

HSM Small Group 2022 Spring Schedule-Freshman

January 12	First Week Back! Get Reacquainted!!
January 19	Things I Wish I'd Known
January 26	Things I Wish I'd Known
February 2	Things I Wish I'd Known
February 9	Wildcard Week
February 16	Things I Wish I'd Known
February 23	Things I Wish I'd Known
March 2	Serve Week
March 9	FAITH OVERVIEW
March 16	SGL Training this week! (No Small Groups!)
March 23	Spring Break! (No Small Groups!)
March 30	<i>Goliath Must Fall - Week 1</i>
April 6	<i>Goliath Must Fall - Week 2</i>
April 13	<i>Goliath Must Fall - Week 3</i>
April 20	<i>Goliath Must Fall - Week 4</i>
April 27	<i>Goliath Must Fall - Week 5</i>
May 4	Final Celebration!!

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 1]: Vulnerability is THE only way to deep, rich community

READ TO GROUP: The importance of vulnerability in community CANNOT be overstated. At some point in our lives we've all probably observed a group of people and wondered how in the world they developed such close-knit relationships. Whether it's a small group that seems closer than family, friends who have each other's backs no matter what, accountability partners that are making a huge difference in each other's lives, or siblings that seem to get along unnaturally well—we've all seen this authentic connection and community and wondered how they got to that point. We are all designed to have a sincere longing for communion with one another and with the Lord. However, when I was younger, I wish I would've known that the only way to have true, deep, intimate community is through authentic vulnerability. So often in relationships, we focus our energy on appearing like we have everything together—as if we think that is what earns us a meaningful bond with other people. I could've saved myself a lot of time and boring, superficial conversations if I had just opened up and been real with my friends and been a good confidant and listener in return. When we choose to let down our guard and be vulnerable with others about what is going on in our lives, we open ourselves up to the richness of true community. Genuine relationships like that can change our lives. I know it's changed mine.

Read: James 5:13-16 & 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE:

1. What are some relationships/groups you've observed that seem to be very close and genuine? What do you think makes them close? Have you ever experienced a relationship like that?
2. What are some of the advantages of opening up to people? What are some disadvantages?

FROM THE TRUTH:

3. Read James 5:13-16 again. Only Jesus can forgive our sins, yet we are called to confess sins to one another and to pray for each other in difficult circumstances. Why do you think that is? How has prayer and confession to trusted friends helped you in the past?
4. 2 Cor. 12:9-10 calls us to boast in our weakness. How does talking about our weaknesses and struggles with one another glorify Jesus? How can it help you develop deeper relationships?
5. What do you think honors the Lord more: acting like we have everything together or being vulnerable with one another? Why?

FROM THE APPLICATION:

6. What is keeping you from being vulnerable with your friends/family/small group?
7. What is the danger in not opening up to other people? How might leaving your guard up affect the chance for real community? What do you feel towards a person who is vulnerable with you?
8. What is one step you can take towards vulnerability with others - opening up with a friend, getting an accountability partner, telling the truth about something...?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, challenge your students to pick one specific step towards vulnerability this week. If they don't already have an accountability partner, encourage them to seek one out. Maybe even help them develop partners within your group.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 2]: In life, spiritual droughts are NORMAL and often bring deep and lasting growth

READ TO GROUP: When I became a Christian, I believed the lie that once you accept Christ, everything falls into place and that a relationship with Jesus is always easy and full of joy. The first couple of times I encountered tough times spiritually, I panicked and thought that I must have done something wrong in my relationship with God. Looking back, I wish that somebody had talked with me about the reality of spiritual droughts in our faith journey. Spiritual droughts are dry seasons in our faith – times when we may feel disconnected from God, or experience frustration, loneliness, or doubt. In these times it may seem hard to pray, talk about God, worship, or even believe that it is all worth it. Your prayers may even feel like they're bouncing off the ceiling! However, times of spiritual drought can be GOOD. Human relationships are made stronger by tough times and the same is true in our relationship with the Lord. Families that walk through hard times together, friends that work to overcome issues, married couples that stick together to work things out—these are all relationships that are made stronger because of difficult seasons. Your relationship with the Lord is no different. Looking back, I have found that the times when I felt the driest spiritually - when I found it hard to pray or had a hard time hearing from God - are often the times when my relationship with the Lord actually grew the most. I am eternally grateful for tough times in my walk with Jesus because that is what has made it so real. These droughts are completely normal in the journey of faith for a believer and deep, lasting spiritual growth can be found in hard times if we press on and cling to the promises of our Savior. There is beauty to be found in the desert if you will take steps to move closer to the Lord.

Read Hosea 2:14 & Psalm 142 & Deut. 31:8 & Romans 8:38-39

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE

1. Do you have a relationship in your life that is stronger because of hard times you've experienced together?
2. Have you ever experienced a time of spiritual drought? What were the circumstances surrounding that time? What was going on in your life?
3. As believers, why do we often feel like it's shameful or wrong to experience times of spiritual dryness?

FROM THE TRUTH

4. Read Hosea 2:14. The Lord is speaking about his love and reconciliation for Israel here. It's clear that He redeems times of drought in the wilderness and allows us to hear His tender voice. How does that change how we view our times in the wilderness?
5. The second part of the verse says that the Lord speaks tenderly to us in the wilderness. How should this encourage us in times of drought?
6. Read Deuteronomy 31:8 and Romans 8:38. Even when we feel like God is far from us, what does the Bible say about God's presence? Do you believe that? Why is it sometimes hard to grasp that nothing can separate us from God and his love?

FROM THE APPLICATION

7. If we know that the Lord has purpose for us in wilderness times, and that He wants to speak intimately to us, how should that change our spiritual practices during those times? In what ways do you think God can help you grow in the midst of a spiritual drought? How can you still have joy when times are tough?
8. If you can remember a spiritual drought in your life, can you look back and see how God was faithful during that drought? What did he teach you during that time?
9. In the Bible, David experienced huge wilderness seasons in his life and wrote about it in the book of Psalms. Spend some time flipping through the Psalms and pick a Psalm that speaks to how you've felt during your times of drought. You are not alone (ex. Psalm 51:12, 143:6, 63:1). Now find a Psalm where David is rejoicing because of God's faithfulness (ex: Psalm 145:13-16; Psalm 23; 36:5-10).

NEXT STEP: Leaders, pray with your students that they will be in tune with the Holy Spirit—that they will be able to hear His tender voice in their times of spiritual drought.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 3]: Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is take a nap!

READ TO GROUP: It's no surprise that high school is crazy busy. Even as you hear this you are probably thinking about all the activities and things you need to get done this week. Between 8 hours of the day spent at school, homework, sports, clubs, extracurricular activities, ACT prep courses, friends, relationships, and family, it is easy to feel like rest is the last thing you're able to focus on. In fact, it might even feel irresponsible to rest. One of the best quotes I've heard on this subject is from Andy Crouch - Editor of Christianity Today magazine and a pretty busy guy. He said "it has been the experience of countless disciples that the more faithful and trusting our *weekly rest*, the more real fruit we have to celebrate from our *weekly work*". I love this quote because it speaks to the importance of both fruitful work and faithful rest. Both are equally important in glorifying the Lord. Over and over again, Scripture speaks to us about the importance of rest and being still before the Lord. If we don't have margin in our lives - times of stillness and peace - we make it very hard for ourselves to hear from the Lord. I've experienced many moments in my life where I felt like I wasn't hearing from the Lord, only to realize that it was because my life was too busy and my heart was too crowded for the voice of the Lord to be heard. In the midst of our hectic lives, it's important to understand that allowing ourselves to rest is one way we show God that we trust him to take care of the details in our lives. When we trust him with the details, we make room for the Holy Spirit to move powerfully in and through us. Is anyone else ready for a nap?

Read Proverbs 27:1 & 2 Cor. 4:18 & Psalm 46:10 & Gen. 2:2-3

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE:

1. Let your group sit for five minutes in complete silence, relaxing and breathing. Encourage them to still their minds and push thoughts away and just sit in God's presence (It's not easy and that's ok! Do your best!). When 5 minutes is up, guide them through another couple minutes of quiet reflection with these questions: How do they spend their time? Who do they spend it with? What are their priorities in life? Are they satisfied with these habits?
2. After these minutes of stillness are complete, ask: how did that feel? Was it refreshing or difficult for you? Why?
3. When was the last time you got more than 8 hours of sleep in one night?

FROM THE TRUTH:

4. Read Proverbs 27:1 and 2 Corinthians 4:18. What does God teach us about where our priorities in life should be? Where does he want our focus to be? Why do you think that is? How difficult is it for you to focus on things that cannot be seen?
5. Consider Genesis 2:2-3. Why do you think the almighty God took time to rest after he worked? Why is it so important that we follow his example?
6. Now remember Psalm 46:10. Why do you think we "know" God through being still?

FROM THE APPLICATION:

7. The more time we spend on something – or someone – generally, the more important it is. What does your time management say about your priorities? What adjustments might be wise to consider?
8. I heard a wise student once say that we shouldn't be defined by our activities. What does that mean to you? How does that measure up to what the scriptures teach us?
9. Do you find it hard to stop and make time for Jesus in your hectic life? What about yourself? Family? Why do you think He wants us to take time and "be still"?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, challenge your students to make one change in their schedule this week - whether it's taking a nap every day, getting 8 hours of sleep, or cutting back on activities or something. Have them share their choice with the group and commit to that change.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 4]: The best friends are often the ones who tell us what we don't want to hear

READ TO GROUP: Most of us have had moments in our lives where people we love tell us something that we don't want to hear, whether it's a blind spot in our behavior we've missed, a call to accountability, or a challenge. When we hear it we might cringe, ignore it, become defensive, or just plain get angry with that person - often to realize down the road that they were right and looking out for us all along. Jesus, the ultimate best friend, was always telling those closest to him things that were hard for them to hear. Was it because He didn't like them or wanted to discourage them? No, it was because He loved them dearly and cared deeply about their souls. Even though Jesus knew He was only with them for a little while, He poured as much truth and love into them as He could in a short time. As friendships come and go and naturally change over the years, it is important to always seek friends who love Jesus and will tell you the truth about hard things. I now look back on some of my strongest relationships in high school and realize that they were just a shell of what true deep friendship should be. If friends cannot tell you things that may be tough to hear, then they aren't truly looking out for you and your relationship with the Lord and others. Following Jesus' example, we need to pursue friendships that are rooted in truth and love.

Read Romans 8:28 & Proverbs 18:24, 19:20, 27:5-6, 27:17

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE:

1. Think back over the last several years of your life. Do you still have the same "best friend" that you did years ago? Why or why not?
2. What are some qualities your friends have that makes you love them? How do you know they love you? How do they know you love them back?

FROM THE TRUTH:

3. As life speeds on and you continue to grow and mature, our friend groups often shift and change. How do you think Romans 8:28 can help guide us through inevitable changes in our life?
4. Proverbs is full of amazing passages about friendships. Read a few and reflect on the importance of some characteristics God wants your friendships to contain. Can you think of any other godly qualities good friends should have?

FROM THE APPLICATION:

5. We see the nature of a perfect friend in the person of Jesus. What are some of His qualities that you want to find/keep in your friends? What are some characteristics of his that you want to develop in yourself?
6. When Jesus challenged his followers to make a change in their lives, he did so from a place of love and respect. How do you think this perspective helped his message? How would it help you receive a tough message from a friend if you knew they were trying to love and help you?
7. What does it mean to you for a "friend to sharpen a friend"? How important is it to you to have a friend who will sharpen you? Do you have a friend who will challenge you and call you out in love when you are in sin? How do you respond? Would you do the same for them?
8. We know that life changes and so do relationships. Sometimes, that's a healthy normal thing. However, some friendships have been unfortunately injured or broken due to circumstances that were unnecessary. Take time to honestly assess your relationships. Can you think of a friendship that you need to work to mend? What can you do to heal that friendship?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, challenge your students to dwell on the idea of what it means to be friends with Jesus - to walk in a real relationship with Him as they would any other friend. Encourage them to consider how they can deepen their relationship with Jesus this week as well as strengthen their relationships with their friends.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 5]: Can you recognize the lies you believe about yourself?

READ TO GROUP: It's no secret that high school is a time of figuring out who you are, who your friends should be, what your interests are, and what you might like to do in the future. For a lot of people this time can be exciting and invigorating. Unfortunately, for others this can also be a time of confusion and struggle as you try to decipher who you really are from who the world says you are. As a teenager, it seems like you are constantly bombarded by voices from peers, family, social media, movies, music, etc. telling you things about yourself like how much you are worth, what you should like doing, what you should be involved in, how you should look, who you should date, etc. Through all this noise, it can be very challenging to know which voices to listen to. If you are feeling unworthy, unwanted, rejected, useless, or uncertain about who you are, it may be time to investigate the source and motives of the messages you're receiving. Scripture is clear that Satan is the father of lies, full of deception and incapable of truth. So often we believe things about ourselves that are lies straight from the devil meant to shake our faith and destroy our self-worth. Sometimes, we don't even realize that things we believe are untrue until they have sunken into our hearts and minds and distorted our identity. One of the most important steps we can take in defeating this falsehood is recognizing that it exists. Once we can identify the lies that we believe about ourselves, we can actively combat them with the words of scripture and the truth of our Father.

Read 2 Cor. 11:14 & John 10:10 & Eph. 2:10 & 2 Cor. 4:16-18

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE:

1. What are some lies that you **hear** about yourself, other people and world you live in? What are the sources of those lies?
2. Do you ever feel like you are defined by what you do, how much money you have, who your friends are, or who you date? How do you feel about that?
3. Take time and consider honestly what lies you **believe** about yourself and the world you live in. What are some of them? (I'm not good enough; I have to be popular to be liked; I'm defined by my social group or activities, etc.)
4. Where do you think God is in the midst of these lies? Where do you think Satan is in the midst of them?

FROM THE TRUTH:

5. Look back at 2 Corinthians 11:14 & John 10:10. What do these verses tell you about Satan's intent towards you?
6. Reread Ephesians 2:10. What does this declare about God's intent/desire for us?
7. Refer to 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 to describe what Paul is trying to tell us and how it relates to lies we buy into.
8. Consider other scriptures that might combat the lies you or your friends believe about yourselves.
 - Do you believe you'll never achieve your goals? Check out Galatians 6:9
 - Do you believe you're alone in your troubles? Check out 1 Cor. 10:13, Deut. 31:6
 - Do you believe: I sin too much! God could never love me! Check out 2 Cor 12:9, Zeph 3:17, Romans 5:8

FROM THE APPLICATION:

9. As humans, it's easy to believe the lies the world declares about us. As we've seen, God's word can be trusted to bring those lies into the light. Why is it so difficult to surrender the lies we believe about ourselves?
10. Is it easier to help our friends see the truth about themselves than it is to see it in ourselves? Why is that?
11. What would you say to a friend who needs truth spoken in their life about a lie they're believing? How could you encourage them? What do you need to hear about the lies that you believe about yourself? How can you receive that message from the Word and declare it about yourself? Remember that you are a child of God! (John 3:1)
12. Take a few minutes of silent reflection and prayer. During that time, really dig down and let God bring light into the darkness of lies you've been holding onto. How is that going to change the way you face tomorrow?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, challenge your students to pick one specific lie they believe about themselves to combat with scripture this week.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 6]: When making big decisions, there is freedom to change your mind!

READ TO GROUP: For many students, when a phrase like “college decision” is mentioned, it sets off a chain reaction of fear, anxiety, and stress. One of the reasons we are so fearful about making decisions, big or small, is because we believe the lie that you are locked in to that choice and cannot change your mind. I believe we’re also often afraid of what others will think of us or that we might disappoint someone. Granted, there are times when you make a commitment and it is not ok to change your mind - like in your marriage or with kids or in other binding circumstances. However, as Christians, I don’t think we dwell enough on the FREEDOM that is in Christ. If I had understood that earlier, I think it would have saved me a lot of unnecessary apprehension and stress in the decision-making process. As someone who transferred colleges, walked away from a D1 athletic scholarship, and lived in 3 different states in 4 years...you can trust me when I say it is OK to change your mind. The world will not end if you transfer colleges or change majors 5 times; it will not end if you change homecoming groups or dresses the day before; and it will not end if you change your mind on how you want to spend your weekend. We do not need to be paralyzed by decision making! One of the best pieces of advice I’ve ever received was that when making a decision - if neither option is sin - we are FREE to choose! Now, it’s important to note that even within our freedom we need to stay connected to God and seek his direction for the *best* things he has for us. There will definitely be some decisions the Lord will make clear to us and also times where one decision is obviously better than another. But, if you have options in front of you, and you know that none of the options involve sinning or stepping outside of the Lord’s will, then you have freedom in Christ to choose. You can be confident that He will walk with you every step of the way! Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty and freedom!

Read Psalm 139:7-10 & Deut. 31:6 & Phil. 4:6-7

Create meaningful, Jesus-based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don’t feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE:

1. Have you ever felt stress, anxiety, or fear over a decision you had to make? What was it?
2. Why can making big (or small) decisions be so scary and paralyzing?

FROM THE TRUTH:

3. Psalm 139:7-10 is very clear that we cannot go anywhere where the Lord is not with us. Verse 10 also assures us that wherever we are he will be there to guide and support us. How do these verses help you view decisions you have to make?
4. Scripture says the Lord is for us and that he will never leave us (Ps 139 & Deut. 31:6). How does this take the fear out of decision-making? What type of perspective does it give you when you consider your future?
5. Look back at Philippians 4:6-7. God wants us to surrender our anxiety to him and pray. It’s a tall order, but totally worth the peace that follows. How do you think it would help you to surrender your decisions to God? How do you think this could change your life?

FROM THE APPLICATION:

6. Think about a big decision that you are trying to make and analyze it. Are either choices sin? Or would either choice honor the Lord? How does that free you up to make the choice? Have you ever made a choice and then felt God’s peace afterwards confirming that you chose well?
7. We can find peace in the fact that God is always with us and guiding us in our decisions. What’s one step you can take to make more room for the voice of the Holy Spirit in your life?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, challenge your students to set aside specific times of prayer dedicated to praying about big decisions they have to make. Divide them into groups of 2-3 and have them pray for each other and those decisions.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 7]: We aren't called to pursue virginity; we are called to pursue purity

READ TO GROUP: Purity and virginity are not the same thing. I know plenty of technical virgins that surrendered their purity long ago, and I know plenty of people who surrendered their virginity outside of marriage who had their purity fully restored by the Lord. No, the Lord may not restore your virginity, but He can and will restore your purity if it is lost. What the Lord desires from us most is a pure, unwavering heart that is deeply enthralled by Him. So often the Church gets it wrong when they talk to teenagers about sex and purity. Most people tell you that purity is not having sex until marriage, but it is so much more than that. Your motivation for staying pure until marriage should never be another human (even your future husband/wife) because they will fail you. When you are in those moments of temptation, the idea of a vague-maybe-real-future-spouse that you may not even know yet is not going to be enough to keep you strong. The only thing that will give you the strength to stay pure in the most tempting moments is an unwavering desire for the Lord. Someone once told me that the only way to beat temptation is to love Jesus more than you love sin. The only thing that will replace the desire to sin is a stronger desire for something else. Your motivation should be to stay pure for the Lord, the true owner of your heart.

Matthew 5:8 – Psalm 51:10 – Philippians 4:8

Create meaningful, Jesus based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer all of them.

FROM REAL LIFE

1. Have you ever thought about the difference between purity and virginity? Is this a new idea for you?
2. Why do you "wait?" What is your motivation?
3. Have you ever thought about purity as something that you pursue your entire life? Even once you're married?

FROM THE TRUTH

4. What do each of these verses tell us about what the Lord desires from us?
5. So often, when we talk about this subject in church, we focus on NOT doing something, rather than on what we should do in place of it. What does Philippians 4:8 teach us about how to stay pure?

FROM THE APPLICATION

6. What steps can you take to replace your desire to sin/temptation with the desire for Jesus?
7. If you have already fallen to sexual temptation of any sort, take heart in the fact that the Lord can and will restore your purity! What steps can you take towards Jesus to help restore your purity?
8. To be pure in heart means to have a heart that is purely seeking after Jesus. How can you pursue purity in all areas of your life, not just sexual temptation?

NEXT STEP: Leaders, pray that your students will pursue purity of heart in their everyday lives and that their sole desire would be for Jesus.

Things I Wish I'd Known [Week 8]: Why we date is just as important as who we date.

READ TO GROUP: There are so many new and exciting experiences in high school, but perhaps one of the most sweet, special - and at the same time terrifying - experiences is dating. It is exciting to have a companion, make memories, and to be thought of in a special way. It also can be a huge learning experience in selflessness, putting the Lord first in your relationships, time management, the importance and priority of friends in your life, and countless other lessons. It is a thrilling roller coaster that can both encourage you in your walk with the Lord and cloud your judgment to the point of disaster. At some point, we've all seen examples of relationships or significant others on TV, in movies, or in the news that we've been jealous of or hoped to aspire to. The only problem is that usually those relationships aren't glorifying the Lord or helping you understand the real reasons behind why we date. So much energy in high school is devoted to WHO we date, when the real energy should be spent answering the question: Why do we date? What is the purpose and goal of it? How does its purpose change our perspective on it? Though people said it to me over and over again, I wish I would've truly understood in high school that dating is a direct precursor to marriage...not just a fun thing we do until we go to college. Marriage is about Jesus, so dating should be about Jesus too. The Lord's purpose for dating is to find a future spouse who is a faithful believer in Jesus and a committed partner in serving Him. [*Leaders, don't be afraid (with wisdom!) to share your story, the good, the bad, and the ugly about dating-they want help and advice, even if they don't seem like they do.*]

Genesis 2:18-24 + Matthew 10:37 + Matthew 22:37-39

Create meaningful, Jesus based conversation. Adjust questions as needed, and don't feel like you need to answer them all.

FROM REAL LIFE

1. Why do you think most people date? Why would/do you date?
2. What qualities would make someone dateable or not dateable in your eyes? What makes you dateable or not dateable?
3. How would you feel if you never had a boyfriend/girlfriend in high school? Why?

FROM THE TRUTH

4. Read Matt. 22:37-39 & Matt. 10:37. What do they tell us about what our priorities should be in life? How could that apply to dating?
5. What does God remind us in Genesis 2:18-24 should be our ultimate goal for dating?

FROM THE APPLICATION

6. Why is it important to view every person you date as someone you might potentially marry? How would that change the standards of those you choose to date?
7. Why is it so important to have Jesus as your top priority and first love as you head into a dating relationship? Why would it be important for the person you date to have the same priorities?
8. How easy or hard is it for you to trust God to bring the right person for you to date at the right time?
9. If He never does bring someone for you, is Jesus enough for you?

NEXT STEP: *Leaders, challenge your students to really dwell on question #9 this week. Encourage them to search their hearts and ask the Lord to show Himself enough for them.*

Wildcard Week!!!

Welcome to Wildcard Week!! Tonight, we'd like to provide the space and opportunity to give you a free night to use as you choose – and we couldn't be more excited! We hope you will take the time to think through a number of possibilities that might help form the discussion for the evening.

Here are a few directions you might consider:

- If, as a leader, I could share anything with my group – what would it be?
- When I was the age of the students in my group – I really needed to hear (fill in the blank). So here goes!
- When we get off track during group – our conversation always seems to drift towards (fill in the blank). So, let's take time to really discuss it.
- We always talk about wanting to have a lesson about (fill in the blank). So, tonight's the night!

No one knows your group better than you do – so here's your chance to have a night tailored specifically for your students! Please use the time to pray and prepare ahead of time (and let us know if we can help!). We can't wait to hear how it goes!

FAITH OVERVIEW

The Gospel is the bedrock of our faith, however, it's surprising how many of our students struggle to put the Good News into words. In fact, there's a very good chance that there's at least one student in your group who has never heard the Gospel story in its entirety. Tonight, we're going to accomplish that!

We're going to use the 5 Finger Exercise to share and teach the Gospel to our students. There are 2 big goals for this:

1. That those students who have never heard the Gospel would hear it!
2. That those students who know the gospel would learn how to easily share it with others!

The lesson that follows is an easy handout to navigate. Please show your group how to use this 5 Finger Exercise to learn about all Jesus has done for them. You can choose how to utilize this tool – either you teach it or have the students help teach. I would strongly consider having them break into groups and practice using this exercise on each other!

It's our prayer that at the end of the evening – each student has a firmer grasp on how to share their faith!

****Please note: The Faith Overview handout is designed to be printed for the students so they can keep a copy in their Bible for whenever they need it! Please let us know if you want copies for your group and we can provide them!**

Five Finger Reminders

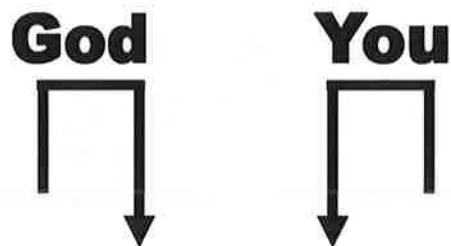


Hear Romans 10:14

Romans 10:14 asks how can people believe in Jesus if they have never heard about him. In the Bible, "hearing" often means more than just hearing the words, but also understanding them. Hearing the "gospel" of Jesus is the starting point for everyone. The gospel is the good news of Jesus. We want to make sure you know what the message of Jesus is, so we're going to break it down.

The Gospel Breakdown

1. We all have sinned. Romans 3:23
2. Sin Separates us from God. Romans 6:23, Isaiah 59:2
3. God doesn't want to be separated from us. 2nd Peter 3:9
4. Jesus paid for our sins. Hebrews 9:28, 2nd Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:8
5. We can have a relationship with God through Jesus. John 14:6, Romans 6:23b



Believe John 3:16, Romans 10:9, John 20:31

Once you have heard, you have to have faith in God. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see.
Thomas... how did Jesus respond? John 20:19-29

Acts 2:38 & 3:19 Repent

Repentance happens when a changed heart changes your life. It's a U-Turn! You were walking away from God and now you're walking towards God.



Zacchaeus Repented... Luke 19:1-10

Confess Romans 10:9, Matthew 10:32, Philippians 2:9-11

At some point, as you give your life to Jesus, you need to confess what's going on in your heart. You say what you believe. You admit it.

Confess to God...

... your love, ...your sin, ... your need for him, etc.

Confess to people...

...that you believe and want to follow Jesus.

Be Baptized Romans 6:1-4 & Acts 2:38, Matt. 28:19-20

Being baptized is taking all that you have going on in your heart, and doing something about it. It is an outward sign of what's inside.

When we are baptized, we are buried like Jesus.
Our old self dies. We raise to a new life... forgiven of our sins...
given the gift of the Holy Spirit.



The early church used to give
new clothes to people getting baptized as a symbol of the new life that they would now live.

At Eastview we practice "immersion" which is a fancy word for dunking. When the early church baptized, it was this way and it points us to being buried with Jesus.

Live the Christian Life Luke 9:23, Ephesians 5:10

Living your life for Jesus is the best thing you're ever going to do. It will not, however, be the easiest. When you "pick up your cross" everyday, that means that you choose to live for him everyday—and not for yourself!

God doesn't expect you to do this on your own. He give us the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT! Acts 2:38, 1st Corinthians 3:16 & 6:19.

God's Spirit that lives within you will help you do many things.
Three of those things are easy to remember with the letter "C".
Comfort... He will help you in your troubles.
Counsel... He will help you make decisions in your life.
Convict... He will tell you in your heart when you are doing the wrong thing.

The fruit of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23. What are the ways that a person who lives by the Spirit acts?

Growing Up!

You will continue to grow as a Christian. This decision you make now is based on what you know and feel now. But as you grow and mature, this decision will mean more and more. You will continue to grow by praying, reading God's word, going to church, serving others and much more. Can you think of ways that will help you grow as a Christian?

Let's give this some thought. . .

Okay, so you've been through this class. Now what? Ask yourself some questions using the things we learned...

1. Hear—Have I heard and understand the gospel?
2. Believe—Do I believe in God and in his son Jesus? Do I believe that he is the only way to God?
3. Repent—Am I ready to live my life walking towards God and not towards sin?
4. Confess—Can I confess that Jesus is the Lord and that I need him to save me from my sin?
5. Baptize—Am I ready to bury my “old self” and raise to a new life? To be forgiven of my sin and have the gift of the Holy Spirit?
6. Live a Christian Life—Am I ready to pursue a relationship with God and live everyday for him? Am I willing to follow God's commands so that I can grow in my faith?

Goliath Must Fall – Week 1

Based on Goliath Must Fall by Louie Giglio

Watch Goliath Must Fall – Week 1: (<https://vimeo.com/252393150>)

Getting Started:

- What first comes to mind when you think about the story of David and Goliath?
- What is something that stood out to you from the video?

Digging In:

Read 1 Samuel 17:2-11; 16-20; 32-51

- Why did Saul, Goliath and the armies doubt David's ability to fight the giant? What made David so confident that God would provide victory over Goliath?
- What was Saul's plan for David's battle? What was David's plan? How do you think David's battle strategy served to glorify God?

Thinking It Through:

(Read) Jesus died for us- once and for all. Every sin we've ever committed and ever will commit has been washed clean because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for us. When he died – he conquered Satan, death and sin for all time. He is victorious!

But – just like a poisonous snake whose fangs are still deadly after it's been killed, our sin (even though it is forgiven!) can still cause us problems and rob us of God's joy, power, and purpose for our lives. Giants – even if they're dead – can still be dangerous.

- What Giants do you struggle with in your life? In other words, what is something that you deal with often that stands in the way of God's peace and glory in your life?
- In the story of David and Goliath, David represents Jesus. Can you explain what that means to you?
- When you face a problem, how do you usually deal with it? Who do you depend on for help?
- This series isn't about working harder to defeat sin. It's not about doing things through our own power, but Jesus' power. Read Ephesians 1:19-20. How do you feel about having access to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead?
- David didn't fight Goliath for his own glory. He did it for God's glory. What is your motivation for wanting to rid your life of giants? Why do you think that makes a difference?

Next Steps:

- Have your students spread out so that they can have 5 minutes alone with God to reflect on their giant(s) and to acknowledge the victory that Jesus has already had over sin, Satan, and our giants! Afterwards, close in prayer together.

Goliath Must Fall – Week 2

Based on Goliath Must Fall by Louie Giglio

Fear Must Fall

Getting Started:

- Do you feel like you are a fearful person? Why or why not?
- What is a fear you had when you were a small child? How has that changed now that you're older?

Digging In:

Read 1 Samuel 17:4-11; 50-51

- Why do you think the Israelites were so terrified of Goliath? Consider ways that God had already protected and fought for Israel before this. Why do you think fear still got in the way of their faith?
- In contrast – why do you think the Philistines were afraid at the end of the story? What was important about what they witnessed?

Thinking It Through:

- In the book and video: Louie suggests that there are 3 major things that cause of fear:
 - Fear comes from Conditioning: You've been raised in an environment of anxiety and fear for one reason or another.
 - Fear comes from Concealing: You're hiding something and are afraid to be discovered.
 - Fear comes from controlling: You're afraid of things you cannot control.
- Consider these reasons for fear. Do any of these hit home for you? Share with the group some fears you've struggled with. How do these fears affect you on a daily basis?
- Consider that Jesus wants to be in control of your life so he can help you manage your fear. What do you think of the idea: "Faith is the antidote for fear and the soundtrack of faith is worship"? How was David's faith an antidote for fear? How can worship be an affect defense against fear?
- Fear is a relentless giant. What difference could it make if you surrendered your fear to God? How can you do that?

Next Steps:

- Wrap up the night by having the group sit quietly as you lead them in this exercise:
 - Have them silently name their fear. Acknowledge it before God. ("I am anxious because...")
 - Now encourage them to decide what they're going to do with that fear: will they continue to hold onto it or lay it before Jesus? (acknowledge that they may have to lay it at his feet more than once since it's very easy for us to pick the burden back up again when we least expect it!)
 - Now have them fill their hearts and mouths with praise. Read Psalm 16:8-11 aloud and focus on the security that God provides for those who depend on him.
 - End in prayer.

Goliath Must Fall – Week 3

Based on Goliath Must Fall by Louie Giglio

Rejection Must Fall

Getting Started:

- What is acceptance worth to you?
- What role do you think social media plays in making people feel inadequate or unworthy?

Digging In:

**Read 1 Samuel 17:28-29; 32-37; 41-44
John 3:16; Psalm 139:13-14**

- Why would David have struggled with feeling disapproved of and rejected? Where did he find his confidence: in his own success or in God's faithfulness?
- What does the Bible tell us about how much God values us? Is that easy or difficult to comprehend and accept?

Thinking It Through:

- What does it mean to you to hear the phrase: "You are worth Jesus to God"? Be honest: how much value do you place in the fact that the God of the universe gave his only Son for you?
- Read Matthew 3:16-17. After Jesus was baptized, God declared that he loved and was pleased with his son. Jesus was in the very beginning stages of his ministry and it was clear that God was already pleased with him – he didn't have to do anything to earn God's love or acceptance. How do you think that extends to us?
- What would it look like to live life from a place of acceptance rather than living to be accepted?
- Chasing success will never defeat the giant of rejection – Only believing in a God who loves you unconditionally can do that. What does it mean to you to be loved unconditionally? How can that truth change the way you live? What steps can you take to own that truth when the giant of rejection creeps up on you?

Next Steps:

- Rejection and worship cannot co-exist. One leaves no room for the other. Challenge your students to surrender their giant of rejection this week by setting aside time to glorify God and worship him. Take time to brainstorm ways to displace rejection with different types of worship.

Goliath Must Fall – Week 4

Based on Goliath Must Fall by Louie Giglio

Comfort Must Fall

Getting Started:

- Can you think of some things in your life that make you feel “comfortable” that might be hard for you to give up if you were asked to? (ex: nice clothes, phone, money for activities...)
- Can you think of why comfort might be a giant that could get in the way of us pursuing God’s purpose for our lives?

Digging In:

Read 1 Samuel 17:16-19

Luke 12:13-21

- The Israelites were challenged by Goliath every day, yet no one stepped up to confront him. For forty days, they stalled in the safety and security of their tents letting the giant call the shots. They even had David come and give them more supplies so they could hold out longer. But when David came – he did in about 40 minutes what the entire army didn’t do in 40 days! Why do you think it was so easy for Saul and his army to stall instead of act?
- Comfort is not dangerous in and of itself. Consider the rich man in the book of Luke. How did his preoccupation with comfort end up? Why is it important not to get side-tracked by our desire for safety, security and the easy life? What could we be missing?

Thinking It Through:

- The giant of comfort is sneaky! That’s why it can be so dangerous! Why do you think that is?
- Do you ever slip into the mindset of “It’s my life – I can do whatever I want”? How can that affect your faith? What blessings might you be missing out on?
- Consider this statement: “Faith thrives best in discomfort”. Easier isn’t always better! Can you think of a time when you grew because of an uncomfortable situation you found yourself in? Can you think of examples from the bible where God’s kingdom grew because of people who thrived when things got difficult? (huge example: JESUS!!)
- Comfort and security is not bad – there’s room for it in all of our lives. Even though we probably wouldn’t choose discomfort – God might choose it for us. Why would he do that? How do you feel about that possibility?

Next Steps:

- Take time to pray for God to help you be willing to be uncomfortable in order to glorify him and to work towards the purpose he has for your life. Remember – you don’t have to wait until you’ve got everything together! He wants to use you just as you are! The giant of comfort can fall!

Goliath Must Fall – Week 5

Based on Goliath Must Fall by Louie Giglio

Anger Must Fall

Getting Started:

- Do you feel like we live in an “angry society”? Why or why not?
- What is it that sometimes trigger anger in your own life?

Digging In:

Read 1 Samuel 17:28

Ephesians 4:26

- A chapter earlier, David’s oldest brother, Elias, was passed over as the future king and David – the youngest - was chosen instead. How does Elias’s response in chapter 17 reflect how he handled that situation?
- What does the Bible teach us about anger and sin? Is it a sin to be angry?

Thinking It Through:

- Sometimes anger can smolder under the surface until it eventually bursts into flame. In fact – this smoldering is often caused by unresolved issues in a relationship. Can you identify a smoldering issue in a relationship that you’re angry about – even if you try to convince yourself you’re not?
- How can sitting in our anger hurt us more than it hurts those with whom we’re angry?
- In Goliath Must Fall we are encouraged to take these steps to allow Jesus to defeat our giant of anger:
 - **Remind ourselves that we aren’t perfect either:** Check out Romans 3:23. How can remembering our own need for grace help us when we are angry with someone else?
 - **Remind ourselves that God has made peace with us:** Check out Ephesians 2:13-18. How did Jesus bring us peace with God – even though we deserved His wrath?
 - **Remind ourselves that God is just and trustworthy:** Check out Romans 12:14, 17-18. God cares about your hurt – but, thankfully, Jesus is bigger than our wounds. How can you resolve conflict without “repaying evil for evil”?
 - **Remind ourselves to forgive:** Check out Colossians 3:13-14. Why is it so important that we forgive? Why does it take faith to forgive?
- The cross is where the giant of anger can be brought down. Even if someone doesn’t want our forgiveness, we should forgive them anyway – even if they choose not to receive it. Why is that? How does forgiveness help us as much as it helps those we forgive?

Next Steps:

- End this week with a recap of the series: In the story of David and Goliath, David represents Jesus. Our Savior came and conquered death, sin, and all our giants once and for all! He is victorious! However, even slain giants can still be dangerous. When we trust Jesus to take down our giants by his power – instead of our own – we can enjoy peace, while we live a life fulfilled by his purpose and for his glory. He is our giant-slayer. Take time to pray about surrendering all our giants (even those we didn’t touch on!) to Jesus.

