

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ will be treated like Christ.

SCRIPTURE

ISAIAH 53:1-3; LUKE 4:16, 28-30; JOHN 7:5; MATTHEW 8:34; LUKE 13:34;
HEBREWS 4:14-16

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Isaiah was an Old Testament prophet who recorded his visions from God (Isa. 1:1). Chapter 53 is an uncanny description of how the Christ would suffer and is quoted or referred to in the New Testament roughly 85 times. But the agony Christ endured resulted in our victory. We can find hope in Jesus' rejection and sacrifice.

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/816583739>



FACILITATOR NOTE: We're giving you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

OPENING

PRAYER

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

OPTIONAL: Give students an opportunity to lead the prayer.

1-2 minutes

OPENING QUESTIONS

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- When was a time you rejected or excluded someone else? Why did you do it?

3-5 minutes



EXPLORE

EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

In the Bible verses we study today, we'll see several ways people rejected Jesus and his message. Choosing to follow Jesus will also mean facing rejection because of our faith. Jesus warned his followers that a servant is not greater than his master (John 13:16). *Disciples of Christ will be treated like Christ.*

3-5 minutes

Read Isaiah 53:1–3 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- Do you ever let the fear of rejection stop you from doing something? Why or why not?
We may not try out for the team or ask someone out because we fear rejection, but much more tragically, we sometimes remain silent about our faith for the same reason.
- How do you feel when others dismiss or exclude you?
Answers will vary, but we all know what this feels like.
- How do you think Jesus felt when other people turned him away?
While we can't know for sure, we do know that Jesus was God in flesh (John 1:14). He was human. It makes sense that he felt the same way we do in those moments.



Say something like: Even though Jesus knew his message about God's Kingdom would be rejected by large numbers of people, he still shared it. We can't control how people will respond when we talk about Jesus, but we can't let the fear of rejection stop us from sharing the Gospel.

Read Luke 4:16, 28–30 & John 7:5 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- Why do you think so many people rejected Jesus? What did he do to offend so many people?
Answers will vary. Part of the reason people dismissed Jesus was that he wasn't the type of Christ they expected him to be. Following Jesus involves surrender and self-denial (Luke 9:23), and that's not easy.
- How popular do you think Jesus would be if he went to your school today?
Answers will vary, and there is no way to know for sure, but people would likely treat him today the same as they did 2000 years ago. He would be misunderstood. A handful of people would love him, some would hate him, and most would just want to see him do the miraculous things only he could do. He'd be an outcast.
- How do you typically handle rejection or feeling like an outcast?
Answers will vary but could include talking to friends/family, playing favorite music, hobbies, etc.



Say something like: Because Jesus was treated like an outcast due to his obedience to God, we, his followers, can expect the same kind of treatment (John 15:18–19). At times, our faith will cause us to be excluded from some groups of people.

FACILITATOR NOTE: If you have extra time, go through the next set of questions. If not, skip to the **Connection** section.

Read Matthew 8:34 & Luke 13:34 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- In what ways have we rejected Jesus?
Before we knew Jesus, we were enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). Every time we choose our way over God's way, it is a form of rejection.
- How do you think God can help when you feel excluded?
Read Hebrews 4:14–16. Because he went through rejection, he understands how it feels and, therefore, how we feel.



Say something like: We all understand what it feels like to be pushed aside or excluded. Because of this, we should be on the lookout for fellow outcasts and treat them as Jesus would.



CONNECT & APPLY

CONNECTION

5-7 minutes

Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how fear of rejection has kept you from reaching out to someone who needs God.



Example: Josh sat in front of his locker in the fieldhouse and listened to one of his teammates open up about his parents' fighting. He was pretty sure a divorce was coming and fought back the tears as he spoke. While some of the other guys in the locker room said their parents were divorced and it wasn't that bad, Josh felt he should pray with his teammate. Afraid of how the guys would respond, Josh continued to sit silently in front of his locker. Soon the coach came in to start practice, and Josh's opportunity to reach out and pray with his teammate was gone. He had let the fear of possible rejection stop him from doing something he was positive God wanted him to do.

- What do you think happens when we let the fear of rejection keep us from being obedient to God's leading?
We miss out on the blessing of being used by God. Other people miss out on being blessed by God through us. And disobedience to God is never a habit we want to practice.

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2-3 minutes

Disciples of Christ will be treated like Christ.

Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.

APPLY IT

5-10 minutes

How can you reach out to students at your school who have been pushed to the margins or considered outcasts? Write down some specific steps you are going to take and the name of at least one person you plan on reaching out to.



Be specific:

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



FACILITATOR NOTE: Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.



CLOSING**PRAYER***2-3 minutes*

Take a moment to ask for prayer requests. Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks. Spend some time praying for your students to experience the unconditional love of Christ. *Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

MEMORY VERSE

Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)

NOTES

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright ©2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. May not copy or download more than 500 consecutive verses of the ESV Bible or more than one half of any book of the ESV Bible.

Any reference within this piece to Internet addresses of websites not under the administration of LeaderTreks is not to be taken as an endorsement of these websites by LeaderTreks; neither does LeaderTreks vouch for their content.

