prayer

LEADER: Silence is often at the heart of prayer and is important for us in order that we may reflect on and understand the teachings of Jesus. We are going to take a moment of silence to quiet ourselves, listen, and just be in the presence of God.
Take a minute or two to simply sit in silence.

Sign of Peace

LEADER: As the People of God gathered in Christ, let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Sending Forth Prayer

LEADER: Let us pray.
(Silence)
Faithful and ever-loving Father,
you call us to be true disciples of the Word, your Son.
Send the Spirit so we may go forth from this space filled with all that is good.
May you bless us always in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.