

Series: Five Ways Weird

Session Title: Purpose

Date and Time: _____

Number of Students: _____

Materials Needed:

- ☐ DVD copy of *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*
- ☐ Several strange objects with indeterminate purpose
- ☐ Toaster
- ☐ Copies of page A7
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ One copy of each of pages A10-14 taped up on the walls (enlarged if you like)
- ☐ Double-sided copies of pages A8-9
- ☐ Overhead projector
- ☐ Overheads of pages A8-9
- ☐ Overhead pens (optional for feedback)

Lesson Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to...

- Identify that living with purpose is part of what it means to be a Christian.
- Identify that they are part of a great story and have been created for a purpose.
- Learn five purposes shared by all humanity.
- Discuss the impact of living according to and opposed to purpose.
- Identify what is so 'weird' about living according to purpose.

Pastoral Objectives:

Lead In:

Show the clip from the movie *The Lord of The Rings: The Two Towers* where Frodo and Sam begin to chat about what it will be like when the village children tell their stories. Will they be remembered as brave or cowardly? As victors or victims? As the students watch the clip ask them to decide why or why not Sam and Frodo are heroic characters. At the conclusion of the clip solicit some suggestions. You will likely get a wide variety of answers but at least one bright student should point out that neither Sam nor Frodo are all that special in and of themselves; they simply found themselves swept up into events far greater than themselves and they acted true to their natures throughout. Sam was steadfast and reliable; Frodo was a visionary and bold. The point so often made by great writers is that heroism is often less about being remarkable and more about being caught up in something great that reveals the truth of who we are. Great events reveal our nature. Tolkien also seems to make the point that providence produces people for a purpose. As each character in *Lord of the Rings* is introduced they give a hint of their future contribution to the story. Everyone seems to be created for a purpose that affects the successful resolution of the story. Even Gollum has a purpose. It is his greed and capacity for thievery that eventually ensure the destruction of the ring. In Tolkien's world, every creature has a purpose.

Transition by bringing out an assortment of obscure items. Go to a hardware store or an antique barn and locate obscure and strange items. Learn what they are used for. Display all of these strange items one by one and ask the students to suggest a purpose for them. After they guess give a prize to the person coming closest to the truth. As the very last item bring out a common electrical household toaster.

Transition by saying something like:

In Tolkien's world every created thing had a purpose. This (holding up toaster) created thing has a purpose. What is it? (Receive answer). Correct. When something is used according to its purpose great things happen. But what happens when something is used for something it was never created for? What would happen for example if you decided to use this toaster to heat your bath water? (You would get electrocuted). Now is heating your bath water a sin? Is God angry with you for wanting a warm bath? No! The problem is simply that you have not paid sufficient attention to the issue of purpose. Tonight we are going to discover the purpose for human beings. People have a purpose. Just like with the toaster if we know our purpose and act accordingly great things will happen, but if we ignore our purpose we can be in for quite a shock!

Task One Instructions:

Hand out to all students the one-sided sheet titled: "Finding Your Purpose". Give them each a pen and instruct them to visit the five pieces of paper that you have taped up around the room. Each piece of paper has a verse or two describing a life purpose. (These verses are supplied in the appendix.) On their handout they have ten potential purposes. Five are correct and five are not. They must identify the five correct and reference them to one of the verse from the papers.

After completing the task they should have crossed out five incorrect options and circled five correct options and have provided references. This should take about twelve minutes. Tell them to hold on to their sheets when they are done.

When the task is done, make sure to do feedback. This could be as simple as soliciting the right answers from the students verbally in a big group or you could put up an overhead copy of the handout and give students overhead pens to go up to the board and fill in the right answers. Either way, allow for questions and guide the students towards the correct answers. The correct answers are 1, 4, 5, 7, and 10.

Task Two Instructions:

Instruct the students to split up into discussion groups with each group having no more than ten people and no less than five people. When they are in their groups hand out the double-sided handout titled “Living Your Purpose”. Have the students follow the instructions on the sheet to complete the task. This should take about thirty minutes.

Repeat the feedback after task two. Again, you could solicit the answers verbally from the group, you could have one group answer each section and have the other groups listen for disagreement, or you could put copies of the handout on the overhead and have students fill these in with overhead pens. Allow for student to student feedback on the answers (questions, disagreement, additions) before stepping in to clarify, correct, or move on.

Conclusion:

Consider wrapping up the evening by saying something like this:

Life works best when it is lived according to its purpose. Just like a toaster works best when it is used to toast bread, so human life is best when it is lived with an awareness of its purpose and intentions. Having a sense of who you are and what you are supposed to be doing is not just good sense, its also incredibly attractive to other people. Many of our friends and peers are wondering why they are here and what they are supposed to be doing. By living your purpose faithfully and confidently you will stand out as weird and compelling. You will be like a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Do you want to shine? Then live according to purpose!