

YOU ARE THERE

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

CHRIST A: SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTION NOTES

As mentioned elsewhere, these notes are not the “answer key.” They are suggestions for where the discussion questions in this book can go, but feel free to go in entirely different directions. (In fact, feel free to introduce other questions.) The notes below are deliberately brief, so as to provide suggestions and pointers, but not “official” answers. In some cases, there are follow-up questions that you might add to the discussion.

1. MARY

- Her qualities, summed up in “may it be ... according to Your word.”
 - Be a good mother, physically nurture the baby (both before & after birth), raise Him in God’s teaching, to keep herself pure (not sinless), since her reputation reflects on Jesus ... basically, the responsibility any mother has.
 - “fair” isn’t a factor. It is God’s decision, and not for us to judge. God calls on each of us to make sacrifices, some harder than others.
- It’s a shock; not something easy to accept. If you question what right God has to interfere with your life, you’ll have trouble accepting it.
 - What has your life been like so far — what would be easier for your parents to believe? The truth, or the obvious alternative?
 - You might ask: “From which of your friends would you believe an unlikely story like Mary’s? From what sort of person would you believe this?”
- Teach God and God’s Word; be a good example; teach godly behavior. (This should be the same for any child.)

2. SIMEON

- Because he earned it. (Develop why and how he earned it — how he has lived his life.)
- Possibilities include: Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 53, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 11, Psalm 22, etc.
 - Some is clear, some seems to be contradictory (e.g., king/rejected). Simeon (and we) should realize not all that God foretells is clear beforehand, but He will make things clear when they take place.
- Consolation: a source of comfort, relief, help and/or cheer in time of need (in this case, need of salvation and protection from the world)
Salvation: a source of protection and/or redemption from harm (in this case, from sin)
Light of revelation: something that reveals (because it shines light on it; in this case, revealing God’s plan)
Redemption: “buying back” (from sin); rescuing from sin
Glory: a source of honor, praise and fame

3. JOSEPH

- The first reaction is obvious — she’s cheated on you. What qualities in Mary would help you believe she’s telling the truth? What other factors would help? An angel convinces Joseph; would you require an angel from God?
- The burden God places on Joseph is in many ways as hard as that on Mary. He must accept that people believe Mary committed sexual sin, either with him or against him. He must live his life for Jesus, not for himself. How easy is all of that to accept? How long would it take you to accept it? How easy is it to accept God’s instructions to us today?
- Jesus has clearly disobeyed Joseph and Mary and been the cause of a great deal of worry, but at some point His primary responsibility must be to take up the life that God has given

Him. His parents’ first impulse is to punish Him ... but does that take into account His duty to God?
b) Jesus clearly does the right thing, but be careful about using Jesus as an example for yourself. He has two fathers, and He must obey His heavenly father before Joseph.
c) Various answers, much depending on the level of trust that each student’s parents have in his or her judgment. Some students’ parents would prefer obedience, some would prefer the student apply judgment in whether it is more valuable to teach than to strictly obey. This is a difficult question, and there is no single right answer for all students. Make sure students understand that the answer involves priorities and that sometimes (especially as they grow older) the right answer will not always be obvious or easy, and that others will not always agree with them.

4. JOHN THE BAPTIZER

- To “make straight the way of the Lord”; to prepare for and announce Christ’s arrival. An introduction from someone else helps.
- John’s baptism indicates the person’s repentance.
 - there is no forgiveness until Christ’s blood is shed as a sacrifice.
 - Forgiveness is available today as soon as a person repents and is baptized with Christ’s baptism; there’s no reason to be baptized only for repentance today.
- It proves it absolutely. God promises a glorious, eternal life in heaven, but not an easy life on earth. Other examples include Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Jesus Himself.

5. ANDREW & PHILIP

- Various answers: a happy announcement (baby, wedding), good grade on a test, etc.
 - Got excited, joyous
 - family, friends — people who can share your joy with you
- Career, athletic achievements, family plans
 - It would take something *very* important
 - Yes, but. Good idea, but you’ve got to support yourself along the way. Make sure your plan includes taking care of personal responsibilities.
- No. This Philip becomes an apostle; the Philip in Acts 6 is appointed by the apostles to take care of needed business because they’re too busy.
 - Probably not. The Philip in Acts 8 doesn’t give the gifts of the Holy Spirit like an apostle does; this is probably the Philip of Acts 6.

6. JAIRUS

- You might be strongly tempted, but we hope you wouldn’t
 - His daughter is dying; there’s aren’t. If he doesn’t get a miracle, she will die. He’s willing to risk approaching Jesus, when Jesus is reported to perform miracles.
- He risks being cast out of the synagogue for approaching Jesus. As a ruler and/or official of the synagogue, that’s risking a great deal.
- Why? Can’t really say, but you can list some possible reasons. She has nothing to lose; she believes (she wants to believe), when others don’t have the incentive she does. Perhaps she’s heard of others being healed this way; or she’s simply decided that’s the way it is.
 - Because that’s what He promises. We can believe what He promises because we see the fulfillment of His other promises. We see His power. He can and will do what He says He will do.

7. NICODEMUS

1. How? Born in a different way: spiritually, not physically. How does it make you born again? Born out of water (baptism; John 3:5, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 3:21). Born of the Spirit (John 3:6-8, John 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:44,49). We're familiar with "born again" today; help them understand how strange/unfamiliar it was when Jesus first said it.
2. Both are invisible and seem to have no substance (although today we know that the air in the wind is a gas). The wind is going somewhere unknown, just as our spirit is going to a place we've never seen.
3. Probably. See "But Wait, There's More ..." He helps bury Christ; he seems to have made a commitment.

8. WOMAN OF SAMARIA

1. He offers something mysterious and wonderful (and thus attractive); He shows unexpected personal knowledge (her relationships); He is clearly different from other people she's met.
2. Discuss possible ways to bring up the subject of Christ and salvation; possible openings and opportunities.
3. a. All the preparation that prophets and others have made before the apostles started their own work (including John the Baptizer).
b. Sometimes in cooperative work; sometimes your predecessor in a job has done prep work; sometimes you take over work that someone else has been preparing. And sometimes you might be the person who helps someone become a Christian, after others have spent lots of time studying with this person.
c. The flip side of (b). One conclusion: you haven't wasted your time, even if the person doesn't become a Christian; you've planted seeds.

9. BOY WITH BREAD & FISH

1. Miracles draw attention; establish His authority/divinity; occasionally help make a point (as when He withers the fig tree, Matthew 21:19).
2. a. The Bible records miracles. If the Bible can be believed, these miracles clearly show that God exists and that Jesus (and other miracle workers) have power from God — they are God's workers.
b. The record of miracles in the Bible; evidence in nature (Romans 1:20); internal consistency and prophetic accuracy of the Bible; your life.
3. a. Anything small can become greater using prayer, practice, training and exercise. What should you do to make your faith greater? To make a specific talent better? (Talents might include teaching, leading, serving, etc.)
b. Wide range of possible answers: talents of various sorts that can be applied to God's work; enthusiasm/willingness to work. Anything small can become something great in God's service.

10. PETER AT SEA

1. Knowledge (with Andrew & Philip, with Samaritan woman); over sickness (bleeding woman); over death (Jairus' daughter); over physical matter (feeding thousands); over nature (this lesson); etc.
2. a. Because of Christ's power; because he believes.
Follow-up question: Why does it matter that Peter believes? (Christ gives supernatural power to those who actively believe Him. For us, this is power over eternal death.)
b. Because he doubts.
Follow-up question: Why does it matter that Peter doubts? Because Christ requires our faith. We will not get power from Him if we doubt His power.
3. a. Different for different people. Possibilities include: stand up to evil, error and blasphemy; stand as a Christ-like example; teach (etc.) when you're normally too timid/shy/scared.
b. Again, various possibilities: Doubt (in yourself, in Christ); lack of wisdom/knowledge; unwillingness to take a chance.

11. PHARISEE

It's important to internalize the Pharisee — to realize that *he* can be *me*, rather than to point to him as someone I am too wise/smart to be.

1. a. Various answers.
b. If you have, it's usually hard.
2. Oppose/correct/study (but gently, trying to keep it about being right with God, not about winning a debate). Always remember that the Bible is the final authority, not your own opinion — you might be wrong.
3. a. Be willing to discuss & study; not slap them down.
b. Try to be mature and improve yourself. (It can be hard not to lash out.)

12. PETER ON THE MOUNTAIN

** The first time God speaks from heaven is when John baptizes Jesus. (Matthew 3:17)

1. a. I might if I thought I knew what he wanted better than he did. But I should be careful about assuming what someone else wants.
b. Nothing in (a) applies to God. God knows what He wants better than I do. Adding to whatever God tells me to do assumes that I know better than God what He wants.
2. a. It could make sense, but only if Peter doesn't fully understand who Jesus is and what He is doing. (Not that anyone fully understood this until after Jesus' ascension.)
b. Possible: rearranging the order of things in the worship, changing a meeting time, different types of classes.
c. **If** it's worth discussing, then meekly/gently discuss it with people who won't get upset. Don't start a whispering campaign, but sound out the idea with people you respect before making an official proposal. Once it's official, be ready to yield to those who disagree with you (either by rejecting or by modifying your idea).
3. Christ and His instruction are more important than anything. OT is for our instruction and example, but Christ is our law.

13. ADULTEROUS WOMAN

1. Try to make sure both sides are advocated. He obviously did the right thing, but "why?" is not as simple. Bottom line is that forgiveness is the key element in this example He gives us.
2. a. Try to help him (her) recognize and correct it; admonish him (gently); do not join him in it; pray for him, etc.
b. Tell everyone else immediately; publicly ridicule him/chastise him; make him defensive (and ready to justify his sin); punish him yourself; etc.
3. a. Recognize and correct it, and ask for forgiveness (from God and anyone you hurt)
b. Justify it; excuse it; blame others; minimize it; etc.