

# DAY 1

## Meet Jesus!

### Discover His Bold Claims

#### BIBLE PASSAGES

John 4:5–26; Mark 2:1–12; 1 John 3:5;  
Colossians 1:16; John 14:6

#### APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Compared to all others, only Jesus can rightly claim to be God.

#### PRECIOUS GOLD MEMORY VERSE

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

#### GEM TO TREASURE

Don’t be fooled by counterfeits!

#### LESSON AIM

Children will be challenged to meet Jesus in a fresh way as they learn about the bold claims Jesus made about Himself, including that He is God, He is the only way to heaven, and He can forgive sins.

#### Today’s Lesson at a Glance

- News That’s New  
Panning for Gold
- Discover What’s True  
Part One: Staking His Claims  
Part Two: Puppet Pal—The Way, the Truth, the Life
- Time to Review  
Part One: Precious Gold Memory Verses  
Part Two: Go and Do  
Review Game: Bucket of Gold

#### Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Mark 2:1–12, John 4:5–26, John 14:1–6, Colossians 1:16, and 1 John 3:5 to prepare for teaching about the bold claims of Jesus.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- Pray.

#### Lesson Materials

##### FROM TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

- ☐ Memory verse poster
- ☐ Daily overview poster
- ☐ Bold Claims posters

##### FROM TEACHER RESOURCE CD-ROM

- ☐ 2 copies of today’s puppet script

##### OTHER MATERIALS

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Old West costumes for teachers
- ☐ Gold panning supplies (baby pool, play sand and water, colanders, blue plastic tablecloth)
- ☐ “Gold nuggets” (gold aquarium gravel)
- ☐ Claim-staking supplies (wooden stakes, hammer, rope, bag)
- ☐ “Well” supplies (large appliance box, marker, rope, bowl of water, small bucket, tarp)
- ☐ Boy or girl puppet
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Map
- ☐ Optional: Today’s coin, 1 per child
- ☐ Optional: Student guides and supplies (see page 19)
- ☐ Optional: Review game supplies (see page 20)

## Today's Devotional: Meet Jesus

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1*

Imagine meeting a man who claimed to be God. What would you think? Crazy nut?

Now imagine this man claimed to be the fulfillment of statements written hundreds of years before. Sure, sure, weirdo.

Now imagine the little boy down the street who had died was running around again. The man who claimed to be God had raised him from the dead. It was no trick—you had seen the boy after he died, and he was now playing with your kids.

Makes you think, doesn't it? Could this man really be who he claimed to be?

This is our Savior.

Even though today, we would (and should) scoff at someone staking a claim to deity, Jesus Christ was the real deal. He was the Creator incarnate, the God-man, the One who came to save His people from their sins, fulfilling the promises God had made since the beginning of time.

As you study your Bible this week, focus your attention on the four gospels. Put aside the genteel storybook notions that cloud the truth about the Messiah. And read the accounts as if for the first time, marveling at the astounding claims Jesus made ("before Abraham was, I AM"); the awesome demonstrations of His power over

nature, sin, and death; the amazing fact that He *rose from the dead*; and the astonishing change in the lives of those He touched.

Of all the people who have ever lived, ever led a religion, ever claimed to be a deity, only Jesus has the credentials to deserve our worship and following. And the only way we can know the truth about Him is through His inspired Word, the Bible.

As you prepare to meet Jesus with your students today, let's meditate on this Puritan Prayer about the Rock of Ages.

Thou Great I AM,  
Fill my mind with elevation and grandeur at the  
thought of a Being  
With whom one day is as a thousand years, and a  
thousand years as one day.  
A mighty God who, amidst the lapse of the worlds,  
and the revolutions of empires,  
Feels no variableness but is glorious in immortality.  
May I rejoice that, while men die, the Lord lives;  
That, while all creatures are broken reeds, empty  
cisterns, fading flowers, withering grass,  
He is the Rock of Ages, the fountain of Living  
Waters.

—Arthur Bennet, *The Valley of Vision*  
(The Banner of Truth Trust: 2005), p. 104.

## News That's New (5–10 minutes)

### Panning for Gold

**Teacher One:** Howdy, partners, and welcome to the Old West! I'm mighty glad to see y'all! My name is Miner \_\_\_\_\_ and this here is \_\_\_\_\_ (Teacher Two or Teaching Assistant). This is my cabin, and just over yonder is the Discovery Mine Site. Are you ready to head out to look for gold? Let's get on our ponies and gallop along. (Pretend to do so. After a few seconds, stop and cough, then say the following.) **Whew! It sure is dusty on the trail! Let's grab our bandanas to keep the dust from our lungs.** (Pretend to do so. After a few seconds, continue to the "creek" area, then say the following.) **Well, we're just about here, and look at all of you comin' to find gold! It's gonna cause a GOLD RUSH!**

**I'm sure y'all would like to try your hand at panning for gold, so let's try it now.**

Do so. Show them how to dip their pan and swish it around. Give them a few minutes to play around with this before moving on. Or the teacher can do this now, and at the end of the day's lesson, offer three stations at which the kids can take turns: one for panning for gold, one for playing with the well (see below), and one for practicing the memory verse (see page 19).

**Did anybody find some gold? Whether you did or didn't, I'm still mighty glad you're here, because I'm trusting that every one of you will find some gold this week. The gold I'm talkin' about isn't the kind from the ground, though. We're gonna be mining for TRUE gold and meetin' that one-of-a-kind, extra special ROCK, the Rock of Ages, called Jesus. He's worth more than all the silver and gold in the world! Maybe you've heard about Jesus before and maybe you haven't, but we're gonna meet Him in a fresh way and hear the claims He staked about Himself. So let's mosey on to our next activity where we can meet Jesus.**

## Discover What's True (20–25 minutes)

### Part One: Staking His Claims (15–20 minutes)

**Teacher Two:** Start at the area of the room near the "creek" and pick up claim-staking supplies, which can be wooden stakes, a hammer, and a rope. (You might want to put your supplies in a feed sack or muslin bag.) Act as if you're measuring and hammering to stake a claim. These can also be imaginary supplies.

**Teacher One:** \_\_\_\_\_, what are you doing?

**Teacher Two:** I heard you say you were staking claims today, so I wanted to be sure to get ours staked before all the good locations were taken.

**Teacher One:** I said we were going to *talk* about claims today, not *stake* claims.

**Teacher Two:** You mean you aren't gonna try and get us the best claim on the creek?

- ☐ Old West costumes for teachers
- ☐ Gold panning supplies (baby pool or under-the bed storage container, play sand and water, colanders or pie pans with holes punched in them, blue plastic tablecloth)
- ☐ "Gold nuggets" (gold aquarium gravel or small pebbles)

#### PRE-PREP

1. For the gold panning station, put down the tablecloth, place the pool on it, add the play sand with some water, and place the colanders nearby.
2. Spray paint the aquarium gravel and let dry. (Or purchase gold aquarium gravel.)
3. For larger classes, set up several stations.

★ Think of fun names for yourselves, such as Uncle Jed, Coyote Kate, Panner Pete, or Goldie.

★ An alternative to making the well is to give each child a drink of water to sip as you share this account.

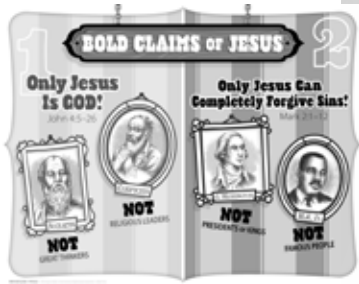
- ☐ Bible (or children's picture Bible)
- ☐ Claim-staking supplies (wooden stakes, hammer, rope, bag)
- ☐ "Well" supplies (large appliance box, marker, rope, cooler or bowl of water, small bucket, tarp or thick towel)
- ☐ Bold Claims posters (Teacher Resource Pack)

#### PRE-PREP

1. Make the well by drawing stones on the sides of the appliance box with the marker, placing the bowl or cooler of water in the well, and attaching a rope (approximately 7 feet) to the small bucket. You may want to place the bowl on a tarp or thick towel to catch spills, or just pretend there's water.

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★ Kids enjoy looking at Old West photos. Find some on the web at places such as [www.archives.gov/research/american-west/](http://www.archives.gov/research/american-west/) and show throughout the week.



★ Be familiar with the lesson, but don't memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference.

★ If working as co-teachers, decide which parts of the lesson each of you will be responsible for teaching.

★ The Bible is listed just once daily but may be used throughout the day.

★ An alternative to making the well is to give each child a drink of water to sip as you share this account.

**Teacher One:** No, \_\_\_\_\_, I'm gonna tell the boy and girls about some amazing claims that Jesus made about Himself that are rock-solid gold.

**Teacher Two:** Well, I reckon they must be worth lots of money, then!

**Teacher One:** They're worth a lot more than money. Why don't you take a load off your feet and listen while I tell you what I read in this here Bible?

Four accounts follow with four claims of Jesus. Do as many as time allows. As you narrate each one, pick children as volunteers to act them out where noted. They can act them out silently (doing what you are talking about), or they can repeat lines after you have said them.

## Claim 1: Only Jesus Is God! (John 4:5-19, 25-26)

Volunteers needed: Jesus (a boy); woman at the well (a girl); townsfolk (rest of class). Call the boy and girl up at the time noted in the narrative.

**Does anyone know what a well is?** (Take responses.) **It's a deep hole in the ground that has access to water way down in the ground. People used it (some still do!) to get their water, much like we use faucets in our houses. They would let a bucket down and fill it with water, then pull on a rope to get the water.**

Demonstrate this and let them try it. Or, if doing as a station at the end of the lesson, have them take their turns later.

At this point, have the boy and girl volunteers come up.

**The Bible records a time when the star of our VBS, Jesus, came to a well in the town of Samaria. Jesus was very tired because He had been traveling, so He sat down by the well.**

**Along came a woman from Samaria to get some water at the well. Usually Jewish men (which Jesus was) wouldn't speak to Samaritan women. Jewish people didn't like Samaritans, especially Samaritan women.**

**But Jesus wasn't an ordinary person. He loves all people, no matter what they look like or where they live. He loves you, and He loved that Samaritan woman. So as she came to the well, Jesus talked to her and asked her if she could get him a drink of water. This would have surprised the woman to have Jesus talk to her. Girls, give me your best look of shocked surprise, along with the Samaritan woman. (Do so.)**

**As they talked, she began to realize Jesus was someone special. He was able to tell her all about her life, even though they had never met before. For instance, Jesus told her to go get her husband. She said she didn't have a husband. Jesus told her that was true, and that she had actually had five husbands in her lifetime.**

**The woman was amazed that Jesus knew all about her past life. Look amazed, everyone, along with the woman at the well. (Do so.) Still, she didn't completely know who Jesus was. She told Jesus she knew the Messiah (God) was going to come, and when He came, He would tell her all things.**

**Jesus told her that He was that Messiah. In other words, He told her He was God!**

He wasn't just a person, like everyone else who has ever lived or who will ever live. He was and is God!

The woman was so excited she left her water pot and ran to tell everyone what Jesus had said to her. She brought many more people to meet Jesus, and they also believed Jesus was God, the Savior of the world.

Have the volunteers sit down. Using the Bold Claims posters, say:

Jesus claims here that He is God. That's a mighty big thing to claim! Can you imagine someone comin' up to you and claiming he is God? None of the world's most famous thinkers (such as a guy named Socrates, for example) ever claimed to be God. Founders of false religions, such as Confucius, never claimed to be God. Some cultures, like ancient Greece or Rome, made up gods like Zeus or Hermes, but they weren't for real. Only Jesus can claim to be God and back it up with His life. *Only Jesus!*

## Claim 2: Only Jesus Can Completely Forgive Sins! (Mark 2:1–12)

Volunteers needed: Jesus (a boy); paralyzed man (a boy); crowd (rest of class). Call the two boy volunteers up at the time noted in the narrative.

To set the stage, have the class crowd together as much as they possibly can. Share Mark 2:1–12 and have everyone look up and imagine the roof being taken off and pieces of tile (roof) possibly falling in. Imagine the paralyzed man being lowered on a mat through the hole in the roof. Continue with the narrative, with the two volunteers beginning at this point to act out the parts of Jesus and the paralyzed man, and everyone else reacting as the crowd did.

Have the volunteers sit down. Using the Bold Claims posters, say:

When someone has sinned against us, we can forgive them for it. But we can't offer complete forgiveness for all the sin (disobedience to God's commands) someone has done in this life. Only God can forgive all sins. Jesus claims He is God by saying He can forgive sins, then He backs it up with action! No other person can completely take away our sin. *Only Jesus!*

## Claim 3: Only Jesus Is Perfect! (1 John 3:5)

Volunteers needed: None

Just briefly share this one. Using the Bold Claims posters, say:

Have you ever heard of people like Buddha who founded false religions? There are many such counterfeit (false) leaders out there. Remember, these people were just men. They made mistakes. They weren't perfect. For example, Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, left his wife and son in search of answers about life. Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was arrested for dishonest banking. Other religious founders were known for sinning.

Jesus, on the other hand, *was* perfect. The Bible says "in Him there is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Sin is disobeying God's commands. The Bible clearly tells us Jesus never did

★ You may want to have the same person for Jesus every time—perhaps a male teen helper or adult.





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anything wrong. He always obeyed God's commands. He never made a mistake. His enemies tried to figure out something He did wrong so they could blame Him, but they could never come up with even one true sin.

No other person can make the claim that they are perfect and back it up with a perfect life. *Only Jesus!*

## Claim 4: Only Jesus Is the Creator! (Colossians 1:16)

Volunteers needed: The whole class.

When you mention something Jesus created, point to one or two people and have them act that out. The key words to act out are italicized. If you want each child to act one out, just keep thinking up more plant kinds or animal kinds.

Did you know that Jesus never had a beginning? He's been around forever. Think back as far as you can imagine, and He was there before that! If you tried to think back even further, He was there! And further still, He was there! No one else can say that!

About 6,000 years ago, Jesus created time and the world and everything in it. Let's act out some of the things He created. When I point to you, act out what I mention.

He created *light*. He created the *heavens*. He created *plants*. He created the *sun*, the *moon*, and the *stars*. He created *fish*. He created *birds*. He created *dinosaurs*. He created *land animals*. He created *Adam*. He created *Eve*.

The Bible says, "For by Him [Jesus] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth. All things were created through Him [Jesus] and for Him [Jesus]" (Colossians 1:16). Jesus created horses, and prairie dogs, and cattle, and gold, and people!

Have everyone sit down if they aren't already. Using the Bold Claims posters, say:

Sometimes people talk about "Mother Nature" or "The Force" as if they're real and can create. But there's no such thing as "Mother Nature" or "The Force." They're just make-believe. The Bible clearly tells us Jesus is the Creator (Genesis 1:1; John 1). He created everyone and everything, including the founders of false religions, like Confucius and Buddha. No one else can create from nothing. *Only Jesus!*

## Part Two: Puppet Pal—The Way, the Truth, the Life

(5 minutes)

### Claim 5: Only Jesus Is the Way to Heaven! (John 14:6)

Share this last example using the Puppet Pal.

If you don't have a teaching assistant, enlist someone (a class leader or other volunteer) to work the puppet each day. The puppet will enter from the cabin window. If you need to work the puppet by yourself, have the puppet enter from an old trunk or suitcase that has the lid flipped up.

- ☐ Boy or girl puppet
- ☐ 2 copies of today's puppet script (Teacher CD-ROM)
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Map
- ☐ Daily overview poster (Teacher Resource Pack)
- ☐ Optional: Today's coin, 1 per child

#### PRE-PREP

1. Tape one script inside the cabin window, and attach the other to a clipboard for reference.

The puppet (Dakota) can be a boy or girl. He (or she) should appear disheveled and flustered each day. Use a consistent voice for the puppet all week. Speak clearly, and exaggerate words and expressions. For instance, draw out certain words for emphasis, or make an exaggerated action for things like groaning or turning its head or sneezing. Use your free hand to do things with the puppet's hands or arms. For example, if the puppet is "thinking," put the puppet's hand on its chin. When the puppet is talking, make sure the mouth is open. (This is the opposite of what people often do!)

**Dakota:** Enter, appearing flustered, turning head dramatically from side to side several times. Look up, look down, then look all around.

**Teacher:** Hi there, Dakota. What seems to be the trouble?

**Dakota:** I am soooooooooo frustrated!

**Teacher:** Why?

**Dakota:** Well, I was supposed to be at the gold mine an hour ago, but I'm lost. I can't figure out if it's this way, or that way, or which way. Turn your head dramatically as you say this.

**Teacher:** Pick up a map. Let me look at this map here, and I'll try to help you out. Look at it for a few seconds. Begin to point dramatically this way and that as you say the following, with Dakota turning this way and that, too. Also, talk faster and faster: **It looks like all you need to do is go down the road that way about five miles, then turn that way and go another five miles, then hike up this little lane for a mile or two, then take a right, then take the first left, then another left, then two more rights, and you'll be right there!**

**Dakota:** Groan. Put his hand on the side of his head. **Why does finding your way have to be so complicated?**

**Teacher:** It doesn't have to be. I know a place you can find your way to easily.

**Dakota:** Turn slowly to the audience. **Where's that? Timbuktu?**

**Teacher:** No, somewhere more important than that. The Bible is our perfect map for life, and it tells us the way to heaven.

**Dakota:** Aaaahhh! Heaven? I'm not thinking about that yet!

**Teacher:** I know. But it's good to be ready. And the Bible tells us the way.

**Dakota:** What do we have to do? Follow the yellow brick road up into the sky? Begin to hum, and get the kids humming, too.

**Teacher:** Uh, no. It's really not that kind of way.

**Dakota:** What do you mean?

**Teacher:** The Bible tells us that Jesus is the way to heaven. He's THE way, THE truth, and THE life.

**Dakota:** Shake your head sideways. **I don't get it. I just don't get it.**

★ Dress the puppet in Old West clothing (a mini hat and bandana, a flannel shirt, etc.) or a small VBS T-shirt. To make a small T-shirt, photocopy, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the logo and tape it to a baby-sized T-shirt.

★ If you want to get snazzy, use a quick musical introduction and exit when it's puppet time.

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**Teacher:** That means there's only one way to live forever in heaven, and that's by believing in Jesus. He truly is God, He truly is perfect, and He truly is *the* only way to live forever in heaven. Jesus said He is THE way, THE truth, THE life. If anyone tells you there's another way to heaven, you need to know that it's just a counterfeit, which means a fake. **DON'T BE FOOLED BY COUNTERFEITS!** Only Jesus is the way.

**Dakota:** Are you trying to tell me there's no one like Jesus?

**Teacher:** I certainly am. All other people are just people. Jesus is GOD! He'll never let you down. Now you'd better get on your way to that gold mine.

**Dakota:** Get all agitated and excited. The gold mine? Oh, man, I forgot! Yikes! Help! Oh, no! I've gotta scram. See you later!

**Teacher:** See you later, Dakota. Boys and girls, some people say all beliefs lead to heaven. Religions such as Hinduism or Bahaism, for instance, claim there can be many ways to get to heaven. Muslims claim Islam is the way to heaven. But in this passage, Jesus teaches He's not *one* of the ways to heaven, He's the *only* way. *Only Jesus!* Just like fool's gold looks similar to gold but really isn't worth anything, other religions may say Jesus was just a good teacher or was one of many gods, but these religions are counterfeits (fakes). Point to the daily overview poster. **DON'T BE FOOLED BY COUNTERFEITS! Jesus is God, and He is the only way to heaven!**

Show them the coin they will receive at the end of the day and repeat the saying together: Don't be fooled by counterfeits! Then sing the following song together to the tune of "Oh, My Darling Clementine."

Verse One

Oh, God's Son, Oh, God's Son,  
Oh, God's Son is Jesus Christ

Oh, God's Son, Oh, God's Son  
Oh, God's Son is Jesus Christ

NOTE: Every day new verses will be added to this song.

## Bold Claims of Jesus

Claim	Passage	Bible Account	Point to Ponder
1. Only Jesus is God!	John 4:5–26	Woman at the Well	No one else can rightly claim to be God. Only Jesus.
2. Only Jesus can completely forgive sins!	Mark 2:1–12	Paralyzed Man	No one else can completely forgive sins. Only Jesus.
3. Only Jesus is perfect!	1 John 3:5	In Him Is No Sin	No one else was or is perfect. Only Jesus.
4. Only Jesus is the Creator!	Colossians 1:16	By Him All Things Were Created	No one else can create from nothing. Only Jesus.



5. Only Jesus is the way to heaven!	John 14:6	The Way, the Truth, the Life	All paths don't lead to heaven. Only Jesus.
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## Time to Review (Remaining class time)

Choose from the following options. Specific supplies for this section are not listed in the supply list on the back cover since they will vary depending on the activities you choose. If time is an issue, the student pages can be sent home to be completed and the review game can be done in class. Be sure to motivate the kids to do the student pages at home because they are full of good stuff! Have the team leaders check with the kids tomorrow to see how they did on them and consider giving contest bonus points to the children for their hard work!

- ☐ **Optional: Student guides and supplies for Part 1 and Part 2**
- ☐ **Memory verse poster (Teacher Resource Pack)**

## Part One: Precious Gold Memory Verses

### Option One

If you purchased the student pages, pass them out now and complete the Precious Gold Memory Verse sections and anything else you have time for. Challenge the kids to complete the rest at home.

### Option Two

If you didn't purchase the student pages, continue with the directions below, choosing according to your time.

Today's memory verse is listed first, with directions. As time allows, practice tomorrow's verse, as well.

**Today's Verse:** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Practice this verse several times, using the memory verse poster as a reference, then try the following challenge.

**Challenge:** The Pony Express riders tried to deliver the mail as fast as possible. Write the verse on an envelope and place the envelope on a plastic or paper plate that's flipped upside-down. Walk across the room with the envelope and plate, saying the verse all the way. Don't touch the envelope! If the envelope falls off, come back and start over. See how fast you can "deliver" your verse. Or, divide into two groups and relay race against each other.

**Tomorrow's Verse:** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:21).

Say tomorrow's verse together several times and try the challenge again.

★ You can also have team leaders pass these out at the end of the day.

★ The back of each day's student page parallels this section. The front provides additional information for the kids.

## Part Two: Go and Do

Share one or more of the following ideas and challenge the kids to complete it now or at home, depending on the choice and how much class time you have.

1. **Read or have someone read to you any account of Jesus in the Bible. Even if you've heard this account many times, read it as if you've never heard of Jesus before. Always be amazed as you read the Bible and meet Jesus on its pages!**
2. **Act out the Woman at the Well Bible account you heard today.**
3. **Jesus is our Rock (1 Corinthians 10:4). Write the name JESUS on a rock with a permanent marker. Decorate the rock and keep it as a reminder. Discuss what it means for Jesus to be our Rock.**
4. **One way Jesus is unique is He is the Creator (Colossians 1:15–17). Make a poster showing something Jesus created.**

**Ask yourself this question: How is Jesus better than everyone else who has ever lived?**

## Review Game: Bucket of Gold

Each day, an optional quick review game is included. It's not only a fun ending to the lesson, but also reinforces what was learned.

**Goal:** See which team can fill its bucket with gold first.

**Play:** Divide into two teams. Boys against girls is quickest! Take turns asking review questions from today's lesson. If the team gets it right, they automatically get one piece of gold in their bucket. They then get a turn to throw another nugget of gold in their bucket from five feet away. If it goes in, it helps to fill their bucket. If it doesn't, it goes back in the pile. Keep this moving at a quick pace! The winning team is the one whose bucket is most full by the end of the playing time.

- ☐ 2 small galvanized buckets
- ☐ 30 wadded up sheets of yellow tissue paper

### PRE-PREP

1. Place the two buckets on a table with the tissue paper "nuggets" in a pile between them.
2. Make up 15–20 review questions from today's lesson.