

**everything  
you do  
matters**



**t.b.d.**  
think. believe. do.

# facilitator prep.

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## What's the Point?

Mission can be overwhelming, especially when you begin to really think about it! God wants us to help, needs us to be engaged, and calls us to the sacrificial work of helping in the world. The potential for feeling overwhelmed in the face of everything you're supposed to do is high. As a result, it's not uncommon to ask: Do all of our actions matter? And if all of our actions do matter, can we be aware of every moment we spend in the world? This lesson will help students understand that each moment is sacred and that every one of our actions is important, but is never the last word in a world that is constantly stumbling toward God's kingdom.

## Background

- Mission is a call to be present to the needs of the world in the here and now. The more we are able to participate in God's redemptive work that is immediately in front of us on a day-to-day basis, the more we will be able to catch a glimpse of the larger purposes of God in the world. If God's mission includes drawing all of creation closer to God, then it is not only in the big experiences of God that we find ourselves being renewed, but also in the ordinary and everyday experiences. If everything we do matters, it is possible to experience God in the midst of everything and at any moment! We don't have to wait for the mountaintop experience.
- When we act in the world, we become a living witness to God's work. When we bear witness to and participate in God's life and love, our actions in the world bring joy, peace, and generosity to our communities. Think of where humanity would be were it not for the witness of women and men such as Sojourner Truth, Nelson Mandela, and Mahatma Gandhi. Their witness was not born of one single act of greatness, but instead were constant, daily acts of courage and love.
- Christianity has often distinguished between the sacred and the secular. Saying that our actions matter breaks down false dualisms that mark certain actions as "sacred" and others as "secular." However, when we think of how God comes to us in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, we do not encounter extraordinary—or intrinsically sacred—elements. God uses the simplest and most basic ingredients: water, bread, wine. It's a reminder that God does not need flashy or fancy moments to make a difference. God is able to use simple acts—the sacred and the secular—for the sake of God's mission.

## Student-Specific Tips

- Students know that individual decisions carry consequences. Adults are very good at reminding them of this! Whether academically, in extracurricular activities, or morally and socially, students often carry the burden of knowing their actions have effects. Mission shouldn't be another burden they have to carry. Rather, life is not so much about appeasing the expectations of others as it is about becoming more fully themselves, more presently engaged with the world through their whole self in the unique ways God has created them to be.
- When students are taken seriously for their contributions, they tend to live into spaces of greater responsibility and service. As students are given greater responsibilities, they realize that their actions and choices affect others—that they *matter*. As we encourage students to engage in missional activities, it's important not to relegate them to "lesser" tasks. Instead, when we call them to take on big responsibilities, we invite them to take ownership of their faith and participation in God's work. Doing so is a gift both to the student and to the church.



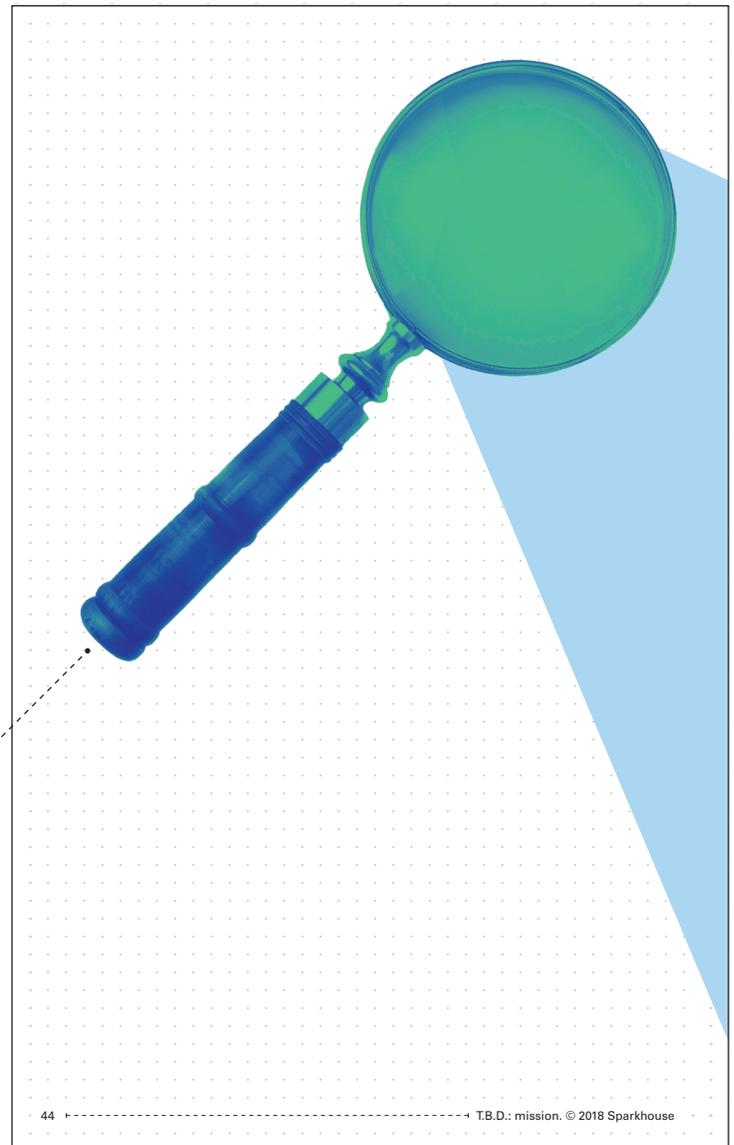
## + facilitate.

The lesson starts with an open-ended question to poke at students' assumptions a bit.

As you get started with the lesson, have students read this text, and ask them for their initial responses.

## + tip.

*Everything* is a big word. What does it look like when every action has a consequence? How does that force us to live? Can we be present and aware of every single moment in our lives? This lesson asks students to think about what it means to live into the idea that everything they do matters. Or to put it a different way, to believe that every thing and every moment is sacred.



## Lesson Notes

+ Topics or questions to address:

+ See what's next. Do it.

Here's where we are: God doesn't need you to heal the problems in the world all by yourself, but you are definitely part of God's solution to those problems. If that's the case, then **everything you do matters.**

What? You don't like the sound of that?

From the smallest hiccup of a mistake, to your grandest moment. Every. Single. Moment.

What could go wrong?

**+ tip.**

Before you start, give students a chance to check in and discuss what they discovered during last week's Big Action.

+ Where the group might struggle:

## + facilitate.

Have students work through the questions on this page in their journals. When they're ready, have them post their thoughts on the wall.

After all students have had a chance to add their ideas, look for themes and connections as a group. Move the sticky notes into these groups.

Before you turn the page, give students an opportunity to add one more sticky note to the wall and discuss why they made the addition.

# think. everything you do matters

Does everything we do matter? Use this page to lament. To get fired up. To consider everything up until this point.

When have your actions or decisions resulted in consequences for you or others?

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## Lesson Notes

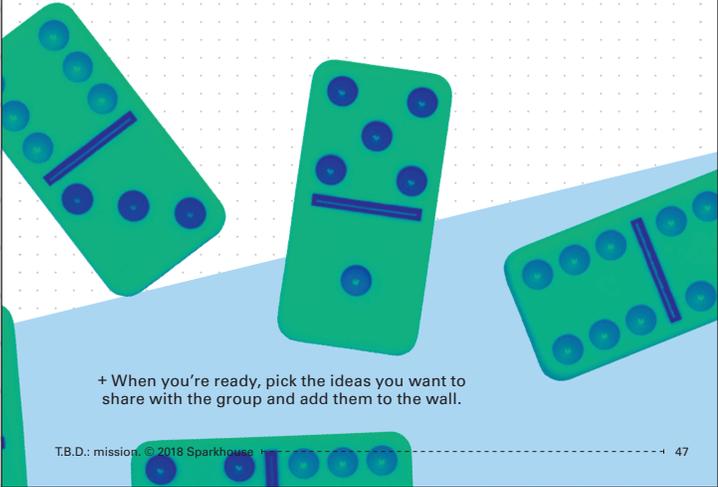
+ What's on the wall?

What's intimidating about the idea that everything matters? What's hopeful?

If everything matters, does anything matter? What are some things that really might not matter to God?

**+ tip.**

This is a great opportunity to get kids thinking theologically while also digging into the tension of the lesson. What matters in our lives? Are there some moments that are bigger than others? Are there some things God simply doesn't care about? Get ready—your students will be all-in on this discussion.



+ Topics or questions to address:

## + facilitate.

The video will introduce new information to students—information that may support, contradict, or confound the conversation you’ve already had.

After the video is finished, have students process this new information by answering the questions in their journal and then discussing them as a group.

## + tip.

Here are the three new bits of information introduced in the video—just in case your students missed them.

- Students might not be aware of the term “colonialism,” but it’s at the core of Archbishop Tutu’s quote. A quick (and woefully inadequate) definition of *colonialism* is “the policy or practice of a powerful country controlling less powerful countries in order to use their resources to gain more power and wealth.”
- The tendency within western Christianity has been to conceive of “missions” as something we do “out there,” often in foreign lands. Missiologist David Bosch fights against what he calls “the mystical doctrine of salt water”—or the idea that we have to go somewhere to do mission work.
- Dorothy Day was a writer, social activist, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, a collection of Catholic communities with the goal of living “in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus Christ.”

## + Video

+ Desmond Tutu is an Anglican priest as well as a human rights activist. He says missionaries to Africa acted as colonizers, stealing the land. How do we avoid hurting other people with our good intentions?

+ David Bosch, a missiologist and theologian, believes that we have to get past the idea of “going somewhere” to do mission work. How can you do mission work in your community? How is that different from going on a trip to do the same work?

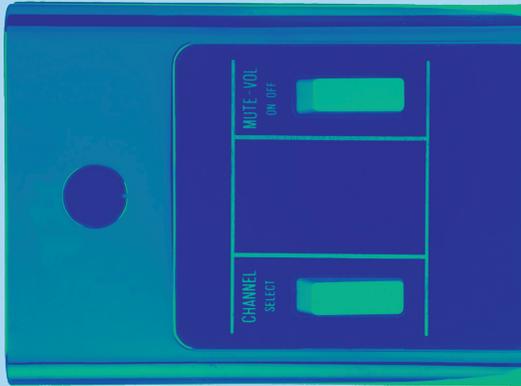
+ Dorothy Day was a journalist and activist and remains a major figure in the Catholic church. She said, “A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions. Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that. No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do.” Write down some words to describe how you feel about this quote.

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## Lesson Notes

+ Video notes:



**You've got more information. So let's revisit the wall.**

- + Put an "X" next to three ideas you can no longer leave on the wall.
- + Put a check mark next to the three you most agree with.
- + What's not on the wall, but should be? Add it now.

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### + facilitate.

Give students a chance to process the video and discussion, and then turn back to the wall. Have students read the instructions at the bottom of this page and then begin voting by making "X" and check marks on the sticky notes.

When they've finished, have each student discuss how they voted and why.

Organize the sticky notes by votes and see if there are any emerging correlations or themes.

### + tip.

As this is the last lesson, encourage students to bring previous insights into this step of the process. What have they learned that could influence their thinking now?

+ Check in with your students. What questions do they have?

## + facilitate.

The Bible verses introduce even more new information to the lesson. Have students work in groups of two or three. As they read and discuss the Bible passages, point them back to the provocative statement of the lesson. What new information do these passages provide?

## + tip.

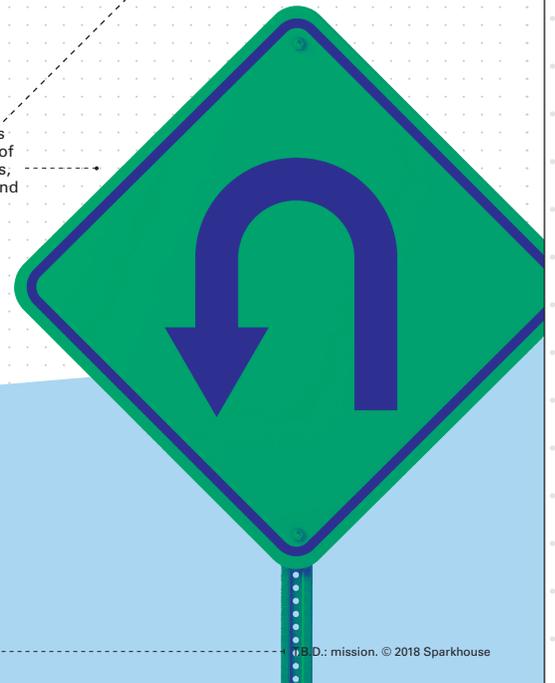
Paul's appeal to submit everything they do to the love of Christ is both a call to radical discipleship and a picture of radical community. All that Christ-followers do should be done in the name (or manner) of Christ and done for the sake of the community. We look to the virtues listed in verse 12 (compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience) as both the characteristics of our interactions with one another and also the characteristics of God.

## + Bible

Read Colossians 3:12-17 with a partner. Discuss:

- The first few verses in this passage are a picture of what Christian community can look like. What would change in your life if you felt connected to this kind of community?
- At the end of the passage, Paul writes, "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus..." What do you do with your words and deeds that shows Jesus to other people?

+ The Bible is full of stories of consequences, redirections, and redemption.



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## Lesson Notes

+ Other passages to discuss:

**Now read Genesis 50:1-20 together. Then discuss:**

- Joseph's brothers tried to harm him by selling him off into slavery when he was a teenager. And yet, this evil act led to something good in Joseph's life. How does this complicate the idea that "everything we do matters"?
- How does God factor into our decisions and actions? How could God redeem some of your bad decisions?

**Now that you've discussed the Bible passages, what needs to be on the wall?**

- + **With your partner, come up with two or three new ideas to share with the group.**
- + **When you're ready, put them on the wall. Extra points for dramatic, mic-drop reveals.**

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## + tip.

The actions of Joseph's brothers are inherently bad, and yet the event still turns out to be something positive in Joseph's (and eventually, his brothers') life. It's an oversimplification (and potentially dangerous) to suggest that God wants us to endure toxic people and relationships. However, believing that God can redirect or redeem painful situations is at the core of Christian theology. Does that complicate the idea that "everything you do matters"?

## + facilitate.

When students are finished, ask them to read the instructions in their student journals and come up with two or three new sticky notes for the wall.

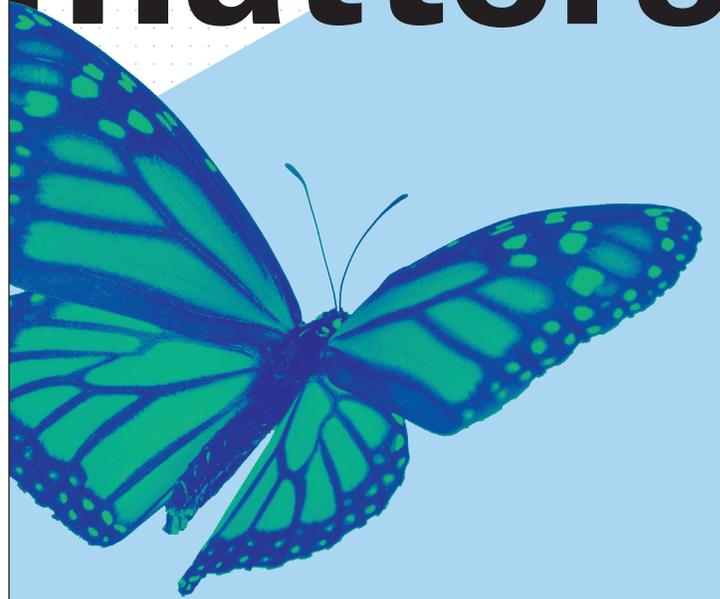
Have each group explain what they're adding to the wall and why.

## + facilitate.

Have students work through the first two questions in their journals. Encourage them to get up and study the wall—even to further organize and move the sticky notes, if they discover new connections.

When everybody is ready, it's time to tackle the provocative statement. This could mean rewriting the statement completely, adding words, subtracting words—you decide. Whatever statement you come up with needs to stand up against the work you've done during the lesson. It needs to be something students can say with integrity right now.

believe.  
**everything  
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## Lesson Notes

+ What's the new provocative statement?

+ Take a look at all the information on the wall. What are some common themes? Connections? Write two or three in the space provided.

+ Is there anything you'd add to the wall? Anything you'd take away? Write those here.

+ So... how do your actions affect the world? How would you rewrite the provocative statement? As a group, figure out what you can now say about mission.

### + tip.

For the final week, consider writing a provocative statement that encompasses all four lessons. How would your students articulate the last four weeks of discussion? If they had to say one definitive thing about mission, what would it be?

### + tip.

If your group is struggling with coming up with a new statement, suggest they use the following lead-ins:

If everything we do matters, then...

Our actions matter except...

Everything we do matters because...

## + facilitate.

Once students have a working provocative statement, they will brainstorm a way to “test” it in their daily lives.

This should be an activity that is achievable, but also asks students to risk a little more than they might usually.

Once students have figured out what they want to do, have them look at the other activities for the week and prepare for the end of the session.

## do.

### + Big Action

You’ve spent a lot of time thinking about your actions in the world. Now it’s time to put your ideas to the test. As a group, discuss how, when, and where you serve. What does it look like? What does it feel like? Use the tools on the next page to come up with one thing you can do this week.

How will you understand mission better this week?

## Lesson Notes

+ How can I support the Big Action this week?

**+ Looking Back**

Flip through your student journal and take a look at the three previous Big Actions you and your group have undertaken. Where were you effective? Where were there opportunities to improve? In the space below, reflect on what made you effective and what didn't, and then look at how you can apply it to this week.

**+ You Matter**

While your beliefs and actions *do* matter, they also don't define you completely. Whether it's grades, extracurricular activities, your family, or social media, it's important to remember that God's expectations for you are always cloaked in grace and love. In the space below, draw a picture or write a few words—anything—that can remind you of God's love this week.

**+ tip.**

We never know what students carry with them to lessons, or how they interpret theology or the Bible. This activity allows students a moment to remember that God's grace covers our mistakes, our missteps. And that's always enough.

## + facilitate.

Your students will use this page to center and collect their thoughts during the week. Remind them that they'll have an opportunity to share what they learned and experienced before you start your next series.

## + tip.

If you won't be doing a different T.B.D. study next week, plan to check in with your students informally to see how they felt about the week's Big Action, as well as the topic as a whole.

+ This week, take some time to think about your thoughts and questions on mission.

+ What I discovered...

+ What I'm still questioning...

+ And now I can honestly say...

## Lesson Notes

+ Who should I contact this week?