



# **Liberty Students Connect Groups**

## **The Book of Deuteronomy**

**August 14 - September 4, 2016**

A stylized, white, cursive letter 'J' logo set against a dark grey rectangular background.

**STUDENTS**

The 'White Flag' logo, featuring the words 'White Flag' in a white, cursive script font on a dark, textured rectangular background.

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**Series:** “White Flag” The Book of Deuteronomy

**Date:** August 14th, 2016

**Lesson:** How to Start a Conversation About the Gospel

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

**Author:** Spencer Helm (Student Pastor, Greenbrier Campus)

## **Lead Teacher Welcome and Game (for 10 min at 9:15 & 11:15)**

Lead Teachers, as all the students and leaders come into the room, please welcome them with the music continuing behind you.

**As they are coming in, give them a couple of really brief announcement reminders like:**

These announcements will be included in the weekly email.

**Come up with a simple game lasting for no more than 5 minutes for Connect Groups to compete each other:** This morning, you will play “**Two Truths and a Lie**”. Each person in a connect group will have 1 minute at the beginning of the game to come up with two truths about themselves such as hobbies, or family facts, etc. and one lie (it can be anything like “I’m a professional foosball player”). When each person states their 2 truths and 1 lie the rest of the table will have to discern what the lie is. If they do, that person is knocked out of the round, if you succeed in not being “found out” you keep on playing till the last person is still “standing”. This game is fun, creative and will help you to get to know each student or first timer better! (Connect Group Leaders, feel free to bring a prize for your winning student on this Sunday)

Now, enjoy your connecting with your group. You’re Connect Group Leader (students, give them a high five), has some important questions for y’all to hang out and catch up. Go!

## **Connect Group Introductions (for 5 min at 9:25 & 11:25)**

- **Welcome** and personally speak to **every** student, **especially** first-time guests.
- Discussion starter questions you could use:
  - 1) What was your favorite part about camp, or this summer so far?
  - 2) What else do you have planned for this summer?
  - 3) What are you looking forward to the most/least about this coming school year?
- **Go over the Newsletter** and **Daily Devo’s** on your table with your students.
- **Pray** to begin the morning together.



## **Lead Teacher Introduction (for 10 min at 9:30 & 11:30)**

**Introduction:** Lead Teachers, share a story about how you have shared the Gospel with someone conversationally (recently preferably). Or share about a time in presenting the Gospel you will never forget! Please share how you initiated or transitioned in to a Gospel-sharing conversation. Share on how awkward or smooth the conversation was; was it hard to share, easy to share or how did you share? How much of the Gospel did you get to share? What was that person(s) response? How did you feel afterwards?

### **Here is a story from me personally that might help:**

This past week for me was spent traveling to Florida for my grandfather's funeral. It was tough and emotional in so many ways and completely exhausting. On my flight home, I was delayed twice and more ready than ever to go to bed! However, on my flight I met a young man who sat next to me and I introduced myself after sarcastically making a remark about the seat sizes in the plane. I began to ask him his name, where he was from, where he worked, what he did for fun. He shared that he loved video games so I pulled at my phone and challenged him to Slither and Chess. After gaming for about an hour together, he asked me where I was from and from there the conversation was opened for me to share the Gospel! It only takes one question! I began to share my calling as a Student Pastor, and how I got to be where I am at today. His question was perfect for sharing the Gospel because I would only be lying if I didn't include the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in my personal story! I got the opportunity to share who and how great Jesus was by showing him what He'd done in my life! After the plane landed, I gave him my info and invited his family and him to come to Church! It was awesome!

### **Explanation this story in relation to the lesson:**

This morning, we're going to be looking in 1 Corinthians 9 where Paul famously writes about surrendering his "personal rights" to "become all things to all people that by any means I may win some to the Gospel". Sharing Jesus with others isn't a burden and doesn't have to be painfully challenging, however I will challenge you just like Paul does, to stop thinking about yourself and get into the lives of others conversationally. Opportunities will rarely open if we do not take time to open our mouths, get to know others, and relate to them as best we can in order to share the love of Jesus with them.

### **Transition into Lesson:**

As we talk about this, open your Bibles and get into conversations with one another from these discussion questions. Remember, our Sunday Connect Groups are not about teachers lecturing, students just listening, or a time of question and answer. Instead, our goal is teachers asking questions and students to engage in conversations and discussions. So students, feel the freedom to speak up, answer, ask more questions, as we want everyone to be a part of the discussion.



## Connect Group Discussion #1 (for 30 mins at 9:40 & 11:40)

**Connect Group Leader Note:** The purpose of this Connect Group section is to conversationally discuss how to start a conversation about the Gospel with anyone.

*Please study this lesson, internalize it, pray through it, and own it so that you don't have to just read the answers or the teaching points from this curriculum. I realize you will need to read the questions of course, but the more the students hear the answers and the teaching points from your heart, the more they will want to memorize it as well and let it sink deeply into their hearts!*

*We are well aware you will not be able to get to or through every single question in the curriculum. Please do not even try! We put more questions than you need into the curriculum because we know that some questions will connect with some groups better than others. Please prayerfully study which questions to facilitate your Connect Group through.*

### INTRODUCTION: (for 5 mins starting at 9:40 or 11:40)

- In general, what is your perspective on Christian's sharing their faith? (Is it necessary? Hard? Too forceful? Awkward? Joyful? Or too demanding of Jesus?)
- How have you personally shared your faith with others this year?
- In this did you share any explicit truths of the Gospel (Sin, Eternity, Heaven, Hell, Jesus' Perfect life, His death for us, or his Resurrection from the Dead?)
- How long should you wait to know a person before you can share these truths?
- How important, on a scale of 1-5, do you think your responsibility to share the Gospel with others is? Why?

### BIBLE: (for 15 mins starting at 9:45 or 11:45)

**Open up your Bible's and have the leader's read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.**

(Lead teacher place this verse on the screens if you have the capability.)

- **As Paul writes these lines in Scripture, what is he getting at specifically in these verses?**  
Paul is telling the Corinthian Church that both themselves and himself as Believer's were personally called and trusted to be agents who are the mouth piece for God here on earth. Paul states that we are in fact ambassador's (royal officials) who have been saved and shave



now been sent by God to persuade the world to turn to God the Father through Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

- **If this is true, what responsibilities or privileges do we have as ambassador's for the royal King of the Universe?**
- **Why does God want us to get this message out?**
- **Why does God want "us" to do this instead of Him pushing an easy button from heaven?** Teaching Point: God has chosen us to be examples of how powerful the Gospel is by how it transforms our lives! We can easily relate to other men and women on the ground that we are both messed up, hurting humans who have found redemption and purpose and true life in Jesus. We get to be trophies of how powerful God's grace is for others to see!

### Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

**Teaching Point:** Paul is declaring his efforts to share the Gospel with people from all different kinds of cultures, religions, and ethnicities. What we see here is an intentional effort from Paul to be able to relate with others in order that he can share the Gospel with as many people and cultures as possible so that they can believe and Jesus can save!

- **Read verse 19 again. What does Paul seem to be getting at when he states "I have become a servant to all that I may *win* as many as possible"?**  
Paul is saying as dramatically and truthfully as possible that he will lay down whatever personal preferences, or social popularity status in order to relate with others who are both like himself and unlike from himself. This is hard work and means that Paul intentionally spends time getting to know others and learning about the things they value and love, or the things that have hurt them, or challenged them in order to have a chance to share Jesus. **People desire to be known and understood rather than just "preached at"**.

### Read verses 19-22.

- **What different types of people do you see in these verses?**
- **What do YOU think Paul means when after each type of person, he lists, he says "I became a Jew, or one outside the law, or weak? Or what does Paul mean when he says "I became like these people"?**  
Paul intentionally tries to develop aspects of their lives in his own life in order to relate to all people and show them the respect and value they deserve as people whom Jesus dearly loves.
- **Does this make Paul a sell-out or "fake"? If so WHY? If not, then WHY NOT?**

### Read verses 22-23.

- **After reading these verses where is the "what" or "why" for Paul choosing this type of life style?**



- How could this technique possibly help Paul to start a conversation about the Gospel with these very different types of people?

## **GOSPEL: (for 5 mins starting at 10:00 or 12:00)**

- **As simply as possible, what is the GOSPEL?**

Teaching Point: Let a few students answer this by writing the Gospel in a few points on the back of their newsletters. Give them about 1-2 minutes. After they write and share take them back to 2 Corinthians 5.

### **Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.**

- **According to these 4 verses what is the Gospel? What is the message or appeal that God is making to ALL of humanity through us, his ambassadors?**

Teaching Point: The Gospel we see in this passage is simple! Jesus made a way for all of human kind to have a way to not have their SINS counted against them! God deeply desires to have the world reconciled, or put back in a RIGHT, PEACEFUL, DEEP RELATIONSHIP with Himself. Jesus took on our sin and took it from us, and gives us PERFECT AND PEACEFUL EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS or RIGHT-STANDING with God the Father.

- **Looking at verse 21, for WHOSE sake did God the Father send Jesus to carry the weight and punishment of sin for?**
- **Looking at these verses one more time, what does this truth mean for YOUR life and WHAT you should live for?**
- **Looking at these verses, how, if at all, does this change your perspective about sharing faith?**
- **How, in any way, does this truth change the way you feel towards God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit's desire towards you?**

**Teaching Point:** This truth should deepen a desire and love in your own for Jesus and the rest of the Trinity. When we truly understand all that God had done for us in order to make us right with him it should humble and lifts our hearts up to love Him more truly and serve Him with more sincerity. When we see the way he loves us and truly understand it, we should see a compelling desire in our lives to introduce others to this God who has done EVERYTHING for us.

## **PERSONAL: (for 5 mins starting at 10:05 or 12:05)**

- **From today's lesson what are ways we can try and live out what Paul lived out in order to share the Gospel with others? Write down your example/answer.**



- List three practical ways YOU can begin to do this at school, home, in sports, in band or dance that you can use this example to start forming relationships with others to share the Gospel with.
- Practice starting a conversation about the Gospel with someone in your Connect Group now.

## **Closing by Lead Teacher (10 min at 10:10 & 12:10)**

OK, all of this sounds good, but how do you start a conversation with someone about Jesus?

- Five Practical Steps to start sharing the Gospel in Daily Conversation with someone brand new or someone you already know:

**Step 1: Pray for an opportunity to share! (Jesus ALWAYS answers this one)**

**Step 2: Intentionally place yourself in the path of any person He puts on your heart, OR be ready to engage conversationally with someone He places in your path.**

**Step 3: Introduce yourself and be the question asker!**

The best way to open up conversation about Jesus and take pressure off yourself is to make the conversation about THEM by learning about THEM. Just ask “why” or “who” or “what”.

**This is a challenge to apply what Paul did in his life!**

Ask the person questions about themselves! Don't think selfishly or “blab” a million things about yourself. Don't be quick to force similarities between you and them or shut down conversation by saying “I know how that is” in reply to their stories.

*Let each treasure of their identity that they choose to share help you to ask more questions about them.*

**Wrong Example:** “Oh you like Pokémon Go?” “I know all about that”, or “I've heard bad things about that game” or “I am the best Pokémon player of all time”.

**Right Example:** “Oh you like Pokémon Go? Tell me more about it!”

**If this is a friend or acquaintance,** spend intentional time in asking them how they are, or what's new with them. The more they open up, which usually happens, the more you can learn about what to share or how to start encouraging them with the Gospel.

**Step 4: After you have spent some time in conversation, allow them to take their turn and asks questions about you. Or, if they are shy or simply don't care, now is the time to find ways to relate to them!**



Depending on what they ask you may have a direct “open door” to share the Gospel with them. Rely on Jesus prayerfully during this time and ask Him to give you the right words.

**Step 5: Make Jesus the “unforced” center of your own answers.**

If Jesus is currently working in your life you don’t have to force him ANYWHERE in ANY conversation, because... He’s already there!

**Simply put: Whatever they ask, *IF* you are really walking with Jesus, learning and growing, Jesus CAN’T NOT be the center or your reply.**

**Example: Friend: How have you been? Me: I’ve been great; Jesus has been really rocking my world lately in “this way”.**

Always share about how Jesus is currently revealing himself to you or how He is currently working in you.

**If this person is a new acquaintance find ways to connect with them and relate to them by using your testimony!**

It’s the MOST POWERFUL way to start a conversation about the Gospel when you allow yourself to be seen as a trophy of a life redeemed by a GOOD GOD.

**If this person or friend shares any personal struggles, if possible, find ways to identify with them in their hurt, frustration and brokenness.** So many people including myself share the Gospel the best when we connect with people contemplating suicide, people struggling with depression, sin addiction, insecurity, identity issues and so many other things. Why? Because we all are similar in ONE WAY: WE ALL HAVE ISSUES that Jesus is rescuing or has rescued us from! Sharing how Jesus has touched these parts in your life contagiously spreads hope to them. Let them know by your story that Jesus wants to do the same exact thing for THEM!

**This type of communication takes bravery, selflessness, listening skills, patience, sympathy, creativity and prayerful dependence on Jesus to help you share the Gospel truth in these moments.** We cannot stress enough the importance of being prayerful, wait, listen, let Jesus give you the right opportunity to speak, the right words to say, don’t rush, give your time, your full attention, your emotions and the love Jesus has poured out in your own heart. Each situation will be different. But all you have to do is: Introduce yourself or say “Hey!”, be the INTENTIONAL question asker, look for ways to relate or sympathize with them, let Jesus be the “un-forced” center of your conversation.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT REMINDERS**

**These announcements will be included in the weekly email.**



## **5 Steps for Sharing the Gospel in a Conversation** (Student Handout)

**Step 1: Pray for an opportunity to share! (Jesus ALWAYS answers this one)**

**Step 2: Intentionally place yourself in the path of any person he puts on your heart OR be ready to engage conversationally with someone he places in your path.**

**Step 3: Be the introducer of yourself and the QUESTION ASKER! The best way to open up conversation about Jesus and take pressure off yourself is to make the conversation about THEM by learning about THEM. Just ask “why” or “who” or “what”.**

**This is a challenge to apply what Paul did in his life! Ask the person questions about themselves! Don't think selfishly or “blab” a million things about yourself. Don't be quick to force similarities between you and them or shut down conversation by saying “I know how that is” in reply to their stories.**

**Step 4: After you have spent some time in conversation allow them to take the turn and asks questions about you *OR* if they are shy or simply don't care, now is the time to find ways to relate to them!**

**Step 5: Make Jesus the “unforced” center of your own answers. If Jesus is currently working in your life you don't have to force him ANYWHERE in ANY conversation, because... He's already there!**



**Series:** “White Flag”

**Date:** August 21, 2016

**Lesson:** How To Share the Full Gospel For Salvation

**Text:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

**Author:** Chip Dean (Global Student Pastor)

### **Lead Teacher Welcome and Game (for 10 min at 9:15 & 11:15)**

Lead Teachers, as all the students and leaders come into the room, please welcome them with the music continuing behind you.

**As they are coming in, give them a couple of really brief announcement reminders like:**

- Announcements will be provided in the weekly email.

For now, enjoy your connecting with your group. Your Connect Group Leader (students, give them a high five) has some important questions for y'all to hang out and catch up. Go!

**Come up with a simple game lasting for around 5 minutes for Connect Groups to compete each other:** This morning, you will play the PowerPoint Quiz Game “**LIFE EXPECTANCY.**” This game is to remind you that we must share the Gospel because life is short! Each team will have 10 questions on the Video Screens. Each leader will have a sheet of paper to take down the answers from his group. Connect Groups will compete as a team. Leaders cannot look at the screen, so they must trust and write down the answers of their students. Every team only has 5 seconds to answer each question once it is read. At the end, we'll reveal all the answers. Team with the most correct answers wins.

### **Connect Group Introductions (for 5 min at 9:25 & 11:25)**

- **Welcome** and personally speak to **every** student, **especially** first-time guests.
- Discussion starter questions you could use:
  - 1) Who's your favorite college or pro football team? Going to any games?
  - 2) What's your play to finish out your summer strong?
  - 3) What are you most excited about school coming up?
- Ask them if there was anything that was cool that happened this past week, and tell them of anything interesting that has been going on in your life lately.
- **Go over the Newsletter** and **Daily Devos** on your table with your students.
- **Pray** to begin the morning together.



## **Lead Teacher Introduction (for 5 min at 9:30 & 11:30)**

**Introduction:** Lead Teachers, share a story with the Connect Groups about a time that you got to share the Gospel with someone and they gave their life to Jesus.

### **Explanation this story in relation to the lesson:**

This morning, we're going to study how we can all share the Gospel with someone. Before we share the Gospel with someone, we have to make sure to know the full Gospel to share with them so that they can be saved.

### **Transition into Lesson:**

As we talk about this, open your Bibles and get into conversations with one another from these discussion questions. Remember, our Sunday Connect Groups are not about teachers lecturing, students just listening, or a time of question and answer. Instead, our goal is teachers asking questions and students to engage in conversations and discussions. So students, feel the freedom to speak up, answer, ask more questions, as we want everyone to be a part of the discussion.

## **Connect Group Discussion (for 35 mins at 9:35 & 11:35)**

**Connect Group Leader Note:** The purpose of this section is to learn how to share the essential elements of the Gospel for someone to get saved: Person of Jesus, Work of Jesus, our Response to Jesus.

*Please study this lesson, internalize it, pray through it, and own it so that you don't have to just read the answers or the teaching points from this curriculum. I realize you will need to read the questions of course, but the more the students hear the answers and the teaching points from your heart, the more they will want to memorize it as well and let it sink deeply into their hearts!*

*We are well aware you will not be able to get to or through every single question in the curriculum. Please do not even try! We put more questions than you need into the curriculum because we know that some questions will connect with some groups better than others. Please prayerfully study which questions to facilitate your Connect Group through.*

### **INTRODUCTION: (for 5 mins starting at 9:35 or 11:35)**

- Is there a time that you've ever shared the Gospel with someone?
- Who shared the Gospel with you when you gave your life to Jesus?
- What is your greatest fear when it comes to sharing the Gospel?
- If you could share the Gospel with anyone in the world, who would it be?



- **On your notes page (backside of your Newsletter), write down the essential elements of the Gospel that a lost person must believe to be saved. (We'll save these for the end)**

## **POWER OF THE GOSPEL (for 5 mins starting at 9:40 or 11:40)**

**Read Romans 1:16 (many Connect Group Leaders have found that the students reading the passage silently to themselves is the most effective).**

**Teaching Point:** The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes!

- **What could be more life changing to a lost person than what the Gospel can do to their life?**  
There is nothing that can outweigh the importance of the Gospel in anyone's life!
- **What does the world see as more powerful than the Gospel in a person's life?**  
Pretty much anything: Sports, education, friendships, happiness, pleasure, etc.
- **What does the Gospel give people that nothing or no-one else could give them?**  
The Gospel gives lasting peace in life, joy in all situations, hope for the future, eternal rest in heaven, forgiveness from sin, etc. Those are humanity's deepest needs.

**Teaching Point:** It is very important to simply the Gospel so that it is easier for your students to remember. The simplified way I remember the Gospel is it being the P.W.R. of God.

**P = Person of Jesus**

**W = Work of Jesus**

**R = Response to Jesus**

**Read 1 Corinthians 15:3.**

- **What is the most important part of the Bible?**  
All of the Bible is of utmost importance, but Paul says that the Gospel is the most important part of the Bible. Think about the importance of every word of the Bible, then realize how much more important the Gospel is!
- **What is the most important thing in the world?**  
Many students may answer this differently, so be ready to defend why the Gospel is more important than anything or anyone else in the world.

**Teaching Point:** Leaders, talk through how the Gospel has been the most powerful and the most important part of your life because the Apostle Paul says the Gospel is what he has already received. Leaders, share your personal belief in the Gospel and how you've received it. Don't just share your testimony, we'll do that next week. Instead, share how you believe the Gospel is true!

## **PERSON ON JESUS (for 5 mins starting at 9:45 or 11:45)**



**Teaching Point:** 1 Corinthians 15:3 continues on to talk about the **PERSON** of Jesus. Paul calls Him “Christ.” Christ is not a name, it’s not Jesus’ last name, but Christ His title. Christ means “Anointed One” or “Messiah.” Because Jesus is the final Jew to be anointed with the Holy Spirit (by which all His followers will be anointed with the Holy Spirit), Jesus is the Messiah (Isaiah 11, Jeremiah 31). The Gospel is the good news that Jesus is fully God who became fully man. Jesus remained fully God and became fully man when He came to earth. Some students only think of Jesus as God in such a way that they don’t feel like they can know Him. Other students only think of Jesus as human in such a way they don’t fully respect Him. Jesus was and is both fully God and fully man which makes His work possible. The P in PWR of the Gospel is the Person of Jesus. A sinner must believe in the Person of Jesus to be truly saved.

- **Conversation: Ask your students how Jesus can be both fully God and fully man. Write on your paper “God” and “man.” On the God side, write Jesus’ divine characteristics. On the man side, write Jesus’ human characteristics. There are many characteristics that may seem contradictory, and that is the beauty of the mystery of Jesus being the God-man (1 Tim 2:5). Remember, Jesus being human does not mean that He is a sinner, it means that he’s a human being.**

## **WORK OF JESUS (for 10 mins starting at 9:50 or 11:50)**

**Teaching Points:** 1 Corinthians 15:3 finishes with and 15:4 continues to teach the **WORK** of Jesus. It says that the death of Jesus for our sins, Jesus’ burial, and His resurrection is as of first importance.

**Jesus’ life** is as of first importance because it made His death acceptable for the sins of the world. Jesus not only lived sinlessly, but Jesus also lived perfectly. He not only did nothing wrong, but He also did everything right. He never disobeyed His Father, and He always obeyed His Father. Many people think Christianity is all about not doing anything wrong, but living like Jesus is also doing everything that is right!

**Jesus’ death** is as of first importance because it satisfied God’s eternal wrath for our sins (1 John 2:2). Help your students to understand that even one sin makes us deserve judgment in hell forever because it is against the eternally holy God. Then when we weigh that one sin is deserving of eternity in hell, we must feel the weight of all our sin from all of our life. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that is wrong. Sin is anything we also don’t think, say, or do that we should. Not just any, but also all of our sin is deserving of eternal punishment in hell. On the cross, God poured out His wrath on Jesus. Jesus not only underwent God’s wrath for our sin, but also for the sins of the seven billion people on this earth. He not only underwent God’s wrath for everyone on the earth, but also for everyone who has ever lived and who ever will live on the earth. Jesus’ death absorbed the wrath of God meant for the sins of the world!

**Jesus’ burial** is also as of first importance. Jesus’ burial wasn’t meant to only say He was really dead. Jesus’ burial was meant to show that Jesus was under the curse of sin for us. Old Testament passages like the story of Jonah prophesied Jesus being buried for three days. Therefore, Jesus’ burial shows us that He fully and finally overcame the curse of our sin.



**Jesus' resurrection** is also as of first importance. Not only does 1 Corinthians 15:4 tell us this, but Romans 10:9 does as well. Not only was Jesus' resurrection necessary for salvation, but our belief in Jesus' resurrection is necessary for our salvation. If Jesus had to do it for salvation, then we must believe it for our salvation. Jesus died to give us power over sin, but Jesus rose from the dead to give us power for obedience. Jesus' resurrection also assures us that we will rise from the dead as well and live eternally with Him.

- **For two minutes each, share with someone in your Connect Group beside you about Jesus' life, death, burial, and resurrection. Once you've shared with them, then they will share with you for two minutes.**

## **RESPONSE TO JESUS (for 10 mins starting at 10:00 or 12:00)**

**Read Romans 10:9.**

**Teaching Points:** Our RESPONSE to Jesus is necessary for our salvation. There are three responses that everyone must have in order to be saved: Lordship, Belief, and Repentance

In Romans 10:9, God tells us to confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord. In Matthew 12:34, Jesus tells us that our mouth speaks for our heart. Real belief in the Gospel will have a natural response that confesses Jesus as the Lord of their life. Not only is the Lordship of Jesus necessary for salvation, our confession of Jesus' Lordship is necessary for our salvation.

- **What is the difference in just saying with your mouth (religion) and confessing with your mouth (faith) that Jesus is Lord?**

**Teaching Point:** Romans 10:9 also says that every sinner must believe with our heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. We've already discussed the resurrection of Jesus above. The word here for belief is faith. Not only must we confess that Jesus is the Lord, but we also must place our faith in Him. All the Bible is very clear that our salvation is never possible by our works, but only by our faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus did the work; we trust His work in faith for our salvation.

- **What is the difference in just "believing" that Jesus rose from the dead and believing with your heart that Jesus rose from the dead?**

**Teaching Point:** In Mark 1:14-15, Jesus preaches that we must also repent for salvation. Repentance simply means to change one's direction. It literally means a one-hundred and eighty-degree directional turn. The picture is a sinner living for sin, turning the direction of their life (repents), and then living for Jesus. Repentance involves being convicted for sin, believing Jesus died for sin, confessing sin, and asking for forgiveness from sin. Not only should a sinner believe in Jesus, but also a sinner must repent of sin in order to be saved (2 Cor 5:15). Repentance is not just turning from sin, but it is also turning to Jesus.

- **What is the difference in only confessing sin for salvation (religion) and repenting of sin for salvation (relationship)?**

## **PERSONAL (for 10 mins starting at 10:10 or 12:10)**



- Write out the Gospel. Now that you've studied the Gospel as a group, ask your students to write out the Gospel personally on their notes page using the PWR memory tool. Ask them to describe the difference between their first Gospel explanation and their second explanation of the Gospel.
- Now that you've heard the true Gospel for salvation, have you fully given your life over to Jesus yet for your own salvation?
- From today's lessons what are the 5 biggest motivators or reasons why we cannot live a life of complaining as a follower of Jesus?
- What stuck out to you the most from today's lesson?
- What remaining questions do you have from today's lesson?
- From this lesson, how can we pray for you this week to live this out?
- How could you summarize today's lesson in 1 - 2 sentences?

### Closing by Lead Teacher (5 min at 10:15 & 12:15)

Remember the Gospel to both share and live it. Remember the PWR of the Gospel in order to **share** it friends, family, and the world who have never heard it before. Also remember that the Gospel is not just for salvation, but also for our sanctification (1 Cor. 15:1-2). The ultimate way we **live** for God is by living the Gospel. We **live** for the **PERSON** of Jesus. We live from the **WORK** of Jesus by **RESPONDING** to Jesus. We continue to repent from our sin because of His death and follow Him as our Lord because of His resurrection. **Question: *If a person doesn't live the Gospel, have they truly believed the Gospel?*** The answer to this is "no." The way we know we've been saved is by God changing our lives in living the Gospel once we've believed the Gospel. We must be people who both share and live the Gospel of Jesus!

### LEAD TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENT REMINDERS

- Closing Announcements Provided in Weekly Email



**Series:** “White Flag”

**Date:** September 4th, 2016

**Lesson:** How To Share Your Salvation Testimony

**Text:** 1 John 1:1-4, Acts 26:9-1;12-23, 1 Co. 15:3-5, Romans 1:16, Luke 12:11-12

**Author:** Michael Kiley (Middle School Pastor, Hampton Campus)

### **Lead Teacher Welcome and Game (for 10 min at 9:15 & 11:15)**

Lead Teachers, as all the students and leaders come into the room, please welcome them with the music continuing behind you.

**As they are coming in, give them a couple of really brief announcement reminders like:**

These announcements will be given on the weekly email.

**Come up with a simple game lasting for no more than 5 minutes for Connect Groups to compete each other:** Reverse Charades. Each connect group will nominate a student from their group to go to the front of the room. When the name of the object/person/etc comes on screen, the whole crowd has to act it out and the contestants have to write it down on a piece of paper. After 5 questions are done, the connect groups have to choose one of their leaders to go to the front and do the same thing. Slides on P Drive.

Now, enjoy your connecting with your group! You're Connect Group Leader (students, give them a high five), has some important questions for y'all to hang out and catch up. Go!

### **Connect Group Introductions (5 min at 9:25 & 11:25)**

- **Welcome** and personally speak to every student, especially first-time guests.
- Discussion starter questions you could use:
  - 1) If you could pick 3 people in the history of the world to have dinner with, who would they be and what would you be eating?
  - 2) **Would you rather** have your mom or dad follow you around at school and sit in your classes with you, or would you rather have to come to school everyday wearing a huge wig? **You have to choose one.**
  - 3) Have you ever shared your faith with someone before? How did it go?
- Ask them if there was anything that was cool that happened this past week, and tell them of anything interesting that has been going on in your life lately.
- **Go over the Newsletter** and **Daily Devos** on your table with your students.
- **Pray** to begin the morning together.



## **Lead Teacher Introduction (10 min at 9:30 & 11:30)**

**Introduction:** Lead Teachers, share about a time when you got to tell someone about how God changed your life. Then, relate that story to how sharing our own testimonies with others might be tough, but worth it.

**Here is a story from me personally that might help:** One time when I was in college, me and my friends decided to go to Florida for spring break. Anyone in here like Florida? Ya, it's ok I guess. Well, we went to this place called Saint Augustine which is like the oldest settlement in North America, crazy. Anyways, me and my friends were on the beach throwing the frisbee around when a random dude named Mike came up and asked if he could hang with us. Long story short, we hung out with him and invited him to a Bible study that we all were doing every night. He decided that he would come and check it out. During this Bible study and the rest of the week, we got to share with Mike how awesome God was and how he had changed each of our lives. Mike needed some hope, he had a special illness that made him very sick. As a matter of fact, he told us that the doctors told him that he was probably going to die in his 40s from it. Well, we ended up having a great time with Mike, and he and I exchanged numbers. For the next 6 months or so, we would talk over the phone about God. It wasn't easy sharing about God with Mike. He had a terrible family past, and that coupled with his illness and history of bad decisions, meant that he had a lot to go through and a lot of depression and bitterness built up. But, I kept sharing about how real God is, and how trustworthy His word is. One day God gave me the opportunity to lead him to Christ. And I saw a change in Mike that day. He received joy, he was on fire for God, and he now had purpose in His life. I still talk to him sometimes to this day, years later.

### **Explanation for this story in relation to the lesson:**

I share this story with you guys because like this instance with Mike, God wants us all to share our personal testimony of what God has done in our life with others. You don't have to have one of those freakishly awesome testimonies (like you were hanging off a side of a cliff when God spoke to you), although those are cool. All it takes is someone who knows Jesus. You don't have to have all the answers. But every time we share our story of what God has done with us, we give someone else an opportunity to be saved from hell forever and have a joy-filled life with Jesus. Anyone of us can share our testimony.

### **Transition into Lesson:**

As we talk about this, open your Bibles and get into conversations with one another from these discussion questions. Remember, our Sunday Connect Groups are not about teachers lecturing, students just listening, or a time of question and answer. Instead, our goal is teachers asking questions and students to engage in conversations and discussions. So students, feel the freedom to speak up, answer, ask more questions, as we want everyone to be a part of the discussion.

## **Connect Group Discussion #1 (25 mins at 9:40 & 11:40)**

**Connect Group Leader Note:** The purpose of this Connect Group discussion session is to get students talking about sharing their salvation testimony with the lost.



***Please study this lesson, internalize it, pray through it, and own it so that you don't have to just read the answers or the teaching points from this curriculum. I realize you will need to read the questions of course, but the more the students hear the answers and the teaching points from your heart, the more they will want to memorize it as well and let it sink deeply into their hearts!***

***We are well aware you will not be able to get to or through every single question in the curriculum. Please do not even try! We put more questions than you need into the curriculum because we know that some questions will connect with some groups better than others. Please prayerfully study which questions to facilitate your Connect Group through.***

## **INTRODUCTION: (for 5 mins starting at 9:40 or 11:40)**

- Have you ever been inspired by a story? What was the story? What happened?
- Why do you think stories are so powerful? Why do people love them so much?
- Do you think you have a story that could make an impact with others? Why?
- Do you think God has given you a specific story (testimony) to help others around you? Why/why not? What might that story be?

## **BIBLE: (for 15 mins starting at 9:45 or 11:45)**

- **Read 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1-4 (many Connect Group Leaders have found that the students reading the passage silently to themselves is the most effective).** - Leader Note: First explain to the students that the person writing this is the apostle John, who was with Jesus during His time here on earth.
- **What story from John's life was he sharing with others in these verses? What do you think the "eternal life" in this passage refers to?** He was sharing with others ***his experience of Jesus*** and the teachings of Jesus. He had seen how Jesus lived, listened to what Jesus taught him, and ultimately saw Jesus die and rise again from the dead. Jesus, who is the eternal life through the gospel, saved him.
- **Why do you think John would want to share his story of life with Jesus with other people? Why is this important? (hint, have the student look at verse 3)** John wanted to share his experiences with other people so that they could join him and other believers in having fellowship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ. This is important because as believers, God has called us to share Jesus with others so they too can come to know Him.



- **Why can it be so hard sharing our personal testimony with others sometimes? If the opportunity came for you to share, how would you do it?** Sometimes people don't want to hear it. We are shy. We aren't sure what to say. Etc.

**Teaching Point:** If we really love and care for others, we will want to share our own stories of how God has changed our lives with them. A personal testimony is one of the greatest tools we have because it shows others not just what Christ has done for us, but how He has changed our lives. The goal of sharing our testimony is that the person listening will be moved closer to accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This is why it's important that we know how to share our testimony.

- **Read Acts 26:9-11- Leader Note:** Relate to the students that this story is about when Paul was brought before a king because the Jews accused him of wrongdoing (he was preaching the gospel). Here he gives his personal testimony as his defense.
- **When giving his personal testimony, Paul first goes into what he was like before coming to Christ. From reading these verses, what kind of man do you think Paul was before accepting Jesus? What were some of the things he did?** He was evil and dangerous. He was hateful towards both Christians and Christ, and he made it his mission to throw Christians in jail and destroy the church.
- **Why do you think Paul would first want to talk about what he used to be like before becoming a Christian? Can you remember what you were like before coming to Christ?** When we show others what we used to be like, it prepares them to see how much of a difference Christ has made in us, and what He can do in them.
- **Read Acts 26:12-18. Paul now talks about how God saved him. How did Paul receive Jesus? Do you think your story of salvation has to sound as epic as his? Why or why not?** Jesus miraculously appeared to him and his companions on a road, blinding Paul and sending him on a mission to preach about Him. No, because any story of salvation is a miracle, and God gave you your story for a reason.
- **Read Acts 26:19-23. Paul now talks about what has happened in his life since coming to Christ. Look at verses 20 and 22-23. Do you see a change in Paul after his salvation? What was different?** Paul loved Jesus, and was willing to do whatever it took for others to come to know Him. His heart had changed.
- **Do you think it's powerful when someone shares about how their life has changed? Have you ever seen someone's life dramatically change for the better?**
- **Why do you think Paul chose to tell others about his life since accepting Christ?** It would show them that the story of Jesus isn't just information, it's real life change!
- **What happened to you after your salvation, how did it make you feel?**



- **Why would Paul begin his testimony with: his life before Christ, how Christ saved him, and then end with his life since Christ? Do you think this is a good way to do it? Why or why not?** It is an easy way to show others what you used to be like, how God personally saved and touched your life, and how He has blessed and touched your life since because He saved you.

## **GOSPEL: (for 5 mins starting at 10:00 or 12:00)**

- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. In this letter what does Paul say was most important to him? Why is the gospel always the most important thing, especially when giving your testimony?** That Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. The only reason anyone has a testimony is because of the gospel. It is important because no one can come to know Jesus without knowing who He is and what He did for us. Because Jesus died and rose again for us, we have a hope for the future to be with Him forever.
- **How much of your testimony has to do with the gospel?** All of it. God was working in you, planning for you to receive Jesus before you ever heard of Him. The story of your testimony IS the story of how you received Jesus and had your life changed by Him. Because of this, we NEED to know how to share the gospel with someone.
- **Since many of us have now been saved, why do we need to keep talking about the gospel? Isn't our testimony done now, and ready to be shared with others?** We always need to go back to Jesus death and resurrection because it reminds us of how Jesus has set us free from sin, how he never stops loving us, and how we need to rely completely on Him instead of ourselves. **Our testimony is still happening.** As long as you know Jesus, you have a testimony to share, but it is never over. God is still adding to your story now, and because of this we still need to remember the gospel so we can have the strength to follow Him.
- **Read Romans 1:16. Why does Paul say that he is not ashamed of the gospel? How do you think your friends would respond if you shared the gospel with them?** Because the gospel is God's power to save all people.

## **PERSONAL: (for 5 mins starting at 10:05 or 12:05)**

- **What are the simple steps of sharing your salvation testimony from this morning's lesson?**
- **Write down your personal testimony and let your Connect Group Leader read it before you leave. (You can also have each one of your students share their personal testimony with the rest of the Connect Group)**
- **Now that we have covered all this, do you know anyone in your life you can share your testimony with?**



- **How can you take what we discussed today and start sharing your testimony with the friend that you mentioned?**
- **Read Luke 12:11-12. Why does the Bible say that we should not be anxious when we are put in a position to share our testimony and the gospel?** The Holy Spirit will give us the words to say.
- **Do you have any fears regarding sharing your testimony? How can the group pray for you?**

## **Closing by Lead Teacher (5 min at 10:10 & 12:10)**

If you are in this room, and you have accepted Jesus Christ into your life, **you have a testimony.** God gives us testimonies not just for ourselves, but also to give to others so that they too can have a relationship with God our Father like we have. Sharing our story and the gospel that saved us with someone can feel scary sometimes right? We might be scared that we get rejected, or won't have the right words to say. I want to encourage you guys with this. God will give you the words to say, and He will help you say them. God promises to work in us and through us when we ask Him. Ask God to give you opportunities to share your gospel testimony with someone this week. Let's pray.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT REMINDERS**

These announcements will be given in the weekly email.

