

WITNESS – Reaching out to others
(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Giving Thanks to God

Who do you say, Jesus is? Thank God for different aspects of his son.

Praying for one another

Share what you think God has been saying to you as we have looked at this study? Pray for the person on your right.

Praying for our community

If we were to ask the people of Hungerford, Who do they think Jesus is? What do you think there answer would be? Pray for our community.

MATTHEW

Matthew 15.1 - 16.20

6

The Revelation of the King

Purpose: To see that our understanding Jesus' identity is the central issue of the kingdom of heaven.

This is another long study because Matthew gives us crucial details that lead up to the great confession of Peter.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice *(Aim for 10 minutes)*

The climax of a story is packed with emotion. What feelings have you experienced when reaching the climax of an exciting story?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord *(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)*

THE EXAMEN

1. **Become aware of God's presence** - take some time to remember that God is present with us in our everyday lives. He has been near to you and with you throughout the events of your day. Invite the Holy Spirit.
2. **Review the day with gratitude** - what are you thankful for?
3. **Pay attention to your emotions** - St. Ignatius emphasised how our emotions can point to the presence of God. Reflect upon how you felt throughout your day. What might God be saying to you through these emotions?
4. **Choose one thing from the day and pray for it**

WORD – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

Eureka! A word to describe a sudden insight. What a relief and pleasure when something we have not quite understood becomes clear to us.

In this section of Matthew the disciples come to a supernatural understanding of Jesus. What they thought they knew becomes a new and deeper knowledge. Peter, speaking for the disciples, declares who Jesus really is.

Peter's words bring us to the climax of the first half of Matthew.

1. Read Matthew 15. Top religious leaders from Jerusalem oppose Jesus by attacking the disciples (vv. 1–2). What is their complaint, and what does it suggest about Jesus?

2. How does Jesus respond to their accusation (vv. 3–20)?

3. Are there religious practices in your life which are in danger of becoming outward, empty forms? Explain.

How can you avoid this tendency?

4. How would you account for the unusual interaction between Jesus, the woman and the disciples (vv. 21–28)?

5. Read Matthew 16:1–20. After Jesus heals the sick and feeds the four thousand, the religious leaders ask him for a sign from heaven (v. 1). Why do you think Jesus refuses them (vv. 2–4)?

6. In verses 5–12 the disciples misunderstand Jesus' allusion to yeast. How is their misunderstanding related to a lack of faith?

7. In verses 5–12 the disciples couldn't even grasp a simple figure of speech. How then does Peter have enough insight to confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (vv. 13–17)?

8. How will Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God unlock the entrance to the kingdom of heaven for others (vv. 18–20)?

9. Jesus' question to Peter is one that everyone will have to respond to at some point. Who do you say Jesus is, and why?

*From Matthew: Being Discipled by Jesus by Stephen & Jacalyn Eyre.
Copyright 1987 by Stephen and Jacalyn Eyre. Published by InterVarsity Press.*