



TEACH IT MIDDLE SCHOOL SESSION 10

1. Materials

For this session each student will need—

- the Session 10 Scripture sheet
- the student journal page for Session 10
- 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 one color per student)
- optional: a projection presentation featuring famous farewell quotations

2. Session Intro

GOALS OF SESSION 10

As students experience this session, they will—

- discover why Jesus spent a lot of time toward the end of his life (spanning nearly five chapters in John's Gospel) in an intimate, intense conversation with his disciples.
- explore Jesus' exclusive claims about who he is.
- explore some lofty promises Jesus made.
- be challenged to meet the conditions required to enjoy these promises.

PRAYER

After the students have gathered, pray for their time together as a group. Use Colossians 3:16 as the basis for your prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to help Christ's words dwell richly in your group members' hearts.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (Colossians 3:16)

OPEN

Famous Farewells

Explore the idea of famous farewells by introducing a few of the quotations, last words, or sign-offs below. Some are fictional; others are real. Read the quotations (or, before your session, copy the quotations below into presentation software such as MediaShout or PowerPoint, and project them onto a screen). Then have students guess the source and/or occasion of each quotation. Feel free to divide the group into teams and make it a game.

Captain: Don't grieve, Admiral. It is logical. The needs of the many outweigh...

Admiral: ...the needs of the few.

Captain: ...or the one.

—Movie: *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*; Spock to Kirk as Spock dies after saving the ship

Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow.

—Speech: Richard M. Nixon, resigning the presidency of the United States, August 8, 1974

Good day.

—Radio-show sign-off: Paul Harvey, news commentator

I'll be right here.

—Movie: *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*; ET, after touching Elliot's forehead with his finger, just before returning to his extra-terrestrial home

I have offended God and mankind because my work did not reach the quality it should have.

—Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519, artist and scientist)

The taste of death is upon my lips. I feel something that is not of this earth.

—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791, Classical composer)

Ben, make sure you play "Precious Lord, Take My Hand" in the meeting tonight. Play it real pretty.

—Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–1968, minister and pivotal leader of the American civil rights movement)

Please don't leave me. Please don't leave me.

—Chris Farley (1964–1997, comedian and actor)

I hope I haven't bored you.

—Elvis Presley (1935–1977, singer, musician, and cultural icon)

And please remember, help control the pet population; have your pet spayed or neutered. Good-bye, everybody.

—Bob Barker, sign-off for *The Price Is Right*

Monsieur, I beg your pardon.

—Marie Antoinette, spoken to her executioner, after she accidentally stepped on his foot

Transition into the study by telling your students that Jesus also had some famous last words. In fact, he gave nearly five chapters' worth in the book of John!

3. Digging In

Words to Live By

Remind the group of the giant block of red ink mentioned in Session 9—John 13–17. That red ink represents Jesus' "farewell speech" to his closest friends. To get a feel for the purpose of Jesus' talk, ask two volunteers to look up these passages in their Bibles:

John 16:1

John 16:33

As they locate the passages, tell the group to pay attention as the volunteers read the verses aloud, listening for anything Jesus said about the situation the disciples were about to face. They should also pick up on any reasons *why* Jesus was having this talk with his friends.

After the volunteers have read the passages aloud, ask—

How would you sum up Jesus' reason for this talk with the disciples?

Now tell the group—

1. Read John 14:1-14 using your Scripture sheets.

2. As you read, mark with a cross  every mention of Jesus.

3. Don't forget to include pronouns such as *I* and *my*.

When most have finished (it's okay if some haven't), ask them to tell you all of the big statements Jesus made about himself in these verses. Record their observations on the left side of the whiteboard. As they share, the whiteboard will begin to look something like this:

Jesus on Himself

- He was going to his Father's house, to prepare a place for them/us (v. 2).
- He is the way, the truth, and the life (v. 6).
- You have to go through Jesus to get to God (v. 6).
- If we really know Jesus, we know God (v. 7).
- The words Jesus spoke were not his own, but the Father's living in him (v. 10).
- He will do whatever we ask in his name (v. 13).

Now ask the group what promises Jesus made in John 14:12-14. Write these on the right side of the whiteboard. The info will look something like this:

Jesus' Promises

- If they believed in Jesus, they would do even greater things than Jesus because he was going to the Father (v. 12).
- Whatever they asked in his name, Jesus would do so that the Father might get glory (v. 13).
- If they asked anything in Jesus' name, he would do it (v. 14).

Help them process this info by asking the following questions:

Think about Jesus' reason for this conversation with his disciples: to keep them from going off track in a world that would soon bring them trouble. Which of Jesus' promises or claims about himself do you think were going to be the most helpful to the disciples? Why?

What about you? Everything Jesus said to his disciples can be true for us as well. Of all the points on the whiteboard, what speaks most to your situation?

Encourage them to discuss a few points from both lists.

Your students may land on Jesus' claim to be the only way to God. Jesus' words in John 14:6 cut straight through today's widespread belief that all roads lead to a "higher power." Your group members may ask how Jesus could have been so intolerant of other religions. If so, allow a few minutes of discussion; then set up another time for the group to explore this further. The goal of this session isn't to present a defense of Jesus' claims, but to help students encounter Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

4. Cross-Checking

Did He Say "Greater"?

The next two exercises (Cross-Checking and Digging Deeper) are designed for students to do in solitude. Explain that Jesus made some radical promises and claims in John 14, and the students are going to take a moment to experience both a promise and a claim. Before they take off, tell them—

1. Find places where you can be alone with God—perhaps a corner of the room, a hallway, or an empty room nearby—where you can listen to him without distractions.

2. You'll need your Bibles, journal pages, and pens.

3. The Cross-Checking and Digging Deeper exercises on your journal pages will help you explore the promise that you can do even greater things than Jesus, and Jesus' claim that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

Before the group disperses, have a moment of prayer. Give this time to the Lord, asking him to help students have open minds and soft hearts to encounter him.

We've noted Scripture references and possible observations from the exercises below for your reference.

ACTS 1:1-8

What did Jesus say we'd need in order to do great things?

He said we'd need power from the Holy Spirit (v. 8).

ACTS 2:32-41

In this scene, Peter experienced the results of what Jesus promised in Acts 1. What results do you see?

About 3,000 people accepted the message and were baptized in one day (v. 41)!

Could this be an example of the disciples doing "greater things" than Jesus? In what way?

In one day, more people were saved after accepting the message of the gospel than perhaps in Jesus' entire ministry. Jesus had to die, be raised again, and ascend to the Father for the gospel of salvation to exist. The disciples got the awesome job (the "greater works," according to Jesus) of sharing that message by the power of the Holy Spirit—and of seeing lives transformed from darkness into light. And now that awesome job is ours!

5. Digging Deeper



Bold Claims, Bold Actions

JOHN 8:28-32

What actions does Jesus ask of us?

-He asks that we lift him up (v. 28).

-He asks that we hold to his teachings (v. 31).

If we do these things, what will happen to us? (Look for the word *then*. You'll find it twice.)

-If we do these things, then (not before!) we'll know he's the one he claims to be (v. 28).

-If we do these things, then (not before!) we'll know the truth, and it will set us free (v. 32).

JOHN 10:7-15

-Jesus is the gate (v. 7).

-Jesus came that we might have full life (v. 10).

-Jesus laid down his life for the sheep (v. 11, 15).

COLOSSIANS 2:1-10

-All the fullness of the Deity—God—lives in Christ in bodily form (v. 9).

-We have been given fullness in Christ (v. 10).

-Christ is the head over every power and authority (v. 10).

6. Taking It Inward

Taking Jesus at His Word

When most of your group members have finished, call them back together. Ask any volunteers to share about their encounters with Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

Then discuss these questions, allowing students to note their responses on their journal pages before sharing.

Here's the big question: Do you want all this? Do you want to do greater things than Jesus did? Do you want to experience Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life?

Yes No Maybe

Are you willing to do what it takes to get this?

Yes No Maybe

In the passages you read, Jesus was clear about what it takes to experience him as the truth: *Lift him up and hold to his teachings*. You'll see these questions on your journal page:

To what degree are you doing what Jesus is asking?

What are some specific things you can do to lift Jesus up and hold to his teachings?

Write down your responses in the space provided.

7. Wrapping It Up

Bringing Hope and Assurance Close to Home

Close the discussion by reminding your group *why* Jesus was having this talk with his disciples. He was getting ready to leave them, and life was about to get tougher. Ask a few volunteers to share one tough thing they're facing this week, and let the group encourage them with a promise or assurance from Jesus' conversation with his disciples. After some have shared, ask for students to volunteer to check in on those students who shared about a tough thing coming up this week. Close with prayer.