

## Teen Devotion

Year A – All Saints Day

The Time In Between



**One truth shared:** See your Savior dying our death under the hashtag “*#cursed*” so you—when you die—will live under the hashtag “*#blessed*.”

*Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.*

*He said:*

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.*

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

**Matthew 5:1-12**

### ***#blessed***

If you were to go on Instagram and look up photos with the hashtag “*#blessed*,” would you find a picture of you?

What you will find are pictures of athletes receiving championship trophies and gold medals. You’ll find pictures of students graduating from prestigious universities with honors. You’ll find pictures of entrepreneurial giants making millions while creating billion-dollar industries that change the world. You’ll find pictures of celebrities taking selfies with their adoring fans. You’ll find every picture-perfect person vacationing at beautiful places—all the while showing off their toned abs by the pool.

When you search for pictures with the hashtag *#blessed*, you’ll find people who appear to be absolutely winning at life. *#blessed* are the attractive. *#blessed* are the achievers. *#blessed* are the popular. *#blessed* are the privileged. *#blessed* are the rich—for every pleasure in this world is within reach. *#blessed* are the comfortable—for they don’t need comforting. *#blessed* are the strong—for they will inherit positions of power and respect. *#blessed* are the those who

hunger and thirst for success, for they will be satisfied. *#blessed* are the those who are praised and complimented and smothered with recognition for who they are, for flattery is its own reward.

But when we arrive at the opening words of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, we're not shown pictures of some guy driving a Maserati or some girl in designer clothes walking down a runway. We're shown people who—by the world's estimation—aren't winning at life, but *utterly losing*.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are those who mourn... Blessed are the meek... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... Blessed are the merciful... Blessed are the pure in heart... Blessed are the peacemakers... Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness..." those who are insulted, beaten, and maliciously slandered all because they follow Jesus. How could any of this coincide with someone who is *#blessed*?

But who do you know whose life is perfectly embodied by these Beatitudes? Who was perfectly merciful to us when we needed to be shown mercy? Who beautifully embodied "meekness" as he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem to wage war against sin, death and hell for you? Who would be persecuted so that you would be saved?

Jesus. The Beatitudes paint *his* portrait—for you!

See your Savior fulfilling all the promises of Scripture for you. See your Savior not running from suffering, rejection and isolation, but running headlong into it so you wouldn't experience that for eternity. See your sin, guilt, and shame nailed to his cross. See your Savior dying our death under the hashtag "*#cursed*" so you—when you die—will live under the hashtag "*#blessed*."

You are *#blessed* because, in Christ, you are reconciled to God. You are *#blessed* because, in Christ, you are forgiven and adopted into God's family. You are *#blessed* because, in Christ, the riches of heaven are your reward. Your Savior lives. And because Jesus lives, who cares if anyone will ever find your photo on Instagram? Your very name is written in the book of life.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, I praise you for your amazing, unending, undeserved love for someone like me. I thank you for sending your Son to live for me and die for me to make *me* a member of your family. As I endure hardships in my life, may I never forget the eternal identity I have in your Son. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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### *#blessed*

**Starting the Discussion:** *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Imagine: you're submitting a senior photo for your high school yearbook. Which of these four photos would you pick? Explain why.

- Photo A: a picture of you when you both look and feel your worst.

- Photo B: a picture of you getting bullied and teased by kids at school.
- Photo C: a picture of you crying after finding out your parents were getting divorced.
- Photo D: a picture of you when you look your best, and your picture been so photoshopped and digitally doctored, it could be on the cover of a magazine.

**Connecting:** *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

- What kind of photos do you find on Instagram with the hashtag *#blessed*?
- How might the photos on Instagram influence our attitudes about what it means to be *#blessed*?
- How do those photos compare with the picture Jesus paints in Matthew 5:3-12?

**Digging In:** *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Jesus' immediate audience here are Christians. How is it that the Christian is "blessed" even when we are sad? Even when we are grieving? Even when we are humble, dejected, and weak?
- Jesus' words here pair nicely with sentiments expressed in Psalm 73. How do the words of Psalm 73 compliment what Jesus is saying here? What changes our perspective?
- Reread Matthew 5:10-12. To paraphrase one pastor, "Does a trillionaire sweat losing \$20? Of course not!" What does that have to do with our eternal reward as Christians?

**Conclusion:** *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Read Revelation 7:9-10, 13-17. Here, the apostle John is given a glimpse into your eternity. How do these words of your future in Christ inform how we see our time between now and eternity?