

Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Module 3: Living the Story

Lesson 3: Widows, Orphans, and Those on the Margins

Objectives:

Students will

- use scripture to define complex terms
- connect old and new testament concepts of how God desires us to live
- identify people in their own sphere who need care and develop plan to show that care

Materials Needed:

- chart paper and markers
- Bibles
- pens/pencils
- small slips of paper
- Appendix A: Expert Group Sheets
- coloured paper, 3 different colours
- <http://pianoplayingdave.wordpress.com/2006/08/16/widows-and-orphans/> print up page

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Write Justice, Mercy and Humility, each on its own sheet of chart paper

- Print each Expert Group Sheet on a different colour of paper. Fold the sheets in half matching top and bottom edges, and cut along the fold so the scriptures are on the top piece leaving a blank half below. You will cut these bottom halves into pieces that all together will total the number of students in your group, with equal number of pieces (± 1) for each group. The pieces do not need to be equal size or shape.

For example, if you have 15 students, dividing by three (colours) means you will cut each of the half sheets into 5 pieces, and number the pieces from each colour 1-5. If on the other hand you have 7 students, cut two of the half sheets into two pieces, and number each piece 1 and 2 for each colour, and cut the third colour into three pieces, and number them 1, 2 and 3. When the students are in their Home Groups (explained below), any numbers that do NOT make a complete set of all three colours of paper will join with the next number group below (in this case the leftover 3 will join the 2s).

- Tape the top half of each Expert Group Sheet conspicuously in three different locations in the room. These will serve as prompts, and as signs for Expert Group locations later on.
- Place enough slips of paper and writing implements at each Expert Group location for each group member.

Minds On

Approximately 30 minutes

This lesson is very dense: if your students like to ‘dig in’ to things, double all of the times for every activity and turn this lesson into two lessons!

The strategy you are about to use is called a Jigsaw (you can find more information on the strategy here: <http://www.jigsaw.org/overview.htm>, or see an illustration of how grouping works here: <http://www.etc.edu.cn/cet/Articles/jigsaw/>). Students will participate in two different groups, their HOME Group which will be divided by number and their EXPERT Group which will be divided by colour. They will spend a brief time in their Home Group, move to their Expert Group for a longer activity then back to their Home Group for another activity. In their Expert group, they will get information that is needed to accomplish a task in the Home Group. This arrangement assures that the contribution of each student is needed, which in turn increases student engagement. Make sure the room is set up in a way that students can move around freely and that they can meet in different groupings.

Prompt: Tonight we are going to think about some definitions to different words but also consider what it means to care for others. To start I want you to take a moment and think about ‘sacrifice’. When you think about sacrifice, what one or two words come to mind? (Pause while the students think) In a moment, I am going to hand each of you a coloured piece of paper with a number on it. This paper will be important, so please do not lose it, throw it away, destroy it, etc. In fact, when you get it, take a second to memorize your colour AND your number. When I say ‘go’, you will find the other people in the room with the same number as you and sit down as a group and share your two words related to ‘sacrifice’.

Remind the students to wait for your ‘Go’ signal. Hand out the papers. When all students have a paper (check first!) say ‘Go!’

Give the groups two minutes to assemble and share their one or two words, then ask for their attention.

Prompt: The group you are in now is your Home Group. In these groups we are going to learn how to define a word. Here are the rules of defining a word:

1. a definition is made up of simple words
2. you cannot use the word itself or derivatives in the definition, for example you can't use the word colourful to define the word colour
3. a definition should be short

The word you are to define is SACRIFICE... you have three minutes... go!

As students work out their definition, circulate to determine if they are on task and when they are done. If a group is struggling, suggest they try to explain SACRIFICE as they would to a younger sibling or cousin. Warn the students when a minute remains: if there are many groans, give an extra minute. Loudly say 'Time's Up!' Have each group give their definition and see if they adhered to the rules. Point out when they haven't adhered to the rules and applaud their effort.

Prompt: Now you will work with a different group and become experts! Eventually you will bring that information back to your Home Group. When I say 'go', say goodbye to the people in your Home Group and re-group with those who have the same colour paper, and say 'Hi' to your new group members. There is a paper taped up to help you find your Expert Group: Look for a sheet with the same colour paper as you have. That paper has instructions on it.

Give the students a minute to change groups, say hello and settle. Get the students' attention.

Say something like, "The group you are now in is your Expert Group. Each group has been given a word and a few scriptures that contain that word. Your task is to define

your word, remembering the rules we just used. You will need to take the definition to your home group later, so everyone needs to pay attention and be part of the discussion, and use the paper and pens to write down the definition. You have 10 minutes!”

Give students time to work out their definition. While they are working, write out the text and reference of Micah 6:8 and James 1:27 on the board, but cover the James passage until later. Circulate to determine if they are on task and to monitor their progress. Warn the students when 5 minutes remain, and again when 2 minutes remain and when time is up.

Prompt: In a moment you will thank the members of your Expert Group and return to your Home Group. When you arrive back, your Home Group will have at least one expert on each of the words: Justice, Mercy and Humility. Your Home Group will make a poster of Micah 6:8 that conveys the meaning of the verse, not just the words of the verse. This could be a comic strip telling a story, a flow chart, a before and after picture, a movie poster for Micah 6:8 or something else that you can think of... On your way back to your Home Groups, I would like all of the yellows (select one of the group colours) to come and collect a sheet of chart paper and markers from you to take back to your group. Thank your Expert Group members!

Warn the groups when 5 and 2 minutes remain, and when time is up. Have groups hold up and share their posters with the other groups. Draw all students’ attention back to the board.

Action

Approximately 30 minutes

Reveal James 1:27 on the board and ask for a student to read it out loud.

Prompt: To help us understand why widows and orphan are singled out as needing care, I am going to read a blog entry from a Christian filmmaker who has spent a lot of time in Africa.

Read entry from Dave's Blog. **Say something like,** "Just like in the world of the Bible, there are many parts of our world where widows and orphans are the neediest people in society. In our setting, as Dave remarks at the beginning of his blog, widows and orphans aren't necessarily the neediest people. Who do you think are the neediest people in our society? Remember there are financial, physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs."

Ask the students to think, and after a few moments take some answers and compile a list on the board or chart paper.

Prompt: OK. We have a bunch of puzzle pieces up here: a verse from the Old Testament with really specific words like justice, mercy and humility, a verse from the New Testament with widows and orphans, and a list of the neediest people in society. How does it all fit together?

If you were to summarize all of these ideas in one sentence, what would that sentence be? Taking all of these ideas together, what is God's message to us? Think about this, and when you have an answer, put your hand on your shoulder to show me you are ready, and I will call on a few of you.

Give the students a moment to think, and wait until most students have their hands on their shoulders. Be patient. You can reframe or restate your question as you wait. This is a complex question, and the students are aware you might ask them to share, so they will want to 'rehearse' their answers covertly. Call on a few students who have signaled they are ready. This strategy allows you to call on students who might not normally put up their hands. If a student brings up the idea of being humble as we care for others, then use that as a cue to transition, if it doesn't come up, then you will need to mention it.

Prompt: We have some great ideas for how to put this puzzle together, but we have to remember not to leave out the humility piece. Think for a moment about why humility might be so important, (Pause while the students think) then when turn to a partner and share why you think humility is so important and how we can show justice and mercy to the needy in humility.

Give the students a few minutes to share, then ask students to share something they heard a partner say.

Consolidate/Debrief

Approximately 15 minutes

Tell the students to think of someone who is in some kind of need. This person could be someone at school, sports team, a family friend, a member of the church or possibly even the youth group, a homeless person in your community, a senior citizen or a teacher.

Pause for a moment to let them think. Tell the students to return to their home groups when you give the signal, and to share with their group the person of whom they are thinking. Encourage them to be sensitive to not share personal details about the person. Give the signal to 'go!'

Give the students a few minutes to share the person they are thinking about. Ask what groups need more time, and gauge how much time to give based on which groups respond. When the groups have shared, get everyone's attention.

Tell the students their task is to come up with an idea of a Not-so-Random-Act-of-Kindness they can do to show love to the person they are thinking of. If all the students in the Home Group know the same person, they could team up together, or they could each have their own individual. The Home Group should brainstorm to come up with an idea that is really practical, and doable. Let the students work for a while, then get their

attention. Ask the home group members are to pray for each other to close and agree to check next week and see if they've followed through.

Examples of Not-so-Random-Acts-of-Kindness:

1. With parents' permission, offer a classmate a ride to school so they don't have to pay for the bus.
2. Speak up on behalf of a student who is being bullied or cyber-bullied.
3. Encourage a teacher who has had a rough day.
4. If you take good notes at school, photocopy them for someone who has been away sick for a few days.
5. Make a Get Well Soon card for a classmate who has been away sick

Appendix A: Expert Group Sheets

Justice

Exodus 23:1-9

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

Psalm 33:5

Using the scriptures above to help you, define the word JUSTICE.

Remember the rules of defining a word:

4. a definition is made up of simple words
5. you cannot use the word itself or derivatives in the definition
6. a definition should be short

Mercy

Nehemiah 9:30-31

Matthew 5:7

Matthew 20:29-34

James 2:13

Using the scriptures above to help you, define the word **MERCY**.

Remember the rules of defining a word:

1. a definition is made up of simple words
2. you cannot use the word itself or derivatives in the definition
3. a definition should be short

Humility/Being Humble

2 Chronicles 7:14

Psalm 18:27

Philippians 2:4

James 4:10

Using the scriptures above to help you, define the word HUMILITY.

Remember the rules of defining a word:

1. a definition is made up of simple words
2. you cannot use the word itself or derivatives in the definition
3. a definition should be short