

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ receive second life through Jesus.

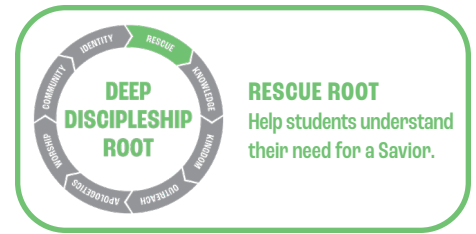
SCRIPTURE

ROMANS 5:12–17; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:45–49

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The first man ever created, Adam, was perfect. He had a perfect relationship with his wife. And he had a perfect relationship with his God...for a while. With one very costly mistake, Adam opened the door for sin to seep in and ruin all creation. The second Adam, Jesus, was perfect. He had a perfect relationship with God. He loved his people perfectly. With countless sacrificial choices, Jesus gave up his perfect life so we could pick it up and take on his righteousness (Rom. 3:21–26).

Check out the *Teacher Prep Video* for this lesson: <https://vimeo.com/933478081>



OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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MEDIA AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

1. Play background music (optional)
2. Display **SERIES TITLE Slide** and announcement slides in a loop or customize the provided **PowerPoint**.
3. Play a 5-minute Countdown Timer 5:00 minutes before you start.

GAME or ICE BREAKER

Based on your group's size, choose a **Game** from **Deep Discipleship Games** OR use the **Ice Breaker** prompt.

- **Game**—We recommend **That's a Terrible Description** or choose another screen game from **Deep Discipleship Games**
- **Ice Breaker**— If you could have a second chance at something in your life, what would it be? What would you do differently?

DEEP DISCIPLESHIP GAMES

Find free games in **Deep Discipleship Games**. It's already included with your Deep Discipleship subscription. View the game in advance in case you need supplies or slides.

WORSHIP

Craft a time of worship with a live band or sing along to a playlist.

- Check out our curated Spotify list. We understand that every church has a different theological view of worship. These songs are suggestions, please pick what works best for your church.
- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2xmeIKGUjkEE7bJYSCbRwe?si=d254ec715a4749e5>

SLIDES (optional)

Use **SERIES Background & Blank Slides** or **PowerPoint** to create lyric slides.

TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

Include a brief element that transitions students from worship to teaching time, like a prayer or video. This will keep students focused and prepared for the message while the band leaves the stage.

VIDEO (optional)

Show **SERIES Promo Video** or **LESSON Intro Video** after the last worship song.

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

POINT 1: The First Adam

Read or have someone in your group read Romans 5:12–14

The Christmas event was the answer to a problem. What was the problem? Death. Since the sin of Adam and Eve—all the way back at the beginning of creation—humanity endlessly struggled to get right with God. And they never got it right! Sin and death reigned in the life of every person, proving that humanity needed divine assistance to overcome the fatal struggle.

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to create these slides to support your message:

- Romans 5:12–14
- Point 1

POINT 2: The Gift

Read or have someone in your group read Romans 5:15–17

So, what did God do about our big sin problem? He gave the greatest gift that has ever been given: Jesus! Jesus came to earth, died (paying the penalty we deserve), rose again—conquering sin and death—and offered the gift of life to anyone who wants to receive it. This gift wasn't owed or deserved. God didn't have to give it. But because of God's grace, life abounds, and death is defeated!

SLIDES (optional)

- Romans 5:15–17
- Point 2

ILLUSTRATION: Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* tells the story of Jean Valjean, a peasant sentenced to 19 years in prison for stealing bread to feed his starving sister and her family. Upon release from prison, Valjean faced a hard life. In an act of great compassion, a kindly priest offered him shelter for the night in his home. Valjean took the opportunity to steal the priest's valuable silver and flee. He was later caught by the police and brought before the priest to face judgment. Instead of condemning him, the priest extended extraordinary grace. He insisted he had given the silver to Valjean, so Valjean was set free. The priest told Valjean this was his chance to begin an honest life. Valjean was forever changed after his encounter with grace and redemption.¹ (You can find a great clip of this exchange online. The 1998 *Les Misérables* film starring Liam Neeson is a good option!)

Similar to the priest and Valjean, God gave an extraordinary gift of grace to sinful and undeserving people. This is our chance to be made new and live a life of freedom in Christ!



POINT 3: The Second Adam

Read or have someone in your group read 1 Corinthians 15:45–49

Have you ever been told that you look like one of your parents? Maybe they said, “You have your mother’s eyes,” or “You look just like your father when he was your age!” Because you have your parents’ DNA, you bear many similarities with them.

Our relationship with Adam is kind of the same. We follow the first earthly man and bear the same marks of sin that he did. Without Jesus, that sin-likeness would be passed on forever and ever. But Jesus came and set things right. Whereas Adam began a heritage of death, Jesus offers the opportunity to take on a new likeness and experience eternal life.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a personal story about a time you had to fix someone else’s mistake. What was done wrong? What did you have to do to fix it? The problem started with Adam, and Jesus stepped in with the solution. It wasn’t his responsibility, but because of his great love and grace, he took on the burden.

SLIDES (optional)

- 1 Corinthians 15:45–49
- Point 3

CLOSING**MARK OF A DISCIPLE**

Disciples of Christ receive second life through Jesus.

SLIDES (optional)

- Mark of a Disciple

FACILITATOR NOTE: DO YOU HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION RIGHT AWAY?

- If YES, then **STOP HERE**, divide into groups, and provide Small Group Leaders with the **Small Group Breakout Questions** on the next page.
- If NO, then end your gathering with the **Reflect & Respond** questions and **Prayer** prompt below.

REFLECT & RESPOND

Give the students time to silently think through what they have heard and contemplate these questions:

- How do these passages influence the way you understand what it means to have your identity in Christ?
- How does the offer of a second life through Jesus shape your attitudes, actions, and relationships?

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to display the **Reflect & Respond** questions.

FACILITATOR NOTE: Don't rush this part. Give the students a few minutes to really consider how big Jesus' Christmas gift is and how much he loves us!

PRAYER

Take time to pray that we all live in a way that honors God’s gift of a second life through Jesus.



SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT (OPTIONAL)

Pick a few questions from each section to discuss. Close with prayer.

BREAKOUT QUESTIONS**Build Meaningful Relationships**

- Have you witnessed the transformative power of Jesus in your life or the lives of others? What happened?
Allow students the space to share personal stories about their experience with Christ's transforming power! Come prepared to share your own stories, too.
- How is the hope of a second life through Jesus a source of encouragement in challenging times?
Jesus' gift is a promise that suffering will not last. Even in dark days, we have the expectation of eternal life because of Jesus!

Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- According to our verses from Romans, how does sin affect all of humanity?
Everyone is sinful. It is a universal plight for all of humanity.
- What gift do we receive through Jesus, and how does it contrast with the impact of sin?
Because of grace, Jesus offers us new and eternal life when we turn to him in repentance and faith. Sin can only give us death.
- What did this lesson teach us about God's grace?
God's grace is abundant. Because of it, Jesus became the solution to all of humanity's sin problem and offers each person eternal life.
- What are the differences between the first Adam and the second Adam, according to 1 Corinthians 15?
The first Adam was earthly and natural, but the second Adam is heavenly and spiritual. The first brought death; the second brought life.

Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- 1 Corinthians 15:45 says that Jesus is a life-giving Spirit. What does this teach us about his role in our lives?
Apart from Jesus, there is no life! His Spirit fills us with the gift of life he brought to earth (John 1:4–5).
- How do we “bear the image of the heavenly man” in our daily lives?
Becoming Christ-like is an ongoing and intentional process. We can invest in this process by living as he showed us—doing our best to love God and love others while trusting that God is going to finish the work he started in us (Phil. 1:6).

PRAYER

Take time to pray that we all live in a way that honors God's gift of a second life through Jesus.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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¹ Hugo, Victor. *Les Misérables*. 1862.

