

middle school



Great Expectations

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1



Lesson 7

Focus:

Jesus is greater than our expectations.

Lesson 7

Bible Basis:

John 8:21-29, 48-59

Lesson 7

Memory Verse:

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
—Colossians 1:17

Your students will watch a video, discuss expectations vs. reality, and come to understand that the “not yet” of what Jesus will do is beyond our greatest expectations.

Materials:

- Internet access

As students enter your classroom, encourage them to think about one thing/event/person they are excited for and looking forward to (doing/attending/seeing) in the near future. When most students have arrived, call on various students and ask them what they thought of. After students share, ask:

- **Do you think this** (fill in the blank with activity/event/person/etc.) **will live up to your expectations?** (Invite students to share their opinions. There are no wrong answers.)

We all have expectations. Many of them are formed by things we see online. For example, we may believe we should have the latest fashion or most popular tech because “everyone” online seems to have those things. Let’s take a look at a funny video from a content creator illustrating how photo and video editing on social media platforms can lead to ridiculous expectations for how everyday life and actions should be. Let’s take a look.

Share this video with your students [0:39]:

Instagram VS. Reality

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/7rZiFIJwzEk>

- **How were the “Instagram” expectations different than the realities of how these everyday actions played out?** (Possible answers include: the highly edited versions for social media made even getting the mail or reading a book seem dramatic, the “Instagram” versions weren’t an accurate reflection of everyday actions, etc.)
- **Although this was a silly video highlighting how social media can set us up to have silly expectations about how our lives should look, can you relate to the idea that it can be easy to build expectations for your life or relationships based on things you see online?** (Answers will vary, invite honest answers here.)

➤ **Is it important to have expectations?** (Answers will vary. Students may note that it is always good to “play things through” in our heads before we actually encounter them so that we can think through what the reality of the situation may be like.)

Frequently, we are disappointed by expectations we set that are way too high for a person or experience to meet, and we end up being disappointed. Imagine a situation where it is impossible to expect too much! Today we’re going to talk about just that: not being able to set our expectations high enough. Let’s look further at what that means.

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

Great Expectations

for use as
STEP 4 **Lesson 7****Focus:**

Jesus is greater than our expectations.

Lesson 7**Bible Basis:**

John 8:21-29, 48-59

Lesson 7**Memory Verse:**

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
—Colossians 1:17

Materials:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

Many people in Jesus' time did not believe Jesus could possibly be God. The Jews were perplexed by Jesus' statements such as "Where I go, you cannot come" and "whoever obeys my word will never see death." Jesus' words were filled with spiritual meaning, but the Jews could only see them literally and became frustrated with Jesus, even wanting to kill Him.

Realizing that Jesus is greater than our expectations is what today's lesson is about. Our memory verse from Colossians 1:17 confirms this idea, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." The idea of Jesus being before all things can be a difficult concept because most people think of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection in consecutive order, but Jesus being before time is one of the great mysteries of the Trinity.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Encourage students to write today's memory verse on an index card so they can remember this truth. Encourage students to contemplate the last sentence, "**and in him all things hold together.**" **This is one way Jesus is greater than our expectations. Jesus holds everything together; without Him everything would fall apart.**

- Have students break down the word expectations. **What word is in the word "expectations"?** (Expect.)
- **What things can we expect from Jesus in the future?** (Have students list things that they know about Jesus. That Jesus will come again! Jesus will restore the world. Jesus will come as judge. Jesus will ride a white horse, etc. There are many answers that are correct here. Let students come up with as many as possible.)
- **We talked about expectation vs. reality earlier in today's lesson. How might reality surpass expectation when it comes to our future with Jesus?** (Answers will vary. If no one brings it up, have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 2:9. Remind students that God has told us that we can't even begin to imagine how wonderful it will be. We can never expect too much!)

In our week ahead, there may be expectations about things to come that we are excited about. A new year is full of expectations and that is natural and normal. Keep in mind, however, that human expectations can fail, but having great expectations about Jesus is something that will never fail us. Jesus is greater than our expectations.

Tell students to flip over their index card and write down the thing they are expectantly looking forward to (in this week/month/year) Next to this thing, write today's lesson focus: Jesus is greater than our expectations.

Have students pair up and pray for each other this week as they face their own expectations related to their lives and try to weigh these things in light of Jesus' expectations for our future with Him. (If your class is meeting online, you can use the breakout room feature of your video chat software.) Give students a minute or two to talk about the thing they are in expectation of and discuss together how putting their expectations on Jesus can be an encouragement for them. **It isn't easy to wait, yet we can anticipate great things when we put our trust in Jesus.**

Close in prayer for the entire group thanking Jesus for being greater than our expectations and for being trustworthy. Pray for guidance as students face each day living with their expectations vs. the realities of their lives. Ask for help in turning to Jesus as their greatest expectation.

(We are not affiliated with and do not endorse any website or any other media listed on these pages. At the time of writing, we carefully review the referenced material and non-referenced web page content. However, due to the nature of the Internet, non-cited content on the website [including pop-ups, links, and ads] changes frequently and is beyond our control. Please review carefully before showing links in the classroom.)