



DISCOVER

Revealing Your Identity

**JR. HIGH
CURRICULUM**





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Revealing Your Identity

INTRODUCTION

Who am I? It's an age-old question to which every person seeks to find the answer. All around us, it seems everything and everyone is vying to shape our identity, for better or for worse— from parents to friends to billboards to online ads to music and movies. Without an answer to that question, we drift in life, aimlessly and passively.

With Jr. high students, it's that much more pertinent. As many are starting adolescence, these questions become that much more important. Erik Erikson, a noted psychologist, theorized how the teens years are about identity formation. It's a key component in adolescence.

This curriculum is designed to explore the question Who am I? within the viewpoint of the Christian faith. If God created us, then he would know us best. If he knows us best, then shouldn't we be turning to him to figure out our identity?

It is our desire to help students anchor their faith and lives in the One who made them (and all of us). Having that anchor point solidifies our sense of being in Christ alone.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE CURRICULUM?

In this curriculum, we have tried to focus on conveying important biblical and spiritual truths through well-structured and thought-provoking lessons. We have also taken great efforts to write our lessons in such a way as to improve your teaching practice. Lesson flow, wording of instructions, transitions and other details have been explicitly expressed. We have also included teaching tips. These brief lessons on instructional practice and teaching strategies help to model the pedagogical practice behind the lessons so that you can improvise, adapt and create your own lessons using research-based practice. The lessons are laid out so that you know everything you need before you start.

The curriculum was produced using a constructivist/ student-centred approach to learning. The premise is that people learn through different, multiple intelligences. Through this approach, we attempt to utilize these intelligences in different fashions.

There are five modules, each with 3-4 lessons. Each module is not dependent on the others. While we have ordered them in a preferable sequence, you can choose to use whichever modules fit your ministry context best.

We understand that you might not use the curriculum in the order the lessons were written. Just be aware that if you use lessons out of sequence you might need to make adjustments so the lessons will flow properly. Of course, if you need to change, amend or improve these lessons in any way, we encourage you to do so. We only ask that you do not redistribute either this original curriculum or any altered version as your own property.

STRUCTURE

In each lesson, you will find the following blocks to help you teach each lesson.

Spiritual Aims

These are the life transformations we hope will happen with the Holy Spirit's initiative. While it's hard to quantify or empirically measure transformations, these are qualities and actions we trust will be instilled in our students.

Lesson Objectives

These are the key end goals we aim for each student to attain by the end of a lesson.

Materials Needed

This is a comprehensive list of all the items you'll need to facilitate the lesson. In some instances, you will see a notation such as "1 copy of Appendix A per 4 students" which means "In the lesson, students will be in groups of 4, so make sure each group has 1 copy." These are some terms for you to familiarize yourself with:

Video equipment: To show a video, ensure you have a projector or TV screen, the appropriate cables (e.g., HDMI cable or VGA cable), a computer or applicable device (e.g., DVD player) and speakers. If possible, ensure this is set up at least 20 minutes before start time and play at least part of the clip to ensure all the video and sound are working properly.

Recording paper: For large-group brainstorming or idea compilation, you can choose to use chart paper with permanent markers, a white board with dry erase markers or an electronic word processor (like MS Word) displayed on an LCD projector.

In some instances, other media (outside of online sources) may be referenced. These standalone media will be available at cboqyouth.ca/discover under "Jr High Media Pack."

Depending on the spiritual maturity and context of your group, you'll notice "1 Bible with <certain passages> bookmarked." You may choose to prepare this or have your students find those references themselves.

Pre-Lesson Preparation

There may be some specific set-ups required before the lesson begins. These details are outlined for your preparation.

Minds On

A brief section to create the mental set for the lesson and provide an effective "hook" for the ideas that will be presented. These are not just icebreaker activities (unless otherwise stated); these are interactive introductions to prepare your students for the "meat" of the lesson.

Action

This is the main part of the lesson. Students will engage with big ideas from Scripture or from theological thinking around the Christian faith. A lot of times, these are moments where students will be teaching each other and learning together (hopefully including your leaders as well).

Consolidate/Debrief

This gives an opportunity to bring all the ideas of the lesson together and to apply them to our own lives. While the "Action" section usually deals with the head, this section deals with the heart. Its intention is to hopefully internalize the discoveries made in "Action" into life transformation.

HOW TO USE THE CURRICULUM

Read the lesson thoroughly and well in advance. There are some preparations that will take time to set up depending on the lesson. This includes any technical requirements, such as equipment to view a video.

Review the teaching tips so you can become familiar with some best practices when facilitating a lesson. While not every tip has a specific allocation in the lessons themselves, take some time to review them to help expand your teaching toolkit. (You can always share your own online via Facebook ([facebook.com/cboqyouth](https://www.facebook.com/cboqyouth)) or Twitter (@cboqyouth) #teachingtips.)

Leader's notes vs. teaching tips: Leader's notes are details specific to that part of the lesson. Teaching tips are general, helpful practices or reminders. Each teaching tip corresponds to an index at the back of the curriculum.

Your role is to facilitate the lesson. Within a constructivist approach, your objective is to create the space for students to find the truths God is aiming to show them. Keep the group moving at a good pace through the lesson. Observe the feedback they are giving you through their energy levels and body language. Also, ask good questions (not just giving good answers).

Prompt: These are words you can speak verbatim or in your own words.

The numbered instructions are meant to give clear directions to students. Providing clear details for what students will be doing is vital in smooth transitions and accepted expectations. The title gives you the aim of the set-up.

Some common set-ups will include:

Place mat 

Think/Pair/Share 

Jigsaw 

If there are instructions that are repeated often through the module, only the title will be shown with the topic/question.

MEDIA USE

Please note that presenting a video from a distributor (e.g. from a DVD or a digital download) in public (e.g., a church) does require a licence (similar to a CCLI licence for music). You can obtain a licence that will cover most distributors, such as Universal, Disney and 20th Century Fox, Audio Ciné Film (www.acf-film.com) or Criterion Pictures (www.criterionpic.com).

We will give you the URLs of the videos so you can screen them. You may choose to download those clips, because other content like YouTube sidebars cannot be controlled or to remove the dependency for an online connection at the time of the lesson. However, due to copyright laws, we're not able to include the clips with the curriculum itself. 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. Note that at the time of print, the URLs were live. However, they can be removed at the website host's discretion at any time.

Last, we pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire you to fill you and your students with the presence and nature of God, and to change and transform you in such a way that you and your students will continue to discover what God already knows about you as he reveals YOUR identity in his Son.

SPECIAL THANKS

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HOW TO DISCOVER



This module aims to lay out the process whereby students can discover who God has made us to be, who God has called us to be, and how that changes our lives. This process involves recognizing and accepting God's offer to help us through hard times, learning to study scripture, praying with confidence, and partnering with a godly mentor. Focusing on process means that this module does not provide concrete answers to the questions of "Who am I?" and "Who should I be?", but it will equip students to reflect on and explore these questions from a Christian perspective.

- ▶ **Lesson 1** gives students a foundation to explore their identity and provides an opportunity to get their feet wet in faith by asking God for help.
- ▶ In **lesson 2** students learn practical skills to study the Bible and practice them on 1 Peter 5:5-10, a passage on humility.
- ▶ **Lesson 3** investigates Jesus' teaching on prayer to instill confidence that God hears our prayers and to explore the role of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ **Lesson 4** will provide students the opportunity to reflect on the value of a godly mentor through the story of Esther and Mordecai. This lesson provides a framework for you to connect students with potential mentors if you wish.

Module: How to Discover

Lesson 1: Ask God for Help

Spiritual Aims

Hopefully students will be able to ...

- *reflect on what shapes their identity*
- *ask for Jesus' help with a specific struggle*
- *receive God's help in a specific area of challenge*

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- *name five aspects of their identity with specific words*
- *identify Jesus as a source of strength in hard times*
- *choose an area of struggle where they need Jesus' help*

Materials Needed:

- *2 pieces of chart paper and marker for brainstorming*
- *1 blank 8.5 x 11 paper per student*
- *Min. 1 marker/pencil crayon/pen per student*
- *tape or sticky tack to mount paper on walls*
- *Min. 1 small note paper per student*
- *1 copy of Appendix A*
- *1 copy of Appendix B per 4-5 students*
- *1 index card with Jeremiah 29:13 printed on it per student*
- *1 Bible (for large group readings)*

Pre-lesson preparation


Write the word IDENTITY in the centre of 1 piece of chart paper.

- *Draw a large stick figure on the second piece of chart paper and write below it, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13."*
- *If you do not have time to write Jeremiah 29:13 on the index cards for your students, they may copy it themselves off the chart paper when they do the closing activity.*

Minds On (approx. 10 min.)

 **Prompt:** What do you think of when I say the word identity? Raise your hand to tell me something that comes to mind.

Take 4-5 answers. Some phrases to help get discussion going could include identity theft, mistaken identity, identity crisis

 **Prompt:** Now think about your own identity. What makes you different from others, and what helps you relate to others? These can be things you control and work on, or they may be things you have no control over. Take a minute to think about it, then I'll have a person write our answers on this chart paper.


Ask students one by one for their one or two-word answers and have a volunteer record the responses on a large piece of chart paper. Keep going until every student has shared or until the group runs out of answers. Hopefully you will have 30 words or so. Keep this brainstorm posted and as visible as possible for the next activity.

TT# 1

Distribute a blank 8.5x11 piece of paper to each student along with pens/markers, and instruct your students to each draw a stick figure of themselves and label it with 5 words that speak to their identity without writing their name on the paper. Post the pictures around the brainstorm.

Leader's note: If you have less than 8 students, let them try and guess who is who. If your group is larger than 8, simply move on to the Bible study. You can return to the "guess who it is" activity if you have time at the end.

Action (approx. 25 min.)

 **Prompt:** In our life, times get tough sometimes. That affects our identity. How we deal with it also affects our identity. Today our lesson looks at two passages from the Bible about suffering so we can study how God is shaping our personal identities.

Jeremiah 29

Distribute note paper and pens to your students and ask for a volunteer to read Jeremiah 29:10-14. Ask students to listen or read along, and write down on their piece of note paper something that stands out to them. Ask your volunteer to read the passage twice with a short break in between, and after the second time, invite several students to reveal what they wrote down.

Leader's Note: This is not an easy passage to understand, especially without any background info, so don't expect students to interpret the passage; just have them share what words they noticed most, or what verse stood out to them.

After some students have shared what stood out to them, Prompt: This passage is hard to understand if you don't know what is going on around it, so let's hear some background.

Ask another volunteer to read Appendix A.

Ask your students to turn and face each other in groups of 3-4 and discuss:


Have you ever had to move away from home? How did you feel?

Have hard times ever caused you to reach out to God?

Do you think the exiles felt better knowing they could go home eventually? (Seventy years is a long time; most people would die before God freed them from exile. Does that change things?)


TT# 2

TT# 14

 **Prompt:** Hard times don't always come as a punishment from God. Sometimes the world is just a broken place, but often hard times do cause us to seek God, to try to find relief and answers. When we go through hard times, one of the most important aspects is not just getting through them but understanding how our identity is shaped. Sometimes the surface things fall away, or we find that even our inner identity is not as strong as we thought. If our identity is grounded in appearances, accomplishments, or others' acceptance, we can be easily shaken because those things come and go. Now let's read about a Christian who faced hard times and came through everything with Jesus' help.

Philippians 4

Ask a volunteer to read Philippians 4:11-13.

 **Prompt:** stances came, he stayed true to himself, kept obeying God and ultimately he came through. Let's look at the words he wrote leading up to the passage we just read and look for clues that will help us in our own lives.


Divide your students into groups of 4-5 and give each group a copy of Appendix B (Philippians 4:4-7 with questions). Ask them to read the passage in their groups and answer the questions. They can write their answers on the paper. Each group should have 1 person ready to report their findings to the large group.

 TT# 2

 TT# 5

After 5 minutes, call the groups together and go through the answers. Ask a volunteer from a different group for each question (unless you have less than four groups).

With the students still sitting in their groups, draw their attention to the chart paper you drew a stick figure on before the lesson. Remind your students of Paul's words in Philippians 4:13—"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Ask a volunteer to tell you, "Who is HIM who Paul says gives him strength?" (Jesus)

 **Prompt:** In Jeremiah, we saw God's promise to his people that they were not abandoned even in hard times, and now we see that Paul says to rejoice even when we are in trouble. In your groups, take five minutes to brainstorm how to trust in God when things are not going easy. What will help you hold on to God's promises?

Ask a volunteer from each group to share an idea, and if applicable, add it to the chart paper with the original brainstorm about identity.

Leader's note: This may take some flexibility on your part. If a group says to pray, you can add to the identity brainstorm "pray-er" etc.

 TT# 3

Consolidate/Debrief (approx. 10 min.)

Have a volunteer distribute the index cards with Jer. 29:13 on it. Ask your students to think about a challenge they are facing and how Jesus can strengthen them. Let each student take a marker or pen (whatever you used in the Minds-On) and ask them to write on the back of the index card a challenge or struggle they are seeking God's help with. You may ask them to put their name or to leave it anonymous, but let them know you will collect them afterward. Collect the cards and close in prayer for Jesus to strengthen your students and to shape their identity so that they can find joy and peace in every circumstance.

Leader's note: If your ministry uses a small group model, you may ask your small group leaders to take prayer requests and close in prayer instead of praying generally for your whole group.

Keep the index cards and use them to guide your personal prayer for your students throughout this module.

Module: How to Discover

Lesson 2: Study the Bible



Spiritual Aims

Hopefully students will be able to ...

- *study the Bible independently, using resources from this lesson guard against arrogance, anxiety and doubt in suffering*

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to...

- *co-operatively study a Bible passage*
- *identify three threats to building a strong identity*
- *define at least three strategies to stand firm in faith*

Pre-lesson preparation:

- *Tape yarn or twine across one corner of your room to make a clothes line. It must be long enough to hold six t-shirt cut-outs in a row and strong enough to hold the weight of the cutouts and clothes pegs.*


Materials Needed:


- *3 blindfolds*
- *1 copy of Appendix C per 3 students*
- *Min. 1 coloured marker per student*
- *Recording paper*
- *at least 6 pairs of scissors*
- *Min. 6 copies of Appendix F*
- *optional: stickers, feathers, jewels or beads and glue for decorating t-shirt cut-outs*
- *1 roll of tape*
- *1 long piece of twine or heavy-duty string (at least the length of the meeting room)*
- *2 small clothes pegs per copy of Appendix F you're using*

Minds On (approx. 10 minutes)

Ask for three volunteers to stand in front of the group and be blindfolded. Once blindfolded, ask them one by one to describe the clothes they are wearing. Do they remember what they put on that morning? After all the students have gone ask for three new volunteers to come up front and be blindfolded. After they are blindfolded ask them to describe the outfit of the person next to them.

When they are done, ask your students to think about how long it takes them to get ready in the morning. Have them all raise a hand in the air if it takes five minutes or more and keep their hand up if it takes ten minutes or more, 20 mins or more, 30 mins or more, an hour or more.


 **Prompt:** So we know how long it takes to get ready for how you look, but does anybody take time to prepare your attitude for the day? [Allow students to raise their hand and share an example if they wish.]

 **Prompt:** Today we are going to look at a Bible passage that tells us to clothe ourselves with humility. What does humility mean? Turn to the person next to you and see if you can figure out a definition. Be prepared to share your answer with the large group.

Give students a minute to discuss, then ask for some volunteers to offer their definition. Record key words or definitions on the recording paper.

TT# 1

Leader's note: Humility means acting humble. Humble means not proud or arrogant; modest.

 **Prompt:** We'll talk more about this after we actually see the passage. Last time we read a verse in Jeremiah 29:13 says "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." One way that we can seek God is to read the Bible. In our lesson today we will learn one way of studying the Bible that is very interactive, repetitive and co-operative, and I hope it will help you study the Bible on your own!

Action (approx. 30 min.)

Divide students into groups of 3. Give each group a copy of Appendix C and some different coloured pens or markers, and allow the groups to spread out around the room to work independently.

TT# 4

Each student will take a turn either reading, listening or writing on the paper as the group studies 1 Peter 5:5-10. If all students are comfortable reading aloud, each will read through the passage once while the others listen. After they will work together to complete the marking-up described below the passage. If a student in the group cannot read well, another group member may read twice, but all students should participate in marking the passage. Each group will have a spokesperson to share the group's answers.

TT# 5

Leader's note: This activity is very similar to manuscript Bible study and is designed to accommodate different learning styles—let students know they can move around while listening or listen with their eyes closed. Circulate while the groups are working to answer questions and help keep students on track.

After 15 minutes, draw everyone's attention to yourself and ask students to stay in their groups. Ask a spokesperson from each group to share any words they did not understand and one thing that stands out to their group.

TT# 6

On chart paper, record each group's responses to the questions of "What we do," "What God Does," and "Threats We Face."

TT# 1

Ask your students to discuss in their groups how these different elements relate (for example, God shows favour to the humble, so when we humble ourselves we receive God's favour and we also see that he will lift us up in due time, vs lifting ourselves up in arrogance). Circulate amongst the groups while they discuss to hear the connections they are making and help them stay on track.

Ask students to share ideas of what it means to clothe ourselves with humility.
Think/pair/share: "How can we stand firm in our faith?"

TT#7

Consolidate/Debrief (approx. 10 min.)

Depending on your numbers, provide each group or student with a t-shirt cut-out (Appendix F). Ask them to write one verse from the passage on the front side of the shirt and decorate it however they want.

Leader's note: verses can be copied from Appendix C. Assign verses so you have all the verses written out. On the back of each cut-out have them write one way to stand firm. Using coloured markers and any additional decorative elements you've provided, students can personalize designs on the t-shirts.

When the groups/students have finished, hang the cutouts by clothes pegs so that the verses are in order on a clothes line.

If you have a large group you may opt to make multiple clotheslines.

When complete, close in prayer.

Module: How to Discover

Lesson 3: How to Pray



Spiritual Aims

Hopefully students will be able to ...

- *have confidence God hears their prayers*
- *ask the Holy Spirit to help them pray*

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- *observe Jesus' model of prayer*
- *identify 3 elements of prayer (worship, requests, confession)*
- *contrast human relationships with a divine relationship*

Materials Needed:


- *1 copy of Appendix G per 2 students (optional: the image can be projected to half the group.)*
- *1 copy of Appendix D per student*
- *1 pen/pencil per student*

Minds On (approx. 5 min)

Pair students off by counting 1-2-1-2 and instruct them to remember their number. Give a copy of Appendix G to the 2s and tell them they will need to describe the picture only with words to their partners. The 1s will attempt to draw the picture. They may ask questions to clarify. Give 3-5 minutes for this activity.

Leader's note: If you have a very large group, you can have 5 pairs of volunteers where the 2s (along with the rest of the group) can see a projection of the picture while the 1s draw the picture without seeing it.

Action (approx. 35 min.)

 **Prompt:** With many things, unless you have experienced it, it is really hard to imagine. Prompt: When Jesus taught his disciples how to pray, he wanted them to understand what God is like, but God is perfect and completely good, unlike sinful human beings. To teach what God is like, Jesus gave some human examples that emphasize God's good character compared to human selfishness. We'll look at those examples. Jesus also taught that in order to pray effectively, we need the Holy Spirit to help us and Jesus says we get the Holy Spirit simply by asking God. Let's take a look at the passage.

Leader's Note: Depending on your context, you may also need to explain the Holy Spirit to your students; don't just assume they know who you're talking about. Here are some key facts about the Holy Spirit: After Jesus rose from the dead, the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples (John 20:21-22) and is given to all believers (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit is God's presence with us (John 16:7-11).

The Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible, grow in faith and maturity, make wise decisions and tell others about Jesus (Acts 1:8).

Distribute copies of Appendix D and have a volunteer read the passage aloud without rushing. Tell your students to follow along and use a pen or pencil to underline words they don't know, circle and connect any related words they notice [similar to the activity in Lesson 2].

After the passage is read, ask students to reread the passage silently. Then ask if they understand what happened.

Leader's notes: hallowed means “holy; sacred” the phrase “hallowed be your name” is a statement of worship and respect. cultural note: In Jesus' day homes were much smaller and families often shared a single bedroom and even a family bed. This was the norm, so for the friend who is “in bed with his children,” that means settled in for the night.

Divide students into groups of 3-4 to create skits, acting out one of the scenarios Jesus describes in verses 5-8, 9-10, and 11-12. You may assign a passage to each group or allow them to choose their own. You may also provide the option for students to act out their own brief scenario in which someone grants a request to someone else. Remind the groups that Jesus gave his examples to emphasize that if sinful human beings can do good to one another, how much more will our completely good God answer our prayers.

Give the groups 10 minutes to plan and practice their skits, then let them perform in front of each other.

Option for large groups: If you have more than 4 groups, you may assign 3-4 groups together into a cluster and have each cluster perform their skits for each other to save time. Not every student will see every skit, but they will still be exposed to different perspectives on the stories and get to share what they have created with their peers.

Still working within their groups, ask students to look together at verses 2-4. As a group, they should identify at least one example of the following elements of prayer: worship, confession (acknowledgement of sin), and asking for help. Let students know they will refer to this later in the lesson.

Now, still remaining seated in their groups, have them look at verse 13. Together, they will formulate an answer to this question: What does it mean to ask God for the Holy Spirit, and what does the Holy Spirit mean for us when God gives it to us? Each group will have 1 spokesperson to report their group's answer to the larger group.

Consolidate/Debrief (approx. 10 min.)

On the back of Appendix D, have each group write a prayer together, following the structure of Jesus' example prayer in verses 2-4, including elements of worship, confession, and asking for help, and also asking for the Holy Spirit. Students' prayers may be longer than the example as the group incorporates each other's suggestions for each element. Ask each group to pray their prayer together. If you have volunteers helping you lead, it would be ideal to have a leader observing and supporting each group, but you may also circulate.

After the groups have finished praying, or if 8 minutes have passed, call your students together to close the session in a brief prayer of thanks and blessing for your students as they continue to learn to pray and grow closer to God.

Module: How to Discover

Lesson 4: Find a Mentor



Spiritual Aims

Hopefully students will be able to ...

- *evaluate their own spiritual health*
- *find a mentor to support their spiritual development*

Lesson Objectives:

Students will be able to...

- *describe at least 3 characteristics of a godly mentor*
- *identify 1 spiritual role model in their own life*
- *analyze the benefits/challenges of having a mentor*

Pre-lesson preparation:

- *Set up an obstacle course*
- *Reach out to people in your congregation to see if they would be willing to mentor a student in the faith.*

Materials Needed:


- *chairs, hula hoops, dodge balls, buckets, etc to create an obstacle course*
- *1 blindfold per 2 students*
- *chart paper and marker for brainstorming*
- *1 copy of Appendix E per 4 students*
- *1 pen per student*
- *YouTube video (www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOPgxCeg0ow) with video equipment*
- *1 quarter of a blank or lined 8.5x11 paper per student*

Minds On (approx. 15 min.)

Tell your students to partner up and decide which partner will wear a blindfold to go through the obstacle course. The non-blindfolded partner can help their partner by giving directions and hints to complete the obstacle course, and they may provide physical guidance and support if needed, but the blindfolded person must complete the course and any tasks associated with it (e.g. pour a glass of water into a pitcher or throw a ball through a net)


Option: Depending on the size of your group and the facilities/equipment you have available, this activity can be done as a challenge with two or more identical courses set up for pair to race through. It can also be done as a relay with pairs passing off their blindfold to the next pair after completing the course.

After the activity is finished, ask your students to identify what the challenges they faced. Students who were blindfolded will have a very different perspective than those who could see. On the chart paper, create a T chart (the left side labelled “Challenges” and the right side labelled “Helpful”) to brainstorm challenges and helps of working with a partner to get through the course. Write down students’ answers of what they found hard or frustrating, and what they found helpful about having a partner.

 **Prompt:** Last week we learned about prayer, but even when we have the Holy Spirit to help us, having another person speak into our life can help us get through life's obstacles and challenges. Today we are going to look at an example from the Bible of a person who helped someone through a big challenge. They acted like a mentor by giving direction and encouragement.

Action (approx. 25 min.)

Introduce the Bible study by showing the YouTube video which gives an overview of the story of Esther.


 **Prompt:** Esther faced a lot of challenging obstacles, and having a mentor like Mordecai helped her get through them all. From this overview you can tell that Esther was very courageous and that she had an important role to play! We're going to look at one chapter of her story from the Bible, in the book that is named after her. Esther chapter 4 begins after Mordecai learns Haman has a plot to kill all the Jews in the kingdom. He is dressed in sackcloth and wailing outside the palace, so Esther sends a servant, Hathak, to find out what's wrong.

Ask a volunteer to read Esther 4:6-17.

Think/pair/share: How would you react if a law was made that said your ethnic group was going to be killed? Would you try to hide or fight?



Think/pair/share: Nobody knew that Esther was a Jew except for Mordecai, so it's possible she could have avoided the slaughter by simply keeping her mouth shut. Yet Mordecai encouraged her to risk her life and speak to the King. What would you have done in that situation?

 **Prompt:** The book of Esther is the only book in the Bible that does not directly speak about God; the word God doesn't appear in the whole book! Yet it clearly shows God working through his people. In verse 14, Mordecai tells Esther, "If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Mordecai is able to see how God can use the circumstances of Esther's life to accomplish a greater purpose, and this shows us the value that can come from having a godly mentor.

Divide students into groups of 4 and give each group a copy of Appendix E and four pens. Tell each student to write in their section what verse numbers from Esther 4 show Mordecai being a mentor to Esther in each particular way. After 3 minutes (this is flexible, gauge how your students are handling the task by their level of focus and feel free to extend by a minute or two if they are working well or rotate sooner if they are distracted) tell students to rotate the paper, look at what the person before them wrote in that section and add anything they may have missed. Continue rotating three more times so students end up back with their original section facing them to see what others have added. Then bring the group back together.

Ask students to think about Mordecai's relationship with Esther and consider if they have anyone in their own life who acts as a mentor to them. Invite them to pair up and share their answer with someone sitting near to them.

Consolidate/Debrief (approx. 10 min.)

Go back to the T chart of students' thoughts on the obstacle course. Ask if any of the challenges/helps applied to the story of Esther and Mordecai; they will vote by raising their hand when you say that word/phrase. If a majority vote then circle the word/phrase.

Have students reflect on a situation in their lives that could benefit from having a more experienced person's perspective. Ask them to write on a ¼ piece of paper what that situation entails. They may hand the paper in to you if they wish, or they may choose to keep it private.

If you were able to connect with adults in your congregation who are willing to mentor a student, invite students to tell you if they want a mentor so you can facilitate those connections.

Leader's note: Be familiar with your church's child protection policy and the requirements that policy has regarding one-on-one meetings and if background checks are required by adult volunteers, and be sure to inform parents and guardians. For additional training, refer to CBOQ Youth resource "Sharing Life" <http://cboqyouth.ca/training/seminars/>.

Close the lesson by praying for your group, especially for whatever students wrote on their paper. Ask God to provide them with godly mentors and wisdom to navigate their challenges.

APPENDIX A

Jeremiah is telling the people of Israel that they are going through a really hard time as judgment for disobeying God. They were taken captive and forced to move to another country called Babylon, and Jeremiah is saying they'll have to stay there for 70 years. But he also tells them that they will return to God and God will end their punishment and bring them back to their home.

APPENDIX B

Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1. **When does Paul say to rejoice?**
2. **Where is the Lord?**
3. **When should we pray?**
4. **What will Jesus guard for us?**

APPENDIX C

1 Peter 5:5-10

⁵ In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. ⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Mark-up Instructions:

- a. Underline what Peter says we should do*
- b. Underline with a zig-zag what Peter says God does*
- c. Double underline any words you don’t understand*
- d. Circle and connect related words*
- e. Draw a box around words that threaten or challenge our identity*
- f. Put a * by a verse or phrase that stands out to you*

APPENDIX D

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

² He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

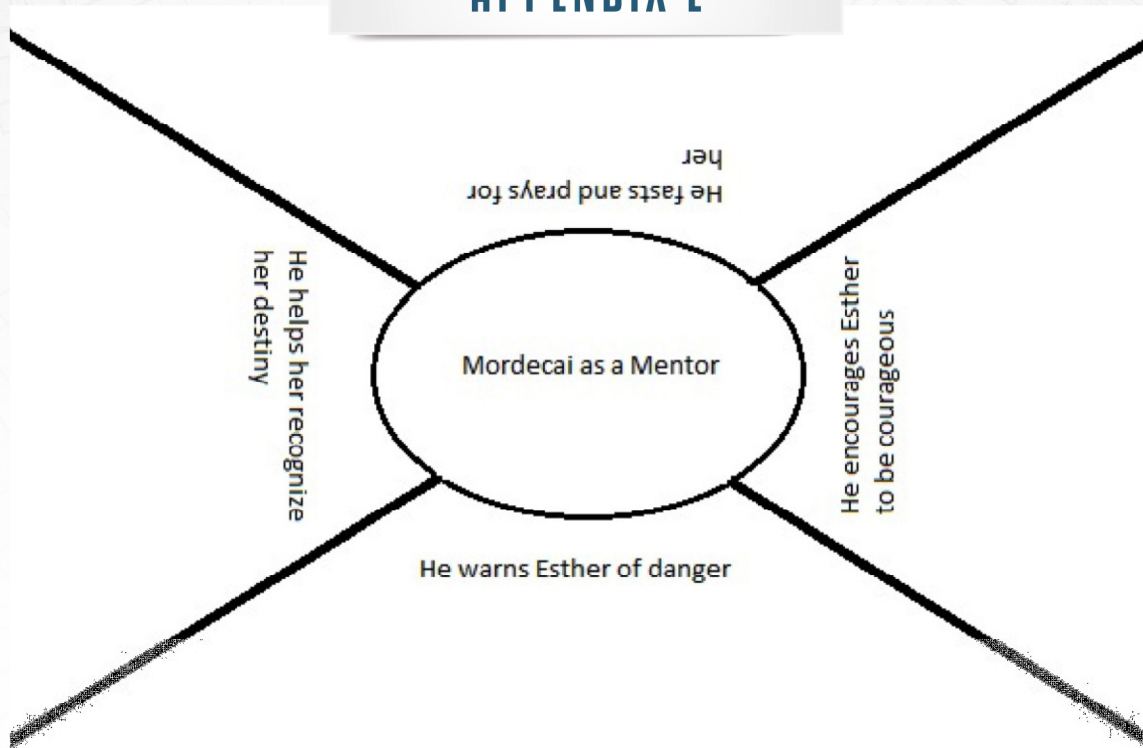
⁴ Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation."

⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' ⁷ And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[e] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

⁹ "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

APPENDIX E



Esther 4: ⁶ So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

⁹ Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. ¹⁰ Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, ¹¹ "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

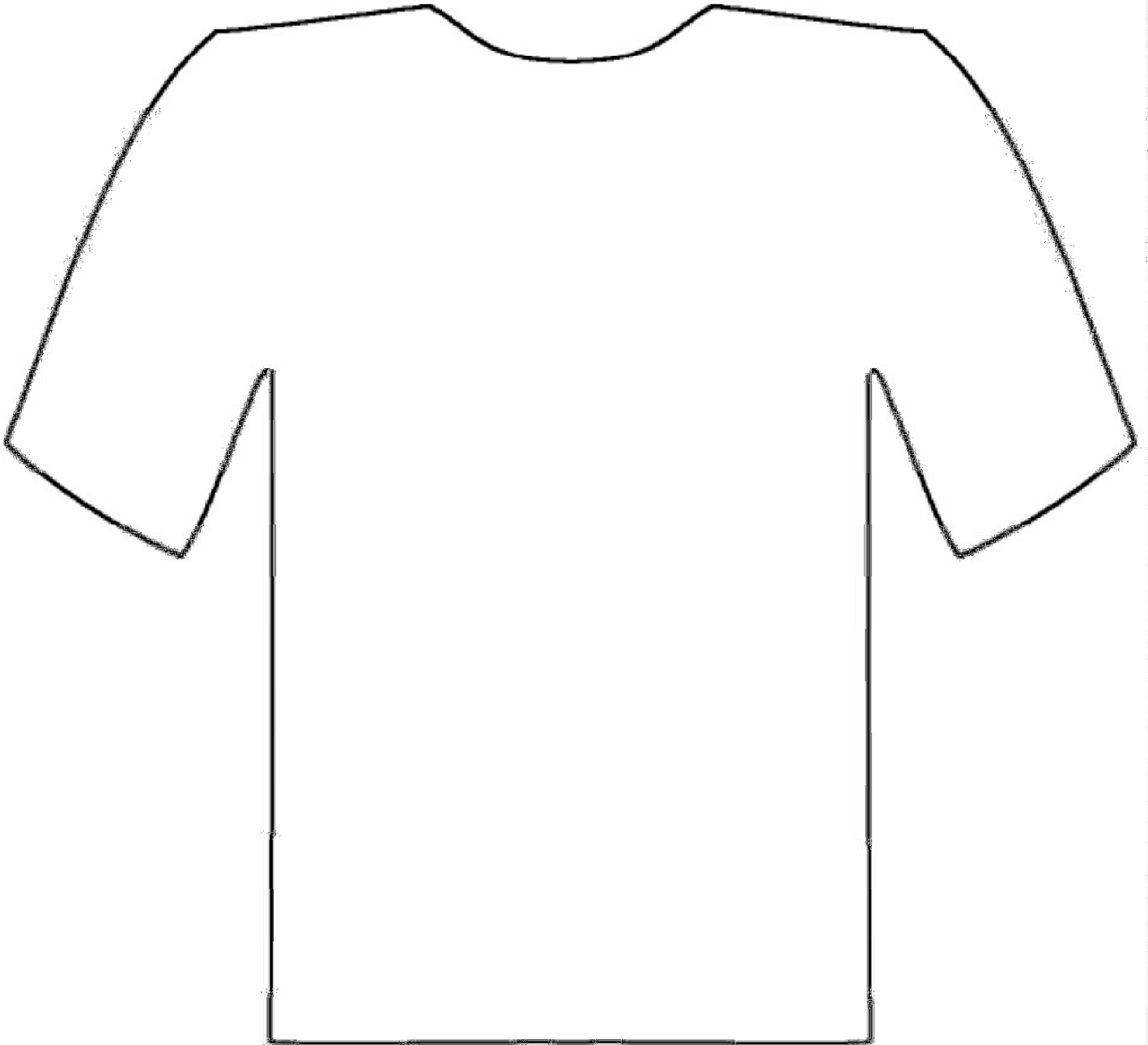
¹² When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, ¹³ he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape.

¹⁴ For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

APPENDIX F



APPENDIX G



http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f6/Swans_reflecting_elephants.jpg

Teaching Tips



1. Involve others in the information gathering (like writing answers on a chart paper). This helps to give ownership to other students or leaders in the activity even though it may be outside their comfort zone. Use your discernment in situations where you may be the best person to do this (instead of “forcing” someone else to participate).
2. When separating into groups, be as specific as you can. While some instructions suggest separating students into groups of 3-4, choose an optimal number and have an exception. (e.g. If you have 29 students, you can suggest students gather in groups of 3 and, knowing there are 2 extra people, have 2 groups adopt each of the extra students.)
3. When recording answers from others, if you feel a revision needs to be made, rephrase it and ask the person if that’s acceptable. (e.g. If the answer offered is “to pray” but you’re writing down items instead of actions, you can ask, “Can I write ‘prayer?’”)
4. Dividing students into groups can be a chaotic moment where misbehaviour typically occur. There may be moments you allow students to form their own groups (usually with friends they know). Other times, it’s best for you as the facilitator to organize the groups. This could include:
 - a. Clustering them by proximity.
 - b. “Randomly” grouping them based on common features. e.g. Have them line up based on birthdates and then cluster them.
 - c. Before your meeting, assign who will be in which group (while being prepared to include any visitors to those assignments).
5. While smaller groups are doing an activity, circulate and listen to their discussions without intervening.
6. When a student shares a word their group did not understand, invite students from other groups to volunteer to explain. This can allow the students to teach each other.
7. Think/Pair/Share is a common tool to help students process a question together. The instruction to repeat their partners’ answers allows for them to participate without the anxiety of giving their own opinions to a larger group. The following format is standard:
 - a. When I say “go,” you are going to think about your answer to this question: [insert question].
 - b. You are going to find a partner and share with him or her what you have been thinking.
 - c. After [insert number] minutes, I will draw us all back together. Be prepared to share your partner’s answer.
 - d. Any questions? [Allow students to make clarifications, if needed.]
 - e. OK, go!
8. Typically, a small group

between 3 to 5 people is ideal. If you need to, divide students into smaller groups but have the same task for multiple groups. For instance, if the lesson asks you to create 4 small groups but you have 40 people (i.e. it would be 10 per group), make 8 groups and have pairs of groups do the same task separately. If groups are too large, some students will melt into the background and not really participate. If groups are too small, students could become overwhelmed with the task. A good balance will allow everyone to participate and work together to complete the task.

9. When asking a large group a question and you're looking for responses, use the following instructions:
 - a. Think about your answer to this question: [insert question].
 - b. After a minute, I'll ask for volunteers to give their answers. If you're ready to volunteer your answer, raise your hand [or you can give another signal like touch your nose].
10. Side coaching: While students are talking, move from group to group. Listen briefly, and if appropriate, add a small bit of information to help clarify an idea, or answer questions the students might have. Rather than directly answering questions, try to lead students to answer their

own questions, often by asking simpler or clearer versions of their questions. Use this time to get a feel for the mood of the group, the degree to which they understand the material, and how engaged they are.

11. During group work, it is helpful to check how much time they still need (i.e., allow the duration time to be adaptable). When the time allotted is nearing an end, ask who needs more time. If the majority do, then give 2 to 3 more minutes and check back. If only a few do, give 1 minute for them to wrap up.
12. Some students are very willing and able to read publicly. Others (whether because of their reading level or fear of public speaking) may need some lead-time to prepare. If you're asking a student who's not as comfortable, give him or her the passage to read ahead of time. Consider using a translation or paraphrase that will be easily understood by your group (e.g., the Message). If the passage is long (i.e., more than 2 verses), consider breaking it up and having multiple readers.
13. If there are answers still missing, offer them as suggestions and ask students if they agree or disagree.
14. Be aware that there is no control over what preview videos are displayed on the sidebars of the YouTube website. As well, it is suggested

that you preload the video to avoid showing the commercials at the beginning. As with any media, we suggest that you watch this video ahead of time to ensure it is appropriate for your group. If necessary, skip the video and continue the lesson.

15. "Does anyone have a question?" is worded in such a way that allows for those who did not understand to get clarification of your instructions. Often people will ask, "Does everyone understand?" This is ambiguous because no one can actually answer that without reading the minds of the whole group.
16. If students are answering multiple questions, it's best to either provide a handout with the questions or display/project them for everyone to see.
17. Mind Map is a teaching tool where you record and direct conversation by choosing which points to highlight and explore more explicitly. You can record ideas with point form, or pictures, or one word. Go to http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36_coop_placemat.pdf to see how you can draw a mind map and direct conversation.
18. "Wait time" is important to allow students to time to think. Don't be afraid of some silence, and don't be afraid of the natural ebb and flow of a discussion. If a student presents an answer that is almost correct or almost at the point you want

then say something like “I like what you said about can you expand on that.” If they are not getting to the realizations you are hoping for then prompt them with further questions like “We believe God is all powerful—who is stronger than God? Is the media stronger than God? If the media pokes fun at Christians, does that mean that what they say about us is true? Who defines us? Are media stereotypes about different people groups true?”

19. Name these groups in some creative way. For example, by Gospels (Matthew group, Mark group, Luke group, John group), colours (Red group, Blue group), etc. Having the students begin in their home groups will help later with the multiple transitions that the students will be making.
20. Inviting each student to write comments allows every student to participate in an equal way and all at the same time. However, choose confident students (volunteers are best) to summarize as they are being asked to perform in front of their peers.
21. Jigsaw involves splitting the large group into home groups, which then regroup into expert groups. A home group will have a representative in each expert group. The easiest method for dividing a group for Jigsaw is to use a deck of playing cards. If your group has fewer than 6 students, your whole group will

act as the home group and you only then need to divide your group into 3. If you have more than 24 people, you may want to split your expert groups in half to make the room more manageable (e.g., all hearts with odd numbers form one group).

22. Transition times are when students get off topic or get distracted. Giving clear instructions and a length of time for the transition is a good way to simplify the process. If you naturally give a short break in the class this would be an excellent time to do so. Instruct the students to come back and sit in their home groups. (e.g. for Module 4, Lesson 4: “Thank you class, I heard some really great discussions happening and am impressed with how well you tackled a difficult subject. Now we need to go back to our home groups (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and share our newfound expertise. Let’s take one minute and organize ourselves back into our home groups. When you do so, begin with situation 1 and that person may share for a few minutes and then move to situation 2 and so on...”)
23. When transitioning from one activity to another, clear instructions are crucial. e.g. “Everyone sit where you are, and turn and face me. We are going to transition now to our group work. I will give you the instructions and divide you into your groups and after you have your instructions, we will

move.”

24. This can happen naturally; however, if you know of certain students who derail, or distract each other than you may want to arrange the pairings so that you can avoid distractions.
25. Project the verse on a screen to allow visual students the opportunity to see it.
26. You might want to predetermine where the groups work. Alternatively, you may allow the students to find their own places to work. Choose what works best for your students.
27. Use a time countdown to keep students on task as well as to prepare for a transition to another part of the activity. e.g., Call out “We have 5 minutes left.”
28. Whenever you serve food, ensure you are aware of any food allergies. As a general rule, ensure your food is nut-free.
29. There are multiple ways to check for understanding. Two common ways are: 1. Ask whether they have any questions; and 2. Have them repeat the instructions back.
30. You may want to physically demonstrate the logistics of an activity as you’re giving instructions.
31. You and your leaders should also be familiar with your

church's child protection policy and what the law requires in terms of reporting allegations of abuse.

32. It's great to have students ask questions. At times, those questions may sidetrack the conversation. Use your discretion to prayerfully decide whether to continue that discussion. At times, it may

be the Holy Spirit leading the conversation to something specific he wants them to see. At other times, it may be a distraction from where God was leading in the first place, in which case you could discreetly postpone the discussion for another time. For example, say, "That's a great question that we should take a look at later on [tonight, next week, etc.]"

33. If you communicate with your students through the week via text, Facebook, Twitter, email, etc., posting a reminder (of either a specific action they were going to take or a key verse they studied) is a great way to help them remember the lesson.