

Breathe

Module: Following Jesus in the Day to Day

Lesson 3: Healthy Interactions with Others

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify misconceptions they have about other people (specifically the opposite gender)
- Express how others who are seen as ‘different’ still share things in common with the students

Materials Needed:

- Chart Paper
- Markers
- Copies of “Healthy Interactions Activity Pages” (Appendix A)
- Writing Utensils
- Pieces of paper
- Container for the paper collection

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Familiarize yourself with the verses that are used on the Activity Pages

Note on Teaching Practice: Grouping Students

Putting students in groups is often taken for granted, and many teachers default to always allowing students to choose their own groups. This is convenient in some ways, however, some students are subtly ostracized in such groupings. Other times troublesome students will cluster together in one group. Ideally, sometimes students choose their own groups, other times you can use a chance procedure, and still other times you will want to deliberately determine how the groups are formed so that you can include students of differing cognitive, social and spiritual abilities in one group. It is also useful to break down barriers between students who might not associate outside of youth group. Sadly, many students feel isolated, even at youth group. This lesson includes a grouping strategy that allows students with leadership skills, isolates and “regular” kids to both choose their own group, and for you the leader to provide a structure that will be supportive and nurturing.

Minds On: (15 minutes)

Game: My friend, if you love me...

Make sure you are meeting in an area where everyone can fit while sitting in a circle.

When you are ready to start, have everyone sit in a circle. Go over the rules of the game before letting them know what it's called.

Prompt:

In this game, one person will be in the middle of our circle. This person will approach a friend of their choice and will say, "My friend, if you love me won't you please, please smile?". The person in the middle is not allowed to touch the person they are approaching, but can do other things to try to get them to crack a smile and/or laugh. The "friend" that was approached, must be able to respond by saying "My friend, you know I love you, but I just can't smile", and **MUST** be able to keep a straight face. If you smile or laugh while being approached and before you are able to say the response fully, they will then become the person in the middle of the circle. The person in the middle has 30 sec. to make the person smile. If you haven't played this before, this game is called "My friend, if you love me..."

First, have just the 1 person in the middle for 4-5 rounds. You could make it more exciting by putting an extra person in the middle so there are two people attempting to make people laugh. When there are two in the middle, they are allowed to work together (but don't give that specific direction to them). End the game after 10 minutes of play (or less).

Action: (40 minutes)

In Groups: I think girls/boys are...

Divide the group by their gender i.e. boys on one side, girls on the other. Have the boys write down their answer to complete the sentence "I think girls are ...". Have the girls do

the same with “I think boys are ...” Let them know their responses will be read aloud. Give them 1 minute to write their answers and collect them in a container. When all the papers are collected, pull out a random paper and read the quote. (As the leader, you do have the right to censor any inappropriate comments.) Ask the gender in question what their reaction is to the statement. Repeat until you have at least 3 statements for each gender.

Have a volunteer/student read Ephesians 4:29-32 (NIV).

Prompt:

We are called to build each other up as brothers and sisters in Christ, not to put each other down. Do you realize that the Bible talks about Christians being like brothers and sisters to one another? Although our “brothers” or “sisters” are very different from us, we were all created with equal value in God’s eyes. Rather than say mean things to them, ignore them, or give them any reason to think they are not important, we should learn more about them. Romans 12:10 (NLT) says, “Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honouring each other.” In just a minute we are going to examine some passages in the bible and will decide whether the interactions are ways that God would like us to treat each other, or if they are not.

Expert Groups: Bible passages on relationships

Divide students into 3 groups. You will do this by putting 3 strong students in a corner of the room. Have students pick which group they want to be in (capping it so that each group is even – for example, if you have 12 students, the group is closed when there are 4 in the group). Let students who you deem socially weaker than others pick first, and end off with the strongest (other than the 3 that are in the corners). When everyone is in a group (these are the expert groups), hand out one of the activity sheets to each group (each page focuses on a different passage, therefore group 1 gets the 1st passage, group 2 gets the 2nd passage, and group 3 gets the 3rd passage). Give the students ample time (10 minutes maximum) to complete it. Each person should be prepared to report their expert group’s answers.

Home Groups: Comparing the Answers

When all the groups have completed their section, have all the students number off within their group, from one to the the number of students in the group. Ask the students to wait until you say “Go”, but tell them in a moment you are going to ask them to move to a specific location. Tell them when they get there they will need to share a summary of their group’s answers. Assign a location for each number (e.g. all 1s in the right corner, all 2s in the middle, etc.); these are their home groups. Tell the students to thank the members of their expert groups, then to go to their home group. Within their home groups, have them compare the answers from each passage, noting which answers were similar. If you have one student alone in a home group, attach that student to another home group.

Leader’s Note:

If you have enough leaders, put one in each group. If not, have them circulate through the room to see who needs help. Encourage them to join in and help enrich the conversation or get the conversation started. You, as the leader, may join in as well.

After 5 minutes, gather the large group and have 2-3 volunteers report what similarities they found among the passages in their home groups.

Prompt:

Are there any other characteristics that you think would be good in a friendship? (allow for answers and discussion) What are some other bad characteristics? Characteristics that would tell you someone isn’t really your friend? (allow for answers and discussion)

Consolidation/Debrief: Approximately 20 minutes

Large Group: We All have something in Common

With the students in their home groups, ask them to find one thing that they have in common, whether it has to do with their family, a favourite sport, somewhere they have traveled, etc. Let students know that they should be digging deep to find something in common (i.e. don't use "go to the same church", same school, or have the same physical features). They have to get to know something about the other person that they did not necessarily know beforehand. When it looks like the some groups have found something, ask "Hands up if you need more time". If many students need more time, say "Okay, 1 more minute!" If only a few need more time say "Okay, 30 more seconds". Gauge your timing depending on the student response. Once each group has found something they have in common, have them tell the other groups. When everyone is done sharing, combine 2 groups together (so you should have half the number of groups now) and invite them to find a new thing that all of them have in common. Repeat until there is one big group trying to find something in common.

Leader's Note:

As the groups get bigger, especially with the whole youth group, the ability to find things they have in common will become more difficult so allow things like "we go to the same school", or "we all have a mother", are acceptable at this point, otherwise it may be too difficult and time consuming to do this activity).

Prompt:

You do not need to answer these questions, but they are for you to think about: Did you discover you shared something in common with someone today that surprised you, either because of who it was or what you shared? Or perhaps you found out something neat or interesting about someone that you had never learned before?

Give them about thirty seconds to reflect on this and take a few answers.

[Continue] I am going to ask one more question, and I would like you to challenge you to be open and share with us your answer, if you feel comfortable. Feel free to pass, there is no pressure to say something. Did your opinion of someone change because of this activity?

Leader's Note:

Some students may have some painful experiences particularly involving the opposite sex. While this lesson doesn't necessarily directly address those issues, it may bring those issues to the surface. Be aware and address such issues with sensitivity and appropriateness. (Be sure to follow your church's child protection policy if there is any issue of abuse that arises.)

Breathe In

Ask students to close their eyes and to breathe in through deep long breaths. Have a leader read John 15:12-15. Ask them to think about one person in particular (it could be a sibling, a friend, a classmate), and to spend a minute thinking about how they treat them, and how they might treat them better. They are to do this silently to themselves. After 20-30 seconds of silence, ask students to pray about this person and their interactions with them, to become more Godly and honouring of this person.

End the prayer time yourself, asking God to give the students, even yourself, the love and compassion required to interact with others, especially those who are different from ourselves.

Breathe Out

Now that they have thought about one particular person, challenge them to throw out their old understanding of who this person is and to spend some time with this person, whether at school during lunch or recess, at home or church, and to get to know something about them that they didn't already know. Perhaps they will see this person in a different way after getting to know them.

End your time in prayer, asking God to fill their spirit with love and compassion for those they interact with, and to shine a light into the world full of His grace.

Appendix A

Read the passage Ruth 1:1-18 as a group. Answer the following questions:

1. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?
2. What words would you use to describe the way that these people act towards each other?
3. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

Read the passage Judges 16:2-18 as a group. Answer the following questions:

1. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?
2. What words would you use to describe the way that these people act towards each other?
3. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

Read the passage 1 Samuel 20:1-17 as a group. Answer the following questions:

1. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?
2. What words would you use to describe the way that these people act towards each other?
3. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

ANSWERS

1. Read the passage Ruth 1:1-18 as a group. Answer the following questions.

1. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?

Ruth and Naomi. They are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

2. What words would you use to describe the way that these people acted towards each other?

Loyalty (verse 16+17), Love, Honour (verse 16+17)

3. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

Yes, Answers will vary

2. Read the passage Judges 16:2-18 as a group. Answer the following questions.

4. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?

Samson and Delilah. Dating.

5. What words would you use to describe the way that these people acted towards each other?

Lying (verse 10, 13, and 15), Deceit (verse 5),

6. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

No, Answers will vary

3. Read the passage 1 Samuel 20:1-17 as a group. Answer the following questions.

7. Who are the main characters in this story and what is their relationship to each other?

David and Jonathan. Best friends.

8. What words would you use to describe the way that these people acted towards each other?

Love (verse 17), Devoted (verse 4 – willing to do anything for him).

9. Is this relationship an example of how Jesus wants us to treat others around us? Why or why not?

Yes, Answers will vary