

"I am so thankful for Ed Drew and his commitment to lifting Jesus up for our children. *Meals With Jesus* has done the heavy lifting in shaping questions and conversations that meet families where they are. I'll be going through it with my kids! Thank you for this bright, thoughtful, engaging and much-needed tool for families to remember our great Lord and Savior together."

RANDALL GOODGAME, Slugs & Bugs Family Music

"If you struggle to read the Bible regularly with your children (and who doesn't?), this is a great resource. Imaginative and easy to use, whatever age and stage your children are, this study in Luke's Gospel is full of practical ideas, wise insights and some great applications."

TREVOR ARCHER, London Director, FIEC; father of four, grandad to seven

"Ed Drew takes families on a wonderful journey through Luke's Gospel, exploring who Jesus is through the various meals Jesus shared. The most important thing a parent can do for their child is to show them Jesus. This book helps every parent to do just that. Ed has a wonderful way of giving parents fresh language that's age appropriate and beautifully rich yet simple and clear. Every family, whatever their shape or size, will find this resource accessible and easy to use. And every family who embarks on this journey will be blessed by it."

SANDY GALEA, MBM Kids' Ministry Director; Founder, Kidswise

"Would you like to have to Jesus join you for a family meal? Well, here's the next best thing—a series of simple Bible studies through which your children can meet Jesus around the dinner table. *Meals with Jesus* includes something for every member of the family, with a focus on how the good news speaks to our hearts."

TIM CHESTER, Pastor, Grace Church, Boroughbridge; Faculty Member, Crossland Training

"This book is a feast for each family member. Taste and see the goodness of Jesus Christ in Ed's short Bible readings and probing age-appropriate questions, while together you grow a deeper delight in our Savior. Parents, if you are looking to be spiritually fed yourselves while training your children to glorify Jesus, this book is for you."

CHERYCE BERG, Director of Children's Ministries, College Church, Wheaton

Ed Drew

Meals with Jesus

A journey through Luke's Gospel
for the whole family

The Good Book Company logo features a stylized, curved line above the text. The text "thegoodbook" is in a lowercase, sans-serif font, and "COMPANY" is in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font below it.
thegoodbook
COMPANY

Meals with Jesus
© Faith in Kids 2021
www.faithinkids.org

faith in kids

Published by:
The Good Book Company

thegoodbook
COMPANY

thegoodbook.com | thegoodbook.co.uk
thegoodbook.com.au | thegoodbook.co.nz | thegoodbook.co.in

Unless otherwise indicated, Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible®, copyright ©1986, 1988, 1999, 2015 by Tommy Nelson. Used by permission.

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

ISBN: 9781784985769 | Printed in India

Cover and design by André Parker | Illustrations by Isobel Lundie

Contents

Before you begin	7
Charts showing pattern of stories	8
<i>Meal one: Lunch with Levi</i>	
Day 1: Leaving it all behind	11
Day 2: The strangest party	14
Day 3: Who is sick?	17
Day 4: Healed and forgiven	20
<i>Meal two: Simon's show</i>	
Day 5: Does Jesus know?	23
Day 6: Who loves more?	26
Day 7: You are saved!	30
Day 8: Thankful	33
<i>Meal three: Mega picnic</i>	
Day 9: A proper welcome for a crowd	36
Day 10: Feeling hungry	39
Day 11: Satisfied	42
Day 12: Enough. Thank you	45
<i>Meal four: At Mary and Martha's</i>	
Day 13: Don't be distracted	48
Day 14: Only one thing	52
Day 15: Like two builders	55
Day 16: The best choice	58

Meal five: Best seat in the house

Day 17: Clever but not kind	61
Day 18: Aim low. Push others up	65
Day 19: Strange invitations	69
Day 20: Turning it all upside down	72

Meal six: At home with Zach

Day 21: Evil in a tree	76
Day 22: With the crowd or the sinner?	79
Day 23: Saved and changed	82
Day 24: Lost and hated by all (except one)	86

Meal seven: The last supper

Day 25: Not the last supper	89
Day 26: A meal to remember	93
Day 27: True greatness	97
Day 28: Do this to remember me	100

Meal eight: Supper in Emmaus

Day 29: Their faces were very sad	103
Day 30: A stranger explains the whole Bible	106
Day 31: Eyes opened and hearts on fire	110
Day 32: All change!	113

Meal nine: Invite to the banquet

Day 33: Come to the big party? No thanks!	116
Day 34: Come to the big party! What, me?	120

Top tips	123
----------	-----

Before you begin

Welcome to *Meals with Jesus*, a journey through Luke's Gospel for the whole family.

Christians are not primarily about an institution, a religion, a habit or a set of behaviours. We are about Jesus Christ. As we sit with him at the dinner table, we see who he is: his decision-making, his compassion and his bravery. When we sit with him, we meet the man we spend so long talking about. As we look him square in the eye, we get the chance to make the biggest decisions of our lives. What do we think of him? Do we like him? Do we trust him? Will we dare to follow him?

There will come a day, if it has not already happened, when our sons and daughters will not take our word for it. They won't just do what their parents did before them. They need to hear it for themselves—the whole story—so that they can make their own decisions. With these studies your family will have the chance to look Jesus in the eye, to ask their deepest questions and to hear him speaking to them.

Come and have a meal with Jesus.

HOW TO READ THESE STORIES DURING LENT

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
WK 1		Shrove Tuesday Pancakes!	Day 1 Lk 5 v 27-28	Day 2 Lk 5 v 29-30	Day 3 Lk 5 v 31-32		
WK 2	Day 4 Lk 5 v 31-32	Day 5 Lk 7 v 36-39	Day 6 Lk 7 v 40-43	Day 7 Lk 7 v 44-50	Day 8 Lk 7 v 37-38, 47-48		
WK 3	Day 9 Lk 9 v 10-11	Day 10 Lk 9 v 12-14	Day 11 Lk 9 v 15-17	Day 12 Lk 9 v 16-17	Day 13 Lk 10 v 38-42		
WK 4	Day 14 Lk 10 v 38-42	Day 15 Lk 6 v 46-49	Day 16 Lk 10 v 41-42	Day 17 Lk 14 v 1-6	Day 18 Lk 14 v 7-11		
WK 5	Day 19 Lk 14 v 12-14	Day 20 Lk 14 v 11	Day 21 Lk 19 v 1-4	Day 22 Lk 19 v 5-7	Day 23 Lk 19 v 8-10		
WK 6	Day 24 Lk 19 v 5-10	Day 25 Lk 22 v 7-16	Day 26 Lk 22 v 17-23	Day 27 Lk 22 v 24-27	Day 28 Lk 22 v 15-20		
WK 7	Day 29 Lk 24 v 13-24	Day 30 Lk 24 v 25-29	Day 31 Lk 24 v 30-35	Day 32 Lk 24 v 30-34	Day 33 Good Friday Lk 14 v 15-20		Day 34 Easter Sunday Lk 14 v 21-24

Note: On both charts, the “hit the heart” stories are the ones with a grey background.

HOW TO ENJOY THESE STORIES AT ANY TIME OF YEAR

	MEAL	THEME	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4
WK 1	Lunch with Levi	The joy of following	Day 1 Lk 5 v 27-28	Day 2 Lk 5 v 29-30	Day 3 Lk 5 v 31-32	Day 4 Lk 5 v 31-32
WK 2	Simon's show	Gratitude for forgiveness	Day 5 Lk 7 v 36-39	Day 6 Lk 7 v 40-43	Day 7 Lk 7 v 44-50	Day 8 Lk 7 v 37-38, 47-48
WK 3	Mega picnic	Contentment from knowing we have all we need	Day 9 Lk 9 v 10-11	Day 10 Lk 9 v 12-14	Day 11 Lk 9 v 15-17	Day 12 Lk 9 v 16-17
WK 4	At Mary and Martha's	We delight to hear Jesus speak	Day 13 Lk 10 v 38-42	Day 14 Lk 10 v 38-42	Day 15 Lk 6 v 46-49	Day 16 Lk 10 v 41-42
WK 5	Best seat in the house	The humility to put others first	Day 17 Lk 14 v 1-6	Day 18 Lk 14 v 7-11	Day 19 Lk 14 v 12-14	Day 20 Lk 14 v 11
WK 6	At home with Zach	Amazement that Jesus came for the worst	Day 21 Lk 19 v 1-4	Day 22 Lk 19 v 5-7	Day 23 Lk 19 v 8-10	Day 24 Lk 19 v 5-10
WK 7	The last supper	Awestruck that Jesus died to take us to the final feast	Day 25 Lk 22 v 7-16	Day 26 Lk 22 v 17-23	Day 27 Lk 22 v 24-27	Day 28 Lk 22 v 15-20
WK 8	Supper in Emmaus	Sure hope because of Jesus' resurrection	Day 29 Lk 24 v 13-24	Day 30 Lk 24 v 25-29	Day 31 Lk 24 v 30-35	Day 32 Lk 24 v 30-34
WK 9	Invite to the banquet	Who will be at the final meal with Jesus?	Day 33 Lk 14 v 15-20	Day 34 Lk 14 v 21-24		

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Take ten minutes with your family each day.

Whether you have a child of three or eighteen, this flexible, easy-to-use resource will allow the whole family to celebrate a month of meals with Jesus.

The devotions we've created aim to be an achievable joy, not an unrealistic burden. No more than ten minutes are needed to complete a daily section. If you want to take longer, that's great!

We spend three days exploring each meal, followed by a "hit the heart" day to draw the themes of that meal together and apply them to our hearts.

There are two charts on pages 8-9. One shows you how to use these stories during Lent, as you build up to the Easter weekend. The other shows how you can use them at any time of year, on four days per week. Choose whichever approach works best for your family.

And if you'd like a bit more help, any tricky questions include an example answer in brackets after the question. There are also some top tips on page 123 at the back of the book.

I am so grateful to Tim Chester for his book *A Meal with Jesus*, which inspired, encouraged and advised me as I wrote these studies for my family and yours.

DAY 1

Leaving it all behind

Where are we going today?

Jesus picked a hated tax collector to become his friend. Levi left everything to follow Jesus.

READY?

- **Optional.** Can each person grab two or three objects that are precious to them or that represent favourite activities? Parents might grab a purse, a family picture or their car keys. Children might grab a soft toy, a screen, a photo of a friend, a soccer ball or a favourite piece of clothing.
- Open your Bible to **Luke 5 v 27-28** (or read the passage from page 12).

LET'S GO!

Pray: Dear Father, help us to understand what is most precious. Amen.

Perhaps try...

- Lay out your precious items on the floor.
- What emergency would it take for you to run out of your home right now and leave them *all* behind?
- If you can't do this activity, ask a quick question instead: Which object is most precious to you?
- *Link:* In today's story Levi left everything to follow Jesus.

This week's story

- *Where are we in the Bible?* Jesus has begun to cause a stir. News is spreading about him. Crowds have been gathering. Now it is time for Jesus to choose a group of friends to be his disciples.
- *Look out for* what we are told about the man Jesus chooses. (Look at the box on page 13 for more about tax collectors.)
- *Read* the passage.

Luke 5 v 27-28

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸ Levi got up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Questions for us all

1. What do you think a tax collector would have on his desk? (*If you want, you could put your wallet, phone and house keys out in front of you.*)
2. What sort of things do you imagine would fill Levi's normal working day?

Question for 3s and 4s

What did Levi do when Jesus said, "Follow me"?

Question for 5-7s

What did Levi take with him, as he went to follow Jesus?

Question for over-7s

Why would Levi or you leave everything to follow someone?

Question for teens

You make choices each day about who to follow, who to be with, who to listen to, who to imitate... How do you make those decisions? What is it about Jesus that has attracted you to following him? OR What would Jesus need to be like for you or your friends to choose to follow him?

Think and pray

Thank Jesus for the good things he has given you. Have you discovered what you value more than Jesus? Talk to him about that.

Got time to chat?

What and who we value leads quickly to the decisions we make. Think about how you choose to fill your spare time, which people you choose to be around, and who you wish you could see more often. Can you see from these decisions what you value, what you love, who you trust, and how you choose friends? Levi saw in Jesus all that he valued, all that he needed, and exactly who he needed to listen to.

Something more for the adults?

We know the tax collector Levi better as Matthew, the writer of the first Gospel. It's intriguing that Matthew chose not to write about his own calling in his Gospel, but instead he tells us about his friends being called to follow Jesus. Read Matthew 4 v 18-22. Matthew must have smiled as he wrote this and remembered his own story. What do we learn about discipleship from these passages? Before you load a burden on yourself to be more, to think more, or to do more, just take a moment to ponder what we learn about Jesus' role in discipleship.

A note about tax collectors

Levi was a tax collector: a Jew working for the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire had invaded the Jewish country, had made life harder for the Jewish people, and had killed some of Levi's own people. So the Jewish people hated the Roman Empire for taking away their freedom. This meant that Levi and other tax collectors were hated traitors. They were collecting money from their own people to give to the Roman Empire; that money paid for the hated Roman soldiers to stay in their country!

It gets even worse. The tax collectors could charge whatever they liked. So if Levi's Jewish neighbour owed two denarii, he could charge them three or four denarii and keep the extra money. Tax collectors got rich by stealing money from their own people. And if anyone argued, the Roman soldiers were on hand. Can you imagine how much the Jewish people hated Levi and the other tax collectors?

Jesus chose Levi! No one else chose to even talk to Levi. But Jesus went back to Levi's for a party. Why? Did Jesus know what Levi had done?

DAY 2

The strangest party

Where are we going today?

Jesus chose to go home with the worst of people for a party with other scumbags.

READY?

- **Optional.** Collect a few objects for each member of the family, to represent people. Some toy characters? Or just some big spoons?
- Open up your Bible to **Luke 5 v 29-30** (or read the passage from page 15).

LET'S GO!

Pray: Dear Father, please help us to understand why Jesus chose to make friends with mean people. Amen.

Perhaps try...

- Each person picks two of their best friends. Tell each other about them. Why do you like them?
- Now imagine totally opposite people. Use the objects you've collected to represent these imaginary people. So, if your friend loves playing with you, imagine someone who only spoils your games and shouts at you. If your friend is kind, imagine someone selfish and mean. Let's give these imaginary anti-friends names such as Mean Milly or Angry Alan.
- If you can't do this activity, ask a quick question instead: Describe someone you would never want as a friend.

- *Link: How would it feel walking into a party of those people? That is exactly where Jesus goes in today's story.*

This week's story

- *Where are we in the Bible? Jesus walked up to Levi and told him, "Follow me". Where did they go next?*
- *Look out for what the Jewish leaders were angry about.*
- *Read the passage.*

Luke 5 v 29-30

²⁹ Then Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. The dinner was at Levi's house. At the table there were many tax collectors and other people, too. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the men who taught the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the followers of Jesus. They said, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

Questions for us all

1. Who was at the party?
2. What made the Jewish leaders so angry?

Question for 3s and 4s

Levi made a great big yummy dinner for Jesus. What do you think they ate?

Question for 5-7s

Levi and the other tax collectors knew that everyone else thought they were bad people, always doing the wrong thing. Who do you think Levi normally invited to his parties?

Question for over-7s

Normally, only tax collectors and sinners went to parties like Levi's. No one like Jesus had ever come to one. Who would you invite to your party who would be amazed to be invited? How would you feel about inviting them? *(It is easy to think of someone who you wouldn't normally invite. The challenge is to think of someone who would love to be invited to your party. Perhaps you would feel pleased to amaze someone, or a little cross that they get to enjoy your party without deserving it.)*

Question for teens

What do you know about tax collectors in Jesus' day? Look at the note on page 13. If you knew all this about Levi, what might you have been thinking as Levi walked with Jesus, taking him back to his house? What do you think you might have blurted out to Jesus as he walked past you? *(Some of us would want to tell Jesus all about Levi, in case he hadn't realized. Others of us might feel a little jealous that Jesus hadn't chosen to spend time with us. The best of us might want to say, "Finally! We have someone in authority who is kind to all and listens to the marginalised!")*

Think and pray

Thank Jesus that he is a friend to the friendless and to those that most people hate. Is there anyone like that who you want to pray for?

Got time to chat?

It can be lonely to feel as if you're on the outside, with people pointing at you. Sometimes we can be the ones doing the pointing. What do others do, that makes you think, "They are wrong. That is bad. They should be punished"? Sometimes we are the ones being pointed at, because we have done something wrong. Which of those two—pointing at others or being pointed at—do you think is normally you? Does this story teach you something?

Something more for the adults?

Paul was very clear that he was one of those sinners that Jesus had chosen to love. In fact, Paul said he was the worst of sinners! Read 1 Timothy 1 v 15-17. When you find yourself feeling crushed by your sin, how does Paul offer a way forward for your broken heart? Read carefully. Paul sees that he was shown mercy and patience. Jesus Christ not only offers us a way out of our shame and despair but lifts our faces to the one who offers our hearts soaring, joyful, hope-filled worship. What a Saviour we have!