

I Dare You

Module: Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson 4: Celebration

Objectives:

Students will

- gain perspective on the importance of celebrating life
- understand that joy is not just a feeling but a way of life
- See that the Christian life is not to be a boring exercise in following someone's rules

Materials Needed

- ☐ paper, pens
- ☐ copies of the handout "Celebration"
- ☐ Bibles and/or visual representations of the passages from the celebration handout above

Minds On

As an opening to this lesson, consider throwing a ‘We love you and appreciate you’ party. The purpose of the party is to celebrate your youth. It will also set the tone for the day. Set up ahead of time so that students are walking into a party atmosphere. Have some snacks and fun games ready to start your time together.

Say something like: We have now gone through a few of the spiritual disciplines of engagement. Following this module will come a module covering spiritual disciplines of abstinence. These are disciplines where we remove something from our lives in order to grow closer to Jesus. Before launching into that series it is important to highlight one of the often forgotten disciplines. That is the discipline of celebration.

Begin by having your students draw up a list of all the things we have to celebrate as Christians. Allow several minutes to compile a list.

Follow up with the question “why is it important for us to celebrate?” Give time for responses.

Action

In order to properly understand celebration as a way of life, have your students work through the attached sheet of scripture passages. Depending on the size of your group, you may want to split them into smaller groups to facilitate this exercise. The object is for them to identify celebration in a biblical context. Have the groups come together and share their perspectives on the passages. (Note: an alternate approach would be to have visual representations of each passage, and have students pull out from each picture or painting what is “celebratory”.)

It is very clear from the Bible that we are to live joyfully. But what does that mean? Spend some time as a group defining joy. Use dictionaries and any other resources you can think of to come up with a clear definition of what joy is. Ensure that the definition includes the reality that joy is more than a feeling. It is not just an emotion. It is a way of life. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to give thanks in all things. Not for all things, in all things. That is an important distinction to make. The Bible is not telling us to be

happy with everything that is going on around us. Joy stems from our choice to see the world with God at the centre.

And yet there are so many things that drag us down. Often we don't have joy because it is sucked right out of us. Have your students spend 3 – 5 minutes talking about the things in their lives that suck the joy out of them. What is getting in the way of them finding joy on a regular basis? Have them come up with practical ways that they can avoid or counteract these joy-suckers.

Consolidate/Debrief

You want your students to walk away from this lesson with the reality that God never intended our lives to be a “drag”. He wants us to be filled with joy and to celebrate every day. Have students spend a couple of minutes coming up with one or two practical ways that they can focus on practicing celebration this coming week.

Close in prayer. Spend some time praying for any specific areas that students are having the joy sucked out of them.

At the end of the lesson, leave some time for students to enjoy the party you started when they arrived. Have them leave from that atmosphere of celebration!