

SO WHAT?

Lesson 1: The Great Commission

This includes:

1. Leader Preparation
2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW

The Greatest Commission is one of the most popular teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. In this lesson we will study what Jesus actually meant in this commissioning and how it applies to our everyday lives nearly 2,000 years later. We will delve into the four calls to action for every follower of Christ and discuss how this commission wasn't just for the disciples during Jesus' day but is also for our lives today.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. WHAT: Jesus gave his disciples a mandate in the Great Commission to spread the message of good news and make disciples around the world.
2. WHY: The Great Commission wasn't just for the earliest followers of Jesus; it applies to us today, too.
3. HOW: Students will focus on the different components of the Great Commission, and they'll discuss how we can live out that active faith.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:18-20

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES

Mark 16:15-18

TEACHING PREP

The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you'll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

In some ways, this passage of Scripture can lose some of its meaning and power because it's become so commonplace in many churches.



LEADER
TIP



Now read Mark 16:15-18. This passage expounds on pieces of the Great Commission with descriptions of what can happen when we live out the Great Commission in our lives. Do these descriptions sound commonplace in our churches and lives, or do they seem like foreign outcomes sequestered to the pages of Scripture?

Reread the Great Commission with fresh eyes, perhaps in a translation that's unfamiliar. Review your own discipleship and ask God if there's a new level of the Great Commission that he'd like to activate in your life. And as you engage your students in conversation this week, help them to realize that God is with us as we fulfill this enormous mandate. Jesus did not commission us to do this alone; God's Spirit empowers us as we go.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry

- What do you think of when you hear the word "commission"? Let's talk about it when the group meets.
- What do you think is the ultimate mission of Christians? Get ready to share your thoughts tonight.

Parent Email

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

Our group has started a three-lesson series called "So What?" which takes a look at some core passages in the New Testament. What do the truths of these passages mean for followers of Jesus Christ?



In the first lesson we looked at the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, and the mission Jesus calls all disciples to. We discussed the importance of making disciples, teaching people what it means to follow Christ, and relying on God's strength as we go.

As you go throughout the week, take this lesson to the next level at home. Here are a few questions you might want to ask:

- When someone talks about being a disciple of Jesus, what does that mean to you?
- How can you make disciples during school, or while at practice, or while working, or while you're hanging out with friends on the weekend? How might that happen?
- If you could teach just one thing to a new follower of Christ about what it means to be a Christian, what would you teach—and why?

If I can help support you and your family in any way, please let me know. Have a blessed week!



SO WHAT?

Lesson 1: The Great Commission

2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

Preview the following video for your group: [youtube.com/watch?v=oJWkQ9UP_m8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJWkQ9UP_m8). You will need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your group.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then show the video clip. Then ASK:

- *How is that depiction of the church similar to your experience with church? How is it different?*
- *What excites you about how this video describes the church? What scares or intimidates you?*
- *For your friends who don't know Jesus, do you think this would make them want to know Jesus more? Why or why not?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *This video opens the door to some great conversation, and is really challenging for the way we think about church. This is the first of three lessons where we will be looking at "So what?" now that Jesus has risen from the grave and conquered death. What does it all mean for the way we live our lives nearly 2,000 years later? Today we are going to look at some of Jesus' last words to his disciples: the Great Commission.*

TEACHING POINTS

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) We can make disciples as we are going, (2) Baptism identifies us with the community of Christ-followers, (3) Teaching and obedience are interconnected, and (4) God doesn't leave us alone in this effort.





LEADER
TIP

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it's up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Matthew 28:18-20 together as a group.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Let's unpack Jesus' words and discuss four calls to action for followers of Jesus Christ.*

1. We can make disciples as we are going

ASK:

- *When someone talks about being a disciple of Jesus, what does that mean to you?*
- *Do you think there's a difference between being a convert to Christianity and being a disciple of Jesus? Why or why not?*
- *In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the opening words of verse 19 imply a lifestyle versus a task—an ongoing commitment versus a one-time thing. When it comes to making disciples, why does that difference matter?*
- *Is there a difference between “as you are going” and being a missionary? Why or why not?*
- *What's your reaction to this first part of the commission? Does it excite you, or intimidate you? Are you ready to do it, or are you unsure how to do it? Tell me what you think.*
- *How can you make disciples during school, or while at practice, or while working, or while you're hanging out with friends on the weekend? How might that happen?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Jesus is clear that this mission is a way of life, not something we do on the side as Christians. Our mission is simple and focused: to make disciples. Everywhere we go and everything we do is tied to this calling. That's great news because it means that as you're at school, you can be making disciples. It can happen while you're at work or spending time with friends. Wherever you are, you can help people discover what it means to follow Jesus as you live a Jesus-centered life.*



2. Baptism identifies us with the community of Christ-followers

ASK:

- *How do people know you're a follower of Jesus?*
- *If you've been baptized, why did you get baptized? What did the experience mean to you?*
- *What are the benefits of being connected to a group of people following Jesus?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Baptism is another call to action. Baptism is a big deal because it shows the world that you are a follower of Jesus Christ and also invites the community of Christ-followers to come around you and support you on your spiritual journey. Baptism is like an official celebration that you are a part of the family of God.*

3. Teaching and obedience are interconnected

ASK:

- *If you could teach just one thing to a new follower of Christ about what it means to be a Christian, what would you teach—and why?*
- *Jesus talks about teaching people to obey his commands—what is he talking about here?*
- *What's the connection between teaching and obedience?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *Teaching is another call to action for a follower of Jesus. Though you may not have a gift of teaching, your life is always teaching others what it means to follow Jesus. Actions always speak louder than words. To teach others what it means to be a disciple, we also have to know the commands that Jesus talks about. But Jesus is clear that it's not just enough to know and teach his commands; we also have to obey them.*

4. God doesn't leave us alone in this effort

ASK:

- *How does Jesus' promise at the end of verse 20 reassure you?*
- *What do you see about how the Trinity works together? How do God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit interact in this whole process of sending us out to make disciples?*



- *What can you learn about their relationship with each other?*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: *In one of the most important passages of the New Testament, we can see the Trinity working together here. Jesus gave the great commission. The Father gave Jesus the authority on Earth. The Holy Spirit is within us. God the Father, Son, and Spirit all have different roles to play in our lives and the mission of the gospel.*

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

ASK:

- *Read Mark 16:15-18. How is this a description of what the Good News can look like in action?*
- *How can you see God's miraculous power in your life more and more?*
- *Do you feel like you have this kind of authority and power that these passages talk about? Why or why not?*



PAIR SHARE

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.

APPLICATION

ASK:

- *Which of the calls to action do you need to take an action step toward this week: go, make disciples, baptize, or teach? Why?*
- *If you haven't been baptized yet, are you willing to take that next step of obedience?*
- *Think of a friend who doesn't know Jesus—how can you pray for that person this week, and how can you help this friend discover the good news of Jesus?*



SUMMARY



End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]



Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

