



2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

SMALL GROUP LEADER GUIDE

“BUT SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE PROVIDED FOR YOU.”

MATTHEW 6:33



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THE GOOD LIFE

THE GOOD LIFE

GREETINGS,

We are excited for you to lead your students in small group Bible study each day. The time you invest in your students is invaluable. You are a very important part of the 2024 Caswell experience as you and your adults lead out in pointing your students to the overall theme as well as daily themes. The theme for this summer is “The Good Life,” based on Matthew 5-7.

These materials were written by members of the 2024 Summer Youth Weeks planning team and are an integral part of the entire program. Daily quiet times, morning celebrations, small group studies, evening worship and church group devotions all contribute to the week’s purpose, which is described in the following themes:

1. Heart of Sin
2. Heart of Trust
3. Heart of Mission

Please use these materials as you prepare to lead your small group time. The main “meat” of the lesson is taught during large group study. During the small group sessions, you help students apply Scripture to their lives.

It is important to spend time studying the Scriptures listed in each lesson before coming to Caswell, as well as reading the lesson material to be ready to teach the lesson. It is very important that all students study the same material every day. Each day is planned around a theme that begins in quiet time, goes throughout the day and ends in church group devotions. Be assured of our prayers as you prepare for your part in this important week for our youth.

If you have questions, call Merrie Johnson, student ministries strategist at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5568, or email Merrie at mjohnson@ncbaptist.org. You will also have an opportunity to ask questions during the small group overview meeting Monday at 4 p.m. in the Classroom Building, Room 101. This meeting is intended for the adults or college students from your church that will be leading your own youth group.

Enclosed are your teaching materials and a schedule for the week. The planning committee has prepared excellent small group study material, which is an integral part of each day’s theme and the week’s theme, “The Good Life.” The guide should be self-explanatory and **must be followed** during small group time. Some material referenced will be in the student workbook, which will be given to the students Monday evening. You will see these items marked in your teaching guide. **Please note the materials needed and bring all these materials with you to Caswell.**

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Preparation is essential. We suggest you read through the material to get a feel for each session, then spend time preparing for each study. There are videos located on bedotell.com/summer-youth-weeks that will help explain each session. If you have questions, please call Merrie Johnson at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5568, before May 25. After May 25, please email your questions to mjohnson@ncbaptist.org.

Please make sure you complete the background check procedure as outlined in the background check policy provided with camp materials. **A background check verification form for all adult chaperones must be brought to camp at the time of registration.**

Again, thank you for your willingness to be an important part of the Summer Youth Weeks. I look forward to seeing you at Caswell. Please join me in praying for all nine weeks of camp. My prayer is that God will move in such a way that we all hear Him calling us to follow Him now in missions and ministry to this generation!

Dr. Merrie Johnson

Student Ministries Strategist
Ministry Strategies Group
Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

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THE GOOD LIFE



2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Growing up in a pastor's home, the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ was apparent in everything we did as a family and everything we were told to do as fellow believers in Jesus Christ. Amazingly, however, even with all the attention my parents paid to the gospel, sin was still in our lives. Of course, we believed in Jesus and His provision for our eternal life. We believed Jesus was the only way to heaven. We believed following Jesus was the best way to live. But sin was still lurking about.

Many of my friends thought perfection came with faith in Jesus. That was so far from the truth of the gospel. Assurance of my salvation came when I placed my faith in who Jesus is and His payment for my sins on the cross. But as I tried to live out my faith, I was still filled with doubts and uncertainty as I began to think more abstractly as a teenager. The concrete thinking of my childhood expanded with more questions.

Questions led me to search the Bible more for answers. Today, however, questions for some lead them away from seeking the biblical answer, instead causing them to believe that what others say makes up reality.

This summer we want to study what Jesus said in His most famous sermon, referred to as the "Sermon on the Mount" found in Matthew 5-7. This sermon is Jesus' own words of what He wanted His followers to be and do. (That's where we get our name – BeDoTell.)

These verses show us what our lives should look like when we allow Jesus Christ to be the ruler of our lives – how we should think, believe and act under God's rule

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' first sermon, and in it, He teaches us about what it looks like to have spiritually healthy internal and external lives. Our external lives are how we live in relationship with others, and our internal lives are how we love and obey God.

The Sermon on the Mount teaches us that as followers of Jesus, we are blessed when we live according to what matters to Jesus. It also teaches us how to pray by giving us an example of what Jesus prayed in the "Lord's Prayer."

Each day at camp we will focus on three main parts of the Beatitudes:

THE GOOD LIFE

TUESDAY

Session Title: Heart of Sin

Scripture Focus: Genesis 6:5-6, Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Mark 12:30-31, Psalm 51:10

Summary: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is deepening, not destroying, the Old Testament law. Jesus is not trying to minimize the Old Testament law — He's expanding on it, or explaining the heart behind it. In both cases of murder and adultery, Jesus is teaching us that God's law is not just about outward behavior, but about the state of our hearts. He's showing that sin is not just about our actions but also about our thoughts and attitudes.

We often fall into sin cycles because we only address the outward action, not the heart. Jesus died to set us free from sin. The only way to be truly free from sin is to be given a new heart in Christ. When students are not receiving something from their relationship with Jesus, they often look for it somewhere else. Our biggest weapon against sin is a growing and passionate relationship with Jesus.

WEDNESDAY

Session Title: Heart of Trust

Scripture Focus: Matthew 6:25-34

Summary: According to the CDC, 91% of teenagers in our country report significant psychological symptoms due to stress and anxiety. Crippling anxiety and worry often prevent students from walking into God's purpose for their lives. We will examine two common roots of anxiety: lack of control and wrong priorities. We'll see how God is with us by providing for us and loving us amid our struggle.

When we allow our hearts to trust God, that He knows what is best for us, we are able to seek first the kingdom of God while walking through seasons of anxiety. We surrender our lives to the person who is already in control, who loves us, and desires what is best for us. We are surrendering to someone who has already given up His life to save us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, students can stop fighting for control over their lives and trust God.

THURSDAY

Session Title: Heart of Mission

Scripture Focus: Matthew 5:13-16, Numbers 18:19, Joshua 1:9

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Summary: Since the fall in the garden, the world has been both morally decaying and in spiritual darkness. Our hope comes from Jesus, the light of the world. When we could do nothing about separation from God, Jesus came and died the death that we deserve so we might have new life.

As followers of Jesus we are called to be salt that prevents decay and light that shines in the darkness. Lights do not shine to be seen — they shine to show the way. The heart of the mission is to shine our light so everyone can see Jesus. Through the power of the Spirit, we have a critical role to play in the redemption of the world.

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2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS SCHEDULE

MONDAY

- 1:00 p.m. Registration
- 4:00 p.m. Small group overview for teachers in Classroom Building room 101, located behind Hatch Auditorium
- 5:00 p.m. Supper
- 6:30 p.m. Main leader meeting in Classroom Building room 101
- 7:10 p.m. Line up by church in the Parade Ground
- 7:30 p.m. Worship in Hatch Auditorium
- 10:00 p.m. Church group devotions (locations assigned by Caswell and given at registration)
- 11:00 p.m. Clear campus (those having devotions in the Classroom Building should be back in their residence building by 11:00 p.m.)
- 11:45 p.m. Lights out

TUESDAY – THURSDAY DAILY SCHEDULE

- 7:15 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:15 a.m. Quiet time (printed in student workbook)
- 8:40 a.m. Line up by church in the Parade Ground
- 9:00 a.m. Morning worship in Hatch Auditorium
- 10:50 a.m. Dismiss to small groups in your assigned spaces
- Noon Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Track times or Pack Meals for Haiti
- 3:30 p.m. Free time
- 5:00 p.m. Supper
- 6:40 p.m. Line up by church in the Parade Ground

(TUESDAY – THURSDAY CONT.)

- 7:00 p.m. Worship
- 10:00 p.m. Church group devotions in your assigned spaces
- 11:00 p.m. Clear campus (those having devotions in the Classroom Building should be back in their residence building by 11:00 p.m.)
- 11:45 p.m. Lights out

FRIDAY MORNING

- 7:15 a.m. Breakfast
- 8:15 a.m. Quiet time - printed in Student Workbook
- 8:40 a.m. Line up by church in the Parade Ground
- 9:00 a.m. Morning worship in Hatch Auditorium
- 10:45 a.m. Dismiss to houses to pack up.
- Lunch at 12:00 p.m. and must be out of buildings before going to lunch.
- Cottages must be out by 1:00 p.m.

*SPECIAL FEATURES

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY: ADDITIONAL TRACK TIMES FROM 2:45-3:30 P.M.
SPLASH AND DIVE CONTEST AT THE SWIMMING POOL:
WEDNESDAY AT 4:00 P.M.



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2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

TUESDAY MORNING

TUESDAY MORNING

SESSION TITLE: Heart of Sin

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 6:5-6, Deuteronomy 6:4-7, Mark 12:30-31, Psalm 51:10

SESSION AT-A-GLANCE

- Ground rules (5 minutes)
- Examine the Scripture (30 minutes)
- Apply the Scripture (10 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens
- A Bible
- Student Workbook
- A hand full of sand and a small stick

GROUND RULES

SAY: There are several things you can do to help make this week better for all of us. These are not really rules but some simple guidelines that will help us during our time together. We greatly appreciate your help with these.

1. Make every effort to get here on time. If you come in late, it may cause an interruption that distracts everyone.
2. Listen and pay attention — or at least act like it. You may not care about the subject being discussed, but your neighbor could. Don't ruin things for others.
3. Bring your student workbook and Bible each day. The workbook includes many of our activities, and we do not want you to miss anything.

EXAMINE THE SCRIPTURE

SAY: Take your workbooks and turn to the Tuesday Small Group page. In the top right-hand corner, you will notice some weird-looking symbols with two dots. That is actually a word. Follow the directions and take a minute and write down what this word means. Hint: It is a Hebrew word, and you will get extra credit if you can spell it.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT



Take a minute and write down what you think this word means. Here's a hint: It is a Hebrew word. Extra credit if you can spell it.

Leader: Give them about a minute to write and think.

Ask: Well, what do you think it is and why? (*Be prepared — you could get all kinds of answers. Have fun with it and let them talk if they will.*)

Explain: Interestingly enough, the reason the word is in the top right-hand corner is because Hebrew is read from right to left. Also, the words themselves are spelled right to left. The first letter in the word is the letter that looks like a shepherd's staff. It is the letter "L." The second letter looks like 2 dots at the bottom of the L, and that is the letter "E." The third letter looks kind of like a shed, and it is the letter "B." Which spells "LEB." LEB is the Hebrew word for "heart."

Say: I am going to give you 10 interesting facts about the heart. Let's see what you think.

Read:

1. Your heart beats over 100,000 times per day.
2. Your heart pumps about 1.5 gallons of blood every minute. Over the course of a day, that adds up to over 2,000 gallons.
3. There are 60,000 miles of blood vessels in your body. That's enough to go around the world twice.
4. The average heartbeat of a woman is about 8 beats a minute faster than a man's heartbeat.
5. An adult heart is about the size of two hands clasped together. A child's heart is about the size of a fist.

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6. Other than the cornea, every cell in the human body gets blood from the heart.
7. The right side of your heart pumps blood into your lungs. The left side of your heart pumps blood back through your body.
8. The highest amount of heart attacks occur each year on Christmas Day.
9. More heart attacks happen on a Monday than any other day of the week.
10. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States.

Say: One of the big words during our scripture study today was “heart.” And so, to more fully understand the Scripture, we are going to try to grasp a deeper understanding of the Hebrew meaning and understanding of heart. Two specific reasons for examining the Hebrew meaning are: 1) The original language of the Old Testament was Hebrew; and 2) God’s chosen people were Israelites, also known as Hebrews. To understand the Hebrew writings, we need to try to understand the Hebrew way of thinking.

Leader: Read Genesis 6:5-6 (NIV) and have your students listen as you read.

“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.”

Say: Look in your student workbook again and answer the next question: “According to verse 5, thoughts are associated with _____
_____.”

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Genesis 6:5-6 (NIV)

“The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.”

According to vs. 5, thoughts are associated with _____ .

Answer: The Human Heart

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Say: I am now going to read the following sentences. And I want you to fill in the blanks in your student workbook.

The **human heart** is understood as the center of **desire** and **inclination**. It is also the center of **emotions** and a place of **knowledge** and **wisdom** and often appears with the verb, “to know.”

Heart may also be the **seat** of **conscious** and **moral character** — the fountain of man’s **deeds** and a place of **rebellion** and pride.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

The _____ is understood as the center of _____ and _____.

It is also the center of _____ and a place of _____ and _____ and often appears with the verb, “to know.”

_____ may also be the _____ of _____ and _____ — the fountain of man’s _____ and a place of _____ and pride.

Say: In your own words, describe what the heart is in Hebrew/Old Testament thinking.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

In your own words, describe what the heart is in Hebrew/Old Testament thinking.

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Leader: After a minute or so, ask them to share some of their answers. A good answer may be your inner being where emotions are and decisions are made. As you can see, the heart, according to Hebrew thinking, is the center of a person.

Say: Turn to Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Can someone read the verses?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7

“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

Say: Do you notice what is missing? If you compare that to Mark 12:30-31, it says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these.”

Do you notice what is different in the Deuteronomy passage? Mind. Why?

According to Hebrew thinking, the heart and the mind are tied together; therefore, this might help us understand as we study about the heart in the Sermon on the Mount.

Now: Look in your book and find the part that says: “Finish the Southern saying.” Take a few minutes and fill in the blanks.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Finish the Southern Saying:

- Bless your _____
- _____ Yonder
- Butter my _____
- Country as _____
- The sun don't _____ on the same dog's _____ all the time!
- _____ to Besty
- Fixin' _____
- A _____ of Sundays
- _____ need Jesus
- I'm a _____ Christian

Say: Each of the above sayings has a meaning.

- “Bless your heart” could mean “that poor soul” or “blessings.”
- “Heaven’s to Betsy” means “oh my goodness.”
- “Over yonder” means “over there.”
- “Fixin’ to” means “I’m getting ready to do something.”
- “Butter my biscuit” means “I like that” or “that satisfies me.”
- “A month of Sundays” means “a long time.”
- “Country as cornbread” just means “country country.”
- “Y’all need Jesus,” well, means “y’all need Jesus.”
- “The sun don’t shine on the same dog’s behind all the time” means “it doesn’t happen to the same person all the time.”
- Now I wonder what a good Christian means?

Now: This leads us to the next two questions. Take a couple of minutes and answer the next two questions.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Write down what makes you a good Christian.

Write down what makes you a bad Christian.

Ask: Would some of you be willing to share some of your answers?

Leader: *Let them answer and then just leave the questions and move on. We will return to them later. Don't try to correct them.*

Say: Look at the next question in your student workbook. What is the definition of a Christian?

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Definition of a Christian

Say: The first time the word “Christian” is used in the New Testament is found in Acts 11:26. Would one of you read that for us? “And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch so for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Acts 11:26

“And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch so for a whole year, Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

The Greek word for Christian is CHRISTIANOS, which means disciples of Jesus or Christ followers.

Say: There is a list of struggles in your student workbook. I would like for you to rank your top 5 struggles from the list. Take a few minutes to do so.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Rank your top 5 struggles from the list below:

__ Putting your wants and desires before God. (Ex 20:3)

“Do not have other gods besides me”

__ Lying (Ps. 101:7)

“No one who acts deceitfully will live in my palace; the one who tells lies will not be retained here to guide me”

__ Hooking up (Eph. 5:3, Heb 13:4)

“But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints.”

“Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.”

__ Procrastination (Prov. 13:4, James 4:17)

“The slacker craves, yet has nothing, but the diligent is fully satisfied.”

“So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it.”

__ Stereotyping (Matt. 7:1-2)

“Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use.”

__ Stealing (Eph. 4:28)

“Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.”

__ Laziness (Prov. 19:5)

“A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who utters lies will not escape.”

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

__Murder (Ex. 20:13)

“Do not murder.”

__Skimping on work you are paid to do (Col. 3:23)

“Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people”

__Sexting (Eph 4:19)

“They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.”

__Holding Grudges (Matt 6:14-15)

“For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.”

__Racism (John 3:16)

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

__Having an idol (Lev. 26:1)

“Do not make worthless idols for yourselves, set up a carved image or sacred pillar for yourselves, or place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the Lord your God.”

__Unwholesome Language (Ephesians 4:29)

“No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear”

__Cheating (Lev. 19:11)

“Do not steal. Do not act deceptively or lie to one another.”

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Fornication (Gal 5:19)

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity”

Drunkenness (1Pet 4:1-3)

“Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding—because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished with sin— in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God’s will. For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and lawless idolatry.”

Bullying (Mark 12:31)

“The second is, Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other command greater than these.”

Leader: After a few minutes, ask them to share which struggles are in their top 5.

Say: The truth is, this was a trick question. In God’s eyes, a sin is a sin. As Christians (disciples of Christ) we are called to be different from the world.

In John 13:35, Jesus says, “They will know you are mine if you love one another.” Love is something this world knows very little about. Think about your social media accounts — if I looked at your social media, would I know without a doubt you were a Christian? Also as Christians, we are called to be holy. Do you know what holy means? It means to be set apart. Therefore you are to be different from the world’s standards.

I know as you think about ranking sin you may be thinking this sin is worse than that one because it costs more or the consequences are worse. The immediate consequences here in this world may be different, but in God’s eyes and heart, every sin separates you from His heart.

Your student workbook asks you to draw a 5-ring target below. Then put your top 5 struggles from the list above each ring.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Draw a five-ring target below. Place your top 5 struggles from the list above each ring.

Satan knows our top 5 struggles. He is going to use those to entice you to sin.
That will separate you from the love of God

Definition of Sin - _____

ἁμαρτία (hamartia)

Say: Satan knows our top 5 struggles. He is going to use those to entice you to sin. That will separate you from the love of God. The definition of sin according to the Greek word HAMARTIA is a “missing of the mark.”

Why is this important? Because God has given us a target to shoot for. That target is to be like Christ. Do you remember what the definition of a Christian was? To be like Christ. Looking at your top 5 struggles, does this allow you to be like Christ?

So anything shy of having the heart of Jesus could be considered a sin. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life and no one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him.”

Say: Can I have 3 volunteers to read the following scriptures found in your Student Workbook?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read the following scriptures.

John 18:37: “...you say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

Ephesians 5:2: “ And walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved and gave Himself up as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

1 John 2:15-17: “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For anything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God will live forever.”

Say: Back to the two questions we asked a few minutes ago ... What is the difference between a bad Christian and a good Christian? I don't know that there is such a thing as being a good Christian and a bad Christian. I think it's just about being a Christian and striving to hit the mark of being a good follower of Him and following his teaching with all our hearts.

Ask: What are some things that keep you from a stronger relationship with Jesus? What is keeping you from being committed to loving and communicating with Him? One answer: Your heart! Your heart is committed, loving and communicating with something else more than it is with Jesus. Why are you missing the mark? Because of sin in your life.

Say: You will notice a challenge in your student workbook that says: The next time you have your phone, take your phone and go to settings. Go to screen time then see all activity and scroll down to pickups and look at your total pickups. Ask yourself, what if I picked up my Bible that many times in a day? Would it make a difference in my life?

Leader: *For this exercise, you will need a handful of sand and a small stick.*

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Leader: *If you have a large group or you are inside in a carpeted area you may have one person or a couple of people hold the handful of sand (towel or something covering the floor and have the students come up and get a grain per person). Another option is to just use a couple of folks as demonstrators, but if possible and time permitting it would be more beneficial if everyone could touch the grain. Take a handful of sand and pass it around. As it is passed, ask each person to single out one grain, hold it in their hand and then continue to pass it until everyone has a grain.*

Say: That one grain of sand represents a sin. No big deal, right? Nobody can see it. You can hide it. And you really can't feel it. But what if you add another? And then another. Until it begins to rub and cause a blister.

You see, you may have one little sin in your life. You think you can hide it, but eventually, they add up and cause rough hurting spots. Eventually, that "sand" is what you become known for, and you have let that replace your identity as a Christian. Oh, and what about the grains of sand that fell in the cracks as it was passed around? Those represent sins between people that are forming a base on which they stand.

But watch this! *Take the stick, place it on the ground, and cover it with the remaining sand.*

The stick represents us, and the sand is the sins that cover us. Picture Jesus on the cross. What is holding the cross in place? Grains of sin (sand) — my sin and your sin. What takes away sin? The blood of Jesus.

Reach down, pick the stick up and say: Jesus took our sins to the grave. He was buried by our sins, yet our sins couldn't hold Him down. And when we give our hearts to Jesus, nothing can hold us down.

Have you given your heart to Jesus?

PRAY AND DISMISS

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Student Challenge

The next time you have your phone, take your phone and go to settings. Go to “screen time,” then “see all activity,” and scroll down to pickups and look at your total pickups. Ask yourself: What if I picked up my Bible that many times in a day? Would it make a difference in my life?

Final thoughts for the day:

The “Heart” stands for the inner being of man, the man himself. From this heart flows all he/she does, thinks, is, wants to be, desires, craves, loves, knows, rebels against and stands for.

Memorize: Psalm 51:10

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Write it below.

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2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

WEDNESDAY MORNING

WEDNESDAY MORNING

SESSION TITLE: Heart of Trust

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:25-34

SESSION AT-A-GLANCE

- Warm-up: How do you respond? (10 minutes)
- Examine the Scripture (10 minutes)
- Apply the Scripture (30 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens
- A Bible
- Student Workbook

WARM-UP: HOW DO YOU RESPOND

Leader: *The following questions are meant to be extremely simple to answer. These obvious answers should help them to see that our response to anxiety should be just as straightforward.*

How do you respond:

1. When you are hungry? (Eat food)
2. When you are thirsty? (Drink water)
3. When you sprain your foot during a game? (Ice it)
4. When you are exhausted? (Sleep)

Pick a student to answer each of these questions, and after they easily answer these questions correctly.

Say: Each of these things has an appropriate response. A response that solves the problem you are facing. In our lesson today, we are going to discuss a question that we tend to complicate: How do you respond when you are anxious?

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Say: Before we review the passage (Matthew 6:25-34) that was preached in the large group session this morning, I want to clarify that we are not addressing the diagnosable conditions related to anxiety. This discussion on a biblical understanding of anxiety and techniques to assist in combating anxiety is for everyone to grow in their trust in Jesus. To avoid confusion between diagnosable anxiety conditions and what Jesus is discussing in Matthew 6:25-34, for the rest of this small group guide we are going to use the word “worry” instead of anxiety. The Greek word translated as “anxiety” is the same as “worry,” but to most of us the word “anxiety” carries a more clinical usage.

Ask: After listening to this morning’s sermon, does anyone want to give us a definition of worry?

Leader: *Guide their understanding to match the following definition.*

Say: The Oxford Learners’ Dictionary gives this definition: “Worry is to keep thinking about unpleasant things that might happen or about problems that you have.”

EXAMINE THE SCRIPTURE

Say: We are going to spend the majority of our time applying the Scripture to our lives. But first, let’s review Matthew 6:25-34.

Ask: Will someone read Matthew 6:25-34 in your student workbook?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Matthew 6:25-34 (CSB)

“Therefore I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t he do much more for you—you of little faith? So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Ask: What things does Jesus tell us not to worry about?

Answer: *Food, drink, clothing and even our bodies.*

Ask: What do all of these things have in common?

Answer: *They are daily things. We all need to eat, drink, live and wear clothing every day, but if we only focused on these basic essentials we'd misdirect our efforts.*

Ask: Why does Jesus compare the crowd listening to his sermon to birds of the sky?

Answer: *During the time of Jesus' teaching, people were heavily agricultural and were familiar with the idea of growing crops and storing food in barns for later consumption and sale. This allowed the people to have food even when the land was not directly producing grain, fruits or vegetables. God is reminding them that ultimately all harvest and all food production is under God's control.*

Ask: Why does Jesus compare the crowd listening to his sermon to the grass and wildflowers?

Answer: *He is teaching that God is the one from whom all beauty is derived. That same God loves and cares for them and will provide clothing.*

Ask: What does Jesus tell them to focus their thoughts on in verses 33-34?

Answer: *Jesus tells them to not be consumed with worrisome thoughts about their basic needs, but instead to focus on the kingdom and righteousness of God.*

Say: Jesus is teaching that we must be more concerned about following God in obedience than our day-to-day needs. We must trust our faithful God to provide for our needs. Worrying about our life is pointless because we cannot add another day to our lifespan. Worrying about what we will eat or drink tomorrow is pointless because we cannot predict the future. However, we can confidently rest in the truth that our God is forever faithful. We can rest assured that, "all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28)." Let's now talk about how we can grow in trusting God!

THE GOOD LIFE

APPLY THE SCRIPTURE

Grow in Trusting God

Say: Students, we all feel some level of worry when we are faced with new situations or new difficulties, but the question is: How are we going to deal with those feelings? Are we going to dwell on them and allow them to become consuming thoughts, or are we going to lean into God and trust him?

Leader: Turn your students' attention to their workbooks. Give them time to answer the questions about their current worries.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Addressing your worries.

What are some of the things that regularly lead you to worry?

How do you typically respond to these feelings of worry?

Does dwelling on your thoughts of fear and worry help alleviate your situation?

THE GOOD LIFE

Leader: We recommend that in advance you talk with someone you know has worked through worry, and ask them to share with the group. If they are willing, it would be best for them to share it with you before they share it with the group. If you do not pick someone to share, then you can ask if anyone would like to share how they typically respond to their feelings of worry. Some of the responses might be healthy, and others might be harmful and propagate into sinful thoughts or actions. Our goal in this section is not to condemn or praise their response, but to allow our group to hear from others. We will get to the appropriate response to these feelings in a moment.

Say: Thank you for being willing to share your responses to worry. Let's elaborate on our response to worry.

Ask: Is worrying sinful?

Answer: The feelings associated with worrying are not in itself sinful. However, when we let the thoughts of worry and fear consume our minds and overpower our trust in God, it becomes sinful.

Ask: Why would dwelling on our future needs or future situations be sinful?

Answer: Because we are failing to trust God. We are doubting that God cares about us deeply and will provide for our needs. In addition, we are failing to understand that God is in control of all things and uses His power intentionally for the good of those who follow Him! This idea is referred to as God's Providence, and doubting this attribute of His character is what leads us to be consumed by worry.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Growing in Trusting God.

What are some practical ways you can respond in trust?

What would it change for you to respond in these ways?

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Leader: Ask if anyone would like to share some practical ways they wrote down how they could respond in trust. After they finish sharing, be sure to add some of your own or talk about how you personally combat worry. Some important practices are prayer, prayer journaling, prayer walking, reminding yourself of the ways God has been faithful to provide in the past, talking with a friend about the promises of God, and ultimately using all of these things to remind you that God is good, He is faithful, He is in control and He loves and cares for you!

You may not get through all of these practical ways. We encourage you to use these when you get home.

PRACTICAL WAYS OF COMBATING WORRY

Prayer Walking:

Ask: How many of you have been prayer walking before? Why do you think prayer walking would help us to respond in a healthy way to worry?

Say: One of the most effective ways to respond to a worry in a God-honoring way is to prayer walk. We are going to God with our worries and fears, and we are seeking His help. In addition, we are doing the two things that are scientifically proven to lower worry: exercising and receiving sunlight. Our body and soul are integrally tied together and affect one another in unexplainable ways, and by prayer walking, we can trigger both the physical and spiritual ways to combat worry.

Leader: A special note that you can share if it would benefit your group. Walking is a cross-body movement. These types of movements help the left and right sides of your brain connect, according to neuroscientists. Strengthening the coordination between the two hemispheres of our brain reduces our anxious thoughts and feelings. Therapists use this to trigger bilateral stimulation through EMDR Therapy.

Leader: Feel free to share my experience or share your experience.

Starting in high school, I would go on prayer walks in the woods by my house when I was feeling overwhelmed or anxious, and I would just pour out my heart to God. Once I finished pouring out my heart, I would just start naming things that He created around me. The beauty in the bark on the trees, the complex structure of these leaves and how they take in sunlight as energy through photosynthesis, the unique properties of water, and the life it sustains. These things would remind me that my God is a God of great order and great power! If He has sustaining power over these aspects of nature, then He is in full control of my life. This reminder would do wonders to decrease my worries and draw me to a place of worshiping and trusting God with whatever I was facing. This was one of the more impactful ways I responded in a God-honoring way to my struggle with worry.

Leader: I'd recommend ending your time this morning with a prayer walk! Walk your small group through the workbook content on Prayer Walking, or give your students time to do it in smaller groups.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Psalm 8:1

“Lord, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! You have covered the heavens with your majesty.”

Prayer Walking:

Donald Whitney, in his book *Simplify Your Spiritual Life*, offers these helpful words on prayer walking: “The walking and the weather invigorate my sluggish soul. Looking up into the blue or out to the horizon refreshes my sense of the greatness of God. The sights, smells, and sounds of my Father’s world surround me with reminders of His presence. The cadence of my pace or stopping occasionally to stare into the distance often enables me to concentrate in prayer more easily than when I’m still and my eyes are closed.”

The Psalmist and Whitney are both observing the creation of God and praising the Lord! When you look in creation, you are going to look for three things: the Power of God, the Providence of God and the Presence of God! These are the three P’s of prayer walking.

Start your prayer by asking your heavenly Father to calm your soul and remove your worries through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help you to see His power and His love for you. Ask Him to help you trust Him with whatever is consuming your mind.

As you walk around Fort Caswell, simply start observing things that God created.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Power: Ponder the power that God has when He creates. How much power would it take to create the things you are hearing, feeling and seeing? Praise Him for His power. Then shift your mind to ponder this question: Does the God that created this have the power to handle the thing worrying you?

Providence: While still pondering that object of creation, think about God's intentionality in creating it. Why is it exactly located where it is? Why is it that color? Why is it solid, liquid or gas? God intentionally created that object for a purpose. Did He create you? If so, then what is your purpose? Does He care if you're doing your purpose? Was He intentional in making you?

Presence: Did God just make the world and leave it alone to do its own thing? Of course not! Then God is present in the world you are observing. Colossians 1:17 tells us that Jesus "is before all things, and by him all things hold together." Jesus is literally holding the air we breathe in the atmosphere using gravity, He is holding the atoms in your body together with atomic forces, and He keeps the photosynthesis of the grass working. God does all these things to keep us alive, and He cares for us most of all, according to Psalm 8. God did not leave you after creating you — He is present among you and cares for you.

Therefore, the question is do you trust Him? Do you trust your powerful, intentional and present God? Give over your worries to Him!

Prayer Journaling:

Ask: Can someone read 1 Peter 5:6-9 from your workbook?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read 1 Peter 5:6-9

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.”

Ask: What comfort does the Apostle Peter give to the church in verses 6-9?

Say: Peter reminds them that God has a mighty hand, and He is working! He tells them we need to humble ourselves and understand that He is God and we are not. Therefore, our response must be to cast our cares upon Him. Peter is extremely clear that suffering is going to be experienced and the devil is at work. But in the midst of that, we have a God who has a mighty hand and cares about us. So let us cast our cares on Him!

Ask: Do any of you regularly cast your cares on Him? If so, how do you cast your cares?

Say: A popular way that followers of Jesus cast their cares on Jesus in response to worry is through prayer journaling. This method is effective because expressing the thoughts in your head in the form of prayers points you toward your reliance on King Jesus. Not only are you reminded that Jesus is the King, but you also are putting those thoughts on a piece of paper, you visibly see those thoughts leave your brain as they are compiled on the page.

After you finish writing down your prayer, say “amen” and walk away. This action of leaving the prayer on paper or in that notebook needs to be viewed as leaving that prayer and those anxious thoughts with the Lord! For He is good, He is faithful and He loves you, so trust Him to faithfully and lovingly answer your prayer!

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Prayer Journaling:

Use this space to write a prayer to God, casting all your worries on Him.

Once you've finished casting your worries on Him, remind yourself that He cares for you, and that you must trust His mighty hand.

Scan this QR code to watch a conference by Shane and Shane that is helpful for meditating on the faithfulness of God. Use this when you get home to help you with your prayer journaling.



Living Stones:

Ask: Has anyone ever heard of living stones? Or want to take a guess of what is meant by living stones?

Say: The concept of living stones comes from Joshua chapter 4, when the people of Israel were about to go into the land God had promised them. While leading them out of the wilderness and into the promised land, God parted the Jordan River and let His people cross on dry land. Then, he commanded them to place twelve stones in the Jordan River. Let's read Joshua 4:21-24 to see the reason behind placing the stones in the Jordan.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Joshua 4:21-24

“In the future, when your children ask their fathers, ‘What is the meaning of these stones?’ you should tell your children, ‘Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.’ For the Lord your God dried up the water of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up before us until we had crossed over.”

Ask: Why did God command the Israelites to place the stones in the river?

Answer: *To be a reminder of the time God was faithful and showed up in a powerful way to bring the people of God into the promised land.*

Ask: What would it look like for us to have our own living stones?

Answer: *The stones allow us to look back at our lives and pick out ways that God showed up to provide for us in a powerful way. Then in the future, when it's a struggle to trust God or we are starting to doubt Him, we can look back and say, “He was faithful to provide then, and He will be faithful to provide right now!”*

Leader: *In the student book we have provided two pictures of stones. Allow the students time to think about the next question, and ask them to write down their answers on the stones in their book. After they've had time to answer, ask a few of the students to tell the group a way God has provided in a powerful way! Make sure you have one or two examples from your own life, to share in case your group struggles with recalling times God was faithful in their lives.*

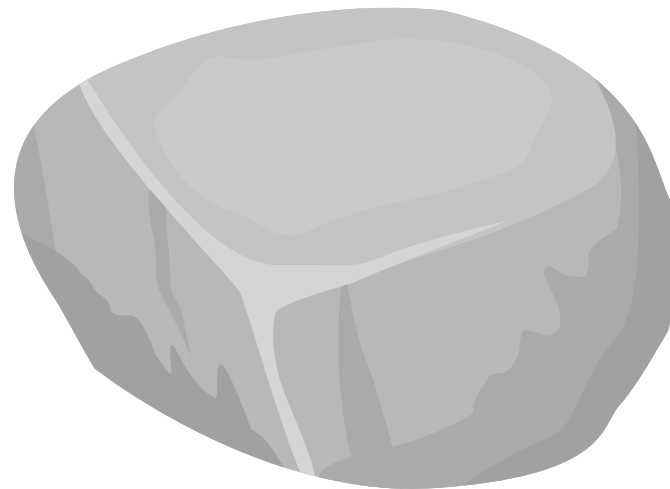
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Ask: When has God shown up in your life to provide in a powerful way?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Living Stones:

When has God shown up in your life to provide in a powerful way? Write the answers on the stones below.



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Leader: *Some of your students might struggle to recall times when God was faithful in their past. This is part of the reason it's so hard for us to trust God — we fail to acknowledge His ever present, sustaining work in our lives. Let's challenge the students to grow in their ability to notice the work of the Lord in their lives.*

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Use this space to take additional notes about the practical ways of combating worry.

Prayer Walking:

Prayer Journaling:

Living Stones:

PRAY AND DISMISS

Leader: *If your group is small enough, we recommend you end your small group by doing a short prayer walk around your building or meeting place.*

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2024 SUMMER YOUTH WEEKS

THURSDAY MORNING

THURSDAY MORNING

SESSION: Heart of Mission

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:13-16, Numbers 18:19, Joshua 1:9

SESSION AT-A-GLANCE

- Opening Discussion (10 minutes)
- Examine the Scripture (20 minutes)
- Apply the Scripture (10 minutes)

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Pens
- A Bible
- Student workbook

OPENING DISCUSSION

Leader: *Who can tell me what an influencer is? (Get responses).*

Say: An influencer is a person who has a reputation for their knowledge or expertise on a specific topic. They make regular posts on this topic on their preferred social media channel and generate a large following of people who pay close attention to their accounts. Let's be clear about this – not all these “influencers” are experts, but they still have a large following and actually influence a lot of people! Many of us follow people on YouTube, which is a good place to get valuable information.

Ask: Who is someone you follow? Who are some famous “YouTubers?” (Answers maybe people like Dude Perfect, Sadie Robertson Huff, etc). Do you follow anyone on YouTube? Why? How about on other platforms? What do you learn from them?

Say: We are all going to have people in our lives who influence us – it may be family, friends, or even entertainers. Remember last fall when Taylor Swift was attending the Kansas City Chiefs football games? All of a sudden, the number of people watching their NFL games greatly increased. There were, all of a sudden, countless young girls becoming Kansas City fans when they had never even been football fans. Most of us want to “fit in” with the world around us, and often find ourselves being influenced by what is trending!

Ask: Is it always good for us to do the things that are trending? What are some things that are trending that may not be good for us to be involved with? Is it always good for us to take advice from YouTubers or other influencers? (Give students time to answer).

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Say: Jesus, in the “Sermon on the Mount,” challenges us to be the “influencers” on the world around us. As Christ-followers, we are to influence others to want to follow Jesus – that is, through our lives, others are to see Jesus in us. We have to decide if we are going to be influenced by others or influence them through the things we do and say.

EXAMINE THE SCRIPTURE

Leader: Have the students turn to their workbooks and have a student read Matthew 5:13-16.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Read Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Say: Jesus was using metaphors to describe the way His followers should be seen by those around them. If He was here today and teaching the students at Caswell, He would use examples you would be familiar with. He might say you need to be an influencer in your community and school. He might tell you that you should be the ones who set the popular trends. He would be giving the same message, but using terms you could relate to.

Ask: Why do you think Jesus used the example of salt? What do you use salt for? Are there any other uses for it?

Leader: Most answers will probably revolve around food, there may be a few outliers such as smelling salts, killing slugs, soaking in Epsom salts and other random uses. What you are looking for is its use as a seasoning on food.

Ask: We mostly use salt as a common tabletop seasoning for our food to give it a better flavor. What are some foods that you cannot imagine eating without salt?

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Leader: *A few good examples of these foods are French fries, popcorn and potato chips. There are many more that your group will probably come up with.*

Say: Without salt on these foods, they become tasteless, bland and almost undesirable. Could you imagine going the rest of your life and not liking the taste of French fries with a burger or popcorn at the movies? Salt gives us a kick of flavor on otherwise bland or tasteless foods. At the same time, the gospel of Jesus gives flavor and meaning to lives that we might think are bland and almost unbearable.

Say: In Jesus' time, salt was not only used as seasoning but also in the preservation and storage of some foods and in spiritual purification ceremonies. It was so valuable that it was even used as a payment method instead of actual money. Examples of these uses are specified in Exodus (30:35), Leviticus (2:13), Numbers (18:19), 2 Kings (2:21), Ezra (6:9) and Ezekiel (16:4).

In Numbers 18:19, God tells his people through Aaron, "I give to you and your sons and daughters all the holy contributions that the Israelites present to the Lord as a permanent statute. It is a permanent covenant of salt before the LORD for you as well as your offspring."

Ask: The word 'covenant' means 'an agreement,' why do you think God called this agreement a "covenant of salt?" (Allow time for discussion and answers.)

Answer: *Coarse and naturally occurring salt, like what they used in biblical times, will last forever. It will not expire and it will not deteriorate, just like God's promise to preserve His people.*

Say: Purification is a process that removes the bad or harmful things from something to make it clean. We benefit from many different purification processes every day, from the water purification process all the way to the steps it takes to produce gasoline. When Jesus calls us "the salt of the earth," He is calling us to help purify the world with the words of His gospel. Simply, as being "salt," we are to help make the world a better place with our Christian lifestyles and attitudes. We are to show Christ's love to those around us!

Leader: *Have the students turn to their Student Workbooks and answer the following questions.*

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

What are some examples of how you can be the "salt of the earth" at your school?

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It’s no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.” Which speaks louder – our words or our actions?

Say: Turn to your neighbor and discuss your examples of how you can be the “salt of the earth” at your school.

Leader: Give the students time to discuss and then ask for some examples.

Ask: What about the next question: What do you think Jesus meant when he said those words? (*You may have to reread the second question from their student workbooks*)

Answer: *When salt loses its saltiness, it is too contaminated and no longer pure, so therefore it becomes useless and has turned into something that needs to be thrown out. As Christians, we can “lose our saltiness” by saying that we are a Christian, but not acting like one. If our actions do not reflect what God wants, we have become an obstacle in the way of those who are trying to walk in the ways that God has called us to. Acting foolishly and immorally can do more harm to others than it can do to us, because it can contaminate our witness to where it means nothing.*

Say: Christians can lose their saltiness in other ways as well — as 2 Peter 1:8 says, we can become useless if we do not strive to deepen our relationship with God. 2 Peter 1:5-10 says,

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the

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cleansing from his past sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things you will never stumble.”

We are called to continue growing in our faith. If we simply stay in one place with our faith, we are not living up to our potential and we become useless; we are not truly living the good life that God has in store for us.

Leader: *Have someone reread Matthew 5:13-16 in their Student Workbook.*

Ask: Is anyone afraid of the dark? Why is being in the dark so frightening? What are some things we have today to keep us out of the dark?

Leader: *Students can give a variety of answers that are correct – ranging from electric lights, flashlights, phones, car headlights etc.*

Say: Most of us like to see where we are going and what is going around us. It is more comfortable to be in a lighted area than a dark area. Many parts of our world are in dark times and some of those dark places are right here at home. We have been tasked to be the “light of the world,” to shine the light of God’s love on those around us and to bring hope into hopeless situations.

Ask: What are some ways that we may try and hide our light from the world, on purpose or on accident?

Say: As modern students with modern technology, your generation is more connected with one another than any generation ever before. Each one of you is almost in constant conversation with someone else, whether it be through text messaging, direct messaging on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat. These opportunities for constant communication can be used to be the “light” of someone’s world.

Ask: When we are successful in our challenge to be “the light of the world,” who should be praised for it? Who should get the credit for our success?

Answer: *God. God should be praised when we succeed because without Him nothing would be possible. Verse 16 says, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven.”*

Say: The light we are supposed to share does not come from us or our actions. It comes from the sacrifice and the love of Jesus. When we live our lives in a way that reflects that sacrifice and love, we are becoming the light God has called us to be. In the book of Isaiah there are descriptions of the ministry of Jesus, where He will be “... a great light” (9:1-2), how Jesus will call His people to be “... a light for the nations” (42:6) and that Jesus will be the Lord’s “... salvation to the ends of the earth” (49:6).

We should never let our light be covered up or hidden because that light is the love of God in our lives. When you truly are a follower of Christ, that light should be the first thing people see when they see you. We can show others around us how to open their eyes so that they are not stumbling through life with their eyes closed, be the light that someone needs because people should see Jesus in you.

Leader: *Divide your students into at least three groups and assign each group one of the “case studies” given in the student workbook. Their task*

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is to decide what they – as Christ-followers, could do to be salt and light in each case. They are to brainstorm and come up with ways to be Christ's influencers in each case. Ask them to report to the group about their findings.

These discussions may bring up opportunities for further discussion.

Say: Look in your student book at the three “case studies.” Each of your groups has been assigned one of these varying situations. Would each group place themselves in the situation and determine what actions they could take to be like “salt and light” in each case? What can you do to influence others to be what Christ wants us to be?

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Case #1

Lauren is at all the youth group meetings. She is involved in everything at the church. When she goes into worship, she sings, raises her hands and makes you think she is the best Christian ever. This is the problem: At school, no one would even know Lauren has ever heard of Jesus. She is seen as a “mean girl,” uses bad language, and does all sorts of stuff she shouldn't be doing.

When she is invited to church, Caroline is told, “Yeah, you know Lauren from school. She goes to our church!” Caroline immediately has serious reservations – because if Lauren represents what church is all about, she wants no part of it.

How do our actions affect people around us?

How do we influence our friends either for or against being a Christian?

What can we do as a youth group to help people like Lauren realize they are living in two totally different worlds?

What can we say to Caroline to help her want to come and be a part of our youth group?

Case # 2

Bobby has always been small for his age. He is shy and timid – really not very confident in anything. He enjoys coming to church and to youth. He wants to go to camp but is somewhat afraid because there have been times he has been picked on. Staying in a room full of guys really scares him.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Bobby confides in you and shares his fears. You know that Derek and Josh can sometimes be brutal to the younger kids. You know that Bobby has never accepted Christ and needs to be at camp.

How do you reassure Bobby?

How can you help Derek and Josh realize the effects of picking on a shy kid like Bobby?

What can we do as a youth group to make sure kids like Bobby have a great experience and don't have to worry about someone picking on them?

Case #3

Nikki, Samantha, and Jessica are eating lunch at school and sit near Erica. Erica goes to church with the others but isn't in their circle. As they are eating, they begin to roast Erica in a harsh way. Her shoes aren't right, her phone isn't up-to-date and she needs to do something with that hair. You are sitting a few tables away and notice what is happening.

What can you do to help Erica in this awkward situation?

How can you help Nikki, Samantha and Jessica realize what they are doing is just wrong and that they are not being salt and light?

What can we do as youth groups to help ensure that people are treated in a manner that is pleasing to Christ?

APPLY THE SCRIPTURE

Ask: After learning that God has called us to be the "salt of the earth" and "light of the world" and what that means, how does that make you feel? Scared, powerful, excited, nervous?

Leader: Have the students turn to the Student Workbooks and give them a few minutes to answer the questions.

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STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Salt and Light

What is something that you are good at or enjoy doing?

How can you use that skill, hobby or activity to be “salt and light?”

Does it scare you to think about sharing your faith with someone else? Why?

Leader: When everyone is finished, ask them why they might be scared to share their faith. Does it have to do with where they might be or who they might be around, or is it because they might be afraid that they do not know enough?

Say: Throughout Scripture, God has to remind His people not to fear 365 times. For us today, that means we can look over each of these verses every day for a year.

Leader: This is a good moment to share a verse that you hold onto when you feel down and alone or when times get dark in your life. Ask the students if they have a verse that they hold on to.

CLOSING

Leader: Have someone read Joshua 1:9 from their Student Workbook and then let them answer the question.

STUDENT WORKBOOK CONTENT

Joshua 1:9

“Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord your God goes with you wherever you go.”

Realizing that God is always with us can give us a reason to stop and think about our actions, thoughts and attitudes. What habits do you need to give up so that you can be a better example of “salt and light” to those around you?

Say: Each day we have a chance to share something good with everyone that we meet. We have the chance to share Jesus. Going out from here this week, will you take more of those chances and be kind to those around you, invite your classmates to church and tell them about Jesus and His love for them? Remember, if you ask for opportunities to share, God will give them to you. But it is up to you to be ready for them.

PRAY AND DISMISS

THE GOOD LIFE

NOTES
