

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week # 1

Greetings and Introduction for this eight week study

**Introduction:** In Rwanda one of the pastors said to my husband, "You don't really know me till you know me with all five senses." Is it possible to know and understand someone with all five of our senses? It's a challenge! I believe we can get to know Jesus in a much deeper and more intimate way if we approach our relationship in this way. "I'd like to know what He sees, what or how He feels, what He hears, what He smells and what He tastes in His relationship with me."

**A. Who is He and why did He come to this Earth?** See John 1:1-18  
(Read together and discuss in large group)

1. Who is the "Word" John refers to in verses 1-4 and why did John use this name?

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2. Which other names or attributes does John give in this portion of Scripture?

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3. How well did John know Jesus? How could he know Him so well when he had so little contact with Him?  
(See Luke 1:11-17, 80)

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**B. John Introduces Jesus to the Priests & Levites**

(Read John 1:19-34 – (If you have a large group you may wish to discuss this section in small groups)

4. How does John’s explanation of who he is introduce Jesus and what does this tell us about John?

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5. What does the baptism of Jesus tell us about John and what do we learn about Jesus? Use your imagination. What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

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6. What two things did John say Jesus would do and how has Jesus done this for you?

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Pray for each other and for open hearts and minds to understand more fully who Jesus is.

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week # 2 – Mary’s Encounter with Jesus

Greetings and Opening Prayer

#### **Introduction:**

Memories of the past Christmas are still very fresh in our minds. Every year I spend at least a small amount of time reflecting on what it must have been like to be Mary when she received the news that she was to be the means of the Messiah – Jesus coming into our world. Today we want to look at three amazing super natural encounters she had with Jesus.

#### **A. Mary Divine Encounter via the angel Gabriel**

See Luke 1:26-38(Read together & discuss in large group)

1. What was the message Gabriel brought and what was Mary’s first response?

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2. Allowing ourselves to identify with Mary what do you think she felt, saw, heard, tasted and said?

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#### **B. Mary’s Encounter after the birth of Jesus**

(Read Luke 2:16-19)

3. What do you think were thoughts or questions Mary had during and after giving birth?

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### **C. Mary's Encounter with Jesus - Early Childhood**

In Small Group (Read Luke 2:39-51)

4. When Mary observed her "Son" at play what thoughts must have gone through her mind?

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5. After searching for three days and finding 12 year old Jesus asking questions of the synagogue teachers what question did Mary ask and what was His response? What do you think Mary "treasured" in her heart?

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6. Share a meaningful encounter you have had with Jesus that caused you to stop & think.

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Pray for each other asking Jesus to give you a sign of His presence in your group.

Next week: Mary & Martha Encounter Jesus

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #3 - Mary & Martha Encounter Jesus

Greetings and Opening Prayer

#### **Introduction:**

When I was a child we had a family who adopted our family and we called them Grandma & Grandpa Wiebe. They were not related to us but we knew a special welcome awaited us whenever we visited. They had a big family and seven extra people made for a thanksgiving celebration whenever we gathered around their big table. They gave us many special memories.

#### **A. Mary, Martha & Lazarus had a Divine Encounter whenever Jesus dropped in.**

See Matt. 21:17 and Luke 10:38-42. (Read together & consider the following questions)

1. After reading the passage in Luke what gives us a clue that Jesus has been here many times before?

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2. Describe the personalities of Mary & Martha. In what way did each one try to please Jesus?

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#### **B. Mary & Martha Encounter Jesus after their brother's death** (Read John 11:17-44)

3. a. What approach does Martha seem to take in a difficult situation? What does she say to Jesus?

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b. What approach does Mary take when she hears that Jesus has arrived? How is she coping with her grief?

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### **C. Jesus Responds to Grief and Suffering**

In Small Group (Re-Read John 11:32-44)

4. How did Jesus respond to the tears of Mary and the other mourners? Does Jesus feel our pain?

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5. When Jesus asks to have the stone removed how does Martha respond? How do you think the words of Jesus made her feel?

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6. Share how the presence of Jesus supported you during a particular time of grief or sorrow.

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Pray for each other asking Jesus to make His presence known in your group. Be sensitive to those who are hurting allowing Jesus to minister through you.

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #4 - The Disciples Encounter Christ in Unique Ways

Greetings and Opening Prayer

**Introduction:** Change in our lives often opens up the door for us to experience a powerful encounter with Christ. When we left Chemainus to come here I had no way of knowing how quickly God would open doors of opportunity for new encounters with Himself. Encourage women to share briefly how change in your life opened doors to draw you into a closer relationship with God.

When Jesus began his public ministry He brought together a group of men from many different walks of life. They were in for the greatest adventure of their lives.

#### **A. Jesus Calls Fishermen to a New Profession**

Read Matt. 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20 & Luke 5:1-11

1. What do you think attracted Jesus to these men?

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2. What potential did Jesus see in them and how would this affect their lives?

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#### **B. Jesus Provides Wisdom for the Call**

Read John 1:40-51.

3. What experience led up to the personal encounter Peter had with Jesus? How did he respond?

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4. How was Philip's response to the "call" similar to the way Andrew responded?

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### **C. Our Response to God's Call**

In Small Group (Read John 1:35-39)

In your imagination place yourself on the dusty road beside the Sea of Galilee. Jesus turns and says, "What do you want?" What do you see, what do you hear Him say, what do you feel and how do you respond?

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Spend a few quiet moments waiting to hear what Jesus is saying to you before sharing with the group.

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Being sensitive to what has been shared pray in two's or three's encouraging one another to follow God's call and be more open to hear His voice.

Next week: The Samaritan Woman Encounters Jesus



# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #5 - The Samaritan Woman Encounters Jesus

Greetings and Opening Prayer

**Introduction:** Meeting Someone New

Stop and think for a moment about an experience where you are met someone for the first time. It may have been an unexpected meeting or it may have been planned. This someone you met has made a powerful impact on your life. Share briefly some thoughts and feelings about your first meeting.

#### **A. Jesus Meets the Woman at the Well**

Read John 4: 1-19

1. What do we know about the cultural setting seen here and about the relationship Jews had with Samaritans?

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2. It was about noon when "Sara" came to the well and Jesus asked her for a drink. What might Jesus have guessed about her and what were her reactions to the request Jesus made?

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#### **B. Jesus Challenges the Woman**

3. What are the two challenges Jesus presents to "Sara"(vs 10 & 16)?

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4. How does she handle these challenges? What excuses does she give?

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### **C. "Sara's" Response to Jesus' Challenge**

In Small Group (Read John 4:19-26)

In verse 19 a change takes place in "Sara's" thinking. What excuse does she give and what accusation? How does Jesus respond? What lessons of listening to others can we learn from the way Jesus listened to "Sara"? Discuss.

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When Jesus said, "I who speak to you am he," her eyes were opened. When you first encountered Jesus, what was it that convinced you? How did you feel?

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Pray for each other to have wisdom in listening to those who have not yet encountered the love of Jesus in a personal way.

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #6 - The Death of a Child & The Illness of a Woman

Greetings and Opening Prayer

**Introduction:** Encounters With Jesus In Our Pain

I sat beside the bedside of a grieving woman who was holding the tiny body of her premature baby. My heart ached for her with a deep understanding. I too had lost a child born too soon at much the same time. I knew what it meant to grieve and I knew what it meant to suffer the emotional pain of infertility and the physical pain and discomfort of a disease that affects many women. All I could do was pray silently and weep with her. Only time and the presence of Jesus would bring healing.

#### **A. Jesus Meets the Woman who needed Healing**

Read Luke 8:40-48

1. Jesus is moving slowly as people from the crowd jostle him from time to time. Once again someone is approaching from behind with a need, a purpose. What might this woman have been thinking?

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2. Share together what you think this woman saw, heard, thought, felt and experienced in her encounter with Jesus.

#### **B. Jesus Continues His Mission to the home of Jarius**

Read: Luke 8:49-56

3. Where was Jarius while Jesus was dealing with the woman He had just healed? How do you think he felt? What do we learn about Jesus when he overhears the servant telling Jarius that his daughter is dead?

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4. How does Jesus handle the noisy crowd at the house? Who did He take into the room? What do you think they were feeling and thinking?

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**C. Responding to Encounters With Jesus**

(Small groups)

Jesus meets us in our pain. Share how you encountered Jesus during times of illness and pain.

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When Jesus raised this little girl to life how do you think it changed the lives of those involved (including the girl)?

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What happens when you have an encounter with Jesus? How do you respond?

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Pray for each other seeking wisdom in responding to each others pain. Pray also for sensitivity in listening to others who are suffering pain and loss.

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #7 – The Unrecorded, Rejected Encounters

Greetings & Opening Prayer

#### Introduction:

Have you ever studied one of those 3D pictures? At first it just appears like lines and strokes. (If you are able to get one to display you may wish to use it in your demo)

After you stare at it for awhile and distance the page it gradually changes and you see a clear picture. The more often you practice this the sooner you are able to recognize the picture. Many people dismiss this as “I can never see what others see” or “I can’t be bothered”. Similarly, I believe God desires to connect with His creation and so many of us just seem to miss the encounters He desires to have with us. Many who encounter Christ are unable to face the challenge set before them. This is what happened to the man in today’s encounter:

#### **The Rich Man Encounters Jesus** - Mark 10:17-31

1. What is the setting of this encounter and why do you think Jesus responds to the man with a question? (vs.18)

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2. In verse 21 we read, “Jesus looked at him and loved him”

a) What does this tell us about Jesus?

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b) What was the man’s response when Jesus told him to go sell all his belongings and come follow Him?

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3. After the man leaves, Jesus turns to His disciples and makes a statement (23, 24). Why do you think He continued with this topic after the man left?

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4. How did the disciples respond to the statements Jesus made about riches and the kingdom?

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### Small Group Discussion

How does Jesus compare the cost and the benefits of following Him?  
Compare the cost and the benefits in your own life experience in your choice to follow Him.

Pray with each other and for those who struggle with making the choice to follow Him.

# ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

## Part I. Encounters During His Life on Earth

### Week #8 - A Recent Encounter? Review and Share

Greetings and Opening Prayer

#### Introduction:

"Father, as I sit here to write this study I desire to share a recent encounter and wonder what You would have me share. I can't think of anything that might really grip or challenge us." You seem to say to me, "You met with me this morning and it was good. Share the importance of the ordinary every day meeting."

Encourage women to share a recent encounter.

#### A. Jesus Meets us Because He Likes Us

Read Titus 3:3-7, Roman's 5:1-5, Isaiah 54:10

1. What common theme runs through each of the above?

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2. How can we know without a doubt that we are loved and accepted by God?

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#### B. We Encounter Him when we Accept His Unconditional Love and Expect His Presence

Read: Jeremiah 31:5, John 14:20&21

3. Why should we expect to have an encounter with Jesus?

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4. What hinders us from having meaningful encounters?

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### **C. Responding to Encounters With Jesus**

a) What has God impressed on your heart and mind today and during the past weeks?

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Spent time in prayer as a group thanking God and Jesus for the Holy Spirit who reveals the presence of God to us. Enjoy Him!!