

Creative Camping

BIBLE VERSE

“From there he moved to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel to the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and worshiped him” (Genesis 12:8).

LEADER PREPARATION

- Go to the North American Mission Board Web site www.namb.net and click on the Mission Opportunities tab. Click on the Campers on Mission link.
- Make copies of the “Camping Essentials” handout at the end of this lesson.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goal of this lesson is to help adults create positive family camping experiences and to identify the missions application of camping.

Camping is one of the great minefields of family fun. Whether camping resembles a field of landmines or a field of dreams, camping features a get away from electronics and schedules. Abraham proposes a biblical context for creative camping, since the great biblical patriarch learned some of his greatest lessons outdoors.

Abraham’s experiences with the Lord while camping commenced when God ordered Abraham to evacuate the land of his father for the property that He would disclose to Abraham (Genesis 12). Essentially, Abraham’s orders were to leave and go. God relegated the *where* component of Abraham’s camping trip to a “need to know” basis. Only the Father knew where He was sending his obedient child.

Abraham was walking on the land of promise in Canaan before God disclosed that this was his destination. Abraham built an altar to the Lord halfway between Bethel, the place of communion with God, and Ai, which represented the world. Consider where God might ask you to go to discover His land of promise.

Secondly, God told Abraham to “lift up [his] eyes [and]...see” (Genesis 13:14–15). Abraham traveled from place to place until he returned to the site where he had built his altar, between Bethel and Ai (Genesis 13). He learned to worship, wait on, and work for God simultaneously.

While he was wandering, Abraham perceived *what* God would do for him—guide and provide. Oswalt Chambers says that the Spirit changes the way that we perceive things until what was once impossible begins to merge with the possible. Abraham’s journey of “going nowhere” became the arrival at “somewhere” when he reached Canaan.

Thirdly, Abraham experienced deliverance from his enemies and realized *who* manipulated his camping expedition (Genesis 14). Melchizedek led Abraham in worshiping God: “. . . give praise to God Most High who has handed over your enemies to you.” Celebrating rescues and victories is vital to godly camping.

Next, Abraham’s camping excursion revealed *when* God is with us: always. The Creator led Abraham outside and challenged him to count the stars (Genesis 15:5). Although Abraham had no heir, God promised offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens. God’s covenant with Abraham was as his shield and the source of his immense reward.

Finally, after his son Isaac’s birth, the Lord ordered Abraham to take his only heir on a mountain excursion. The great *where* returned to challenge Abraham’s faith again. The patriarch wondered where God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice, or where he must sacrifice Isaac. Ultimately, as Abraham believed, “God Himself [provided] the lamb for the burnt offering.” God witnessed Abraham’s faith within Abraham’s willingness to offer his son. God repeated his promise to Abraham for many heirs.

Abraham’s camping experiences reveal the necessity of getting out of our comfort zones with God. Often we must leave where we are to meet God to see what He is trying to show us. Ultimately, we experience gratitude when He reveals Himself and His ways.

TEACHING PLAN

Campfire Stories

Share camping stories. Ask the adults to share their best memories of camping. Discuss what adults like most and least about the great outdoors.

Say: Name 3–5 items you consider camping necessities. (Tents, running water, flashlights, food, stove)

Ask: What attitudes create pleasant camping experiences? (Cooperative, supportive, courageous)

Interject that Abraham’s outdoor experiences reveal ways to be more creative campers.

The Creator and the Great Outdoors

Challenge adults to describe the outdoor encounters of biblical characters.

I. Leave and Go

Read Genesis 12:1–8.

Note that Abraham became a nomad at 75 and spent most of his later years outside or in a tent.

Ask the following questions:

- What was God's order to Abraham? (To leave his father's land)
- How did God tell Abraham that he would know where to go? (God would show him.)

Note that Abraham's orders from God were to leave and go. Only God knew the destination. Point out that typically no one in that culture left his father's land.

Ask:

- Have you ever had to abandon a campsite unexpectedly?
- When have you stepped out in faith to go where God has shown you?

Ask: Where did God send Abraham? (Canaan)

Note that before God disclosed to Abraham his destination, he was already at his destination—Canaan, or the Promised Land.

Ask: Where and why did Abraham build an altar?

Abraham built an altar to worship the Lord halfway between Bethel, the place of communion with God, and Ai, which represented the world.

Ask individuals: Where does God want you to go to discover His promises?

II. Lift up your eyes and see

Read Genesis 13:3–4,12,14–18.

Ask:

- Did Abraham wander before locating his new home? (Abraham traveled from place to place.)
- Where did he stop? (Between Bethel and Ai and at his altar)

- What did God command Abraham to “lift up [his] eyes [and] . . . see?” (The land where his descendants would live forever.)

Read this quote from devotional writer, Oswald Chambers:

“God’s Spirit alters the atmosphere of our way of looking at things, and things begin to be possible which were never possible.” (Taken from *My Utmost for His Highest*.)

Summarize by explaining that the Spirit changes the way that we perceive things until what we once considered impossible begins to merge with the possible. Indicate that Abraham’s journey of “going nowhere” ended “somewhere” when he reached Canaan.

Ask: *What* did God do for Abraham while he was wandering? (Provided)

III. Give praise to God Most High

Read Genesis 14:14,16,18–20.

Ask:

- How did God take care of Abraham? (Deliverance)
- Who manipulated Abraham’s camping expedition? (God)
- In what ways is it important to celebrate safety and victory when camping?
- How did Melchizedek model worshiping God? (He gave praise to God.)

IV. I am your shield and your great reward.

Read Genesis 15:1,5–6,18.

Ask: Based on Abraham’s excursion, *when* is God with us? (Always)

Discuss the reason that God took Abraham outside. (To count the stars)

Consider the significance of God’s promise of offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens to Abraham who had no son.

Ask: What was God’s covenant with Abraham? (To be his shield and his immense reward and many offspring)

V. God will provide the sacrifice

Read Genesis 22:2–3,5,8,12,14, and 18.

Ask:

- How did God's command to Abraham to take his son to the mountain challenge his faith?
- How did Abraham display his faith before reaching the mountain? (He believed that God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice.)

Discuss what would have happened if God had not provided the lamb for the sacrifice.

Ask:

- Do you think that Isaac would have been sacrificed?
- What did Abraham believe about God that comforted him, even as he thought he might have to kill his only heir? (God could raise the dead.)
- How did Abraham display obedience to God?
- What promise did God repeat to Abraham because of his obedience? (Many heirs)

In summary, ask:

What can we learn about creative camping from Abraham's experiences?

- Get alone with God
- Stretch our comfort zones
- Be willing to travel or change to meet God
- Notice and obey what God is leading us to do
- Be grateful when He reveals Himself and His ways

ACTION PLAN

Camping with a Purpose

An on-mission follower looks for ways to bring the lost into the camp of God.

- As you travel look for opportunities to share the beauty of God's creation.
- Appreciate the restorative qualities of being away from busy schedules.
- Point others to the Creator and the God of peace whom you serve.
- Learn about nature according to your interests: birds, plants, and wildlife.
- Participate in spontaneous worship. Encourage your children to take part in worship by the campfire by reading poems or Scripture or contributing drawings or bits of nature they have collected.
- Invite other families to join your worship and celebration.
- Delegate leadership roles to the children during camping trips, such as washing and drying cooking utensils, gathering firewood, and preparing food for cooking.
- Encourage teamwork and cooperation in the camping experience.
- Create games or races with the chores if your family enjoys competition.

LESSON BY

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HANDOUT**Camping Essentials**

- Shelter, sleeping bags, and air mattresses (automatically inflatable, unless you have a battery-operated pump)
- Pots and pans with handles
- Coffee pot
- Cooking stove or matches and firewood and grill rack
- Inexpensive plastic plates, mugs or Styrofoam® cups, inexpensive stainless steel knives, forks, and spoons (Plastic utensils break easily.)
- Cooking utensils: Long handled fork, spatula, spoon, and a sharp knife
- Large pot or bucket for dishwashing
- Oven mitt, dish towels and sponge, cutting board, can opener with bottle opener
- Tools: hatchet for firewood, hammer, pliers, assortment of screwdrivers, shovel, pocketknife, or Swiss Army knife
- Plastic bin or bucket, footlocker for storing and carrying supplies
- Aluminum foil, paper towels, trash bags, detergent, clothespins, insect repellent, sunscreen
- Plastic containers
- Collapsible water jug
- Stools or folding chairs
- Toilet tissue
- String
- Torch-style flashlight and batteries
- Tarp and plastic tablecloth
- First-aid kit
- Towels and washcloths
- Coats, extra pairs of jeans and washable shoes, old swimsuits, clothing for layering, socks for hiking, shower shoes
- Dehydrated foods and snacks

Courtesy of *Recreation Xtras. A Prescription for Family Fun*. Jennette and Phil Briggs. Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1988.



FAMILY FUN

Family Missions

BIBLE VERSE

“So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household’” (Acts 16:31).

LEADER PREPARATION

- Visit www.thebridge.namb.net for information on adult volunteer mission opportunities at The Bridge or call 1 800 462-8657.
- For information on family oriented mission trips (Families on Missions) visit the North American Mission Board Web site at www.namb.net/fom or call 1 800 462-8657.
- Make copies of the handout at the end of this lesson, one for each participant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The purpose of this lesson is to lead adults to prioritize and to plan short-term mission trips with their families.

Going on mission for Christ as a family is one of the ways that the nuclear family can model the family of God in Jesus Christ. Two very different families in the New Testament serve as examples for ways to share joy, fellowship, and Christ.

In Acts 16, the Philippian jailer encountered the worship of Paul and Silas, when they were imprisoned for healing a demon-possessed slave girl. After the men had been stripped, beaten, and thrown into prison, the jailer heard them singing praises to God. A powerful earthquake shook the prison to its foundations, releasing the locks on the doors and the chains on the prisoners. The jailer thought to take his own life, assuming all the prisoners were gone. But Paul and Silas stopped him by shouting that they were all still in their cells.

The jailer fell down trembling before them and asked what he must do to be saved. He accepted Jesus Christ, as did his entire household. Paul and Silas shared gladness from their open hearts (Acts 16:32) with the jailer’s entire family, who came to believe in God and were filled with joy (16:34).

Acts chapter 10 tells us that Cornelius and his family were already God-fearing and generous people

when their lives intersected with the apostle Peter. Cornelius was a Gentile, and Peter was a Jew. Cornelius had a vision from God that he was to find Peter and bring him to his house. Cornelius sent a devout soldier from his regiment, along with two servants, to fetch Peter.

Cornelius set an example for us in that he followed as much direction as he had been given. He discovered that as he was obedient, God gave more direction. Cornelius did not know why God had told him to locate Peter and bring him to his home.

In the meantime, the Lord gave a vision to Peter that convinced him that nothing that God had created was unclean; therefore, Peter was willing to go with Cornelius' emissaries to visit the house of a Gentile. Previously, the gospel of Christ had been reserved for Jews alone, and orthodox Jews never shared a meal with Gentiles.

Cornelius and his family opened their home to Peter, who shared the gospel of Christ with all of the family and guests at their home. Many people were baptized, and Peter stayed for a few days to have more fellowship with the new believers. The openness of Cornelius' family allowed Peter to share the story of the peace of Christ, who is Lord of all. Their fellowship offered a forum for Peter to preach the good works of Christ, because God was with Him. Peter gave testimony from the witnesses who knew Christ, that all that believe receive forgiveness of sins through His name.

As a family on mission for God, consider when and where you will commit to sharing joy, fellowship, and the good news of Christ.

TEACHING PLAN

The Sharing Groove

Discuss possible ways to open your home in hospitality to share joy and fellowship with others. Encourage individuals to create an inventory of ways to share Christ as a family. Possible suggestions:

- Organize a Backyard Bible Club in a trailer park, home, clubhouse, or campsite.
- Use an interest or talent, such as music, arts and crafts, drama, or sports to draw children and families.
- Volunteer to serve at a soup kitchen, clothes closet, or a food or toy drive.

Before proceeding further into the session:

1. Be certain that each participant has a personal relationship with Christ.
2. Instruct adults to be sure that all family members are believers before going on mission.

3. Note that families may minister outside the church's planned ministries.
4. Encourage adults to help children find ways to participate.
5. Note that some children are capable of arranging family ministries, with adult assistance.

Home Base

Distribute copies of the handout "Family Missions." Instruct individuals to complete the questions during the session.

1. Families on mission share joy.

Read Acts 16:25–34. Explain the background of Paul and Silas' imprisonment. (Healing the slave girl, Acts 16:16-24)

Note that the sharing of their joy led to the salvation of a household.

Direct the class to discuss what happened while the men were imprisoned. (Sang praises and experienced an earthquake)

Discuss the earthquake. (Shaken foundation and broken locks and chains)

Ask:

- Why did the jailer attempt to take his life? (He assumed that his prisoners had escaped.)
- How did Paul and Silas save the jailer's earthly life? (They remained in their cells.)
- What happened when the jailer asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved? (They shared Jesus with him. He accepted Christ, as did his household.)
- What happened because Paul and Silas shared their joy? (Acts 16:25,34) (The jailer and his family trusted in God and were filled with joy.)

2. Families on mission share fellowship.

Read Acts 10:1–3,19–20,22–24, and 27–29. Note that Cornelius and his family were God-fearing, generous people, and that Cornelius had a vision that he was to find Peter and bring him to his house.

Ask: What is significant about Cornelius being a Gentile and Peter's heritage as a Jew? (The races did not socialize.)

Discuss how Cornelius responded to the vision (Acts 10:7). (He sent a devout soldier and two servants to fetch Peter.)

Ask: What happened to Peter in the meantime? (He had a vision that told him none of God's creation is unclean.)

Discuss the impact that vision had on Peter's life. (Peter visited and shared the gospel in a Gentile home.)

3. Families on mission share Christ.

Read the rest of Peter and Cornelius' story in Acts 10:30–31,33–40,43–48.

Direct the participants to summarize Peter's message by answering the following questions:

- How does God treat people? (Without favoritism)
- What behavior does God expect? (Fear and righteousness)
- Describe Jesus' experiences in Peter's message (Acts 10:39–41). (Christ was killed, raised from the dead, and seen by witnesses.)
- According to Acts 10:42, what are believers commanded to preach? (Gospel)
- What is offered to all who believe in Christ (Acts 10:43)? (Forgiveness through Jesus)

Ask: What was the result of Cornelius' family's willingness to open their home to Peter?

- Peter shared the good news.
- The invitation for the speaker and the listeners to attend permitted the gospel to be spoken and heard.
- Peter testified that everyone who believes receives forgiveness through Jesus.
- Many people accepted Christ and were baptized.
- Peter continued to fellowship with new believers.

4. Challenge adults:

As families on mission, when and where will you commit to sharing joy, fellowship, and the gospel?

In summary, ask:

When and where will your family be on mission for God?

ACTION PLAN

On Mission as a Family

On-mission families investigate ways to serve God together:

- Perform secret acts of service as a family such as raking leaves and delivering special gifts of food or crafts.
- Survey the ministry that your family does as individuals and as a unit. Discover ways to multiply or broaden the ways that you serve. For example, serve more regularly, for longer hours, add a financial component to your service, or invite a friend or another family to work alongside you.
- Celebrate ministry victories by hosting an attitude of gratitude meal. Invite a few close friends to share in the event. Then invite them to participate in a family ministry project.
- Sing or play instruments at an assisted living or extended care facility.
- Invite a single person to join your family for a weekly family night.
- Over a family meal, discuss individual dreams and goals for serving Christ in the next year. Plan ways to help each other achieve those goals. Then set some family ministry goals.
- Choose a family ministry theme for the year. Possible themes: "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands," "As You Go" "If My People Will Pray" "Now Is the Time to Worship," or "Adventures in Obedience." Search for ministry opportunities that match your family's ministry theme.
- Discover and plan to do a mission trip or project together, such as Families on Mission through the North American Mission Board; e-mail fom@namb.net or register at www.namb.net/fom.

LESSON BY

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HANDOUT**Family Missions**

1. Share joy with open hearts (Acts 16:25–34).

- With whom will we share joy?
- What will we tell others about how to find joy?
- When and where will we as a family share our joy in Christ?
- What is my motivation for sharing my joy in Christ?

2. Share fellowship by opening homes (Acts 10:1–3,19–24,27–29).

- To whom will we open our home?
- What will we do when we open our home, and what will we serve?
- When and where will we open our home to share Christ?
- What is my motivation for having fellowship with lost persons?

3. Share Jesus with open lives (Acts 10:30–40,43–48).

- With whom will my family share Christ?
- What will we say to others about Christ?
- When and where will we share Christ as a family? (Set a specific time and place.)

Mark the Roman Road in your Bible for sharing.

- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 5:8
- Romans 10:9–10,13
- Why? What is my motivation for sharing Christ?
- When and where will we go?

Encountering Jerusalem

BIBLE VERSES

“Then He took the Twelve aside and told them, ‘Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. Everything that is written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished” (Luke 18:31).

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

LEADER PREPARATION

- Ladder or scaffolding
- Butcher paper or poster board
- Markers
- Copies of the two handouts found at the end of the lesson, enough for each group member

Before the meeting, visit the North American Mission Board Web site (www.namb.net) and familiarize yourself with the mission trip tips offered there. These can be found under the Mission Opportunities tab. Click on the Adult Opportunities link and find Mission Trip Tips in the menu on the left. Feel free to look around. There are many great resources.

Another great Web site with resources is the Acts 1:8 Challenge at www.actstone8.com. The Acts 1:8 Challenge is supported by both the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board.

Contact your Baptist association office to learn of any Jerusalem projects planned. Find out ways your group or church can be involved. Present this information to the group as part of the Action Plan at the end of this lesson.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the Acts 1:8 passage, Jesus tells His disciples that they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. This gives one the sense of spreading the gospel near and far. We can assume our personal Jerusalem to be those people within our sphere of influence and our hometown.

In Luke 18:31, Jesus told His twelve closest followers that they were going to Jerusalem. For Him, Jerusalem represented the culmination of His earthly ministry—the site of His death, burial, and resurrection. Consider what comprises your Jerusalem.

In order to reach our personal Jerusalem, we must first grasp the magnitude of Jesus' trek to Jerusalem. Jerusalem represented the fulfillment of the prophets' predictions for the Son of Man (Luke 18:31–33). Jesus would be handed over to the Gentiles for public beatings and humiliation. Christ's mission on earth, His purpose in coming, was to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). His death benefited sinners. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day to defeat sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Jesus' obedience to the will of the Father completed the work of redemption (John 4:34).

In order to reach our Jerusalem, our city and sphere of influence, we must respond to Christ's compelling to follow Him. Christ desires for us to set our "face like flint" as He did, relying on the Father for direction (Isaiah 50:7,10).

God's plan for our lives is bigger than a mere mission. This may be difficult for us to see because of our tendency toward shortsightedness. He sees the big picture. Our personal goals likely fall short of God's goals and have no place in God's mission; only God's purposes have meaning.

He chose us (John 15:16). His call to follow Him never ends. His calling on our lives outlasts the mission to reach our Jerusalem and into eternity.

In order to grasp the magnitude of reaching our Jerusalem for Christ, we must accept God's perspective on the world and share His vision for the lost. To be equipped for every good work, we must be in right relationship with God, with His purposes, and with His wisdom.

Knowing God's Word is the route to grasping God's ways. God inspired His Scripture and gave His message to teach, rebuke, correct, and train us in right living (2 Timothy 3:16–17). God's purpose in Christ was to sacrifice His life for our sins, to bury Him in death, and to raise Him from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:2–4).

God's discernment exceeds the reaches of the human mind. His wisdom is pure, peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy (James 3:17). In Christ, we possess the wisdom of heaven that is our "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). To reach our Jerusalem, our choices, motives, and actions must manifest wise thinking.

Ultimately, Christ lives in His on-mission followers. We come to Him. We ask to be burdened for the fields that are white with the harvest of souls (John 4:29, 34–38). We encourage others to die to a life of rebellion and to follow Christ to find life.

TEACHING PLAN

Scaffolding

Before to the session, set up the ladder or scaffolding. Attach the butcher paper or poster board to a focal wall. As participants arrive, encourage them to write the names of their hometowns or birthplaces.

Allow time for brief fellowship and discussion about hometowns and birthplaces. Some group members may have these in common. This knowledge could come in handy when deciding later where they can be Christ's witnesses.

Tell the group that today's lesson is about the importance of being Christ's witnesses to those close to us. Read Acts 1:8. Explain that our Jerusalem is comprised of our families, friends, and community. Ask individuals to call out names and groups within their spheres of influence. Write the names on the focal wall as individuals respond.

Discuss the purpose of ladders or scaffolding in building or painting (support, to reach higher, for efficiency, to allow more workers to participate).

Challenge adults to compare walking with Christ to benefiting from a ladder or scaffolding (support for growth, higher levels of worship or understanding, and cooperation).

Tell the group that there are four steps to sharing Christ where we live. These are as follows and we will discuss each one in turn:

I. Understanding Jesus' mission

II. Responding to His call

III. Sharing His vision

IV. Encountering Jerusalem

I. Understanding Jesus' Mission

Remind the group that Jesus was a Jew. He came first to them (Matthew 15:24). He loved Jerusalem and even wept for it. During His earthly ministry, the Jews and Jerusalem were within His immediate sphere of influence.

Read Luke 18:31-33.

Ask, "Where did Jesus say He was going?" (Jerusalem)

Explain that if we are to reach our Jerusalem, we must grasp the magnitude of Jesus' trek to Jerusalem. Divide the participants into two groups. Distribute copies of handout #1: Grasp the Magnitude of Jesus' Trek to Jerusalem (located at the end of this lesson).

Ask the participants to answer the questions on the handout according to which group they are in. Allow time for them to complete the assignment. Then ask Group A these questions.

Group A

1. In verse 31, what did Jesus tell His disciples would happen in Jerusalem? (The prophecies written about Him would be fulfilled.)
2. According to verses 32–33, how would it happen?
 - Handed over to the Gentiles
 - Mocked, insulted, spit upon, flogged, killed
 - Rise on the third day

Ask Group B these questions.

Group B

1. According to Luke 19:10 and 1 Corinthians 15:2-4, why did Jesus come to earth?
 - To seek and to save the lost
 - To die for our sins and be buried
 - To be raised on the third day
2. What phrase is repeated twice in 1 Corinthians 15:2–4 that reinforces the answer to the first question above? (“according to the Scriptures”)

Address the following questions to the entire group:

1. What would you say is the significance of Jesus' trek to Jerusalem?
2. How would you explain this to someone in your personal Jerusalem?

Be ready to offer your own response. (What happened in Jerusalem represented fulfillment of all the prophecies regarding the Son of Man.)

Continue:

3. How does knowing that Jesus fulfilled prophecy motivate you to tell our city about Him?

4. In what ways does Jesus' purpose motivate you to be a witness in our city?

II. Responding to His Call

Read Isaiah 50:7,10.

Ask, "With what attitude does God expect us to respond to His call?" (To set our "face like flint" and to rely on Him)

"How have you responded to Christ's invitation to follow Him?"

Read John 15:16.

Ask, "How does realizing that God chose you impact your willingness to share your faith here?"

Pray that more seekers from your city would find Christ.

III. Sharing His Vision

Explain that we must share God's vision before we can reach our city.

Direct adults to comprehend three elements of God's vision for His followers:

Right relationship with:

- God
- His purposes
- His wisdom

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Explain that living the truth of Scripture keeps us in right relationship with God.

List specific benefits of Scripture: teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

Ask, "What impact does knowing God's Word have on understanding God's ways?"

Read 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 again.

Ask, "What was God's purpose in sending Christ?"

Read James 3:17. Note that God's discernment exceeds that of the human mind. List attributes of God's wisdom.

- Pure
- Peace-loving
- Gentle
- Compliant
- Full of mercy and good fruits
- Without favoritism and hypocrisy

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26–30.

Ask, "What is the purpose of heavenly wisdom in our spiritual growth?"

Discuss the meanings of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Note that, to reach our Jerusalem for Christ, believers must be wise in choices, motives, and actions.

IV. Encountering Jerusalem

Remind believers that Jesus' obedience to the Father permitted the work of redemption that permits Christ to live in us.

Read John 4:29, 34–38. Note the three stages of sharing Christ in our Jerusalem:

- Invite others to come to Christ (4:29)
- Have concern for lost souls (4:35)
- Lead others to follow Christ (4:37–38)

Invite adults to go on mission to reach your city. Set class and individual goals to prepare for your missions involvement. Set goals in number of times the gospel is shared (invite others to come to Christ), number of ministry actions you are able to do (concern for the lost), and the number who accept Christ as Savior (lead others to follow Christ).

ACTION PLAN

On Mission in Jerusalem

On-mission believers develop a plan to share the gospel of Christ with their Jerusalem, their city, and sphere of influence. Distribute Handout #2: Jerusalem Timeline.

- Contact your Baptist association to learn of any Jerusalem mission projects they are planning.
- Choose a theme for your mission project.

- Set clear goals for the task of reaching your city or sphere of influence for Christ, based on Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18–20.
- Prepare for the mission project, both spiritually and organizationally.
- Establish a regular time to pray specifically for the mission project.
- Make a three-month calendar of prayer needs. Distribute your prayer needs to four faithful prayer warriors, whom you enlist, based on their shared burden for your city or sphere of influence.
- Investigate biblical characters that went on mission for God to reach their Jerusalem, including Peter, James, John, and Paul.
- Contact a local missionary. Ask how you can contribute to their work.
- Learn all that you can about your area so that you can understand your mission field.
- Look for any disadvantaged or destitute persons in your area who might need physical resources.
- Be committed to personal transformation because the Lord will change the vessel before He uses you to honor His kingdom.

LESSON BY

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NOTES ON SOURCES

Adapted from "The Beatitudes of Missiology," *My Life—A Mission Trip. Leader's Guide*, 9-13. George Siler. Alpharetta, GA: The North American Mission Board, SBC, 2002.

HANDOUT #1**Grasp the Magnitude of Jesus' Trek to Jerusalem****GROUP A: READ LUKE 18:31-33.**

1. In verse 31, what did Jesus tell His disciples would happen in Jerusalem?

2. According to verses 32-33, how would it happen?

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-
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GROUP B

Read Luke 19:10 and 1 Corinthians 15:2-4.

1. According to these verses, why did Jesus come to earth?

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2. What phrase is repeated twice in 1 Corinthians 15:2-4 that reinforces the answer to the first question above?

HANDOUT #2**Jerusalem Timeline****9-12 MONTHS AHEAD:**

1. Research possible mission trips.
2. Seek financial resources from church and other sources.
3. Identify your destination and dates.
4. Recruit a team leader or team of leaders to plan the trip.
5. Make an agreement with the mission trip host, where appropriate.

6-9 MONTHS AHEAD:

1. Arrange meals and transportation.
2. Plan budget for the trip, including any fundraising; determine individual costs.
3. Schedule a pre-trip visit, if possible.
4. Recruit chaperones if any children or teens are included.
5. Recruit your team, checking for eligibility.
6. Promote the trip.
7. Host a meeting about trip details.

4-6 MONTHS AHEAD:

1. Write or purchase devotional or journal material for participants.
2. Calendar a commissioning service prior to the trip and a celebration service upon your return; include church, groups, or families as appropriate.
3. Secure any medical information or release forms from participants.
4. Stock a first-aid kit; secure a first-aid leader, if necessary.

3-4 MONTHS AHEAD:

1. Conduct team training, including Bible study and evangelism training.
2. Be sure team members are aware of any advance preparation for which individuals are responsible.
3. Prepare any study or teaching materials.
4. Gather supplies and materials.
5. Make a packing list.
6. Group participants into work teams, as required.

1-4 WEEKS AHEAD:

1. Assign tasks to work teams.
2. Hold final team meeting.
3. Conduct a commissioning service.
4. Collect final money due, along with signed and notarized medical releases.
5. Verify financial situation, including amounts due for meals.
6. Be sure you have checks or credit cards to cover all expenses while on mission.

ON MISSION:

1. Be sure that individuals have time for personal worship and reflection in their journals.
2. Meet daily as a team for worship, sharing, and debriefing.
3. Meet hosts daily to evaluate and adjust mission.
4. Take pictures and video footage of the trip.
5. Record spiritual decisions and other results to report to churches for follow-up.

1-2 WEEKS AFTER:

1. Debrief the mission experience. Invite prayer support and financial contributors, when possible.

1-4 WEEKS AFTER:

1. Conduct a celebration service.
2. Evaluate mission trip and plan for future work with host and with the field.
3. Assist participants in keeping in touch with the field and in following up on commitments made during the trip.

2 MONTHS AFTER:

1. Select a personal mission field as individual participants, and begin on-mission strategies to reach that field for Christ.

Adapted from "Leader's Checklist and Timeline," *My Life—A Mission Trip. Leader's Guide*, 5-6. George Siler. Alpharetta, GA: The North American Mission Board, SBC, 2002.

Time to Rest

BIBLE VERSES

“The result of righteousness will be peace, the effect of righteousness will be quiet confidence forever. Then my people will dwell in a peaceful place, and in safe and restful dwellings” (Isaiah 32:17–18).

LEADER PREPARATION

- Visit www.namb.net to learn where disaster-relief work and other mission opportunities are.
- Visit www.namb.net to discover work in key, major cities where families might vacation.
- Make copies of the two handouts at the end of this lesson.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The goal of this lesson is to lead adults to prioritize and to plan short-term mission trips with their families.

Families on mission for God take time to “be still and know” that He is God (Psalm 46:10). Consider some ways that you can take your family on vacation as a retreat with the Lord and minister to the people whom you encounter as you travel.

God’s Word suggests three specific times that require us to take a rest, or a vacation, in order to rejuvenate. We need to rest in the Lord after creating, after going on mission for God, and after the work of responding to God’s leading in our lives.

Taking time to rest after creating follows the Lord’s example following the creation of the world. He rested on the seventh day after creating the universe (Genesis 2:2–3). Make note of why we are commanded to rest after creating. He calls us to follow His example by taking a day of rest on the Sabbath at the end of our workweek (Exodus 31:12–18).

God also commands us to take time to rest in Him after traveling or going on mission. In Exodus 33:12–14, the Lord promised rest to Moses as one whom He favored. In Matthew 11:28–30, Jesus commands us to come to Him for rest. The word come in Greek implies that coming is our part of a business transaction with the Father. We come to God weary and burdened. God offers rest, gentleness, and humility in exchange for our afflictions. Rather than the crushing weight of life’s concerns, the Father sets an easy yoke and lighter burdens on us.

In *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers describes the transaction of placing our burdens on God after going on mission: “The Holy Spirit will locate the ONE impenetrable thing in [us], but He cannot budge it unless [we] are willing to let Him.”

Our stubborn refusal to rest obstructs our ability to rest in Him! If we think we don’t need His rest, then we will quibble, argue, or experience sorrow, rather than finding His rest. However, He extends divine patience to us. In fact, “. . . all the time God has stood with outstretched hands not only to take [us] but also for us to take His hand!” (From *My Utmost for His Highest*)

Making time to rest after responding to God’s call is vital. As we rest in Him, God establishes the works of our hands (Psalm 90:17). He gives us peaceful homes and minds (Isaiah 32:18). The Lord promises rest if we choose to walk in “the good way” (Jeremiah 6:16). If we ignore His words, then we might meet disaster rather than rest. Choose a specific time and place to transact with God and accept His rest.

TEACHING PLAN

Resting Heart Rate

Direct the adults to share the first word that comes to mind after hearing the words *vacation* and *rest*. Form two lists, as appropriate. Possible answers for *vacation* include: money, planning, arguments, conflict, overload, deadlines, beach, mountains, sunburn, sore feet, laughter, long walks, sunsets, waves, or fishing.

Ask: When was the last time you took a vacation to be with the Lord? To “be still and know” that He is God (Psalm 46:10)?

Guide adults to describe a retreat with God.

A Time to Rest

Distribute the handout “Time to Rest and Recreate As a Family On Mission.”

Note that God’s Word suggests three specific times that require a rest, or vacation, in order to rejuvenate: after creating, after traveling or going on mission for God, and after responding to God’s direction.

1. Take time to rest after creating (Genesis 2:2–3, Exodus 31:12–18).

Read Genesis 2:2–3.

Discuss what God did after He created the world.

Read Exodus 31:12–18.

Lead adults to discuss God’s original intent for rest on the Sabbath.

Lead adults to discuss questions from the first section of handout #1.

- When has God led you to be creative?
- How has He led you to rest after being creative?
- How does He desire for us to rest weekly?
- Why should we rest after creating?

2. Take time to rest after traveling or going on mission for God (Exodus 33:12–14, Matthew 11:28–30).

Read Exodus 33:12–14.

Discuss the Lord's promise to Moses.

Ask: How does God's promise of rest apply to us? (Rest, if He finds favor with us.)

Distribute the handout "A Family That Serves Together." Discuss ways that families can combine vacations with ministry.

Discuss ways that ministry and service exhaust us if we do not refill our spiritual resources.

Read Matthew 11:28–30. Note that "come to Me" implies a business transaction with the Father.

Discuss our position when we meet God.

Investigate the things God exchanges for our burdens: rest, gentleness, humility, easy yoke, and lighter burdens.

Explain that, after going on mission for God, we must give our burdens to Him. Oswald Chambers puts the transaction in these terms:

"The Holy Spirit will locate the ONE impenetrable thing in you, but He cannot budge it unless you are willing to let Him."

Point out that if we attempt to be dishonest with the Lord about our need for rest, then we will:

- Evade rather than come to God's rest
- Argue rather than accept His rest
- Experience sorrow rather than wear His easy yoke

Lead adults to discuss questions from section two on handout #1.

- When has God led you to be a burden-bearer?
- Where has He called you to be on mission?
- How has He led you to rest after a mission?

Challenge adults to accept the Lord's plea to "Come to Me." Note that He has divine patience as He begs us to rest in Him.

Note that as Oswald Chambers says, believers should never approach God "expecting [Him] to do a big thing," just come. He says, ". . . all the time God has stood with outstretched hands not only to take you, but [also] for you to take Him!"

3. Take time to rest after responding to God's call to action.

Observe that God calls us to rest in Him after He has called us to action:

- He establishes the works of our hands (Psalm 90:17).
- He gives us peaceful homes and minds (Isaiah 32:18).

Note that resting in Him is a vital component of obedient and effective service for the kingdom.

Lead adults to discuss questions from section three on handout #1.

- When has God required obedience from you?
- How did you respond?
- How has He rewarded your obedience?
- When has He called you to come away for rest and fellowship?

Challenge individuals to commit to meet with God this next week. Choose a date, time, and place. Encourage them to enlist accountability partners for keeping that appointment.

4. Choosing God's way of rest.

Read Jeremiah 6:16-17,19.

Challenge individuals:

Which road will you choose at the crossroads of serving God?

Will you choose God's good way and walk in it, or will you ignore Him and meet disaster?

ACTION PLAN

On Mission on a Family Vacation

On-mission families investigate ways to serve God together:

- Plan a vacation that would combine the gifts and talents of your family members in ministry and provide quality rest when the ministry has been completed.
- What sort of ministry would capture the imaginations of each of your family members and create excitement for the planning process?
- Tour the significant ministry or benchmark sites for events from your childhood. Invest in family friends or past ministers from other generations.
- Drive across town to discover possible ministry sites for your family on weekend treks.
- Schedule one hour a month for a personal retreat with God to rest and rejuvenate.
- Invest in a family that has undergone tragedy. Help them to discover the peace of Christ while their burdens seem too heavy to bear alone.
- Contact a missionary in the area where you go on vacation. Pray for the family throughout the year, keeping current through e-mails or letters. Plan to assist the ministry on your next trip to their region or state.
- Check out The Bridge at www.namb.net or call 1 800 462-8657 for possible ministry locations for your family while on vacation.

LESSON BY

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NOTES ON SOURCES

My Utmost for His Highest, October 8. Oswalt Chambers. Dodd Meade and Company, 1935.

HANDOUT #1**Time to Rest and Recreate As a Family On Mission**

1. Take time to rest after creating (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 31:12-17).

- When has God led you to be creative?
- How has He led you to rest after a time of being creative?
- In what ways does He desire for you to rest after a busy week of work?
- Why is it suitable to rest after creating?

2. Take time to rest after traveling or going on mission for God (Exodus 33:12-14, Matthew 11:28-30).

- When has God led you to be a burden-bearer for Him?
- Where has He called you to be on mission for His kingdom?
- How or why has He led you to rest after an extensive period or strain of being on mission for Him?

3. Take time to rest after responding to God's call to action (Psalm 90:17, Isaiah 32:17-18).

- When has God requested a change in your life? Or when has He required obedience from you?
- How did you respond?
- How has He rewarded your obedience with His protection and love?
- When has He called you to come away with Him for rest and fellowship?
- At the crossroads of service for God, which road will I choose? God's way of rest or ignoring His way and finding disaster? (Jeremiah 6:16-17,19)
- Why?

Set a specific time and place when you will meet with God for an hour this week:

Date & Time: _____.

Place: _____.

HANDOUT #2**A Family That Serves Together:
Ideas for Being on Mission While on Vacation**

- Arrange a one-day service project at an assisted living or senior center. Prepare and bring supplies for crafts, music, and a brief skit or story about God's faithfulness. Pack smiles, laughter, and enthusiasm.
- Schedule a one-day service event at a boys' and girls' club. Clean the center during off-hours. Play ball, do crafts, or help the students with their homework after school.
- Adopt a grandparent at a church or nursing home where you go on vacation. Visit when you are in the area. Write cards and send pictures and appropriate treats when you are back home.
- Use work skills in the area where you vacation: free tutoring, English as a Second Language classes, Bible studies for women or men before or after work hours, electrical or plumbing services for elderly from a local church or community center, sports training for young athletes, art, crafts, or music sessions. Share your faith as you put love in action.
- Arrange a hayride at a local trailer park where you camp.
- Check the local online edition of the newspaper in the area where you will vacation. Look for people to assist, events on which you can piggyback with treats that include a gospel presentation, or ways to help local missions or church projects in progress.
- Spend time together as a family. When school children were polled about what makes a happy family, they responded: "Doing things together." Your family's shared experiences are a ministry as you walk in a theme park or swim in a hotel pool, as long as you are getting along and cooperating with each other.