

middle school



Lesson 2 / March 12, 2023

Meet the Heart Changer

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 2

Focus:

Jesus demands we shape up.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Matthew 21:12-17

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." —John 8:31

To introduce the topic, students will watch a video about some quick-change artists as they consider the kind of change God wants from us.

Materials:

- Internet access

Have you ever watched a quick-change artist perform? Quick-change artists do just what their job title says—they change outfits quickly. They take a task that would typically take a minute or two and some maneuvering and they do it in just a few seconds, effortlessly, right before your eyes with just the wave of a cloth or burst of confetti. Let's watch:

Play the following video [2:01; stop at 1:47]:

Léa Kyle Surprises The Judges With STUNNING Quick-Change - America's Got Talent 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAQtMjMdBZg>

A dramatic change can be very interesting to witness. This is probably why we like shows that reveal a made-over or made-better person or place at the end.

➤ **What about you? Do you like change or resist change? Why?** (Answers will vary. Some people thrive on change for the sake of variety and excitement and others resist it because they feel comfortable with what they know. Most of your students will likely have examples of both.)

➤ **Have you ever changed or seen someone change their behavior or personality quickly? Tell about that.** (Accept all reasonable answers. Common examples of this could be pretending to be doing homework when a parent walks in on you watching YouTube, or someone pretending to like something only when a certain person is around in an attempt to impress them.)

➤ **Do you think God wants a quick change from us that only lasts a short while, or does He want a heart change that is permanent?** (Students may want to consider many aspects of this. We don't have to change who we are to be Christians or be loved by God, as God has made and gifted us each uniquely, but just as we grow physically, we grow in our faith which requires change—repenting of old ways and becoming more and more like Christ.)

Today we're going to take a look at a time when Jesus told some people to shape up and change their ways—let's find out more.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

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Lesson 2 / March 12, 2023

Meet the Heart Changer

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 2

Focus:

Jesus demands we
shape up.

Lesson 2

Bible Basis:

Matthew 21:12-17

Lesson 2

Memory Verse:

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching,
you are really my disciples." —John 8:31

Materials:

- Internet access
- Optional: Whiteboard and marker (or screenshared document)

Have a volunteer read John 8:31: "Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.'" **Jesus wanted us to know that if we are truly His followers, we will want to shape up and follow His teachings.**

As your students respond to the following questions, you might want to write answers on the whiteboard (or screenshared document).

- **What are some areas in our lives that we might need to change or "shape up"?** (Answers will vary. They may want to revisit some of their responses in Step 3 activities. Answers may include: Respecting authority, how they treat others, etc.)
- **What are some things you could do to shape up in those areas?** (Answers will vary. Examples might be to respond quickly when parents ask them to do something rather than have to be asked multiple times, seek out those in need, offer help, and advocate for the hurting.)

There was a good example in the news recently of someone who showed how to live a Christlike life.

Although the worst of the pandemic is over, we're all familiar with the COVID-19 pandemic and the way it's affected ourselves, our communities, and our families. As of the middle of February 2020, cases of this virus topped 72,500 with over 1,800 related deaths. All across China, people are talking about Dr. Li Wenliang. He was the doctor who discovered the virus and in the early morning of February 7, 2020, he himself died from the virus after catching it from his patients.

Back in December of 2019, he was arrested in China for being a whistle-blower (calling attention to) a mysterious pneumonia-like virus. It has been reported that he was a brother in Christ. He did exactly what we've been talking about: he sought out those in need, offered help, and advocated for them.

He continued to care for patients up until he was infected himself. What a legacy to leave behind of what it means to be like Jesus to those hurting in a time of crisis. He chose to be an example of Immanuel, ‘God with us’ to the people of Wuhan. Can you imagine the joy he must have felt as he entered into eternity and heard the words of Jesus, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”?

➤ **What are some ways Dr. Wenliang showed that he was following the teachings of Jesus?** (Answers will vary. Students may mention that he laid down his life for others, that he sought out those in need, offered all the help he had to give, and advocated for them even though he got in trouble with his government.)

Let’s pray for his family—and for the individuals and families like Dr. Wenliang who sacrifice for the sake of others. (If time allows, you can invite students to share specific names of people they know who live sacrificially or put their lives on the line.)

You might want to have a group prayer time as you close; allow students to offer up sentence prayers about the coronavirus sufferers and/or ask God to show all of you how to shape up and become more Christlike especially as you interact with others.

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