



# PURSUITING JESUS



## Pursuing Jesus - Lesson 1

Writer: Tim Levert  
Editor: Carrie Busch  
Designer: Kaeli Hearn

# Lesson 1



**Series:**

A four-week series about pursuing a relationship with Jesus.



**Week 1:** Trust



**Bible:** *Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!”*  
Mark 1:17 (NLT)



**Bottom Line:**

Pursuing Jesus means you learn how to trust him.

# SUPPLIES

- Four Blindfolds (depending on how many teams you create)
- A dozen or so random objects that you have lying around your meeting space or your home (e.g., stuffed animals, household items, toys)

## OPENING GAME

### Trust or Bust

#### GAME PREP:

- Secure your dozen or so random objects and blindfolds.

#### HOW TO PLAY THE GAME:

Say:

- All right, friends, it's time to get things started with another fantastic game!
- I need four volunteers.

After you select your four volunteers, say:

- Now, I need each volunteer to pick two people to be on their team.
- Ready? Go!

Once each team has three people total, say:

- Now, each team needs to select one person who will be the “Wearer of the Blindfold.” (Say the title with great fanfare and a formal, British-sounding voice.)

After teams select their blindfolded teammate, say:

- Tonight’s game is called “Trust or Bust.”
- For each round, the two non-blindfolded teammates will give the blindfolded teammate a random, everyday item, and the blindfolded teammate will have to guess what the item is.
- It’s that simple! Or is it?

Here’s how we’ll score points:

- The blindfolded person must make their first guess without any hint from their teammate.
- If they get it right, the team gets three points; if they get it wrong, all the other teams get one point.
- For the second guess, the non-blindfolded teammates can give one one-word hint to their blindfolded teammate.
- If the blindfolded teammate gets it right with the hint, the team gets two points; if they get it wrong, all the other teams get another point.
- For the final guess, the non-blindfolded teammates can give one two-word hint.
- If the blindfolded teammate gets it right with this hint, the team gets one point; if they get it wrong again, all the other teams get another point.
- Each team will have three rounds of items to see if they can get it right, to see if they trust their teammates’ hints, to see if they trust or bust.
- Which team would like to go first?

Proceed through the game following the above instructions, keeping track of each team’s score.

Increase the difficulty in each round by using more challenging objects or changing the rules to add funny twists. (Ex: non-blindfolded teammates can only communicate using silly accents or singing their hints.)

Once the game is over, award the team with the highest score the win.

# TEACH

What's up, everybody! Welcome to week one of a brand-new series called Pursuing Jesus, where we will be talking about...pursuing Jesus!

As you all start a new school year and all of our families are getting back into a more regular routine after the summer, I can't think of a better subject to talk about than what it means to be in an exciting, dynamic, vulnerable, real relationship with the creator of the universe!

Before we get started, let's have a little **mandatory fun time**.

Circle up with a group of four or five and answer two questions.

**First**, what is the strongest relationship you have (or had)?

**Second**, what are the qualities that make (or made) that relationship so strong?

Ready, set, go!

[Give students several minutes to discuss-you may want to restate the questions to help them stay focused; when you sense the conversation settling down, call them back to debrief.]

What were the relationships you said were the strongest?

[Interact with student answers, restating major categories like parents, siblings, childhood friends, etc.]

Awesome, I love to hear about those deeper relationships

The second question was, what qualities made those relationships so strong?

What were some of the qualities you all discussed?

[Give students time to share, interacting with answers as appropriate, then continue.]

Let me add one wrinkle to the discussion: without giving any names or saying anything gossipy—if you were describing a strong relationship from the past, what happened to break that relationship up?

[Be sensitive as students share; some may have experienced real pain from broken relationships.]

I know it can be hard to talk about painful parts of our past—thank you all for sharing.

Relationships can be sources of great joy and sources of great heartache.

In fact, that's probably true about anything.

If it can be really great, it could probably also be really terrible.

There is one non-negotiable quality of relationships—the one thing that every relationship needs to be successful and the one thing that, when it's gone, the relationship won't survive—do you know what it is?

It's trust.

Trust.

All the other stuff, in my opinion, falls under the umbrella of trust.

When you trust someone, you assume the best about them, so you can work through times of pain and heartache and overcome anything.

When you don't trust someone, any little thing can lead to the unraveling of the entire relationship.

Trust is crucial, but it doesn't happen immediately.

It takes time.

Do any of you make the mistake of trusting too quickly? Have any of you been burned because of it?

Do any of you struggle to trust at all? Has that caused problems in your relationships?

Trust is a beautiful thing, but it must be nurtured and fed and given space and time to grow.

It's easiest to think about in a romantic relationship.

When you first let your "person" know that you're interested, it takes trust that they won't ridicule you by telling everyone how much they don't like you.

And if someone tells you they like you, it takes trust for you to say you like them back.

And let's say your relationship grows over the next weeks or months, and you introduce them to your family.

That takes a lot of trust.

What if your person thinks your family is really weird?

What if your family IS really weird?

What if your person is really weird?

What if your drunk uncle shows up and tries to teach everyone how to do the Renegade? [Teacher: if you are up for it, try a few dance moves of your own!]



Trust.

And if you're the one meeting someone's family, that takes trust too.

What if they think you're really weird?

Let's fast forward several years, and eventually, you might propose to someone, or someone might propose to you.

That takes a lot of trust to ask and to answer.

Eventually, you get married, and saying "I do" takes a lot of trust.

But it doesn't even stop there.

Sometime later, you might decide to have kids.

That takes a whole different degree of trust.

Then what if your person gets a job offer and needs to move across the country?

That takes a lot of trust again.

Do you see my point about how important trust is?

What if the first time you told someone you liked them, you also invited them to meet your family, asked if they wanted to marry you, asked if they wanted to have kids with you, asked if they would move across the country for your job, and asked them to join your uncle in teaching the new Cupid Shuffle? [Teacher: if you are up for it, try a few dance moves of your own!]

All in the first conversation.

How do you think that would go?

Why? Because trust takes time.

And relationships require trust, so relationships take time to grow and develop.

You don't start out trusting someone with every minute detail of your life. They have to earn your trust.

And how do they earn your trust? By showing you that they are trustworthy.

If you had a friend who continually shared your deepest, darkest secrets with everyone on social media, it wouldn't take long before you stopped sharing your deepest, darkest secrets with them.

Why? Because they have demonstrated that they are not trustworthy with your deepest, darkest secrets.

That's why I think trust is the most important quality in a relationship.

Trust takes time to develop.

And it is exactly the same way in our relationship with Jesus.

**Pursuing Jesus means you learn how to trust him.**

What makes it confusing sometimes is that with Jesus, we often use the word "faith" instead of "trust."

"Faith" is a good, Biblical word, but in our culture today, we've sort of lost what it means.

So let me let you in on a little secret: "faith" and "trust" are the same thing.

In fact, if you substitute the word "trust" any time you read the word "faith" in the Bible, a lot of those verses would make a lot more sense.

Let's have a little more **mandatory fun time**, and I'll show you.

Use your Bible, a Bible app, or even Google, and find a Bible verse with the word "faith" in it.

Find any verse, then let me know when you have one.

[Give students a few moments to look, then invite students, one at a time, to stand and read their verse out loud.]

Now, read the same verse again, but instead of reading "faith," substitute the word "trust."

[Allow several students to do the exercise, each time, pointing out how the word "trust" often gives a clear meaning in today's culture.]

**Pursuing Jesus means you learn how to trust him.**

OK, that's a long intro to today's message, but most of the message is actually in the intro.

Here's why all that matters.

When Jesus invites us to have faith in him, he is asking us to trust him.

Many of us decided to trust Jesus to save us from our sins—which is a big deal—but we have struggled to learn to trust Jesus in some of the other areas of our lives.

Some things in the Bible are straightforward: do not murder.

Most of us would trust that that's the best way for all of us to live.

But there are other teachings in the Bible that are more difficult, mostly because they are so different from our culture.

Things like honoring your parents—that's a command in the Bible we should obey, but do we trust that it's really the best way to live?

Or things like, don't lust—that's in the Bible too, but do we really trust that that's the best way to live?

Or not telling little white lies—do we trust that it's the best way to live?

If healthy relationships are built on trust that grows over time, we have to understand that our relationship with Jesus is the same.

Jesus invites us to trust him to save us AND trust him to teach us how to live better.

Each week in this series, we're reading a verse from one of the gospels.

If you remember, the Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament (everything that happened before Jesus was born) and the New Testament (everything else, starting with Jesus).

The gospels are the first four books of the New Testament, and they tell the story of Jesus' life on earth.

Mark is the second gospel, the second book in the New Testament.

Would someone read Mark 1:17 out loud for the group? [I LOVE having students read the Bible out loud, but if it doesn't work for your group, you or another adult can read it.]

**Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" Mark 1:17**

Thanks for reading!

In this passage, when Jesus says, "Follow me," he's inviting Simon and Andrew into a relationship.

When Jesus says, "I will show you," he's inviting them to learn how to live differently.

Do you know why Jesus said he'd show them how to fish for people? Because they were fishermen.

Jesus was telling them that if they entered into a relationship with Jesus by trusting him, he would give them a deeper understanding of who they were and what they were doing.

Jesus invites us into the same things, and that's the two questions I want you to consider today.

First, have you trusted Jesus to save you from your sin?

This is a one-time decision to stop trusting yourself to have the power to overcome sin and begin trusting that Jesus has already done it.

Have you made that decision?

Second, are you trusting Jesus to show you how to live differently?

This is an everyday decision, maybe even a multiple-times-everyday decision, to trust that the way of Jesus is best.

The second question is so important because it frees us from the fear of letting Jesus down.

If we choose to follow Jesus because we're afraid he'll zap us if we don't, we're missing the point.

Fear doesn't lead to obedience; it leads to oppression.

Jesus invites us to trust him, so our trust will overflow into obedience.

Trust leads to obedience.

You might start like this: "OK, Jesus, I'm not sure if I believe it really matters what I post on social media, but I trust you, and if you say my words matter, then I'll change what I post on social media."

When we choose to obey out of trust, we experience God, and our trust grows.

Then the next time we're faced with a tough decision, we might say, "OK, Jesus, I'm not sure if I believe \_\_\_\_\_, but I experienced closeness with you the last time I trusted you, so I'm going to trust you again."

Our trust might start out really small—the size of a mustard seed, and every time we choose to trust God, God proves that he's trustworthy, and our trust grows a little more.

**Pursuing Jesus means you learn how to trust him.**

How is your trust-in-Jesus meter?

How can you grow in your trust over the next month?

Let me pray for you, then go have a great small group!

[Pray as God's spirit leads, then dismiss the group.]

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the strongest relationship you have (or had)?
  - a. What are the qualities that make (or made) that relationship so strong?
2. In the game we played earlier, if you were blindfolded, what would make it difficult to trust your non-blindfolded friends?
3. Why is trust the most important quality in a relationship?
  - a. How are other qualities affected if you don't have trust?
4. What's wrong with trusting someone too quickly?
  - a. Too slowly?
5. Why is trust so hard to build but so easy to lose?
6. Tell about the time you decided to trust Jesus to save you from your sin?
  - a. If you haven't made that decision yet, what is holding you back?
7. How is obeying God out of fear different from obeying God out of trust?
8. On a scale of 1 (total fear) to 10 (total trust), how is your trust-in-Jesus meter?
  - a. How can you grow in your trust over the next month?
9. What do you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you tonight?