

BREATHE: BASIC TRAINING

In all disciplines of life, a basic understanding is needed, whether in the arts, sports or academic studies. The Christian journey is no different. To be a follower of Christ, a person needs to have some “basic training” to get them going. In this module, we’ll explore four specific areas:

- developing a spiritual training plan
- understanding and practising prayer
- developing a strategy to study the Bible
- understanding the place and importance of the church

With any training, practice is needed. You are encouraged to have students develop some kind of on-going training program. Here’s a suggestion you can use at the end of each lesson.

Give students a minute or two to consider the suggestions and to formulate a training plan for the coming week that will help them to develop the trait that they’ve chosen. They can submit this either on a cue card (as provided) or electronically (i.e. text, email, social media) to you, another student ministry volunteer, or a Christian mentor to create opportunities for following up during the week.

Use whatever method is most effective for your group (text, Twitter, Facebook, email, phone call, etc.) and be sure to follow any social media guidelines that may be in place for your church or ministry. Follow-up is critical to the effectiveness of this activity. Be sure to speak to leaders and mentors ahead of time to help prepare them to follow up with students about their spiritual training plans.

May God develop disciples who are keen in sharpening the faith in Christ.

Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 1: Spiritual Training Program

Objectives:

Students will

- explore the idea of training for something
- understand that spiritual training is part of a healthy relationship with God
- identify specific areas of spiritual training that will help them to become more like Jesus
- begin to formulate a plan to engage in spiritual training

Materials Needed:

- ☐ at least 1 Small Jigsaw Puzzle i.e. 24 pieces or less
- ☐ Stopwatch
- ☐ Computer and/or Projector
- ☐ YouTube Video
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOXM-rg5sgM>
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Chart paper and/or Whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Pencils or Pens
- ☐ Small Pieces of Paper
- ☐ Container (e.g. hat) for the small pieces of paper
- ☐ Optional: Cue Cards

- ❑ Optional: Small Treats for winning group in “Minds On”
- ❑ Spiritual Training Activity handout. The handout has one page for each group (2 pages). Make one copy of the entire handout for every 2 students.

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Be sure to check puzzles to make sure that all pieces are present. If new, remove all packaging and check to make sure that pieces are separated.
- Set up computer/projector and make sure that videos are downloaded and working properly. Be sure to preview videos for content.
- Set up the Spiritual Training PowerPoint or prepare one piece of chart paper with the two scriptures and one piece with the three questions from the Action section.

Minds On (15 minutes):

Think/Pair/Share:

Allow students to think individually about the following question: “Practice makes perfect. Do you think it’s true?” After 30 seconds, have students choose a partner to share their answer. Afterwards, gather the large group and ask for 2-3 volunteers to offer their partner’s answer.

Team Puzzle Challenge:

Divide students into groups of 3-4. Each group will be timed in how fast they put the puzzle together. (If you have more than 5 groups, you can choose to have another puzzle with stopwatch time half of the groups). Make sure to record all the times. Have each group repeat the task, and record the time again. If you have prizes you can award them for fastest time, most creative solution, etc.

Online Alternative:

If you have access to the internet and computers, www.jigzone.com has jigsaw puzzles with an integrated timer that starts when the first puzzle piece is touched. Select a puzzle before the students arrive (there are some good ones in the “animals” section). The default is 48 piece “classic” cut. On the left of the screen there is an option to “Change cut” You can choose “20 piece classic” for a faster solution. Have the students do the puzzle as a relay team, with each student placing two pieces, then the next student placing two pieces, and so on. Teammates can help to find pieces or guide placement. With more than one computer, you could have more than one team solving puzzles at a time. Make sure to record the times as above. Tell the students to use the “Start Over” button for the second attempt. Watch that students do not accidentally or deliberately use the “Auto Solve” button.

Prompt:

Earlier, we asked if the statement “practice makes perfect” is true. It seems that based on our experiment, overall it is true, although it might be more accurate to say “Practice

makes permanent”. If you practice the wrong thing, or practice something the wrong way, that will also become permanent, but not “perfect”. That is why it is important to practice the right things.

Action (30 minutes):

Watching and Discussing a Video in Pairs

Video (5 minutes) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOXM-rg5sgM>

Have the students watch the video. Instruct them to write down all the factors the video suggests make a great athlete. After watching the video, have students regroup with their partner and take 2 minutes to come up with a 1-sentence piece of advice they think this video is telling athletes. Take answers from a few pairs.

Prompt:

The video we just watched focused a lot on the importance of hard work and repetitive training. The same goes for learning to follow Jesus. A lot of Christians get discouraged because they try really, really hard to be like Jesus but don't succeed. Maybe that's because instead of trying really hard we need to train really well. I could wake up tomorrow morning and decide that I'm going to play football in the NFL. In fact, I could even try really hard to be a great football player but because I've spent little to no time training myself to play football, I have no chance whatsoever of actually becoming a professional football player. Becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well.

Working in Groups:

Within each pair, have students number off “1” and “2”. Have the 1s gather on the left side of the room and the 2s on the right side. Assign 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 to the 1s and 1 Timothy 4:7-8, 11, 15-16 to the 2s. (If each group has more than 5 people, you can separate those into smaller groups.) Ask the students to read the verse on the sheet you

will provide, and answer the questions. Provide each group with the appropriate handout. Give the groups about 10 minutes to work through the sheets. At that time, ask if any students need more time. Gauge how much time to allow based on student responses. Ask the students to finish up what they are doing, and to make sure they have the answers written on their sheets, since they will be sharing that information with their partner from before. Tell them they will go through their answers, one partner then the other, comparing between the two scriptures. Ask the students to thank their group members and then return to their partner.

Encourage them to compare between the two partners. After a couple of minutes, ask if the students have any observations they would like to share with the whole group about differences or similarities between the answers for the two passages. Take a few answers.

Note: Side Coaching

While students are talking, float from group to group. Listen briefly, and if appropriate, add a small bit of information to help clarify an idea. Rather than answering questions directly, try to lead students to answer their own questions, often by asking a simpler or clearer version of their question. Use this time to get a feel for the mood of the group, the degree to which they understand the material, and how engaged they are.

Consolidate/Debrief (15 minutes):

Prompt:

The famous philosopher Aristotle once said: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.” What do you think he meant by that? How would you rephrase it in your own words?

This is a complex question, so allow at least a minute for “think time” Ask if any students would volunteer their answers.

Prompt:

The goal is to become as much like Jesus as possible. The way to do that is by practicing the things that Jesus did - training ourselves to become more and more like him.

Brainstorming Together:

Take three minutes to brainstorm with students some of the many godly character traits Christ demonstrated through his life and teaching (honesty, compassion, generosity, prayer, Scripture memorization, humility, etc.). Invite students to share ideas out loud. You may want to chart the responses so that everyone can see the list you create. Be prepared to suggest a few godly character traits if students are having trouble, or to prompt the students to remember stories about Jesus, recalling how he acted.

Breathe In

Ask students to thoughtfully choose one of the traits suggested (or they can come up with their own) they would like to focus on this coming week.

Breathe Out

Have students write that one trait on a small piece of paper and put it into the container. Draw pieces of paper one at a time, inviting ideas from the group about how a person might train themselves for success in that particular area of spiritual growth/Christ-likeness. Encourage students to take note of suggestions that might be helpful for them in their training in the coming week.

Some questions that could help to formulate a successful training:

When would be the best times to do this type of training?

Who might someone ask to help them in this type of training?

How would you know if you've trained well?

What changes/results would you see?

Encourage students to share this plan with a friend, accountability partner, leader or mentor and invite that person to check back with them on their progress after five days.

Close in Prayer

Close in a prayer that acknowledges the Holy Spirit's role in transforming us, through our spiritual training, to become more like Christ. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will help them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.

Group 2 Handout

1 Timothy 4:7-8

1. Based on the Bible passage you read, how is spiritual training (becoming more and more like Jesus) similar to the training required to become a great athlete?

2. How is it different?

3. What is the goal of spiritual training according to the passage you read?

Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 2: Prayer

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- express that prayer is simply communicating with God
- identify some common misconceptions about prayer
- analyze how Jesus prayed and how he taught us to pray
- incorporate this new understanding into their walk with God

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Chart paper and/or whiteboard
- ☐ Masking tape, laid out in 10 inch strips, one per group
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Computer and/or Projector
- ☐ YouTube Videos
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UmL_GTKU2IE
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ One set of “Prayer Signs” (appendix A)
- ☐ Copies of “Prayer Topics” (appendix B) cut into single-line strips (1 copy for every 3 students)
- ☐ Copies of “Prayer Activity” (appendix C). This handout has two nearly identical pages with different scripture passages on each page.
- ☐ Pens/Pencils

- Optional: Cue Cards

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Cut Prayer Topics printout into strips.
- On a whiteboard or using chart paper, create three large headings: 1. Acquaintance; 2. Classmate/Casual Friend; 3. Best Friend. Post these on the wall before the lesson.
- Post the 6 pages from the Prayer Signs, equally spaced, on the walls of the room.
- Make copies of Prayer Activity.pdf (at least one for each group).

Note on Teaching Practice: Transitions

This lesson moves students among groups a number of times, and is a great chance to practice your transitions. Research into educational practice shows that most misbehaviour occurs during transitions between activities, so if students know what to do before they move; they are more likely to be on task when they arrive. This is an important time to make sure materials are well-placed. Where possible, avoid forcing all students into one small location. Position yourself close to the action. It is also important to use the right sequence to transition from one activity to another. The following sequence is the most effective to get the right students doing what they should be doing, when they should be doing it.

Sequence:

1. When students are to move
2. What the students are to do
3. Who is to do it

Minds On (15 minutes):

Identifying Levels of Relationships:

Start by asking the students if they have ever had a friend share too much information. Tell the students “Do not tell me what they shared or who they were, but think for a moment how that made you feel”. Take a few answers from the students, and carefully monitor what students say to protect identities. Before each student responds, say “How did it make you feel?” just to remind them to limit what they share. Tell the students that tonight you are going to be thinking about who you should share your deepest hopes and fears with, and how you might go about that. Instruct the students that in a moment, they will be moving into “home” groups.

Home Groups: Categorizing Sharing:

Tell them you will be giving them slips of paper listing topics that people might share with someone else. Their job is to decide with their group to which of the three categories (Acquaintance, Classmate/Casual Friend or Best Friend) the topic belongs. For each topic, when they have decided with their group, have one student (the “runner”) from their group use a small piece of the masking tape to attach that topic to the chart paper of that category. Ask if anyone needs clarification. When the students are clear, ask them to get into groups of three (self-selected), and ask them to decide who will be the “materials manager”, the “recorder” and a “runner”. To the materials manager of each group give a set of topics from Prayer Activity 1, and a section of masking tape. Monitor activity close to the chart paper, since a lot of misbehaviour occurs at such places, but also try to move among the groups.

Comparing Categories:

When all students have posted all responses, tell the students: “Good. Now I want you all to come up here to see if any groups chose different categories for their topics.” Having the students do this will be “messy”. There will be a lot of talk, and many students close together. If this is not the best choice for you or your group, then ask for one volunteer from each group to have a look and report back to their group. Give the students a little

time to notice the differences, and ask if there were any differences that surprised them. This might invite discussion between two groups that disagree, so try to find the common thread, and where necessary, make a gentle comment to guide the students as to why that category might or might not be best for that topic.

Ask the groups to return to their seats, and have each group answer: “What are some of the factors or reasons why you would share certain details with one group i.e. best friend and not another i.e. acquaintance?” After 2 minutes, gather into a large group and have 2-3 groups report their answers. Without soliciting any answers, ask students to think about under which heading they would place God.

Prompt:

We each see God in different ways. Some of you may see him as an acquaintance while others see him as a friend or maybe even as a best friend. Whether you realize it or not, God is interested in hearing from us about the things we would share with an acquaintance, the things we would share with a casual friend, and the things we would share with a best friend. Prayer is the way that God has provided for us to talk to him about these things.

Action (30 minutes):

Watching and Discussing a Video

Video (4.5 min)

Tell the students they will be watching a video showing different styles of praying. Draw their attention to the six categories posted on the wall. Tell students that as they watch this video, they will choose which role/character they identify with the most. After viewing, remind the students that the video was exaggerating to make a point, but ask them to think about which style their prayers are most like. Tell them, maybe their style isn't like any they saw in the video and that is why there is the “other” group. Ask them to wait for your signal to “go”. Tell them in a moment, they will be moving to the sign

that is most like their prayer style, and to share with their group member why they chose that category. (If your group is very large, ask them to share with one partner, rather than the whole group. If only one student ends up at a group, either you or a leader should go hear what the student has to say.) Say “Go”.

Leader’s Note: Limited Prayer Experience

Some students will have little or no personal experience with prayer. These students can be encouraged to join the group that most closely resembles what they think prayer might be like.

Once students have had a few minutes to share, ask them if there were any things members of their group shared in common. Give a moment for “think time” and take a few answers with the large group.

Prompt:

These characters represent some common ways of praying but may not be exactly what the Bible teaches about prayer.

Home Groups: The Prayers of Jesus

Tell the students that in a moment they will be looking at a Bible passage, and answering questions about the “when”, “why”, “what”, and “how” of Jesus’ prayers. Ask all the Materials Managers to put up their hands. Tell them they will need to collect an activity sheet and writing utensil for their group at the “go” signal, and that all students are also to return to their home groups. Provide a single page from the Prayer Activity (appendix C) to each group. Several groups should have the same passage, depending on the size of your overall group. The Recorder will write their answers on the handout provided to share with the large group. After about 10 minutes ask the students to finish up. Give another minute or two if groups appear to need more time. Starting with question 1, take answers first from the “Matthew 6” groups and then from the “Matthew 26 groups”. Ask the Recorders to write down any additional information they learned from the other answers. Continue with the remainder of the questions.

Leader's Note:

You should make sure students know that these passages do not provide a comprehensive look at prayer. Rather, they provide a good beginning point to explore the idea of prayer.

Consolidate/Debrief (15 minutes):

Still in their home groups, ask the students to reflect silently on one important thing they learned about prayer/praying based on the scriptures and discussions they've had with their groups. Ask the students to share their insight with their group members.

Prompt:

Last week we talked about training ourselves to become more and more like Jesus. We said that becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well. Prayer can be an important part of your spiritual training program to become more like Jesus. Take turns sharing with your partner what you think we can learn from these two examples of Jesus' prayers that we could incorporate into our spiritual training program?

Breathe In

Encourage students to write down one specific practice they learned today about prayer that they want to incorporate this week (e.g. making sure while praying they are away from distractions).

Breathe Out

As a group, have students agree on one specific time they will pray together (not necessarily in the same place). e.g. on Wednesday night at 10:00 pm. Ask them to pray for members of the group for 5 min. Afterwards, have them write down (or post via social media) what they experienced.

Close in Prayer

Ask the students to think of one thing they want to try praying to God about. Give the students a moment to pray silently, then as a leader offer a prayer of gratitude to God for his interest in all aspects of our lives and his desire to communicate with us. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will help them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.

1. The Nocturnal

2. The New Age

3. The Victorian

4. The Lister

5. The “Our Father”

6. Other

Appendix B

What I had for breakfast

What book I'm reading

Problems at home/with my family

Failing a test

Problems with a boyfriend/girlfriend

My interests/favourite things

Feeling sad/depressed

Concerns about a friend

My dreams/hopes for the future

Where I like to shop

About drinking or using drugs

What music I have on my iPod

Feelings about problems in the world

What sport/activities I participate in

My feelings about a loved one who is sick or dying

What I want for Christmas or my birthday

My cell phone/PIN number

My favourite movie

About fights/arguments with my siblings

About moving to a new house/city

Who you have a crush on

About needing help in a subject at school

About being bullied

About cutting/self-injury

Appendix C

Jesus Teaches Us About Prayer

As you read your assigned Bible passage (**Matthew 6:5-13**), discuss and write down your answers to the following questions:

1. When does Jesus pray?

2. Why does Jesus pray?

3. How does Jesus pray?

4. What does Jesus pray?

Jesus Teaches Us About Prayer

As you read your assigned Bible passage (**Matthew 26:36-46**), discuss and write down your answers to the following questions:

1. When does Jesus pray?

2. Why does Jesus pray?

3. How does Jesus pray?

4. What does Jesus pray?

Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 3: Bible Study

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- express why the bible has value for training Christians
- be able to identify and use a 4-step method for studying passages of Scripture
- recite a passage of scripture from memory
- formulate a plan to engage in Bible study as a part of their spiritual training

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic spoons (one for each student)
- ☐ Small plates, one for every two students
- ☐ Liquid honey
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens/Pencils of various colours (see preparation)
- ☐ Computer and/or Projector
- ☐ YouTube Videos
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh3iIUOvLVA&feature=related>
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Bible Study Activity (appendix A) (one printout for each student)
- ☐ Bible Study Grouping Cards (appendix B) (one card for each student)
- ☐ Cue Cards (optional)

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Before the lesson, set out one small plate for every two students. On each plate place two spoons, each with a bit of honey on them.
- Make copies of the Bible Study Activity (appendix A) sheet (one for each student), and place 2 sheets by each plate.
- Place an equal number of different types/colours of writing utensils for students to use when completing the printout, randomly distributed around the honey setup. For example you might use 4 red pens, 4 blue pens, 4 pencils and 4 green markers for your group of 16. (these will be used to form groups for the Breathe Out activity)
- Print and cut apart the Grouping Cards (appendix B), enough for one card for each student, with equal numbers in each group
- Set up computer/projector and make sure that videos are downloaded and working properly. Be sure to preview videos for content!

Minds On (15 minutes):

Observation in Pairs

Tell the students in a moment they will be moving over to where the honey is set up, but to wait for your “Go” signal. Instruct students to examine the spoonfuls of honey and to write down (on the paper provided) as many observations as possible. Divide students into pairs, by passing among them and point to two students and saying “You’re a pair”. Ask if you missed anyone. When all students have been paired, say “Go”.

Prompt:

What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? What does it taste like?

Note: Side Coaching

During this lesson, while students are talking, float from group to group. Listen briefly, and if appropriate, add a small bit of information to help clarify an idea, or to focus the conversation. Rather than answering questions directly, try to lead students to answer their own questions, often by asking a simpler or clearer version of their question. Use this time to get a feel for the mood of the group, the degree to which they understand the material and how engaged they are.

Sharing Observations with the Group

Once students have had enough time, invite them to share some of their observations with the larger group. You may want to have a student chart the responses so that everyone can see the list you create. Tell the students to leave their pens where they are, that they will need them later.

Watching and Discussing a Video

Video (2.5 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh3iIUOvLVA&feature=related>

Inform students that they are going to watch a video about a metal detectorist who makes an amazing discovery. Have students view the video with the focus of identifying what type of reaction the man has upon making his discovery.

Note: Video Length and Content

Only a few minutes of this particular video are pertinent to the lesson. Cue the video to begin at 5:28 and stop the video at 7:55. As a general rule you should always preview video materials for content. This particular video may not be appropriate for all audiences because of some mild language. The video does, however, capture the spontaneous, joyful reaction of the detectorist and is quite effective for the purposes of this lesson.

Prompt:

Why do you think the detectorist was so excited about his discovery? The coin he found on the beach is probably worth somewhere between \$500.00 and \$1500.00 dollars. Why do you think the coin is worth so much? Tell me a few things you know about gold. What do you think that honey and gold have in common?

Once the large group has had a chance to discuss, invite a student to read Psalm 19:9-10 aloud for the group. Then, ask students to discuss the following questions with a person sitting close to them. You may want to display the questions on a screen or chart paper for students to refer to while they discuss.

Prompt:

Why do you think the writer of this Psalm describes God's commands as "more precious than gold" and "sweeter than honey"? What do you think this Psalm says about how we should treat/value the teaching in the Bible?

Sharing with the Group

Once students have had a chance to share with their partners, invite students to share some of the comments they heard from their partners with the larger group.

Action (30-40 minutes):

Invite students to take turns reading the story of Jesus' temptation found in Matthew 4:1-11. Then, ask the following questions:

Prompt:

Can you explain what happened in this story in your own words? What did you notice about the way that Jesus handled the temptations that the devil offered to him? All of Jesus' responses are verses from the book of Deuteronomy. Why do you think Jesus quotes Scripture when he is confronted by the devil in the wilderness? What might you have done if you were in Jesus' place? Based on this story, how do you think Jesus treats/views the Bible?

Prompt:

In a minute, I'm going to ask you to work in groups of 4-5 to create a 30-second commercial. You will have 20 minutes. Remember, commercials are designed to sell a product. The goal of your commercial is to use the things that you've learned so far to "sell" the Bible. Think about why someone might want to buy a Bible. Why would it be important to them? How might it benefit them or improve their life?

In Groups: Bible Commercial

Ask the students to wait for your "go" signal. Divide them into groups of 4-6 by handing out the cards provided. This allows you to choose the groupings if you wish, or to allow the groupings to be random. A good group size is 4-6 students. For a large group, subdivide the "gold", "honey" and "bible" groups into 2 (or more) smaller subgroups, by using 2 different coloured papers, adding the numbers 1 or 2 to each card, or by just dividing each group in half after the students have moved to their work location. Point to a location in the room and tell the "gold" group they will be working there at the signal, and do the same for the other groups. Give the signal to go. As you check in with the groups, you may want to also direct them to 2 Timothy 3:14-16 to focus their efforts.

Once students have had 15 or 20 minutes to prepare, allow them to take turns performing their commercials in front of the larger group.

Consolidate/Debrief (15-30 minutes):

Prompt:

Last week we talked about using prayer as a part of our training to become more and more like Jesus. We said that becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well. Today, we're focusing on how Bible study can be an important part of your spiritual training program to become more like Jesus. The Bible is an amazing resource that communicates God's feelings towards humankind and his rescue plan to save us from self-destruction. The teaching in the Bible is a gift from God to help us form a healthy relationship with him and with each other. These benefits, though, will never be realized if our Bibles just sit on a shelf somewhere without being opened, read, and enjoyed. Even if the idea of Bible study is relatively new to you, you can try using these four steps: 1. Read; 2. Think; 3. Pray; 4. Live.

Breathe In

Invite students to work through the printout provided in order to practice using these four steps for Bible Study. Have the student get the pen or pencil they used for the honey activity in order to complete the printout. Once students have been given about 15 minutes to complete the printout (students who aren't done can finish at home), encourage students to think about at least one specific time in the coming week when they can use these four steps to reflect on another passage from the Bible. Some excellent choices: Genesis 1:1-5; Joshua 1:8; Psalm 55:22; Proverbs 3:5; Matthew 22:34-39; Matthew 28:19-20; James 1:22-24; 1 John 1:9, or there might be a passage your church is focusing on.

Breathe Out

A really effective component of Bible Study is memorizing passages of Scripture. Divide students into groups based on the colour/type of writing utensil they used to complete their printout (blue pen, black pen, green pen, pencil, crayon, coloured pencil, etc.). Tell groups to pretend that they are teaching a class of 5 & 6 year olds to memorize 2 Timothy 3:16a. Invite them to create clear, easily performed actions that will help the children to memorize the verse. If there is time, invite the groups to teach their actions to the larger group. Remind students that memorizing Scripture (with or without actions) can be a really effective part of their spiritual training and it's not as hard as they think! You may want to instruct students to use a translation that would be easier for young children to understand (NLT, NCV, etc.).

Close in Prayer

Close in a prayer that offers gratitude to God for giving us the Bible so that we could understand him and his plan for the world. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will guide them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.

Appendix A

4 Steps for Studying the Bible

Take a few minutes to practice studying these verses from the Bible. Don't worry if this is completely new to you because you're not the only one!

1. READ

- Slowly and carefully read the following three verses...

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. 7 Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. 8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.
Romans 8:6-8 (NLT)

2. THINK –

- put aside all distractions
- re-read the Bible passage
- pick out a few key words that seem to be standing out to you
- write them in the space below
- feel free to include thoughts or pictures that come to mind as you think about these words

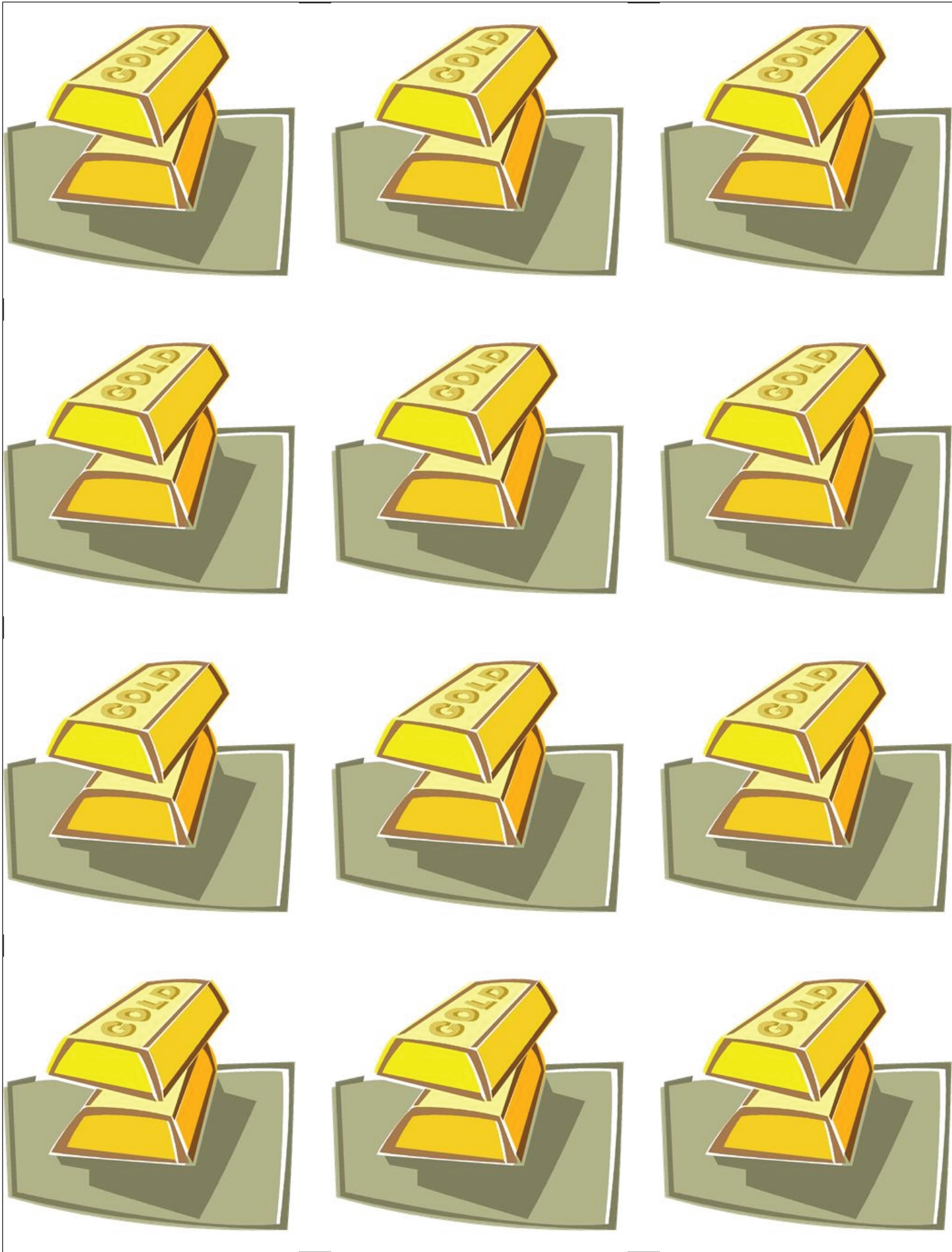
3. PRAY

- talk to God about what you've read by praying
- ask him questions about the things in the passage that you don't understand
- tell him some of your thoughts/reactions about the passage
- sing a song or write a poem or draw a picture that expresses some of your feelings about God based on what you've read

4. LIVE

- Ask yourself how your day might look different if you took these verses more seriously, starting tomorrow
- What would you say/not say?
- What would you do/not do?
- How would you spend your time?
- Follow through by doing (or *not* doing!) one of these things tomorrow!







Breathe

Module: Basic Training

Lesson 4: Church

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- identify some common misconceptions about the church
- use that understanding to develop empathy for those who do not go to church
- define some biblical priorities for the church
- analyze how they are impacted by the church
- begin to formulate a plan to engage more intentionally in the life of their church

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Computer and/or projector
- ☐ YouTube videos
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tik9ZEL7iAA&feature=related>
 - If time is limited, use http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh__g-ZZ6WA
(half as long)
- ☐ 8.5 x 11 paper (3 sheets per pair, could be paper that is good on one side)
or
2 sheets and 1 Church Venn Diagram (appendix A) printout per pair
- ☐ 1 extra piece of chart paper and/or whiteboard
- ☐ Coloured markers/pencils/crayons/pens (equal numbers of different-coloured markers)
- ☐ Markers (including two green markers)

- ☐ Optional: cue cards
- ☐ Bibles

Pre-lesson Preparation:

- Set up computer/projector and make sure that videos are downloaded and working properly. Be sure to preview videos for content that may be considered offensive based on your local context.
- A few weeks before your lesson (if possible) ask a mature Christian person (preferably from your own church) to share a personal story about how the church has helped them in their training to become more and more like Jesus. They might share about a time when they didn't feel that the church was very important to them but how God has taught them about the value of corporate worship, learning, serving, etc. If you are unable to find someone, then consider sharing your own story. Please arrange to have your guest come close to the end of your lesson time if they cannot be present for the whole lesson.

Minds On (20 minutes):

Watching and Discussing a Video

Video (9:28 or 5.25 minutes)

Start by telling the students that tonight they will be considering how people might have wrong ideas about church, to have empathy for those people, and to learn what the bible says about church. Ask the students if they know what empathy is. Take a few answers. Tell them that empathy is the ability to put your own self in someone else's place and to see what it would be like to experience life through their eyes. Tell the students in a moment you are going to ask them to watch a video showing someone in church who does not usually go. Ask your students to try to see church through Mr. Bean's eyes. How do they think it might feel to be that new person at church? Do you think that new person might see some things more accurately than you do? Show the video.

In Pairs: Taking a perspective

Tell the students, in a moment they are going to do an activity. They will take the perspective either of a person who goes to church normally, or one who does not. On a sheet of paper each person will write a list of things they saw in the video that a person of their perspective thinks are true. Ask the students to pair with a partner, and label each partner "A" or "B". Announce that the "A" partner will take the perspective of the person who normally goes to church, and the "B" partner will take the perspective of the person who does not normally go to church. Distribute 3 sheets of paper and 2 pencils to each group. Tell them to save one piece of paper for later.

Venn Diagram

For three minutes, they are to write down all the elements they remember from the video that they believe their assigned perspectives would list as true. (e.g. If they had church-goer, some accurate elements may be the hardwood pews or the boring sermons) After the three minutes are up, give the following instructions:

Prompt:

Now you will make a Venn diagram with your partner. Make two intersecting circles. The left circle is for the church-goer, the right is for the non church-goer. Leave the center intersection blank for the moment. Rewrite your list in the appropriate spot depending on your perspective. When you are both finished, look for items you both have in common, and have one partner write those common items in the intersection of the two circles.

Have students repeat the instructions. When ready, have them proceed.

Prompt:

We all have an idea of what we think church is like (so does Mr. Bean). Tonight, let's take a step back and see what God says a church should be like.

Action (30 minutes):

Leader's Note on Mind Mapping:

Mind mapping is a technique that helps to visualize and organize ideas. A mind map is a diagram made using words or pictures arranged around a key word or idea. It is like a brainstorm on paper. It is important to use the visuals and words to inspire novel thinking. Students should be encouraged to draw lines between ideas that they think are connected, or to write linking words between two concepts. Students should also be encouraged to speak out loud while they are mapping. This "out loud" thinking encourages dialogue and discourse, which is important for learning. If students have never made a mind-map before, it can be useful to model mind-mapping. For this unit, as a group you could make a mind-map of "Spiritual Training". Write the words in the middle of the page, perhaps draw a stick figure of a person lifting a barbell with a cross on it, and ask the student for words and images that would show "Spiritual Training". Help them to make links among ideas, using "chain-like" lines for strongly linked ideas, arrows if one thing follows from another, etc.

In Groups: Mind Maps

Invite students to work in groups to create their own mind maps about the church. Divide students into groups of 3-4 (one option is to have them group based the season they were born into i.e. spring, summer, fall, winter; feel free to combine groups or make additional groups based on your numbers). Give each group a large piece of chart paper, and ONE colour of markers for their group (e.g., 3-4 red). Instruct one member of each group to write the word “CHURCH” in large letters in the middle of the page (be sure to remind them to leave lots of room on the paper for other things to be added). Invite students to use their colour of marker to write words and/or draw pictures that come to their mind when they think of the word “church.” After students have had three minutes to add words and pictures to their pages, instruct them to rotate to the next table, taking their markers, but leaving their page behind for the group that will be taking their place. Give new groups another two minutes to be inspired by what see on their new page, adding their own words and pictures to the content already there using their colour of pen. If time allows, allow them to rotate through all the papers.

Working in Groups

Have students return to their original paper. Invite them to look up the following Bible passages: Hebrews 10:23-25; Acts 2:42-47. Using a red pen, have them circle elements (either written by them or another group) that match what is considered important in the given passages. If there are elements that were not listed, write them out.

Afterwards, have the large group gather with their mind maps. Highlight what are common findings between each mind map as well as what are some differences between what we associate with church and what those passages state.

Consolidate/Debrief (20 minutes):

Prompt:

For the last few weeks, we've been talking about training ourselves to become more like Jesus. An important part of our training is connecting with other Christians who are trying to become more like Jesus too! Some of us go to church because our parents tell us to or because it seems like a good thing to do. Some of us might even go to church to see our friends, meet a hot guy or girl, because we enjoy the food, or because the music and activities are entertaining. These passages seem to suggest that going to church is not about any of those things. Instead, it's about learning to be more like Christ and working together to show other people what he is like. Last week we talked about using Bible study as a part of our training to become more and more like Jesus. We said that becoming a great athlete takes hours and hours of training. In a similar way, becoming like Jesus requires training as well. Today, we're focusing on how involvement in a local church can be an important part of your spiritual training program to become more like Jesus.

Breathe In

Have students reflect by themselves for three minutes about what ways they have been impacted by the church (attending "youth group" can be considered as church too), and write down those thoughts. Students might consider whether what they wrote down is in line with what the two passages state.

Breathe Out

Give students a minute or two to consider how they might change their thinking or behaviour to better reflect what the Bible says the church is about, and to formulate a training plan for the coming week that will help them to use that change. They can submit this either on a cue card (as provided) or electronically (i.e. text, email, social media) to you, another student ministry volunteer, or a Christian mentor to create opportunities for following up during the week.

Close in Prayer

Close in a prayer that offers gratitude to God for giving us other Christians that we can meet with to pray, learn, and serve. Pray for students that the Holy Spirit will guide them as they attempt to implement a spiritual training program that will help them to become more like Jesus.

Church Goer

Non Church Goer

In Common

