



Connect to the Mission

Leader's Guide

Week 1

Topic: Matthew 28:18-20 – All Authority

PREWORK: Before Class: Read the full leader's guide and watch the videos on the website. Note the time of the videos so you can plan well.

Study these teaching points covered in the video.

Script****

Speaker: Chris Henderson

Connecting to The Mission is about becoming a disciple of Jesus. As we read scripture, we clearly see Jesus had a mission on earth. We know Jesus came to save the least and the lost, to restore creation to its original purpose by reopening the gate to the Kingdom of Heaven in our midst. He died to save us from the destruction of our own sins. He defeated death and offered us eternal life. And, in all of this, He was training 12 ordinary men to carry on his work. But before we talk about that I want to remind you of the Great Commandment:

In Matthew 22: 36-39 Jesus was asked, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."

That means that we are freed from a lengthy list of dos and don'ts. Jesus is reminding humankind that God is love and He made us out of the overflow of His love. Our response is to love Him and all His other children because He first loved us. As we begin to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ, we must remember that love drives all our actions. Every day we are learning to love God more and learning to love others more. It is out of this love that we desire to become disciples of Jesus and to join His mission.

To live fully in the Kingdom of Heaven, we need a relationship with Jesus *and* with other people. Our life can be restored to its original design, with hope, joy, peace, and purpose when we make Jesus the focus. The end of one's life is a time for reflecting on life's purpose, impact and even regrets. Words of wisdom, gleaned from a lifetime of experience, are often passed on to loved ones. Jesus' last words are his final instructions given to his disciples before he goes to heaven. We read in Matthew 28:16-20, that Jesus met the disciples in Galilee and gave them explicit instructions. At that time, these instructions were for his disciples, but this command is also for us now. Allow me to read it to you:

Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Over the next few weeks, we are going to unpack this important Biblical passage, which is called the Great Commission. A commission, according to Merriam-Webster, is, "an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts." Jesus is granting his disciples the authority and commanding them to go, make disciples, baptize, teach, and observe his commands. Because these are his last words and final instructions, they are given the title "great." Before he authorizes his disciples to continue his work, Jesus states the scope of his authority, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28: 18b).

We see Jesus' authority displayed even in childhood. When he was twelve years old, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem after his family came for Passover. His parents found him in the temple, talking with the teachers. Luke 2:47 tell us, "Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." At the beginning of his ministry, he taught at a synagogue in Capernaum and, "The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law" (Matt. 7:28-29).

There was a distinct difference between Jesus and the teachers of the law. His authority was evident, even more so when he cast an evil spirit from a man in their presence. Mark 1:27 describes the awe and amazement of the crowd: "The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, 'What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits, and they obey him.'"

The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew tells us Jesus has the authority to judge each person and to determine who will spend eternity with him and who will not. Jesus' authority was obvious by his understanding and teaching, and his miraculous acts. He never presented any of the credentials we associate with authority. His authority was always scripture, and when he corrected misconceptions about scripture, he cited himself as the authority.

Jesus said: "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other also." (Matthew 5:38-39). Such a request is extremely hard, and in our individualistic culture, the concept of authority is not always seen as positive. On the other hand, hierarchies of authority are healthy and necessary for civilized life. Submitting to Jesus' authority can be easy because we know how much He loves us. If someone is willing to die for us, He has our best interest at heart. Jesus knows what is best for each of us. Thus, we submit to His authority out of our love and trust. What does it really look like to submit to the authority of Jesus in our own lives? Well, it means following all His teachings and examples, even the hard ones like loving our enemies and making more disciples. It means discerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit and responding with faithful action. As disciples of Jesus, we are living under His authority by doing the things He requests.

I wonder how the disciples felt when Jesus commissioned them. Maybe they did not feel ready, fully trained or even clear about the instructions, but their faith in Him was greater than their

fears and ours can be also. For the disciples, understanding and obeying his commands would be life-changing, and often extremely dangerous. Jesus underscored his heavenly authority to reassure his disciples that he would be with them as they carried out this great commission. And so, it can be with us also. As we go, make, baptize, and teach the good news, we have confidence because, as Paul states in Romans 8:31, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

End Script****

Tough questions prep:

Jesus commands all disciples to go to all nations does this mean everyone is supposed to be a missionary to another culture/nation?

The Holy Spirit leads each of us into different spheres of influence to carry the banner of disciple making. That is the “Go” command, and “Baptize” means helping people find a saving relationship with Jesus as well bringing them into the church. “Teaching them to obey all my commands” is the process Jesus used to disciple the twelve, and we are to model it in our current culture.

The trinity is three aspects of God in one (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) – how can the Father give the Son authority, and the Son submit to the Father’s authority, if they are one?

Father and Son are the closest concepts we have to describe the three aspects of God. God is far more complex than we can comprehend. Jesus, as son, willingly submits to the Father’s authority.

Key Scriptures used: Matthew 28:18-20

Class Timeline:

	Estimated time
1. Introductions	15 min
2. Teaching Video	Chris Henderson, 8 minutes
3. Discussion Questions	20 min
4. Testimonial Video	Amy Van Haveren, 5 minutes
5. Takeaways	10 min
6. Prayer	1 min
7. Invitation for next week	1 min

Begin with an ice breaker to help foster relationships and community in the class.

Some suggestions include:

Two truths and a lie: Have everyone come up with two things about themselves that are true and one that is false, but believable. Participants then try to identify the lie.

Marooned: Ask each participant, "What are five things that you would take with you if you were marooned on an island?" For example, magic wand (if you had a magic wand, what would you choose to change?).

Where in the world: Ask participants where they are from? Where they've been? Where they'd like to travel someday?

1.Introduce the content and video for this class (in your own words):

After Jesus' resurrection, he met the disciples in Galilee and gave them his parting instructions. These instructions were for his disciples then and these same instructions are for everyone today who desires to follow Jesus.

The great commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'"

We will spend these six weeks dissecting and discussing Jesus' final words to his disciples before he returned to heaven. We'll begin with the first phrase, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me," and we'll learn that Jesus taught with authority throughout his life on earth. Everything he did confirmed his authority, which impacts us today.

2.Play the teaching video.

3.Discussion questions:

1. What is the significance of these being the last words Jesus spoke before he ascended into heaven?
2. Think of someone in your life who exhibits authority. What characteristics does this person have that grants him authority over your life?

3. What was it about Jesus that left the crowds amazed?
4. If you were to submit your life to Jesus as the ultimate authority, what aspects of your life would immediately be affected?

4. Play the short personal testimony video. Discuss, if time remains, by asking them ?

Statement to share:

Relinquishing authority usually means giving up certain rights or freedoms, but in God's kingdom relinquishing all authority to Christ brings freedom. Freedom from the enslaving pattern of sin, freedom from the stress and anguish of running our own lives, and freedom from having to know all the answers and solve all the problems.

5. Closing / takeaways in your own words:

1. Jesus is the Creator and Redeemer of humanity. He is the King of God's Kingdom as all authority is given to Him (p. 17-20).
2. The fact that Jesus has all authority has two implications for us: (1) we must trust and obey, and thus (2) we will experience His freedom and power through the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus spoke his last words on Earth in Matthew 28:18-20 which gives instructions and comfort to all disciples (context for the Great Mission).

6. Close in prayer. Use the PRAY model as we teach them to pray:

P = praise – praise God for who He is and what he has done -- Use attributes to describe Him

R = Repent – helps us confess any sins and change the way we think or feel

A = Ask – petition your request for this group to our Father in Heaven including their understanding of Jesus' mission on earth

Y = Yield – Submit to God's will and let go of our will

PRAISE	Matthew 6:9	"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.'"
REPENT	Matthew 6:12	"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
ASK	Matthew 6:11&13	"Give us this day our daily bread." "And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"
YIELD	Matthew 6:10	"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."

7. Invite them back next week to learn about

Next week's topic:

The terms Christian and Disciple – they should be one in the same.