

# GLAD TIDINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Jesus meets a hopelessly ill man	Mark 2:1-12
2. Jesus meets the boss of a tax office	Luke 19:1-10
3. Jesus meets a prostitute	Luke 7:36-50
4. Jesus meets a prosperous politician	Mark 10:17-27
5. Teachings of Jesus: A lost son	Luke 15:11-24
6. Teachings of Jesus: Another lost son	Luke 15:25-32
7. Teachings of Jesus: Who is my neighbor?	Luke 10:25-37
8. Jesus meets two gangsters	Luke 23:32-43
9. Jesus meets a doubting disciple	John 20:19-29

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## 1 JESUS MEETS A HOPELESSLY ILL MAN Mark 2:1-12

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Houses had at Jesus' time **flat roofs** made of limestone and tiles. There were stairs leading to the roof outside the house. A person is usually **paralyzed** when middle-aged or older, because of a hemorrhage in the brain. A paralyzed person can neither move nor speak. **The Son of Man** is a name Jesus used for himself.

1. Do you think that a person can be happy if he is lying on his bed, unable to speak or to move?
  - \* What kind of care did this man need in his everyday life?
  - \* Imagine the everyday life of the person who was taking care of this man.
2. All the Jews believed in God at that time. What did this man perhaps think about God and faith after he was paralyzed?
3. We can see from the verse 5 that this man had sins on his conscience. What kind of sins can one commit even when unable to move or speak?
  - \* What is your opinion: does pain and sickness change us for the better or for the worse as human beings?
4. What makes it difficult to transport a paralyzed man on a blanket through a town?
  - \* Why didn't other people come out of the house and allow this poor man to be carried to Jesus (4)?
  - \* Why didn't the four friends turn around and go home after having realized that it was impossible to enter through the door?
5. What was the relation of these four men to the paralyzed person? Think of different possibilities. (3).
  - \* What precautions were needed when transporting the paralyzed man to the roof? (See background information about the house.)
  - \* What kind of tools were needed for breaking up the roof? Where did these four men get them?
  - \* What kind of remarks were perhaps heard from the room below while the roof was being broken?
6. The four men had brought their friend to Jesus in order that he might be healed. Why did Jesus forgive him his sins first (5)?
  - \* Why did Jesus work in this order: first forgiving sins and then healing the illness?

\* What did it mean to the paralyzed man that he was forgiven all the wrong things he had done in the past?

7. Imagine a situation that you go to Jesus and ask him to solve your biggest problem. What if he would answer you: "My son/ my daughter, your sins are forgiven." Would you become sad or glad?

\* If you could choose, which one would you take: a good conscience or a solution to your biggest problem?

\* How did the attitude of the paralyzed man change towards his illness when he realized that he would go to heaven in the end?

8. In verse 5 Jesus is not talking about the faith of the paralyzed but that of his friends. Obviously the man himself didn't have any faith before meeting Jesus. Mention the verse when you think he started to believe in Jesus?

\* Why didn't the teachers of law believe that Jesus was able to forgive people their sins (7-8)?

9. Answer the question which Jesus poses in verse 9.

\* What did it cost Jesus to heal this man? What did it cost him to forgive his sins?

\* What would you have thought about Jesus if you had witnessed with your own eyes what is described in verses 10-12?

10. GLAD TIDINGS QUESTION: If your heart is accusing you for something that you did wrong, hear what Jesus is saying to you: "My son/ my daughter, your sins are forgiven!" In order to pay for his promise, Jesus had to die on the cross. What does his promise mean to you today? (You can answer in your heart.)

\* (For everybody to answer): What was the most important thing you learned during this study?

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## 2. JESUS MEETS THE BOSS OF A TAX OFFICE Luke 19:1-10

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: At the time of Jesus, the tax-collectors were known for their dishonest behavior. First of all, they were serving the occupying force (the Romans), and second of all, they usually put tax money into their own pockets and became rich at the cost of their countrymen. From Verse 7, we can see how unpopular Zaccheus was in his hometown. As far as we know, this was Jesus' only visit to Jericho, and it happened only one week before his death. By then he had been doing his public ministry for three years, and everybody knew that he had chosen a publican as one of his disciples.

1. Can a person be happy if he knows that everybody considers him a thief/takes him to be a thief?

\* What kind of effect did it perhaps have on Zaccheus that he had always been shorter than the other boys (3b)?

\* How can we/one get over having being mobbed in our/one's youth?

2. Think of various reasons why Zaccheus had decided to become a tax-collector.

\* How did tax-collectors perhaps justify their behavior when they took from a poor family its last sheep or penny?

\* What was required of a man who became a boss of a tax office in a big city in those circumstances? Do you think that a kind-hearted man could have become the boss of Jericho's tax office? Give your reasons.

3. How do you think Zaccheus took it when he saw that all the people in Jericho despised him (7)?  
\* It usually takes some time to become a boss. If Zaccheus was around 50, he probably had grown-up children. What did they perhaps think about their father's work?  
\* People usually rethink their goals and values when they are around 50. What do you think Zaccheus wanted from the rest of his life at this point?

4. Usually the tax-collectors didn't have anything to do with religious people. Why did Zaccheus so absolutely want to see Jesus (4)?  
\* Respectable men never run in the culture of the Middle East. What does it show of Zaccheus that he didn't simply address Jesus but chose to behave in such a highly unusual way as running and climbing into a tree (4)?  
\* A sycamore tree can grow to be as big as an oak. What do you think: was the boss of Jericho's tax office indifferent about being seen sitting in a tree, or did he want to hide himself among the leaves? Give your reasons.

5. This was the first time Jesus had visited Jericho. What did Zaccheus think when he all of a sudden heard his name from the mouth of Jesus (5)?  
\* Eating together is a sign of friendship in that culture. When did Jesus decide that he would visit Zaccheus' home? Think of various alternatives (5)?

6. How would Zaccheus have reacted if Jesus had said to him from under the tree: "If you become a good man first, then I will want to be your friend?"  
\* How would you react if somebody said to you: "If you change your bad ways first, then I will want to be your friend?"  
\* Why doesn't a human being change just by being told to do so?

7. Why was Jesus in such a hurry (5)?  
\* Why didn't the boss of the tax office feel at all awkward when climbing down the big tree in front of all the people of Jericho (6)?

8. Zaccheus had always loved money. What changed his heart so suddenly (8)?  
\* Count approximately what percent of his previous fortune Zaccheus kept for himself (8).  
\* The people of Jericho had criticized Jesus for staying in the house of the worst man in town. How would they have perhaps reacted if Zaccheus had built, for example, a school with half of his big fortune, and then gone from house to house returning the unfair taxes fourfold?

9. Abraham was the first ancestor of the Jews and he is the "father of the faith" for Christians. What did Jesus mean by saying that Zaccheus was "a son of Abraham?" (9)  
\* What did Jesus mean by his words in Verse 10?

10. When do you think Zaccheus became a believer in Jesus? Mention the verse.  
\* What happened to the punishment of all the bad things that Zaccheus had done?  
\* What did Zaccheus think when he heard after a week that Jesus had died on the cross?

GLAD TIDINGS QUESTION: On his way to Jerusalem Jesus visited Jericho just to meet the worst man in town. When he became Zaccaeus' friend, he knew that he would be punished in his stead. The forgiveness of sins was free for Zaccheus and it is free for us, but it cost Jesus his life. Jesus says today to you the words in Verse 10. What do you answer him? (You can answer in your heart.)

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### 3. JESUS MEETS A PROSTITUTE Luke 7:36-50

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Verses 44-46 describe **how an honored guest was received** in Jesus' time. People ate sitting or reclining on the floor; that is why the dirty feet of a neighbor could cause someone to lose his appetite. Note that in Jewish culture **a woman never revealed her hair** in front of strange men. **A Pharisee** means a devout believer in God. **Simon** is not the same person as one of the disciples of Jesus.

1. In your opinion, can a prostitute live a happy life? Give your reasons.
  - \* All the people in that town knew this woman who was selling her own body. Think of different possibilities what might have made this girl a prostitute?
2. \* What were the important things (values) in the life for Simon, the Pharisee?
  - \* Why didn't Simon ask one of his servants to wash the feet of Jesus; he had after all invited Jesus to be his guest? (36, 44-46)
  - \* What might have been Simon's motives when he invited Jesus to dine in his house? Think of different possibilities (36).
3. How did the woman manage to sneak into Simon's house and even to his dining room? Consider various possibilities.
  - \* An alabaster jar full of perfume was quite expensive. How might the woman have come into possession of this jar, or for what purpose had she bought it? Think of different alternatives.
4. Why did this woman want to meet Jesus so badly that she ventured to the house of a Pharisee, fully knowing that she would be frowned upon?
  - \* At that time religious people did not have any contact with so called sinners. What made this woman hope and believe that Jesus would be different?
5. Why did the woman want to touch Jesus (38)?
  - \* What happens if a rat, a snake or a person we detest, touches us?
  - \* What did the woman understand/ conclude from the fact that Jesus didn't recoil from her touch?
6. Guess how long it was since this woman had cried last?
  - \* How many tears do you think are needed in order that somebody can wash somebody else's feet?
  - \* What made this woman cry so much that the feet of Jesus became wet?
  - \* Why didn't the woman dry Jesus' feet with her scarf or her hem, but with her hair?
  - \* The woman didn't say one single word during that dinner, but what did her behavior say?
7. In verses 41-42 Jesus tells a small parable about a banker and his debtors. The banker means God, but whom does Jesus refer to by these two debtors?
  - \* Jesus compares sin with debt. A debt of 500 denarii corresponded to a salary of an average worker for 1½ years. A debt of 50 denarii corresponded to a debt of 1½ months. How much would this be in our currency?
  - \* Let's assume that every sin you have ever committed will correspond to a debt, say, 10 euros/ 50 rubles/ 100 tugrik. How much do you owe to God by now? (You can answer in your heart.)
8. Why did Simon despise both Jesus and the woman (39)?
  - \* Why is it so much easier for us to pay attention to the sins of others than to those of our own?

9. Which happened first: Did the woman first believe that her sins were forgiven, or did she first love Jesus in order to get her sins forgiven? Give your reasons from verses 42-43, 47.

- \* Who paid the debt which this woman owed to God?
- \* What happened to the debt which Simon owed to God?
- \* In which currency did Jesus pay the debts of all people?

10. THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: Jesus knows all your sins, but in spite of them he says to you: "All your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace!" (Verses 48 and 50) He and only he has the right to say these words, because he paid your sin-debt by his blood. What do you answer him? (You can answer in your heart.)

\* (For everyone to answer): What was the most important thing you learned during this Bible study?

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#### 4. JESUS MEETS A SUCCESSFUL POLITICIAN Mark 10:17-27

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Other biographies of Jesus tell us that the man of this text was still **young** and yet he was already **a member of the parliament** (the so called great council). (Matt.19:22 and Luke 18:18). The man knew from the Bible that after his death he would either inherit everlasting life or go to everlasting hell. Notice that in that culture **men neither ran nor knelt** in front of another man.

1. What do you think: can a human being be happy without knowing what will happen to him/ her after death?

- \* What made this young member of the parliament show such an unusual behavior as running to Jesus and kneeling in front of him (17)?
- \* Did this man consider Jesus as God or just as an unusually wise man (17b-18)?

2. Why wasn't this man sure of his salvation although he had kept God's commandments for all his life?

- \* Why aren't we always sure of going to heaven after we die?
- \* Do you think that somebody can be sure of his going to heaven after he dies? Give your reasons.

3. Which of the commandments that Jesus mentions here is hardest to follow (19)?

- \* Many politicians are tempted to become corrupt in matters of money and sex. How had this man been able to sail clear of all such temptations (20)?
- \* Notice that according to Jesus these commandments must be kept, not only in deeds, but also in words and thoughts. Do you think this young man had really succeeded in doing so (19-20)?
- \* Could you honestly say the same words as this young man said in verse 20?

4. The young politician was lacking only one thing. Summarize verse 21 and say, what was it he was lacking?

5. Jesus mentions a treasure in heaven in verse 21. How can one collect treasures in heaven?

- \* What is the difference between a treasure on the earth and a treasure in heaven?
- \* What are the things that young people in our day usually consider as their most-esteemed "treasures"?
- \* Who or what is your most precious treasure? (You can answer in your heart.)

6. This young man probably had a family and old parents to care for. What would have happened to them if he had followed Jesus' invitation in verse 21?

\* Imagine the situation of you yourself being in the place of this young politician. Could you believe that God would be able to take care of your family even after you had given up your house and all your property?

\* Could you think of giving up your treasure on earth if you by doing so could send it into heaven? (You can answer in your heart.)

7. According to verse 21, Jesus loved the young politician? Why, then, did he say to him such hard words that he went away?

8. After having realized that he could not do what Jesus required from him, what else could this man have done except leave Jesus (22)?

\* What would Jesus perhaps have answered if this man had confessed to him: "Forgive me that I love money more than you!"

9. Imagine the life of the young politician from this point on: Was he happy? What did he think of his death?

\* Compare the answer Jesus gave to this young politician with the answer he gave to Peter (verses 21 and 27). Was his answer basically the same or was it different?

\* Who can go to heaven after his/ her death?

10. THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: "Everything is possible for God" means this: Jesus gave up his treasure in heaven and came to this world to suffer and die in order that you would get an entrance ticket to heaven. The big mistake of this young man was that he left Jesus. What are you going to do? (You can answer in your heart.)

\* (For everyone to answer): What was the most important thing you learned from the text this time?

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## 5. TEACHINGS OF JESUS: A LOST SON Luke 15:11-24

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: A story told by Jesus is called **a parable**. **An inheritance** was never received while the father was still alive. A house in Jesus' time was not standing alone on a hill, but situated by a narrow village road. The only place where you could see outside the village was **the roof of the house** (20). As we have mentioned before, men never run in those parts of the world.

1. Can a young man be happy if his parents limit his freedom?

\* Why wasn't the younger son happy even though he had a good home and a good father?

\* If you had been in the place of the Father, what would you have answered to the request of your son (12a)?

2. Why did the Father hide his disappointment and worry, although he knew perfectly well what would happen if he let his son go (12b)?

\* In this parable the Father means God. The son may here mean a person who has left God after having believed in him and/ or been baptized in his name. Why doesn't God try to stop his child from wandering away from him?

3. Why are many young people in our day attracted to the lifestyle of this young man – being abroad alone, with no responsibilities and much money in his pockets?  
 \* How did this young man use his Father’s money: look at verses 13 and 30?  
 \* Why didn’t this young man get any real friends who would have stood by him even when his luck turned?
4. A pig was considered an unclean animal among the Jews. What may this young man have thought when he had to look for work on a pig farm (14-15)?  
 \* Why wasn’t the young man allowed even to eat pig food to satisfy his hunger (16)?
5. What made the young man “come to himself” rather than committing suicide in his desperate situation (17)?  
 \* In verses 18-19 you will find the confession that the young man was planning to make to his Father. What were his sins against his Father?  
 \* What were the sins this young man had committed “against heaven” (18)?  
 \* What are the sins you have committed a) against heaven, and b) against your parents? (You can answer in your heart.)
6. Why didn’t this young man intend to ask his Father to take him back as his son (19)?  
 \* What kind of people usually think that they are not worthy of being called God’s children (19)?
7. What may the Father have thought when seeing his son drag his feet on the road to the village, barefoot and in tatters (20)?  
 \* What made it possible for the Father to recognize his son from afar (20)? (See background information.)  
 \* What do you think the Father had been doing all those years with his son far away (20)?
8. Why didn’t the son tell his Father all the things he had planned to say to him (18b-19 and 21)?  
 \* What did the words and the behavior of the father convey to his son (22-23)?  
 \* When did the father forgive his son? Mention the verse.  
 \* When did the son start believing in the love and forgiveness of his father? Mention the verse.  
 \* What did the father mean by his words in verse 24?
9. How does the love of God differ from the love of men?  
 \* What does this parable teach about conversion?
10. THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: “My son was dead, but is alive again.” Jesus, too, left the house of his Father and came to this earth, not to rebel against the will of his Father, but to fulfill it. When returning home, the door of heaven was slammed against his face, and he had to cry: “My God, my God, why did you forsake me?” Why was the son in the parable welcomed in the way Jesus should have been welcomed? And why was Jesus rejected in the way this son should have been rejected?  
 \* (For everyone to answer): What was the most important thing you learned from the text this time?

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## **6. MORE TEACHINGS OF JESUS. ANOTHER LOST SON Luke 15:25-32**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: As the matter of fact, **the Father had left half of his property to his elder son** when the younger one got his inheritance (verse 12). It was not the fault of the Father that his son didn't believe his word.

1. Can a young man be happy if he feels that his parents don't love him?

\* Why didn't the older son leave all and go abroad with his brother, if he was unhappy with his life at home?

\* What do you think the older son longed for more than anything else in his life?

2. Why did the older son consider himself almost as a slave, although his Father had promised him half of his property (12b, 29, 31)?

\* If the Father of this parable means God and the younger brother a person who rids himself of his Christian faith, whom might you think the older brother represents?

\* Do you think the Father treated his sons in a fair manner?

\* Do you think God always treats us people in a fair manner?

3. What may the older son have been thinking while toiling on the fields day after day?

\* If you have ever felt like the older son in verses 29-30, in which situation did it happen?

\* What was the real reason why the older son didn't ever give a party for his friends (29)?

\* How would the Father have taken it if his son had killed a goat, a sheep or even a calf and given a party for his friends (30-31)?

4. What was the real reason why the older son lost his temper in this situation (27-28)?

\* The younger son had already humiliated his Father in front of the whole village, and now the older one did the same. Why didn't this Father get angry?

\* What is the impression you get of the Father from verses 28b and 31-32?

\* What is the impression you get of God from verses 28b, 31-32?

5. Why didn't the older son love his Father, although the Father had always been so good to him?

\* Discuss on the basis of this parable: What could be the reason if we don't love God?

6. The older son thought that he had always fulfilled the will of his Father (29). And yet, what did the Father expect from his son most of all?

\* What shows us that the older son didn't love his younger brother at all (30)?

\* Whom did the older son love?

7. Why did Jesus cut his story in the middle without telling us if the older son went to the party or not (28, 32)?

8. In the parables of Jesus, a feast often refers to heaven. According to this parable, who will eventually get into heaven?

\* According to this parable, whose fault is it if somebody does not end up in heaven?

9. Imagine the situation when the two young men went to work on the fields the following morning. What was the mood of the older brother, what about the younger one?

\* All the people of the world resemble one or the other of the sons in this parable. Which one do you think you resemble? (You can answer in your heart.)

10. GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: Jesus says to you: "All that is mine, is yours." On his cross he earned a place for you in heaven. He gave this inheritance to you in the day of your baptism. The

older brother didn't believe this promise, but toiled for his inheritance as a slave. Do you believe, that you will get your heavenly inheritance free, or do you try to earn it with good works? (You can answer in your heart.)

\* (For everyone to answer): What is the most important thing you learned during this Bible study?

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## 7. MORE TEACHINGS OF JESUS: WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? Luke 10:25-37

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: **The mountain road** between Jerusalem and Jericho was 30 km long and very dangerous because of highway robbers lurking for travelers. **A Levite** means a man who was working as a kind of janitor in the temple. At the time of Jesus, **the Jews were in hostile terms with Samaritans** who were living in the same country with them. (Take an example from your own country. RUSSIA: It is easier to understand this parable, if you think that all the other persons in this story are Russians except the Samaritan – he is a Chechen. MONGOLIA: It is easier to understand this parable if you think that all the other people in this story are Mongolians except the Samaritan – he is a Chinese.)

1. Can a person be happy if he does not care for his suffering fellowmen at all, but only thinks about himself and his family?

\* How often do you give away your money for the purpose of helping those in need?

2. In a previous study we learned about a politician who asked Jesus the same question as the teacher of the law in this text. What is the way to heaven according to what Jesus says in this text (25-27)?

\* What are your chances of getting into heaven if the conditions/terms are such as Jesus is teaching in verse 27?

3. Jesus tells a parable about a man who was beaten out of his senses by a gang of robbers. Imagine the thoughts of this injured man while he was lying by the roadside hour after hour (30).

\* What may his wife and children have been thinking when the father didn't show up by promised time?

4. What made it dangerous for passers-by to help the battered man?

\* The priest and the Levite were on their way to perform their religious duties in the temple. What do you think these two men would have done if the injured person had been their own son?

\* Think of as many reasons as possible why these two men refused to help the unknown victim of crime (31-32)?

\* How do you think you yourself would have acted in that given situation?

5. How did the priest and the Levite interpret the commandment of love which they had been taught since they were children? Look at verse 27?

\* What would you think about a person who said like this: "I do love God with all my heart, but unfortunately I don't have any chance to help other people."

6. If the Samaritan had passed by the battered Jew, how could he have excused/ defended his behavior? See Background information.

\* In which respects did the Samaritan do even more than anyone could have expected in such situation (33-35)?

7. Two denarii were wages for two days' labor, which means one thirteenth part of one month's average salary. With that sum one could live in an inn for two whole months. How much approximately would two denarii be in your currency?

\* Think of possible reasons why the Samaritan gave such a sum to a total stranger (35).

\* In your opinion, how many percent out of the commandment of love did the Samaritan traveler fulfill? See verse 27.

8. Whom did Jesus mean by the word "neighbor"?

\* Who are the neighbors you should help far and near?

9. If you were asked to choose one of the roles in this parable, which do you think would suit you best: the battered man, a highway robber, the priest, the Levite or the inn-keeper? Give your reasons for choosing this particular role.

\* In what ways does Jesus resemble the Samaritan of this parable?

\* How does Jesus resemble the battered Jew?

\* Jesus prepared another way to heaven except the one described in verse 27? What is it?

THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: "Go and do the same", said Jesus – and went and did the same himself. Even if all the people have always passed by you without caring for your sorrows, he won't do it. He is standing now by your side and wanting to bind the wounds of your heart. What do you answer him? (You can answer in your heart.)

\* (For everyone to answer): What was the most important thing you learned during this Bible study?

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## 8. JESUS MEETS TWO GANGSTERS Luke 23:32-43

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: In Roman Empire, **crucifixion** was used only for the worst of crimes. We can therefore assume that these two men were professional criminals who had perhaps murdered people for money. **Messiah (or Christ)** was the title of the king whom Jews had been waiting since Old Testament times.

1. Can such a person be happy who beats others with his fists or with his tongue?

\* Why do many young people in our day resort to violence and enjoy mobbing others?

2. Think of various reasons why these two men had started to resort to violence in their youth?

\* Who would perhaps have been able to stop these two before they were beyond any help?

\* Can you always change your behavior when you understand that it is harmful to yourself and others?

3. The two gangsters could observe the behavior of Jesus from closer up than anyone else. Which of his words and deeds may have surprised them most (34-38)?

\* Why did Jesus want to defend before his heavenly Father those who were torturing him (34)?

\* Could you pray for your worst enemy: "God, forgive him. He didn't know himself how badly he was treating me?" (34)

4. Find from the text what the crowd, the rulers, the Roman soldiers and one of the gangsters were yelling at Jesus (34b-39)?

\* What was it that these people were mocking Jesus for (35-39)?

\* Why didn't any of Jesus' friends stand up for him/ come to his defense?

- \* What would you have said and done if you had been standing by the foot of the cross?
5. What made one of the gangsters draw the conclusion that Jesus was a king and had a kingdom of his own (37-38, 42)?
- \* Compare Jesus on the cross to other kings of this world. What are the most striking differences between them?
  - \* What made one of the gangsters draw the conclusion that Jesus not only was a king but he also was God (40-41)?
6. Most criminals don't ever admit having done anything wrong. What made one of the gangsters admit that death penalty was the rightful punishment for his crimes (41)?
- \* Why didn't the other gangster admit his guilt even in this situation?
  - \* Whom of these two gangsters do you understand better: the one who admitted his guilt or the one who denied it?
7. Verse 42 contains a very short prayer: "Remember me!" Why is it important for us human beings that somebody we love will remember us while we are suffering?
- \* Why didn't this gangster ask straight away that he would be allowed to enter the kingdom of Jesus?
8. What may this criminal have thought while hearing the answer Jesus gave him (43)?
- \* Why did Jesus let into Paradise (or heaven) a cold-blooded murderer?
  - \* When, in your opinion, did this criminal start to believe in Jesus? Mention the verse.
9. Imagine the last hours of the criminal who had become a believer in Jesus. Was he happy or unhappy during those hours?
- \* Perhaps the mother, the wife or a child of the ex-gangster was standing under the cross. What kind of memory did this man leave of himself to his family?
  - \* What kind of testimony/witness did this man leave to the coming generations who read about him from the Bible?
10. THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: The gates of the Paradise were opened in front of a gangster, but Jesus himself had to enter through the gates of hell instead. Do you want to pray the same prayer as this gangster did: "Jesus, remember me!" If you do, he will give you the same answer: "One day you will be with me in Paradise." (You can answer in your heart.)
- \* (For everyone to answer): What is the most important thing you learned during this Bible study?

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## **9. JESUS MEETS A DOUBTING DISCIPLE John 20:19-29**

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Thomas was **one of the twelve** disciples of Jesus. He probably had a twin brother, because his name means "**a twin**".

1. Can a human being lead a happy life on this earth without believing that his body will rise from the grave last day?
  - \* What are the good traits in a personality like that of Thomas? What about the bad traits?
  - \* Why do you think Jesus chose a man like this as one of his disciples?
  
2. What did the disciples think about Jesus during the morning and day of the Easter Sunday?

- \* Why didn't the disciples believe in the resurrection of Jesus?
- \* Think of various explanations where Thomas might have gone during Sunday evening, when he was not with the other ten disciples (24)?
- \* Why did the risen Jesus greet his disciples by saying: "Peace be with you" (21, 26)?

3. The resurrection had been prophesied by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus himself. Now the ten best friends of Thomas assured him of having seen Jesus with their own eyes. Why didn't Thomas believe in the resurrection of Jesus, even after having heard all these testimonies (25a)?

- \* If you had been in Thomas's place, do you think you could have believed in the resurrection? Give your reasons.

4. How do you think Thomas felt during the following week amongst his rejoicing friends?

- \* What made Thomas stay with his friends and not to go his own way during that week?
- \* What would have happened to Thomas if he had left the group of disciples at this point?
- \* What will happen to us if we leave the Christian fellowship when we have doubts about the basic Christian doctrines?

5. Why did Thomas want to touch Jesus before believing in his resurrection (25b)?

- \* How do you think Thomas felt when he heard his own words from the mouth of Jesus (25-27)?

6. What details show us that Jesus was neither a ghost nor a spirit (27)?

- \* Do you think Thomas really put his fingers into the scars of Jesus' hands and his side?

7. Thomas was the first person in the New Testament to call Jesus God, not just the Son of God (28). Why do all the Christians in the world believe that Jesus is God?

8. Whom does Jesus refer to in verse 29?

- \* Why is it important to believe in God's help before experiencing it?

9. According to this text, how does Jesus treat a person who would like to believe in him, but cannot?

- \* What would you answer a person who said to you: "I believe in Jesus but I don't believe in his bodily resurrection"?
- \* Why does the whole Christian faith collapse if the body of Jesus didn't rise from the grave?

10. THE GLAD TIDINGS QUESTIONS: Thomas said to Jesus: "My Lord and my God!" Can you make the same confession to Jesus today? (You can answer in your heart.)

- \* (For everyone to answer): What is the most important thing you learned during this Bible study?

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