

# **BREATHE: MESSAGE OF JESUS**

At the core of the Christian faith is the message of Jesus. Without a firm grasp of what Jesus came to proclaim, it's hard to live the life he has challenged his followers with. At times, the message of Jesus can get saturated and even distorted. Whether your students are new to the Christian faith or have been influenced by it since birth, it's good to review it occasionally to ensure everyone has the right understanding.

In this module, students will explore the message of Jesus in five key areas:

- what it means to be a follower of Christ
- why did Jesus come in the first place
- what is the resurrection (and what is its significance)
- what are the core teachings of Jesus
- what it means to be accepted by Jesus

May God help your students to see clearly what Jesus taught both in his words and his life so they may follow him boldly and confidently.

# Breathe

## **Module: Message of Jesus**

### **Lesson 1: What does it mean to be a Christ-follower?**

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to

- articulate the commitment and cost of being a follower
- communicate the sacrifice of the early followers

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Lined Paper
- ☐ Pens/pencils
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Copies of Appendix A

#### **Pre-lesson preparation:**

- Pre-select two students who will be “leaders” during the Minds On activity. It may be wise to choose students who are not likely to play tricks on others.
- Coach the two leaders to be creative in what they do, to be expressive, and to keep things moving.

- Give the second leader a flashlight and ask him/her to shine the flashlight on the followers' feet, the path, obstacles, etc. when the lights go out the second time. Instruct the second leader to keep the flashlight concealed until the lights go out when they are leading.

## **Minds On: (10 minutes)**

Explain to the students that you will be starting with an activity together. Instruct the students that when you say “go” they are to follow the first pre-selected leader in single file around the room as best they can without talking. As you begin, have the first leader take one minute to lead the rest of the students around the room. If needed, verbally encourage the students to follow the leader. Youth leaders should be encouraged to follow as well so that everyone is following. After a minute, tell the students to continue to follow the leader, no matter what and then turn the lights off. Try lights-off only for a few moments using your discretion. When you decide to end this “lights-off” experiment, turn them back on for a moment and let the students know you are changing leaders. Next, switch the leader and try the exercise again; however, when you turn the lights off this time ensure the second leader turns on their flashlight (if they forget). End after a minute or two.

When finished, have students sit in a circle (or sit together in some way) and ask some of the following questions:

1. How did you feel as the follower? How did you feel about the leader?
2. What did you like? Not like?
3. Could you see anything when the lights went out? Was it hard to find the leader in the dark? How did the flashlight change things in this activity?
4. What does it mean to be a follower? What words describe the role of a follower? What sorts of things do you “give up” as a follower?

## **Action: (45 minutes)**

As you finish the questions above, make mention of the transferrable ideas of being a follower in this game and how the students described it, to being a follower of Jesus. (e.g. You commit to going where the leader goes and doing what the leader does. You give up going the way you think you should go on your own.)

Stay in your large group for a moment, and ask the students:

- What else does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?
- How do they feel about committing to go where he sends them?
- What do they commit to doing for Jesus?

Take a few responses for each question– by raised hand.

Ask them if they know of any examples from the Bible of people who followed Jesus?

Can they name any of Jesus first followers (or disciples)?

(Note: The disciples of Jesus were: Simon-Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, another James, Thaddeus (in one of the Gospels Thaddeus is substituted with Jude/Judas), another Simon, Judas Iscariot.

If you have a large group, divide your students into groups of 3 or 4. Divide them up by month of birth (e.g. January birthdays go together, February birthdays go together, etc.) If you have an excess number of students born in the same month divide that month into the 1-15 and 16-30/31. Give each group a printout of the questions. Have each group select one person to look up this passage and read it aloud to their group: Luke 5:27-32. Once they read this passage, have them discuss the questions on the handout:

1. What did Levi (Matthew) give up to follow Jesus?
2. What do you think Levi gained in following Jesus?

3. What do you think it meant for Levi to follow Jesus? (Prompter: What changes would it have made to his life inside and out? How would his life be different from that moment on?)
4. Re-read verses 31 and 32. Why do you think Jesus makes this comment? What does it mean for us as people who he came to save? (e.g. We need to be willing to admit that we are not “healthy”, that we sin and need our doctor, Jesus. When we are sick, we admit that we need to go to the doctor to get well. In the same way, Jesus came for the “sick” sinner. He came to save those who know they need saving. We need to admit that we need saving.)
5. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus? If you already do, what makes you a follower of Christ? If you haven’t made a decision yet, what do you think it might mean for you to start following Jesus?

Leader’s Note:

The last question may feel a little loaded for small groups if there isn’t a leader involved with the students. If you feel it would be helpful to your group, have students transition from the small groups they are in, to pairs. By pairing with someone they are comfortable with, they may feel more open to share their answers aloud.

Together read John 8:12. Take another moment to “flashback” to the Minds on activity. Take just a moment to recap the conversation you had around that activity. How did the flashlight change the activity? In the same way, how does having Jesus as the Light who lights our way in the darkness change our lives?

As you highlight some of the students’ responses of what it means to truly follow Christ, have another leader hand out a pen and paper to each student for the next section.

Prompt:

With that in mind, let’s move to our Breathe In/Breath Out segment.

## **Consolidate/Debrief: (20 minutes)**

### **Breathe In**

While students take some time to do this Breathe In, play some worship music, either live or on a player to help set a reflective tone. Give each student a sheet of lined paper and pen. Allow them some time to write a prayer to God based on the discussion. Tell them to reflect on what it means to be lead by Jesus. What do they want to say to God today about following Jesus? Remind them that prayer can be communicating with God, not just requests.

#### **Leader's Note:**

Ensure that your leaders are still very present for the Breathe In activity. Just because students are working independently shouldn't mean that your leaders remove themselves. Encourage leaders to interact with students and nudge them along without being a distraction. If students need a helping hand, encourage leaders to buddy up with students and ask prompting questions around how to write a prayer. Simple suggestions like: "What do you want to say to God? What do you want to ask God about being lead by Jesus? What do you want to understand better?"

### **Breathe Out**

On the other side of the paper, have students write at the top of the page: "This is how I follow Christ every day" or "These are the questions I have about following Christ". Have them list the ways that they follow Christ practically or the questions they have about what it means to follow Christ (this could be for seekers or Christian kids). Ask a few prompting questions if they need them: How do you follow Jesus at school? How do you follow Jesus at home? OR What could it look like to follow Jesus at school? What could it mean for your life to follow Jesus with all you are? Have them take home the paper and post it somewhere meaningful to them. Tell them to add to it helpful thoughts throughout their week, and/or, connect with a wise friend or trusted adult to discuss their questions.

## Appendix A

### **Message of Jesus: What Does it Mean to be a Christ-Follower?** Group Questions

Select a reader to look up and read aloud Luke 5:27-32 to your group. After they are done reading, have one person read one question at a time, and as a group talk about your answers.

1. What did Levi (Matthew) give up to follow Jesus?
2. What do you think Levi gained in following Jesus?
3. What do you think it meant for Levi to follow Jesus? (Prompter: What changes would it have made to his life inside and out? How would his life be different from that moment on?)
4. Re-read verses 31 and 32. Why do you think Jesus makes this comment? What does it mean for us as people who he came to save?  
(Cheat notes: We need to be willing to admit that we are not “healthy”, that we sin and need our doctor, Jesus. When we are sick, we admit that we need to go to the doctor to get well. In the same way, Jesus came for the “sick” sinner. He came to save those who know they need saving. We need to admit that we need saving.)
5. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus? If you already do, what makes you a follower of Christ? If you haven’t made a decision yet, what do you think it might mean for you to start to follow Jesus?



# Breathe

## **Module: Message of Jesus**

### **Lesson 2: Why did Jesus come to earth?**

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

- identify key elements in the overarching story of the Bible
- modify and relate a story for a specific audience
- better answer some questions that their friends might have about Jesus

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pen/pencil and paper
- ☐ Copies of “Why Jesus Came” (Appendix A)
- ☐ Two or three children’s stories (e.g. a Robert Munsch book, Dr. Seuss, something specifically for young children)

#### **Pre-lesson preparation:**

- Print off the sheets for the Action section
- Pre-set Bibles in all four corners of the room you regularly meet in.

## **Minds On: (15 minutes)**

Have students split into two groups: males and females. Give one volunteer in each group a storybook. Instruct them that they will be reading to the group of students in their group as if those students were three years old (just make sure students aren't acting too silly being "3 years old").

After both groups are done their book, ask:

- What do you do differently when you read to a child?
  - What do you do differently than if you were reading to your mom or dad?
  - How does your voice change? What different things do you choose to do that you might not do if you were just reading to yourself? Why do you suppose you do those things?
- If you were reading to an elderly person, might you read the book differently? How?
- Now imagine you wanted to communicate with someone who spoke a different language? Who might you send? (Try to find someone who speaks that language!)
- What if you wanted to communicate with a group of horses? Would you send a pig? (No! You'd send a horse.) Or what about a gaggle of geese? Would you send a lobster? (No, you'd send a goose.)
- Now imagine you were hoping to clearly communicate a message to a group of people, who would you send? (A person - Prompt: That's one reason why God sent His son, Jesus, to the earth. Jesus was fully human, and fully God, and He came to the earth to live like a human, to experience all the ups and downs of personhood, and to share God's message of love, forgiveness, and grace with all people.)

## **Action: (40 minutes)**

Tell the students that in the next few minutes, they will present the story of the Bible from Creation to Jesus. Remind students not to move until you say “go”. Break your students into four groups by designating them according to height, use your best knowledge of the differences in height of the group but do something like – under 4’10 will stand in that corner, 4’11-5’1 will stand in that corner, 5’2-5’5 will stand in that corner, 5’6+ will stand in that corner. Let them know that each group has a Bible –pre-set in each corner of the room. Tell each group they will have approximately 20 minutes to do the following:

- Read the passage.
- Write a few sentences on their detail page summarizing the main action of the passage.
- Ask you any questions about their passage
- Prepare a 2-3 minute play

The play can have a narrator or only actions or dialogue – whatever the group chooses. Assign each group one of the following roles (and handout the “detail cards” to the appropriate group):

- Creation – This group should clearly convey that God created the world and everything in it; what He created was GOOD and flawless. Point them to Genesis 1 to read together.
- The fall – This group will read together Genesis 3:1-19. They will show that Adam and Eve sinned (doing what God clearly told them not to do) and created consequences for us all. That the “good” world God created was marred by sin. Part of that marring by sin was the disconnection that happened between God and people.
- Israel & the Attempt to Redeem – This group will cover all of Israel’s history! And because that is so lengthy, point them to Acts 13:16-23 to help shorten this history. (Also Hebrews 8:7-13 may also be helpful.) The main point for them to get across is that God set up at plan for Israel to try to follow in hopes of

reconnecting them with Him, but the Israelites could not follow it. They continued to fail God because of their sinful nature.

- Jesus: Our Redeemer – This group will tell how Jesus came to reconnect us with God: to show us God's love, teach us how to live, how he paid the penalty for our sin and granted us forgiveness, and to ushered in God's kingdom. They will check out: John 3:16-21, Acts 13:28-29, and 1 John 3:16.

Have the students present their plays in order. Fill in any blanks that they leave out from the groups' detail cards.

### **Consolidate/Debrief: (20 minutes)**

#### **Breathe In:**

Take some time to read together Acts 17:16-32. Make a connection to when they were reading to/being read to as three-year-olds.

Prompt:

Paul does something similar; he presents the Good News message in a way that his listeners can easily understand. For example, he points to the statue they have to the Unknown god, and he makes that God known to them. He makes reference to something their poets have said – he links to their own culture.

Ask the students if there is anything they would like to share that has helped them to understand Jesus better, or on the other hand what do they wish could happen so they could understand the message of Jesus better? (Perhaps share something that has helped you, as the leader: Was it an illustration, a film clip, a metaphor or an act of service?) Give students a moment to reflect and then ask them turn to a partner beside them to answer. Once they have done this, ask if there are two or three who would like to share their answer with the whole group.

**Breathe Out:**

Have students practice explaining why Jesus came to earth. Do this by pairing them up into discussion partners (partner by numbering 1-(half the number of your group), and 1-half the number of your group again. Have the ones go with ones and the twos with twos. And so on. Have students answer these questions with their partner:

If someone asked you who Jesus is, how would you reply?

If someone asked why he came, what would you say?

How does Paul's example that we just read help to shape one way to share this message?

Can you think of others?

## Appendix A

### CARD 1: CREATION

This group will read together Genesis 1. They will then explain the process of creation, day-by-day, and convey that God created the world and everything in it. What He created was GOOD and flawless.

### CARD 2: THE FALL

This group will read together Genesis 3:1-19. They will show that Adam and Eve sinned (doing what God clearly told them not to do) creating consequences for us all and scarring our relationship with God.

### CARD 3: ISRAEL & THE ATTEMPT TO REDEEM

This group will cover all of Israel's history! And because that is so lengthy, point them to read Acts 13-17-23 to help shorten this history. Hebrews 8:7-13 may also be helpful. The main point for them to get across is that God set up a plan for Israel to try to follow in hopes of reconnecting them with Him, but the Israelites could not follow it. They continued to fail God because of their sinful nature. The old covenant was not working. They needed a new covenant.

### CARD 4: JESUS

Jesus: Our Redeemer – This group will show how Jesus came to show us God's love, teach us how to live, pay the penalty for our sin and grant us forgiveness, and to usher in God's kingdom. They will check out: John 3:16-21, Acts 13:28-29, and 1John 3:16

# Breathe

## Module: Message of Jesus

### Lesson 3: Jesus' Death and Resurrection

#### Objectives:

Students will be able to

- identify reasons for hope we have in Christ
- navigate to places in their Bible that talk about the death and resurrection of Jesus outside of the Gospels

#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pen/pencil and paper
- ☐ Knee-high nylon stockings (1/student)
- ☐ Chia, alfalfa, onion or other easily sprouted seed
- ☐ Potting soil
- ☐ Googly-eyes (2/student)
- ☐ Black marker
- ☐ Hot glue gun
- ☐ Paper bowls (1/student)
- ☐ Additional face-decorating items (optional)

**Pre-lesson preparation:**

- Prior to students arriving, be sure to lay out all of the supplies and create an area where a mess can easily be cleaned up.



## **Minds On: (25 minutes)**

Once you have all students gathered they will each have the opportunity to make their very own “Chia Pet” style planter that we’ll call “Hope Heads”. Begin by telling them that we are going to have fun creating a chia pet. Perhaps if you have a chia pet, bring it in, or a picture of one to jog their memories as to what it is. You will have to give specific directions as to how to do it. You could also print off the instructions and let the students be self-directed, if you would like to give them the freedom to do so.

The instructions are as follows:

1. Wet the nylon
2. Place chia seed in the bottom.
3. Add in enough potting soil to give shape to the “head”.
4. Knot the end of the nylon to hold it together. The knot is the “neck”.
5. Cut the remainder of nylon off if desired.
6. Hot glue eyes.
7. Create mouth and other features as desired.
8. When finished, place in paper bowl and lightly water top. Use a marker to write their names on the bowls.
9. Be sure to let students know they need to continue to water their “head” each day to watch it grow.

Once students are finished, ask students what they hope will happen with the seeds in their “heads”? (Simple answer: They will grow.)

Leader’s Note:

Be sure to touch on the fact that this is just a metaphor. If their seeds don’t grow, this doesn’t reflect their walk as Christians, it just means they probably don’t have a green thumb!

Prompt:

How do we know what to hope for with our heads? How do we know that the chia will grow? (We know that chia comes from chia seed. We trust that it will grow if we take care of it.)

Finish off by asking the students what it means to hope? What is hope? (Students will have different responses and that's okay.)

### **Action: (35 minutes)**

Have students open their Bibles to Luke 23. Feel free to read through the story, but allow the students to recall as much of the crucifixion story as much as they can, prompting where necessary.

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Break students into three groups by numbering each student 1, 2, or 3. Ask the students to wait for your "Go" signal, but indicate that the "Ones" will sit in one location, the "Twos" in another, etc. Then say "Go". Assign each group a verse to look up, and to answer the following question "Why did Jesus need to die? What was the reason that he had to go to the cross and how does this verse help you to understand that?"

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Group 1: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Group 2: 1 Peter 2:22-25

Group 3: Romans 8:3-4

(Simple answers could include: to take on sin for us; to overcome death; to lay down his life for ours; or you may have some kids who are keeners who talk about big ideas like atonement or even the idea of the old covenant and coming of the new covenant; also because we could not do it ourselves.) Give the students some time to read the verse and discuss the questions. Take a few seconds listening to each group. You can add comments, or redirect student thinking if necessary, and try to help more quiet kids to

participate by asking them if there is anything they would like to add. Have each group share their verse with the rest of the students and give their reasoning to the whole group.

Prompt:

If that is why Jesus had to die, why do you think he had to rise again? What importance does that have in the story? (Take time to allow students to work through this idea as a larger group. Point them back to the idea of hope. If Jesus were to have died and not come back, we may not have realized or known the full power that was Jesus as the Son of God. Also, our hope in the last resurrection is important in the resurrection of Christ.)

While considering this as a large group, have students turn to 1 Corinthians 15:13-23. Get one volunteer to read this out loud.

Ask them what significance this verse has for the discussion. What is our hope in this? How is this hope being lived out now? (Our hope is that we have life in Christ and that we can look towards being united with Him for all eternity. We are living in a time of being connected with Christ without necessarily having full presence or understanding of this connection – our hope is moving into the reality of the full presence of Christ.)

## **Consolidate/Debrief: Approximately 10 minutes**

### **Breathe In**

Have students get their “heads” and set them in front of them. Read together 1 Corinthians 15:35-51. As students reflect on this and the hope of eternity with Christ, have them write one word or phrase on the paper bowl their plant is in to remind them of this hope we have in Christ. Challenge them to use their “hope head” as a reminder of the hope we have in Christ each time that they see it.

**Breathe Out**

Ask students to consider how the hope they have in Christ affects their lives and their actions. Who and how they interact with others? How is this hope reflected to the world in your everyday life?

# Breathe

## **Module: Message of Jesus**

### **Lesson 4: The Core Teaching of Jesus**

#### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to

- identify the difference between doing something out of love and doing something because of law
- tell the reasons why Jesus focused on love over law

#### **Materials Needed:**

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Paper (construction or cardstock)
- ☐ Paints of various colours
- ☐ Paintbrushes
- ☐ Cups for water
- ☐ Garbage bags (if desired)
- ☐ Paper towels

**Pre-lesson preparation:**

- Before the session begins, tape a line of masking tape down the middle of your meeting room OR if there is an obvious line in the carpet or flooring of your meeting space, use that.
- Read over the three passages in Matthew used for this lesson. Be knowledgeable about and familiar with what they say before the activity begins.
- Pre-set a creative area/station for the activity time. Set out paper, paint, brushes, and cups for water. Take appropriate precautions such as garbage bags or drop sheets to cover carpet, paper towels to clean mess, etc.

## **Minds On: (15 minutes)**

When all the students have arrived, explain that you are going to begin with an activity. Have the students stand in single file on the masking tape or pre-existing line. Explain that you will read different statements, and the students must decide if this person in the situation is acting out of choice (love) or because they must (law). Point to the right side of the line and tell the students to step to that side if they think the answer is “love”, point to the other side of the line and say to step there if they think the answer is “law”. Read the various statements below and pause as students pick which side they are to stand on. After each statement, ask “Love or Law?” When everyone has chosen a side, tell them which side it did represent (in case there were any discrepancies), and why you feel it belongs on that side. Some students might disagree with the “right” answer. If so, pause for a moment to discuss why they disagree. If you feel they have a good reason, highlight it. If they continue to disagree, follow up with that student once the Minds On activity is finished. (Feel free to create your own as well.)

### **Statements:**

- I did my homework so that I wouldn't get in trouble with my teacher. (LAW)
- I set the table when no one asked me to. (LOVE)
- I never skateboard at the mall, because of the signs that say no to. (LAW)
- A few of my friends started to watch a restricted movie. No one would have found out if I watched it, but I would have known. It didn't seem okay so I decided to leave. (LOVE)
- I started to read my Bible so I could learn about Jesus. (LOVE)
- I pray because I feel like I am supposed to. (LAW)
- I saw a homeless person the other day and gave her the money I was going to use for hot chocolate. (LOVE)
- My parents have been really busy, so I made lunches for my brother or sister for school. (LOVE)
- I take out the garbage because that's what I get an allowance for. (LAW)
- I try to be nice to all people, even the ones who are mean to me. (LOVE)

- I don't download pirated music off of the internet because I'm afraid to get caught. (LAW)
- I told my parents that my brother was doing something he shouldn't because I didn't want him to get hurt. (LOVE)
- I go to church every Sunday, because the bible says to keep the Sabbath holy (LAW)
- I had to choose between spending time with my sister and finishing my homework. I chose my homework. (Could be LAW or LOVE – have students comment on why this could be either!)

Once you have finished your list, walk down the line, and pair the kids 2 by 2. Still on the line, tell students to think up one example themselves. Have them share their example with the group responding as before. The pair providing the example will tell the group if they stood on the right side or the wrong side.

### **Action: (45 minutes)**

Students will be looking at portions of the Sermon on the Mount, and what is considered the core teaching of Jesus. Walk down the line, and number each pair 1, 2 or 3 so you have 3 groups of pairs, passing one bible to each pair. Have all the 1s put up their hands, then 2s, and 3s to make sure no group was missed, and that everyone knows where they belong. Tell the students that each group number will be reading a different Bible passage, and they need to decide what part of the passage is law, and what part is love. Tell the students to wait until all the passages have been announced, then they can sit down to read and discuss it with their partner.

Prompt:

Jesus takes the teachings of the law that the Jewish people had known for years and years, and he zeros in on what is really at the core of things. Jesus challenges us to



choose love over law. He points to motives – the “why” of what we do – over the simple rule that is given.

1. Matthew 5:21-22
2. Matthew 5:38-42
3. Matthew 5:43-44

Tell the students to read their passage by alternating verses with their partner, and to discuss what part is law, and what part is love. Give them a few minutes.

#### Coaching Tip: Make Your Rounds

While students are reading the passages, make rounds. Help them answer the question of what is the love portion and what is the law portion. Be sure they have a clear understanding of what this means. Continue to make your rounds and encourage their painting. Note to students how love is other-centred.

Tell the students they will be creating a poster, with the left side representing the LAW portion of the passage, and the right representing the LOVE portion. Tell them to wait for your signal to “Go”, but instruct them that with their partner they will be going to the “art” station, but to leave their Bible where they were having the discussion. Tell students to divide their page in half and on one side paint their interpretation of the “law” portion of the verse, and on the other side of the page, paint their interpretation of the “love” portion of the verse. Let them know that stick figures are welcomed, and that their interpretation of what things should look like can be as creative or plain as they would like. Once you have given these instructions, ask if there are any questions, then say “Go”.

#### Leader’s Note:

Some students do not feel they are as creatively inclined, so make sure you make them aware that there will be no judging on artistic ability, but the focus is on the interpretation they make of the passage they are reading.

Once the students have had ample time to paint their pictures, have the students share the picture with their partner. Ask the partners to provide feedback on what they like about the interpretation. After each group has had a chance to share with their partner, ask a few of them if they would like to share their pictures with the whole group. Once sharing is done, continue by prompting: How would you describe what it means to do things out of love instead of out of law? Why is it important for us to be able to take these ideas and apply them to our lives?

You may want to remind students that the Bible does not have a firm law for every possible thing in life. We must try to understand the heart of Jesus' teachings and be able to apply that to our lives.)

As students are considering this, have them along with their partner find another set of partners to group with. Give each group another passage to look up:

- Matthew 6:1-4
- Matthew 6:5-6
- Matthew 6:16-18
- Matthew 6:19-21

Ask them to talk in their groups about how love is at the core of each verse. What is the main idea in the verse that they read? How is it linked to love over law?

Leader's Note:

If you do not have enough students to cover each passage, consider keeping your students in pairs or assigning one version to each student, or cover one passage yourself as an example to the students, and assign the remaining.

## **Consolidate/Debrief: (15 minutes)**

### **Breathe In**

Prompt:

Jesus' teachings highlight love over law. He challenges us all to go beyond the law and to rather act out of love. Love puts Christ first. Love puts others before us.

Read together Matthew 6:9-13. You should read it aloud or have one of your leaders read it aloud and ask students to listen to the words.

Prompt:

This is called the Lord's Prayer. It is how Jesus taught people how to pray.

Read it a second time and ask the students to join their hearts in prayer with you as you make it a prayer. Challenge students to return to this prayer on their own through the week. Discuss as a group how love is at the center of this prayer. You could open the discussion by asking the question, "How do we see God's love for us in this prayer? How do you see our love for God in this prayer?"

### **Breathe Out**

Prompt:

Practice choosing love over law this week. Find something that acts as a prompter to remind you. For example, every time someone says, "I'm tired," consider asking them if there is anything you can do for them. Or, every time you see a \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank with your own signal), go find someone you can help. Or, when you are asked for help, do it without grumbling and complete the task to the best of your ability.

# Breathe

## Module: Message of Jesus

### Lesson 5: Face-to-Face with Jesus and Fully Accepted

#### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- identify how Jesus' acceptance was shown in 3 different Bible stories
- identify something in their lives that holds them back from feeling accepted

#### Materials Needed:

- ☐ Bibles (1/student required)
- ☐ Paper cut into 1/8s (1/student)
- ☐ Lined paper (1 sheet/student)
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Printout (3 pages in total)
- ☐ Garbage can

#### Pre-lesson preparation:

- Set up chairs in a circle for all students and leaders minus one (for the Minds On)
- Set up three separate stations (use Appendix A) with chairs where you will:
  - Station 1: Printout, page 1 taped to wall or chair, stack of lined paper, pens
  - Station 2: Printout, page 2 taped to wall or chair, stack of lined paper, pens
  - Station 3: Printout, page 3 taped to wall or chair, stack of lined paper, pens

## **Minds On: (15 minutes)**

### Game: Guilty Pleasures

Let the students know that when you say “go” they will head towards the chairs set up in the large circle. Everyone will take a seat with the exception of one person who will not have a chair. The person who doesn’t have a chair will stand in the middle. They will go first. This is an activity of admission and acceptance.

Tell the students they are going to play a game called “Guilty Pleasures”. The person in the middle will share something mildly embarrassing or nerdy about his or herself that they think someone else might share too, for example, if you love My Little Pony, you will say “I have a guilty pleasure... I still love “My Little Pony”. Everyone who has the same guilty pleasure will stand up, and try to find a different chair. The person who misses a chair has to share their “Guilty Pleasure”. If only one person stands, just switch spots with the person in the middle. If no one stands, the person in the middle has to go again.

The students who do not “like” the same things, also have a role to play. These students have two responsibilities: 1. they are not to make fun of what people say, and 2. they are to cheer for the admission of nerdiness. (e.g. Person in the Middle: “I still eat Dunkaroos”. Students: Woot! Yeah! Wahoo!) Have a couple of leaders, or yourself, go first to set the standard of “nerdiness” or “embarrassment”. Monitor the activity yourself and play it as long as the students are still enjoying it. Help students with some prompters if they are having trouble thinking of anything. (e.g. Is there a TV show that you still watch that you watched when you were really young? Do you still sleep with a teddy bear?)

When you feel as though the activity has served its purpose (probably no longer than 7-8 minutes), stop the activity and bring the students to the normal meeting area or set-up.

Ask a couple of questions:

1. Was anyone surprised by anything that you said that someone else agreed with?

2. How did you feel about yourself when someone agreed with you?
3. Why do you think it is important for us to feel accepted?

Allow the students to explore these questions briefly.

Prompt:

We all want to be accepted. We all want to be a part of something. We all want to know that we are loved for who we are. With Jesus, we always have that love and acceptance.

### **Action: (50 minutes)**

Prompt:

In a few minutes, we will have the opportunity to look at the stories of people who came face-to-face with Jesus and experienced his acceptance despite all else.

Leader's Note:

Students will have the chance to address something that is holding them back from being willing to experience full acceptance from Christ – not because of Jesus, but because of their own unwillingness to forgive themselves.

Tell students that when you say “go” they will move to the station you point them to. At each station, students will find the story in their own Bible, read it, and jot down their answers to the questions posted on the worksheet on the lined paper provided. Tell students that they will use their lined paper to answer questions from all stations, but that they do not have to answer every question provided.

Station 1: John 8:1-11 Adulterous Woman

Station 2: John 4:1-30 Woman at the well

Station 3: Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus

With your three pre-set stations, divide students into three groups: light-coloured shirts, dark-coloured shirts, and bright-coloured shirts and send one group to each station.

#### Coaching Tip: Self-Pacing

Students will be taking their time through each station and pacing themselves. If a student only finishes one station, that is okay. If a student finishes all three, that is okay. Let them know this is not a race, nor do they have to get to all three. Allow your students to go at their own rate. As students do this, have all leaders interspersed throughout the stations. Allow students to ask questions to the leaders, but otherwise, students will be moving from station to station on their own. The students will have 35-40 minutes to work through the different stations on their own.

Once your time is up have students gather back together. Ask them to take a moment to think about one idea that struck them most out of the stories, partner up with a friend (allow them to choose) and share that one thing. Once they share with their partner, have them come back together as a large group. See if any volunteers would be comfortable sharing in the larger group and perhaps take two or three answers. Ask the group if they wrote down anything that was surprising to them, challenged them, or that they thought about for the first time today.

#### Prompt:

Jesus encountered people from different walks and different backgrounds. Even though many were considered bad people and sinners, Jesus saw them as children of God. He looked past how others saw them to how God sees them. Jesus even loved those who had a hard time loving themselves. He embraced the unloved and loved those who no one else loved. He still does. Jesus loves each of us fully and completely. He accepts us as we are.

## **Consolidate/Debrief: (10 minutes)**

### **Breathe In**

Have students sit in a circle. Place a garbage can in the centre of the circle.

Prompt:

As we think about the different people we read about tonight, and the different ways that people felt blocked from being really accepted by God, consider yourself for a moment. On the small pieces of paper provided, write down a way or ways that you feel blocked from being fully accepted by God. (e.g. I feel like God can't love me because of the things I've done. I feel like God can't love me because of the things I think about. I feel like God can't love me because I feel like no one can.)

Pass out a blank piece of paper and pen to each student, and give them a few minutes to write down a response. Take a moment and have the students reflect on what they wrote. Pray together. Pray that each student would no longer feel a barrier to God. Pray that they would feel loved and fully accepted. Once you finish praying, have the students tear up or crumple up their paper and throw it into the garbage.

### **Breathe Out**

As students head out into their week, challenge them to show the same grace to others. Challenge them to take the things that they hold against other people, tear them up, and throw them out (metaphorically, of course!). As students go to school, home, or anywhere in-between, encourage them to see others the way Jesus sees them, and. urge them to get rid of the excuses or reasons they make for not loving others.



## **Station 1: The Adulterous Woman**

**READ:** John 8:1-11

**WRITE:** Your thoughts to the following questions:

1. Was there anything in this story that you read this time that you didn't notice before?
2. How do you think the woman felt when Jesus spoke to the people who tried to have her stoned? When he spoke to her?
3. Have you ever been stuck in a situation when people were judging you for something? How did it feel?
4. Have you ever been in a situation when you were judging someone else? How do you think they felt?
5. How do you think this face-to-face encounter with Jesus affected the woman's life?

**THINK:** Is there a situation in your life that you feel like Jesus wants to tell you that he doesn't condemn you, and to "Go and sin no more"?

**PRAY:** If you had an answer to the THINK section, pray about that. Hand over that sin to God.

If you didn't have an answer to the THINK section, pray about the times when you have judged other people. Ask God to help you to not be so quick to judge and to be filled with love instead.

## **Station 2: The Woman at the Well**

**READ:** John 4:1-30

**WRITE:** Your thoughts to the following questions:

1. Was there anything in this story that you read this time that you didn't notice before?
2. Jesus knew all about this woman, and made it clear to her that he did, but he did not judge her. Why do you think Jesus pointed out her sins to her?
3. Jesus took time to talk to this woman that others probably overlooked quite often. (He even took the time to tell her his secret: "I AM the Messiah!") Why do you think he did that?
4. How do you think this face-to-face encounter with Jesus changed this woman's life?

**THINK:** Have you ever had a time when you overlooked someone else because you thought that they were not "cool" enough (or smart enough, old enough, young enough, pretty enough, etc.)?

OR

Have you ever experience a time when you didn't feel like you were "cool" enough (or smart enough, old enough, pretty enough, worthy, etc.)?

**PRAY:** Take time to pray that God would help you to not measure up people this way (including yourself!), but instead, to see each person as a child of God – a bro or a sis!

### Station 3: Zacchaeus

**READ:** Luke 19: 1-10

**WRITE:** Your thoughts to the following questions:

1. Was there anything in this story that you read this time that you didn't notice before?
2. Just for fun: Do you know the words to *Zacchaeus Was a Wee Little Man*? If you do, when the group gets back together, you and others who know it can sing it for everyone else!
3. Zacchaeus was called "a notorious sinner" by the people. How do you think that made him feel?
4. Despite the fact that Zacchaeus had wrongly taken money from people, Jesus is his guest and shows him love and acceptance. How do you think this face-to-face encounter with Jesus changed Zacchaeus?

**THINK:** Have you ever labeled someone kind of like that? Maybe as a loser? Dirty? A jerk? How do you think that affects a person? Have you ever been labeled in this way? How does it make you feel?

**PRAY:** Take time to pray for people who have been labeled wrongly. Ask God to help you help others not feel restricted to those labels. Pray that God allows you to help others encounter him face-to-face.