




# Talkabout the Message of Jesus

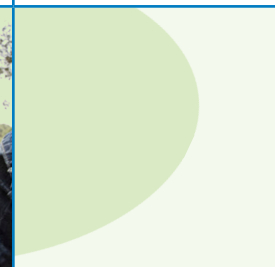
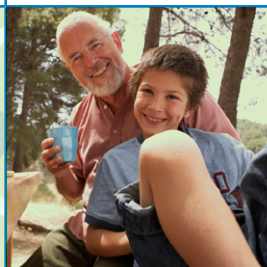
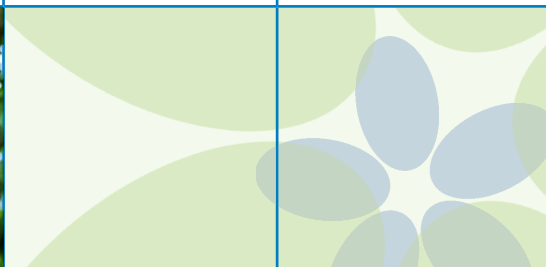
Gather 'Round Spring 2011 **Calendar** April 3–30



CHURCH STAFF

Copy one calendar per family for each month.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>3 Jesus angers the leaders</b>  <b>Luke 20:1–26</b>  <i>Thank you, God, for being with us when we need courage to do the right thing.</i></p>	<p><b>4</b> Talk about a time when you had the courage to do the right thing.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Read Luke 20:1–2. Why did Jesus go on teaching even when angry leaders wanted to stop him?</p>	<p><b>6</b> Jesus used a story to make a point. Read <i>The Cow of No Color</i> by Nina Jaffe, or <i>Tricycle</i> by Elisa Amado.</p>	<p><b>7</b> The tenants wanted all the grapes for themselves. Act out a different ending to the story and share a grape snack.</p>	<p><b>8</b> Which Caesar was in power during the time of Jesus? </p> <p style="text-align: right;">Augustus.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Finish the sentence: I would like to stand up for ____ (person, cause, or a virtue).</p>
<p><b>10 The Lord's Supper</b>  <b>Luke 22:1–27</b>  <i>God, forgive us when we want to be first and best. Help us to remember Jesus' example.</i></p>	<p><b>11</b> Read Luke 22:19–20. How could bread help the disciples remember Jesus?</p>	<p><b>12</b> What Jewish festival did Jesus celebrate at the Last Supper? </p> <p style="text-align: right;">Passover.</p>	<p><b>13</b> Eat matzo bread or crackers to remember the unleavened bread Jesus shared with his disciples at the Last Supper.</p>	<p><b>14</b> Luke 22:27 is a memory verse for this quarter. Tell about a time you helped someone or shared with someone this week.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Name someone who serves others instead of expecting to be served.</p>	<p><b>16</b> Which family quarrels have been about being the greatest?</p>
<p><b>17 Riding to Jerusalem</b>  <b>Luke 19:28–40; 23:32–56</b>  <i>Thank you, God, that you are with us even in our darkest, scariest times.</i></p>	<p><b>18</b> Read Luke 19:35–38. How do we welcome famous people today?</p>	<p><b>19</b> Why did Jesus ride on a donkey instead of on a horse?</p>	<p><b>20</b> Read Luke 23:44–49. What is the saddest part of this story?</p>	<p><b>21</b> Crosses have become a Christian symbol. Take a walk or bike ride through your community and look for crosses.</p>	<p><b>22</b> What natural phenomenon causes darkness during the day? </p> <p style="text-align: right;">A solar eclipse.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Make hot cross buns. Or put icing on bread in the shape of a cross.</p>
<p><b>24 Jesus is alive!</b>  <b>Luke 24:1–12</b>  <i>God of the living, fill our hearts with joyful songs.</i></p>	<p><b>25</b> Think about the first Easter morning. What can you hear, smell, and see at dawn?</p>	<p><b>26</b> Read Luke 24:2–5. Why were the women frightened?</p>	<p><b>27</b> The women brought spices to the tomb. Smell various spices in your cupboard.</p>	<p><b>28</b> Sing "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" or another Easter song.</p>	<p><b>29</b> The date of Easter can vary between March 22 and April 25. </p>	<p><b>30</b> The other disciples didn't believe the women's story. Talk about what you find hard to believe.</p>



# Talkabout the Message of Jesus

## Gather 'Round Weekly page

Spring 2011



### Week 5

## Jesus angers the leaders

Luke 20:1-26

### Faith focus

Jesus shows us how to stand up for what is right.

Jesus taught in the temple and the leaders questioned his authority. Jesus told a parable against them, and they sent spies to trap him, but Jesus silenced the spies with his answers.



### Choose from the following ideas:

- Read Luke 20:1-2. Why did Jesus go on teaching even when angry leaders wanted to stop him?
- Talk about a time when you had the courage to do the right thing.
- Jesus used a story to make a point. Read *The Cow of No Color* by Nina Jaffe, or *Tricycle* by Elisa Amado.
- Finish the sentence: I would like to stand up for \_\_\_\_ (person, cause, or a virtue).
- The tenants wanted all the grapes for themselves. Act out a different ending to the story and share a grape snack.
- Jesus avoided a trick question about Roman taxes. Look at coins. Whose image is on your coins?
- Which Caesar was in power during the time of Jesus?  
(Augustus.)

### Prayers for this week

*God, help us to see our own selfishness, instead of blaming others for doing wrong.*

*Thank you, God, for being with us when we need courage to do the right thing.*

This page coordinates with the Gather 'Round session that your child experienced at church.

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**CHURCH  
STAFF**

**These family faith-building ideas** are ready to place into your weekly bulletins or newsletters. Each week's suggestions coordinate with the Gather 'Round curriculum that children and youth are studying during their Christian education time. The weekly entries are available in both PDF and Microsoft Word document formats. Check with your Christian education coordinator to see which dates your congregation is doing each particular session. Sessions for this quarter are expected to run from Sunday, November 28, through Sunday, February 27. Sometimes dates change, however, because of special church events.

**When placing the first Gather 'Round bulletin note add this explanation:**

Today we are beginning a weekly note for families of children and youth who use the Gather 'Round curriculum. Each Sunday you will find faith nurture ideas that coordinate with the weekly session plans for your child's group.

**Gather 'Round Session 1**

TALKABOUT Luke 14:25–35; Count the cost

Talk about the Bible story children and youth explored this week. Here are some ways to nurture faith at home based on this week's story. (1) Read Luke 14:27–28. (2) Tell about something you've accomplished that took a lot of planning and effort. (3) Mark a path that goes over and around obstacles. Think about following Jesus as you walk the path together.

**Did you know?** What is the tallest skyscraper in the world? *Burj Khalifa, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.*

**Prayer for the week** *God, we are listening for you. We feel your love around us as we work and play.*

**Gather 'Round Session 2**

TALKABOUT Luke 17:11–19; The ten lepers

Talk about the Bible story children and youth explored this week. Here are some ways to nurture faith at home based on this week's story. (1) Read Luke 17:15–16. (2) Tell a story about when you were sick and then got well again. (3) Take a thank-you walk through your house. Gather four things you are thankful for into a basket.

**Did you know?** In Jesus' time there were more than a million Samaritans. In November 2007, the count was only 712.

**Prayer for the week** *We hear the birds singing. We see the squirrels digging. We can smell that spring is springing. Thank you, God.*

**Gather 'Round Session 3**

TALKABOUT Luke 9:28–36; The transfiguration

Talk about the Bible story children and youth explored this week. Here are some ways to nurture faith at home based on this week's story. (1) Read Luke 9:33–35. (2) Tell a story of experiencing God's presence. (3) Walk to a special place outdoors. Thank God for our mysterious, beautiful world.

**Did you know?** What mountains were important in the stories of Moses and Elijah? *For Moses, Mt. Sinai. For Elijah, Mt. Carmel.*

**Prayer for the week** *God of the high mountains, your amazing love scatters far and wide over the whole earth.*

**Gather 'Round Session 4**

TALKABOUT Luke 19:1–10; Zacchaeus meets Jesus

Talk about the Bible story children and youth explored this week. Here are some ways to nurture faith at home based on this week's story. (1) Read Luke 19:2–5. (2) Plant a tree in honor of Zacchaeus. Watch the tree change and grow. (3) Jesus became a friend to Zacchaeus. Who needs your love and friendship?

**Did you know?** What does the name Zacchaeus mean? *Innocent.*

**Prayer for the week** *God, change us so that we grow more loving. Chip away at our mean-spirited ways.*

**Gather 'Round Session 5**

TALKABOUT Luke 20:1–26; Jesus angers the leaders

Talk about the Bible story children and youth explored this week. Here are some ways to nurture faith at home based on this week's story. (1) Read Luke 20:1–2. (2) Talk about a time when you had the courage to do the right thing. (3) Jesus avoided a trick question about Roman taxes. Look at coins. Whose image is on your coins?

**Did you know?** Which Caesar was in power during the time of Jesus? *Augustus.*

**Prayer for the week** *God, help us to see our own selfishness, instead of blaming others for doing wrong.*

## Bible commentary Week 5

Luke 20:1–26

### Introduction

This week's text is composed of three stories. First there is a general question about Jesus' authority in verses 1–8. It is followed by the difficult parable of the tenants of the vineyard in verses 9–18. Verse 19 signals that tension is mounting and ties the parable to the final story about the spies who try to trick Jesus into making a fatal mistake on the question of taxes. We can, however, see these stories as a single unit if we think of the parable of the tenants as the center of the passage. The parable intensifies the conflicts between Jesus and his opponents, which appear on either side of the parable. We have been taught through centuries of artwork and Sunday school stories that Jesus is "meek and mild." In this text, we see a very different picture.

### Authority

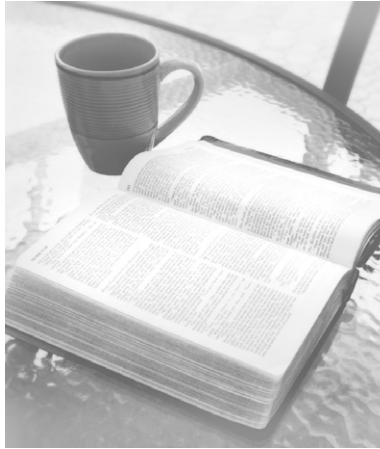
Jesus' authority has been an issue from the beginning of this Gospel. For example, when he healed the paralyzed man in chapter 5, he was questioned about what right he had to forgive sins. The problem seems to be that Jesus' authority does not have the backing of an institution. There is no one overseeing him or sanctioning his actions. Jesus is a maverick—and yet no one can discount his obvious authority. He teaches, preaches, and heals with compelling power. People are convinced by him. In this story, the leaders would like to take that power away from Jesus, but they are held in check by the crowds he attracts.

As Luke's readers, however, we know something that Jesus' opponents do not. We know that Jesus' authority was hard won in the wilderness by his resistance to Satan's power (chapter 4). We know that his authority comes from none other than God.

### The parable of the tenants

This is a harsh, unpleasant, and violent tale. The tenants of an absentee landlord mistreat his representatives when they come to collect his share of the harvest. The tenants beat up the first two and send them away empty handed. The third representative they injure and throw out of the vineyard. The landlord reasons that if he sends his own son, the tenants will respect him and pay what they owe for using the land. Instead, the tenants kill the owner's son. They think that this way they will inherit the vineyard. Jesus ends the parable by suggesting to his hearers that the owner will destroy the rebellious tenants and give the vineyard to others.

This troubling parable can be read in various ways. Unfortunately, it has been seen too often as a statement against



the Jews. The tenants in Jesus' parable, however, represent anyone who misuses delegated authority. The tenants think that their hard work means that they own the land. They resent a landlord who never seems to come around but still claims ownership. In a context where there were likely many landlords and tenants experiencing similar tensions, this parable was probably meant to provoke. Jesus is telling a story that is certainly pointed, perhaps even exasperated or angry. He is reminding his listeners that the prophets and even the son of God have often been mistreated and their authority questioned, and that there are consequences for this.

### Controversies

Luke sets up this sequence as an escalating controversy. Jesus tells the parable as a response to those who question his authority. The scribes and chief priests perceive that Jesus told the parable against them and are angered. They concoct a plan to send spies to ask Jesus a question he cannot answer without implicating himself. Or so they think. Jesus, of course, handles them with aplomb. Asking for a coin—with Caesar's image on it—Jesus pulls his opponents into the question of collaboration with the occupying Roman government by the payment of taxes. The spies can't trap Jesus without trapping themselves.

—*Mary H. Schertz, Professor of New Testament, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, IN.*

### Reflect

1. Charles Wesley wrote the hymn "Gentle Jesus, Meek and Mild." Do Jesus' interactions with religious authorities fit this picture of Jesus?
2. One part of today's passage is a parable with escalating violence. Did the tenants start out with murderous intentions? Do similar situations happen in real life?
3. The commentary names Jesus' authority as a central issue. When is it appropriate to question someone's authority?
4. How can we follow Jesus' example and stand up for what is right?