

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

What we want students to learn: That embracing Christian community means growing in their knowledge of Christ together.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To identify, and commit to, specific ways they can grow in their knowledge of God with others in their community.

Scripture Focus: Colossians 1:3-12

Supporting Scripture: Acts 2:42, 46

Overview: One of the things we see most powerfully in the Jerusalem church is their commitment to learning about God together. Over and over again in Scripture, we see groups of people gathering together to learn about God. To grow in their knowledge of God. You've already made the case for your students that an important aspect of being a disciple is hungering to know God. What we learn is that a big part of embracing Christian community is embracing the practice of corporately growing in our knowledge of God, specifically through Bible Study OR through listening to someone teach the Bible. This is a habit that many of your students already practice. But understanding that it is a VALUE of people seeking to follow after Christ will help your students take their commitment to the next level.

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 26 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 26, 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 LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul identified himself as the author of Colossians.
- **Time frame:** Most people believe Colossians was written sometime between A.D. 61 and 63, during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:17-31).
- **Purpose:** Ultimately, this letter's purpose is to emphasize the supremacy of Christ over everything. Paul was writing to combat the spread of false teachings among the church at Colossae. The exact heresy being refuted is not certain and may have been a blend of multiple influences. The legalism, mysticism, and asceticism corrupting the pure faith in Colossae were moving attention away from Christ, placing it instead on self-discipline and the awe of other spiritual things.

THE SETTING

The main passage for this lesson is Colossians 1:2-12. Paul and Timothy are writing to the church in Colossae, a church that they did not plant. The *ESV Study Bible* notes that in this letter, we are beginning to see the spread of faith in Jesus Christ. It is moving far beyond singular missionaries and is beginning to grow. Paul does not see this as a loss of his power or influence, but sees the Colossians as partners.

THE MAIN POINT

In this portion of the beginning of the letter to the Colossians, Paul is thanking God for the faith of the Colossians and encouraging them to continue pursuing God. Paul does not want their faith to stagnate, but to continue pushing them to learn, grow, and "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:9). Not only does Paul address the church as a group that is growing together, he treats them as partners, even though he is not their pastor. Paul sees the Christian movement growing in the knowledge of God together, not separately or individually.

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 help students begin to see that we learn, grow, and retain better when we work together.
- **Set-Up:** Print out the "Who's On the Money?" game. You'll need two copies of the quiz.

FIRST, set up the game by explaining that you've got a quick quiz-game. Ask for the smartest person in the room to volunteer. Once they have volunteered, explain that they're going to take this quiz, "one-vs-all" style. They'll take the quiz by themselves, while the rest of the group (they can use adults if they want) works together. (NO PHONES!)

THEN, pass out the quiz sheets, set a timer for 45 seconds and start the quiz. After you've given them enough time, go over the answers. The answers are as follows:

- **Penny: Abraham Lincoln**

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

- Nickel: Thomas Jefferson
- Dime: Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Quarter: George Washington
- \$1 Bill: George Washington
- \$5 Bill: Abraham Lincoln
- \$10 Bill: Alexander Hamilton
- \$20 Bill: Andrew Jackson
- \$50 Bill: Ulysses S. Grant
- \$100 Bill: Benjamin Franklin

Explain that this is a pretty difficult task to do on your own. It's hard to remember, but many times others remember things you didn't. The group-team should win.

NEXT, help them make the connection to our lesson. Ask something like:

- **Ask the student who took the quiz alone: What made this so hard?**
 - Answers will vary. They will probably discuss something about feeling like they knew the answer but couldn't quite come up with it.
- **Was there something the adults knew that you didn't?**
 - Answers will vary. The answer to this will probably be "yes." (There's a joke in there about \$100 bills somewhere.) The idea that you want your students to see is the value of being with others – they can fill in some gaps and help you see things, remember things, and learn things that you couldn't on your own.

FINALLY, transition to *The Main Event* by saying something like this:

- **It's easy for us to think that we have to figure everything about Christianity out on our own. We feel like we need to be perfectly pursuing God in our own lives before we can really discuss it with others. That's like trying to rely only on your own memory. It's so much better when we can work together – even in learning about God!**

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students see that embracing Christian community means growing in their knowledge of Christ together.
- **Set Up:** You may benefit from a dry-erase board, but it's not critical. Make sure students have a Bible or that they are able to look along with a friend.

FIRST, start with asking your students to open up their Bibles to Colossians. Then, provide the context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, have a student read Colossians 1:1. Ask:

- **What do you notice there?**
 - Answer: Apparently, Paul did not write this letter alone. Timothy was also there – they were working

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

together. Explain that this lesson is going to be all about working together.

NEXT, read or have a student read Colossians 1:3-8. Then, lead in this discussion:

- **Paul says that he and Timothy thank God for the Colossians. Why do they thank God for them?**
 - Answer: Look at verse 4. They're thanking God because of their faith in Jesus and the love that they have for other believers.
- **Why do you think is it such a big deal to Paul that these folks are worshipping in Colossae?**
 - Answer: It was an encouragement for Paul to see people worshipping Jesus in other places – it wasn't because he had started up a big movement, it was because they loved Jesus. Explain to students that Paul hadn't been to Colossae, but there was a group of people worshipping Jesus there. Think about how encouraging that would be: it's not as if there were only churches in the places Paul planted them. God was growing Christians even in places Paul had never been! The passage points to this in verse 6, when Paul mentioned that the Gospel is "indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing." Paul is seeing the story of what Jesus has done spread throughout the whole world!
- **How did this group of people in Colossae find out about Jesus?**
 - Answers will vary. You might get some answers about the Bible or others, but encourage your students to really look at the passage you're reading. Point them to verse 7. The ESV Study Bible notes that the Colossians learned from Epaphras. Epaphras was a Colossian (Col. 4:12), who returned to his hometown and helped the church begin there. He most likely met Paul while Paul was in Ephesus. The church in Colossae is an example of how God was moving through Believers working together to spread the story of what Jesus had done!

NEXT, explain that, in this passage, Paul is not just pointing out that he and Timothy and Epaphras were working hard for the Gospel of Jesus, but that he wanted the Colossians to join with them in growing in faith. The Gospel was not only growing and increasing in the world, but in the Colossian church. Paul is going to demonstrate this in his second prayer for them.

THEN, read or have a student read Colossians 1:9-12. Lead in this discussion:

- **What is Paul saying that he and Timothy are praying for the Colossians in this passage?**
 - Answer: He's really praying one thing: that they would grow in the knowledge of God and what He is calling them to do. Paul does not want the Gospel to stop its growth by going to Colossae, but to continue the growth in their hearts.
- **What would the result be of the Colossians being filled with the knowledge of God like this?**
 - Answer: They will walk in a manner worth of the Lord, bearing fruit in every good work and increase in the knowledge of God (vs. 7). It's interesting that Paul mentions more increase in the knowledge of God; this growth is not something that stops.
- **What does it mean to "walk in a manner worth of the Lord"?**
 - Let your students discuss with this answer. Help them see that Paul is moving the Colossians toward an understanding that they are representatives of Jesus. The same is true of us. If we are claiming to follow Jesus, the world will look at us for an example of how to follow God. Are we walking in a way that is worthy of that? Do we show the world a good example of what it looks like to follow Jesus?
- **Paul ends this passage by talking about what Jesus has done for us. Read vs. 10-12 again. Why does Paul talk about us sharing "in the inheritance of the saints?"**

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

- o Answer: As Paul discusses our faith in Christ and how that changes the way we live, he points again to the fact that we are not alone. We're not expected to learn about God by ourselves, follow Him perfectly by ourselves, or even pray for others by ourselves. We are living the Christian life together!

Explain to students that the idea of togetherness in faith is an important one. There will be times in their life where they feel alone. They may feel like they are the only one in their friend group who is really trying to follow Jesus. It's so important for us to realize that God has given us a Christian community to pursue Him with together. Even if we don't feel like there is anyone immediately in front of us to walk arm-in-arm with, we are a part of a global, historical movement of Christians!

FINALLY, transition to *The Last Word* by explaining to your students that you're going to close the lesson by looking at how the Christian movement got started after Jesus died, came back to life, and returned to be with God. Say something like:

- **In Colossians, Paul was talking to people who lived in a different city but who had placed their faith in the same Jesus as he had. He was witnessing the spread of the truth of Jesus. We're going to close the lesson by looking at how that started in the book of Acts.**

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

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To identify, and commit to, specific way they can grow in their knowledge of God with others in their community.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need a notecard or piece of paper and writing utensil for each student.

FIRST, connect back to the beginning of the lesson. Say something like this:

- **Think about the quiz we took at the beginning. Imagine if school worked that way. What if you had the option to take every quiz with a group of people. Why would you ever choose to take something alone? Yet, that's exactly what we do with our faith. God has given us relationships with other people to help us grow in our faith, but we try to do everything by ourselves.**

THEN, set up the Acts passage before reading it aloud to your students. Say something like this:

- **The church that Paul was writing to in Colossae believed that Jesus died for our sins, came back to life, and ascended back to be with God. How did that message get from the disciples to the Colossians? It started to spread after Jesus left, in Jerusalem, where the disciples were gathered. As you recall from last week, Peter preached about Jesus and thousands of people believed. Jesus told them that this would happen, but He didn't exactly tell them what to do next. What do you think they did?**

Read Acts 2:42-46 reminding students that they studied this passage just last week. Ask:

- **What did the new believers do next?**

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 3: A Disciple Embraces Christian Community
LESSON 26: DISCIPLES LEARN IN COMMUNITY
WITH ONE ANOTHER

- o Answer: They devoted themselves to the Apostle's teaching (the Gospel), they fellowshiped, ate together, and prayed. They shared their possessions and worshipped together. Give your students a chance to answer, but help them see that all of these things were done together in community. These believers did not accept Jesus and wander off on their own. The Apostles did not expect them to figure the rest out on their own. The Apostle's continued to teach these people and grew in their knowledge of God TOGETHER.

NEXT, pass out a notecard or sheet of paper and a pen to each student. Explain that you're going to ask them to write down something they feel like they can do to grow in their faith and knowledge of God. Say something like this:

- **Take your notecard and ask God to show you one specific way that you can grow in your faith and knowledge of God. It may be to attend church more regularly, read your Bible, pray earnestly that God would grow your desire for Him, attend youth group, or have a Bible study with some friends.**

Give your students some time to think and write. It shouldn't take too long.

THEN, explain what you want your students to do with what they've written down. Say:

- **I want you to take what you've written down and share it with someone close to you who loves Jesus. It may be something that you can do together. At least, they will be able to encourage you to follow through and keep you accountable. You may want to share with someone in this room, your parents, or a close friend. But do not take your growth in Christ and make it private. You are not alone. We are in this together.**

Remind your students of Paul's words to the Colossians about why all of this matters. Say:

- **Why do we want to grow in our knowledge of God? Because we want to fulfill Paul's words in Colossians 1:10. We are seeking to grow in our faith together "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."**

FINALLY, close in prayer, asking God to help all of you grow alongside one another, together. Pray something like this:

- **Father God, we ask that you would help our group to grow in our faith in you, to increase in our knowledge of you, and our love for you. But we do not ask that we would be a grouping of individuals who are seeking you, but that we would pursue you together! God help us to help one another. Help us to join each other in our pursuit of You and to realize that we are not alone.**
- 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.

WEEK 26: LESSON PLAN
©2017 YM360