

Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Module: Telling The Story

Lesson 1: Living With Consistently Contagious Faith

Objectives:

- Students will learn about Jesus' example of contagious faith.
- Students will see that they can tell the story of God's love through contagious faith.
- Students will understand that contagious faith should be consistent.

Materials Needed

- A piece of paper with 5-10 celebrity pictures (both positive and negative role models) on it per group
- Min. 1 piece of paper per student
- 1 pen per student
- Reflective music
- Flip chart and markers
- 1 half-sheet of paper per student
- Lots of post-it notes
- Names of each student on a strip of paper

Minds On

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Provide each group with a sheet of paper with the pictures of 5-10 celebrities that they would know. Ask them to put them in order of who they find most appealing to least appealing. Each group should be prepared to report their reasons for their order.

Leader's note: To further discussion, you may want to consider using the following questions:

- How difficult was it for the group to decide unanimously?
- Do all the groups agree with each other?

Prompt: Whether we realize it or not, we place everyone we meet or seen on this scale of most appealing to least appealing. Some of those most appealing are people we tend to look up to, maybe even see as role models. Whether consciously or unconsciously we will try to imitate them in the way we live our life because of a particular skill they have, their personality or an action that they do. Whatever it is, there is something about that person that draws us in. They are, in a sense, contagious. In this lesson, we're going to see what exactly makes a faith contagious.

Returning to their groups, have students discuss the following question: "Are people drawn to Christianity in today's society the same way they were drawn to Jesus? Why or Why not?" Each group should be prepared to give their answer to the larger group. Afterwards, have 2-3 groups give their answers and see if other groups agree or disagree.

Action

Read Mark 3:7-8 together.

Prompt: When you look at the life of Jesus you cannot ignore that people were drawn to Him. The Pharisees could not leave Him alone. The sick fought to meet with Him. The

down and out wanted to follow Him. His life was contagious all the time – however, this does not mean people always liked what He had to say.

Distribute a piece of paper and pen to each student. Ask them to write down what turns them away from Christianity and what attracts them to it. They can list as many examples as they like. They can also keep their answers anonymous. Collect the papers afterwards reassuring that you will keep their anonymity if they want.

Leader’s note: Pay attention to what your students are writing. This could help give direction in the near future into areas or situations that need to be addressed.

Prompt: Whether you liked what Jesus said or not, He lived by the things He said. He did not say one thing and then live another. Today we often say that we have to practice what we preach. Jesus did just that. Jesus invited everyone to come and follow Him.

Returning to their original groups, students will read Matthew 11:28-30 together. Together, they will rephrase the passage in contemporary language so it becomes more understandable for their peers. Encourage them to use the answers to the previous discussion questions to help them with this. Each group will then share their answer with the larger group afterwards.

Prompt: What made Jesus seem to attract was that his message was simple yet challenging. (In old rabbinic terms, a person’s “yoke” was the core message of their teaching. Jesus said his teachings were simple to understand, although it would be hard to carry through.) Many were drawn to him, although when most saw what it would cost ended up turning away. But the Bible tells us that many still took the challenge to lay down their lives and follow him. That’s what made Jesus so contagious. Having a faith that is consistently contagious is not just an overnight occurrence. It takes work and dedication. It needs to be something that comes naturally to you and becomes part of who you are. So how do we be like Jesus in shaping this faith to be contagious?

Hand a stack of post-it notes to each student. Have a volunteer read Colossians 4:2-6. As it's being read, invite the students to list all the practical ways in building a contagious faith; they can write one item per post-it note. They can also add other ideas. After one minute, have students bring their post-its to the wall and then stick all the similar ones together.

Consolidate/Debrief

Prompt: Faith needs to be consistent. It should not act one way at one time and then another way at another time. A true faith that tells the story of God's Love, Grace, Peace and Hope will be contagious to all. However, all may not like it. Christian's lives should draw people to God. This will not happen if they say one thing and live another. Contagious faith has to be a way of life, like that of Jesus. One key way Jesus made faith contagious was through encouragement.

Distribute a half-sheet of paper and a name slip to each student. As the music is playing in the background, ask students to reflect on what they learned from this lesson and the person whose name they received. Encourage students to write an encouragement note to that person, how they see this person moving towards a contagious faith. The note can remain anonymous. Have students fold it in half and write the addressee's name on the outside. Collect the papers and redistribute to the addressee. Close in prayer.

Leader's note: This is similar to the activity from Lesson 5 of Module 1. If applicable, remind the group of this and to encourage them to look for ways to encourage each other in a new way in light of all the things that you have been learning together. The key difference is that rather than all of the students encouraging each other, one person focussed on another individual.

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Module: Telling The Story

Lesson 2: Living With Consistently Active Faith

Objectives:

- Students will learn about Jesus' example of active faith.
- Students will see that they can tell the story of God's love through active faith.
- Students will understand that active faith should be consistent and that without action, faith goes stale.

Materials Needed

- List of scenarios (involving serving or helping others) for the students to act out in a game like charades. Examples include:
 - Helping a blind person across the street
 - Helping someone lift something very heavy
 - Helping someone rake leaves/shovel snow
 - Offering to give someone a ride (who they see walking)
 - Sitting with someone who is homeless and buying them a coffee
 - Any other example you can think of.
- Min. 1 piece of paper per student (extras would be recommended)
- 1 pen per student
- Half piece of paper for the short message
- Optional: small prizes
- Flipchart and markers OR LCD projector with laptop

Minds On

Ask: Why do you think people enjoy watching movies like Batman, Spiderman and Superman? How does the story of Jesus compare?

Prompt: Jesus did not just sit at home and hope that people would knock on his door so he could speak to them. Jesus went out and lived a faith of action. Action was at the heart of what Jesus came to do. His life told the story of God's love, grace and compassion. However, he also inspired other people to action too. When people came into contact with Him they were not left unchanged.

Inform students that you are going to play a variation of the game of charades. Invite two of the students to come to the front. Give them a scenario to act out while the group watching has to guess what is going on. If applicable, award a small prize to those who get the right answer.

Ask: When was the last time you saw someone do something extraordinary **for** someone else?

Prompt: We'll continue our look at active faith. However, you are going to look a little deeper and see that it should not be something that is a part time characteristic. A faith that has landed should be consistently active. The way we live our lives should tell the story of God's love.

Action

Have 2 volunteers read John 8:2-11.

Ask: If you were in the same position as Jesus what would you have done?

Did Jesus plan this moment of action or was it just natural to Him?

Prompt: We can sometimes believe that to have a faith that includes action we have to do really big things like feed 5,000 people or heal the blind. In this passage we see Jesus stand up for someone who needed help. This lady, by Law, was to be put to death for her actions. She did not have a defence. The only way out was for someone to show her active Mercy and Grace. That is exactly what Jesus does. There are small opportunities every day for us to tell the story and put our faith into action.

Divide all students into groups of 3-4. Each group will make a list of 10 simple ways they could tell the story of God's love through active faith (e.g. picking up garbage you see on the floor, etc.) Then have two groups combine and sort which would be the top 5 from their combined suggestions. Afterwards, take the top 5 list from the new groups and compile them into a list (either on screen or on flipchart).

Have students return to their original groups and read James 2:14-19. Have groups evaluate whether people know what they believe in God by the way they live their life. Remind them that this is about "pass or fail" but whether we are making better conscious efforts in living out our faith. (**Leader's note:** It may be helpful for you to provide an example from your life.)

Consolidate/Debrief

Remaining in their groups, using the compiled list or another personal example, encourage them to talk about one aspect of their life that they are going to change. If applicable, they should also think of a specific individual they can demonstrate their faith to actively. Remember, it does not have to be anything big. (Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things, only small things with love.") The members of each group, if possible, should check in with each other in 3-4 days to see if they are each following through with their intention. If they feel comfortable to do so, ask them to pray for each other to carry out those intentions; otherwise, they can all pray silently individually.

Prompt: Jesus' faith was consistent. He was always ready to tell the story of love, kindness and compassion through action. He interrupted the social norms of the day and through His actions displayed the love of God and drew people to the Father. We are called to have an active faith. One that stands up for the broken and one that serves other people. There are opportunities to do this every single day (and we have been listing ways that we can do that).

Close in prayer.

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Module: Telling The Story

Lesson 3: Living With Consistently Christ-Like Faith

Objectives:

- Students will learn about Jesus' example of living.
- Students will see that they can tell the story of God's love through Christ-like faith.
- Students will understand that Christ-like faith should be consistent.

Materials Needed

- 1 newspaper per 4 students (preferably all different copies)
- 2 copies of Appendix 1 (preferably each on a large sheet of paper or on a PowerPoint slide)
- Min. 2 pieces of paper per student
- 1 pen per student

Minds On

Think / pair / share: Ask students this question, “Who is the biggest influence in your life and why?” Have them come up with their answer for 30 sec. Then have them partner with another person and share their answer. Each student should be prepared to share their partner’s answer with the larger group. After students have shared with their partner, gather the large group together and have 3-4 students give their partner’s answer.

Prompt: The word Christian means little Christ. People saw that the early disciples were trying to copy the life of Jesus and so they coined this expression. It caught on and continued to be used. So when we call people Christians, we are saying that they are people trying to be like Jesus. In their thoughts, in their actions and in their attitudes they should be like Jesus. It needs to be a consistent Christ-like faith.

Have everyone stand in a circle facing inwards. Then pick one person and send them out of the room. While they are out of the room, appoint a 'leader'. This person is the one who will lead the room in various movements (eg stamping feet, spinning, standing on one foot, dancing, singing, etc). Everyone else in the circle must mimic the leader, without giving away who the leader is. Bring the person back into the room, and commence the game. The aim of the game is for the person who was sent out of the room to guess who the leader is. They get three chances to guess it right. The leader then becomes the 'guesser' and the next round starts. Play as many rounds as you feel appropriate.

Prompt: Whether we realize it or not, we tend to follow other people. Maybe they wear. How they act. What they think. We are going to be looking at the issue of Christ-like faith today. Jesus influenced everyone around him. He challenges his followers to have that kind of influence. But what does that really look like for us?

Action

Divide students into four even groups. Assign each group one of the following passages: Matthew 5:48, Leviticus 11:45, Ephesians 1:1-2 and John 13:13-17. In those groups, they are to list what characteristics of Jesus are shown in their assigned passage. Each person will need to know their group's answer.

Afterwards, have students assign themselves a number from 1 to however many there are in that group in order. Then have all the numbers gather together (e.g. all 1s, all 2s, etc.) The new groups will each compile their own list of the characteristics as listed in the passage. Then give each group a newspaper. They will choose five stories that reflect the character of Jesus. If they can't find anything then suggest they find a story where someone could have acted differently to be more like Jesus. Each group will present their articles and explanations to the larger group.

Prompt: Seeing who Jesus is and seeing his characteristics in others is sometimes easier than seeing how we can live it out. Sometimes we're not sure where to start. Let's begin with a passage that the Apostle Paul wrote.

Show a copy of Appendix 1. Choose one student to write the word "love" in the blank spaces. Have the large group read it out loud together. Ask students to paraphrase this passage and invite 2-3 answers.

Show the second copy of Appendix 1. Choose another student to write the word "God" in the blank spaces. Have the large group read it out loud together. Ask students whether this version makes sense and allow the group to discuss it.

Have students pair up with a partner. This time, ask them to insert their own name in the blank spaces. Students will ask their partner which parts of that statement are most true and which parts are the hardest. If appropriate, invite students to pray for each other in becoming more like Jesus in the manner this passage suggests.

Consolidate/Debrief

Prompt: The way we live our life should be consistently like Jesus. Jesus lived a life that tells the story of Grace and Love. One way to reflect back to see if we're living like Jesus is to insert our names into that passage and see if that statement is true. We are called to have that same contagiously active loving faith that He had.

Invite students choose a place in the room by themselves with a piece of paper and pen. Ask them to write a letter to someone who is an important part of their life and why. Afterwards, challenge students to express that gratitude to that person either by sharing that letter or in another way.

Close in prayer.

Appendix 1

_____ is patient; _____ is kind; _____ is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NRSV)

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Module: Telling The Story

Lesson 4: Living With Consistently Spirit-Filled Faith

Objectives:

- Students will learn about Paul's example of Spirit-filled faith.
- Students will see that with the help of the Holy Spirit they can tell the story of God's love
- Students will understand that Spirit-filled faith should be consistent.

Materials Needed

- Items to obstruct someone walking (e.g. chairs, boxes, tables etc.)
- 5 blindfolds
- 6 simple puzzles that are each colour coded. (A simple way to do this is to tape all the pieces of one puzzle to sheets of the same coloured paper so each group has one colour.
- 2 half-sheets of paper per student.
- 1 pen for each student.
- A picture or drawing of a bird's eye view of a baseball stadium (including the field, the dugout, the crowd, the car park and the local street)
- Reflective music
- Flip chart (or a large roll newsprint) and markers
- optional: small prizes for the winner of "Minds On"

Minds On

Ask students to share their answer to this question: “In Star Wars, what would be your favourite thing about having ‘the force’?” Invite as many responses as you’d like.

Prompt: In Star Wars, the force guided the Jedi Knights. You often hear them say things such as, “The force is strong with this one” and “I sense a disturbance in the force.” As Christians, we don’t believe in the force, but we do believe in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit guided Jesus and we read in the Bible that the Spirit is also available to guide each one of us. We have looked at having consistently contagious, active and Christ-like faith and how we tell the story through that. However, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can become aware of where God is at work around us and join in. We can learn to let the Holy Spirit guide our words and actions and be sensitive to contexts and situations that we find ourselves.

Divide students into 6 teams (you can use fewer if your group is smaller). Give each group a blindfold and a colour to be looking for. Then take the puzzle pieces and spread them throughout the room, making sure all the pieces have their colour codes face up. (A large space like a gym or parking lot would be recommended.) Have each team gather in one spot in the room; they need to remain there the entire game. When you say “go”, one member of each team will put on the blindfold while the other team members verbally give directions to a piece of the team’s puzzle. The team must stay at their designated spot in the room. After the piece is retrieved, the person returns to the group, still blindfolded. Once they have made it back, the blindfold is passed to another person and they repeat the process. Once all the pieces have been retrieved, the group can put the puzzle together. The first team to finish wins. You can award prizes to the winning team if appropriate.

Gather everyone into the larger group. Debrief by asking student about the experience.

What made it difficult?

What would have made it easier?

Would it have helped if your team could have travelled with you? Why?
(They should say something like it would have been easier to hear instructions or follow their direction if they were walking with them.)

Prompt: Today, we're going to explore what a Spirit-filled faith is.

Action

Have the group read John 14:16-17, 26 together.

Prompt: There are many times we wish we had Jesus in front of us so we could ask Him what we should do in certain situations. However, Jesus reassured His disciples (us included) that He will not leave us on our own. He promised that He would leave a helper to help guide us through life. As we live our day-to-day lives we have the Holy Spirit to help us tell the story. What does that look like exactly?

(Leader's note: It may be helpful to explain to the students some of the ways we can feel the Spirit guiding us e.g. an internal feelings in our heart, little nudging from our conscience, affirmation from another person, coincidental openings in our life, dreams, pictures in our minds, etc. If appropriate, allow students to discuss or ask questions. You may also choose to share how the Holy Spirit has led you.)

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Each group will read Acts 16:6-10 together and answer the following question, "How did Paul follow the Spirit? (How did he know?)" Afterwards, gather everyone into the larger group and have each group report their answer.

Prompt: Sometimes, it can appear a little intimidating as it reads that Paul just knew what the Spirit wanted. It can be much tougher than that for some of us. However, sometimes we're in situations we recognize we shouldn't be in (e.g. gossiping about

another person behind their back, watching something we shouldn't, etc.). Perhaps that is the Holy Spirit. If we have a faith that tells the story we must listen to our Guide.

Back in their groups, have students discuss two questions:

- What are some other examples where the Spirit might be letting us know we are somewhere we shouldn't be?
- How can we avoid being in these situations in future?

Prompt: When you let the Holy Spirit guide you, you will become a different person. In the following passage Paul tells us what the visible signs are that we are being Spirit led consistently.

Have a student read Galatians 5:22-26 to the group.

Invite them to come and write the fruits of the Spirit they remember on a flip chart. It does not matter if words are repeated.

Prompt: If you're wondering whether you are being guided by the Holy Spirit, ask yourself if these characteristics are evident in you. (Better yet, ask someone else if they see them in you.) It will help you to see where you can still improve as you more intentionally listen to the Holy Spirit.

Consolidate/Debrief

Prompt: A faith that is consistently Spirit Filled takes time and practice. It takes prayer, action and support around you. We may see that we are actually hearing from God's Spirit already and are perhaps choosing to ignore it or listening to it. Whatever stage we are at it is important to understand that God wants to interact with us and He hasn't left us on our own. He wants to help us tell the story through lives. We have a helper who is

there to guide us in every aspect of life. When we live a life that is consistently Spirit filled, it will not go unnoticed to others.

Bring out your (birds-eye view) drawing of a baseball field.

Prompt: We're all at different stages of our journey with God. This picture represents the faith journey that we are on. Some of us might feel like we are in the game and right in the thick of it and doing really well. Some of us might feel like we are just watching in the audience. Some of us might have been ejected from the game and are having an early shower. Some of us might still be in the car, we have the ticket but we just cannot bring ourselves to go inside.

Invite students to take a pen, and draw themselves onto the drawing. (Leader's note: Make a note of where the young people place themselves on the field. This could be a helpful tool for you to know how students see themselves and to help guide them through their next steps.)

Play some reflective music.

Invite students to write a short note to the Holy Spirit. These will stay private. In this note write honestly and openly about what, if anything, you would like the Spirit's help with in your life. This is a great first step in being guided by the Spirit.

Close in prayer.

Telling the Story

When I think of the best things that have happened in my life, I want to tell people about them. When I think about the amazing things other people have done, I want to hear about them. Story telling is such a big part of our day to day life. People read stories, listen to stories, watch stories and tell their own stories. Story telling is how we learn as children and how we engage with people we haven't met before. A great story, one that is really exciting, is worth sharing with other people. A great story, one that is life changing, will be listened to.

Jesus came to Earth to proclaim the Good News of God. This story was so great that He did not stop talking about it. Unfortunately for some of us, we do not know how we begin telling the story of Jesus. We are scared that we are not clever enough or that we do not pray or read the Bible enough. We are scared we might not say the right words or that people will not listen to us. God is not concerned about that. He wants us to share what we do have with anyone that we can. He wants to begin with you just as you are.

The purpose of this module to is to help students move beyond what they have learned in the previous modules and equip them to begin having a faith that they can share with other people in a variety of different ways.

In lesson 1 we are going to look at having a **contagious faith**. When you look at the life of Jesus you cannot ignore that people were drawn to Him. Students will think about contagious faith in the life of Jesus and in the life of those around them. They will understand that it is not something that is turned on or turned off, it is something that is consistent without compromising their faith.

In lesson 2 we are going to look at having an **active faith**. A faith without action goes stale. Jesus did not just sit and hope that people would knock on his door so he could speak to them. Jesus went out and lived a faith of action. Students will think about active

faith in the life of Jesus and in the life of those around them. This session will aim to move students from a faith that plans action to one that lives action.

In lesson 3 we are going to look at having a **Christ-like faith**. To be a Christian literally means to be a little Christ. In our thoughts, in our actions and in our attitudes we should be striving to be more like Jesus. Students will understand that as they develop the instincts of Jesus and the attitudes of Jesus and as they seek to live a life which centres around Jesus that their faith will be contagious and active.

In lesson 4 we are going to look at having a **Spirit-filled faith**. Jesus was guided by the Holy Spirit and we read in the book of Acts that the same Spirit is also available to guide us. Students will think about Spirit-filled faith in the life of Jesus and in the life of those around them. It is important for students to understand the role the Holy Spirit plays in the day to day living out of their faith.

Let's learn to Tell the Story Together.