



To Set Captives Free

A Bible Study on Human Trafficking

THIS BIBLE STUDY explores Jesus as an advocate who embodied Isaiah's call to justice.

TIME REQUIRED: 30-40 MINUTES | INTENDED FOR GRADES 9-12



MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Bibles, one for each participant
- » Visit [worldvision.org/lp/acsi-teacher-resources](https://www.worldvision.org/lp/acsi-teacher-resources) for a video you can show to support this lesson. (optional)

Activity Steps

1

BEGIN BY POSING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- » When you hear the name “Jesus,” what word comes to your mind? Why?
- » If you stopped people on the street and asked them that question, what do you think they might say?

2

INVITE A GOOD NUMBER OF RESPONSES

 from the participants.

Offer the following comments:

- » Jesus is described as an “advocate” (*parakletos*) once in the New Testament (1 John 2:1). It is the same word used for the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John (14:16, 26).
- » Furthermore, the four Gospels provide an account of how Jesus exerted his role as an advocate in defending the poor throughout his life—in words and deeds.

- » In the following passage, Jesus quotes the prophecy found in Isaiah 61:1-2, in which the prophet claims the liberation of Israel from captivity in Babylon. The expression “the year of the Lord’s favor” refers to the Year of Jubilee, which marked the liberation of slaves, the cancellation of debts, and the restoration of the land to its original owners.

3

INVITE THE PARTICIPANTS TO OPEN THEIR BIBLES to Luke 4 and follow along with you as you read verses 14-21.

Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about Him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, as was His custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written.

4

NOTE THAT VERSES 18-19 are sometimes called Jesus’ manifesto because Jesus’ advocacy included four good news messages. Ask the participants to name the four found in the text. Then engage all in a group discussion using the following questions:

- » Are these four messages what you would normally associate with the proclamation of the gospel? Why or why not?
- » How do you think this “good news” can be lived out in our world today? What examples can you share from your own life of this action?

5

CONTINUE BY NOTING:

- » At the start of Jesus’ ministry, he reads from Isaiah. Jesus stands before the elders and his entire faith community and unfolds the scroll to this passage about setting the oppressed free.
- » God’s concerns about captivity and oppression are so big that Jesus uses them to describe the purpose and work on earth.
- » It was primarily Christians who led the anti-slavery movements in the 1800s. They were inspired by the Bible to fight slavery. But despite the advances made, slavery still thrives in the 21st century.
- » Experts believe there may be more slavery now than at any time in the history of the world. The United Nations says that 21 million people are enslaved worldwide. Three of every 1,000 people in the world are victims of forced labor, or slavery.
- » However, within the last decade there has been a global challenge to the practice of modern slavery. A large number of today’s anti-slavery activists are again inspired by their faith, many invoking Isaiah 58:6, which calls us to “loose the bonds of injustice.”
- » Human trafficking involves the forced labor and sexual exploitation of people of all ages. Often it involves the sexual exploitation of women and children through prostitution and pornography, including child sex tourism.

- » Labor slavery also abounds through debt bondage, domestic servitude, forced labor in mining and agriculture, and begging rings.
- » Yet individuals are making a difference—a living reminder that true religion serves the poorest and most vulnerable among us and sets the captives free. The number of activists is growing. Governments across the globe are starting to respond. This is the ripest time yet for challenging the institutions of slavery worldwide, in the character of the biblical command to “set the captives free.”

6

ENGAGE THE PARTICIPANTS in a large-group discussion or invite them to divide into smaller groups and share their responses to the following questions:

- » Why do you think Jesus was so concerned about the poor and oppressed?
- » Why do you think human trafficking still occurs?
- » Does the scale of human trafficking occurring today surprise you? Why or why not?
- » Do you think most people are aware that slavery still exists?
- » What do you think would need to occur to end human trafficking?
- » What role could you play in this?
- » Would you consider yourself to be an “activist” for the poor? If so, how?
- » Do you think every follower of Jesus has a responsibility to advocate in some way for people suffering through oppression? Why or why not?

7

CONCLUDE YOUR DISCUSSION and study with prayer. Pray, thanking God that He loves everyone regardless of who they are, especially the poor, the vulnerable, and the outcast. Thank God for Jesus Christ—who demonstrated God’s compassion for all of us, who broke the power of evil and set us free. Ask God to help us to live as free men and women, to identify the poor right where we are, and to reach out to them with the liberating power of the gospel. Invite God to challenge you on ways that you might act to “set the captives free.”

HOMEWORK: *A Bible Study on Human Trafficking*

STUDENT NAME _____

DATE _____

Advocate against human trafficking. Visit worldvision.org/advocacy to learn how you can use your voice to help put an end to human trafficking. Share on social media.

Write down what you learned from this experience.
