**INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE**

**Kingdom Living**

**A Study in the Beatitudes**

**Week 1**

**Session Title: *Sermon on the Mount***

**Focal Passage: Matthew 5-7**

**Central Teaching/Learning Aim:** To review the Sermon on the Mount, to challenge the learner to live accordingly and to introduce the Beatitudes.

1. **Hook**
2. **Object Lesson – Prescription medicine bottles:**

Display the bottles and ask…

Why do we take prescriptions?

Who prescribes them?

Where do people look for a prescription for how to live?

**State –** If you ever wanted a prescription for how to live you need to read, memorize and live out the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is the greatest sermon ever preached. (Give a brief description of the background and context.)

**Display** pictures of the location of the Sermon on the Mount.

**Next –** Ask for volunteers to read sections of the sermon. (Note – only ask folks you know are comfortable reading out loud.)

Use the following outline. Direct members to complete question #3 on the Discussion Guide.

Matthew 5:3-12 - The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:13-16 - Salt and Light
Matthew 5:17-20 - Jesus fulfilled the Law
Matthew 5:21-26 - Anger and Murder
Matthew 5:27-30 - Lust and Adultery
Matthew 5:31-32 - Divorce and Remarriage
Matthew 5:33-37 - Oaths
Matthew 5:38-42 - Eye for an Eye
Matthew 5:43-48 - Love your enemies
Matthew 6:1-4 - Give to the Needy
Matthew 6:5-15 - How to Pray
Matthew 6:16-18 - How to Fast
Matthew 6:19-24 - Treasures in Heaven
Matthew 6:25-34 - Do not worry
Matthew 7:1-6 - Do not judge hypocritically
Matthew 7:7-12 - Ask, Seek, Knock
Matthew 7:13-14 - The Narrow Gate
Matthew 7:15-23 - False Prophets
Matthew 7:24-27 - The Wise Builder

**State –** Today we are going to review the Sermon on the Mount and set the stage for our study of the Beatitudes. We will also be challenged to practice the principles found in the greatest sermon ever preached.

1. **Optional Method – Web Clip – Scottish Theologian Sinclair Ferguson teaching an introduction to the Sermon on the Mount.**

**Location:** <https://rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/206397#1>

**Start: 07:55**

**Stop: 14:45**

**Synopsis:** Dr. Sinclair Ferguson is a Scottish theologian known for his teaching, writing and editorial work. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen and has been a minister in the Church of Scotland since 1971. He has served as an editor with the Banner of Truth and Trust and worked as a minister at St George’s-Tron Church, Glasgow.

In 2013, Sinclair retired as Senior Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, where he had served for eight years. Sinclair is the author of some two dozen books, has authored numerous articles and has contributed to various symposia. His writing interests have ranged from works of scholarship to books for children. He has served as minister to two congregations in Scotland, one in Unst, the most northerly inhabited island in the United Kingdom, and the other at the center of Glasgow, the largest city in Scotland.

**Next –** Ask for volunteers to read sections of the sermon. (Note – only ask folks you know are comfortable reading out loud.)

Use the following outline. Direct members to complete question #3 on the Discussion Guide.

Matthew 5:3-12 - The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:13-16 - Salt and Light
Matthew 5:17-20 - Jesus fulfilled the Law
Matthew 5:21-26 - Anger and Murder
Matthew 5:27-30 - Lust and Adultery
Matthew 5:31-32 - Divorce and Remarriage
Matthew 5:33-37 - Oaths
Matthew 5:38-42 - Eye for an Eye
Matthew 5:43-48 - Love your enemies
Matthew 6:1-4 - Give to the Needy
Matthew 6:5-15 - How to Pray
Matthew 6:16-18 - How to Fast
Matthew 6:19-24 - Treasures in Heaven
Matthew 6:25-34 - Do not worry
Matthew 7:1-6 - Do not judge hypocritically
Matthew 7:7-12 - Ask, Seek, Knock
Matthew 7:13-14 - The Narrow Gate
Matthew 7:15-23 - False Prophets
Matthew 7:24-27 - The Wise Builder

**State –** Today we are going to review the Sermon on the Mount and set the stage for our study of the Beatitudes. We will also be challenged to practice the principles found in the greatest sermon ever preached.

1. **Book**

1. **Utilize** the discussion guide to examine the Scripture passages.
2. **Look**
3. **Utilize** the rest of the time to introduce the summer series about the Beatitudes. Place members into groups. Display the Beatitudes on your TV.

Ask each group to re-write the Beatitudes according to the worlds standards in the 21st century. Make the list about the kinds of people who seem to be well-off, who have made it.

For example:

Blessed are the rich and famous, because they can always get a seat at the best restaurants.

Blessed are the good-looking for they shall ben on the cover of magazines.

After the class has had time to discuss, ask groups to share some of their re-writes for each beatitude.

1. **Took**
2. **Challenge** members to read the Beatitudes each day in the coming week and to memorize them.

**Close** in prayer.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Teacher Copy

1. What was the setting for the Sermon on the Mount?

**[Jesus went up on a mountainside to teach the multitude of folks who were following him.]**

1. Who was the audience for this great sermon?

**[The newly appointed 12 Disciples, many other followers of Jesus and a multitude of others.]**

1. Outline the content of the Sermon on the Mount:
	* + - 1. **(Matthew 5:3-12) The Beatitudes**
				2. **(Matthew 5:13-16) Salt and Light**
				3. **(Matthew 5:17-20) Jesus fulfilled the Law**
				4. **(Matthew 5:21-26) Anger and Murder**
				5. **(Matthew 5:27-30) Lust and Adultery**
				6. **(Matthew 5:31-32) Divorce and Remarriage**
				7. **(Matthew 5:33-37) Oaths**
				8. **(Matthew 5:38-42) Eye for an Eye**
				9. **(Matthew 5:43-48) Love your enemies**
				10. **(Matthew 6:1-4) Give to the Needy**
				11. **(Matthew 6:5-15) How to Pray**
				12. **(Matthew 6:16-18) How to Fast**
				13. **(Matthew 6:19-24) Treasures in Heaven**
				14. **(Matthew 6:25-34) Do not worry**
				15. **(Matthew 7:1-6) Do not judge hypocritically**
				16. **(Matthew 7:7-12) Ask, Seek, Knock**
				17. **(Matthew 7:13-14) The Narrow Gate**
				18. **(Matthew 7:15-23) False Prophets**
				19. **(Matthew 7:24-27) The Wise Builder**
2. What are the 4 sections of the sermon?

**(5:3-16) The subjects of the kingdom**

**(5:17-48) The precepts of the kingdom**

**(6:1-7:12) The righteousness of the kingdom**

**(7:13-27) The tests of the kingdom**

1. The sermon is directed to Christians to instruct how to be salt and light in the world. How salty and bright are you? Does the lost world know you are a Christian?
2. Review the outline of the sermon and list which subjects most impact you. Where do you need to improve?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Student Copy

1. What was the setting for the Sermon on the Mount?
2. Who was the audience for this great sermon?
3. Outline the content of the Sermon on the Mount:
4. **(Matthew 5:3-12)**
5. **(Matthew 5:13-16)**
6. **(Matthew 5:17-20)**
7. **(Matthew 5:21-26)**
8. **(Matthew 5:27-30)**
9. **(Matthew 5:31-32)**
10. **(Matthew 5:33-37)**
11. **(Matthew 5:38-42)**
12. **(Matthew 5:43-48)**
13. **(Matthew 6:1-4)**
14. **(Matthew 6:5-15)**
15. **(Matthew 6:16-18)**
16. **(Matthew 6:19-24)**
17. **(Matthew 6:25-34)**
18. **(Matthew 7:1-6)**
19. **(Matthew 7:7-12)**
20. **(Matthew 7:13-14)**
21. **(Matthew 7:15-23)**
22. **(Matthew 7:24-27)**
23. What are the 4 sections of the sermon?
24. **(5:3-16)**
25. **(5:17-48)**
26. **(6:1-7:12)**
27. **(7:13-27)**
28. The sermon is directed to Christians to instruct how to be salt and light in the world. How salty and bright are you? Does the lost world know you are a Christian?
29. Review the outline of the sermon and list which subjects most impact you. Where do you need to improve?

**THEE WORD FOR THE WEEK**

**Happy are the Hopeless
Matthew 5:3 and Psalm 131:1-3**

**Monday:** Read Matthew 5:1-3

This is the beginning of what we call the Sermon on the Mount or the Beatitudes. We do not know all the details, but we do know that this is early in the ministry of Jesus.

* What does verse one tell us about who was present?
* Do you think that Jesus only saw the size of the crowd or that He also saw the condition of the crowd also?
* Why do you think He went up on a mountainside?

**Tuesday:** Read Matthew 5:1-3

The crowds were drawn to Jesus and they still are. Matthew chapter 4 ends with telling us that news about Jesus spread as He went throughout Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching the good news, and healing every sickness and disease. We see here that the disciples were part of the crowd that was there on the mountainside.

* Why do you think the large crowd was there?
* Do you think that they were looking for teaching or to see something?
* What are you looking for in your spiritual journey?

**Wednesday:** Read Matthew 5:1-3

* What does it mean to be poor in spirit?
* Would people describe you as poor in spirit?
* Why do you think Jesus uses these words to begin the sermon on the mount?

**Thursday:** Read Matthew 5:1-3

Poor in spirit means to be humble. To have a correct estimate of oneself.

* Jesus declared that blessed are the poor in spirit (humble) and that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Why do you think that is?
* How can you increase your humility?

**Friday:** Read Psalm 131:1-3

Jesus declared in the sermon on the mount that it is blessed to be poor in spirit or humble.

* What do these verses teach about humility?
* Are you able to say that your heart is not proud?

**EXEGETICAL ~ THEOLOGICAL ~ PEDAGOGICAL**

**Note**: Because this lesson is an overview the format will be different from the normal format for Life Group lessons. The goal is not to expound a pericope, but to take a bird’s eye perspective of a larger unit. Let’s begin with a very broad statement of Matthew’s gospel.

 Matthew, one of Jesus’ disciples/apostles, wrote to fellow Jewish believers who were concerned that the promised Kingdom was not being experienced in its fullest sense. The major question was, “If Jesus was the Messiah King of Israel, where was the Kingdom?”

 Matthew argued 1) that Jesus’ **ancestry**/**incarnation** and pre-ministry life (forerunner, baptism, temptation) demonstrated His qualification as Israel’s Messiah/King (1:1-4:25); 2) that Jesus’ authoritative **proclamation** concerning His Kingdom demonstrated His qualification as Messiah/King (5:1-7:29); 3) that Jesus’ authoritative manifestations of **power** demonstrated His qualification as Messiah/King (8:1-11:1); 4) that although **opposition** to Jesus’ Messianic claims might appear to negate His claims (11:2-13:53); 5) that Jesus’ Kingdom program had merely been **postponed** because of Israel’s (leaders’) unbelief (13:54-19:2); 6) that Jesus’ **presentation** of Himself to Israel as their King demonstrated His qualification as Messiah/King (19:3-26:2); 7) that Jesus’ **crucifixion** as Messiah demonstrated His qualification as Messiah/King (26:3-27:66); and 8) that Jesus’ supernatural **resurrection** demonstrated His qualification as Messiah/King (28:1-20).

 “The Beatitudes are the first part of Jesus’ teaching called the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5:1-7:29). In Matthew 4:17 Jesus began his ministry by announcing the coming of the kingdom of heaven: ’Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’ In Matthew 4:23-25, Jesus healed the sick throughout Galilee. This healing was a demonstration of the coming kingdom of heaven, of the fulfillment of God’s promises through his prophets in the Old Testament. The teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, then, are descriptions and instructions for those living in the kingdom of heaven.

 “The Beatitudes are not imperatives, they are not commands the believer must fulfill to enter the kingdom of God. Rather they are results of the coming of this kingdom. They are part of the Gospel, the good news that Jesus, the Messiah, has come. The good news is that God was about to intervene decisively in history and produce people like the ones described in the Sermon on the Mount” (Rose Publishing. *The Beatitudes*, 1).

 Perhaps Matthew’s clearest account of Jesus’ postponement of His Kingdom occurs in 21:33-46 where Jesus tells the parable of the wicked tenants who kill the Son of the vineyard’s Owner and, as a result have the promise taken from them (Israel’s religious rulers) and given to others (the Church) who will be faithful.

 The role of Matthew 5-7, therefore, is to lay out the demands and expectations that fall upon those who will accept Jesus as Messiah/King and live in the “initiated/now” of the Kingdom as they wait for the “fulfilled/then” of its full realization (see Acts 1:6-7).

 “Jesus instructed [His disciples] in view of His announcement of the coming kingdom (4:17). Natural questions on the heart of every Jew would have been, ‘Am I eligible to enter Messiah’s kingdom? Am I righteous enough to qualify for entrance?’ The only standard of righteousness the people knew was that laid down by the current religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees. Would one who followed that standard be acceptable in Messiah’s kingdom? Jesus’ sermon therefore must be understood in the context of His offer of the kingdom to Israel and the need for repentance to enter that kingdom. The sermon did not give a ‘Constitution’ for the kingdom nor did it present the way of salvation. *The sermon showed how a person who is in right relationship with God should conduct his life*. While the passage must be understood in the light of the offer of the messianic kingdom, the sermon applies to Jesus’ followers today for it demonstrates the standard of righteousness God demands of His people” (Barbieri, L. A., Jr. “[Matthew](https://ref.ly/logosres/bkc;ref=Bible.Mt5.1-12;off=665;ctx=_at_His_teaching$E2$80$9D).$0A~Jesus_instructed_the)” in J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, 28).

 In order to identify the focus of each section of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29), I have placed those themes in bold.

1. The **character of Kingdom subjects** which manifests **righteousness** also motivates righteousness, (5:1-16).

A. The context of Jesus’ discourse (Sermon on the Mount) was **on the mountain** before the crowds and His disciples, (5:1-2).

B. The content of Jesus’ discourse (Sermon on the Mount) revealed that the character of His subjects manifested righteousness, (5:3-12).

1. The reason the **hopeless** were blessed was because the Kingdom was theirs, (5:3).

2. The reason the **heartbroken** were blessed was because they would be comforted, (5:4).

3. The reason the **humble** were blessed was because they would inherit the Earth, (5:5).

4. The reason the **hungry** were blessed was because they would be satisfied, (5:6).

5. The reason the **helpful** were blessed was because they would receive mercy, (5:7).

6. The reason the **holy** were blessed was because they would see God, (5:8).

7. The reason the **harmonious** were blessed was because they would be called “God’s children,” (5:9).

8. The reason the **harassed** were blessed, and to rejoice, was because the blessings of the Kingdom were theirs, (5:10-12).

C. The content of Jesus’ discourse (Sermon on the Mount) revealed that the **influence** of His subjects motivated righteousness, (5:13-16).

1. The reason Jesus’ subjects were to be a preserving influence (taste like **salt**) was because otherwise they would be useless on this Earth, (5:13).

2. The reason Jesus’ subjects were to be a revealing influence (shine like **light**) was because otherwise they would be hidden to this world, (5:14-15).

3. The purpose for which Jesus’ subjects were to be a revealing influence (shine like lights) was so that others would see their changed lives and **give glory to God** (who changed them), (5:16).

II. The content of Jesus’ teaching regarding **entrance into the Kingdom** demanded a **perfect fulfilling of the Law’s demands** and the prophets’ promises, (5:17-48).

A. The reason the Law’s eternal demands and the prophets’ certain promises were to be kept – which Jesus came to keep – was because **absolute righteousness** (that exceeding the scribes and the Pharisees) was necessary to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, (5:17-20).

B. Jesus’ **interpretations**, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding the meaning **of the Law** demanded an absolute, and therefore righteous, obedience, (5:21-47).

1. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **murder** demanded a conscience free from all **anger**, (5:21-26).

2. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **adultery** demanded a constraint on all sexual desire/**lust**, (5:27-30).

3. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **divorce** demanded a **commitment** to “one flesh” relationships, (5:31-32).

4. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **deception** demanded a conversation expressing **truth**, (5:33-37).

5. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **revenge** demanded a compensation of **graciousness**, (5:38-42).

6. Jesus’ interpretation, in contrast to traditional teaching, regarding **hatred** demanded a **compassion** that reaches out to both friends and enemies, (5:43-47).

C. The content of Jesus’ command to His followers, as a result of His correct/accurate/righteous interpretation of the Law’s demands, was “be **perfect/complete/mature**,” (5:48).

III. The result of Jesus’ followers **worshipping** God in secret, as Jesus commanded, and in contrast to the public “worship” of the hypocrites who wanted and received the recognition of others, was that their heavenly Father who saw their secret worship would pay them back a full blessing, (6:1-18).

 A. The content of Jesus’ summary command regarding worship, to His followers, so that they would secure their reward of blessing from their heavenly Father, was that they **beware of doing their works** of worship (righteousness) in public in order **to be noticed by others**, (6:1).

 B. The result of Jesus’ followers worshipping God through **giving** before Him in secret, as Jesus commanded and in contrast to the public giving of the hypocrites who wanted and received the recognition of others, was that their heavenly Father who saw their **s**ecret giving would pay them back (a full blessing), (6:2-4).

 C. The result of Jesus’ followers worshipping God through **praying** before Him in secret, as Jesus commanded and in contrast to the public praying of the hypocrites who wanted and received the recognition of others, was that their heavenly Father who saw their secret praying would pay them back (a full blessing), (6:5-15).

 1. The result of the hypocrites’ making a loud **spectacle of their worship** through praying, in their synagogues and streets in order to be acknowledged by others, an act and attitude Jesus warned His followers against, was that the public recognition they received was their full reward, (6:5).

 2. The result of Jesus’ followers’ worshipping through **praying in absolute human secrecy**, in contrast to the hypocrites’ public praying, was that their heavenly Father, the one seeing in secret, would pay them back, (6:6).

 3. The reason Jesus’ followers were to pray without the Gentiles’ [unbelievers’] meaningless repetition of words, intended to gain their (g)ods’ attention, was because their heavenly **Father already knew** what they needed before they prayed, (6:7-8).

 4. The content of the model prayer which Jesus gave His followers consisted of the **adoration** of God’s glory, the **petition** for human griefs, and the **benediction** of God’s greatness, (6:9-13).

 5. The condition upon which a follower’s continual transgressions would be forgiven by their heavenly Father would be the follower’s **forgiving** those who transgressed against him/her, (6:14-15).

 D. The result of Jesus’ followers worshipping God through **fasting** before Him in secret, as Jesus commanded and in contrast to the public fasting of the hypocrites who wanted and received the recognition of others, was that their heavenly Father who saw their secret fasting would pay them back (a full blessing), (6:16-18).

 1. The result of the hypocrites’ making a visible **spectacle of their worship** through fasting, by putting on a look of gloom in order to be honored by others, an act and attitude Jesus warned His followers against, was that the public recognition they received was their full reward, (6:16).

 2. The result of Jesus’ followers’ worshipping through **fasting in absolute human secrecy**, in contrast to the hypocrites’ public fasting, was that their heavenly Father, the one seeing in secret, would pay them back, (6:17-18).

IV. Jesus’ commands to His followers demanded **investing** in Heaven, **never worrying** on Earth, **judging** one’s self first, and **never wasting sound judgment**, (6:19-7:6).

 A. The reasons Jesus commanded His followers to **invest** anything of value in Heaven, rather than in Earth, was because they would commit themselves to whatever they invested in, because their principles could easily be distorted by the material things of Earth, and because their devotion could easily be enslaved to the material things of Earth, (6:19-24).

 B. The reasons Jesus’ followers, whose needs would be met as they pursued God’s Kingdom and righteousness, were not to worry was because **worry** was **unnecessary**, **unworthy**, and **unproductive**, (6:25-34).

 C. Jesus’ positive command regarding **judging**, which His followers could so easily do hypocritically and which would invite judgment in like manner, was that His followers first habitually and critically judge themselves, (7:1-5).

 D. The reason Jesus’ followers were **not to waste their sound judgment** on those who despised it was because those who despised sound judgment might try to destroy its messenger in return, (7:6).

V. The content of Jesus’ authoritative commands to His followers was **pray** for grace to minister, **enter into the Kingdom** through Jesus alone, **judge the prophets** by their character, and **live in obedience** to Jesus’ teaching, (7:7-29).

 A. The result of Jesus’ followers’ certainty of receiving God’s grace for ministry just for the **asking** was that they should do to others whatever they desired that others do to them, (7:7-12).

 B. The reason Jesus’ followers were to enter by means of the **exclusive gate** (Himself), rather than the common, universal gate (works), was because the few who were trying to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven by means of the exclusive gate (Himself) ended up in the life of the Kingdom, (7:13-14).

 C. The reasons Jesus’ followers were to judge the prophets by their behavior and preaching/teaching was because a person’s **life revealed that person’s character**, and because only those prophets (and individuals) who did the will of the heavenly Father would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, (7:15-23).

 D. The reason Jesus’ followers were to **do all they heard Him teach** was because then they would be able to withstand all the challenges and crises of life, (7:24-27).

 E. The reason the crowds were **astonished** by Jesus’ teaching was because, unlike the teaching of their religious authorities, Jesus taught with **genuine authority**, (7:28-29).

**Note**: “The teaching in this sermon certainly sets a high standard. If we take it seriously we realize that we cannot attain it and therefore cannot merit salvation. It is the end of the way of law and drives us to seek salvation in Christ. But when we have received this salvation as God’s free gift, the sermon shows us how we should live in the service of our gracious God. It shows us what life is like in the kingdom of God. The sermon removes all complacency. The follower of Christ cannot say, ‘I have done all I should; I am the complete servant of God.’ No matter how far we have gone along the Christian road the sermon tells us that there is more ahead of us” (Morris, L. [*The Gospel According to Matthew*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntcmatt;ref=Bible.Mt5.1-7.29;off=1780;ctx=ces_so_strongly.$EF$BB$BF1$EF$BB$BF$0A~The_teaching_in_this), 91–92).

 “Inaugurated eschatology . . . seems most in keeping with Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom more generally. Inaugurated eschatology recognizes an ‘already/not yet’ tension in which the sermon’s ethic remains the ideal or goal for all Christians in every age but which will never be fully realized until the consummation of the kingdom at Christ’s return.

 “We can expect the Spirit to empower us to make substantial strides in obedience, even as we recognize that our sinfulness will prevent us from ever coming close to attaining God’s standards” (Blomberg, C. *Matthew*, 95).