

do you *really* want to do what jesus did?

hopscotch through Matthew's Gospel reveals...

1. Jesus spent more time praying than speaking because he knew he was in a fight with a formidable foe who was serious about "killing, stealing from, and destroying" the children of God. When he sent his disciples out on their own for the first time, he explicitly told them to "drive out demons."

2. Jesus enjoyed spending time with self-confessed sinners because they weren't shrink-wrapping themselves in man-made righteousness.

3. Jesus said we'd know we were starting to make an impact when people started insulting, persecuting, and defaming us because of him.

4. Jesus hated it when people hid themselves behind religious rule-keeping, and he told his followers to plunge themselves into the mainstream culture like a lamp in a dark room or salt added to a recipe.

5. Jesus spoke openly about hell and warned that there are real consequences for those who cling to self-sufficiency and unbelief.

6. Jesus hated it when people prayed or served or sacrificed to boost their profiles or feed their egos—he honored secret acts because they revealed a desire for an honest relationship with God.

7. Jesus was quick to forgive those who were repentant and quick to blast those who weren't.

8. Jesus said the richest people were those who'd banked a lifetime of *actions* that honored God, and he bluntly told his followers that they could not be motivated by love of money and love of God at the same time.

9. Jesus told us to ignore people

who talk big but don't act big and to honor those who talk small but act big.

10. Jesus healed people of incurable diseases and permanent disabilities.

11. Jesus loved celebrations and enjoyed himself so much that the religious rule-keepers accused him of public drunkenness.

12. Jesus said that farmers who sat around in the farmhouse waiting for corn-cobs to launch themselves through the door were sadly misinformed about the concept of "harvesting."

13. Jesus said our loyalty to his ways should outweigh our loyalty to our family traditions and practices.

14. Jesus told us to not focus our energies on fighting sin (pulling weeds) but instead do everything we can to encourage good growth (growing wheat).

15. Jesus said that the root of our lack of faith is our penchant to forget the acts and character of God—our biggest faith battle is remembering to remember God.

To drive home your group's purpose as a boot camp for doing what Jesus did, challenge your kids

to create a "Jesus Did/Jesus Didn't" list similar to the one I've created here. Have them choose one of the four gospels and simply read through it looking for things Jesus embraced, advised, or did, and things he opposed, warned against, or shunned.

I'm guessing the effect will be sobering and exciting. At least, that's the impact it had on me... ■

Rick Lawrence is executive editor of *group Magazine*.

I think the least we can do is count the cost before we build a youth ministry that names Christ as its foundation stone.

TAKE NOTE:

We know you're serious about "doing what Jesus did," and that's why we've added a regular feature to *group* called Jesus-Style Youth Ministry, written by staffers working for Sonlife (www.sonlife.com), an organization that has spent decades teaching youth leaders to mirror Jesus' strategies in their ministries. You'll find it on page 34 in this issue.