



GOD VIEWS

Match the Marvelous Mutts

Take a few minutes to fill in the appropriate name for the “mutt” (Jesus’ disciple or special friend). A list of names can be found at the end of this exercise. Then consider the questions that follow.

JESUS’ MARVELOUS “MUTTS”

Name	Description
① _____	An evaluation by the Sanhedrin suggested that he was “unlearned and ignorant.” (See Acts 4:13). A common fisherman by trade. Yet he came to be the most prominent of the 12 apostles. Original name was Simon.
② _____	The brother of Simon Peter and son of Jonas, of Bethsaida. He also was a fisherman and lived with his brother (Peter) in Capernaum. He was directed to Jesus by John the Baptist.
③ _____	Son of Zebedee (Matthew 4:21) and Salome. Elder brother of the apostle John. Lived in Capernaum and, you guessed it, was a fisherman. Partners with Peter and Andrew. From lowly beginnings became one of Jesus’ special three, the only disciples present for the raising of Jarius’ daughter (Mark 5:37), the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8), and the agony of the Garden (Matthew 26:36-46).
④ _____	A fisherman and disciple of John the Baptist (John 1:35-39). Unschooled in rabbinical matters, a layman when it came to religious understanding (Acts 4:13). Yet five books of New Testament are attributed to him.
⑤ _____	First a disciple of John the Baptist. Characterized as being timid and retiring. Seemed reluctant to believe wholeheartedly in the Kingdom and at times seemed to have difficulty in grasping its meaning (John 14:8-14).
⑥ _____	Almost nothing is known about this person. May be confusion concerning his name. Could be surname for Nathanael—who was led to Christ by Philip. Aside from listing with group of disciples, there is no further mention of him in the NT.

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- 7 _____ Famous only for his doubting.
- 8 _____ A despised tax collector (Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27). Jesus met him at the tax office in Capernaum.
- 9 _____ Usually identified as James the Little, or the Less.
- 10 _____ Mentioned in only two of the four lists of apostles (Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18). Not mentioned in Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13).
- 11 _____ Another disciple of Jesus (not Peter). A member of a party later called “the Zealots.”
- 12 _____ Camel-skin wearing, locust-eating hermit, prophet, and evangelist. On serious outs with the ruler, Herod.
- 13 _____ Name indicates she was from Magdala, on the SW coast of the Sea of Galilee. After Jesus cast seven demons out of her she became a devoted disciple of his. (Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2). Under the influence of the demons, she may have been living an immoral life—but the evidence not completely clear. Even so, she was given the honor of being the first to learn of Jesus’ resurrection.
- 14 _____ Was brought in by the Pharisees and teachers of the law who wanted Jesus to punish her in public. She had been caught in the act of adultery. (See John 8:4 and following)
- 15 _____ A widow so poor she gave to the Temple treasury a coin so worthless that well-to-do people wouldn’t bend down to pick one up. Yet she was praised for giving more to God than the Pharisees.

■ Choose from the following:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Andrew | Bartholomew | James—son of Zebedee |
| James—son of Alphaeus | John—the apostle | John—the Baptist |
| Judas | Matthew | Mary Magdalene |
| Peter | Philip | Poor Widow |
| Simon | Thaddeus | Thomas |
| Woman (in adultery) | | |

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Incredibly Loyal “Mutts”

Perhaps the strongest argument for the resurrection of Christ is the lives of his disciples. At the time of Jesus’ arrest (and through his death on a cross), his followers were a confused and bewildered lot. Peter denied Christ three times, using profanity for punctuation. With the exception of John, none of the disciples are thought to have been present for the crucifixion. The first to see Jesus’ empty tomb was not one of the twelve, but Mary Magdalene. Yet this band of cowards became a mighty army, willing to risk everything to advance the gospel of Christ. Reflect on their loyalty (and your own) as you read what happened to the eleven remaining disciples. These “mutts” were amazingly loyal to their owner.

■ Disciple

■ Manner of Death³

Peter	Crucified head down in Rome, 66 A.D.
Andrew	Bound to death. Preached until his death in 74 A.D.
James, son of Zebedee	Beheaded in Jerusalem by the sword (Acts 12:1-9)
John	Banished to the Isle of Patmos, 96 A.D.
Philip	Crucified at Hierapolis, Phrygia, 52 A.D.
Bartholomew	Beaten and crucified, then beheaded by the command of a king, 52 A.D.
Thomas	Run through by a lance at Corehandal, East Indies, 52 A.D.
Matthew	Slain by the sword, 60 A.D.
James, son of Alphaeus	Thrown from a pinnacle, then beaten to death, 60 A.D.
Thaddeus	Shot to death by arrows, 72 A.D.
Simon	Crucified in Persia, 74 A.D.

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³Scripture does not provide information on how each of the disciples died. The information provided here is found in church history and tradition. Some of these accounts have more verity than others.



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Bible Study

READ JOHN 21:7-17. (JESUS REINSTATES PETER)

⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from the shore, about a hundred yards. ⁹When they landed they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

¹¹Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

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- 1 Do you think it is significant that Jesus ministers to Peter after “re-creating” the scene when he was first called? (Read Luke 5:1-11 and then John 21:1-6.)
- 2 What do you believe this reveals about the nature of God?
- 3 Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to contribute some of their fish to the breakfast he had prepared for them that morning? That is to say, how is it that their fish plus his fish makes a better breakfast?
- 4 Jesus asked Peter if he truly (with his entire being, including his will) loved Jesus. Peter responded that he had affection for Jesus. Take a moment to personalize the question. What is the evidence in your life that you love Jesus with your entire self—will, thoughts, emotions, behavior, and interactions with others?
- 5 What do you believe is revealed about the nature of God through this scene?

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Just for Fun— Another story about dogs

Are you a dog person or a cat person? I'm a dog person myself. Never had much use for cats. That's probably because I've yet to meet one that had much use for me.

Cats are Pharisees. They're snooty, care too much about appearances, and don't need anyone but themselves. About the only good thing you can say about a cat or a Pharisee is that they're really clean. When a cat is trying to dislodge a hairball, I root for the hairball.

Now dogs are a completely different matter. Most every dog I've been around has acted like a fine Christian.

I got my first dog when I was five years old. My family had moved for the fifth time in as many years, and I was trying to adjust to school and a new neighborhood. Right in the middle of this crisis, I remember going to sleep on the sofa, in tears.

The next thing I knew, a brown and black ball of fur was licking me awake. It took me about two seconds to forget about my problems. I named my new best friend Frisky—I got the name from a can of animal food.

That night I went to sleep with my hand on Frisky's back. He had already taught me a valuable lesson in life. It doesn't take much to make someone feel better—just show up and let 'em know how glad you are to see them.

The next time we moved, Frisky fell in with the wrong crowd and didn't come back home. He must have gotten himself killed, because we'd become pretty good buddies and liked being together each day. I wasn't much good for about a week.

The next time I got a dog, I was in college taking Hebrew. I named him Kelev, which is Hebrew for dog. I got the joke, but I don't think it meant that much to Kelev. If I had it to do over, I would've named him Kitty. Standing out in the backyard saying, "Hear, Kitty, Kitty, Kitty," only to have a big ol' German shepherd gallop up would be a joke everybody would get.

To be honest, by the time Kelev came along, I was more into dating than dogging. To be even more honest, Kelev was a neglected pet. But he never complained. Anytime I had a minute for him, he just smiled and enjoyed the time with me. I didn't really stop to think about it at the time, but Kelev was teaching about forgiveness long before it became such a hot seminar topic.

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The reason dogs are on my mind so much lately is that someone dropped a couple of strays off at our house. I didn't know they were strays at first. I just thought they liked hanging out at our place. But after a couple of weeks of them always being around, coupled with the absence of a collar and the stench of dead-squirrel breath (nobody was feeding them), it hit me. They think they are home.

These two dogs are pretty smart too. (Or it could be that only one is smart and the other is a follower.) I started noticing that there would be a shredded newspaper in our yard every morning. So I began apologizing to our neighbors and explaining that the two dogs camping out at our place weren't really our dogs. But I couldn't find a neighbor who was taking the newspaper—or believed my story. When I told my wife, she said, “Oh, I forgot to tell you that I ordered the paper last week.”

This brought the whole matter much closer to home, so I went out and explained to the dogs that it was a bad thing to shred the morning paper before I had checked on the Braves. They had just supplied me with a fresh object lesson (a freshly shredded newspaper) that was piled on the lawn like spaghetti.

Next morning, the paper was left in its blue plastic bag—unchewed. I made sure they knew how much I appreciated being able to read the sports section with a string of “nice dogs” and head scratches. Next day, not only was the paper still in its bag, it had been dragged to the driver's side of my car to save me some steps. Smart dogs.

That evening, a dog dish showed up in our yard. I asked my wife if she had decided we should start feeding the dogs on a regular basis—I'm pretty smart too. But she hadn't bought the dish. Turns out the dogs had borrowed it from a neighbor. There was no mistaking their meaning. For a little food, they'd be on call twenty-four hours a day.

Well, to make a long story short, I believe dogs are some of God's unspoken parables. As one saint said, “I only hope that some day I will be as good a Christian as a dog—they love everyone and do not judge.”

That's true. And they can teach you a lot about making people feel better, forgiveness, and being sensitive to the needs of others. Perhaps if I try really hard, someday I'll become the kind of person my dogs have always thought I was.

So are dogs going to heaven? I'm more concerned about me.

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Transparency

Session Outline

I. INTRODUCTION



- Welcome
- Prayer
- Review

II. WARM-UP



- Quick Transition To Video

III. CONTENT



- Video Vignette
- Class Response
- Question/Discussion/Exercises

IV. BIBLE STUDY



- Small Groups or All Together

V. SUMMARY



- Review

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