

Series Title: Agent I²

Session Title: Foundational Faith

Date and Time: _____

Number of Students: _____

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Board and markers
- ☐ Candy prize
- ☐ Variety of craft or building materials such as shoe boxes, foam, egg cartons, duct tape, and so on (lots of stuff)
- ☐ Eggs

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will:

- Grasp the importance of building a strong foundation of unshakeable faith
- Wrestle with the difficulty of living out their faith in a hostile world.
- Begin to establish some of the foundational elements of faith in their own lives.

Pastoral Objectives:

Leader Note: This session is scheduled to happen towards the end of the school year. Summer is a time that often challenges the faith of young people significantly. The added freedom in their schedule, travel by parents, the change in clothing, times spent at the beach, camping, and so on, provide added temptation. Statistics tell us that summer is a time of tremendous testing: students lose their virginity more often in the summer than any other time of the year; students try drugs or they over-indulge in alcohol more frequently; the freedom in their schedule means they might be “hanging out” more- in public places, getting bored and thinking up mischief! Also, for those graduating, summer leads into frosh year at

university, with frosh week, and house parties, and a whole new freedom from family and friends and accountability structures. This session is meant to begin to at least make them aware that this reality is coming!

Lead In:

At the very beginning of this lesson, ask the students to answer the question, “If you had to guess what we are going to talk about tonight what would you guess?” Based on logic of following 1 Timothy 4:12, they might guess faith.

Preamble:

Create a grid on a whiteboard or overhead with the following titles: similarities, differences, consequences.

Now read the story of the builders from Matthew 7:24-29. Ask the group as a whole to brainstorm with you what were the similarities between the two men, the differences between them, and the consequences of these similarities or differences.

Leader’s note: Some similarities include: same vision (to build a house), same hearing (they both heard the words), same storm (they both endured the same storm), and possibly, same-looking kind of house. Differences include: character, discipline, and clearly, the foundations used to build upon. Consequences: one house stood while one house didn’t

Have the students turn to the person (or two) beside them and scribble down these questions (or you could write them on the board) and ask them to answer them:

1. Why is it important to build a house on a solid foundation?
2. When are foundations laid?
3. When are foundations tested (at the end when all the weight is there, during a storm)
4. Was there any noticeable difference in the houses before the storm came?

Review: as a large group, ask some of the smaller groups to report back their answers. Prompt them for answers that will lead them towards the issue of their own faith. For example: Question #2 – at the beginning, in nice weather; Question #3 – at the end when all the weight is there, during a storm, etc.; Question #4 – not really, except the house on the sand might have had a view of the water or been in a nicer location.

Young Faith:

Building Project.

Divide the group into teams of four to five. Give each group an egg. Tell them that the egg represents their faith. Faith is a fragile thing and we need to protect it!

Ask them to label their egg with a sharpie marker with a name that indicates it is their egg. Then tell them that their egg is about to endure a series of challenging tests, each test more dangerous. It is their job to build a “nest” that will protect their egg from the tests that it will have to endure. The egg that lasts the longest will be the winner and its parents win the candy!

Give the students up to ten minutes to build their “nest”. Provide a good assortment of building materials such as duct tape, cardboard, sticks, foam, etc.

Begin to talk to your students about the fragile nature of young faith and its need to be protected. I often use the analogy of cement: that our faith (and our characters) are like a sidewalk that is being poured. When the concrete is first poured into the forms, it is soft and completely pliable. It can go anywhere and into pretty much any shape. But the people who pour sidewalks, fashion it into a sidewalk and then attempt to protect it as best as they can to let it dry. Before it is dry, it is easy to damage it or scratch your name in it. Later when it is dry, that damage or scratch will remain forever. Young faith is like soft cement; it can be easily damaged. Young faith is like the eggs that you have just built nest to protect: fragile.

Many things threaten young faith. Solicit some of these from the students. Solicit about ten or twelve. Now ask students to identify the top five things that threaten their faith. What things are unique to the summer?

Put to the Test:

Before the evening begins, think about five “tests” that you can subject the “egg nests” to. Determine the level of intensity of the tests, so that you will begin with the easiest test and end with the most difficult. Tests could include a) having a heavy person jump on the nest, b) dropping the nest off a height, c) playing baseball with the nest (pitch it to a batter and swing) d) throwing the nest against the wall, e) dropping it from chest level to the floor, f) driving over it with a stroller or a car (that would have to be the last test), and so on. Make the tests creative, fun, and customized to your setting

After the group has created a list of the top five storms we will face in lives, tell them that you are about to subject their “egg nests” to tests that will be named after the tests/storms they will face in life. For example, if the first threat to faith that the students identify is drugs, your first nest test (dropping it from chest level) is the drug test. The egg symbolizes the faith; the test symbolizes, well, the test.

Have the students participate in the tests and have the teams predict whether other team’s “egg nests” will be able to survive the challenge. Winning egg nest equals good prize (maybe something better than candies like gift certificates for food, Tim Horton’s, or something like that).

Wrap Up:

Have everyone gather together and ask them:

1. What made a good egg nest?
2. What would it take to build the best egg nest?

You could tell this story if you have time:

“A couple of years ago my wife and I took a cruise to Alaska. On our way back a storm broke out, one of the worst storms Royal Caribbean had ever experienced. The waves were fifty feet high. Plates were flying. Pianos were rolling. People were throwing up. My wife was very upset, and so she picked up the telephone and called the captain’s office. They said, “Ma’am, the captain is on the bridge, he can’t talk to anyone in light of the storm.” My wife said, “Would you please tell him I am very upset that he would put us through this when he could have avoided this...” They said, “We will relay that to the captain”. A few minutes later our phone rang, and it was the assistant to the captain. He said, “Ma’am, the captain asked me to call you and relay two things. First, go to sleep, because the captain is going to say up and there is no need in both of you staying awake. Second, this ship was built with this storm in mind. Long before we ever hit this storm, we knew this day was going to come. This boat was structured in such a way that on whatever day this storm came, while it would be an inconvenience, irritating, aggravating, and exacerbating, while it would be traumatic to go through, what you need to know is all of that was considered when it was constructed. So while the storm is bad, the boat is better.”⁴

Have each team answer this question:

In your egg group, come up with five things that must be present in your life to help ensure that your boat is built to face the worst storms that life, temptation or Satan have to throw at it.

Leader Note: you may want to provide your small group leaders with some potential answers or even brainstorm with them ahead of time to help their teams as they brainstorm. Ideas may contain things like: accountability, stay connected to the youth group, join IVCF at university, read some good books to strengthen my faith, continue to have a regular quiet time, find a mentor who will meet with me regularly, start a group of friends who will study the Bible, pray and encourage one another, etc.

Share; pray; conclude.

⁴ Darren needs to provide this footnote.