

Breathe

Module: Q & Eh?

Lesson 3: Jesus and the Skeptics

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- Identify that what people say is not always what they mean.
- Analyze what clues in people's behaviour reveals their motives.
- Consider their own motives in asking questions of God.

Materials Needed:

- Deck of cards without all the spades and in numeric order i.e. all 2s, then 3s, etc.
(if you have more than 38 students, have multiple decks of cards)
- 4 identical index card, two that say "Steal" on the lined side, two that say "Split" on the lined side
- Bibles
- Pen/pencil and paper
- Small slips of paper with either the word "Direct" or "Indirect" written on them.
Equal numbers of each.
- Different kinds of small snacks (e.g. chocolate bars, lollipops, etc.)
- Chart paper or whiteboard with markers
- Sound system with an instrumental song set to play
- Optional: large picture of each card suit symbol, i.e., one heart, one diamond, one club

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Tape the card suit symbol in each corner of the room.
- Place a table with a chair on either side at the front of the room. Put two snacks in the middle. In front of each chair place one “Split” card, and one “Steal” card, both FACE DOWN.

Note on Teaching Practice: How to prepare a card-suit jigsaw

The overall structure and idea behind the Jigsaw Instructional strategy is included in the first lesson of this unit, Q and A 1- Midrash. A good way to get students into their two different groups is by using playing cards. The cards have numbered ranks, and you can say “All the Aces, gather in this corner”, then later say “All clubs will study the crucifixion story in Matthew, all spades in Mark, all diamonds in Luke, and all hearts in John”. (You could also cut 4 pictures into 8 pieces each, and number the pieces from 1 to 8, asking students to gather in their picture groups or number groups. You can put a copy of the whole picture in the appropriate corner to facilitate kids finding their home groups).

The following procedure is important to get the right number of cards, and the right groupings. Students will eventually be using their cards to be in two different groups, depending on what part of the lesson you are in. The card suit will have them be in one group, the card’s rank value will have them be in another. This lesson calls for only 3 groupings by suit, so you have removed the spades.

To make sure you have the right number of students in each ranked group, you must do the following. As mentioned above, arrange the cards by rank order. Once all students have arrived, count the number of students. Starting with the lowest rank, count the same number of cards, and set aside the higher ranks in case more students show up. Shuffle the cards and set them aside for later in the lesson.

Minds On: (15 minutes)

Game: Split or Steal?

Invite two volunteers to sit at the table. Tell them they are about to play a very famous game that psychologists have been studying for many years. Normally it is called the Prisoner's Dilemma, but tonight, they are playing a version called "Split or Steal". Tell them the rules are very simple.

- You have two cards in front of you. One says "Split" the other "Steal"
- You must choose one of the cards, and put it face down next to the snacks.
- If both of you choose split, you each get one snack
- If both of you choose steal, neither of you get a snack.
- If one of you chooses steal, and the other chooses split, the person who chose steal gets BOTH snacks, and the person who chose split gets NOTHING.
- Before making your choice, you each get to say one thing to the other to try to influence their choice.

Audience members, your job is to try to discern what choice each player has made, based on what they say, what you know about them, and maybe how they move, but are not allowed to say anything to influence the choice.

Check for understanding with the rules.

Have each student peek at their cards so they know which is which without showing anyone else. Then have one student then the other make ONE statement to try to convince their partner what to do. Once they have made their statements, have them choose and place their card next to the snacks. Pause here before they turn over their cards, and have the audience vote: "How many of you think Student A chose 'steal'?" "How many think 'split'?" Do the same for student B. On the count of three, have the students turn over the card next to the snacks. Announce the winners (and/or losers). Tell the audience whether they were mostly right or wrong. Repeat this as many times as you

like, depending on the amount of time you have. Students will probably be anxious to talk about the game, and if you have time, take a few comments or questions.

Think/Pair/Share: Can you see a motive?

Tell the students to think for a moment: Was there anything you saw when people were choosing that helped you to decide if they were going to split or steal? Tell them when they are ready to put their hands on their shoulders. When you see most students with their hands on their shoulders, ask them to share their answer with a partner of their choice and be prepared to share their partner's answers. After 5 minutes, select 3-4 students to share their partner's answers and have a leader (or student volunteer) record the answers on the chart paper.

Note: Think/Pair/Share

Think/Pair/Share is very simple structure with remarkable pedagogical underpinnings: almost every student will take a moment to answer your question since every student will be individually accountable to provide an answer to someone. It is important to allow students some time to process the question i.e. think time (perhaps around 30-60 seconds depending on how complex the question is, and how long they have been thinking about the material). By pairing up with a partner of their choice (or simply have them pair with someone beside them), students are able to participate and give their input without being "under the spotlight". On a scale of covert to overt answering, this is fairly covert. On a scale of perceived risk, responding to one person has relatively little risk. With this structure, you can have students rehearse their answer first, then share with the larger group, moving both toward overt and higher risk answers. Alternatively have a student share his or her partner's answer. The second option encourages active listening in your students (something that is tough for everyone, but especially junior high students).

Think/pair/share also provides more introverted students with a voice. As leader, you can take volunteered answers randomly or select students you want to hear from. If Sanjay (extrovert) and Sarah (introvert) are partners, you can ask "Sanjay, what did your partner say?" Encourage the sharing student to use their partner's name when sharing ("Sarah

said...”). If students have shared things of a more personal nature, always have them grant permission before their partner shares their answer with the larger group.

Prompt:

Sometimes, what is at the surface hides the real intention is underneath.

Action: (50 minutes)

Expert Groups: Discerning motives

Distribute the playing cards to the students (note: this is another version of Jigsaw as explained in Lesson 1). Tell the students that people often say one thing but mean something else altogether, and that people in the bible were no different. Let them know in a moment they will be gathering with other students to become experts in one of three different passages of scripture, and will have to share their expertise with others. Their job with their expert group is look at a bible passage where someone is talking to Jesus, see what the person actually asked, then decide what the person really meant. Tell them you will let them know their scripture passage once they are in their groups. Have students separate into their expert groups based on their card's suit. You can point to locations or ask them to gather at their signs. Once they are gathered, walk to each group, make eye contact with one student, and tell that student one of the following passages, Mark 11:27-33, John 4:1-26, Mark 15:1-20, then remind “You are answering what the person actually asked, what the person really meant”. After students have had an opportunity to discuss the answers (about 10 minutes), remind them that they will be taking these answers to their home groups.

Home Groups: Sharing and finding the common thread

Tell the students they will be moving from their expert groups into home groups. Point to locations (or put up signs) and say “1s will go here, 2s will go here, etc.) Tell them when they arrive that each suit should share their answer with the other two, then all together, they should consolidate the answers and identify which were the common elements in

which Jesus moved from the intended question to the real question. Repeat the instructions more simply and then say “Thank your expert partners, and move to your home groups”.

After another 10 minutes, have each home group report their findings to the large group, and (have a student) record each numbers group’s answers on the chart paper. If there are overlapping/similar answers, circle them. Take a moment to consider the student responses and fill in any gaps in their understanding.

Consolidate/Debrief: (10 minutes)

Prompt:

Jesus was able to see past the question to the motives behind the question. Jesus isn’t opposed to those questions, but challenges them and us to face up to the real motive that drives us.

Breathe In

Ask students to spread out so they have some space by themselves. If they have their question list, ask them to have that in hand. (If not, it’s not an issue.) Have an instrumental song playing in the background (preferably just acoustic guitar or piano). Ask students to look at the words/phrases that were circled, and see which one they identify with the most. Suggest they take some time to pray with Jesus, whether their motives are as they are presented, or if there is a different motive. If there is a different motive, then ask how the question(s) could be revised.