

Breathe

Module: PEOPLE WHO BREATHED

Lesson 3: THE EARLY CHURCH

Objectives:

- Students will distinguish the importance of practicing our faith within a community, as opposed to being a “lone wolf.”
- Students will understand the example of the early church described in Acts 2:42-47.

Materials Needed

- ☐ Vehicle(s) to push across a parking lot (or other heavy objects with seats)
- ☐ Copies of Acts 2:42-47 printed on paper (one per student)
- ☐ Different coloured markers or pencil crayons
- ☐ Blank paper

Minds On

Leader's Note: If you used Lesson 2 from this module last week about Daniel and prayer, and if it suits your group, you could start by asking students how they experienced prayer this past week, if they started any new habits.

Prompt: The last lesson was about the importance of spending regular time with God no matter what changes happen in your life. Today we are going to learn the importance of practicing our faith WITH OTHERS.

Leader's Note: Depending on the size of your group, this activity can be an illustration, or you can turn it into a competition. Obviously make safety your first priority and do not have this activity on a hill, near traffic, etc. No student should ever be in the path of an oncoming vehicle.

In your church parking lot, challenge a student (or leader) to push a vehicle from one side to the other. If they are able to do it, up the ante by having other students get in the vehicle to increase the difficulty.

Next, have a team (or multiple teams depending on your numbers and the space) attempt the same task. If you have a large group, two teams could race to push their vehicles across the parking lot. Each vehicle should be “driven” by an adult leader to steer and brake when the challenge has been completed. Students who are not physically able to participate can ride in the vehicle to experience the activity.

Leader's Note: If you do not have the space/resources to move a vehicle, you could get the same idea across by moving couches/stacks of chairs - something heavy enough that it requires a team of people.

After the activity, gather the group in the space where the rest of your study will take place and allow them to discuss the activity. Start with the following questions:

- Would it ever be possible to move a vehicle from one place to another all by yourself? (Even if you were really strong, you need someone to push and someone to steer and brake.)
- Is there anything like that in Christianity? How do we help each other do more together than we could ever do on our own?

Action

Distribute copies of the passage for this lesson to all your students and read (or have a volunteer read) Acts 2:42-47. Hand out different coloured markers or pencil crayons, and have the students work independently to circle or underline with one colour all of the activities that show HOW the believers did life together and use a different colour to mark the RESULTS of these activities.

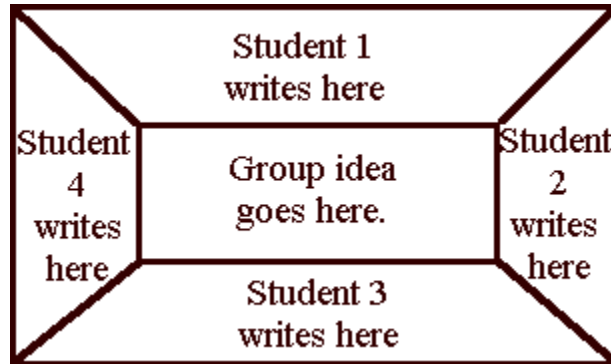
Based on what they circled/underlined, ask the large group:

- What did the believers do TOGETHER that they couldn't do on their own?
- What activities from this passage take place in our church/youth group?
- Would these activities be possible in another club or team? What, if anything, makes youth group unique?
- How might you react if a healing miracle happened at youth group?

Think/Pair/Share: Give students time to think about the following question for a minute or so, and then have them share their answer with a partner before discussing as a whole group. **Ask:** How would your friendships at youth group be different if you met together every day?

Consolidate/Debrief

Have students form groups of 3-5 people, and give each group enough pens for each person, and one blank piece of paper with instructions to draw a shape in the middle with lines coming off to create a section for each student in the group. (see below)



Each student will write their ideas in one outer section of the place mat, and when everyone is done, the group will rotate the paper to read what the person beside them wrote. They can add any ideas or thoughts they have, then turn the paper again and repeat until everyone has read each person's section. Then, as a group, they can discuss and boil down the main point/biggest idea and write it in the center shape on the page.

Have the students write their thoughts about, "What specific activities could help this youth group become more like the early church?" You may consider writing this question on a white board or piece of chart paper to help students remember the question and stay focused.

After the activity, have each group share what they wrote in the center of their page.

Breathe In: Have students reflect in prayer on this passage: Romans 12:4-5 "Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

Breathe Out: Have students plan to get together with at least one other student during this week to practice one of the activities from the passage (prayer, Bible study, sharing a

meal together, giving to the needy). As a leader, you can facilitate this by contacting a local community group and having an evening or Saturday planned for your students to help out.

Acts 2:42-47

“[The believers] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47

“[The believers] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”