

Momentum/Friction

Module: What's YOUR Excuse?

Lesson I: What's YOUR Excuse? Introductory Lesson

Objectives:

- Students will consider the excuses that they make on a regular basis.
- Students will explore how excuses keep them from doing what God wants.

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Bibles (if students will be reading different parts of the passage)

Minds On

The Excuses Game:

Have everyone sit in a circle. The game begins with the first person giving a command to the person on their left. That person then comes up with an excuse as to why they will not do what is being asked of them, and then turns to the person on their left and gives another command.

For example:

Person 1) Make me a sandwich

Person 2) I don't have any bread...Go buy me some bread

Person 3) I don't have any money...Give me \$5.

Person 4) I'm sorry, I spent all my money...Go rob a bank...

etc...

Depending on your group, you may need to set some guidelines in order to maintain an appropriate tone. There is potential for things to get out of hand. You may want to distribute leaders or trusted students throughout the circle who can help to redirect the conversation if necessary.

In order to keep things moving, have a time limit for responses (e.g. 3 seconds). You can also make a rule that there is to be no repetition of either excuses or commands and eliminate players that take too long or say something that has already been said. If the game goes too long, consider shortening the time limit or adding certain words or phrases that cannot be said. (Such as uhmm, no, go, etc...) The last remaining player is declared the winner.

Action

Say something like...*It's amazing how good we are at making excuses. If you were to honestly think about the number of excuses you have made today, or this week, or this month, I think we would be pretty overwhelmed. And while certainly there are some good reasons for not doing*

things, a lot of times we simply make excuses to get out of doing things that are too hard, are inconvenient, or that we just don't want to do.

Over the next few weeks, we will be looking at some of the excuses people use to get out of doing what God wants them to do. Some examples could include sharing their faith with a friend at school, or being nice to the kid that no one else is nice to, or maybe it's not doing something that you know isn't right, even if others will make fun of you.

The reality is that we are not alone in this. The Bible is actually full of people who made excuses to try and get out of doing what God was asking them to do. In fact, people have been making excuses since the beginning of time!

Invite your students to take a look at Genesis 3:1-12. Walk through the passage together, paying close attention to verses 8-12. While reading, you may want to assign students to different parts (i.e. one could be the narrator, one could read the part of the serpent, one could be Eve, etc...). After reading the passage, you could also pre-select a few students and have them play out this scene as a skit.

The goal is to help your students see that the initial response of both Adam and Eve was to give an excuse as to why they didn't want to do what was asked of them. In Adam's case, he gives the excuse that it was God's fault, rather than taking responsibility for his own actions. Ask your students why they think Adam and Eve reacted in this way. Help them to make connections between their own responses when they get in trouble and what Adam and Eve did in this passage.

Following this, lead your students in a discussion about excuses in general.

Some sample questions would be:

Why do you think people use excuses?

How often do you use excuses?

What sort of things do you use excuses to avoid doing?

How do you feel when people give you excuses, rather than doing what you have asked them to do?

Consolidate/Debrief

Say something like...Many times the reason that we use excuses is to get ourselves out of trouble or to avoid doing something that is unpleasant. The reality is that excuses can actually be more harmful than helpful. They can actually hold us back and keep us from succeeding. If you are constantly making excuses, eventually you may start to believe them! God has made each of us and he loves us! He has a great plan for you and for me. If we are busy making excuses we may miss out on the adventure he has in store for us.

Invite students to pair up with someone that they trust and make a commitment to doing something positive that they have been avoiding with excuses. Encourage them to set a “due date” or timeline to help with accountability. Have them pray together to close the session.

Depending on your group, an optional exercise is to close by talking through the following quote from William Shakespeare.

*And oftentimes, excusing of a fault,
Doth make a fault the worse by the excuse;
As patches set upon a little breach,
Discredit more in hiding of the fault,
Than did the fault before it was so patch'd.*
(King John Act iv. Sc. 2)