

# **Yesterday. Today. Forever.**

## **Module: Telling The Story**

### **Lesson 1: Living With Consistently Contagious Faith**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will learn about Jesus' example of contagious faith.
- Students will see that they can tell the story of God's love through contagious faith.
- Students will understand that contagious faith should be consistent.

#### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ A piece of paper with 5-10 celebrity pictures (both positive and negative role models) on it per group
- ☐ Min. 1 piece of paper per student
- ☐ 1 pen per student
- ☐ Reflective music
- ☐ Flip chart and markers
- ☐ 1 half-sheet of paper per student
- ☐ Lots of post-it notes
- ☐ Names of each student on a strip of paper

## Minds On

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Provide each group with a sheet of paper with the pictures of 5-10 celebrities that they would know. Ask them to put them in order of who they find most appealing to least appealing. Each group should be prepared to report their reasons for their order.

Leader's note: To further discussion, you may want to consider using the following questions:

- How difficult was it for the group to decide unanimously?
- Do all the groups agree with each other?

**Prompt:** Whether we realize it or not, we place everyone we meet or seen on this scale of most appealing to least appealing. Some of those most appealing are people we tend to look up to, maybe even see as role models. Whether consciously or unconsciously we will try to imitate them in the way we live our life because of a particular skill they have, their personality or an action that they do. Whatever it is, there is something about that person that draws us in. They are, in a sense, contagious. In this lesson, we're going to see what exactly makes a faith contagious.

Returning to their groups, have students discuss the following question: "Are people drawn to Christianity in today's society the same way they were drawn to Jesus? Why or Why not?" Each group should be prepared to give their answer to the larger group. Afterwards, have 2-3 groups give their answers and see if other groups agree or disagree.

## Action

Read Mark 3:7-8 together.

**Prompt:** When you look at the life of Jesus you cannot ignore that people were drawn to Him. The Pharisees could not leave Him alone. The sick fought to meet with Him. The

down and out's wanted to follow Him. His life was contagious all the time – however, this does not mean people always liked what He had to say.

Distribute a piece of paper and pen to each student. Ask them to write down what turns them away from Christianity and what attracts them to it. They can list as many examples as they like. They can also keep their answers anonymous. Collect the papers afterwards reassuring that you will keep their anonymity if they want.

**Leader's note:** Pay attention to what your students are writing. This could help give direction in the near future into areas or situations that need to be addressed.

**Prompt:** Whether you liked what Jesus said or not, He lived by the things He said. He did not say one thing and then live another. Today we often say that we have to practice what we preach. Jesus did just that. Jesus invited everyone to come and follow Him.

Returning to their original groups, students will read Matthew 11:28-30 together. Together, they will rephrase the passage in contemporary language so it becomes more understandable for their peers. Encourage them to use the answers to the previous discussion questions to help them with this. Each group will then share their answer with the larger group afterwards.

**Prompt:** What made Jesus seem to attract was that his message was simple yet challenging. (In old rabbinic terms, a person's "yoke" was the core message of their teaching. Jesus said his teachings were simple to understand, although it would be hard to carry through.) Many were drawn to him, although when most saw what it would cost ended up turning away. But the Bible tells us that many still took the challenge to lay down their lives and follow him. That's what made Jesus so contagious. Having a faith that is consistently contagious is not just an overnight occurrence. It takes work and dedication. It needs to be something that comes naturally to you and becomes part of who you are. So how do we be like Jesus in shaping this faith to be contagious?

Hand a stack of post-it notes to each student. Have a volunteer read Colossians 4:2-6. As it's being read, invite the students to list all the practical ways in building a contagious faith; they can write one item per post-it note. They can also add other ideas. After one minute, have students bring their post-its to the wall and then stick all the similar ones together.

## **Consolidate/Debrief**

**Prompt:** Faith needs to be consistent. It should not act one way at one time and then another way at another time. A true faith that tells the story of God's Love, Grace, Peace and Hope will be contagious to all. However, all may not like it. Christian's lives should draw people to God. This will not happen if they say one thing and live another. Contagious faith has to be a way of life, like that of Jesus. One key way Jesus made faith contagious was through encouragement.

Distribute a half-sheet of paper and a name slip to each student. As the music is playing in the background, ask students to reflect on what they learned from this lesson and the person who's name they received. Encourage students to write an encouragement know to that person, how they see this person moving towards a contagious faith. The note can remain anonymous. Have students fold it in half and write the addressee's name on the outside. Collect the papers and redistribute to the addressee. Close in prayer.

**Leader's note:** This is similar to the activity from Lesson 5 of Module 1. If applicable, remind the group of this and to encourage them to look for ways to encourage each other in a new way in light of all the things that you have been learning together. The key difference is that rather than all of the students encouraging each other, one person focussed on another individual.