

# Introduction: Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Welcome to our newest CBOQ curriculum resource for youth: **Yesterday. Today. Forever.**

Each and every day, we are surrounded by stories. We read them to our kids. We read them for ourselves. We watch them on screens, both big and small. We use them to let people know how our day went or why we are feeling the way that we are. Our history is contained in stories. Our present hopes and aspirations are sometimes best communicated with a narrative. Our dreams for what is to come can be shared with others by expressing the story of what we long for our life to be. Innumerable interactions of varying scope and significance have begun with the simple phrase, “Let me tell you the story...” Some stories are worth telling. Some would be better left unsaid. Others have the power to change the course of human history.

It is our hope through this curriculum that your students will become more and more aware of the reality that there is one story that has been echoing through the ages...Yesterday. Today. Forever. This is the epic story of God. HIS story. And this is not a story just meant to be read, but rather it is one to be known, loved, lived, told and shared. As you explore this truth together, we pray that you and your students would hear the call of God to join in telling his story by becoming a part of it.

**NOTE:** Given the nature of the topics at hand, you may journey through some very sensitive and complicated areas with your students. We would encourage you to familiarize yourself with your church’s policies in terms of counselling students and how to respond if and when certain pieces of information are revealed along the way. The goal is not to shy away from these conversations, but to handle them with complete integrity in a God-honouring way.

## Modules

Included in **Yesterday. Today. Forever.** are 5 different modules that have been designed with a ten-month youth ministry calendar in mind. While there are not enough lessons to fill every week of the ministry year, this has been done intentionally to allow room for you to insert your own ideas into the instruction. In particular, you may use your own local ministries and projects or yearly events like Christmas and Easter to 'flesh out' this curriculum in rather unique ways.

Because this curriculum is formatted as modules, you can choose which modules can be /most effective for your youth ministry. While this arrangement is the recommended sequence as some modules do naturally build on others, you can choose which modules are most applicable for your ministry context.

In module 1, **Knowing the Story**, students will learn that this is a story all about Faith. Faith is what allows us to jump in to what God is, and has been doing, around us since the beginning of time. Faith is what enables us to step into the story and learn it for ourselves, so that we may share it with others.

Module 2, **Loving the Story**, takes us beyond knowledge to appreciation. This is not just a story that you hear and move on from, but instead it is one that has been captivating people throughout history. The purpose of this module is to deepen that love by enabling students to know more about the story, understanding it in some new ways, and then choosing to be a part of it.

Module 3, **Living the Story**, helps students answer the question, “Now what?” As God’s story takes a hold of our lives, changes start to happen. These lessons are designed to help students navigate these new realities by looking at the life of Peter. They will be able to relate to his successes and failures and begin to see the impact that God’s story can have on their lives, and the lives of those around them.

Good stories are meant to be shared, and Module 4, **Telling the Story**, will help your students discover how they can be telling the story of God with their lives. The knowledge and insight gained in the previous modules is put into practical use as that information is passed on to others in some exciting ways simply by living them out day to day.

And finally, Module 5, **Sharing the Story** is designed to help students come to terms with how their story and God's story fit together. A life lived for God is worth sharing with those around you, and this module will help students fit their lives into the broader narrative of God by seeing where he is at work around them and understanding that they have a story worth telling!

There are some other topics or concepts that may repeat throughout the curriculum. This provides an opportunity for students to grow and develop in these areas over the course of the year and also allow you as the leader to focus in on some areas, such as doubt, that are of particular concern for Christ followers of any age.

## **Lesson Structure**

On the first page of each lesson, you'll notice the module name and lesson number/name. Following this are Objectives for the lesson, as well as a Materials Needed list. The lesson objectives let you know up front what the point or goal of the lesson is. It tells you what you should hope to achieve in the lesson. Lesson goals are written in student-centred language, reflecting our philosophy of student-centred teaching. Lessons should be taught with the learner, or success of the learner in mind.

The Materials Needed list will help you be prepared in advance. All required materials, including photocopies, objects, and media clips are listed. Preparing a lesson requires that you be aware of this list and think ahead to ensure that you have what is needed for each lesson. Items such as pens and pencils are typically assumed and therefore not always listed

separately. If a media clip is suggested, it is assumed that the requirements to show the clip are also required.

In some instances you will find the term “Board and Markers” or something similar listed in the Materials Needed. This is a general term that could mean a) a chalk board and chalk, b) a white board and markers, c) an overhead projector, blank overheads and overhead pens, d) chart paper and markers, or e) anything else that works for you in the space that you use.

## **Lesson Format: The Three-Part Lesson Plan**

Each of the lessons in this package follows the three-part lesson plan. Educational research tells us that this approach to teaching ensures a well-rounded learning experience that will better enable students to really link new understanding to already-existing ideas in their schema. The three-part lesson follows this structure: Minds On, Action, Consolidate/Debrief. Each part of the lesson can be modified to fit with specific time requirements as instructors see fit, although it is important to ensure that all three sections of the lesson plan are included. Instructors are often quick to cut the Consolidate portion of a lesson when time is lacking. Before doing this, please consider that current research confirms it is extremely important for youth to have an opportunity to consolidate learning and debrief with peers and/or adults as part of the learning process.

### **Minds On**

This section acts as a type of “warm-up” or introduction to the lesson. It features something to engage the group and get them thinking about the lesson topic.

### **Action**

This portion of the lesson is typically the longest part and contains the 'meat' or chief goals of the lesson. This is the section of the lesson where students may be working on constructing a concept or idea, often by working through a “problem” of sorts. Students are often occupied with active work that promotes understanding of the topic.

### **Consolidate/Debrief**

This is the lesson summary, and provides an opportunity for students to consolidate their learning and clarify their understanding. It typically requires learners to participate in some type of independent or shared reflective activity to link new ideas to already-existing “files” of a similar nature in their brains. Often this section ends with ideas being brought together in a group prayer of sorts. Sometimes students are encouraged to pray or reflect individually on the topic explored in the preceding lesson.

### **Media Use**

Please note that presenting a video in public (e.g. in a church) does require a license (similar to a CCLI license for music). You can obtain a license that will cover most distributors (e.g. Universal, Disney and 20th Century Fox) from companies such as Audio Cine Film ([www.acf-film.com](http://www.acf-film.com)) or Criterion Pictures ([www.criterionpic.com](http://www.criterionpic.com)).

We suggest that you preview the movie clips suggested in each specific case. This will help you determine whether the clips are suitable for your group. Occasionally, YouTube or similar online resources may be referenced. Most of those resources are public domain, however, we encourage you to preview these to ensure the links are still active and appropriate.

### **Tips on Teaching the Lessons**

It is important for instructors to be prepared before the lesson begins. Be sure to arrive early and ready your materials required for the upcoming lesson. You will need to make sure that you have enough Bibles, pencils, pens, and other individual materials. You may also wish to review the lesson notes before the students arrive.

Many of the modules in this package make use of group work. Group work can be a very effective way for students to learn. In particular, it promotes a friendly and safe environment for all. Research tells us that group work is best when it is cooperative, or when the students have specified roles in the group. For example, students can take on the role of reporter, recorder, encourager, timer, etc. This ensures that all participate in the work and share responsibility. Try to be creative in how groups are chosen. There are times when you will want students to choose their own groups. At other times you will want more control over group choice.

The philosophy of those who wrote and edited **Yesterday. Today. Forever.** is student-centred (also known as constructivist) learning. Following the work of recent educational research, we believe that students learn best when they are actively engaged in activities of learning, as opposed to sitting and listening to a lecture. In part this relates to the fact that we all have different pre-dominate learning styles (e.g. auditory, visual, kinaesthetic) and are smart in different ways (e.g. multiple intelligences). It also relates to the fact that students are more engaged in learning when they have an opportunity to construct the knowledge for themselves through a hands-on approach.

## **The Writing Team**

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