

### **Counting the Cost:**

**Thesis:** Walking with Jesus requires commitment.

**Scripture:** Luke 14:25-33

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

28 “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’

31 “Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? 32 And if he can’t, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. 33 So you cannot become my disciple without giving up everything you own.

**Opening Activity – Speed Jenga:** Play Jenga, BUT, you must take the first block you touch, and you only have 30 seconds to complete the entire task. (I have a jenga set at the church, for anyone that needs it)

**Opening Activity – Design your dream home.** Give everyone a piece of paper and have them design their dream home. Then have them share this home with the group.

Ask: How expensive do you think a home like this would cost?

Do you think you will ever live in a home like that? Why/why not?

**Ice Breaker Question:** What is something you really wanted that you saved up for?

**Follow up questions:** How did it feel to get it? Does it still bring you the same joy?

**SKIT:** Our New House

Have two students perform the skit Our New House. The skit is two women talking (you can change the genders if needed) about the extravagant new house one of them is going to build. The twist is that she and her husband are unemployed?

Ask:

- What do you think of Margret’s new home?
- Would you want to live in that house?
- What makes Margret’s new home so ridiculous?
- If you were Hellen, what would you say to Margret?

**Unfinished buildings:** [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished\\_building](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unfinished_building) (PHONES NEEDED)

Have the group go to this website and each person pick an unfinished building from the list. Have them look at pictures of the unfinished building and try to discover why it was not finished. Have them share some information and a picture with the group. (they can pass their phones around the group).

Here are some things they might want to share: Name of building. Location. Original purpose. Why it is unfinished.

**Read:** Luke 14:28-30

28 “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete

only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

**Ask:**

- What does it mean to "Count the cost?" (in the terms of a building project)
- What is the consequence if you do not properly count the cost?
- Can you relate to this story? Have you ever poorly planned a project? What was the result?
- What do you think Jesus' illustration means?

**Read:** Luke 14:25-27

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 "If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

- Who is Jesus talking to? (a large crowd)  
*Jesus knew that most of those in the crowd were not the least bit interested in spiritual things. Some wanted only to see miracles, others heard that he fed the hungry, a few hoped he would overthrow Rome... They were expecting the wrong things. Jesus turned to the multitude and preached a sermon that thinned out the ranks. – Warren Wiesbe Commentary*
- Why might what Jesus said "thinned out the ranks"?
- What was it that Jesus said that might have rubbed people the wrong way? (Hate everyone & Carry Cross)

**Hate Everyone Else**

- Doesn't Jesus want us to love everyone, what do you think Jesus meant to "hate everyone else"?  
*The word "hate" does not suggest positive antagonism but rather "to love less". Our love for Christ must be so strong that all other love is like hated by comparison... We must love Christ supremely, even more than we love our own flesh and blood. – Warren Wiesbe Commentary*
- How must our love for Jesus compare to our love for our parents, siblings, best friends, etc?
- What might that love look like?
- Do you love Jesus that much?

**Carry Your Own Cross**

- Why might the people be offended by Jesus saying we need to carry our cross? (the cross was a means of public execution by the Romans, for political prisoners)
- What do you think it means to "carry your cross"?  
*It means daily identification with Christ in shame, suffering, and surrender to God's will. It means death to self, our own plans and ambitions, a willingness to serve Jesus as he directs. – Warren Wiesbe Commentary*
- How is carrying your cross a way of identifying with Jesus?
- What are some of the challenges when it comes to carrying your cross?
- How can you find the strength to carry your cross when it feels too costly?

**Count the Cost:**

- Don't begin until you count the cost. What is the cost of following Jesus?
- Why does Jesus want us to "count the cost?"  
*If we tell Jesus that we want to take up our cross and follow him as his disciples, then he wants us to know exactly what we are getting into. He wants no false expectancy, no illusions, no bargains. – Warren Wiesbe Commentary*
- For you personally, what has been the cost of following Jesus so far?
- Did anyone tell you about the "cost" before you became a Christians?
- Does this idea of taking up your cross make you feel like getting to work for Jesus or getting out of this disciple thing?

**Make it Personal: *Take up your cross.***

*Print out a cross coloring sheet, design your own, or have each group member draw a cross on the page. Have them write a key phrase from the lesson on the Horizontal beam. Then have them write on the cross struggles that they have with following Jesus as a time of confession. Give them time to ask Jesus to help them "carry their cross". Encourage them to carry that piece of paper with the this week.*