

# **Rooted in Messy Community**

## **Lesson 1: Life's Struggles**

### **Objectives:**

Students will

- identify personal life struggles
- explore and discuss Benaiah the warrior
- role play assisting others in current life struggles
- resolve to collaborate in handling life's struggles

### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ Chaise lounge chair or equivalent
- ☐ 3x5 cards (one per student)
- ☐ Lesson 1 handout ("Life's Struggles")
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Whiteboard

## **Minds On**

As students enter the room, have them take a 3x5 card and move quickly to their seat. Ask students to write on the card a specific life challenge that they have heard people talk with a counsellor about. Remind them that the challenge can be one that they face personally or one that they've heard about. (This is not intended to be an actual situation that they are currently dealing with.) Encourage them to keep the challenge they write down a secret from others for a role-play that will happen once everyone arrives.

Once everyone has arrived and written down the life challenge, invite a volunteer to the front to sit in the chaise lounge (or equivalent). When they are lying down, invite someone to be their "counsellor" and encourage them to role play a conversation between a counsellor and a patient as if the situation were real. Encourage them to ask engaging questions that allow the "patient" to speak honestly about their "life challenge." After the conversation begins to diminish, invite another counsellor and patient to the front to role play another situation.

At the end of several role plays, provide an opportunity for people to comment on how it felt to be the patient. Ask them what it felt like to be the counsellor. After some discussion about those questions, say something along the lines of: Our focus today is to begin to recognize some of our own life struggles and to start to develop a plan on how to deal with our struggles from a Biblical perspective and from the perspective of Christian community.

## **Action**

After the role-plays and discussion, invite the students to break into two different groups. Once the students are split into two groups, provide each group with one of the scripture passages below. Allow the students to read the passages aloud in their groups. Provide questions for each group (these are also available on Lesson 1 handout, which you may wish to copy and cut apart for the two groups):

### **Group #1 – 2 Samuel 23:20**

#### **Questions:**

1. What are Benaiah's strengths according to this passage?
2. Why do you think Benaiah didn't run from the lion?
3. What do you think this lion represents in this story?
4. Can you equate Benaiah's "killing of the Lion" to a challenge of life that you need to "chase into a hole and kill?"

### **Group #2 – Mark 2:1-12**

#### **Questions:**

1. What was the life struggle of the man on the mat?
2. Why did his friends want to see Jesus?
3. What was keeping them from getting to Christ?
4. How did they finally get their friend into the presence of Christ?
5. What three characteristics could you identify in these four friends?

After the groups have spent time reading the scripture passages and discussing their answers, invite them to share their answers through a spokesperson they choose. Compare their answers to that of real life situations in their lives. Provide adequate time for students to express how these Bible stories relate to their own personal struggles.

### **Consolidate/Debrief**

Ask for a volunteer to be the recorder at the white board for the following activity. Invite feedback to the question, "what are some life struggles your friends are dealing with?" Allow time for students to mention struggles that their friends are dealing with. After a number of struggles have been listed, invite feedback on how we as Christian friends could respond to each situation. Encourage concise answers rather than long explanations on what they might do.

Invite the students to take a piece of paper and a pen to write down a personal struggle they see one of their own friends dealing with currently. Then invite them to write down on the same paper a personal struggle they themselves are having currently.

After a time of reflection, invite students to gather together in groups of three to pray. If students don't feel comfortable sharing their personal struggles, encourage them to share the struggle of their friends and then have each student pray for another student in the group.

At the end of the prayer time, assure the students that you (the leader/teacher) will also be praying for them. Be sure to challenge them to share this personal struggle with someone whom they trust, who can help them deal personally with their current struggles.