



Lesson Overview

Week of January 17

1 Life Need:

Note ways we want to be made whole.

2 Bible Learning:

Learn what Jesus did to make a paralytic whole.

Suggested Material

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Poster and Reproducible Sheet—Called into His Light

3 Bible Application:

Discuss ways Jesus can make you whole.

Suggested Material:

- *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Reproducible sheet—Becoming Whole in Jesus
- Two sheets of newsprint, colored pens, tape
- Sheets of notebook or copy paper, pens or pencils

4 Life Response:

Trust that Jesus can make you whole.

Church/Home Theme:
Christ Jesus Is Our Savior

Lesson Focus:
Trust that Jesus has the authority to make you whole.

Lesson Scripture:
Mark 2:1-12

Called in Authority

Deeper—Throughout the Gospels, the writers describe the multitudes clamoring after Jesus to heal the sick and cast out demons. However, God sent His Son and gave Him the ability to do much more. He also probed deeper, addressing people's spiritual and emotional needs as well.

Healing—Prior to this incident with the person with paralysis, Jesus had dramatically released a man possessed by a demon (Mark 1:28). From this point on, wherever He went a multitude immediately gathered. He attempted to privately travel to Capernaum and probably stayed in Peter's home. News of His arrival spread like wildfire throughout the area, and the people came in droves. The doorway, courtyard, and the front of the house were overrun with people.

Some determined men, despite the mob, devised a creative way to get a paralytic man to Jesus. They climbed up on the roof, made a hole in it, and let the paralyzed man down on a pallet or mat.

Forgiving Sin—Jesus recognized their faith in their extraordinary efforts. With great compassion, He tenderly called the sick person "son." Then the Master further assured him, "Your sins are forgiven." He knew forgiveness of sins was a more profound need than physical healing. Immediately, the Jewish leaders became indignant. Forgiving sins? Only God can forgive sins.

Forgiveness and Healing—With His divine insight, Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. He asked them, "Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'" (Mark 2:9). Once again, Jesus made a bold claim: God has power to forgive sins, and now He was doing the same here on earth. Then, He turned to the paralytic on the mat and said to take up his bed and walk. Immediately the previously afflicted man followed Jesus' instructions. The people were amazed. Not only did this Man have healing powers, but He also could forgive sins.

Wholeness—When a person becomes a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes into that person's life to help the believer become a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). It's the first step in the process of becoming whole. The old self is tainted by sin and in need of healing and restoration. Daily, the Holy Spirit does His transforming, renewing work, making the surrendering individual more like Christ, making them whole (2 Cor. 3:18).

As Your Students Arrive

Write the phrase, "When someone or something is whole, it

is _____,” on a board or sheet newsprint. Ask students how they would complete this. Summarize their answers on the board or newsprint. For example, if something is whole it is complete; it lacks nothing; it is unbroken or undamaged; it is in one piece. If a person is whole it could mean that they are unhurt, are physically healthy, or are mentally or emotionally sound.

Link to Last Week

Let students share about how they were part of Jesus’ mission this past week.

1 Life Need

Note ways we want to be made whole.

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Called in Authority

When Evie came out of the bathroom, she noticed her roommate was still in the bed—facedown. Evie was growing more concerned with Chanita’s mental state. Her roommate had suffered a terrible ordeal last year, and her life had been turned upside down.

Chanita had left school for a semester and returned. She had been getting mental health counseling, but she was still struggling. However, some of the things that Chanita shared were troubling to Evie and seemed to be expanding the problem.

“I may have ADHD,” Chanita had told Evie.

Evie had only known her roommate for about a year and a half, but Evie had not noticed any signs of ADHD. Evie knew that mental health counseling was important, but it was also crucial to seek out the good ones.

“Is your counselor certified? What kind of counselor is she?” Evie had asked. “Is she a Christian counselor?”

Chanita had been “around” church before, but had never accepted Christ. Evie had never been one to push her beliefs onto others, but she had been feeling convicted of not sharing Christ with her friend.

“Chanita, are you awake? Can you roll over?” Evie asked.

Evie began to share Christ with Chanita. She told her how the Lord could save, heal, and restore anyone.

“I’m taking you to church with me this morning,” said Evie. “Come on. Get up.”

1. *In what areas do we want to be made whole—areas where we sense that something is lacking and need help if we want to be complete?*

2. *What makes it hard sometimes to believe that Jesus wants to make us whole in these areas?*

3. *What would make it easier to believe that Jesus can and wants to make us whole?*

LESSON FOCUS: Trust that Jesus has the authority to make you whole.

Read the story, then divide the class into small groups to discuss their responses to **Question 1, 2, and 3.**

For Question 1, we want to be made whole in our relationships with others so that they are fulfilling; we want to be made whole spiritually by knowing we are forgiven and are no longer separated from God because of our sins; we want to be made whole emotionally or physically by being healed of the things we struggle with in these areas.

Regarding Question 2, sometimes we don’t think Jesus is personally interested in us and that He is only concerned about the “big” picture; sometimes we think our sins are so grievous that there is little likelihood that Jesus will overlook them and give us what is required to make us whole; sometimes we think we have to work to earn God’s grace rather than accepting that He doesn’t have any preconditions for making us whole other than trusting that He has the desire and authority to do so.

Question 3 is about seeing how Jesus has made others whole can be helpful; we need to hear and appreciate others’ testimonies of God’s grace. It’s also helpful when struggling to remember ways we’ve already experienced being made whole by Jesus in the past.

2 Bible Learning

Learn what Jesus did to make a paralytic whole.



On the poster sheet, read the seventh paragraph, then point out on the poster the illustration of the friends of the paralyzed man letting him down through the roof to see Jesus.

JESUS HEALS THE SICK

Read Mark 2:1-4, then highlight these points:

- Early in His ministry, Jesus became known as a miracle worker who could cast out demons and heal the sick.
- Jesus soon found it difficult to enter villages without gaining unwanted attention from those more interested in

BIBLE EXTRA

Roofs

According to William Barclay's book *The Gospel of Mark* (The Saint Andrew Press, 1956), roofs of private homes at that time were normally flat. They were accessed from a set of stairs outside the home and were often used as a place of rest and quiet. They were typically constructed by laying wood beams three feet apart over the exterior walls of the dwelling. The space between was then filled with brushwood packed tight with clay. This was then covered with earth where grass was grown or with other materials impervious to water. If this was the way the roof of the house in today's passage was built, it would have been relatively easy for the four men to dig a hole through it, although not without catching the attention of those below who would have heard the sound of their efforts or found residue falling onto their heads from it. And due to how the roof was constructed, it would have been relatively easy to repair following the incident.

His miracles than in His words.

- When Jesus returned to Capernaum, a crowd gathered at a home where He was staying.
- Four men carrying a paralytic friend couldn't reach Jesus because of the crowd and so dug a hole in the roof and lowered the man on a mat through it.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

Jesus became known early in His ministry as

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Jesus Heals the Sick

Mark 2:1-4, NIV

1 And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

Mark 2:1-4, NIV

¹A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ²They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on.

Early in His ministry, Jesus' frequently found Himself surrounded by those who seemed more enamored by what He could do than what He had to say. Many saw Him more as a miracle worker who could cast out demons and cure people than as One who could make them spiritually whole.

Jesus' reputation as a miracle worker began in Capernaum where He freed a man of demon possession and healed many who were sick, including Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:21-34). Jesus left Capernaum shortly afterward, perhaps hoping that He'd find some who were more interested in the message He wanted to share rather than the miracles He could perform (Mark 1:35-39). At one point, He instructed a leper He'd healed not to tell anyone about it (Mark 1:40-45), perhaps to avoid giving those following Him further justification to see Him primarily as a healer of bodies rather than a healer of souls. The leper told others about what happened anyway



Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 825-827 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*.

a worker of miracles; He cast out demons and healed people of what physically ailed them. Many may have followed Him more for the miracles He performed than for the message He wanted to convey.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

Jesus began to spend more time alone away from the villages. His reason for doing so may have been to avoid the crowds that were enamored by the miracles He performed and who were more interested in what He could do than what He

had to say.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

The four men had faith that Jesus could heal their friend and were willing to go to great lengths to make sure that he benefited from the miracles Jesus could perform.

JESUS FORGIVES SIN

Read Mark 2:5-7, then note these key points:

- Jesus used this incident to bring into focus who He is and the message He came to proclaim.

BIBLE EXTRA

The Association of Sin and Suffering

One of the common beliefs in those days was that no one suffered unless some sin had been committed. One example of this can be found in Luke 13:1-5. According to this passage, people thought that the reason some Galilean Jews were murdered by Pilate was because they were worse sinners than others; also, some thought that the 18 who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell died because they were more guilty of sin than others. Jesus responded by pointing out that all are equally in need of repentance and anyone who refuses to repent will perish.

The healing of the paralytic may be another example of what Jesus did to challenge the Jews' thinking about their association between suffering and sin. When Jesus said that the paralytic's sins were forgiven without blaming His disabilities on them, one thought of those listening may have had been, "How can Jesus do this? The man is suffering. Isn't he getting what he deserves? Doesn't this mean that he can't or shouldn't be forgiven?"

Jesus didn't ask for the paralytic to do anything in order to be healed or forgiven. By doing so, Jesus may have been indicating that their belief about the relationship between sin and all suffering was faulty and that He could address one without associating it with the other.

and Jesus soon found it more difficult to enter villages without gaining the type of attention He didn't desire.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum, many heard that He'd arrived in town, and soon a crowd gathered both inside and outside of the home where He was staying. There were so many that four men who were intent on helping a paralyzed friend get healed couldn't get through the door. The four were determined not to abandon their friend, so they made their way to the roof of the house, dug a hole through it, and lowered the mat their friend was laying on.

4. *What may have prompted some to follow Jesus early in His ministry?*

5. *How did Jesus respond? Why do you think He responded this way?*

6. *How would you characterize the four who carried the paralytic to Jesus?*

Jesus Forgives Sin

Mark 2:5-7, KJV

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

Mark 2:5-7, NIV

⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Jesus used this incident to bring into focus His true nature. When He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven," those who had a good understanding of Scripture knew that since only God can forgive sins. By saying that He had the authority to forgive sins, Jesus was in fact claiming that He was God. Under the laws given to Moses, this could have been considered blasphemous and would have been ample justification to

- By saying that the paralytic's sins were forgiven, Jesus was claiming He was God, as only God has the authority to forgive sin.

- Those hearing Jesus make this claim understood that according to the law this could have made Him guilty of blasphemy.

- Jesus wanted to do more than just heal the paralytic physically; He wanted to make him spiritually whole.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

Jesus wanted to bring into focus His true nature; He wanted those present to understand who He claimed to be. Since only God has the authority to forgive sin, Jesus was saying that He is God.

BIBLE EXTRA

Blasphemy!

Blasphemy can be defined as "the act of insulting or showing contempt for God or exhibiting a lack of reverence for Him." Leviticus 24:10-16 describes the Old Testament context for the accusation against Jesus regarding this. Although the passage doesn't define what is blasphemous, it provides one example and notes that the penalty for doing so is death. Blasphemy was in effect showing contempt for God by deliberately disobeying Him or by creating and worshiping substitutes for Him.

By the time of Jesus, the definition of blasphemy had broadened and included claiming traits that were attributed only to God. Jesus' claim to have the authority to heal or forgive, something only God could do, would have been blasphemous under this definition. The Jewish leaders' attempts to have Jesus executed were consistent with the penalties imposed on blasphemers throughout Scripture. The problem in this case was that Jesus had provided ample evidence of who He is. Those who wanted to kill Jesus were therefore the ones guilty of blasphemy as they were revealing their contempt for God by their rejection of the evidence that He, through Jesus, was dwelling in their midst.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

Those well-versed in Scripture understood that Jesus was claiming to be God. This could have been considered blasphemy under the law and would have been ample justification to have Jesus executed.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

Jesus wanted to do something more than just heal the paralytic physically; He wanted to do something more than just help him walk again; He wanted to make him spiritually whole.

have Jesus executed (Lev. 24:15-16).

Caiaphas, the high priest at the time Jesus was crucified, made a similar charge against Jesus during His trial. At one point, Caiaphas asked Jesus, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" (Mark 14:60-65). Jesus said He was, and then added that one day He would sit at the right hand of God. Hearing this, Caiaphas tore his clothes, accused Jesus of blasphemy, and asked the crowd what should be done. As Mark noted, "They all condemned him as worthy of death."

Jesus may have had a secondary purpose for declaring that the paralytic's sins were forgiven. Jesus knew that healing the man physically would not make Him whole spiritually. He wanted to do more than just perform a miracle that would result in the man being able to walk again. Jesus wanted to start the process of spiritual healing that begins when people recognize that they have been forgiven for their sins.

7. *What was Jesus' primary reason for saying He could forgive the man's sins?*

8. *How did those well-versed in Scripture respond?*

9. *What may have been a secondary purpose for what Jesus said?*

Jesus Reveals His Nature

Mark 2:8-12, KJV

8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to

Mark 2:8-12, NIV

⁸Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But I want you to know that the Son of Man has

JESUS REVEALS HIS NATURE

Read Mark 2:8-12. Then highlight the following:

- Jesus would have been guilty of blasphemy if He wasn't God. To prove their accusations were unjustified, He posed a question they found difficult to answer.
- Healing the sick and forgiving sin are equally difficult; neither is easy; both are things that only God can do.
- Jesus healed the man proving that He has the power to forgive sin as well. In the process, Jesus provided ample evidence that He is God.
- Jesus revealed that He has the desire and authority to make us whole. Our trust that He can

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KJV
forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

NIV
authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Jesus would have been guilty of blasphemy if He claimed to be God and wasn't. To show that their accusations of blasphemy were without merit, Jesus posed a question about what was easier to do: to forgive, or to heal. They knew that neither one was easy; both were things that only God can do. As they considered this, Jesus said that He would prove that He had the authority to forgive sins by healing the paralytic. He then did so to the amazement of those gathered in the house.

One of the reasons Jesus may have performed this miracle was to shift the focus of those who followed Him away from the physical healing they sought toward the spiritual healing they needed. He wanted to prove that He had the authority to make people spiritually whole.

Jesus also wanted to provide tangible evidence of His true nature. Rather than just asking people to trust His claim to be the Son of God, Jesus provided physical evidence of who He is. He then told those following Him to look at His actions and use this to guide their conclusions about Him.

The miracles Jesus performed, especially the one where He rose from the dead, give credibility to Jesus' claim that He is the Son of God and that He has the ability to forgive our sins and heal us spiritually.

- 10.** Why did Jesus perform this miracle?
- 11.** Why were the accusations of blasphemy without merit?
- 12.** What implication does this incident have for us?

do so is therefore not misplaced.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 10

Jesus wanted to provide evidence of His true nature—that He is God—and that He was the desire and authority to heal and to forgive. He also wanted to change the focus of the dialogue about Him away from the miracles He could perform and towards the spiritual healing He could provide.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 11

Jesus would have been guilty of blasphemy if He claimed to be God and wasn't. His miracles—acts only God can do—provided ample proof that He was in fact God. The accusations against Him of blasphemy were therefore without merit.

SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 12

Although Jesus does have the ability to heal us physically, He wants us to focus more on the spiritually healing He provides. Jesus can make us spiritually whole, and we can trust that He has the desire and authority to do so.

WINDOW ON THE WORD

Being Made Whole

One of the ways Jesus makes us whole is by making us like Him. This is something that takes time, however; it is a process, not an event.

The apostle Paul noted this when he wrote, "And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Becoming like Jesus is not something we can do on our own. It is a work of the Holy Spirit that results when we surrender ourselves to Him. It is also something we pursue throughout our lives. Although we are in one sense made whole when the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we are in another in the process of being made whole by the Holy Spirit throughout our lives.

3 Bible Application

Discuss ways Jesus can make you whole.

You may want to photocopy this page so that each group has its own set of instructions. Give two sheets of newsprint, a set of marking pens, and some tape to the group doing the listings. Give notebook or copy paper and some pens or pencils to the group doing the personal reflection. Make copies of the handout sheet from the Resource Kit.



Handout:

'Becoming Whole in Jesus'

Read the handout sheet and respond to the questions at the end.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Discussion Group

Read "How Jesus Makes Us Whole" in the student book and respond to **Questions 13, 14, and 15**. Being made whole in Jesus is often a process and not an event; it is something that typically takes time. What it requires is faith that Jesus has the authority to make us whole, that He wants to do so, and then trusting in the means He has provided to make this happen.

Pictures: Whole, and Not So Whole

On a sheet of newsprint labeled "Whole," draw some pictures or indicate through words or phrases ways that Jesus has already made you whole. On a second sheet labeled "Not So," do the same but in this case noting ways you still need to be made whole—ways where something is lacking that only Jesus can complete. Discuss why it's sometimes difficult to believe that Jesus wants to make you whole in these areas and what you can do to help this process take place.

Personal Reflection

On a sheet of notebook or copy paper, write out some ways you already feel that Jesus has made you whole. Below this list some ways you feel you still need to be made whole by Him—areas where something is lacking that only Jesus can complete. Then write out a short prayer where you express your appreciation for the ways Jesus has already made you whole and your desire for Him to complete you in these other areas. Take time to share what you wrote with the other members of your group.

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How Jesus Makes Us Whole

There are many ways that Jesus makes us whole. First and perhaps foremost, Jesus makes us whole by forgiving our sins. In the process, He takes away the justification for us to carry a load of guilt about our past sins or beating ourselves up emotionally for what we've done wrong.

He makes us whole by giving guidance on what is good, right, and true, by calling us to act in faith that this is so, and by promising that the outcome will be far better than what would occur if we followed our own idea of right and wrong.

Jesus makes us whole by promising a future that is far better than anything we can experience in this life. Jesus says that there are better days ahead, even though the best will not happen until we enter eternity with Him.

Jesus makes us whole by giving our lives purpose and meaning. He emphasizes that we've been placed where we're at for a reason and that He wants to use us in ways that are fruitful for us, others, and Him.

Jesus makes us whole by encouraging us when we are down, by comforting us when we are grieving, and by giving us strength when we are weary. He is there when we feel lonely and promises to always be with us, no matter what.

Jesus makes us whole by changing us into His likeness, something that doesn't result from us working hard to be good, but happens when we surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us.

All of these things take time; they don't happen instantaneously. And they can and will result when we fully trust that Jesus has the desire and authority to make us whole.

13. *Have you already been made whole by Jesus? Explain your answer.*

14. *What are some additional areas where you still need Him to make you whole?*

15. *What can you do so that you are contributing to the process of being made whole by Jesus?*

4 Life Response

Trust that Jesus can make you whole.

Trusting that Jesus has the authority to make us whole is sometimes easier if we first note the ways we've already experienced the wholeness He provides. This may include remembering that we are loved, forgiven, and saved by Jesus, recognizing the relationships He's helped us secure and nurture, and acknowledging how He's guided us to careers that are fulfilling and fruitful. The goal in the final exercise is to identify additional areas where we don't feel complete, to trust that Jesus

has the authority to make us whole in these, and to act in faith accordingly.

Read "Jesus Can Make You Whole" in the student book and ask students to write out their responses to the questions at the end. Then divide students back into the groups they formed in Step 1 and encourage them to share what they wrote with the other members of their group. They may note a need to trust in Jesus' guidance regarding how to make their personal relationships work out for the best; to trust that God has their best interests in mind and to be committed to follow the path He's laid out for them; or to believe that God has forgiven them and that they no longer have to carry around a load of guilt for their past sins.

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Jesus Can Make You Whole

We know that Jesus has the desire and the authority to make us whole. And most of us have undoubtedly already experienced some ways that Jesus has done so. What remains is understanding the additional ways He wants to make us whole and trusting in both His desire and authority to do so.

► *In what area do you need to experience the "wholeness" that Jesus provides? What can you do this week to assist in the process of experiencing this?*

KEY VERSE

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?
—Mark 2:9, KJV

"Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk?'"
—Mark 2:9, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON Week of January 18 through January 24

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Acts 12:5-11—Prayer for Peter in Prison.
- Tues.** Romans 15:22-33—Pray for a Successful Ministry.
- Wed.** Ephesians 3:14-21—Pray for Inner Strength and Power.
- Thurs.** Matthew 6:7-13—Pray the Prayer of Our Lord.
- Fri.** Luke 6:22-33—Pray for Your Abusers.
- Sat.** Luke 22:39-46—Pray to Avoid Trials.
- Sun.** John 17:13-24—Jesus Prays for His Disciples.



As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Read John 17:14-24. Give some thought to ways you and your church are showing what Jesus is like through unity and love as well as ways you may not be doing this.