

## ELEVATE: Panorama

### Session #1: God's Perspective

**Session Objective:** This session's objective is to begin helping students become **aware** of God's perspective on life. It is a shorter session because we are aware that in your first weeks back there is much you want to be doing to develop community, reacquaint students to one another, and set some benchmarks for what will happen in your ministry over the coming year.

#### Minimum Prep:

- Read through the entire session outline.
- Have ready 1 envelope, paper and pen for each person (including adult leaders).

**Extended Prep:** If you have some extended prep time, try some of the following options:

- If you have access to the movie BRUCE ALMIGHTY cue it up to the scene right after Bruce and his girlfriend are having dinner in the restaurant and he begins to hear prayers in his head. Pause it at the exact moment when Bruce exits the restaurant and puts his head between his hands. Play through Bruce's entire encounter with God on the mountaintop (approx. 4 minutes) **PLAY CLIP AFTER QUESTION THREE HAS BEEN DISCUSSED.**
- Another idea is to take your group to the highest point in your area (e.g. CN Tower for Toronto, local ski hill, highest building, etc.). Conduct your discussion at that location.
- Preparing various panoramic scenes on overhead transparencies or through PowerPoint, and displaying them during the session to give a vision of a high viewpoint. Some images can be found on the Internet.
- For icebreaker or game ideas check out <http://www.egadideas.com/ideas.asp> or <http://www.youthspecialties.com/free/>
- Consider doing a values and life perspective survey at the beginning of the year. In addition to the exercise about their image of God, it would be beneficial for you to a survey so that you can gain a snapshot on the present values and life perspectives of your students. You could also mail this survey back to the students at the end of the year. Some questions to consider might include: Who are some of the most important people in your life and why? If you could ask God one question, what would it be. Pick the three issues below that you are most concerned with (world hunger, youth group relational dynamics, what courses you're going to take at university, the AIDS epidemic, gay marriage, TV violence, who you are going to the formal with, etc.) Also consider asking some general knowledge questions about issues that are likely of concern to God but not necessarily to them. Test their knowledge of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, of world hunger statistics, of the Ten Commandments, etc.

## Session Outline

**Pre- Session:** As people are entering in the room, have pens/pencils and paper available for people to do this activity.

### Small Group Questions:

1. **What's your idea of God? Write down your description, or draw an image that best represents your thoughts about God. When you're done, put it into the envelope, seal it, and write your home address on the front.**

*You'll be giving these back at the end of the year to see if your ideas of God have changed. If you're not around at the end of the year, we'll mail it back to your home.*

2. **When you need advice, where do you go? Whose opinion do you value? Why?**

*Their best friend. Their parents. A trusted teacher. An expert - Because that person has invested in them. They share common interests and values. That person has expertise in that subject.*

3. **Should God's opinion matter to us? Why or why not?**

**Leader's Note:** *You'll probably get some generic "Sunday school" answers. Probe their answers a bit deeper, to see if they really do value God's opinion, and how they practically do it in their lives. If some don't value God's opinion, probe some specific reasons (e.g. "I don't trust God"). However, affirm opinions given here without any judgement or attempt to change their opinion.*

**Say something like:** *Look out for a minute. (If you're at a high point, look outward. If you're using a transparency, have them imagine looking toward that image and placing themselves at that location.) A lot of the time, God's view is from up here. He sees the big picture of life, much broader than we can tend to see.*

*Now get down onto the ground and tell me what the smallest thing you see is. (Allow for a couple of answers.) If you take that smallest thing and put it under a microscope, you could see much smaller things. In fact, you could break it down past its molecules, atoms, electrons and who knows what else beyond that. God sees all these small details, even the infinitely small stuff people can't see.*

*God has a perspective that is both infinitely big and infinitely small.<sup>1</sup> He sees both the big picture and all the small details within it. He sees how it all works together. In the movie "Bruce Almighty", Bruce gives people whatever they ask for. He manipulated situations for his own purpose. But he never realized the consequences and outcomes of those actions (e.g. the riots).*

*If God is able to see and weigh all those factors, shouldn't we consider His perspective?*

**(PLAY VIDEO AT THIS POINT)**

4. How did Bruce's perspective on what is really important change after his mountaintop experience with God?
5. What did Bruce begin to do differently with his special powers after his visit to Mt. Everest?
6. Have you ever had a "mountain top experience" with the supernatural that changed how you understood life?
7. How do we begin to get God's perspective?

**Leader's note:** *Let them brainstorm without necessarily giving the answer.*

**Say something like:** *Over the next few weeks, we'll look at God's opinion about some different issues, about life itself and about you. One way we learn about God's perspective is through the Bible. While none of us knows everything, we're here to learn together what God's perspective is.*

Close in prayer, commissioning this year for the purpose of understanding and living by God's perspective.

**Leader Note:** *Contact Rob McAlpine at [compass@baptist.ca](mailto:compass@baptist.ca) with any thoughts, questions or suggestions.*

### **Comments and Feedback:**

**Leader Note:** This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

---



---



---



---



---



---

Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.