



TEACH IT COLLEGE AGE SESSION 5

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 5 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 5
- his or her own Bible, a pen, and a notebook

You'll also need—

- a whiteboard and markers
- a pack of colored pencils (at least three colors per student)
- various images or a video clip showing what a synchronized crowd can do with cards
- optional: juice, bread, small cups, and a basket or plate for communion (See the Optional Close in Wrapping It Up.)

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 5

As students experience this session, they will—

- examine the expectations and commitments of those who followed Jesus after seeing his miraculous signs.
- compare their level of commitment to both the crowd's casual commitment and the apostles' genuine commitment.
- be challenged to imitate the apostles' commitment.

PRAYER

After your group has gathered, pray that your students will be open to a disruption in their lives. Remind them that to truly embrace what Jesus taught, God will call us out of our spiritual and emotional comfort zones. Pray they'll welcome this call.

OPEN

Mob Mentality

Do a Web search for images (or search a video-sharing Web site such as YouTube) of a cool crowd animation, such as a creative card display at a college football game or in the stands of an Olympics opening or closing ceremony. You may even be able to track down some interesting info about the animation (e.g., how many people were involved, how long they practiced, and so forth).

After viewing the images or video, discuss the concept of a crowd mentality. Ask—

What's the biggest crowd you've ever been in?

Have you ever worried about your safety in a crowd?

What kind of influence do crowds have on—

- sports games?
- the political process?

- **public opinion?**

Make the turn toward Bible study by encouraging students to weigh in on the positive and negative impact crowds and crowd manipulation can have on thought, politics, and culture.

Transition into the study by saying something like—

It didn't take long for Jesus to start attracting massive crowds. In John 6 we hit a major juncture in Jesus' ministry, when an opportunity arose in which Jesus could have wielded considerable political influence.

3. Digging In

What I Saw at the Miracle Meal

Share that in this session, the group will focus on Jesus' convicting teaching near the end of John 6. But to gain a better understanding of this teaching, they'll need to see the event that preceded it. Because it's a familiar scene to some, remind them to watch for details they've never noticed before.

As the group reads John 6:1-15 from their Scripture sheets, have them—

1. **Use three colors to mark the various people in this passage: the crowd**   , **Jesus' disciples** , **and Jesus** .
2. **Key in on words such as saw and realized and draw a pair of eyes or glasses**  **over what the crowd saw.**

When most have finished (it's okay if some haven't), work as a group to pull as much detail as possible from the passage. As they discuss the following questions, record their observations on the whiteboard.

Look over your sets of "eyes" in John 6:1-15. What did the crowd see? How did they react to what they saw?

What They Saw	How They Reacted
-They saw miraculous signs Jesus performed on the sick (v. 2). -They saw the miraculous sign of feeding the 5,000 (v. 14).	-They followed Jesus around (v. 2). -They began to say Jesus was a prophet who had come into the world (v. 14).

Have them look at John 6:24-31, where the crowd rejoins Jesus after the miraculous meal. Ask—

How did Jesus describe what they were looking for?

You're not looking for a sign; you're wanting more food (v. 26)!

In what two ways did Jesus challenge the crowd?

-Don't work for food that spoils; work for food that endures to eternal life (v. 27).

-The work of God is to believe in the one he has sent (v. 29).

Explain that at this point, Jesus told the crowd a few things God's people had never heard before. Before moving on, make sure the students understand the mindset of Jesus' audience. Have someone read John 6:14-15 and 28-31 aloud. Then discuss—

How would you describe the crowd's mindset?

- They were sure Jesus was the prophet for whom they were looking.
- They were expecting to make him king, to establish a political kingdom.
- They were looking for signs similar to what Moses had done.

4. Digging Deeper



Crowd-Pleaser?

Share with the group that they'll do the next exercise alone with God. Admit to your group that this is a big chunk of Scripture, but encourage them with the fact that it's probably one of the most important teachings of Jesus' ministry. If you need to cut it short, have students stop at John 6:58. Before they go, give these instructions:

- 1. Find places of solitude—maybe a corner of the room, a hallway, or an empty room nearby.**
- 2. You'll need your Scripture sheets, journal pages, and colored pencils.**
- 3. For the next few minutes, you'll be doing the Digging Deeper exercise on your journal pages as a personal retreat. Get alone with God and experience on your own Jesus' life-shaking words.**

Students will read John 6:30-71, looking for key things Jesus said about himself and those who "come to" or "believe in" him. We've listed some possible observations for your reference below.

Jesus on Jesus

- He's the bread of life (v. 35).
- He came down from heaven to do the will of God, who sent him (v. 38).
- He is the living bread that came down from heaven (v. 51).
- He gives this bread for the life of the world (v. 51).
- His flesh is real food (v. 55).
- His blood is real drink (v. 55).

Jesus on Those Who Come to Him

- They'll never go hungry or get thirsty (v. 35).
- Jesus will never drive them away (v. 37).
- They'll have eternal life (v. 40).
- Jesus will raise them up on the last day (v. 40).
- The Father draws them to Jesus (v. 44).

5. Taking It Inward

Crowd Comparison

When most have finished the exercise, call the group back together. You may want to discuss a few of the Digging Deeper questions before delving into these:

Who do you think you're more like—the crowd or the Twelve?

If they're unsure, ask them to consider what they tend to think about more: what they'd have to give up to follow Jesus, or what they might gain by following him.

Consider asking these follow-up questions to push students to think through this answer:

- Which of Jesus' teachings do you find most difficult to live out during your normal day?
- What could Jesus have said to make it easier to live the Christian faith?
- When have you done what this crowd did: walking away instead of standing up for Jesus or doing the hard thing?

The multitude was in the middle of a big miracle, but they couldn't see past their own desires—such as food, easy teaching that was fun to hear, or their personal expectations of Jesus. Are we ever guilty of the same thing? In what ways?

You could ask the group what they typically pray for. This will give a clue as to their expectations of Jesus.

The crowd had a definite expectation of Jesus—they wanted to squeeze *him* into *their* mold. In what ways do we do that today?

Following Jesus today goes against popular culture, just as it did in Jesus' day. Every day, we're confronted with the same question Jesus asked the apostles: "Do you want to leave, too?" What are some ways we get asked that question?

Look for situations such as when we're tempted to sin, when it seems like not being a Christian would be easier, or when friends make us feel stupid about believing in God.

When people today contemplate following Jesus, do they tend to think more about what they have to give up rather than what they gain? What do they typically put in the "have to give this up" column?

Discuss the validity of things people think they have to give up. Some things need to be given up, such as pre-marital sex. Other things maybe not so much, such as watching football on Sunday, or favorite music or clothing.

How can Peter's answer help in times like these? How can the hope of eternal life, which is intangible, tip the scales over the things we need to give up, which are tangible, to follow Jesus?

A few so-called "disciples" turned away from following Jesus when his words began to disrupt their lives. How has Jesus' presence disrupted your life—and how have you handled it?

6. Cross-Checking

Interrupting the Regularly Scheduled Programming

After several have shared, have volunteers read the following passages aloud from their Bibles. Ask the group to listen to the kind of commitment Jesus demanded in these verses. After the volunteers have read each passage, ask students to describe the level of commitment in their own words. Then discuss the questions that follow.

Matthew 7:13-14

Matthew 16:24-27

Luke 13:24-30

Different levels of commitment seem to be developing here: broad-gate and those who walk away versus narrow-gate and those who stay. But what's the difference between failing to achieve narrow-gate living even though you're striving for that, and simply choosing the broad-gate road?

How can we encourage our friends to strive for the narrow-gate road without judging their lifestyles or choices?

7. Wrapping It Up

Broad Versus Narrow

Remind the group that the kind of disruption Jesus is calling for here isn't necessarily a commitment to serve as a missionary in a foreign country. The disruption he's asking for is a new level of intimacy—"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains [abides] in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Your students have seen two possible levels of intimacy with Jesus, and each has its consequences:



1. “Broad Gate” Intimacy—the crowd’s mentality, more concerned with what they have to give up; it doesn’t stand up to the test of eternity.

2. “Narrow Gate” Intimacy—the intimacy of Jesus’ apostles, obsessed with what they gain; it leads to eternal life.

Close the session by asking students to discuss the pros and cons of broad-gate intimacy and narrow-gate intimacy.

-Broad-gate pros: You may be more accepted by friends; life won’t be disrupted.

-Broad-gate cons: It ultimately leads to destruction.

-Narrow-gate pros: It leads to life.

-Narrow-gate cons: Friends might think you’re weird; you might be excluded or shunned from things you want to be part of; you may have to figure out how to encourage friends to choose this path.

LARGE GROUP OPTION:

If the group is larger than 10, you may want to pair each student with a partner to discuss these pros and cons and to share each other’s choice.

Invite students to make a choice based on the pros and cons, and ask for volunteers to share their choices.

OPTIONAL CLOSE: Jesus’ words in John 6 dovetail nicely with communion. Consider preparing an area nearby for your group to receive the Lord’s Supper together. This can be a time for students to think about their level of commitment to experiencing intimacy with Jesus. We also suggest communion in Session 11 as a way to experience Jesus’ sacrifice.