Review: Everyone explain the Bridge to Life illustration with someone in the room.

What do you think it means to declare Jesus as Lord?

Matthew 19:16 (NIV)
Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

If someone asked you this question, how would you answer?

Matthew 19:17-18 (NIV)
17"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." "Which ones?" the man inquired.

Why do you think Jesus answered this man’s question by saying, “There is only One who is good”?
The man believed that if he was good enough he would get to heaven. Jesus immediately corrects this assumption by saying that there is no one who is good except God alone. In other words, if he is hoping to get to heaven based on being good, he has already fallen short.

Psalms 14:3 (NIV)
All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Jesus, to make his point, says that someone would need to be able to keep the commands of God in order to live a holy life. The man asks which ones which seems to indicate there are some commands that he perceives are negotiable or less important than others. So Jesus lists some of the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20.

Matthew 19:18-22 (NIV)
18Jesus replied, "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, 19 honor your father and mother,’ and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.’"
20 "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"
21 Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
22 When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

Which commands did Jesus leave out?
Below is a system of using your fingers to help remember the Ten Commandments in order. Have fun with the group seeing if they can remember them next week.
10 Commandments on Fingers:

1: One God
   Hold one finger up.
   Worship God only

2: Scissors
   Two fingers held like scissors cutting paper.
   Cut out all idols

3: W
   Three fingers forming a W.
   Watch your Words /Don't take God’s name in vain

4: Family going to church
   Four fingers representing Dad, Mom & 2 kids going to church.
   Keep the Sabbath day holy

5: Hand salute
   Five fingers together to make a salute.
   Honour your Parents

6: Finger stabbing hand
   One open hand with fingers together being stabbed by one finger of the other hand.
   Do not kill

7: Two leaving the other five at a party
   Five fingers in one hand, two in the other. The two leave to be by themselves.
   Do not commit adultery

8: Hide thumbs
   Four fingers on each hand, with thumbs hidden. In some countries if you steal they cut off your thumbs. In other countries they put you behind bars (the 8 fingers looking like bars).
   Do not steal – cut off your thumbs

9: Pinocchio’s nose grew
   Eight fingers with thumbs hidden. As Pinocchio lied his nose grew. Gradually extend one thumb out to mimic the growing nose.
   Do not lie

10: Hands on top of fence
    Place all ten fingers and thumbs as if they are holding on top of a fence and you look over into your neighbour’s yard.
    Do not covet – love your neighbour

The first four commands relate to: LOVING GOD

The last six commands relate to: LOVING OTHERS

Jesus left out the commands directly related to loving God above everything else.

Why do you think Jesus left out these specific commands?
The man would have known the Ten Commandments. They would have been taught and embedded into him as he grew up going to the Jewish synagogue. He should have become very suspicious then when Jesus left these very important ones out. But, because he was so eager to be declared “righteous” and worthy of heaven he focused solely on what he did do versus what he did not do. By leaving them out, Jesus is revealing the very area that the man is neglecting in his life.
Why does Jesus respond by telling him to give away everything that he has to the poor and follow him?

Jesus knew that this man’s god was his wealth. As long as his money remained the most important thing to him, God could never be God in his life and God will not take second place in our lives. Whatever we value the most is what we declare to be our God. This is why the greatest commandment is to LOVE GOD with ALL your HEART, ALL your SOUL, and ALL your MIND.

Why did the young man walk away sad?

The young man’s wealth gave him an illusion of success, significance, independence, comfort, and status. People in that culture were considered blessed by God if they had material wealth. For him to give up his wealth would be to forfeit everything he relied on to give his life meaning. His wealth had such a grip on him that when it came to choosing between following Jesus and his money, his money won. The reason he went away sad was because he knew that even with all the money he had, his life was empty and unfulfilled. He knew that there was some disconnect between him and God but taking a step of faith and trusting God with his life was a step he was not willing to take. His money was his God and he was not willing to let it go.

Does this mean we need to give away our all our money to the poor in order to go to heaven?

Jesus knew that money was this man’s idol and that it was a barrier between him and God, so he challenged him on this point. Each of us has different things we give priority to in our lives. The question is, “Is there anything in our lives that takes a higher priority than God himself?” If there is, then Jesus would come to us and ask us to surrender that issue to him.

What might be some things we might be tempted to value more than God?

Relationship, Family, Career, Hobby,

What might Jesus want to say to us in each of those examples?

If the man had been told simply to pray a prayer, asking for forgiveness for his sins, he would have likely done that and then walked away feeling he was now secure and going heaven. Would his assumption have been correct?

His repentance would have been superficial and incomplete. In his heart he was not willing to let God be God; he was not willing to let Jesus be Lord. There was still a rebellion in his spirit that did not trust God and he valued what his money offered him more than Jesus. He would have walked away deceived, believing he was a child of God, but in for a major disappointment on the day of judgement.

Does this passage create any tension for you?

How many people believe they are “in” God’s family because they prayed a “prayer”, but perhaps have not allowed Jesus to be Lord?
How can we be sure we trust Jesus as Lord?
When Jesus calls us to do something, we obey. Even if we don’t understand, or don’t see how he can protect us, we obey, knowing that he loves us and has our best interests at heart.

*Luke 6:46 (NIV)*

> Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?

Read the following scenarios and consider how Jesus challenges their perception of his Lordship.

*Matthew 8:19-20 (NIV)*

19 Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."
20 Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

Why do you think the teacher might have been motivated to follow Jesus?
Teachers love listening to good teachers. In this case, the teacher was obviously enthralled with Jesus’ teaching and expressed he would be willing to become his disciple and follow him everywhere. Surely, to train under a great teacher like Jesus would assure this teacher a position of honour and prestige among the people.

How might Jesus’ response have made him think otherwise?
Jesus never declared that life would be easy for his followers. Following him was never a guaranteed passage to a comfortable, wealthy, or even respected life. This man’s claim was a rash decision that was made without really considering the cost or what he would be called to surrender. Jesus was ultimately asking him if he felt it was still worth it to follow him even if it meant having to live by faith for a place to lay his head.

What are some of the costs we might face if we truly choose to call Jesus, Lord?

*Matthew 8:21-22 (NIV)*

21 Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."
22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

What would have been so wrong with Jesus letting the man go and bury his father?
Again, this is a situation where Jesus is challenging the priorities of the man.
Let the dead bury their own dead: Jesus describes those who are separated from God as being spiritually dead. Their spiritual death ultimately culminates in physical death and eternal judgement. Jesus is not in the "death" business, he is in the "life-giving" business. He is challenging this man to consider whether he is more interested in dealing with death, or is he more interested in giving life?

True, it is the man’s father, and Jesus calls us to honour our parents, but when Jesus calls us to follow him we have to make a decision as to whether our life centers on our earthly family or whether it centres on Jesus and his mission to rescue people from death. As important as burying family members is, obeying Jesus and giving life to others takes a higher priority. When God calls us to follow him and obey it is not always convenient, but if he is truly Lord, we obey.

Matthew 10:32-39 (NIV)
32 "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. 33 But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. 34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— 36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' 37 "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Which phrases in this passage do you find hard to accept?

What point is Jesus stressing in the above passage?
Jesus is saying that we need to understand our relationship with him is to come before any other relationship. The greatest command is to LOVE GOD first, then LOVING OTHERS follows from that. If those two are reversed then God is not God, your family or friends are your god.

When members of a family choose to set Jesus as their priority it will often create tensions within a family. Suddenly your values are different, your priorities are different, where and how you spend your time and money, who you enjoy being with all change. Not everyone will be thrilled that you have chosen to follow Jesus and it may create divisions within a family.

Have any of you had to pay a price in your relationships because you chose to follow Jesus?
What does Jesus mean when he says to pick up your cross and follow him?
When Jesus picked up his cross he was saying to the Father, “Not my will, but yours be done.” Jesus did not want to die a painful, torturous death on a cross, but he knew that it was the Father’s will for him to do so in order to rescue all mankind. Jesus put to death his own will and preferences and chose to embrace the will of the Father despite the great suffering it would bring him. When he tells us to pick up our cross, he is calling us to follow his example of dying to self and embracing the will of God, whatever the cost.

Why do we find it hard to surrender our lives to the rule of Jesus?

Two common reasons:

1) **Pride**
   We like to be in control. We like to think we are self sufficient and that we are capable of doing everything on our own. Pride was the driving force behind **Satan’s rebellion** as he desired to be equal with God. Pride was the driving force behind Adam and Eve’s sin of eating the fruit, believing they would become like God, not needing him to tell them what to do. Pride is the driving force whenever we sit on the throne and declare ourselves god of our lives.
   Pride says I can do a better job with my life than God can.
   Pride keeps us from humbling ourselves before God.

2) **Fear**
   A distrust that Jesus will meet all my needs.
   A fear of where he will lead me and what he might call me to do.
   It is ultimately rooted in a questioning of God’s true love for me.

   *1 John 4:18 (NIV)*
   There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

   *Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)*
   6Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
In all of the above scriptures the question is raised, “What role will Jesus play in your life?”

To declare Jesus is Lord is to say that he is now the Owner of your life; he can do with it whatever he wishes. It is HIS! To declare Jesus is Lord requires a huge step of faith, trusting that he is HOLY, JUST, and that he LOVES you fully.

*Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)*

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Everyone will eventually declare Jesus is Lord. The only decision we have to make is whether we will do it as his child or as one who has been in constant rebellion against him, forced to bow as his defeated enemy.

**HOME STUDY:**

Read Genesis 1-11

Genesis 1-11 covers the story of God’s perfect creation, the fall of man, and reveals how our sinful nature consistently drives us further from God and destroys life as he intended it. For now feel free to scan over the genealogies when you come to them as the goal is simply to get a quick overview of the story.