

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

*Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).*

## Into the Lesson

Have this statement displayed on the board as learners arrive:

*Share with someone how far back  
you can trace your ancestry.*

Give each student an index card. Ask students to record on it a few known facts about one of their ancestors (no names, and not Adam!). Collect the cards after a minute, shuffle them, then give each student one. Have the cards read aloud; allow class members to guess who they believe wrote the card. (For larger classes, have this done within groups of five or more to save time.)

Lead into Bible study by saying, “While knowing facts of one’s ancestors can be interesting, Jesus’ ancestry is more than that. Let’s see why.”

## Into the Word

Announce a pretest as you distribute the following list of names on identical handouts (you create): Abraham / Ai / Aminadab / Boaz / David / Esau / Gideon / Hezron / Isaac / Ishmael / Jacob / Jesse / Joseph / Judah / Nahshon / Obed / Perez / Rahab / Ram / Ruth / Salmon / Solomon.

Tell learners they have one minute, working individually with Bibles closed, to strike out the four names that are not in Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17. Have learners check their results according to those verses. (*Alternatives.* Use this exercise at the end of the Into the Word segment instead, as a posttest; or create enough copies to do both.)

Follow by having a learner read aloud Hebrews 1:1-5; then divide the class into three groups. Give each group a designation and handouts (you prepare) as follows.

**Faithfulness Group:** Create a poster based on Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17 to answer these questions: 1—What were some prominent ways God showed faithfulness to certain of these people? 2—In what ways do we see God’s faithfulness today?

**Female Gentiles Group:** Create a poster based on Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17 to answer these questions: 1—Which names are those of female Gentiles and which are female Israelites? 2—Why would Matthew have chosen to list Gentiles?

**Jesus as Heir Group:** Create a poster based on Hebrews 1:1-5 to answer these questions: 1—What preceded Jesus’ having the inheritance listed? 2—Why is that question important?

After no more than 15 minutes, allow groups to share their posters with the class. Encourage whole-class discussion. Bring discussion to a climax by asking why it’s important to know about both Jesus’ human and divine heritages.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the “Jesus’ Heritage” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have students work in pairs or small groups to complete as indicated. After no more than 15 minutes, have students share their conclusions. Use the commentary to fill in any gaps.

Make a transition to Into Life by saying, “While we *don’t* have any control over our human heritage, we *do* have control over our spiritual heritage.”

## Into Life

Give each learner an index card. Say, “On a scale from 1 (rarely) to 10 (daily), write how often you acknowledge your spiritual heritage in Jesus.” [Pause as they do so.] Continue: “Now jot some ideas on ways to improve that score in the week ahead.”

Call time after one minute. Ask for volunteers to share responses, but don’t put anyone on the spot.

*Option.* Close by distributing copies of the “Jesus, My Savior, Is All Things to Me” from the activity page. As someone reads aloud the words to the hymn, encourage students to remember and acknowledge that their spiritual heritage is in Jesus—and what a wonderful heritage it is!

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## Into the Lesson

Have this quote written on the board as learners arrive:

*Life is a matter of choices, and every choice you make makes you.* —John C. Maxwell

After a time of agree/disagree discussion, read aloud each of the following pairs of choices, and ask learners to indicate their choices by raising hands:

- 1—Eat vanilla ice cream or chocolate ice cream.
- 2—Watch TV or listen to music.
- 3—Shop in a store or shop online.
- 4—Eat at a restaurant or eat at home.
- 5—Drink coffee or drink tea.
- 6—Dress up or dress casually.

*Alternative.* Distribute handouts (you prepare) with the choices listed above. Ask students to circle their choices, time limit of one minute.

After either alternative, lead into Bible study by saying, “The choices Joseph faced were far more important than any of these! Let’s see what his decisions can teach us.”

## Into the Word

Recruit a student in advance to be interviewed as Joseph. Ask him to be ready to talk about the difficult choices he faced regarding the facts that (1) Mary was expecting a baby, but he was not the father and (2) an angel appeared to him with information and instructions.

Have students take turns reading Matthew 1:18-25 aloud; then conduct the interview. Possible interview questions are as follows; modify these and ask follow-up questions of your own devising as appropriate. Help “Joseph” with advance preparation by furnishing interview questions to him ahead of time.

1—When you found out that Mary was pregnant, what thoughts other than those recorded in

Matthew 1 crossed your mind? 2—When the angel appeared to you in a dream, how did you know the dream was not merely an ordinary one? 3—What was the deciding factor that caused you to honor the angel’s instructions?

Be sure to fill in any gaps with information from the lesson commentary; encourage “Joseph” in advance to use his “sanctified imagination” to give reasonable answers when answers are not found in the text. After the interview, thank your “Joseph” and encourage reactions during whole-class discussion. (*Option 1:* Have “Joseph” wear Bible-times clothing. *Option 2:* Distribute copies of the “Joseph’s Options” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work in small groups to complete as indicated.)

Ask a learner to read verses 22 and 23 again. Write “Immanuel” on the board. Give each student a sticky note as you say, “In no more than one minute, write on your sticky note why the name Immanuel is an appropriate name for Jesus.” Encourage thoughts deeper than the obvious meaning “God with us” from the text. Have learners affix their notes on the board. Read some or all of them aloud for whole-class discussion.

## Into Life

Divide learners into small groups. Encourage each group to work together to write a prayer of thanks for the gift of Jesus. After a few minutes, ask each group to pray together the prayer they have written.

*Option.* To extend this activity, distribute copies of “Step Up Your Thanks!” from the activity page as a take-home exercise. You have two options regarding words to be found: either include a list of the 13 to be found or don’t. The latter option will make the puzzle harder to solve and is recommended. To encourage completion, promise to call for results at the beginning of next week’s class.

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## Into the Lesson

**Option.** Before learners arrive, place in chairs copies of the “Worship Around the World” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Discuss results to begin class.

Challenge students to think of synonyms for the word *venerate*; write ideas on the board as they are voiced. Be sure to add *adore*, *revere*, and *ascribe worth* if no one mentions them. Then divide the class into small groups and ask groups to create lists of things that are venerated in today’s culture. After a few minutes, have groups compare lists in whole-class discussion.

Lead into the Bible study by saying, “I think we can agree that some people are confused about who they should worship. But some of those we will study about today got it right. Let’s see why.”

## Into the Word

Have students take turns reading Matthew 2:1-2, 7-15 aloud. Say, “There are many Old Testament prophecies about Jesus’ birth. Let’s see if we can match some of those prophecies to events surrounding Jesus’ birth.”

Ask a learner to read Jeremiah 23:5 aloud and another learner to read Numbers 24:17 aloud. Ask, “What verse from today’s Scripture do these two prophecies match up with?” (*Answer:* Matthew 2:2). Follow the same process for Isaiah 60:3, 9 and Psalm 72:10 (*Answer:* Matthew 2:11) and Hosea 11:1 (*Answer:* Matthew 2:15).

**Option.** For deeper study of Old Testament predictions of the Messiah, distribute copies of the “Old Testament Prophecies” exercise from the activity page. Have learners work in study pairs or triads to complete as indicated. After an appropriate amount of time, reconvene for whole-class comparisons of conclusions.

Next, divide the class in half. Designate one of the halves to be **Magi’s Group** and the other half to be **Herod’s Group**. If the halves are too large

for the exercise to follow, form smaller groups with identical names.

Distribute handouts (you prepare) of the following questions to the **Magi’s Group**: 1–What kind of “GPS” did the Magi rely on? 2–What was their physical posture in worship? 3–What gifts accompanied their worship? (*Answers* are in Matthew 2:9, 11a, and 11b, respectively.) Concurrently, distribute handouts (you prepare) of the following questions to **Herod’s Group**: 1–What instructions did Herod give the Magi? 2–What was Herod’s stated motive in giving those instructions? 3–What was his real motive? (*Answers* are in Matthew 2:8a, 8b, and 13, respectively.)

When groups finish, check for accuracy during whole-class discussion. Use the commentary to correct misconceptions and fill in gaps. Ask students to summarize the similarities and differences among the motives of the Magi and Herod.

Make a transition to Into Life by saying, “Let’s see what the Magi can teach us regarding the connection between *who* to worship and the *why* and *how* of that worship.”

## Into Life

Write these two phrases on the board as column headers:

*What’s So / So What?*

In whole-class discussion, ask, “What are the stated facts regarding the Magi’s worship of Jesus?” Jot responses under the *What’s so* column. After there are no more responses, continue by pointing to each of those responses in turn as you ask, “How might this be one model for our worship?” Jot replies under the *So what?* header. Make sure that the concepts of joy, humility, and sacrifice are addressed in both columns.

Close by singing “We Three Kings”; distribute handouts of lyrics so class members can sing all five stanzas.

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## Into the Lesson

Have this question written on the board as learners arrive:

*Are you a person who likes to be prepared, or more of a person who likes to take things as they come?*

After a few minutes of discussion, divide your class into pairs (or triads), giving each group an index card. Ask learners to work in their pairs to create a list of preparations for a job interview. After a few minutes, reconvene for whole-class comparisons of lists.

**Alternative.** Distribute copies of the “How Would You Prepare?” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work in pairs to complete as indicated.

After either activity, lead into Bible study by saying, “Today’s lesson has something important to teach us about preparation. Let’s see what it is.”

## Into the Word

Have students take turns reading Matthew 3:1-12 aloud. Then divide the class into three groups, giving each group one of the handouts below (you create). Have Bible dictionaries and other resources available for groups that need them.

**Who He Was Group:** Who was John the Baptist, and what do we know about him?

**What He Said Group:** What significant things did John the Baptist say?

**What He Did Group:** What significant things did John the Baptist do?

After no more than 15 minutes, allow groups to share findings. Use the lesson commentary to fill in gaps. (*Some responses to anticipate:* Who He Was Group—the son of elderly parents, John was prophesied to be the one to prepare the way for the Messiah. What He Said Group—preached repentance and the nearness of the kingdom of Heaven. What He Did Group—baptized and called out those guilty of hypocrisy)

Then write on the board the phrases *Baptism by John* and *Baptism from Jesus* as the headers to two columns. Follow by writing *Who it’s for / What it does / When it happens* as the titles of three rows down the left-hand side of the board. Read verses 11 and 12 again, and ask learners to help you make the proper entries at the intersections of the rows and columns. (*Expected responses* are per the Scripture text for the lesson. Use the commentary to fill in gaps and correct misconceptions.)

**Option.** For an extended study on baptism, distribute copies of the “Baptism in the New Testament” exercise from the activity page for learners to complete in small groups as indicated. If time is short, this can be a take-home.

Make a transition to the Into Life segment by saying, “While John the Baptist had the task of preparing for Jesus’ first coming, we have the important task of preparing for his second coming.”

## Into Life

Write on the board the following:

*hypocrisy / cunning / wicked ways /  
attention to outward appearances*

Say, “By calling the Pharisees and Sadducees ‘vipers,’ John may have been referring to these attributes.” Give each student a slip of paper. Ask students to think of an attitude they may hold that falls into one or more of the categories listed that puts them in danger of being viper-like. Suggest that students write that attitude on their papers—an attitude that works against preparing for Jesus’ return.

Offer a chance for volunteers to voice what they have written. Encourage them each to put their paper in a place where it will remind them daily to ask God for his help in correcting that attitude. Close by urging students to continue preparing well for Jesus’ second coming.

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## Into the Lesson

Have these scrambled words displayed on the board as class members arrive:

*EMOOWNTH ROEH*

As learners arrive, challenge them to unscramble the phrase silently—in their heads or on a slip of paper. Call the class to order and ask how many came up with “hometown hero” as the correct answer.

Then ask for a show of hands of those who received a hero’s welcome on their most recent return to their hometown. Ask someone with a smartphone to look up the phrase *hometown hero* and share the result with the class. (*Option:* Offer this additional sarcastic definition: “A person who achieves local fame for accomplishments in high school, then fades into obscurity.”) Ask why it can be difficult for an adult to gain respect from those among whom he or she grew up.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Minute Match” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Allow no more than one minute for the matching part; how much time to allow for the compare part is at your discretion.

After either activity, write this multiple choice question on the board:

*Where was Jesus from?*

*A. Bethlehem    B. Nazareth    C. Heaven*

After discussion, explain that each answer is correct in a different sense, but the sense at issue in today’s lesson is B.

## Into the Word

Before class, recruit a volunteer to prepare and present a two-minute explanation of the context of today’s lesson. Ask another volunteer to read the printed text while class members listen for answers to the following questions, which you distribute on handouts that you prepare: 1–What did Jesus

do, and why? 2–What was Jesus’ mission? 3–What did Jesus claim?

In the ensuing whole-class discussion of results, expect the following answers: 1–Jesus went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth and read from the prophet Isaiah. 2–Mission statement and tasks per Luke 4:18-19. 3–Jesus claimed to be the fulfillment of this prophecy; in so doing, his claim was messianic.

Divide the class into groups of no more than four; assign each group of them one of the five items of Jesus’ mission as listed in Luke 4:18-19. Allow about five minutes for groups to think of examples showing how Jesus actually accomplished this mission in his ministry. Stress the importance of spiritual fulfillment over physical fulfillment (compare John 9:39-41).

## Into Life

Ask each of the above groups to make a list of ways Christians today continue to fulfill the five tasks in the mission of Jesus. After a few minutes, reconvene for whole-class discussion. Write these two words on the board as column headers:

*Physical / Spiritual*

Work down through the five tasks by calling for actions under each of the two headers. Be prepared to add your own ideas, particularly in “thin” areas. Introduce a minute of silent commitment as you challenge learners to choose one of the tasks of Luke 4:18-19 and decide how to live it out as a calling. Stress again that although the physical aspects of the tasks are important, the spiritual aspects are even more so. After that minute of silent commitment, ask volunteers to share their decisions, but don’t put anyone on the spot.

*Option.* Extend the above activity by distributing copies of the “My Mission” prayer-writing exercise on the activity page. Use this to close the class or as a take-home.

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## Into the Lesson

Distribute slips of paper on which you ask learners to complete this sentence:

*When I was a child, here's what I said I wanted to be when I grew up: \_\_\_\_\_*

Ask class members *not* to sign their slips of paper as they fold them in half and give them to you. Redistribute them so that everyone has a slip that is not their own.

Ask class members to guess who wrote the answer on the slip they've been given. Allow time for persons named to confirm or deny the correctness of the guesses.

Say, "Today we're going to talk about vocation; that is, what we're doing now that we're grown up—and what the Lord may be calling us to do."

## Into the Word

Designate two halves of the class for a responsive reading of today's printed text as follows:

Group A	Group B
verse 1	verses 2-3
verse 4	verse 5
verses 6-7	verses 8-10a
verse 10b	verse 11

Form small groups and distribute identical handouts (you prepare) with these challenges:

Explain the nature of Jesus' calling of the fishermen—both in terms of the calling itself in verse 10b and what Simon and the others gave up in the process in verse 11—

- 1—as the fishermen may have understood the calling and the sacrifice at the time
- 2—as we understand the calling and the sacrifice for those fishermen now.

Inform your groups that they are allowed to use their sanctified imaginations on the first challenge and should provide scriptural justification for the

answers to the second (expect as a minimum the mention of Matthew 28:19-20).

*Option.* Dig deeper into the first challenge by distributing to small groups the "What Were They Thinking?" exercise from the activity page, which you can download. After several minutes, reconvene for whole-class discussion.

## Into Life

Divide the class into groups of four to six. Make sure at least one member of each group has a smartphone with internet access. Distribute handouts (you prepare) on which are printed these instructions: 1—Search the internet for lists of professions or occupations. 2—Choose several of those (possibly at random) and ask, for each, "How could God use a Christian in this profession or occupation to serve him in a unique way?"

*Alternative.* If an internet search isn't possible or practical, introduce the above activity as a brainstorming exercise. Give the class two minutes to voice as many professions as they can while you write their answers on your board rapidly. Then proceed with item 2 of the small-group activity above.

After several minutes, reconvene for whole-class discussion of conclusions. Finish by adding this challenge: "Take no more than one minute to write your response to this addition to our 'Explain the nature of Jesus' calling' exercise of earlier: How do you understand verses 10b-11 in terms of your own calling today?" Allow volunteers to reveal what they have written, but don't put anyone on the spot.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the "All to Jesus I Surrender" exercise from the activity page. Give students a minute to jot thoughts in this chart, and then invite them to share those thoughts with a study partner. End the class session by leading the class in singing "All to Jesus I Surrender." Provide copies of additional stanzas as appropriate.



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## Into the Lesson

Place magazines and newspapers on chairs before learners arrive. Begin your session by forming small groups of three or four. Have all groups look in the publications for examples of our culture's search for physical and spiritual health. After several minutes, ask groups to share what they've found. Pose questions such as these:

- 1–Which search was easier?
- 2–Which kind of health concerns people more these days?
- 3–Which of the two kinds of health issues are more likely to drive people to seek unproven or unscriptural methods of cure?

*Option.* Ask class members to use their own memories and/or smartphones instead of surveying printed publications.

Lead into Bible study by noting that search for cures isn't new, and that an ancient account points us in the right direction in that regard.

## Into the Word

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Mark 2:1-12. Challenge class members to listen for key issues regarding Jesus and attitudes toward Him. Call for responses at the end of the reading; jot those responses on the board.

Introduce the next activity by saying, "Each of the characters would tell the story differently, mentioning details they most noticed and including their own opinions or biases. Reflect these in your brief retelling; feel free to use your 'sanctified imagination' to make reasonable inferences."

Divide the class into five groups or study pairs; assign each group one of the following from the story: (1) Jesus, (2) the gathered crowd, (3) the man on the mat, (4) the four men carrying the mat, and (5) the teachers of the law. Assign group names according to the designated character(s), and ask each group to write a brief retelling of the story from the point of view of their character(s).

Allow groups six to eight minutes to create their retellings. If they don't have time to write smooth narratives, they may simply list some things their assigned character(s) might have said or done. As each group reports in the ensuing whole-class discussion, ask those not in that group to comment on the unique spin each character or set of characters puts on the story as seen by the reporting group's conclusions. Encourage discussion by asking what might be added and why.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the "Be Healed!" exercise on the activity page, which you can download. Assign each Scripture there to a different class member or study pair to paraphrase and then share results with the whole class.

## Into Life

Tell the following true story:

A man in an adult Bible-study class decided to record and categorize the prayer requests he heard expressed over a 10-week period in the class. He himself made no prayer requests in order not to bias the outcome. When the 10-week period was over, he discovered that the prayer requests could be categorized and tallied this way:

Prayers for physical healing: 97 requests  
Prayers for situations (job loss, etc.): 26 requests  
Prayers for spiritual healing: 3 requests

Follow the story by asking, "What's wrong with this picture?" *Teacher Tip:* Be absolutely silent after asking the question! If class members are themselves silent, resist the temptation to "say something" yourself. Let the discomfort of the silence continue for 15 seconds or so before you add thoughts of your own. Discuss as appropriate.

Wrap up by asking learners to share thoughts they'd include in a prayer of thanksgiving for God's healing forgiveness. *Option.* Distribute copies of the "Finding Forgiveness" exercise on the activity page. Have learners work in study pairs to complete it. Allow time for whole-class sharing.

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## Into the Lesson

Place four chairs in the front of the classroom, facing the front of the room, and ask a volunteer to come sit in each one. Attach one each of the following labels to the backs of the chairs so that the class can see them but the volunteers can't:

*Attorney / Elected Official / Union Negotiator /  
Real Estate Agent*

Have the four volunteers take turns asking questions of the class in order to determine what their labels say.

After several minutes, reveal answers to the volunteers and ask the class what these professions have in common. If no one gets the answer, say, "Although they are much different from one another, each of these acts on behalf of someone else to achieve something for them—an intercessor. Today we're going to look at the greatest intercessor of all."

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the "What I Pray for Most" exercise on the activity page, which can be downloaded. Allow one minute to complete; then call for volunteers to share the entries on their lists. Make a transition by saying, "Today as we look at a prayer priority of Jesus, it will be interesting to compare and contrast it with our typical prayers."

## Into the Word

Distribute handouts (you prepare) featuring five blank rows intersected by two blank columns, one column headed *Verse Reference* and the other headed *What Jesus Prayed For*. Ask a volunteer to read the lesson text out loud slowly while class members listen for answers to the blanks on their charts. Divide the class into groups to compare and complete their charts as necessary.

Verse references (which you may decide to include on the chart) and answers (which you will not include) are as follows:

- Verse 15: Protect my disciples from the evil one.
- Verse 17: Sanctify them (set them apart) by the knowledge of Your truth.
- Verses 20-23: Create unity among my believers so that the world will know I was sent by You, Father.
- Verse 21: May my believers be unified with You and me, Father, as well as with each other.
- Verse 24: I want my believers to join us someday for eternity.

Ask the groups to report what they've written, making sure all the blanks are completed correctly. Then point to a list of adjectives you've written on the board while groups worked:

*surprising / inspiring / comforting / challenging /  
unattainable / difficult*

Ask which of these adjectives the class members would choose to describe the prayer of Jesus and what adjectives might they add.

*Option 1.* If you used the "What I Pray for Most" exercise on the activity page, distribute copies of the "The Prayer Requests of Jesus" exercise from that same page for learners to complete as indicated in study pairs. After three minutes, compare and contrast the results of the two exercises.

*Option 2.* Form study pairs to look at Jesus' prayer another way by completing the "Three Important Themes" exercise on the activity page. Correct omissions in the ensuing whole-class discussion.

## Into Life

Ask, "What can we include in our prayers to make them more like today's prayer of Jesus?" Write answers on the board as learners suggest them. Then send members back to their original groups. Ask each group to compose a prayer that includes some of these elements. Close with a prayer time in which a representative from each group prays the prayer their group has written.



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## Into the Lesson

Write these six nouns on the board, on two separate lines as shown here:

*Summons / Bidding / Invitation*

*Bequest / Endowment / Grant*

Inform the class that you are looking for two synonyms or near synonyms, one for the first line of words and another for the second line of words. As learners call out responses, write them on the board. Do not, however, indicate whether the answers are right or wrong.

After there are no more responses, work back through the synonyms your learners proposed and have them vote on which are best fits—two words, one for each line. (Final expected responses are *call* for the first line and *gift* for the second line.) If learners seem stumped at any point, give the hint that each word you're looking for has only four letters.

*Option.* Before class begins, place on chairs copies of the “His Plan, Not Ours” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Learners can begin considering it as they arrive.

Begin a transition to Bible study by asking, “Speaking in a secular, nonbiblical sense, what’s the relationship between the concepts of *gift* and *call*?” (Expect to hear words such as *talent*, *aptitude*, and *ability* explored.) Complete the transition to Bible study by asking, “Speaking in a biblical sense, what’s the relationship between the concepts of *gift* and *call*?” Do not react with either approval or disapproval to the responses; instead, merely summarize those responses on the board for further use as the lesson progresses.

## Into the Word

Make arrangements in advance to have someone play and dress the part of an elderly Luke, who arrives at this point to read aloud the lesson text. As your Luke finishes and turns his back to

depart, implore him to stay a bit longer and consent to an interview. Use the following list of questions (and/or others of your own devising) in your interview; be sure to give your Luke the same list in advance for his preparation.

- 1—As you think back on these three episodes, what common elements do you see?
- 2—Why are those common elements important?
- 3—In what ways do those three episodes diverge from one another?
- 4—What is the significance of those divergences?
- 5—Given your expert knowledge of the Old Testament, what surprised you, and why?
- 6—What didn’t surprise you, and why?

*Option.* Have the man portraying Luke stay a few more minutes to take questions from your class, by prior agreement.

Return to the listing of the relationships between the concepts of *gift* and *call*, which you left on the board; work back through the list for corrections or improvements that you or your learners see to be biblically necessary.

## Into Life

Have students pair off and discuss (1) ways that Christians sometimes value the Spirit’s influence in some of their fellow believers more than in others and (2) how to correct this. Reconvene after eight minutes for whole-class discussion.

Divide into groups of no more than five each and call for volunteers to (1) thank God that He chooses all believers to do his will in diverse ways to reflect the unity of the church, (2) confess tendencies to value the Spirit’s influence in some people more than in others, and (3) ask for forgiveness for undervaluing contributions of fellow Christians.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the “Calling Intersections” exercise from the activity page for learners to complete in pairs as indicated.

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Distribute handouts (you prepare) on which are printed the following:

*I know a person who. . .*

- ☐ *is a social outcast*
- ☐ *has mixed up religious beliefs*
- ☐ *avoids followers of Jesus*
- ☐ *interrupts plans*

Begin by asking participants to check the boxes as indicated. Stress that learners not write names, initials, or anything else identifying. After one minute, call for shows of hands regarding how many had four boxes checked, how many had three, etc. (For a bit of humor, ask who had boxes checked because they themselves fit the description.) Make a transition by saying, “Today we’re going to see what we can learn from Jesus’ interaction with someone for whom we would have checked all four boxes.”

## Into the Word

Ask a volunteer (notified in advance) to give a two-minute summary of the Lesson Context. Then call for four volunteers to read today’s text, one each to read the words of the narrator, Jesus, the Samaritan woman, and the people of the town. Before the reading, ask class members to use their handouts to identify how the Samaritan woman could be described with each of the labels used in the introductory activity above. After the reading, put learners into study pairs for further consideration of how the Samaritan woman fit those categories.

After reconvening for a few minutes of whole-class discussion, distribute copies (you prepare) of the following true/false quiz. Before doing so, stress that this is a one-minute, closed-Bible quiz; the Scripture references with each statement are for learners to score their own quizzes after the time limit of one minute expires.

1—Jesus had to convince the Samaritan woman that a Messiah was promised to her people too (John 4:25). 2—The disciples readily saw the conversation of Jesus with the woman as normal (4:27). 3—The woman told the townspeople about Jesus’ request for water (4:28-29). 4—Jesus said they’d be required to plant spiritual seeds for many years before they could expect a harvest of souls (4:36-38). 5—Jesus used the analogy of farming to encourage the disciples to move slowly, be patient, and wait for results (4:35). 6—The woman’s neighbors in town rejected what she had to say, because someone of her reputation couldn’t be believed (4:39). 7—The townspeople rushed out to tell Jesus to leave the area (4:40). 8—Ultimately, the townspeople were far more convinced by the woman’s testimony than by anything Jesus could add to it (4:42). (Expected responses: all are false.)

*Option.* Distribute copies of the “Interacting with Nonbelievers” exercise on the activity page, which you can download. Have pairs or triads complete as indicated. Compare and contrast results in ensuing whole-class discussion.

## Into Life

Refer back to the designations on the handout from the beginning of the lesson. Work down through them as you ask this question for each one individually: “How does today’s lesson give you confidence to initiate spiritual conversations with the person you had in mind?” Encourage free discussion.

*Option 1.* Distribute copies of the “Sow or Reap?” exercise from the activity page, allowing learners one minute to complete individually as indicated; then share names with a prayer partner to close the class.

*Option 2.* Distribute copies of the “An Urgent Task” exercise from the activity page for learners to complete individually as indicated. This can be a take-home if time is short.

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

*Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at [www.standardlesson.com](http://www.standardlesson.com) or in the back of the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).*

## Into the Lesson

Begin class by asking participants to pull out all their customer loyalty cards. Announce that you have a prize for the one who has the most such cards; these include grocery cards that give discounts, coffee shop cards earning free coffee, etc. To the winner, give a humorous “Least Loyal Customer” certificate (you prepare) having so many cards indicates a *lack* of loyalty!

Ask, “What is your loyalty to these vendors based upon?”

*Alternative.* Place on chairs copies of the “Favorite Brands” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. After students complete this individually, there is no need to discuss results.

After either activity, lead into the Bible study saying, “The depth of our devotion to certain stores or products can vary greatly. However, our devotion to God should be constant. Today we have something to learn from a person whose devotion was just that.”

## Into the Word

Have three volunteers read the three passages of today’s Scripture, one each. Then divide the class into three groups (or multiples of three for larger class). Distribute handouts (you prepare) on which are printed the following tasks.

**Motivation Group**—Read Luke 8:1-2 and write an explanation as to why Mary Magdalene was so loyal to Jesus.

**Support Group**—Read Luke 8:3 and Mark 15:37-47, looking for specific ways that Mary tangibly supported Jesus during his ministry and even at his crucifixion.

**Resurrection Group**—Read John 20:10-18, looking for ways that Mary demonstrated her loyalty after the resurrection of Jesus.

After about five minutes, reconvene the class and have a spokesperson from each group share discoveries. Refer to relevant portions of the les-

son commentary to support discussion and correct wrong conclusions as necessary.

*Some possible and/or expected responses:* **Motivation Group**—Jesus delivered Mary Magdalene from seven demons. **Support Group**—Mary Magdalene supported Jesus out of her own means; she didn’t desert Him during the crucifixion and burial. **Resurrection Group**—Trying to prepare Jesus’ body for burial properly, Mary was entrusted with instructions from the risen Jesus himself.

*Option.* Distribute copies of the “Mary Magdalene’s Loyalty” exercise from the activity page for students to complete the middle column in study pairs or triads. Save the final column for the Into Life section, below.

## Into Life

Distribute index cards on which you have printed the following phrases, one phrase per card:

*financial support / hospitality / emotional support /  
defending the helpless / grief support /  
communication support*

Say, “On these cards I’ve written ways that Mary expressed her devotion to Jesus. What are some possibilities for showing our own loyalty to Jesus in a way described on your card?” Also encourage students to identify specific people in the church who demonstrate their loyalty to Jesus in one or more of the ways on the cards. Ask, “What is it about these people that inspires us? How can we be more like them?”

*Alternative.* If you used the “Mary Magdalene’s Loyalty” activity above, have the students complete the third column. After a few minutes, have volunteers share their answers in whole-class discussion. Say, “Let’s choose one of these suggestions to put into practice in the coming days.” After doing so, promise to begin next week’s class with a discussion of how things went.

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

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## Into the Lesson

As participants arrive, have the following question on the board:

*What are some of the best performing teams?*

Jot responses on the board as they are voiced. Once you have several listed, ask, “Why are they so good?” Give the class several minutes to share their reasons.

*Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Famous Partners on TV” exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Allow one minute for learners to complete as indicated. After that minute, ask why these partners worked well together.

After either activity say, “Some teams work well together to achieve evil purposes (example: Acts 5:1-10), while others work well together for godly purposes. Today we are going to be looking at one such incredible team in the latter category.”

## Into the Word

Divide the class into four teams. Give each team a slip of paper on which you have written the following:

**Corinthian Team:** Acts 18:1-3

**Ephesian Team:** Acts 18:18-21

**Alexandrian Team:** Acts 18:24-26

**Roman Team:** Romans 16:3-4

Challenge teams to improve on their given team names based on information they read in their assigned texts. After groups have had a few minutes to deliberate, call for groups to read their assigned texts aloud and announce their teams’ improved names. *Option:* Extend the discussion by having teams suggest improvements on other teams’ names.

*Option or Alternative.* Distribute copies of the “Find the Opposite” exercise on the activity page, assigning its completion to research teams. You can assign work to teams either by the exer-

cise’s horizontal rows or by its vertical columns. If assigning by row, you will need five teams, one for each trait; if assigning by column, you will need four teams, one for each name.

If you use the five-team approach, say, “Take the negative trait you’ve been assigned and see if your team can find one instance of its opposite for each of the four people listed.” If you use the four-team approach, say, “Research your assigned person and see if you can find an example of an opposite to each of the five negative traits.”

Allow time for whole-class discussion of discoveries. If learners could benefit from considering other texts in order to fill out their charts, have these ready to suggest: 1 Corinthians 1:12-13; 3:3-9; 4:1-7; 16:19.

## Into Life

Say, “As we wrap up today, let’s focus on how we might have the same type of relationship that we see among Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.” Then pose the following questions for discussion. *Teacher Tip:* Ask only one question at a time, allowing discussion to run its course before posing the next.

- 1—What would a “tentmaking relationship” look like in your situation?
- 2—Who needs to be disciplined by your walking alongside that person as you witness for Jesus?
- 3—In what ways could you better support the leadership of our church to accomplish its mission?

Distribute note cards and envelopes. Offer learners the chance to write a thank-you note to someone who has had an impact on his or her life much like Priscilla and Aquila did on the lives of Paul and/or Apollos. (Completion rate will be much higher if this is kept as an in-class activity rather than a take-home.) Encourage mailing them!

# INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

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## Into the Lesson

**Option.** Before class begins, place on chairs copies of the “Places of Transition” word-search puzzle. Learners can begin working on this as they arrive.

Begin with a one-minute individual exercise as you distribute slips of paper (you prepare) on which you have printed the following question:

By yourself, estimate how many total ‘person hours’ it took to edit and fit the copy of the lesson we’re now studying. Make your estimate for the teacher guide only, not for the student book. Don’t include time for proofreading, contract management, visuals, etc.

After the minute is up, call for responses and jot them on the board. After each response, ask, “What is your basis for that estimate?” (Expect that most will be in the category of wild guesses.)

Then inform learners that you are going to work together to prepare a more precise estimate. Ask each learner to give an estimate for each lesson’s elements individually: (1) the discussion questions in the five boxes, (2) the two verbal illustrations together (segments headed with ¶), (3) the verse by verse commentary itself, and (4) this Involvement Learning page. After getting a tally for a section, compute the average. Then add all tallies together for the overall average. (*Actual averages* for the four sections in a single lesson are 2.9, 1.5, 12.4, and 1.9 hours respectively—a total of 18.7 hours.)

Regardless of the final tally, ask your learners about their levels of confidence during the two tries: Was it better to work as a team or individually? Why? Use responses to lead into today’s lesson on partnerships in teamwork.

## Into the Word

Summarize the Lesson Context. Then ask a volunteer to read Acts 16:11-15, 40. Distribute handouts (you prepare) with the following task (same task for all groups): *Compare and contrast the roles*

*of Paul and Lydia in planting the church in Philippi. [Compare means how they were similar; contrast means how they were different.]*

Call time after a few minutes for whole-class discussion of discoveries.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-30 to the class. Share with students a hand-drawn picture of yourself that depicts who you were before Jesus. Give a perspective on how your relationship with Jesus has changed you. Allow a minute for learners to sketch their own “before” and “after” self-portraits. Discuss results. Reread 1 Corinthians 1:26-30 without commenting; just let the text speak for itself.

## Into Life

Divide the class in half. Have one of the halves brainstorm all the types of gatherings that happen at the church building. Instruct the other half to brainstorm all types of gatherings that could occur in homes.

After five minutes, have each group share its list. Then create a table on the board with three columns intersected by three rows. Label the columns *Inreach Events* / *Upreach Events* / *Outreach Events* (one label per column). Label the three intersecting rows as follows: *Better in Homes* / *Better at the Church Building* / *OK at Either* (one label per row).

Using the lists from both groups, as well as further discussion, have the class help you fill out the chart. **Teacher Tip:** If the anyone asks what *inreach*, *upreach*, and *outreach events* are, don’t answer. Instead, turn the question over to the class to answer—force them to think. Provide these responses as a last resort: *inreach* deals with teaching fellow Christians for greater spiritual maturity, bearing one another’s burdens, etc.; *upreach* deals with worship and prayer; *outreach* concerns evangelism and benevolence. **Option.** Distribute copies of the “Church Planting” exercise on the activity page as a take-home for private reflection.