

Breathe

Module: Message of Jesus

Lesson 1: What does it mean to be a Christ-follower?

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- articulate the commitment and cost of being a follower
- communicate the sacrifice of the early followers

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Lined Paper
- ☐ Pens/pencils
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Copies of Appendix A

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Pre-select two students who will be “leaders” during the Minds On activity. It may be wise to choose students who are not likely to play tricks on others.
- Coach the two leaders to be creative in what they do, to be expressive, and to keep things moving.

- Give the second leader a flashlight and ask him/her to shine the flashlight on the followers' feet, the path, obstacles, etc. when the lights go out the second time. Instruct the second leader to keep the flashlight concealed until the lights go out when they are leading.

Minds On: (10 minutes)

Explain to the students that you will be starting with an activity together. Instruct the students that when you say “go” they are to follow the first pre-selected leader in single file around the room as best they can without talking. As you begin, have the first leader take one minute to lead the rest of the students around the room. If needed, verbally encourage the students to follow the leader. Youth leaders should be encouraged to follow as well so that everyone is following. After a minute, tell the students to continue to follow the leader, no matter what and then turn the lights off. Try lights-off only for a few moments using your discretion. When you decide to end this “lights-off” experiment, turn them back on for a moment and let the students know you are changing leaders. Next, switch the leader and try the exercise again; however, when you turn the lights off this time ensure the second leader turns on their flashlight (if they forget). End after a minute or two.

When finished, have students sit in a circle (or sit together in some way) and ask some of the following questions:

1. How did you feel as the follower? How did you feel about the leader?
2. What did you like? Not like?
3. Could you see anything when the lights went out? Was it hard to find the leader in the dark? How did the flashlight change things in this activity?
4. What does it mean to be a follower? What words describe the role of a follower? What sorts of things do you “give up” as a follower?

Action: (45 minutes)

As you finish the questions above, make mention of the transferrable ideas of being a follower in this game and how the students described it, to being a follower of Jesus. (e.g. You commit to going where the leader goes and doing what the leader does. You give up going the way you think you should go on your own.)

Stay in your large group for a moment, and ask the students:

- What else does it mean to be a follower of Jesus?
- How do they feel about committing to go where he sends them?
- What do they commit to doing for Jesus?

Take a few responses for each question– by raised hand.

Ask them if they know of any examples from the Bible of people who followed Jesus?

Can they name any of Jesus first followers (or disciples)?

(Note: The disciples of Jesus were: Simon-Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, another James, Thaddeus (in one of the Gospels Thaddeus is substituted with Jude/Judas), another Simon, Judas Iscariot.

If you have a large group, divide your students into groups of 3 or 4. Divide them up by month of birth (e.g. January birthdays go together, February birthdays go together, etc.) If you have an excess number of students born in the same month divide that month into the 1-15 and 16-30/31. Give each group a printout of the questions. Have each group select one person to look up this passage and read it aloud to their group: Luke 5:27-32. Once they read this passage, have them discuss the questions on the handout:

1. What did Levi (Matthew) give up to follow Jesus?
2. What do you think Levi gained in following Jesus?

3. What do you think it meant for Levi to follow Jesus? (Prompter: What changes would it have made to his life inside and out? How would his life be different from that moment on?)
4. Re-read verses 31 and 32. Why do you think Jesus makes this comment? What does it mean for us as people who he came to save? (e.g. We need to be willing to admit that we are not “healthy”, that we sin and need our doctor, Jesus. When we are sick, we admit that we need to go to the doctor to get well. In the same way, Jesus came for the “sick” sinner. He came to save those who know they need saving. We need to admit that we need saving.)
5. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus? If you already do, what makes you a follower of Christ? If you haven’t made a decision yet, what do you think it might mean for you to start following Jesus?

Leader’s Note:

The last question may feel a little loaded for small groups if there isn’t a leader involved with the students. If you feel it would be helpful to your group, have students transition from the small groups they are in, to pairs. By pairing with someone they are comfortable with, they may feel more open to share their answers aloud.

Together read John 8:12. Take another moment to “flashback” to the Minds on activity. Take just a moment to recap the conversation you had around that activity. How did the flashlight change the activity? In the same way, how does having Jesus as the Light who lights our way in the darkness change our lives?

As you highlight some of the students’ responses of what it means to truly follow Christ, have another leader hand out a pen and paper to each student for the next section.

Prompt:

With that in mind, let’s move to our Breathe In/Breath Out segment.

Consolidate/Debrief: (20 minutes)

Breathe In

While students take some time to do this Breathe In, play some worship music, either live or on a player to help set a reflective tone. Give each student a sheet of lined paper and pen. Allow them some time to write a prayer to God based on the discussion. Tell them to reflect on what it means to be lead by Jesus. What do they want to say to God today about following Jesus? Remind them that prayer can be communicating with God, not just requests.

Leader's Note:

Ensure that your leaders are still very present for the Breathe In activity. Just because students are working independently shouldn't mean that your leaders remove themselves. Encourage leaders to interact with students and nudge them along without being a distraction. If students need a helping hand, encourage leaders to buddy up with students and ask prompting questions around how to write a prayer. Simple suggestions like: "What do you want to say to God? What do you want to ask God about being lead by Jesus? What do you want to understand better?"

Breathe Out

On the other side of the paper, have students write at the top of the page: "This is how I follow Christ every day" or "These are the questions I have about following Christ". Have them list the ways that they follow Christ practically or the questions they have about what it means to follow Christ (this could be for seekers or Christian kids). Ask a few prompting questions if they need them: How do you follow Jesus at school? How do you follow Jesus at home? OR What could it look like to follow Jesus at school? What could it mean for your life to follow Jesus with all you are? Have them take home the paper and post it somewhere meaningful to them. Tell them to add to it helpful thoughts throughout their week, and/or, connect with a wise friend or trusted adult to discuss their questions.

Appendix A

Message of Jesus: What Does it Mean to be a Christ-Follower? Group Questions

Select a reader to look up and read aloud Luke 5:27-32 to your group. After they are done reading, have one person read one question at a time, and as a group talk about your answers.

1. What did Levi (Matthew) give up to follow Jesus?
2. What do you think Levi gained in following Jesus?
3. What do you think it meant for Levi to follow Jesus? (Prompter: What changes would it have made to his life inside and out? How would his life be different from that moment on?)
4. Re-read verses 31 and 32. Why do you think Jesus makes this comment? What does it mean for us as people who he came to save?
(Cheat notes: We need to be willing to admit that we are not “healthy”, that we sin and need our doctor, Jesus. When we are sick, we admit that we need to go to the doctor to get well. In the same way, Jesus came for the “sick” sinner. He came to save those who know they need saving. We need to admit that we need saving.)
5. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus? If you already do, what makes you a follower of Christ? If you haven’t made a decision yet, what do you think it might mean for you to start to follow Jesus?