

A WHOLE BRAIN LIFE OF JESUS

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In the last 20 years, medical science has made enormous advances, not least of which is in the area of brain research. Beginning with the work of Dr. Marian Diamond at U.C. Berkeley, a new model for education has been created. This model is based, for the first time in history, upon a fairly clear understanding of how our brain learns.

We acquire information through four pathways: saying, hearing, seeing and doing. The first two activities, saying and hearing are much less memory efficient than the last two activities, seeing and doing. According to medical researchers we possess a “seeing brain” because so much of our brain is made up of the visual cortex. Because we encode images more easily than language, people remember faces more easily than names, places more easily than lists of data, pictures more easily than text. The motor cortex which controls physical movement is the brain’s most reliable, long term, memory area. Information stored in the motor cortex can last, perfectly intact, for decades. You never forget how to ride a bicycle. Once you learn to walk, a complex activity, you walk “automatically”, without giving it a conscious thought. You easily tie your shoes because this information is stored in your motor cortex. Imagine if you had to tie your shoes based on verbal instructions (or even a set of mental, visual images!)

Substantial brain research at some of the world's leading universities supports the following:

- Listening to lectures, turning our brains into mere hearing organs, is the most inefficient way to form memories (and yet, verbal instruction is our primary mode of teaching!)
- The brain stores visual and motor information more efficiently than spoken and heard information.
- Data stored in motor memory lasts longer than data stored in any other area of the brain.
- The brain learns most efficiently when information is learned through all four modes: hearing, saying, seeing and doing.

In the last decade, more and more educators are experiencing success with whole brain learning, presenting lessons in which their students from kindergarten to college, hear and see information, translate it into their own words and finally, and most crucially, engage in some form of physical movement to form strong, vivid memories.

God gave us wonderfully powerful brains, which, until recently we have been poorly utilizing.

In 2006, influenced by advances in brain research, a Baptist pastor and a Catholic teacher sat down in Yucaipa, California to try to solve a large problem. How could they design a whole brain learning technique, a method involving hearing, seeing, saying and doing, that would help Christians memorize, in chronological order, important events in Jesus' life? They were amazed and concerned that too many Christians had only the foggiest idea, as they put it, "about when Christ did what."

-- Did Jesus still the storm on the Sea of Galilee before or after He brought Lazarus back to life?

-- Which came first, Christ's anointing by Mary or driving of the money changers out of the Temple?

-- Does Jesus select his 12 apostles and later, tell the story about the Prodigal Son ... or vice versa?

How strange it seemed to the Baptist pastor and the Catholic teacher that millions of Christians could not tell the story of their Savior's life in the order that it happened!

And so, the two men met weekly for seven months. Each added a share of his own teaching experience. They started by dividing Jesus' life into four periods.

1. **Beginnings:** The 12 years from His birth until He astounds the teachers in the Temple.

2. **Ministry:** the two to four years when Jesus spreads his teachings.

3. **Suffering:** the final week of His life.

4. **Victory:** the key events following Jesus' burial in the tomb.

Their next task was to decide how many events should be included in each of the four periods. Forty events total seemed like a good number; 40 certainly was an important number in the Bible ... but how should these events be divided between the four periods.

The pastor and the teacher arrived at the following.

1. **Beginnings:** 5 events

2. **Ministry:** 15 events

3. **Suffering:** 15 events

4. **Victory:** 5 events

The two men thought the symmetry, 5, 15, 15, 5 would help others remember each period. Also, they believed that allotting 15 events to Jesus' ministry and 15 events to the final week of His life stressed the importance of these middle periods. They felt it was especially useful to Christians to see that Jesus' last week played a major role in his gift to us. (The two men trusted that others would disagree and sincerely hoped a more useful system would be invented.)

And so, after seven months the pastor and the teacher compiled the list of 40 events in Christ's life on the next page. Attempting to apply what they had been taught by brain research, they created a physical gesture to represent each event. The goal was to store Christ's life in the brain's most reliable, long lasting memory area, the motor cortex. The two men soon discovered in their teaching that not only were the gestures crucial to their students' success, but also, the gestures made learning Christ's life extremely entertaining.

(The gestures are described in parenthesis after each event.)

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BEGINNINGS: 12 YEARS

1. Jesus is the eternal WORD. (Hold up three fingers, making a “W” for WORD)
 2. Jesus’ birth is announced to Mary by an ANGEL. (Flap your arms like you have an angel’s wings.)
 3. Jesus is born and laid in a MANGER. (Cradle your arms like you’re holding a baby. For extra effect, say “awww.”)
 4. Jesus, Mary and Joseph flee as refugees to EGYPT. (Touch your finger tips together in front of your chest; this will make a shape like the top of an Egyptian pyramid.)
 5. Jesus as a child in Jerusalem amazes the religious TEACHERS. (Shake your finger like a teacher at an imaginary student)
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MINISTRY: 2-4 YEARS

6. Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan RIVER. (Waggle one hand in front of you like a flowing river)
 7. Jesus resists Satan’s three temptations in the DESERT. (Wipe the sweat off your forehead and say “whew!”)
 8. Jesus teaches Nicodemus that we must be born again to enter God’s KINGDOM. (Use two hands and put an imaginary crown on your head)
 9. Jesus gives a command that instantly heals a LEPER. (Touch the corner of your eye, as if you are crying; it makes you sad to think of a leper.)
 10. Jesus heals a paralyzed man lowered through a ROOF. (Roofs in Jesus’ day were flat. Move one hand out from your shoulder, parallel to the ground, showing a flat roof.)
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11. Jesus prays all night and selects twelve APOSTLES. (Fold your hands in prayer.)
 12. Jesus the King preaches the Sermon on the MOUNT. (Point far away to a mountain top.)
 13. Jesus, in crossing the lake Galilee, stills the STORM. (Wiggle your fingers down as if rain is falling.)
 14. Jesus heals a man and sends his demons into a herd of PIGS. (Put your hand over your nose, as if making a pig’s snout and say “oink, oink!”)
 15. Jesus feeds 5000 with two fish and five loaves of BREAD. (Break an imaginary piece of bread with your two hands)
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16. Jesus on the mountain of Transfiguration shines with glory like the SUN. (Make a sun circle with your fingers and hold it over your head.)
 17. Jesus heals a man born BLIND. (Cover your eyes with one hand.)
 18. Jesus tells stories of a lost sheep, coin and YOUTH. (Reach your hand out and pat an imaginary youth on the head.)
 19. Jesus brings Lazarus back to LIFE. (Put both hands on your heart.)
 20. Jesus blesses the CHILDREN. (Reach your hand out and pat several imaginary children on their heads.)
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SUFFERING: ONE WEEK

21. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a DONKEY. (Make donkey ears on your head and say, “hee! haw!”)
 22. Jesus cleanses the Jerusalem TEMPLE. (Put both hands up in the air, like the towers on a temple.)
 23. Jesus, by acknowledging duty to both Caesar and God, surprises his ENEMIES. (Ball your fists and make small punching motions.)
 24. Jesus praises a widow’s small gift of MONEY. (Rub your thumb and fingers together.)
 25. Jesus tells of his return in the FUTURE. (Point straight ahead.)
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26. Jesus is anointed by Mary with PERFUME. (Lift an imaginary bottle of perfume to your nose and inhale.)
 27. Jesus is betrayed by Judas for 30 COINS. (With your thumb and forefinger, hold an imaginary stack of coins in the air.)
 28. Jesus shares with the apostles the Bread and CUP. (Lift a cup to your mouth.)
 29. Jesus prays in Gethsemane’s GARDEN. (Spread both arms out, embracing a garden.)
 30. Jesus suffers trials, flogging and is crowned with THORNS. (With the fingers on one hand, touch the forefinger on the other hand ... It is a sharp thorn! say “ouch!”)
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31. Jesus is denied by Peter three times before the crowing of the ROOSTER. (Put your thumbs into your underarms and crow, “cock-a-doodle-do!”)
 32. Jesus is led to Golgotha, the place of the SKULL. (Tap your skull.)
 33. Jesus is crucified between two THIEVES. (Reach your hand out and steal something.)
 34. Jesus dies for our sins on the CROSS. (Fold your arms across your chest.)
 35. Jesus is buried in the TOMB. (Dip your head to your shoulder, as if you just died.)
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VICTORY: 40 DAYS

36. Jesus is not in the tomb when an angel rolls away the STONE. (Use both hands and push a heavy stone. Say, “ugggg!”)
37. Jesus appears to his FOLLOWERS. (With one hand, walk two fingers in the air. At the same time, with the other hand, walk two fingers behind, following, the first two fingers.)
38. Jesus asks Thomas to touch his wounds with his FINGER. (Hold up your forefinger.)
39. Jesus gives to his apostles the GREAT COMMISSION. (Hold out both hands palms up.)
40. Jesus ascends to heaven in a CLOUD. (Point straight up.)

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Remarkably enough, we, Mahlon Friesen (the Baptist pastor) and Chris Biffle (the Catholic teacher) have found in classroom experiments that most students, from about third grade to adult, can learn this list, *aided by gestures* in from two to four hours! Of course, this time is spread out over several days and learning sessions.

If you are teaching others, present 5 items at a time. Say the sentence, perform the gesture; *then have your students repeat the sentence and gesture to a neighbor*. Go on to the next sentence. Review frequently.

Most classes, can learn 10 events in half an hour. On another day, when you begin again, review the material that has been covered and then add 10 more events and gestures.

if you are teaching yourself, follow the same procedure. Work on a few events at a time; *say and hear* the sentence, *see* the gesture as you *do* it.

Also, note the following memory aids.

-- Jesus' life is divided into four periods: Beginning (5 events), Ministry (15 events), Suffering (15 events), Victory (5 events). The easy to memorize pattern is 5-15-15-5.

-- Every event in Jesus life begins with the word Jesus. If you know the word Jesus, you know the first word in all 40 events!

-- Every event ends with a word all in caps, a key word in the event.

-- Every 5 key words can be combined into one Memory Sentence. Thus, it may be easier for you to memorize the sentences below, with the gestures, than it is to memorize the 40 events on their own.

1. A WORD of an ANGEL becomes a MANGER in EGYPT held by TEACHERS.

2. By the RIVER in the DESERT is a KINGDOM with a LEPER on a ROOF.

3. Can APOSTLES on a MOUNT in a STORM feed PIGS BREAD?
4. Does the SUN above the BLIND YOUTH give LIFE to CHILDREN.
5. Even the DONKEY in the TEMPLE sees its ENEMIES save MONEY for the FUTURE.
6. Find the PERFUME near the COINS in the CUP that fills the GARDEN of THORNS.
7. Get the ROOSTER on the SKULL of the THIEVES that flew from the CROSS on the TOMB.
8. Half the STONE beside the FOLLOWERS became a FINGER that gave the GREAT COMMISSION from a CLOUD.

-- Each of the eight memory sentences is aligned to A-H in the alphabet. Thus, the first sentence begins with A, “A WORD of an ANGEL...”; the second sentence begins with B “By the RIVER in the DESERT...” and so forth. If you know the alphabet, you have a clue about the first letter in each Memory Sentence.

-- Every key word has a memory gesture (see above). *These memory gestures are crucial not only to storing information in the motor cortex, but also to making learning entertaining. What is better than having a happy brain while you are remembering Jesus’ life?!*

-- A diagram of a left hand with the numbers 1-20 appears on the first page of the outline attached to this document. A diagram of a right hand with the numbers 21-40 appears on the second page of the outline. You can use your hands as memory devices. Whenever you have a few minutes, *look* at your fingers, *say* and *hear* the list of events, make the corresponding *gestures* ... whole brain learning! Your left hand will help you remember the first 20 events in Jesus’ life and your right hand will help you remember the last 20 events in

Jesus' life. No matter, where you go, you have His life with you ... and his Victory, the last five events, is in the palm of your right hand!

An outline of everything we've described is on the last two pages of this booklet. We've also included scriptural references for each event in Jesus' life.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are familiar with Power Teaching techniques, you'll find *A Whole Brain Life of Jesus* makes an ideal lesson for your students.

To learn more about Power Teaching see the following links:

100's of pages of free downloads describing Power Teaching's classroom management, reading and math strategies are available at:

<http://homepage.mac.com/chrisbiffle/Menu38.html> (*A Whole Brain Life of Jesus* in pdf. format is also available on this website.)

Nine in-class K-14 videos demonstrating Power Teaching instructional techniques are available at:

www.youtube.com/chrisbiffle

or

<http://www.teachertube.com/uprofile.php?UID=32259>

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Letters	Memory Sentences	Events	Scripture
BEGINNINGS – 12 years			
A □	Δ WORD □	1. Jesus is the eternal WORD.	John 1
	of an ANGEL □	2. Jesus' birth is announced to Mary by an ANGEL.	Matt 1, Luke 2
	becomes a MANGER □	3. Jesus is born and laid in a MANGER.	Matt 1, Luke 2
	in EGYPT □	4. Jesus, Mary and Joseph flee as refugees to EGYPT.	Matthew 1
	held by TEACHERS □	5. Jesus as a child in Jerusalem amazes the religious TEACHERS.	Luke 2
MINISTRY – 2-4 years			
B □	By the RIVER □	6. Jesus is baptized by John in the Jordan RIVER.	Mt 3, Mk 1, Lk 3
	in the DESERT □	7. Jesus resists Satan's three temptations in the DESERT.	Mt 4, Mk 1, Lk 4
	is a KINGDOM □	8. Jesus teaches Nicodemus that we must be born again to enter God's KINGDOM.	John 3
	with a LEPER □	9. Jesus gives a command that instantly heals a LEPER.	Mt 8, Mk 1, Lk 5
	on a ROOF □	10. Jesus heals a paralyzed man lowered through a ROOF.	Mt 9, Mk 2, Lk 5
C □	Can the APOSTLES □	11. Jesus prays all night and selects twelve APOSTLES.	Mark 3, Luke 6
	on a MOUNT □	12. Jesus the King preaches the Sermon on the MOUNT.	Matt 5-7, Luke 6
	in a STORM □	13. Jesus, in crossing the lake Galilee, stills the STORM.	Mt 8, Mk 4, Lk 8
	feed PIGS □	14. Jesus heals a man and sends his demons into a herd of PIGS.	Mt 8, Mk 5, Lk 8
	BREAD? □	15. Jesus feeds 5000 with 2 fish and 5 loaves of BREAD.	Mt 14, Mk 6, Lk 9, Jn 6
D □	Does the SUN □	16. Jesus on the mountain of Transfiguration shines with glory like the SUN.	Mt 17, Mk 9, Lk 9
	above the BLIND □	17. Jesus heals a man born BLIND.	John 9
	YOUTH □	18. Jesus tells stories of a lost sheep, coin and YOUTH.	Luke 15
	give LIFE □	19. Jesus brings Lazarus back to LIFE.	John 11
	to CHILDREN? □	20. Jesus blesses the CHILDREN.	Mt 19, Mk 10, Lk 18



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Letters	Memory Sentences	Events	Scripture
SUFFERING – one week			
E □	Even the DONKEY □	21. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a DONKEY.	Mt 21, Mk 11, Lk 19, Jn 12
	in the TEMPLE □	22. Jesus cleanses the Jerusalem TEMPLE.	Mt 21, Mk 11, Lk 19
	sees its ENEMIES □	23. Jesus, by acknowledging duty to both Caesar and God, surprises his ENEMIES.	Mt 22, Mk 12, Lk 20
	save MONEY □	24. Jesus praises a widow's small gift of MONEY.	Mk 12, Lk 21
	for the FUTURE □	25. Jesus tells of his return in the FUTURE.	Mt 24, Mk 13, Lk 21
E □	Find the PERFUME □	26. Jesus is anointed by Mary with PERFUME.	Mt 26, Mk 14, Jn 12
	near the COINS □	27. Jesus is betrayed by Judas for 30 COINS.	Mt 26, Mk 14, Lk 22
	In the CUP □	28. Jesus shares with the apostles the Bread and CUP.	Mt 26, Mk 14, Lk 22, 1 Cor 11
	that fills the GARDEN □	29. Jesus prays in Gethsemane's GARDEN.	Mt 26, Mk 14, Lk 22, Jn 18
G □	of THORNS □	30. Jesus suffers trials, flogging, and is crowned with THORNS.	Mt 26-27, Mk 14-15, Lk 22-23, Jn 18-19
	Get the ROOSTER □	31. Jesus is denied by Peter three times before the crowing of the ROOSTER.	Mt 26, Mk 14, Lk 22, Jn 18
	on the SKULL □	32. Jesus is led to Golgotha, the place of the SKULL.	Mt 27, Mk 15, Lk 23, Jn 19
	of the THIEVES □	33. Jesus is crucified between two THIEVES.	Mt 27, Mk 15, Lk 23
	that flew from the CROSS □	34. Jesus dies for our sins on the CROSS.	Mt 27, Mk 15, Lk 23, Jn 19
	on the TOMB □	35. Jesus is buried in the TOMB.	Mt 27, Mk 15, Lk 23, Jn 19
VICTORY – 40 days			
H □	Half the STONE □	36. Jesus is not in the tomb when an angel rolls away the STONE.	Mt 28, Mk 16, Lk 24, Jn 20
	beside the FOLLOWERS □	37. Jesus appears to his FOLLOWERS.	Mt 28, Mk 16, Lk 24, Jn 20
	became a FINGER □	38. Jesus asks Thomas to touch his wounds with his FINGER.	Jn 20
	that gave the GREAT COMMISSION □	39. Jesus gives to his apostles the GREAT COMMISSION.	Mt 28, Mk 16, Lk 24, Acts 1
	from a CLOUD □	40. Jesus ascends to heaven in a CLOUD.	Mk 16, Lk 24, Acts 1



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