

Breathe

Module: CULTIVATING INTIMACY IN COMMUNITY

Lesson 4: CELEBRATION

Objectives:

- Students will identify reasons for celebrating.
- Students will learn how to celebrate well when the opportunity arises.

Materials Needed

- ☐ A journal for each member of the group
- ☐ Pens

Minds On

Ask everyone to close their eyes and picture a celebration they have been at, either recently or that they remember as being really great.

Ask: What do you see?

What can you hear?

Do you smell anything?

Is there anything to touch or taste?

How do you feel?

After everyone has had time to consider these things, have students quickly break into groups of 3 and share their answers. After all have shared, ask if there were any elements that were common to everyone in the group?

Action

Prompt: Jesus' life begins with joyous celebration: "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'" (Luke 2:10) And Jesus spoke about joy even towards the very end of his life: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." (John 15:11). Joy is clearly something that is important to the story of scripture and to Jesus himself. The church does not always do a great job of focusing on joy and celebration, but hopefully we can change some of that together!

Break into small groups of 3-7 students per group. Give one of the following passages to each group to read and study:

- Exodus 15:19-21 (If you only have one group I would recommend using this one)
- 2 Samuel 6:12-23
- Psalm 150 (If you only have 2 groups I would suggest not doing this one)

Each group can answer the same questions together after reading their passage, so you may want to have them displayed in some way:

What sort of celebrating is happening in this passage?

What reason, if any, is given for celebrating?

How do others in the story respond to the person(s) celebrating?

How do you think you might respond to this celebration if you were witnessing it?

How do you think this celebration might go over in your church?

Come back together into one big group (if you are a large gathering you could have 3 groups meet, one of each, rather than all meeting together), and have a spokesperson from each group share briefly what occurred in the passage his or his group read.

Ask:

What reasons are presented in the Bible for celebrating?

Do you take opportunities to celebrate each week? month? day?

If you were to celebrate on your own what might you do? What about in a group?

Why do you think celebrating is important?

Prompt (if applicable): God wants us to know that He loves each of us. He wants us to see the ways that he is demonstrating this and he wants us to be filled with joy as Jesus says in John 15:10, not with sadness and fear and guilt. The discipline of celebration teaches us to take stock of what we can be thankful for, and then give God praise in response. God longs to turn our mourning into dancing, our lunch breaks and coffee breaks into thanksgiving and praise breaks. The discipline of celebration reminds that God is present and active in our lives, and helps us to physically and emotionally respond to that joyous reality, teaching us to remind others of this same truth in their own lives.

Consolidate/Debrief

Hand out journals. Write on a white board, chalk board, chart paper, etc. the following questions and invite students to answer them in their journals:

What is one thing that God has done in your life recently that you could celebrate?

What is one thing that someone you know has accomplished that you could celebrate with them?

Why should we bother to celebrate?

While students still have their journals, ask them to consider the following questions:

Breathe in: Are you celebrating God? Are you experiencing joy in your life?

Breathe out: How are you going to celebrate this week?

Leader's Note: If it seems and appropriate (and practical), consider ending with a time of celebration. Maybe singing together as a group or having some snacks or playing some games....something distinct from your group's typical "youth night"

And/Or:

Consider planning a celebration together for the church or for someone particular in your group or church for God (a concert of celebration where individuals bring forth stories, music, art, etc. in celebration of God can be an amazing and moving time together for a youth group).