

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH

What we want students to learn: That there will come a day when God has accomplished His rescue mission, and all Believers will live forever in peace with God.

What we want them to do with what they've learned: To accept God's call on their lives to be essential pieces of God's rescue mission.

Scripture Focus: Matthew 24:30-31, Revelation 7:9-17, Revelation 21:1-8, 2Corinthians 5:16-21

Overview: Your students have had the opportunity to trace the work of God's hand through time and history, watching Him put into place His mission to rescue people from the consequences of their sins. You've shown your students how Christ was the high point of God's rescue mission, the Rescuer Himself. In this lesson, your students will get a brief glimpse of what the end of the mission looks like. They'll also be shown that they have a vital role to play in God's mission, and be challenged to accept the call to share God's story of rescue and redemption.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **God's Mission** lesson 22 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 22, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

Matthew

- **Author:** Matthew, a former tax collector, was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel.

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- **Timeframe:** Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD.
- **Purpose:** Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

2 Corinthians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to the Church in Corinth.
- **Timeframe:** Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia around 55 or 56 AD, a year or so after writing 1 Corinthians and a year before he wrote his letter to the Romans from Corinth.
- **Purpose:** According to the ESV Study Bible, the central theme of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians was "the relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul's apostolic life, ministry, and message."

Revelation

- **Author:** The writer of Revelation identifies himself as John four times. Scholars agree that it is most likely John the Apostle, son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' most beloved disciples.
- **Timeframe:** Revelation was written toward the end of John's life somewhere between 90 and 95 AD.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of Revelation was to reveal the fullness of Christ's identity and to provide hope for suffering Believers at the time who were encountering grave persecution and suffering. Today it gives us hope of what is to come, as well as a stark warning of the battle that rages until Christ returns.

THE MAIN POINT

God's mission does have an end in mind. In Matthew 24:30-31 Jesus teaches His disciples that He will return to gather to Himself all those who are saved. Then, the two passages in Revelation paint a picture of what the completed mission will look like. All people who have placed their faith in Jesus will be made whole and complete by God.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 is our response to the beautiful truth that Jesus rescues sinners and will completely restore them. The point is to help students see how their response to these truths should be to join God as a part of His rescue mission.

LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students to start considering what it means for someone to speak on behalf of another.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need the movie, *The Lorax*, cued to 00:21:30-00:25:20.

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FIRST, ask your students if anyone has seen the movie, *The Lorax*, and get the ones who have to summarize the film. (If you can watch the clip that would be great. If not you'll have to explain it.) Explain that the Once-ler has moved into the forest to pursue making a fortune on his new invention, the thneed. To make the first thneed, he chops down a tree, which leads to him meeting the Lorax. Watch the clip, which introduces the Lorax.

NEXT, ask:

- **Who is the Lorax?**
 - Answer: He is the guardian of the forest. He speaks for the trees.
- **What does he mean that he speaks for the trees?**
 - Answer: He means that he communicates on behalf of the trees. He is a representative for the forest, protecting it and speaking on its behalf.
- **What does it mean to speak on behalf of someone else?**
 - Answer: Answers may vary, but the idea is that you communicate to others what that person intends for you to relate to others.

THEN, remind the students that over the past two weeks you've been discussing God's mission. Today you're going to look at how God invites us to be a part of His rescue mission, specifically by us being one of His representatives to others. First, however, we're going to review the previous weeks and look at the completion of God's mission.

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** That students would learn that there will come a day when God has accomplished His rescue mission, and all Believers will live forever in peace with God.
- **Set-Up:** None

FIRST, spend a few minutes reviewing the past two lessons. Remind your students that:

- **Ever since our sin caused separation between God and humankind, God has been working in and through His creation—including the events of history and the lives of people—to rescue people from their sin.**
- **And that Jesus was the Rescuer that God had promised and He was the highpoint of God's Rescue Mission.**

NEXT, explain that this lesson will examine the completion of God's rescue mission at the end of time when all Believers are eternally with God. Ask students to go to Matthew 24:30-31. While they're finding it, provide the context using the Bible Background. Explain that in this passage Jesus is teaching His disciples regarding the end of the world. Read or have a student read verses 30-31.

- **The word "elect" is referring to all who have been saved through faith in Jesus. What is going to be the fate of believers?**
 - Answer: Jesus will gather all believers to Himself.

THEN, explain that Jesus is teaching His disciples that He will personally finish God's mission to rescue people from sin. Jesus will return to our world and save His people, bringing them to a new heaven and a new earth. Next, let's examine what that gathering will look like.

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NEXT, Go to Revelation 7:9-17. Explain to your students that Revelation is written by the Apostle John. He has a vision of the future when God's rescue mission is complete, and all of God's people are gathered to God's place. Read or have a student read Revelation 7:9-17.

- **According to verse 9, who is going to be gathered together?**
 - o Answer: A multitude of believers "from every nation, tribe, people, and language." This is the same group that Jesus said He would gather to Himself in Matthew 24:30-31.
- **What ways will God bring restoration to His people according to verses 16-17?**
 - o Answer: They will not be hungry, but perfectly provided for. They will not be in need of anything. God is going to restore His people, finally and perfectly rescuing them from the effects of sin.

THEN, Go to Revelation 21:1-7. Tell your students that there is more good news about the end of God's rescue mission. Read or have a student read Revelation 21:1-7. Ask:

- **What is the significance of a new heaven and new earth?**
 - o Answer: All of creation suffered under the effects of sin. God's mission is to completely restore His creation; therefore He creates a new heaven and a new earth that is free from sin and death.
- **Look at verse 3, what is the significance of God dwelling with His people?**
 - o Answer: In the beginning, before sin entered the world, God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When God establishes the new heaven and new earth, He will once again dwell with His people. He is completely restoring all things from the effects of sin.
- **Remember that our sin separates us from God (Rm 3:23). How will God rescue us from this effect of sin?**
 - o Answer: Verse 3 says that "They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God." There will no longer be a separation between God and His people.
- **Sin not only separates us from God, but it also is the cause of suffering in our world. When God restores all things, what happens to suffering?**
 - o Answer: Verse 4 says that God will remove our suffering. He will dry our tears, or in other words, He will be the source of our comfort. There will also be no more death, crying, or pain.

Explain to your students that these passages paint a picture of how God's rescue mission is going to end. Point out the key teaching point that there will come a day when God's rescue mission is complete, and the perfect relationship between God and people will be restored. Ask:

- **How does this good news about our future fate make you feel?**
 - o Answer: Possible answers could be hopeful, expectant, excited, comforted, or many more.

THEN, go to 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Explain to your students that knowing the end of the story also brings great responsibility. This passage will explain how we should respond now. Read or have a student read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Ask:

- **According to verses 18-19, what did God do for us? How did he do it?**
 - o Answer: God reconciled us to Himself. He reconciled us through Jesus (just like we discussed in the last lesson).
- **What does the word reconciled mean?**
 - o Answer: Reconciled means to make a relationship right, to bring harmony where discord previously existed. God worked through Jesus to rescue us from sin. He reconciled our relationship.
- **Verses 18-19 also say that God has given us a "ministry of reconciliation." What does that mean?**

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- o Answer: God has invited us to be a part of His mission. He wants to use us to bring reconciliation to more people in more places.
- **So God wants to use us, but how? How does God use us to help other people be reconciled? (Hint: Look at verse 20).**
 - o Answer: God has made us His ambassadors.
- **What is an ambassador?**
 - o Answer: An ambassador is a representative. Someone who speaks on behalf of another individual or organization. So God has made us His ambassadors, His representatives. He continues His rescue mission through us.
- **Look at verses 20-21. As ambassadors, what is our message to other people?**
 - o Answer: Verse 20 says our message is to appeal for others to "be reconciled to God."

Encourage students to see that they should share their story. Remind them that they've been reconciled to God through Jesus, so now they can go to others with their story of how God rescued us. Their message is also the Gospel, which is summarized in verse 21. Say:

- **Jesus took our sin in our place so that we could be made right with God. The good news is that Jesus is our substitute, bearing our sin and our punishment, and giving us His righteousness.**

THEN, explain to your students that we know the end of the story. God is going to completely fulfill His rescue mission. Until that day, though, He has called us to be on mission with him. The critical point is this: Until God's rescue mission is fulfilled, we are called to be His messengers on this earth. Our message is that reconciliation and peace with God are possible.

FINALLY, say:

- **Do you remember the Lorax? The Lorax spoke for the trees because they could not speak for themselves. God can speak for Himself, but He has invited us to be His representatives here on earth. Our calling is to speak on behalf of God. Our message is that God sent His Son, Jesus, providing a way that all people can be rescued from sin, and have eternal life. We are ministers of this reconciliation.**

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To encourage students to accept God's call on their lives to be essential pieces of God's rescue mission.
- **Set-Up:** You will need to provide pens and paper for each student in your group.

FIRST, explain that there are two key components to being an ambassador. The first one is that you need to know the message you've been asked to communicate. The second one is that you need a person to convey the message to.

THEN, instruct your students to take a few minutes to write down their story of how they came to know Jesus. Stories are powerful, and your personal story about your experience with Jesus is a great way to share with other people. Their story should include:

- **What their life was like before they placed their faith in Jesus.**
- **How they came to know Jesus.**
- **What their life is like after they placed their faith in Jesus.**

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Encourage them to include any relevant Bible verses if they can. Help them put the pieces of their story together. (Note: Depending on your time constraints, this activity might need to be something they work on between your gatherings. If so, make sure you review it the next time your group meets. The idea would be to get them started.)

NEXT, explain that a representative communicates for someone to someone. Ask your students to think about someone in their lives that needs to hear that Jesus can rescue them from the effects of sin. Give them a few minutes to think and then encourage them to pray for that person. Pray:

- **That person would know their sin and know they need to be rescued.**
- **That God would draw that person to salvation.**
- **That God would give you an opportunity to share your story with that person.**
- **That person would place their faith in Jesus.**

Lead your students in a time of prayer. Ask them to pray individually for their friends (aloud or silently depending on your group dynamic). Conclude the time of prayer together by praying that your students would be great ambassadors for Jesus.

FINALLY, challenge your students to continue to pray for their friends. Tell them to look for opportunities to share their testimony with them. You could also continue to pray for those specific people as a group.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.