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Teaching Activities Manual for

Break Through!

The **Bible** for
Young Catholics

Getting to **Know Jesus**



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Rick Keller-Scholz and Jeannie Pomanowski
with Christine Schmertz Navarro



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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all of the faith-filled women and men across North America who work with young adolescents in Catholic grade schools and parishes. Thank you.

The publishing team included Christine Schmertz Navarro, development editor; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; Mary Koehler, permissions editor; FaithClipart, image, page 71; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the production departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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About Our Principal Authors

Rick Keller-Scholz has spent over twenty years teaching at Bellarmine Preparatory School in Tacoma, WA, and more than ten years as a volunteer junior high parish minister. Rick also teaches in the Archdiocese of Seattle Catechetical Certification Program.

Rick has been awarded “Catechist of the Year” from the Seattle Archdiocese and the Elizabeth Ann Kelley Teacher of the Year award from Bellarmine. He is a contributing author to *Pride in Our Past / Faith in Our Future: Catholic Northwest History Curriculum* (Archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle and the Catholic School’s Department [Seattle: Archdiocese of Seattle, 1999]), the *Teaching Activities Manual for “The Catholic Youth Bible®”* (Saint Mary’s Press, 2000), and the *Teaching Activities Manual for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”: An Introduction to People of Faith* (Saint Mary’s Press, 2006).

Rick and his wife, Nancy, live in Tacoma and have three children.

Jeannie Pomanowski has been teaching in Catholic schools for many years and has been teaching middle school religion for the last seven years at Saint Leo the Great School in Lincroft, NJ. In 1999, the Diocese of Trenton awarded Jeannie the “Catholic Educator of the Year” award.

Jeannie is also a songwriter, singer, and recording artist of Christian pop and rock music and has released two albums, *Faith with an Attitude* and *Prayer Warrior*, both published by Be Attitude Music, BMI. Jeannie performs around the country and has shared her skill at the 2001, 2003, and 2005 National Catholic Youth Conference, in addition to other gatherings.

Jeannie is also a principal author for the *Teaching Activities Manual for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”: An Introduction to People of Faith* (Saint Mary’s Press, 2006).

Christine Schmertz Navarro is a development editor at Saint Mary’s Press, having taught several years in high schools and spent volunteer time with young adolescents. She is the principal author of the *Teaching Activities Manual for “THE CATHOLIC YOUTH BIBLE”* (2000), coauthor of the *Teaching Manual for “Living Justice and Peace: Catholic Social Teaching in Action”* (2001), and editor of several other books, all published by Saint Mary’s Press.

Christine and her husband, Rudy, live in Tacoma, WA, and have a nine-year-old daughter.

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INTRODUCTION

GETTING TO KNOW *BREAKTHROUGH!* *THE BIBLE FOR YOUNG CATHOLICS*, ITS TEACHING MANUAL, AND ITS STUDENT WORKBOOK

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics has a growing family of resources that complement one another. This teaching manual, *Getting to Know Jesus*, follows the manual subtitled *An Introduction to People of Faith*. Student workbooks accompany both manuals.

The *Breakthrough!* Family of Resources

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics

Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics will be your strongest resource for introducing young adolescents to the Scriptures. Every element of this Bible was carefully chosen or created to appeal to young people who are ten to thirteen years old. This starts with the choice of using the Catholic Edition of the *Good News Translation* for the Bible text. The *Good News Translation* was created with a vocabulary and reading level appropriate to the younger student. If you have been using translations with a more advanced reading level, you will notice an immediate difference in your students' ability to read and understand the Bible text.

Additionally, *Breakthrough!* provides many other tools to help young people feel more comfortable and familiar with the Bible. Forty illustrated color inserts feature “interviews” with the biblical characters. These character interviews quickly identify the important events in the biblical characters' stories and the roles these people played in salvation history. A four-page salvation history time line at the beginning of the Bible shows how these biblical characters fit into God's big picture of salvation history.

Another key feature is the inclusion of Pray It! Study It! Live It! and Catholic Connection articles. These articles appear alongside the biblical text in forty biblical books. The forty books were chosen to provide the best overview of salvation history and a representative sampling of the different types of books found in the Bible. For these forty books, the articles provide a commentary to help young readers better understand and apply the biblical message to their

lives. Pray It! articles give the young readers ideas about applying the spirituality of the Bible. Study It! articles give them background so that they better understand the context of the passages they are reading. Live It! articles challenge the young people to live biblical values and teachings. Catholic Connections articles show where important Catholic teachings are found in the Scriptures.

Some of the other features you will find in *Breakthrough!* are these:

- a complete list of the Sunday readings
- lists to help find important Bible stories, prayers, and teachings
- a word list with definitions of over 180 important Bible words
- nine color maps

The Teaching Manuals and the Bible

The *Teaching Activities Manual for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”: An Introduction to People of Faith* (Saint Mary’s Press, 2006) provides you with tools to invite young adolescents to encounter God through over forty biblical characters from both the Old and New Testaments. Using a format similar to this manual, the *People of Faith* manual helps you identify similarities between the biblical characters and your students’ lives and gives you ideas about how to best introduce the biblical characters to your students in ways that are relevant and interesting.

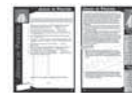
The *Student Activity Workbook for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”: Getting to Know Jesus* (Saint Mary’s Press, 2007) invites you to take a similarly personal approach in your study of Jesus. *Getting to Know Jesus* helps you teach about Jesus through his different gifts and experiences. The manual identifies similarities between the lives of Jesus and your students, providing you with options for inviting them into his story and message.

The Teaching Manuals and the Student Workbooks

Both of the manuals have student workbooks that provide the students with ways to learn about a biblical character or Jesus with greater independence. The workbooks have word puzzles to help the students gain familiarity with the content of relevant readings as well as introductions to the subject matter, lists of relevant Scripture passages and “*Breakthrough!*” articles, and questions and space for reflection.

The teaching manual was written to help teachers use the Bible with young people rather than as a guide to using the workbook. This manual does, however, also provide suggestions about ways you can use all three resources together. The workbook puzzles often function

like the “Getting to Know the Story of Jesus” activities in that they require the students to read some of the passages they need to be familiar with in order to get to know Jesus better. When you see the workbook icon, you will find suggestions about using the puzzles in conjunction with these activities.



The introductory paragraphs and reflection questions in the workbook often come from the “Getting to Know Jesus” activities. When you see the workbook icon in this section of the teaching activities manual chapters, you will encounter suggestions about when and how you might have students answer the questions in the workbook to enhance their experience of the activities.

The teaching manual and the student workbook both stand alone, however. There are advantages to using them together, but every activity in this manual can be conducted without the workbook, and every activity page in the workbook can be completed without the teaching manual. The needs of your students and your own resources should determine which combination of these products you choose.

About the Term *Young Adolescent*

You will notice that the *Breakthrough!* materials use the term *young adolescent* throughout. This term describes young people of the ages that would normally put them in grades five through eight. We intentionally use a term that describes their age rather than their status in school, which is what would happen if we used *junior high* or *middle school*. We all know that, depending on what part of the country, state, or county you find yourself, even these terms are fluid!

We also use the terms *young people* and *student* to refer to this same group. Even though some activities may lend themselves more readily to the classroom of a Catholic grade school, the authors wrote with both school and parish needs in mind.

Looking More Closely at This Teaching Manual

This teaching manual has many features that will help you in your ministry with young adolescents. Though the Bible itself is not a “curriculum,” nor does the teaching manual provide a comprehensive curriculum for biblical study, you will find that this manual will supplement the Christology or New Testament curriculum you are currently using.

This book consists of twelve chapters and three appendices. You can use the chapters in order or pick and choose as you need. In

addition to inviting students to learn the stories about Jesus, the material in the chapters enables you to make connections between your young people's lives and the life of Jesus.

The next sections explain the rationale behind the different parts of the chapters.

Preparing to Teach

Each chapter begins with a section called "Preparing to Teach." There is quite a bit of "raw material" in the first half of each chapter, such as Scripture citations, lists of *Breakthrough!* articles, and connections between Jesus and young people. These tools are present to make it easier for you to reflect about your own students and their needs and questions, and then to move quickly into a lesson or session plan that will bring the Bible and its people alive for your young people.

Instead of going through the chapters sequentially, we hope you will make decisions about what and how to teach based on a combination of factors, such as what materials you have and what you think will excite your students. The chapters in this manual are set up to support your own discernment in teaching. Pray about your students' needs, and focus on the aspects of Jesus' life with which they would most identify right now.

The following parts of the chapters should help you tailor your teaching to the needs of your students.

Overview

The overview consists of several paragraphs that bring the chapter topic into focus and highlight ways the subject connects with the young people at their own stage of development.

This Chapter at a Glance

This short section gives you the names of the activities that are in the second half of the chapter. You will see here that each chapter provides at least one activity that helps the young people learn the stories of Jesus and one that helps them probe more deeply into the person of Jesus.

Scripture Passages Related to the Story of Jesus

This section lists no more than twelve key passages about the aspect of Jesus under study. An asterisk identifies those passages

that are most important to read. This section should make it easier for you to find relevant passages and to assign reading to your group.

Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus

This section lists several articles from *Breakthrough!* that are relevant to your study. The Bible features Pray It! Study It! Live It! articles so that the students can learn more about aspects of the Bible, develop their prayer life, and hear challenges to live differently. These three types of articles as well as the Catholic Connections can be springboards for conversation with your students. When you see the *Breakthrough!* icon in the margin, you will know that you will be directed to an aspect of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics*.

The logo for 'Breakthrough!' features the word 'Break' in a light blue, sans-serif font above the word 'Through!' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A blue exclamation point is positioned at the end of 'Through!'.

Jesus and Young Adolescents Today

This section suggests several connections between Jesus, his ministry, and the young people with whom you are working. Perhaps one or two of the connections will intuitively or obviously seem more suitable for your group now. But next year, with another group, another two may emerge as important.

Activities

The second half of each chapter is devoted to class or session activities. Each chapter has between one and four activities for you to choose from as you explore the person of Jesus with the young people. You will notice that the authors of this manual believe it is possible to learn about Jesus while having an enjoyable, meaningful, and creative time.

There are two types of activities in each chapter:

- **Getting to Know the Story of Jesus.** This activity exposes the young people to the *story* of Jesus either by inviting the young people to read the Scripture passages themselves or by sharing this task with their peers.
- **Getting to Know Jesus.** This activity presumes that the students know the stories about Jesus for the chapter. The activities explore *who Jesus is* and make connections between Jesus, his ministry, and the young people's own life experiences. These activities are more reflective and invite group discussion.

The Appendices: Making It Easier for You

Appendix 1: Additional Resources

This appendix suggests resources that provide background for you and materials that can help you share the beauty of the Scriptures with the students.

Appendix 2: Answer Key for *Breakthrough!* Workbook Puzzles

This appendix contains the answers for the word puzzles that appear in the *Student Activity Workbook for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”: Getting to Know Jesus*. This appendix does not directly connect with any materials in this teaching manual. You may choose to use the student workbook to give your students additional opportunities to learn about Jesus and his story. The workbook is available from Saint Mary’s Press, www.smp.org.

Appendix 3: Index of Activities by Chapter

This appendix lists the activities from the manual by chapter, enabling you to quickly find them and providing you with some sense of the learning styles and methods they use.

Journeying with the Young People

Early adolescence is an exciting age from which to be looking at the stories and person of Jesus. Young people are fairly preoccupied with the opportunities, experiences, and turmoil of this age, so they are primed for stories about Jesus that speak of trying new things, relating with friends, making a difference, wrestling with rejection, and making important decisions.

The opportunity to look at these issues in light of Jesus’ life presents young people with a model of how to address the issues in a loving way, with prayer and grace, and in Christian community. These young people are continuing to transition into an adult faith and relationship with Jesus. You have the privilege to journey with them.

CHAPTER 1

GETTING TO KNOW JESUS AND HIS FAMILY

Preparing to Teach

Overview

Jesus was born into and grew up in a family. Although his childhood and young adolescence are centuries and thousands of miles away, young people can come to understand that they themselves share many human experiences with Jesus. It helps young people to realize that Mary is likely about their age when the angel appears to her and that the story of Jesus in the Temple probably happened when he was a young adolescent. Our students and their parents are not the only ones who miscommunicate!

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus are a model loving family. Jesus learns a humble trade and participates in the religious rituals of a devout Jewish family. It would be a mistake, however, to idealize that this family had it easy by any means. They faced homelessness, became refugees in another country, and likely lived a subsistence lifestyle. Students can see that it was not always Christmas for this family, even though that is a snapshot of their family life that we tend to focus on.

THIS CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

Getting to Know the Story of Jesus and His Family

- The Birth of Jesus

Getting to Know Jesus and His Family

- *Las Posadas*
- Jesus and Human Rights Violations

Scripture Passages Related to Jesus and His Family

The passages listed in bold are readings the students will reference to complete the puzzle “Jesus and His Family” on page 9 of the *Student Activity Workbook for “Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics”*: *Getting to Know Jesus*.

- **Matthew 1:1–17** (The ancestors of Jesus Christ)
- **Luke 2:1–7, Matthew 1:18–25** (The birth of Jesus Christ)*
- **Luke 2:8–20** (The shepherds and the angels)*
- **Matthew 2:1–12** (Visitors from the East)*
- **Matthew 2:13–15** (The escape to Egypt)
- **Luke 2:21** (Jesus is named.)
- **Matthew 2:16–18** (The killing of the children)
- **Matthew 2:19–23** (The return from Egypt)
- **Luke 2:39–40** (The return to Nazareth)
- **Luke 2:22–38** (Jesus is presented in the Temple.)*
- **Luke 2:41–52** (The boy Jesus in the Temple)*

Asterisk (*) signifies key passages to cover.

**Break
Through!**

Articles from *Breakthrough!* Related to Jesus and His Family

- King of Kings (Matthew 1:1–17)
- Remember Moses? (Matthew 2:13–18)
- “Born of the Virgin Mary” (Luke 1:26–38)
- Hail Mary! (Luke 1:41–42)
- “Where Were You?” (Luke 2:41–51)

Jesus’ Family and Young Adolescents Today

- Jesus is fully human. Adolescents share in Christ’s human nature.
- The facts surrounding the birth of Jesus were rather scandalous. Some students were also born under circumstances that others may have considered less than ideal.
- Joseph and Mary were poor. Many young adolescents can relate to a life of frugality.
- Jesus’ birth brought visitors from afar. The birth of each student brought with it a celebration and visits from relatives and friends.
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph are refugees from violence. Young adolescents are aware of people seeking refuge because of violence in their communities.

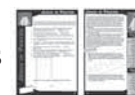
- Jesus and his parents did not communicate well about their plans to leave Jerusalem. Young people and their parents can miscommunicate at times.
- Jesus did not see eye to eye with Mary about being by himself in the Temple. Young adolescents and their parents do not always agree on how much freedom young people should have.

Getting to Know the Story of Jesus and His Family

The Birth of Jesus

In this activity the young adolescents read an excerpt from Luke, chapter 2 in order to review or learn the main events surrounding Jesus' birth.

If the students are using the workbook, they can work on the puzzle "Jesus and His Family" on page 9, which covers not only Luke's narrative but Matthew's also. The activity on handout 1-A, "The Birth of Jesus," prepares students for puzzle questions about Luke. See appendix 2 of this manual for the solution to the puzzle.



Preparation

- Make copies of handout 1-A, "The Birth of Jesus," one for each student.
- Complete the handout yourself before meeting with the students.
- Provide each young person with a copy of *Breakthrough! The Bible for Young Catholics* or another Bible and a pen or pencil.

1. Give each student a copy of handout 1-A, "The Birth of Jesus," a Bible, and a pen or pencil. Ask the young people to read Luke 2:1-12 quietly to themselves. When they finish reading, ask them to close their bibles and fill in the handout from memory.



2. When all the students are done with the handout, have them self-check their work by opening their bibles to the passage in Luke and reviewing their answers. Call on students to share their answers with the class. Answer any questions they might have about the reading.

Getting to Know Jesus and His Family

Las Posadas

“*Las Posadas*” is a wonderful Advent activity that involves the whole school or religious education program. In this activity the students recreate the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the Mexican tradition of *Las Posadas*. Because this activity ideally involves schoolwide participation, it is important to give advance notice and directives to all involved.

Preparation

- ❑ Have the class create invitations for all the other classes in the school, inviting them to *Las Posadas*. Let the classes know they will each have to assign one student as their innkeeper.
- ❑ Have your students include a short explanation of the Mexican tradition of *Las Posadas*. (Information about this celebration is readily available on the Internet.)
- ❑ *Las Posadas* is a Mexican tradition. *Las Posadas* means “inn” and “to find a safe place.” The celebration is a re-enactment of the arrival of Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem. Ask each class in the school to decide on a name for their inn and decorate their classroom door.

1. Assign two students in your class to play the roles of Mary and Joseph.

2. On the designated day, begin *Las Posadas* with your class. Instruct Mary and Joseph to knock at each classroom door that is decorated. The townspeople (the remaining members of your class) follow Mary and Joseph from inn (classroom) to inn. Have the designated innkeepers from each class turn them away. Once a class’s innkeeper has turned away Mary and Joseph, that whole class, including the innkeeper, should join the procession.

3. When Mary and Joseph reach the last inn and are again turned away, they then lead the whole school community to assemble in the sanctuary or auditorium to sing appropriate Advent or Christmas hymns, such as “O Holy Night” or “Away in a Manger.”

4. Lead the students in a discussion of their experience of *Las Posadas*. What did it feel like to play the different roles of innkeeper, Mary, Joseph, and the townspeople?

Additional suggestion. Play instrumental Advent or Christmas hymns quietly over the public address system while Mary and Joseph go from inn to inn. Remind all students to remain silent during the procession so as to present a solemn, holy environment for the event.

Jesus and Human Rights Violations

In this activity the students study several events in Jesus' life from the perspective of current international law in order to reflect more deeply on the story of his early years.

Preparation

- ❑ Make copies of handouts 1-B, "Human Rights," and 1-C, "Human Rights and the Life of Jesus," one of each for each student.
- ❑ Reflect on or research human rights issues. The United Nations has a helpful Web site for teachers.

1. Pass out handout 1-B, "Human Rights," and go through the articles with the students. Clarify any questions they might have about the language used in the articles.



2. Discuss the importance of these articles in the global community. If there are any issues of human rights in the news, refer to them or to past events the students would be familiar with, to help illustrate the articles.

3. Distribute handout 1-C, "Human Rights and the Life of Jesus," and ask the young people to complete it individually, using handout 1-B as a reference. Discuss the results as a class. Ask the students how they think the experience of having their human rights violated shaped Jesus and his parents.



4. If your students have the workbook, this would be a good time for them to answer question 1 on page 10, which asks them to find similarities between their own birth and Jesus' birth. Have them answer the question in writing.



THE BIRTH OF JESUS

At the time Emperor _____ ordered a _____ to be taken throughout the _____ Empire. . . . Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own hometown. Joseph went from the town of _____ in Galilee to the town of _____ in Judea, the birthplace of King David. . . . He went to register with _____, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in _____, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a _____—there was no room for them to stay in the _____.

There were some _____ in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. An _____ of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, “Don’t be _____! I am here with _____ for you, which will bring great joy to all people. This very day in David’s town your Savior was born—Christ the Lord!” (Luke 2:1,3-12)

HUMAN RIGHTS

*From the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”	**Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.	Article 6 1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. 2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
Article 13. 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.	Article 10 2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances, personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the present Convention.
Article 14. 1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.	Article 22 1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.
Article 16. 3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.	
Article 25. 2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.	

*(Articles from “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” on the United Nations’ Web site. Used with permission.)

** (Articles from “United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child,” on the United Nations’ Web site. Used with permission.)

Handout 1-B: Permission to reproduce is granted. © 2007 by Saint Mary’s Press.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LIFE OF JESUS

Match the events in Jesus' life with the articles from the United Nations, which crafted these documents in the last century.

The circumstances surrounding the consequent birth of Jesus were rather scandalous because Mary and Joseph were betrothed to be married when Mary became pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

“After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, ‘Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave.’” (Matthew 2:13)

“When Herod realized that the visitors from the East had tricked him, he was furious. He gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its neighborhood who were two years old and younger.” (Matthew 2:16)

CHAPTER 2

GETTING TO KNOW JESUS' BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION

Preparing to Teach

Overview

Many young people have been baptized, whether in the Catholic Church or in another Christian denomination. All of them have been tempted to sin. It is interesting that Jesus is sent by the Holy Spirit into the desert right after his baptism. The proximity of the two stories suggests how much the grace of baptism is needed to resist temptation. Though young people may not be thinking daily about their Baptism, they need to know that they have a special character because of it, one that has the strength to resist temptation if it is not weakened significantly by sin.

At Jesus' baptism God the Father affirms Jesus in his truest identity as God's Son. Then, in the desert, Jesus confronts those forces that seek to corrupt this identity and destiny. Many adults experience both reinforcement and doubt about their true identity, but young adolescents can perceive it to be an overwhelming struggle at times.

The young adolescent is very sensitive to the importance of belonging—being “the beloved,” “the special one”—and may believe that association with a certain group or team can provide the status they desire, at least for a short time. Yet this status often remains elusive; the feeling of being “the unbeloved” or “the ordinary one” can weigh on the young student.

Like Jesus the young adolescent's sense of true self is challenged. Young adolescent believers struggle with social acceptance and are tempted to compromise their integrity to simply avoid the hassle of defending their faith. This chapter can help the students recognize their true selves, as Jesus did, and also provide them with tools to reject those voices that would cause them to doubt God's care for them and that would try to persuade them that they are foolish to want to serve others so willingly.