

# Journey to Hope

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Youth and Young Adults

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By Jeremy Steele

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## Introduction

Welcome to the “Journey to Hope!” Throughout the next seven weeks, you’ll be on a journey with your youth and young adults, discovering the hope that can be found in the midst of life’s challenges. Your students will be challenged to rethink the Lenten season as they walk with Jesus to the cross. They will experience Scripture in new ways and get a fresh perspective on life with Jesus at the center. Finally, your students will be challenged to “Rethink Outreach” as they brainstorm ways to reach out to the people in their community and beyond.

This resource can be used with Sunday school classes, small groups, in a UMYF or worship setting. If you choose the latter, consider using the interactive activity to start the session and use “Experience the Scripture” as the main lesson. Be sure you have the multi-media bundle for “Journey to Hope.” You will use it in several lessons.

To help you navigate this curriculum, check out these descriptions of the sections with information on the goals and how you might use each one.

**Scripture Focus:** Each week is focused around one or two key passages of Scripture. Though they will be used later in the lesson, we provide them at the beginning for easy reference.

**Session Summary:** This is the big idea or the main challenge that we hope students will discover through the lesson. Use this to focus your teaching and discussion. Keeping this in mind will help you know whether a comment is relevant or will start you down a rabbit trail.

**Lesson Focus:** This bit of background will give you with some insight into the Scripture for the week. It will help you have a fuller picture of the biblical concepts underlying the lessons.

**Interactive Activity:** Each week begins with an activity to help students experience one or more of the concepts underlying the Scripture and big idea we are exploring. Since students generally retain only 20 percent of what they hear but 90 percent of what they do, these activities are far more than games. These are key to long-term learning. Spend as much time as you need on these to make them effective. Keeping the big idea in mind, improvise as students engage in the exploration and venture into each activity.

**Experience the Scripture:** Armed with an experience that will undergird their understanding of the Scripture, students will explore the passages through discussion. Spend as little time as possible rehearsing who did what in each passage. Instead, focus on the higher-level analysis and integration questions in each lesson. The goal is for students to engage with the Scripture in such a way that they grasp not only the content, but also its impact on their lives. Help this to happen by leading them to notice parallels between the first activity and how it aids understanding the Scripture. For a crash course on leading youth discussion, check out [www.tinyurl.com/youthdiscussion](http://www.tinyurl.com/youthdiscussion).

**Explore Media:** We will use the media included with the curriculum as well as video clips from the free site [www.wingclips.com](http://www.wingclips.com) to help the students apply what they explored in Scripture to real life. This is usually a story to illustrate the scriptural concept or an example of the concept in action. The students should see these as more than a depiction of the scriptural concepts. The goal for the illustrations is to extend and deepen students' understanding of the meaning of the concepts.

**Journal the Journey:** Each week there is a personal journal exercise for students to complete in class or during the week. You may want to go over those that are more involved to answer any questions students have about them.

**Rethink Outreach:** Though you may not be able to complete every service project, each week has an opportunity for you, as individuals or as a group, to reach out to people in your community. Even if you are not able to implement all of these options, exploring and coming up with a plan for action is helpful. Students see that true faith produces action and practice how to turn faith-based nudges to act into real work in the world.

I am excited to be part of your ministry through this series! If you have questions or ideas, please contact me via email at [cumcnextgen@gmail.com](mailto:cumcnextgen@gmail.com).

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## Session 1: Risking Adventure

**Scripture Focus:** John 8:1-11

**Session Summary:** This session will focus on helping students see repentance as accepting an offer from Jesus to begin an exciting adventure. They will be challenged to confront their sin and turn to follow Jesus.

### Supplies:

- Bibles
- copy of Journal Page for Session 1 for each person
- pens or pencils

**Lesson Focus:** In the original language of the Scriptures, the word *repent* means to turn. When we decide to accept forgiveness and attempt repentance, we set off in a new direction with our old life at our back. What an adventure! For a long time, we may have been taking a well-known path of sin. We likely have become comfortable with its direction. The turn of repentance takes us in the opposite direction. It takes us into the unknown. It is an act of risking adventure. That is what the ashes of Ash Wednesday are about. They are a sign of repentance; they are a sign of risking adventure!

**Imagine an Adventure:** Tell the students that you are going to spend some time together using your imagination. Ask everyone to close their eyes as they walk through this imagination-focused story:

**You are standing in front of a massive plain. It is as flat a piece of land as you have ever seen. You see an occasional tree or bush, and you have the distinct feeling that you can see everything. Ahead of you are no surprises. The colors are as plain as the landscape, browns and brownish-greens. A few small animals walk freely. They reflect the landscape. What kind of animals do you see? (Pause.) What colors are they? (Pause.) What are they doing? (Pause.)**

**In the distance, you can see someone headed toward you. You remember that you are here to meet someone. The man is far away, but your eyes are fixed on him. You can't stop looking at him, but you begin to hear things behind you ... wild things. You can't quite make them out, but you know that somewhere in the distance behind you is danger. What do you hear? (Pause.) At the same time, the wind comes from behind you, and you smell some of the most intoxicating smells you have ever experienced. They are like your favorite foods all rolled into one hunger-producing scent. What do you smell? (Pause.) It is clear that no matter what those sounds and smells are, there is definitely one thing back there: Adventure. What are you feeling? (Pause.) Are you scared? (Short pause) Are you excited? (Short pause) At the same time you wonder what it is like back there, you are unsure if you are really interested.**

**You've spent so much time listening and smelling and feeling that the man has nearly reached you. You recognize him. You have never seen him before, but you know exactly who it is. It is Jesus. He is there to meet with you. He leans forward and says softly, "It's time. I need you to trust me. It's going to be an adventure. Let's go." Then he takes your hand. As you turn, you realize your adventure has begun.**

After the experience, ask:

- 1. What sorts of emotions did you feel?**
- 2. Were you surprised that Jesus wanted you to turn around and head into the danger/adventure?**
- 3. Which do you prefer in life going into the known or the unknown?**

**Why?**

- 4. What makes the unknown scary?**
- 5. What is the risk of following Jesus in this scenario?**

**Experience Scripture:** Have the youth open their Bibles and read John 8:1-11. Discuss the Scripture using these questions:

1. **What would have happened if Jesus had not been there, but another person had stood up for the woman?**
2. **If you were in that situation, would you have risked the crowd turning on you if you defended the woman? Why or why not?**
3. **What do you think happened when the woman left that place?**
4. **How was this situation similar to the story we imagined earlier?**
5. **The word *repentance* means to turn from sin and head in the opposite direction. Understood that way, how is repentance risky?**
6. **As we sin over and over again, we experience the negative effects. We know the bad consequences. What makes us choose to continue sinning instead of moving in a new direction?**

### **Journal the Journey**

#### **Supplies:**

- copy of Journal Page for Session 1 for each person
- pens or pencils

Give each youth a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences there. If time allows, have them share their responses.

**As you begin any journey, it is important to make sure you are headed in the right direction. Reflect on your life. In what ways have you been heading down the wrong path?**

**Jesus is there. He wants to take your hand, turn you around and lead you into an unknown adventure away from a life of sin. Turn your paper to the right 180 degrees so it is upside down. If you are ready, write a prayer to God expressing your willingness to repent and begin a new adventure with Jesus.**

**Rethink Outreach:** Have the youth form pairs and share (as appropriate) about a friend who is headed down the wrong path. Allow a few minutes for the pairs to talk. Then have them brainstorm ways they could support that friend and help him or her turn around.

After youth have shared their ideas, lead them in a prayer asking God to create opportunities for them to reach out to those friends.

## Session 2: Choosing Your Traveling Companions

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 10:13-16

**Session Summary:** This session will help students discover that relationships can either enhance our relationship with Jesus or make it more difficult. Students will discover how they can build healthy relationships that encourage a relationship with Jesus rather than impede it.

### Supplies:

- sticky notes (six per student)
- pens (one per student)
- some image or representation of a road block
- an area of the floor marked as a path
- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD with this week's video
- copy of the Journal Page for Session 2 for each youth
- computer and/or projector

**Lesson Focus:** This week, we'll look at how relationships affect our journey. The people who accompany us on a journey affect our departure and whether we reach our destination. In this week's Scripture, we'll discover there are individuals who can hinder our relationship with Jesus. We need to take time to reflect on our relationships and discover which of them are helping us in our relationship with Jesus, and which are impeding it. We may also find that we are either a stumbling block on some people's journey with Jesus or a catalyst to help them grow in that relationship.

### Icebreaker: Superlative Stories

To introduce the subject of friendship, have the youth form pairs and share their answers to these questions. After each question, have the youth find a new partner using the ideas suggested. Allow one minute for each question.

1. Find a partner with similar hair color. Discuss: **What is the funniest thing you have ever done with a friend?**

2. Find a new partner with similar shoes and discuss: **What is the grossest thing you have ever eaten with a friend** (or seen them eat)?
3. Find a partner with a different colored shirt and discuss: **What is the longest you stayed awake with a friend, and what did you do?**
4. Find a partner with a different birth month and discuss: **What is the best advice you have ever received from a friend?**
5. Stay with your current partner and discuss: **What is the most difficult time you have ever gone through with a friend?**

Explain how friends are a huge part of life. No matter who they are, they have an impact on our lives. **Let's look at a story that talks about how people can influence our relationship with Jesus.**

### The Friend Wall

#### Supplies:

- three sticky notes per youth
- pens
- large box or other large object to represent a road block

Give each student three sticky notes. Say that if Jesus were still in the flesh on Earth, it would be easy to see who is blocking our relationship with him, but it is not that easy. **Let's try something to understand how people get between Jesus and us.** Have each youth list of three ways friends hinder their relationship with Jesus. Put each idea on a separate sticky note. Place them on the roadblock.

Review what the youth wrote on the sticky notes and discuss these questions:

1. **What would you do if you had a friend doing...** [read one of the sticky notes] **in your life?**
2. **When friends...** [name some of the ideas on the sticky notes], **what happens?**

**3. How do your friends deal with other people who are acting like this?**

**Experience the Scripture:** Have each youth turn to a partner and share a time when a relationship got between them and Jesus, then open your Bible and read Mark 10:13-16. Have each group discuss:

**1. How is what happened in your relationship like or unlike this verse?**

Allow a few minutes for discussion and invite a few people to share as they feel comfortable.

Wrap up this section by sharing a personal story about how a relationship with someone you know impeded your relationship with Jesus. Then share about a relationship that helped you grow in your relationship with Jesus. Use that story as a segue into the next part of the lesson.

### **The Friend Path**

#### **Supplies:**

- three sticky notes per youth
- pens
- an area on the floor marked for a path

Give each person three more sticky notes and tell the students to write down three ways friends help them grow closer to Jesus. Remind them to write one idea per note.

Have the youth place the sticky notes on the floor to make a path. Review what the youth wrote. Discuss the following questions:

- 1. What similarities do these ideas have?**
- 2. Point out one of the ideas: Why does... [name the idea] help you in your relationship with Jesus?**
- 3. When people do these things, do you think their primary focus is to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus? Why or why not?**

**4. Would friends say that you help or hinder their relationship with Jesus? Explain.**

After working in a large group, have youth turn to a partner and share a story of how a friend helped bring them closer to Jesus.

Allow a few minutes for discussion and invite a few youth to share as they feel comfortable.

Close this section by sharing a story about a friend who helped you draw closer to Jesus, then pray a prayer of thanksgiving for all the people who have helped you and the youth grow closer to Jesus.

**Explore Media**

**Supplies:**

- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD
- computer and/or projector

Watch the video story about the teen homeless ministry and explore it with these questions:

1. **Meredith says that she gets “more God” from ministering to homeless people than she gets in her church. What is it about this ministry that makes it filled with the presence of God?**
2. **Why do you think Meredith’s favorite thing about her ministry is the relationships and conversations she has with homeless people?**
3. **Meredith involves her friends in this ministry. How could you involve your friends in ministry?**
4. **Meredith’s ministry is simple: two loaves of bread, a 24-slice pack of cheese and some conversation. How can a simple ministry make a difference?**

## Journal the Journey

### Supplies:

- copy of Journal Page for Session 2 for each person
- pens or pencils

Give each person a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences. If time allows, have youth share their responses.

### Grow Your Relationships

List three of your most important relationships. For each, decide whether you are helping the person grow closer to God or not; then think of one thing you can do in each of those relationships this week to encourage that person's relationship with Jesus.

### Explore Your Passion

Answer this question to discover how you can follow your passion into community:

**1. What important things are you passionate about?** (world hunger? homelessness? illiteracy?)

**Circle one idea and list three ways you could form relationships with people experiencing these problems. Think of things other than raising money.**

### Rethink Outreach

#### Supplies:

- newsprint
- marker
- red dot stickers

Talk with your group about the people in your community who may be considered "outsiders." They may be homeless, poor or a victim of some other

injustice. As youth share their responses, list them on a piece of newsprint; then have the youth brainstorm ways they could get to know these people and help alleviate their suffering. Record their ideas on the newsprint, then distribute a red dot sticker to each person. Have them vote for the best idea by placing their sticker beside it.

Circle the idea with the most red stickers and help the youth plan a time and date to implement it. Encourage them to invite their friends to participate.

### **Other Ideas**

1. The Bible teaches the importance of spending time with wise people. Consider visiting an assisted living facility or nursing home. However, instead of visiting the facility as a way to serve the residents, make the goal to learn or get advice about something. Before the visit, help the students develop questions about the world, faith or history that they can ask the residents. Stress that the goal is to learn, to seek the wisdom of the residents and to develop relationships. After the visit, have the youth share what they learned or the advice they received.

2. Before your group meets, determine if your church supports a missionary. If so, contact that person to see if you can arrange a video chat via Skype or another web conferencing application during your meeting. Prepare students by explaining that your church is on a journey with this person. Encourage students to ask questions about the missionary's work, the story of his or her journey and some of the "traveling companions" in their current setting. Also, have teens ask the missionary how your class could support them in a tangible way.

### Session 3: Self-Esteem

**Scripture Focus:** Genesis 1:26-28

**Session Summary:** Students will discover that self-esteem comes from the image of God within them. They will be challenged to look at what is covering or hiding that image and to seek healing.

#### Supplies:

- fruit that has a large seed (pit) in the center (one piece per student)
- modeling clay or play dough (enough for each student to create a sculpture)
- several knives
- napkins, paper towels, etc.
- list of agencies that help people who struggle with poor self-esteem
- clip download of “Beauty Spell” from *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (available online free from Wing Clips (<http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/narnia-the-voyage-of-the-dawn-treader/beauty-spell>))
- computer and/or projector
- copy of Journal Page for Session 3 for each youth
- pens or pencils
- markers
- poster board

**Lesson Focus:** Being made in the image of God is central to understanding the source of self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem comes with understanding that every human being is made in the image of God. The difficulty with building healthy self-esteem is that people often base their self-worth on things that are impermanent or out of their control. If we can see our actions and personality as a reflection of God’s enduringly good nature, we have the basis for strong, positive self-esteem that is based on the image of God within us, not on changeable, mortal traits.

## Good Pits

### Supplies:

- fruit that has a large seed (pit) in the center (one per student)
- modeling clay or play dough
- several knives for students who do not wish to eat the fruit
- napkins, paper towels, etc.

Begin the activity by telling students to eat or remove the skin and flesh of the fruit and to expose the seed or pit. Then have the youth use the clay to create something interesting, beautiful or ugly using the seed in the center of their creation. Allow a few minutes for youth to work. Debrief the experience with these questions:

1. **What was it like to expose the seed from the piece of fruit?**
2. **What is the point of a seed? What is its potential?**
3. **Explain your creation to us. What is it? Did you choose interesting, beautiful or ugly?**
4. **What is the potential of the seed now that it has been placed in your creation?**

**Experience the Scripture:** After the discussion, have the youth open their Bibles and read Genesis 1:26-28.

Use these questions to explore the passage:

1. **How is this Scripture similar to the activity that we just experienced?**
2. **When God created humanity, on what was the design based?**
3. **What is at the core of every human?**
4. **What sort of potential do we have at our core?**
5. **What sorts of things do we use to cover that core?**

Invite the youth to think about the things that might be covering the image of God within them. Play soft instrumental music while allowing a few minutes for reflection. Explain that sometimes the image of God is covered or hidden by pain

that others have inflicted, but God desires to heal. Allow time for the youth to pray silently for healing. Remind them that healing is usually a process, and God is with them throughout that journey. Offer a listening ear as a first step.

### Explore Media

#### Supplies:

- clip download of “Beauty Spell” from *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (available online free from Wing Clips (<http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/narnia-the-voyage-of-the-dawn-treader/beauty-spell>)).
- computer and/or projector

Watch the clip “Beauty Spell” from *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Use these questions to explore the video:

1. **If you could be someone else, why would you choose to be him or her?**
2. **When Lucy wishes she could be someone else, she is unknowingly wishing that she didn’t exist. Sometimes weak self-esteem causes us to make decisions that have very bad unexpected consequences. Tell about a time someone you know made bad choices because they had low self-esteem.**
3. **Lucy, like all of us, has at her very core the image of God. If she had understood that, how could she have used that to respond differently to her low self-esteem around her appearance? What might she have done differently?**

### Journal the Journey

#### Supplies:

- copy of Journal Page for Session 3 for each youth
- pens or pencils

Give each youth a journal page and invite everyone to reflect on the questions and experiences on the page. If time allows, have youth share their responses.

**Take a moment to look inside yourself. As you look, pray that God will reveal to you the pieces of your life and personality that reflect the image of God. Now spend some time asking God to show you the bits of your life that cover or hide the image of God. Write a prayer asking God to give you the strength to leave the sinful covering behind and allow the image of God to shine through your life.**

## **Rethink Outreach**

### **Supplies:**

- information from agencies that deal with issues of self-esteem
- markers
- poster board

*Important Teacher Note:* Research agencies in your community that help people with low self-esteem. Gather brochures, download information from websites or obtain other materials from these organizations to use in this experience. Contact each agency and ask for a specific list of ways to lift the spirits of those they serve.

Begin this section by explaining that there are groups of people in the community who have lost sight of the image of God within them (another way to say they have poor self-esteem). Tell the youth they will be learning about some special agencies that advocate for these people and assist them.

Based on the number of agencies you contacted, divide the youth into groups of three or four. Assign an agency to each group. Allow five minutes for the youth to read their materials and learn about their agency, then instruct the groups to each prepare a one-minute advertisement for their agency. Invite the groups to be as creative as possible. They can make posters, perform a skit or

create a TV commercial. Allow five minutes for groups to work on their presentation, then have each group present the ad for its agency.

After the presentations, have the entire group choose one agency to support. Then work together to develop ways to help the people served by that agency see the image of God that is within them.

### **Other Ideas**

1. Before your group meets, find an organization that works with youth who are the same age as your students *and* that accepts donations of clothing. Explain to your group that, whether it is good or bad, having stylish clothing can help people feel more confident and positive. Note that, when we donate clothes, we often give the old, unfashionable and worn-out. Challenge each youth to bring one of their favorite items of clothing next week to help build the self-esteem of people served by the organization you are helping.

2. Consider meeting together one weekday afternoon and visiting local salons and hair stylists to ask them to donate gift certificates for haircuts or manicures for battered women in local shelters. Before you deliver the certificates, have your group pray over each one asking God to lift the spirits of the woman who will receive it, to protect her and to bring her out of the dark place she is in right now. After the prayer time, deliver the certificates to a women's shelter. If possible, have your group take them in person.

**Session 4: Work and Time****Scripture Focus:** Ephesians 5:15-17**Session Summary:** Students will discover that God wants them to use their time and energy to make a positive difference in the world. They will be challenged to rearrange their schedules to take time for this.**Supplies:**

- several sheets of paper per student (for paper airplanes)
- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD segment: “Church Welcomes Job Seekers”
- computer and/or projector
- copy of Journal Page for Session 4 for each teen
- pens or pencils
- four pieces of newsprint
- markers

**Lesson Focus:** As we discovered in Week One, our “Journey to Hope” is taken with others. We don’t travel alone; however, how we use our time tells a different story. Our schedules are often filled with tasks and commitments that are primarily for our benefit.

However, that is not the purpose for which we were created. From the very beginning, our purpose has been to care for one another and for the earth. We are not made to travel alone or, even worse, to travel together but ignore each other. Our lives are to be spent serving something much larger than ourselves: the kingdom of God. When that is our destination, our life’s journey is focused on the most hope-filled destination there is.

## Time Limits

### Supplies:

- several sheets of paper per student

Have students form pairs. Tell them the goal of the game is to complete as many tasks as possible in 30 seconds. Begin by giving the teams one task to complete in 30 seconds. Play again, repeating the first task and adding another one from the list. This time, both tasks should be completed in the 30 seconds. Play more rounds continuing to add one more after each round. Teams are eliminated as they are unable to complete all the tasks assigned to them in each round.

1. Give your partner 10 high fives.
2. Make a paper airplane and hit the ceiling (or wall) with it.
3. Name three characteristics about your partner (green eyes, nice smile, cool shirt, etc.).
4. Do-si-do five times.
5. Count to 30 using multiples of three.
6. Have both partners touch four walls of the room.

After the final round, use these questions to debrief:

1. **When was the game the easiest? Why?**
2. **What would you say was the turning point of the game?**
3. **Can you describe how you felt when you ran out of time?**
4. **What do you think you could have done to accomplish more?**

**Experience the Scripture:** Have the youth open their Bibles to Ephesians 5:15-17 and read the passage.

Discuss the Scripture using these questions:

1. **What does this verse say that God wants you to do with your time?**

**2. Compare this Scripture to the activity we just experienced. How is the message of this Scripture like or unlike what you experienced in that activity?**

**3. What happens when we start running out of time?**

Talk with the youth about what fills their day. Ask them how much of their day is spent reaching out and changing the world in the name of Jesus. Use the following questions to help students explore how they can focus their lives on serving Jesus.

**1. People often say, “You have to MAKE time for x, y or z.” What do they mean by that? What is the basic flaw in that statement? (You can’t make time.)**

**2. What changes would you have to make in your life to start using time for God?**

After the discussion, help the youth explore the truth that they may need to quit doing some things to make God a priority. Lead them in a time of prayer asking God to help them implement the changes they need to make, asking God where they might take time.

## **Explore Media**

### **Supplies:**

- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD
- computer and/or projector

Watch the video “Church Welcomes Job Seekers.” Explore it with these questions:

- 1. What are some of the negative effects that being out of work has on people?**
- 2. Where did you see the idea of “taking time” in the video?**
- 3. How are the people in the video bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth?**

**4. What do you think would happen to these people without this ministry?**

**5 How could you start something similar for people your age? What would need to be the same? What would need to be different?**

*Option 2:* This shorter option may be a good supplement to the Bible exploration above. Watch the video “Moonwalking Bear” (available online at <http://youtu.be/Ahg6qcgoay4>). Unpack it with the following questions. (You may want to watch it twice to prove the bear really is in it.)

- 1. Why do you think you missed the bear the first time around?**
- 2. What sorts of things do we miss noticing in our world when we are focusing on ourselves?**

### **Journal the Journey**

#### **Supplies:**

- copy of Journal Page for Session 4 for each teen
- pens or pencils

Give each youth a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences on the page. If time allows, have youth share their responses.

Write out your typical schedule for each day of the week. Make sure you include sleeping, school, rehearsals, lessons, practices, watching TV shows, and Facebook and video game times.

Look over the schedule and ask God these questions:

- 1. Which of these things are important to you?**
- 2. Which of these are wasting time?**
- 3. Which of these do you want me to quit?**
- 4. What would you like me to do with the extra time I have to make earth look more like heaven?**

## Rethink Outreach

### Supplies:

- four pieces of newsprint
- markers
- pens or pencils

Before this experience: Write each of the following activities on a separate large piece of newsprint:

- Facebook
- school
- work
- lessons/practice/rehearsals

Tape a word in each corner of your room.

Have the youth form groups of four and number off 1, 2, 3, 4.

Share with the youth that we don't always have to stop doing one thing totally and start another to "take time." Talk about how we can take things we typically do for ourselves so we do them for others. Point out the activities listed in the four corners of the room. In their groups of four, have youth discuss what they do in these activities each week. Allow time for sharing and invite some students to share their responses with the entire class.

Tell the youth that they are going to brainstorm some ways to use Facebook, school, work, and lessons/practices/rehearsals to make the kingdom of heaven come to earth.

Have the number ones in each group go to corner number one (Facebook). Have the number twos in each group go to corner number two. Threes go to corner number three and fours travel to corner number four.

When the youth get to their assigned corners, have each find a partner and brainstorm ways to use the activity written on the newsprint to serve God. As partners brainstorm, have them write their ideas on the newsprint. Allow three minutes for brainstorming.

After three minutes, have teens return to their original groups of four. Beginning with corner number one, read the ideas written on the newsprint. Have groups choose one idea they like and commit to trying it during the upcoming week.

### **Other Ideas**

1. Before your group meets, research your church's childcare policies regarding babysitting during a Parents' Night Out event. Pay special attention to how your students could serve during this event and the implications for following safe sanctuaries procedures.

When your group meets, talk with the youth about offering the young parents in your church free babysitting during a Parents' Night Out. As a group, decide on the date and time. Then, book the appropriate room in your church and publicize the event to parents in your church and/or community.

2. If your class is school-aged, help them identify several times throughout a normal school day when they could spend time with God or read the Bible. Talk to students about getting several friends together at these times to do together. Check out whether the schools your students attend will require them to register as a club with a teacher sponsor if they want to meet in a classroom, etc rather than in a public place.

## Session 5: Temptation and Sabbath

**Scripture Focus:** Exodus 20:8-11, Mark 14:32-40

**Session Summary:** Students will discover that tiredness and depletion lead to giving into temptation. They will be challenged to schedule time to have a Sabbath in the next week.

### Supplies:

- two phonebooks, jugs of water or other same-sized heavy object per student
- bag of individually-wrapped pieces of candy
- volunteer to be the tempter
- second full bag of candy
- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD segment: “Homeless Addict Turned Advocate”
- computer and/or projector
- copy of Journal Page for Session 5 for each youth
- pens or pencils

**Lesson Focus:** Life can be trying and tiring. It can also be physically, emotionally and spiritually depleting. If we are not careful, that depletion can allow us to slip into places we would not normally go. The life of Jesus offers an example. After his baptism, Jesus goes into the desert. He lives there without food for 40 days with no specific temptation. The tempter waits until Jesus is totally depleted to wave its shiny lures in front of the Savior. The same is true for us. When we are depleted physically, emotionally, spiritually or all of the above, we are much more likely to give in to temptation. To help us resist temptation, God provides a way for us to be refilled. It is called Sabbath. Sabbath is our first defense against temptation and a life without an empty emotional, physical or spiritual tank.

## Tired Temptation

### Supplies:

- two phonebooks, jugs of water, or other same-sized heavy objects per student
- bag of individually-wrapped pieces of candy
- volunteer to be the tempter
- second full bag of candy

Give each student a heavy object (phone book, jug of water, etc.) to hold in each hand. To play the game, youth hold an object in each hand. Standing, they extend their arms to the side perpendicular to their body and parallel to the floor. The object of the game is to see who can hold their arms up the longest. The last person holding the objects out to the side wins. Play one round and award the winner a piece of candy.

Tell teens you'll play again and the winner of this round will receive a larger prize.

During this round, have a volunteer use candy to tempt the teens to stop early. Tell the volunteer to use one piece of candy to tempt them first, and then to increase the number of candies every 20 seconds. Anyone who stops early gets exactly what was offered to them. The last person standing wins an entire bag of candy.

Debrief the experience using the following questions:

1. **Can you describe how you felt during this experience?**
2. **How did your tiredness affect your level of temptation?**
3. **When did the offer of candy become a real temptation to quit?**
4. **How did you feel after you gave in to the temptation? How did that feeling change when you saw the winner receive the reward?**
5. **How did the larger amount of candy affect the degree of temptation?**

**Experience the Scripture:** Have youth close their eyes and listen while you read Mark 14:32-40.

Explore the Scripture with the following questions.

1. **How is what the disciples experienced like or unlike what happened to you in the activity we did?**
2. **What do you think made the temptation to sleep so overwhelming that the disciples couldn't resist even when Jesus asked and reminded them to stay awake?**
3. **Imagine if the disciples had known that these were some of the last moments they would ever spend with Jesus. How might that knowledge have changed their response?**
4. **What underlying principle about temptation do we discover in this Scripture and experience?**

Remind the youth that God designed our bodies and our brains and God knows what makes us more susceptible to temptation. Knowing this, God created spiritual disciplines (like prayer or reading the Bible) to help us deal with spiritual tiredness.

Have the youth read Exodus 20:8-11 and discover God's remedy for temptation.

When they have finished, have everyone stand up. Have those who have taken a Sabbath in the past week sit down. (Pause.) Have anyone who has taken a Sabbath in the last two weeks sit down. (Pause.) Have youth who have taken a Sabbath in the last month sit down. (Pause.) Have teens who have taken Sabbath in the last six months sit down. (Pause.)

Point out the number of people who are sitting down. Discuss the following questions:

1. **What makes humans want to work so hard without taking a break?**
2. **What makes Sabbath difficult for you or your family to practice?**
3. **What is the underlying premise of Sabbath? What is God trying to teach us?**

Wrap up this section by pointing out the key to Sabbath is consecutive hours. The Jews generally practice Sabbath starting at sundown on one day and ending at sundown on the next. Challenge the youth to think about how they can carve out that kind of time in their schedule.

## Explore Media

### Supplies:

- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD
- computer and/or projector

Watch “Homeless Addict Turned Advocate.” Explore it with these questions:

1. **The Bible talks over and over about God using our pain/past to bring beautiful things into the world. How has that been true in this man’s life?**
2. **What do you think allows this man not to give into temptation now as he ministers in the same places where he gave into temptation repeatedly in the past?**
3. **How is this man’s situation like or unlike the way your life works?**
4. **Why is it important for this man and for all of us to be filled emotionally, physically and spiritually?**

## Journal the Journey

### Supplies:

- copy of Journal Page for Session 5 for each youth
- pens or pencils

Give each person a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences there. If time allows, have them share their responses.

Before sitting down with your journal this week, schedule a time of Sabbath. Begin your Sabbath with this journaling exercise.

1. *Physical Sabbath:* How is your body feeling? Tired? Achy? Take some time and tend to those needs. You may need to take a nap or a shower or do whatever relaxes your body.

2. *Emotional Sabbath:* Think about the past week or two. How have you been emotionally? Have you been irritated? Mean? Pleasant? Numb? Is there some emotional pain that you need to think about and deal with? Take a walk or find a relaxing spot in your house and sit and process these emotions. Then ask God to help you begin the process of healing. Part of that process may include talking to a pastor or youth leader about what's going on.

3. *Spiritual Sabbath:* Spend some time alone with God. How do you connect with God? Singing? Dancing? Reading the Bible? Walking in the woods? Choose your favorite way and do it. During this time, ask God to help you see the temptation in your life and how you resist it. Write down what you think you hear God saying.

**Rethink Outreach:** Explain that some of the most overworked people in our society are single parents. Without the support of another parent, life is non-stop. Have youth brainstorm a couple of ways they could reach out to single parents and give them an opportunity to rest. Be creative, and be simple. Pose this question to the youth:

**1. What can one or two people your age do to impact one single-parent family?**

#### **Other Ideas**

1. Start a laundry service for single parents. Work through the logistics with your group. Even if your church does not own washers and dryers, you could offer parents a specific location at which to drop the laundry off when they come to church on Sunday. Each student could take a set of laundry home to

wash, fold and return to the church before the pre-determined pick-up time later that day.

2. Share with your class the difficulties single parents have getting a family ready for church. Talk about all that entails including baths, breakfast, picking out clothes, dressing the kids, etc. Brainstorm how your group could help parents during this stressful time. Have teens consider this question: What would it be like for you get ready an hour earlier and visit a single parent's home to help dress and/or babysit their kids while the parent gets ready for church?

## Session 6: Money

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 10:17-22; 12:41-44

**Lesson Summary:** Students will discover that dealing with money is a spiritual discipline. They will be challenged to find a way to give money so that it will make an impact in the lives of those who do not have as much.

### Supplies:

- Bibles
- one piece of paper per student for budget sheet
- play money
- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD segment: “Meals for Foreclosed”
- computer and/or projector
- copy of Journal Page for Session 6 for each teen
- pens or pencils

### Lesson Focus:

Money is a difficult subject for many people because it is so central to life. Very little can be done without it. When you add to that the consumer-driven culture and economy so many of us live in, its power over us grows, and it can begin to look more and more like an idol. One of the ways money takes hold of us and exercises its power is by expanding the definition of the term *necessity*. Far beyond the basic human needs of food, clothing, and shelter, “necessity” has grown to encompass iPhones, cable television, and designer sunglasses. This excess is brought into stark, convicting clarity when compared with the living conditions in the rest of the world.

For many students, all of their income is spent on non-essentials, which means that they have an incredible opportunity to make an impact on their world! This week, encourage students to loosen the hold that money has on them by using it to bless people other than themselves. Whose life can their money change or save?

## Money Matters

### Supplies:

- one piece of paper per student for budget sheet
- play money

Divide the group into teams of five. Give each team \$50,000 in play money. Tell them this is the amount of money they have for an entire year. Let them know they are a group of friends, not a family. Give each group member a piece of paper. Then, give them two lists: Expenses they need to plan for and global needs they can meet. Tell them that if they can find a way to eliminate some expenses, they can forego spending money on them.

#### List #1: Expenses

Rent

Food

Entertainment

Utilities/Internet

Gas

Car Payment

Clothing

#### List #2: Global Needs

Bed Nets to Prevent Malaria: \$10 per person

Bio Sand Filter for one African family: \$25 for 5 people

Feed three children for a month: \$50 for three lives

Educate a birth attendant about how to conduct safe and healthy deliveries: \$200 per as many babies as are born in the rest of the attendant's lifetime

Build a church building in the developing world: \$500

Start a new church in the developing world: \$1,000

Drill a well in Liberia: \$5,000 per community

Provide for the total care and education of 36 orphans in Zimbabwe:  
\$15,000

Allow time for the teams to work on their budgets. When they have finished, have them share their budgets with the whole group. Discuss the experience using these questions:

1. **Whose responsibility is it to care for these needs in the world?**
2. **What was the most challenging part of the budgeting process?**
3. **How did you choose between the global projects and your own needs?**
4. **How would your life change if you followed this budget?**

**Experience the Scripture:** Have youth return to their groups of five. Have each group read Mark 12:41-44 and discuss the following questions. After each group discusses each question, invite them to share their thoughts with the others.

1. **Which character are you most like in this passage** (woman, disciples, Jesus, rich people)?
2. **How is what you experienced in the budgeting activity like or unlike what happened in this Scripture?**
3. **What does it mean to give your all when all your needs are met by someone else?**

### Explore Media

#### Supplies:

- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD
- computer and/or projector

Watch “Meals for Foreclosed.” Explore it with these questions:

1. **The people of the church said they were surprised to discover that kids in their community needed food. How many kids do you think there might be in your community who need food?**

2. **What do you think motivated the people of the church in Tucker to provide food for the kids?**

3. **What would happen to these kids and families if the people of the church in Tucker did not start the summer food program?**

4. **How can you help the children and families in your community who are faced with a similar situation?**

### **Journal the Journey**

#### **Supplies:**

- copy of Journal Page for Session 6 for each teen
- pens or pencils

Give each youth a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences there. If time allows, have youth share their responses.

In the space below, make a list or draw pictures of the favorite things you own and of a couple of things you plan to purchase/receive as gifts in the near future.

Pray about how Jesus would have you use these resources to make a difference in the world. As you pray, consider these questions: Are there any things you should sell? Are there things you could forego so the money could be used elsewhere?

**Rethink Outreach:** Have youth review the global needs and prices in the “Money Matters” activity. These are actual requests from the United Methodist mission agency. Check out [www.gbqm-umc.org](http://www.gbqm-umc.org) and [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org) to learn more about these requests. (You will need to print off some of the information before class if you are not going to have a computer available for students to use.) As a group, decide on one of the global needs to support by raising money, awareness or both. Challenge the youth to use Facebook and Twitter to raise awareness or rally support.

## Session 7: Suffering

**Scripture Focus:** Mark 14:43-47

**Session Summary:** Students will discover that they are God's presence of hope and healing in a suffering world. They will be challenged to be present with those who are suffering and to offer help.

### Supplies:

- jar of bland baby food (spinach or peas) for each student
- spoon for each student
- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD segment: "Tornado Losses, Lessons"
- computer and/or projector
- copy of Journal Page for Session 7 for each teen
- pens or pencils

**Lesson Focus:** Jesus is no stranger to suffering. He was betrayed by one of his closest friends, wrongly convicted, tortured and crucified. What is amazing in that suffering is that Jesus knew all that was going to happen and still went through it so that the world might be saved. We can take heart in knowing that even in our suffering, God is with us. God has also placed us in a community of believers so that we do not suffer alone. God uses others to minister to us in our suffering. God calls us to do the same for those around us. What a wonderful, loving God.

### Sticking It Out

#### Supplies:

- jar of bland baby food (spinach or peas) for each student
- spoon for each student

Give each student a jar of bland, unsavory baby food. Tell them that if all of the baby food is eaten, they'll receive a gift. Let them know that the game is not a race, and the goal is for everyone to finish all of the baby food in the jars. The baby food cannot be wasted or thrown in the trash. Give no more explanation,

and ask teens to begin eating. Hopefully, some students will volunteer to eat the food of other students. After everyone has eaten the baby food, discuss the experience using these questions:

1. **On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your pickiness as an eater. One is not picky; 10 is very picky. Why did you rate yourself that way?**
2. **What strategy did use to finish the baby food?**
3. **What made you want to quit?**
4. **What made you persevere until the end?**
5. **How did you help each other?**

**Experience the Scripture:** Have teens open their Bibles, and choose someone to read aloud Mark 14:43-47.

Explore the Scripture with these questions:

1. **Jesus was about to go through some of the worst suffering ever experienced by a human being, and he goes willingly. What caused him to act this way?**
2. **At least one of the disciples was ready to fight against some incredible odds to prevent Jesus from suffering, but Jesus was going to have to go through it. How could the disciple have helped Jesus and/or ministered to the Savior without launching a war against the persecutors?**
3. **How can we relate the suffering that happened in the last days of Jesus' mortal life to the suffering in the world?**
4. **What do we do that is similar to the disciple cutting off someone's ear? When is that sort of "help" ever appropriate?**
5. **How can you bring help to those who are suffering?**

### Explore Media

#### Supplies:

- *Journey to Hope* Multimedia DVD
- computer and/or projector

Watch the video “Tornado Losses, Lessons” and debrief it with the following questions:

**1. Turn to a partner and talk about a time you or someone you know experienced a time of suffering. What happened? Who did you or that person turn to for help?**

**2. Unfortunately, some people go through more tragedy than others do, but as you have seen in the video, they use their suffering to minister to others who are suffering. Tell a story of where you have seen someone use their suffering to minister to others. Why do you think people are capable of doing that?**

**3. This kind of suffering is extreme. What kinds of suffering are more common in your world?**

**4. Sometimes it’s hard to handle other people’s suffering. What are some things you can do to be able to minister to people who are suffering without being overwhelmed yourself?**

### **Journal the Journey**

#### **Supplies:**

- copy of Journal Page for Session 7 for each teen
- pens or pencils

Give each youth a journal page and invite them to reflect on the questions and experiences there. If time allows, have teens share their responses.

Suffering is all around you. You can see it in small ways when a friend makes a bad decision not to study and flunks a test. You can see it in more widespread ways when natural disasters destroy homes and lives. One of the most helpful things for people who are suffering is knowing that they do not have to suffer alone. Pray and ask God to show you a friend or family member who is suffering. Use the rest of this paper to write them a note letting them know that they are not alone in their suffering. Tell them you are there and want to help however you can. Mail the letter. If you haven’t heard from after a couple of days,

follow up with a phone call or a Facebook message asking to spend time with them.

**Rethink Outreach:** Brainstorm as a group to identify several groups of people in your area who are suffering. Think about all kinds of suffering, including the more common types of such as the suffering of people who have recently lost a family member. Then, talk through how you might be able to make a connection with someone who is in that situation and to be there for them. It may be as simple as visiting them at home or bringing a meal. The important thing is to be the Body of Christ for someone who is suffering.