

THE LIFE

EMBRACING THE LIFE OF A CHRIST-FOLLOWER

PART 2: THE PICTURE OF A DISCIPLE
UNIT 4: A DISCIPLE ENGAGES WITH
HIS OR HER SURROUNDINGS
LESSON 31: THE CALL TO ENGAGE
WITH OUR SURROUNDINGS

What we want students to learn: That those who have been called to follow Christ must have a spirit of actively serving others.

What we want students to do with what they've learned: To evaluate the current state of their Christ-centered service to the world around them.

Scripture Focus: Mark 10:42-45

Supporting Scripture: James 2:14-17

Overview: As Christ-followers, your students are called to engage their neighborhood, their city, their country, and the world in the name of Christ. This is the Gospel in action. This is compassionate service for the sake of Christ. This is what you may call being "missional," and this is where many youth groups shine, mostly through short-term missions and community outreach projects. But engaging with our surroundings goes beyond mission projects. For your students, engaging with their surroundings means getting to know their neighbors. Yes, it's serving their community, but it's also seeking opportunities to be salt and light in their schools. Sure, it's meeting the needs of the "least of these" in your community (and all around the world), but it's also seeing themselves as God's ambassadors in their everyday lives. It's seeing life through the lens of making a difference, and doing so in the name of Jesus, for the advancement of His Kingdom, and for the glory of His name. This is the heart of this unit, and this lesson will introduce these concepts to your students.

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 31 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 31, 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 Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter's firsthand accounts.

WEEK 31: LESSON PLAN
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- **Time frame:** Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50's AD.
- **Purpose:** Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus' identity.

THE SETTING

Jesus is addressing John and James who have just asked if they can sit at the right and left hand of Jesus on His throne. This is important because it lays the context of this passage as being one of earthly confusion. Often we can forget that the disciples were learning as well, and that Jesus had to constantly remind them of His purpose in being here. Painting the clear picture for your students that disciples didn't have it all figured out will help you in relaying the importance of this passage's message.

THE MAIN POINT

The main goal of this lesson is to teach students that service is a needed part of the Christian lifestyle. The point is not to serve others as a means of getting something for ourselves but serving because Christ teaches that He came to serve and sacrifice His life for the sake of others. Service and sacrifice are main reasons why Jesus came to this earth, and it must become the core for our students in their pursuit of a Christ-like lifestyle.

LESSON PLAN

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

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To show students what it is like to have authority over someone, and that it can be an even more powerful feeling to relinquish that power.
- **Set-Up:** Bring a bag of candy and a deck of cards to class. You are going to pick one student out of the class and bring them to the front. Then distribute a single card to each person in the room who is not the individual you selected. Then give the rest of the deck to the person at the front of the room.

FIRST, you are going to tell students that you are going to start off with a game. This game is simple, and winners get candy. Explain that the individual at the front of the room is going to go person by person and flip the top card over from his/her deck. The person who gets the highest card gets the deck, and the lowest card sits down in that spot. The winner gets to pick who gets a piece of candy though: either they get it for winning or they can pass it off to whoever had the lower card. Explain to students that even if they choose to not take the candy and give it to the other person, they get to go on and play against the next person to make the same decision. Allow them to play the game until everyone has gone.

The important thing to note is that your hope is that one of two things happens here, either one person refuses to give up any candy and keeps winning amassing a large amount of candy. The second option is that one person keeps winning and keeps giving away the candy. (It might be a good idea to get enough extra candy to give some to the rest of the class regardless of results.)

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THEN, when you've finished, ask students a few questions to unpack the example. Ask:

- If you received candy after losing because of a lower card, what did it feel like to be given candy after you lost?
- If you never got candy after losing, what did it feel like to not gain any candy?
- For those of you who won a few in a row and kept your candy, what was it like to keep winning and get more candy?
- How did it feel when you gave away candy after winning? Was it a positive or negative experience? Why?

Explain to the students that the goal of the activity was not to show who has the most candy, but to highlight the feelings that power and authority can bring out when used toward us/expressed from us.

FINALLY, say something like:

- In the course of our lives, there are many opportunities for us to show others that we are better than them at something, and when those opportunities come it is difficult to think about anyone other than ourselves (due to our sinful nature). We are going to look at a passage today where Jesus is talking to His disciples about what it means to put ourselves second and actively serve the people we encounter. Along the way, we're going to learn what it means to see the world around us as one big opportunity to serve others.

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

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To teach students that those who have been called to follow Christ must have a spirit of actively serving others.
- **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, ask students what comes to mind when they think about the word service. If you have your dry-erase board you could poll them with a few of the following questions and write their responses down:

- **What are some examples of someone serving someone else?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Have you ever had the opportunity to serve or do something for someone else, and what did it feel like?**
 - Answers will vary.

Say something like:

- **Opportunities to serve are all around us in the world, and often the church even provides a lot of places to serve. The passage we are going to look at though talks about service in a different way. This passage is going to talk about the identity of a servant.**

THEN, have students turn to Mark 10. While they are finding it, use the Bible Background to provide some context for the passage. Then read or have a student read Mark 10:42. When you're finished, lead students in a brief discussion. Ask:

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- **What did Jesus say that the Gentile rulers did with their power?**
 - Answer: They lord it over the people. They used it as a bragging tool, or even worse a tool for submission.
- **Who are the Gentiles again?**
 - Answer: The Gentiles are the Greeks and non-Jews. Anyone who wasn't a Jew would be considered Gentiles.
- **Why do you think Jesus is talking about Gentile rulers to His Jewish disciples?**
 - Answer: Jesus was trying to show them where their understanding of authority was coming from. Explain to your students that Jesus was not trying to call His disciples foolish for their understanding, but He was trying to open their hearts and minds to the idea of servant-leadership. He was trying to show them that just like us today, we must be careful of how much culture has influenced our minds as it often leads us in the opposite direction of what God wants us.

NEXT, have a student read Mark 10:43-44. Explain to students that Jesus is throwing out some radical ideas to the disciples. They have been raised in a culture that survives attack after attack from mighty nations. The strong in the lives of the disciples have been those who have conquered others, and now Jesus is telling them something different. Ask students:

- **What does Jesus say one must do to become great?**
 - Answer: Become a servant.
- **What do you think Jesus means when He says a slave of all?**
 - Answer: He is pointing out that every person is to be served by a believer, even those that would be considered the lowest of low.
- **What obstacles do you run into that keep you from being a servant?**
 - Answer: These answers may vary from student to student, but things such as pride, fear, lack of knowing what to say when asked why you are doing what you are doing.

Explain, that Jesus was teaching the idea of being a servant to all to open His disciples' eyes to the opportunities around them. Jesus spent a large portion of His ministry reaching out to lepers, cripples, and those that society looked down upon. Jesus tells the disciples that if they desire to be great within the Kingdom of God, it only comes through a sacrifice of self for the service of others. Say something like this:

- **It's not always easy to serve others, especially when they show no signs of thankfulness or kindness in return. We must remember though that Jesus never performed miracles, helped others, or even went to the cross looking for a comparable action in return. Jesus sacrificed Himself daily to serve even the lowest of people without receiving many thanks in return. Let's keep reading.**

THEN, have a student read/you read Mark 10:45. Tell students that Scripture makes it incredibly clear how important it was for believers to be serving others. Jesus Himself serves as the most vivid picture of service ever known. His own personal sacrifice on the cross for our sin was unbelievably powerful. Ask the following questions:

- **How many times does Jesus mention serving others in these four verses?**
 - Answer: Four times He mentions service.
- **Why do you think Jesus repeated Himself so many times to the disciples?**
 - Answer: It is a fundamental part of the Christian life. Discipleship does not occur without service. Discipleship and the Christian life without service is simply a gathering of good people who share ideas.
- **If Jesus dying on the cross was the greatest act of service man could know, how should this affect our willingness to serve others?**
 - Answer: Jesus was willing to give everything He had for the sake of others, even His own life. That should inspire

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us that there is no resource that we should not be willing to give up to help others. Time, money, etc.

Explain to students that we are going to look at another passage of Scripture that talks about how important action in service is to go along with our faith as they turn to James 2:14-17. Say something like this:

- **There is nothing greater that someone can do for the Kingdom of God than to serve the people around them. Jesus tells us to be a servant to all, which means that we should have a desire to serve even those in our lives that don't appear to be worthy of being served. We must let this be a reality check for us, that without Christ in our lives we would have nothing good to offer. It is because we have Christ in our lives though that we are compelled to act. Let's look at what the book of James says about service.**

NEXT, have a student read James 2:14-17. Explain to them that this should be a convicting passage. James has a description of faith that is drastic compared to other parts of scripture. Ask them a few questions to get them engaged with the passage as we head into the Last Word.

- **What does the passage say faith without works is?**
 - Answer: Dead or no good.
- **What does it mean to have faith with works?**
 - Answer: It means that we are to be serving and acting towards others in good deeds and Christ like actions. Our faith is not to be kept as head knowledge as that brings no benefit to the world around us.
- **Do actions earn us faith, or do they flow out of our faith?**
 - Answer: Actions and works are the fruit of our faith; they do not provide it. Our actions can't save us. The only thing that can provide faith and salvation is Jesus, but our relationship with Him should allow us to overflow in joy to the point that we can't contain it. Especially as it pertains to serving others.

FINALLY, say something like this:

- **We are called by Jesus to be serving others. This passage tells us that faith that isn't accompanied by life-changing action may not be a true faith at all. If we are truly transformed by saving faith in Jesus, our lives should be driven toward serve others as Jesus did.**

Ask if there are any questions, and if there are none, transition into *The Last Word*.

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To give students a visual of the need for service, and that they should be serving in the world around them.
- **Set-Up:** You will need a tarp, some plastic cups, a tub or small bucket with water in it, and a cup that has holes punched all throughout it.

FIRST, tell students that you want to give them a little visual to close out the day. Explain to them that the goal of this activity is to get water from one location to the other, but the cups that the water is being brought to can't move. The bucket also can't move, and so the water must get from the bucket to the empty (non-holed) cups.

Ask a student to put water in the hole filled cup first. Notice that water does not stay in the cup, even though it is in the large bucket of water, it's not of any use for getting the water elsewhere. Then have students start cupping their hands to move

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water from the bucket towards the non-holed cups. Point out to students that although not all the water gets there, some of it does. After some water splashing and a few laughs ask students to have a seat again. Ask them some of these questions:

- Was it difficult to get the water from the bucket to the cups by using your hands?
- Would it have been easier if you had a non-holed cup to transport the water?
- What good was the holed cup for transporting water?

THEN, hopefully your students are beginning to see a comparison, but close the lesson with something like this:

- Just like the goal of the activity was to get water from one location to the other, our goal as believers is to get the good news of Jesus to others. Often we feel like we aren't the most effective tool for doing so, but even when a little bit of the truth of the Gospel gets there. The holed cup was in the bucket, but it had no way to help transport the water from one location to the other. So, where are you standing right now? Are you trying to spread the Gospel by using your hands and feet as a servant having the most impact you can? Or are you sitting in the bucket filled with holes because you have not been acting through your faith?

FINALLY, allow time for any closing thoughts or questions from your students. Challenge students to remember that as a follower of Christ, their lives should be marked by service. Encourage them to look for opportunities this week to serve others in the name of Christ.

- 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.