

## Connected: Created to Belong

### Module 5: Qualifications

Qualifications are, in their most basic form, expectations for a role. Professional baseball players are expected to have experience playing the game and a certain amount of talent. We live in a world where we are expected to have the right qualifications. Moving on to the next grade, getting into college and acquiring the right job are all stages of life where we are expected to meet certain qualifications. If we do not meet the qualifications, we risk getting excluded and missing out on something that could have been valuable.

Having to meet a qualification certainly has its value. It helps us work hard and focus on the goal that is ahead. It helps us understand what is expected of us as well as what is and is not acceptable. However, what if we cannot meet the qualifications and never will? How do we move forward and avoid exclusion?

In this module we are going to look at the qualifications God asks of us. We will see that the qualifications expected of us are impossible without his supernatural help.

In lesson 1 we will see that our first qualification is **to be without sin**. God created us to live in perfect relationship with him. Our lives and our bodies should be living testimonies to our love for God. A life that is sinless will not perish, but will live in perfect harmony with God forever. Unfortunately, we have all fallen short of this requirement. The good news, however, is that Jesus has come to put right what we could not achieve. Jesus' death on the cross removed sin and offered the gift of forgiveness to each of us. When we join God's family, he sees us through the perfection of Jesus Christ.

In lesson 2 we will see that our next qualification is **to obey God's plan**. Each of us has special gifts and talents that God has given us. We all have experiences and encounters that God places in our path for his glory. God has a plan for each of our lives, which is uniquely made according to who we are. When we follow his plan we will be at our most productive. Unfortunately, we all go off course and find ourselves lost at times. The good news, however, is that God is a God of grace and there is nowhere we can go that is too far to be useless to him and his kingdom. God's grace finds us and creates a new path for us that starts right where we are.

In lesson 3 we will see that our next qualification is **to love others**. Each person has been created by God and is loved by God. We are required to love each person we encounter the way that God loves him or her. Unfortunately, we often find limits to our love. Some people prove to be unlikeable, ungrateful, nasty and rude. Others are outside the box and just don't fit into our comfort zone, so they too get left behind. The good news, however, is that God says as we journey with him and get his heart and eyes, we will experience the same love for others that God has for each of us.

In lesson 4 we see that our next qualification is **to keep going**. God does not promise an easy life of rainbows and unicorns when we come into his family. In fact, God says it is going to be a tough grind at times. God asks us to keep going and to battle through even when our circumstances and situation might tell us otherwise. We are to have the same strength that Jesus displayed as he went to the cross. Unfortunately, we will have days when we want to pack it all in and quit. We will look up at the sky and see no sense in anything we have been

taught. We have days where we let down God and then knock ourselves down too. The temptation is stay there, but the good news, is that God gives us his strength to get through these days. The same strength that put the stars in their place is available to each of us when we feel like giving up.

It is time to learn how to get qualified.

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### Module 5: Qualifications

#### Lesson 1: We Are Required to Be Without Sin

#### Spiritual Aims

Students will hopefully:

- have a deeper understanding of their need (not just want) for Jesus
- trade their old lives for the ones Jesus offers

#### Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- identify the purpose of Jesus' redeeming work as an exchange of their old sinful lives for new ones
- distinguish the destructive nature of sin

#### Materials Needed

- 2 blank pieces of paper per person
- 1 pen per person
- Optional: Protractor
- Optional: 1 small prize
- 1 Bible per 3 or 4 people [teaching tip 7]
- Recording paper and pen
- 1 copy of Appendix A per student
- 1 copy of Appendix B per student
- An audio system to play reflective, instrumental music of your choice (e.g., [naturesoundsfor.me](http://naturesoundsfor.me))
- 1 garbage can

#### Minds On

**Ask:** Who are some people who are close to perfect at what they do? (You could suggest some examples like LeBron James for basketball, Katy Perry for music, Barack Obama for politics, etc.)

**Prompt:** Everyone has a different perspective of what is perfect and what is not, who is close to achieving it and who isn't. We have all probably heard the expression practise makes perfect and there is a theory that if you practise something for 10,000 hours you will be perfect at it. However, we all make mistakes and none of us is perfect.

#### Perfect Circle:

1. Give each student a sheet of paper and a pen.
2. Have students draw a perfect circle on the paper freehand within 30 seconds. (A perfect

- circle has an exact radius from the centre of the circle to all points on the outer edge.)
3. Afterwards, have your leaders judge which one was closest to a perfect circle. You can use a protractor to draw an overlapping perfect circle to determine which was closest.)
  4. Optional: Award the winner a small prize.

**Prompt:** Drawing a perfect circle is harder than it appears to be. Perfection as a whole is impossible to attain.

**Ask:** [teaching tip 4] What is sin? Does God ask too much of us? (Allow at least 3 students to share their answers.)

**Prompt:** In this lesson we are going to be looking at how we are each called to live a sinless life if we want to live in relationship with God for eternity. It is a huge task and we will see what it means for us going forward.

### **Action**

Have a volunteer read Matthew 5:48 [teaching tip 6].

**Prompt:** In this verse Jesus asks us to imitate God and be perfect just as he is perfect. Right before this Jesus had been talking about how we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. I am sure many have failed at this. This may be an overwhelming message to hear.

This next exercise is aimed to highlight how we have fallen short of what was asked of us — living a sinless life.

### **Hitting the Target:**

1. Each student will need a plain piece of white paper.
2. Have them write their names on the paper and draw a small sketch (something that is personal to them).
3. Next instruct them to make it into a paper airplane.
4. Ask students to throw their airplanes to a target designated by you (see note below).

**Leader's note:** Set a target that is impossible for the planes to reach (e.g., a small placemat in the middle of the room, which you put a bowl over to make it impossible to land on; or if you have a large space, the target could be on the wall at the other end or even on the ceiling).

**Prompt:** Some did better than others. Some flew well earlier on and then faded away and some never got going. However, all of them fell short of what was asked. None of them made it to the goal. This is like us — we have all fallen short of what was asked of us. None of us have lived the sinless lives that God asked us to live.

4. Instruct students to find their own planes.
5. Ask each person to reshape his or her plane so it is back to its original flat form.

**Prompt:** Your paper is no longer the perfect, blank piece you started with. You can try and flatten it and fold it back but it will never go back to the way it was. This is also like us; once we have made a mistake we cannot go back to perfection.

**Word Association:**

1. Have students gather in groups of 3 or 4 by clustering them yourself.
2. Have them read 1 Peter 2:24–25 together in their groups.  
They will generate a list of words that can represent the phrase “by his wounds you have been healed” (e.g., “liberation”, “freedom”, “reborn”, “fresh start”, etc.).
3. After 5 minutes, bring everyone back to the large group.
4. Have 1 group share 1 of their words. Write it on the recording paper. Have the second group share a word not yet given. Continue until all the answers have been given.

Give each student a new piece of paper. Have them hold their paper-airplane paper in their left hand and the new paper in the right hand.

**Prompt:** These 2 papers represent an image about our lives. Since we were born into a broken world, there is no chance at perfection on our own. To try to attain perfection is impossible, like making your paper airplane back into a paper without any markings or creases. We should celebrate and accept that Jesus offers each of us a new life — one that is redeemed, one where the imperfections have been forgiven and one that will never cease. He’s essentially exchanged your old paper for a new one, a life that is considered pure.

**Consolidate/Debrief**

**Prompt:** To live a life that is sinless, a life that does not perish and one that is in perfect harmony with God forever, we need Jesus. We can’t do it by ourselves. We can take our good deeds and put them next to perfection but they will not add up. We all make mistakes and God knows that so he sent Jesus.

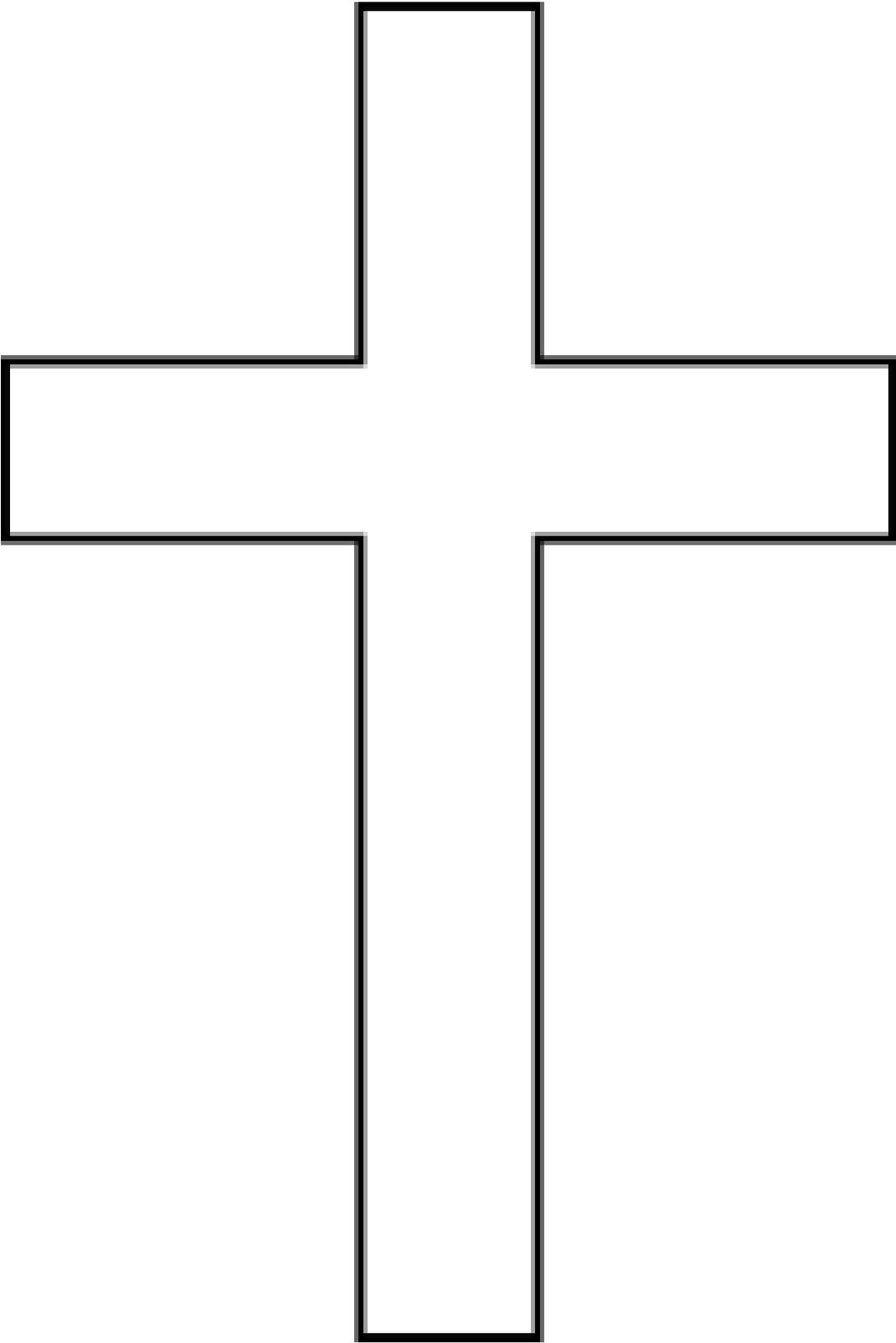
Hand each person a copy of Appendix A. Play some reflective music and read the words “he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless” aloud a couple of times.

Then invite students to find a space and write the mistakes they have made in the cross — maybe some that have been burning in their hearts for a while. Assure them that no one else is going to be seeing what is written. When they are done, encourage them to take the paper and rip it up and put it in the garbage. Afterwards, hand them a copy of Appendix B and ask them to read those words quietly and repeatedly.

**Leader’s note:** Some students may not be ready to release some of their mistakes. Have some of your leaders available to discuss their reasons. Don’t push them into completing the activity if they’re not ready yet.

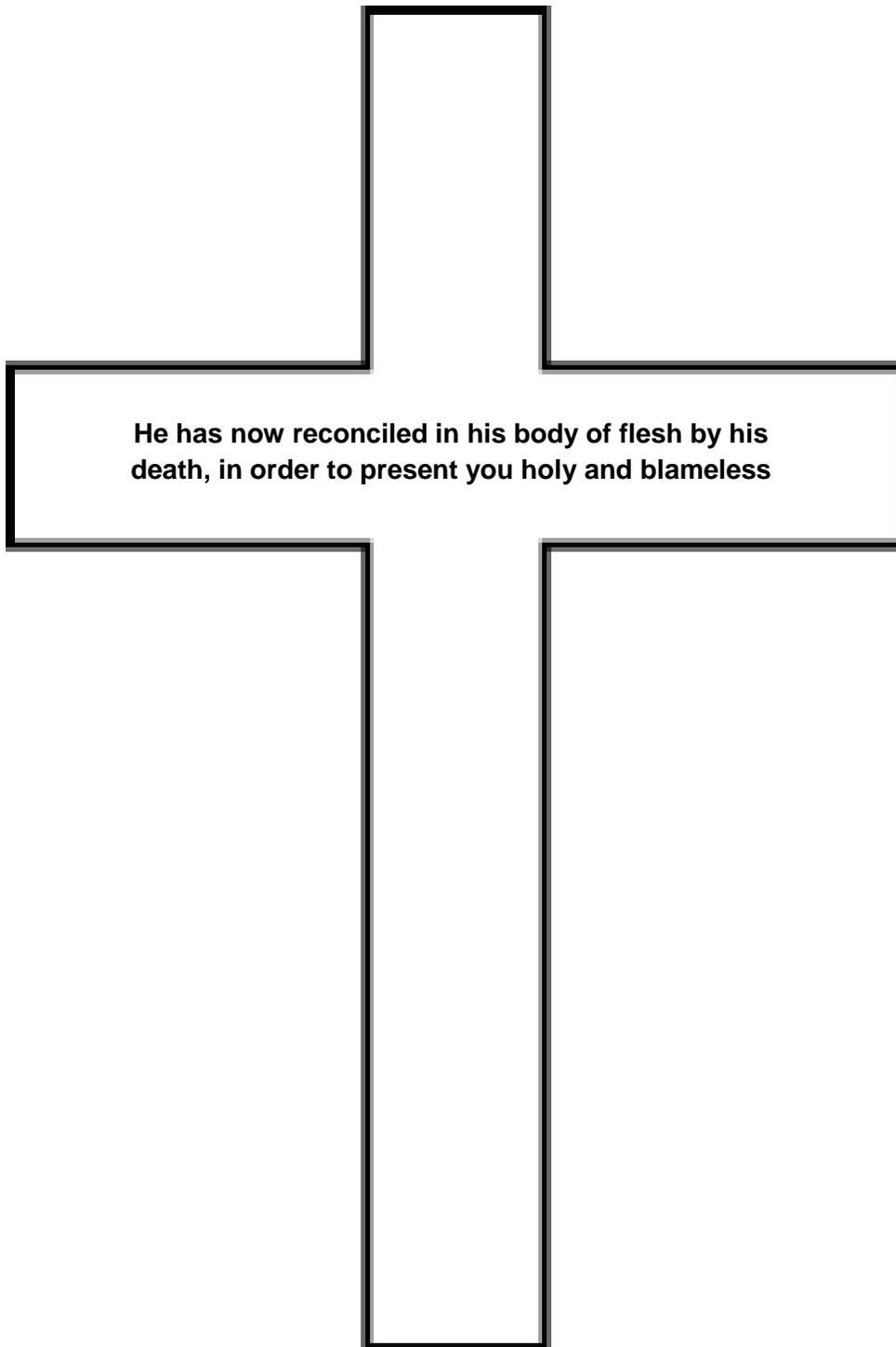
**Prompt:** The aim is for us to be sinless. The only way for us to be sinless is through Jesus. God knows we have failed and that we cannot go backwards. So he sent Jesus and asks us only to trust him and take that step of faith. That way, he can present us as blameless followers of God.

**Appendix A**



**Appendix B**

**Colossians 1:22 ESV**



**Connected: Created to Belong**

**Module 5: Qualifications**

## **Lesson 2: We Are Required to Obey God's Plan**

### **Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

- see the paths God has laid out for them
- move in the directions God is showing them
- recognize how God made them is unique to his plans for them

### **Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

- recognize the right direction is more important than the perfect path
- identify how God made them is integral to his plans for them

### **Materials Needed**

- 1 Ping-Pong ball per 5 to 7 students (or use similar materials, such as a hard-boiled egg or a rolled up ball of tinfoil)
- A variety of craft supplies (e.g., scissors, pipe cleaners, empty water bottles, empty boxes, yarn, string, etc.)
- Optional: 5 to 7 small prizes
- Playing cards in order (i.e., all 2s, 3s, 4s, etc. together)
- 1 Bible per student
- 1 sheet of chart paper per 4 people
- 1 marker per 4 people
- 1 roll masking tape
- 1 copy of Appendix C per student
- 1 pen per student

### **Pre-Lesson Preparation**

- Have all the craft supplies in a pile in the middle of the room. Students should form a circle around the pile when they arrive.

### **Minds On**

#### **Ping-Pong Ball Transport:**

1. Divide students by clustering them into groups of 5 to 7 people.
2. Give each group a Ping-Pong ball (or substitution of your choice).
3. They are to work together in their groups and use the craft supplies to create mechanisms that will throw their Ping-Pong balls towards a target 5 feet away. The only restriction is they cannot move the balls directly with their hands or feet.
4. Give them 10 minutes to design and implement their strategies before showing it to the large group.

5. Have the groups show their mechanisms.
6. Optional: Reward the team whose ball goes the farthest with a small prize.

**Prompt:** These were some interesting designs. We'll come back to them later.

## Action

### Jigsaw Expert Groups:

1. Hand each student a playing card.
2. When you say "go", they will gather into expert groups based on their suits. Designate a space for each group.
3. The red suits (i.e., diamonds and hearts) will look at Psalm 139:13–17. The black suits (i.e., spades and clubs) will look at Jeremiah 29:10–14.
4. Each group has 5 minutes to come up with a summary statement about their given passage.
5. Each person should be prepared to share his or her group's answer.
6. Have students repeat the instructions.

### Jigsaw Home Groups:

1. Before leaving their expert groups, ask each student to thank their group for their discussion.
2. When you say "go", students will find their home groups by joining up with people who have the same numbers on their playing cards. They will meet in the space you designate for them.
3. Each team member will share their expert group's summary statements.
4. Afterwards, they will create a 1-sentence statement that combines the main idea of both passages.
5. Once they have finalized their answers, have each group write theirs on a sheet of chart paper and post it on a designated wall.
6. After teams have posted their answers, review each and draw the similarities between them. If possible, try to form a consensus summary statement from the home group answers.

**Suggested answer:** Because God has a specific direction he wants us to go, he created us uniquely with gifts and talents to carry out the plan he has for us.

**Prompt:** Think back to your Ping-Pong ball mechanism from earlier. You had a specific plan for it to work well. Together, you designed a way for the ball to hit the target. In a similar way, God has a plan tailored to you. Maybe a better statement is he wants you to move in the direction he's already moving, and he has equipped you with the gifts and talents to do so well.

## Consolidate/Debrief

Students can choose to do this activity in pairs or individually.

Have them take Appendix C and a pen. Take 5 to 10 minutes to begin answering the questions.

**Leader's note:** Pay attention to see if anyone may be "stuck". Gently approach them to see if you could help clarify their thoughts. Ask questions to help unpack their possibly jumbled

thoughts.

**Prompt:** You may know the answers to those questions. Maybe you don't yet and that's okay. The key here isn't to figure it all out, but to answer the last question: "Do you want to move in the direction God is leading you?" Going where God leads you is called "obedience". That's the most important part, even if you haven't figured out everything else yet.

**Leader's note:** You may want to suggest students find a mentor or a life coach to help figure out some of the questions in Appendix C.

## **Appendix C**

What direction is God leading you? If you're not sure, how might you find out?

Given what you know about yourself so far, how does "how you're made" help you to continue in that direction?

Do you want to move in the direction God is leading you?

## **Connected: Created to Belong**

### **Module 5: Qualifications**

#### **Lesson 3: We Are Required to Love Others**

#### **Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

- be filled by the Holy Spirit
- have the Holy Spirit overflow to others around them

#### **Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

- distinguish between being shaken up (i.e., sharing God's love) and unshaken (i.e., keeping God's love to themselves)
- have a deeper understanding of God's love and its example to them
- have a deeper understanding of their call to love and show kindness to their "neighbours"

#### **Materials Needed**

- Recording paper and pen
- 1 Bible per student [teaching tip 7]
- 3 sheets of chart paper
- Markers for students to share
- 3 small bottles of Coke
- 3 pairs of protective eyewear (e.g., goggles)
- Alternative: Equipment to view "soda shake" video clip:  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK25YQNyjcE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK25YQNyjcE) [teaching tip 1]
- 6 pads of Post-it Notes (3 each of 2 different colours)
- 1 pen per student
- 2 sheets of chart paper (1 titled "Excuses for not helping" and the other titled "Reasons for helping")
- Tape
- 1 copy of Appendix D per student

#### **Pre-Lesson Preparation**

- Ensure you have a large, outdoor space for the shaken Coke to explode. You may choose to have a leader open the bottles instead of a student. You may conduct the entire lesson outdoors or go indoors after the Coke explosion activity.

#### **Minds On**

Divide the group into 2. Assign each half 1 of the following questions:

- Group 1: What are some of the reasons people do nice things for one another?
- Group 2: Who would you not do something nice for?

**Prompt:** Often we find ourselves with motives for why we offer love and kindness to others. It may be because we want to get something back for ourselves, or maybe it's because we want to feel good, but rarely does it seem it is just for the joy of being kind. And then we may be choosy about who we love and show kindness to. If someone does not look like us or doesn't fit in or has a shady history, we can make excuses as to why they don't deserve our love and kindness.

**Ask:** Do you know some Christians who are good at showing the love of God to others? (Have a volunteer write the answers on the recording paper.)

**Prompt:** Today we are going to look at how God asks us to love others. Sometimes this is easy and sometimes it is difficult. But we have to begin by trying.

### Action

**Leader's note:** If you already have a smaller group, you can do this activity all together. Larger groups can have more groups looking at the same passages.

1. Split the group into 3 smaller groups, with no more than 5 students per group. Give each group 1 of the following Bible passages:
  - Group 1: John 13:34–35
  - Group 2: 1 John 4:19–21
  - Group 3: 1 Corinthians 13:1
2. Invite groups to read their passages together.
3. Instruct each small group to draw a picture to summarize the passage.
4. Afterwards, have a spokesperson share what his or her group's picture represents.

**Suggested answer:** God calls us to love others the same way that he loves us. Our love for others will be the outcome of knowing that love.

**Prompt:** The following exercise demonstrates how knowing God's love can shake us into action.

### Shaken Up:

1. Give each group 1 bottle of Coke.
2. Instruct them to shake the bottle as much as they like for 1 minute.
3. After that minute, send 1 member of each group outdoors (wearing protective eyewear). Allow others who would like to watch to go with them. Some students may wish to stay out of the "splash zone".
4. Ask each group to open their bottles. Coke will obviously come flying out of them.
5. The group with the least amount of Coke left in their bottle is the winner.

**Optional:** If you're not able to do this activity, you can view something similar at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK25YQNyjcE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pK25YQNyjcE).

**Prompt:** When we know God's love, we can't help but be shaken into action and it causes an overflow in our hearts where we have to do something.

Have a volunteer read John 7:38.

**Prompt:** Like the image of the shaken Coke bottle, the Holy Spirit wants to fill you with God's love to the point that it overflows to others around you.

**Ask:** However, we don't always show love to others. What are the some of the reasons we don't show kindness towards others? (After a minute or 2, ask 3 or 4 students to share their answers.)

### **Post-it Note Brainstorming:**

1. Ask students to return to their groups.
2. Give each group 2 stacks of Post-it Notes (each a different colour).
3. Have them read Luke 10:25–37.
4. On 1 colour of notes, they are to write the excuses they found for not helping someone (1 item per Post-it).
5. On the other colour, they are to write the reasons they found for helping someone.
6. After 5 minutes, each group will send 1 person up to stick the appropriate Post-its on the corresponding chart paper (ensure this is taped to the wall during the discussion). If possible, have them overlap similar answers together.
7. When all the Post-its have been posted, review the answers submitted and ask if anyone would like to change any of them. Allow students time to debate if necessary on the submitted reasons until they reach a consensus.

**Prompt:** We have all made mistakes when helping others. We have all had moments when we have chosen our own needs and comforts over the call to help someone in need. We are all underqualified for this job. However, the good news is, thanks to Jesus, we are all called to keep going and try again. The Samaritan in the story likely made mistakes in the past but he came through this time. Make sure that you are ready the next time you are called upon and God says that he will help each of us.

### **Consolidate/Debrief**

Hand each person a copy of Appendix D, with the statement: "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Invite them to write the names of 5 people who they would not consider family or friends. Next to each name, ask them to write 1 realistic act of kindness they could do for that person. It does not have to be anything big. Encourage the young people to do their best to do these things. If they feel comfortable enough, invite them to share with a friend what it is they have set for themselves to do, so they have an accountability partner. Remind them that we have the ability to be the answer to someone else's prayer.

## **Appendix D**

**Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.**

## **Connected: Created to Belong**

### **Module 5: Qualifications**

#### **Lesson 4: We Are Required to Keep Going**

#### **Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

- encourage one another to keep on going
- trust it is God who gives them strength to keep going

#### **Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

- identify what hinders someone from moving forward
- acknowledge that moving forward includes journeying together with other Christians

#### **Materials Needed**

- 4 buckets (2 full of water)
- 2 sponges
- Alternative: 2 basketballs or soccer balls
- 1 piece of paper per student
- 1 copy of Appendix E per 3 or 4 students
- 1 pen per student
- 1 copy of Appendix F per student

#### **Pre-Lesson Preparation**

- In a designated area outdoors, have 2 buckets full of water and a sponge in each at 1 end of the space and 2 empty buckets at least 15 feet away.

#### **Minds On**

##### **Bucket & Sponge Game:**

1. Arrange the buckets and sponges as per the Pre-Lesson Preparation instructions.
2. Split the group into 2 teams.
3. Each person takes a turn soaking the sponge in their team's water-filled bucket and squeezing the water into their empty bucket.
4. The team with the most water moved in the specified time (5 to 10 minutes) wins.

##### **Alternate Activity:**

1. Split the group into 2 teams.
2. Half of both teams must stand at either end of the room.
3. Each individual carries a basketball (or soccer ball) to the opposite end of the room on

the back of his or her neck. A teammate returns the ball to the other end of the room in the same way.

4. When 1 team has gone twice they are the winners.
5. Impose a time limit of 5 to 10 minutes.

**Prompt:** Life can sometimes feel like carrying water in a sponge (or a ball on your neck). You try hard but you just don't feel like you are accomplishing anything. It can be very tempting to quit then.

**Ask:** Do you remember a time when you wanted to quit but you kept going? How did you keep going? (If no one wants to respond, have a leader tell a personal story of when they wanted to quit).

**Prompt:** This next activity is going to push you to understand how it feels when things feel impossible.

### **Paper Folding Challenge:**

1. Give each person a piece of paper.
2. Challenge them to fold it in half 8 times. Give them 1 minute to do it.

**Leader's note:** Don't tell students that it's impossible.

**Prompt:** We can sometimes feel like we are being asked to make that eighth fold, and we get to a point where can't go on any more.

### **Action**

#### **Scripture Sequence:**

1. Split the group into small groups of 3 or 4 students by clustering them yourself.
2. Give each group a copy of Appendix E.
3. Each group will use the information in the 3 verses to complete the statement. Give them 10 minutes to complete this and have a spokesperson ready to report their answers to the large group.

**Suggested answer:** Sometimes, there will be trouble in life, as Jesus reminds us. But we can keep pushing forward and working together with others, because becoming like Jesus is our goal.

**Prompt:** As we mentioned in the last lesson, the strength to keep moving on comes from Jesus. Part of that strength comes from other people, as we work and encourage one another to keep moving with Jesus as he restores the world around us.

### **Consolidate/Debrief**

**Prompt:** The good news is that God has given us his strength to get through tough days. This may be friends and family. This may be an encouraging verse in the Bible. It might be energy and emotions we did not know we had, such as confidence, patience or calmness. The same power that put the stars in the sky and raised Jesus from the dead is available for each of us. God does not leave us or forsake us. He encourages us to push on and keep going.

Have each student take a copy of Appendix F, a pen and choose a space by themselves. As they read the quote at the top of Appendix F silently, have them write what will keep them moving forward, and the names of 3 people who they can encourage to do the same.

Close in prayer.

## Appendix E

Read:

- Philippians 3:12–14
- Ecclesiastes 4:12
- John 16:33

Using the content of the verses, complete this paragraph:

Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

But we can \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix F**

Deuteronomy 31:6 (NIV): “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

## Teaching Tips

1. Be aware that there is no control over what preview videos are displayed on the sidebars of the YouTube website. As well, it is suggested that you preload the video to avoid showing the commercials at the beginning. As with any media, we suggest that you watch this video ahead of time to ensure it is appropriate for your group. If necessary, skip the video and continue the lesson.
2. Think/Pair/Share is a common tool to help students process a question together. The instruction to repeat their partners' answers allows for them to participate without the anxiety of giving their own opinions to a larger group. The following format is standard:
  - a. When I say "go", you are going to think about your answer to this question: [insert question].
  - b. You are going to find a partner and share with him or her what you have been thinking.
  - c. After [insert number] minutes, I will draw us all back together. Be prepared to share your partner's answer.
  - d. Any questions? (Allow students to make clarifications, if needed.)
  - e. OK, go!
3. Typically, a small group between 3 to 5 people is ideal. If you need to, divide students into smaller groups but have the same task for multiple groups [teaching tip 3]. For instance, if the lesson asks you to create 4 small groups but you have 40 people (i.e., 10 per group), make 8 groups and have pairs of groups do the same task separately. If groups are too large, some students will melt into the background and not really participate. If groups are too small students could become overwhelmed with the task. A good balance will allow everyone to participate and work together to complete the task.
4. When asking a large group a question and looking for responses, use the following instructions:
  - a. Think about your answer to this question: [insert question].
  - b. After a minute, I'll ask for volunteers to give their answers. If you're ready to volunteer your answer, raise your hand [or you can give another signal like touch your nose].Sometimes, high school students may be willing to carry a discussion fairly extensively. Discern how much time you want to allot to it. To wrap things up, say something like, "We'll hear the next 2 comments or questions before we wrap up." You can also give the option of continuing the discussion after the lesson.
5. Whenever you serve food, ensure you are aware of any food allergies. As a general rule, ensure your food is nut-free.
6. Some students are very willing and able to read publicly. Others (whether because of their reading level or fear of public speaking) may need some lead-time to prepare. If you're asking a student who's not as comfortable, give him or her the passage to read ahead of time. Consider using a translation or paraphrase that will be easily understood by your group (e.g. the Message). If the passage is long (i.e., more than 2 verses), consider breaking it up and having multiple readers. Because some are very uncomfortable reading in public, allow the option to skip if they choose.
7. Many students have digital Bibles accessible on their mobile devices. It is up to your

discretion whether they are permissible in your setting. There are pros and cons to either option.

8. Check in with groups approximately 3 minutes before your designated end time to gauge how much additional time they may need.