

Breathe

Module: PLAYING THE GAME

Lesson 3: CHECKING THE SCORE

Objectives:

- Students will learn that faith cannot remain stagnant and a true relationship with Christ requires action.
- Students will understand that the “fruit” of our actions shows the world what kind of people Christians are.

Materials Needed

- ☐ Printed copies of Appendix A-E (or displayed via an overhead projector or LCD projector)
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Optional: copies of Appendix F
- ☐ Recipe cards
- ☐ Chart paper, markers
- ☐ A deck of playing cards in order (i.e. 2s, 3s, 4s, etc.)

Minds On

As an ice breaker game you could play “Fruit Basket”. Have everyone grab a chair and sit in a circle. There should be one less chair than there are players. Each person is assigned the name of a fruit (apple, orange, banana, pineapple, Guava, Dragon Fruit, etc.; feel free to be creative with the types of fruit). The player without a chair stands in the middle and calls out the name of a fruit. Everyone with that fruit name stands up and runs to a new seat. Whoever is left without a seat is the new caller. If the caller yells “FRUIT BASKET!” everyone needs to get up and switch seats. When switching seats, you are not allowed to take the seat directly on either side.

Action

Start the lesson by passing out copies of Appendix A-E. If you have access to a projector, you may just want to use that rather than printing copies. Take some time to allow students to laugh and talk about them a little bit.

Prompt: These memes show us that our perception, whether true or false, is a powerful tool in terms of shaping our view of the world. This sort of thinking can be applied to anything, including following God or being a Christian. What are some ways that people view Christianity or Christians, both positive and negative?

Have the students shout out some ideas as you write them down on the chart paper. Ask how the students feel Christian youth in particular are viewed. If helpful, have different columns drawn up on a different piece of paper with the following headings:
How society sees us | How our friends see us | How our Non-Christian relatives see us |
How our Christian Relatives see us | How the church sees us | How we see ourselves |
How we should be seen

In the last column, after the students have finished shouting out ideas, draw a cross at the very bottom and remind them that we should be seen by all as the representatives of Christ.

Give each student a playing card. Have them group together by suits (i.e. diamonds, clubs, hearts, spades). Assign Matthew 7:15-20 to the diamonds and hearts, Mark 11:11-25 to the clubs and spades (if you feel this passage is too long for them to handle, use Appendix F). Have them come up with a 1-sentence summary of the passage (i.e. the main idea of the passage). Each person should be prepared to share that answer with the next group.

Have students group based on their card number (i.e. all 2s, 3s, etc.). Students will share what answer had from their “suit” groups. Based on those answers, have them answer this question:

What are the common ties between the two passages?

Do think there is a relation between Jesus cursing the fig tree in Mark, and saying that trees that don't bear good fruit should be cut down and burned?

Who was not bearing good fruit?

How we can bear good fruit, and how that fruit will be evident?

After 10 min., gather everyone together and compare each number group’s answers.

(Optional if students have questions about the significance of the fig tree.) **Prompt:** This section can be confusing because of the whole fig tree thing. But we need to understand Jesus as being not only the Messiah, but also a teacher and a prophet. The verse opens with a trip to the temple. Jesus would have seen all the things that made him angry, but it was late so he decided to come back later. Then he sees the fig tree and curses it. Jesus was acting as a prophet and prophesying against the temple. The tree had no fruit, and likewise the temple was not producing any fruit. So Jesus curses it and declares it will never bear fruit again. The next day the tree was withered, about 40 years later the temple was destroyed.

Consolidate/Debrief

Prompt: Good fruit doesn't just happen. Like real fruit, it takes time to grow and have the proper nutrients produced in it. We should not be frustrated when our lives don't turn around instantly. Old habits die hard; but we should also not be satisfied staying where we are. We need to actively strive for the goal of producing good fruit. This is a good verse to remember: Matthew 25:40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" The way we treat others is the way we are treating Jesus. Our fruit should be evident even to the least of these people, whoever that is. A homeless person, someone at school you don't like who picks on you, or who you pick on, your brothers or sisters, your mom or dad. Whoever it is, that's Jesus, treat them like a King.

Breathe In: Have students reflect on ways that they can produce good fruit.

Breathe Out: Notify students that you will be sending them three different challenges in how they can bear fruit (whether it's by phone, text, social media, a blog or website). The following week, the group will debrief on their week's experience.

Leader's note: Here are the challenges to send out (the day listed is counted after this lesson date):

- **Day 2:** Keep someone going this week. It's easy to get down or discouraged. Find someone in need of comfort and encouragement and let them know that you are thinking of them and that you believe in them (and help them out if you can!)
- **Day 4:** Remind someone of their value! Too many people feel worthless. Find someone who needs a good reminder of how much God loves them, and by extension how much you love them.
- **Day 6:** Take a load off someone! See someone struggling with their books? Their bag? Their groceries? Or maybe they are dealing with an emotional burden? Whatever it is, take it for them, help them get to where they are going.

Appendix A

YOUTH MINISTER



What society thinks I do



What parents think I do



What the Chairman of
Deacons thinks I do



What I think I do



What I will never do



What I really do

Appendix B

ONLINE GAMER



What Society Thinks I do...



What My Friends Think I do...



What My Cat Thinks I do...



What My Pizza Place Thinks I do...



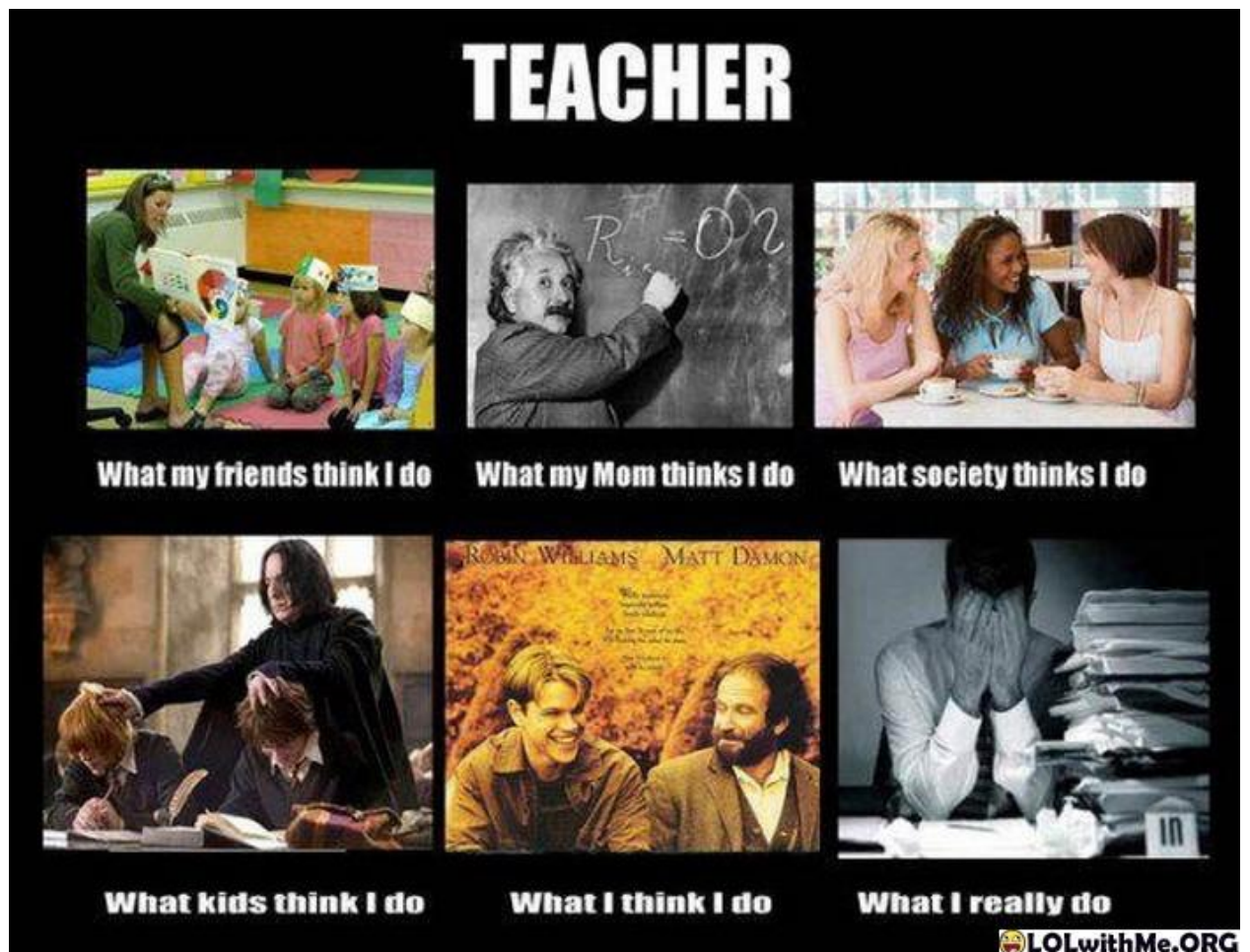
What I Think I do...



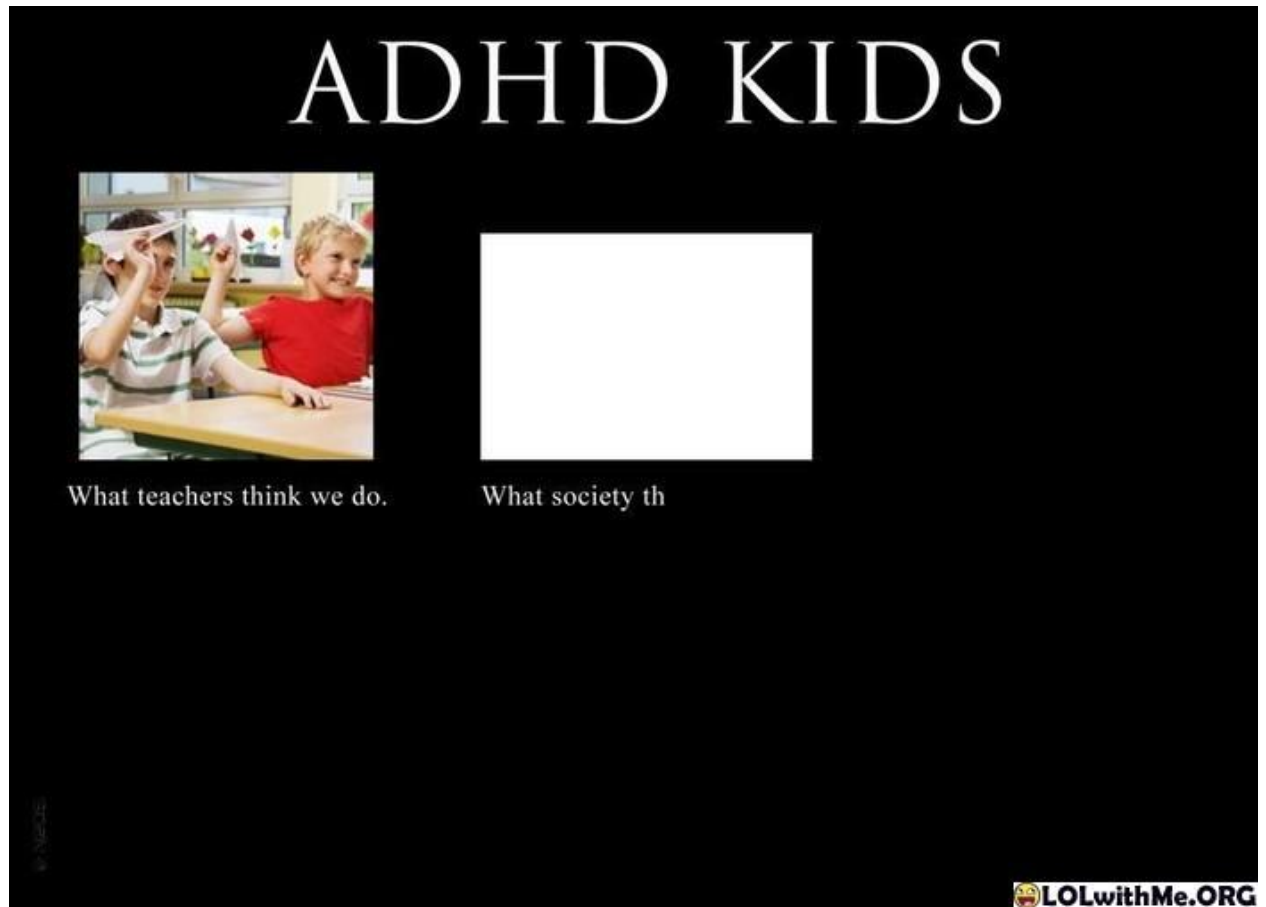
What I Actually Do...

 **LOLwithMe.ORG**

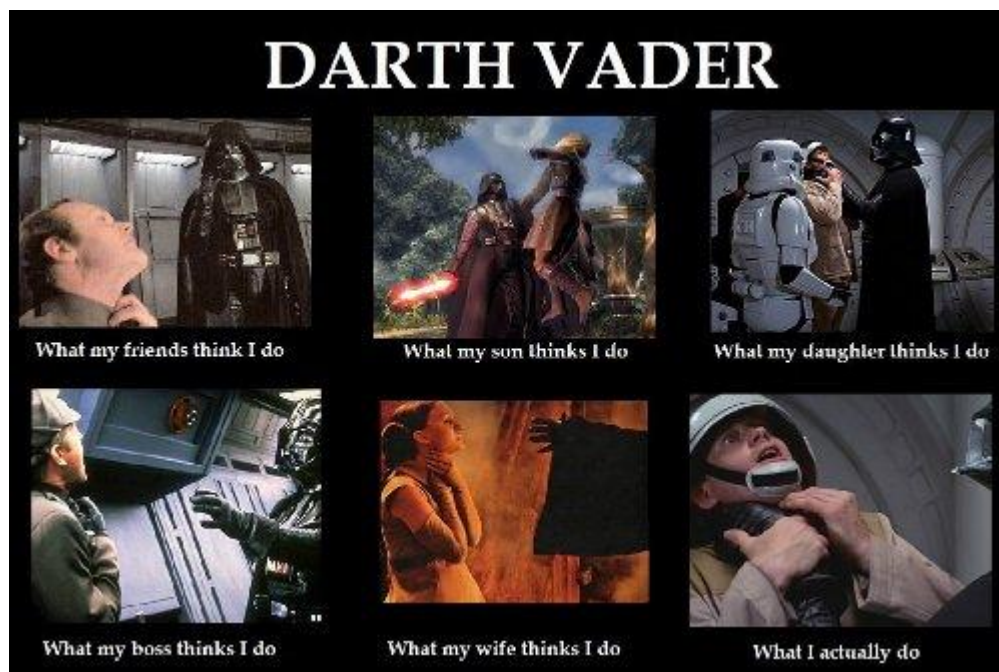
Appendix C



Appendix D



Appendix E



APPENDIX F

In Mark chapter 11 Jesus and his disciples were going to Jerusalem. The Bible says Jesus entered the temple and took a look around and then left. On his way out he saw a fig tree that didn't have any figs on it. The weird thing is that even though figs were out of season Jesus gets mad and curses the fig tree and says "May no one eat fruit from you again!" The next day Jesus goes back to the temple and he is angry and starts turning over tables and kicking out all these people who are exchanging currency and selling sacrificial doves and stuff; and he says "My house is a house of prayer for all nations, but you have turned it into a den of robbers!" When they left the temple that day the disciples saw the fig tree that Jesus cursed the day before and it was withered up from its roots, and they were amazed. Jesus then tells them that we can do a lot of amazing things by having faith in God.