

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 1: INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP
LESSON 11: THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLESHIP,
PART 2: DISCIPLES INTRODUCE OTHERS TO CHRIST

What we want students to learn: That as followers of Christ, we are called by God to introduce others to Jesus, thus leading them to the same life-saving relationship with Christ that we enjoy.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate their commitment to leading others to know Jesus.

Scripture Focus: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Overview: When we enter into a relationship with Jesus, we are given a new task. Our task is to carry His offer of salvation and reconciliation to others. That is our calling. And as we consider the purpose of discipleship, bringing new members into the family of God is definitely a prominent one.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **LIFE** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **LIFE** lesson 11 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 11, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Time frame:** Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55 or 56 AD, a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians and a year before he wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth.
- **Purpose:** According to the ESV Study Bible, the main theme of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was "the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message."

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THE SETTING

Paul had a long and oftentimes rocky relationship with the church in Corinth. He talked about a very “painful” visit to them early on in 2 Corinthians, and many within the church had begun to reject Paul. However, Titus was eventually able to report to Paul and let him know that most of the church had repented. Throughout the letter Paul encourages the believers, and also extends an invitation for the ones still rejecting him and his message to repent.

THE MAIN POINT

Paul had one of the most dramatic conversion experiences we see in Scripture. He, of all people, understood what it meant for the old to pass away and to become a new creation in Christ. He also knew that he had done nothing to bring about his new self. He knew that it was all God’s doing. In the passage we’re about to study, he’s encouraging the church in Corinth to understand the reconciliation that had taken place between themselves and God through Christ. The main point of this lesson is that once we understand what has taken place in our lives through Christ, we must grasp our role of being ambassadors of that message to others.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students and leaders to think how they would introduce themselves to others using descriptive words.
- **Set-Up:** Strips of paper with different “types” of people written on them. By “types,” we mean descriptions like: High School Quarterback, Broadway Actor, President, etc. Each student will need one.

FIRST, divide students into groups of three or four people. If possible, for this introductory game it would probably be best to intermix middle school and high school students. Have older students talking with younger students and the other way around.

NEXT, inform students they all will be given a small sheet of paper with a description of a person on it. Also on the sheet of paper, they will be given four one-word descriptions that they can use to describe who they are to others. The object of the game is for the students to guess who the others students are. When the small group leader says “go,” students will walk around and introduce themselves to others and try and get the other person to guess who they are. Students can only use the descriptive words on the paper. If they are struggling with a particular one they can move on to another student. The goal is to see how many people they can successfully introduce themselves to in two minutes. Here are some samples you can use for the descriptions (feel free to add your own):

- **High School Quarterback** - Descriptions: Sports, Leader, 11 players at a time, oval shaped ball
- **Broadway Actor/Actress** - Descriptions: Sing, Stage, New York, Script.
- **Trumpet Player** - Descriptions: Horn, Music, Small, Bb Flat.
- **President of the United States** - Descriptions: Leader, Washington DC, Oval Office, Politics.

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- **Principal** - Descriptions: Leader, School, Office, Announcements.
- **Coach** - Descriptions: Whistle, Clipboard, Play-Calling, Leader.
- **Doctor** - Descriptions: White Coat, Prescriptions, Diagnose, Medicine.

THEN, when two minutes are up, have the students come back together as a large group and add up how many people they successfully introduced themselves to. Ask something like:

- **Was the game harder or easier than you thought it'd be?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **In real life, are you good at introducing yourself to others? Or do you struggle with it?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What about introducing two people that haven't met? Are you good in that situation? Why or why not?**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, explain to students that this was a fun way to get them thinking about the idea of making introductions. Say something like:

- **As Christ-followers, we are called by God to introduce others to Jesus, thus potentially leading them to the same life-saving relationship with Christ that we enjoy. Whether we are great at building relationships with others or not, our faith must become public and known. We can't save people. But we can lead them to the One who can.**

Transition into *The Main Event* portion of your lesson.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students better understand the importance of a disciple of Jesus Christ introducing others to the same life-changing gospel they themselves have experienced.
- **Set Up:** You'll benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or a Bible app that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, write the words "flesh," "new creation," "reconciled," and "ambassadors" on a dry-erase board. Explain that these will be the main words we will be looking at in this section. Say something like this:

- **In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, he gives Christ followers a very healthy reminder of one of the local church's main missions and purposes, which is to bring others to Christ. He discussed the old self and the new self as the framework in doing this.**

THEN, explain that you're going to start out by reading 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. While students are looking, make sure you take a few moments to provide the context for the passage using the Bible Background. Also, pay close attention to the Setting.

NEXT, read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:16. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **What do you think of when you think of the word flesh?**
 - Answers will vary. Here, Paul is talking about people living like their present life and physical bodies

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are the only things that matter.

- **Why do you believe Paul made such a strong statement as, “regard no one according to the flesh?”**
 - Answer: It is very easy to only see people only for their worldly standards, to only see their value in the here and now and completely miss the bigger picture of what God is doing in their heart and lives.
- **Why do you ultimately believe this is harmful, not only to others, but also to your testimony and what you stand for as a believer?**
 - Answer: When we only view people for what they are in the here and now, we tend to do a couple of things. First, we are not seeing others as Christ sees them. Christ sees us as image-bearers of Himself. This gives us incredible value. Second, it hurts our own testimony when we claim Jesus with our words but our actions do not back this up.

THEN, read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:17. When students have finished, lead them in a short discussion. Ask something like:

- **What do you think of when you think of the phrase “new creation”?**
 - Answers will vary. Write some of their answers on the board.
- **Why is it so important for the Christ-follower to understand, on a daily basis, that Christ has made us new?**
 - Answer: Christ-followers must consistently live in confidence in the new life we have been given in Christ. It’s critical for us to know that we are no longer in bondage to sin. Christ has set us free and we’re called to live like it!
- **With this in mind, how should this change the way we think, act, and relate to others?**
 - Answer: Since Christ has made us new, we will process decisions differently and we will think of others before our own selves. If you don’t see these changes, you may not be a Christ-follower or, at least, not be as strong in the faith as you may think you are.

NEXT, read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. Ask:

- **What does the word “reconciled” mean?**
 - Answers may vary. Write their answers on the board. It means to restore or to bring back together again. Explain to them that spiritually speaking, it means “God’s wrath against sin was satisfied in the death of His Son. Sinners—who formerly put self-interest above God’s glory (Rm 1:21; 3:23)—have been brought to cherish God as their highest treasure.” (HCSB Study Bible Notes)
- **Why is this a big deal for us to understand? Why is it important for others to understand?**
 - Answer: Because without reconciliation, it means that we are separated from God and that means an eternity apart from Him.
- **What does it tell you about the nature and character of God that He would desire to see this outcome?**
 - Answer: Sadly, many people do not see God as a loving, giving, caring God. They believe He stands ready to pour out His wrath. While the wrath of God does exist and is applied, these verses overwhelming show that God has a deep love for us. God thought enough of us to fix our sin problem through His Son, Jesus.

THEN, read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:20. These verses serve as a very theological, yet practical look at how, together as Christ-followers, we can embrace the mission of Christ to carry His offer of salvation and reconciliation to others. That is our calling. And as we consider the purpose of discipleship, bringing new members into the family of God is definitely a prominent one. Ask this question:

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- **What do you think of when you think of the word “ambassador?”**
 - Answers will vary. Let students answer as they will, without correcting or redirecting. Have students write some of their answers down on their paper. Write them on the dry-erase board as well.

NEXT, offer the actual definition of ambassador to the students. Let them know that an ambassador is a person that acts as representation of something or someone. Ask something like:

- **What are some practical ways we can function as ambassadors of Christ in our day-to-day lives?**
 - Answers will vary. Encourage students to be practical, and help them see that this goes beyond typical “church answers.” Push them to talk about their interactions with people at school, in the community, etc.

FINALLY, have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:21. Then, say something like:

- **In verse 21 Paul emphasizes the main thrust of what he has been communicating in these verses. That Christ did for us what we could never do for ourselves; He saved us. We must respond to this. For those who are not in Christ, we must pray that they are willing to surrender to Jesus as their Lord and Savior. For those in Christ, they must be bold ambassadors and urge others to come to know the Jesus that rescues and saves.**

Ask if there are any questions, then transition into *The Last Word*.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students step back and evaluate their commitment to leading others to know Jesus.
- **Set-Up:** You’ll want to use a dry-erase board, or some other means to help students visualize the people in their lives they have an opportunity to impact. Write the words, “Circle of Influence” on the board.

FIRST, explain to students that as you begin to wrap up your lesson, you want to give them an opportunity to evaluate their lives and how effectively they are using them to lead others to know Jesus. Have them think through and process this question:

- **When others see you, do they see Jesus in you?**
 - Answers will vary. Don’t force them to answer out loud if they don’t want to. Just make sure they’re thinking on this question as you move forward.

NEXT, point out the words “Circle of Influence” on the board or screen. Say something like:

- **We all have a “circle of influence.” They are people that know us well, people that we rub shoulders with almost on daily basis. We’ll call these people our “circle of influence.” They impact your life and you impact their life.**

THEN, have students write the first names only of their “circle of influence” on a sheet of paper. Encourage them to come up with at least five names to write down. Then ask:

- **If I were to ask them what is most important in your life, how would they respond? Would they call you an ambassador for Christ? Could they point to evidence that would prove this?**

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o Answers will vary. Encourage students and challenge them to think about how they can continue to impact their circle of influence.

FINALLY, ask if students know how crucial Christ-followers are to others seeing and knowing the work and mission of Jesus. Jesus doesn't need us to accomplish His task but rather He chooses to use us, for His glory. Say something like:

- **Jesus commands Christ-followers to live in our new identity, the new creation, a life in Christ. Each and every Christ-follower needs to continually evaluate what he or she is putting on display. A great way to evaluate this is by wrestling with the following question: "If my friends were to tell others about me, what would be the top three things that would tell about me? Would being an ambassador for Christ even make the list? Can they tell I'm a disciple of Jesus trying to make more disciples of Jesus?"**

Encourage them that their lives are making a difference. Challenge them to keep reaching their circle of influence for Jesus. The circle of influence is a great starting point but should not be the ending point.

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the Social Media guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.