

activate

THE
BUILDING
BLOCKS
OF FAITH



What we want students to learn: That they are called to be messengers of God's Kingdom, being used by God to give evidence of His Kingdom in their day-to-day lives.

What we want them to do with what they've learned: To identify practical ways in which they can be messengers of God's Kingdom to specific people in their lives who don't have a faith relationship with Christ.

Scripture Focus: Ephesians 5:1-5, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, 1 Peter 2:11

Overview: Your students have learned that God's Kingdom is defined by His reign and His realm. God has authority over all things, and His rule extends everywhere. Your students learned that through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God's Kingdom broke through into our world. Through Christ, aspects of God's Kingdom were seen and experienced. The cool thing? As Christ-followers, your students are tasked with being walking, talking messengers of God's Kingdom and His Kingdom values. Through their words and actions, your students can interject aspects of God's Kingdom into the world around them, each day. And this has a powerful effect. It literally serves to draw others to God, in turn, welcoming them into God's Kingdom as well. This final lesson will challenge your students to consider specific people who need to experience some of the characteristics of God's Kingdom in their lives and committing to showing them what this looks like.

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 Kingdom** lesson 31 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 31, 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.

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THE DETAILS

Ephesians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul, who once persecuted Christians and tried to stop Christianity, was a missionary to many areas including this church in Ephesus. He shared this letter with them to follow up after spending time with them (Acts 18:18-21, 19:1-41).
- **Timeframe:** Paul was in a Roman prison when he was inspired to write this (as well as Colossians and Philemon), somewhere between 60-61 A.D.
- **Purpose:** The Christians in Ephesus lived right in the middle of an area devoted to worshipping a false, pagan goddess named Artemis. This letter was written to help them better reveal God's Kingdom in a land of confusion by understanding the grace of God, applying his truth in practical ways and becoming truly mature in how they thought, spoke and lived.

2 Timothy

- **Author:** Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, a young leader he had been mentoring for years.
- **Timeframe:** About four years had passed between this letter and the first one Paul wrote Timothy, placing this document around 67 A.D.
- **Purpose:** As Paul's life and ministry were ending, he wanted to make sure Timothy understood what it meant to carry on without him as a man and church leader. He offered not only encouragement to him, but also an example of what it means to have fought the good fight.

1 Peter

- **Author:** Peter, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, wrote this letter to Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor. His audience included people from a Jewish background and a Gentile (non-Jew) background.
- **Timeframe:** It's likely that this letter was written around 64 A.D., approximately 30 years after the death and resurrection of Christ.
- **Purpose:** One of this book's primary purposes is to show what it means to be "aliens" who live in this world but aren't of it, and how it means bearing persecution while continuing to live faithfully.

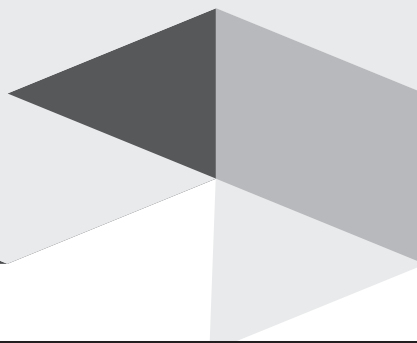
THE MAIN POINT

The idea is to help your students understand that they are called to be messengers of God's Kingdom, being used by God to give evidence of His Kingdom in their day-to-day lives. You'll do this by teaching the following points and Scripture passages:

- **First, you'll help students understand that as Christ-followers, God works in and through them to communicate to the world various aspects of His Kingdom. You'll use Ephesians 5:1-5 and 2 Timothy 2:22-24 to drive this point home.**
- **You'll wrap up by helping students see that when they act as messengers of God's Kingdom, in their words and actions, they draw people into experiencing God's Kingdom for themselves. You'll communicate this message using 2 Timothy 2:25-26 and 1 Peter 2:11-12**

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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:** The idea is to help your students grasp the importance of a “vital component.”
- **Set-Up:** You’ll want a dry-erase board and something to write with, or some other way of recording students’ answers.

FIRST, instruct your students that you’re going to play a little game. Explain that the game starts with them generating a list of “Awesome Combinations.” Explain that the combinations can be made up of anything. They can be food (peanut butter and jelly sandwiches), or superheroes (Batman and Robin), or anything students see fit to come up with.

THEN, allow them to begin brainstorming. Don’t put any limits on the awesome combinations they come up with. Encourage them to be super creative. Record their combos in a way that they can see them, such as on a dry-erase board, tear sheet, or some other means.

NEXT, when they have finished, ask them what makes these combinations so awesome? For instance, choose one of the combos and erase one half, or one part. Ask students if the “combo” is still awesome with the missing piece. Ask students why or why not. Get creative and combine some combos (for instance, you could erase R2D2 from “R2D2 and C3PO” and combine it with peanut butter from “peanut butter and jelly” to make “peanut butter and R2D2”). Ask if this combo is more awesome, less awesome, or just plain nuts.

FINALLY, when you have finished doing this for a while, lead students to think about the idea of a vital component. Say something like:

- **In each of these instances, when you subtract one part of the combination, what results is something entirely different. The nature of the combo has been changed. Why? Because each part of the combo is a vital component. Cookies are good. Milk is OK. But Cookies and Milk is awesome! What we’re going to learn today is that you are actually a vital component in God’s Kingdom. God created you. He saw fit to include you in His creation and call you His child. And in God’s eyes, you are a vital component in sharing the message of His Kingdom. Let’s see exactly what we mean by this.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to learn that they are called to be messengers of God’s Kingdom, being used by God to give evidence of His Kingdom in their day-to-day lives.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

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FIRST, remind your students that this is the last lesson in your three-lesson look at God's Kingdom. Remind them of what you've covered up to this point. See if your students can piece together a general review of lessons 29 and 30. Use the following summary to guide you:

- **(Lesson 29) God is uniquely suited to rule as King over all creation.**
- **(Lesson 30) Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus inaugurated God's Kingdom here on earth, allowing us to experience aspects of God's Kingdom in our everyday lives.**

Explain that this lesson will wrap up your study of God's Kingdom by showing students that they're called to be messengers of God's Kingdom, being used by God to give evidence of His Kingdom in their day-to-day lives.

THEN, explain that you're going to use a passage of Scripture to unlock what it means to embrace God's ideal characteristics for our lives and the effects our lives can have on others. Instruct students to find Ephesians in their Bibles while you use the Bible Background to provide some context for the Book. Then, read or have a student read Ephesians 5:1-5. Lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **What might the difference between a good type of imitation, like the one encouraged here, versus a bad kind of imitation?**
 - Answer: Imitation is good when it helps us grow into the life God created us for, but imitation can be bad when we're just faking something on the outside we have no interest in letting change us on the inside.
- **This passage talks about our language, which means God wants to transform us even in those areas that seem so random and "every day." Do you think that should include texting, email, videos and social media? If so, what would that look like? If not, why not?**
 - Answers may vary.
- **Just so we all know how important this is, can someone share a time when a person who claimed to be a Christian said or did something that was aimed to harm you in some way (just don't share names or gossip)?**
 - Answers may vary.
- **We will impact others, whether we imitate God or imitate the world. What does it look like when the world has the stronger voice and tries to change what Christ-followers think? What does it look like when God has the stronger voice and through Christ-followers helps shape what the world can think?**
 - Answers may vary but try to show that by exhibiting God we inject a little bit of the Kingdom into the world around us.

Help students see that as Christ-followers, God works in and through us to communicate to the world various aspects of His Kingdom.

NEXT, have students find 2 Timothy 2:22-26 in their Bibles. Share that this was written from an older leader named Paul to a younger leader named Timothy. Ask:

- **Who is someone who you look up to as a spiritual leader in your life?**
 - Answers may vary.
- **Put this passage into your own words. How would you describe what Paul challenges Timothy to do?**
 - Answers may vary.

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- **If everyone your age were to live out just these few verses by themselves, what do you think would be different in your generation? Would people be drawn to God or pushed away from Him? What's happening now based on how you live?**
 - Answers may vary, but point out that such a change needs to start in them before they hope to see it in others.

Help students see that when they act as messengers of God's Kingdom, in their words and actions, they draw people into experiencing God's Kingdom for themselves.

THEN, ask students to turn to 1 Peter 2:11-12. Explain that the person God used to write this was Peter, one of the original twelve disciples. It was written sometime 30 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. Read or have a student read the passage. Then ask:

- **What do you think it was like for Peter to be one of the original twelve disciples?**
 - Answer: The Bible says Peter left behind his job as a fisherman to follow Jesus.
- **30 years later, Peter was walking with God and challenging others to do the same. Can you picture yourself doing this in 30 years? How about 20? 10? 5?**
 - Answers may vary.

FINALLY, connect the dots for your students and transition into a time of application in "The Last Word." Say something like:

- **To bring all this together, remember that we act as messengers of God's Kingdom in our words and actions. Everything we do can draw people into experiencing God's Kingdom for themselves or finding another reason to reject Him. That may feel like a lot of pressure, but it's more an opportunity. You may not be perfect in this, but you can decide today if you will grow in this or not. As Christ-followers, God works in and through us to communicate to the world various aspects of His Kingdom.**

THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to grasp how they are vital to others knowing God and His Kingdom.
- **Set-Up:** None needed

FIRST, explain that you want students to think for a moment about the idea of influence. Say:

- **Can you think of two or three people who have influenced you? Can you share how they have influenced you? It doesn't have to strictly be in regards to your faith.**
 - Allow students to share a few examples of people who have influenced them and how this affected them.

Explain that sometimes people have influence on us not by planning ahead to say or do the right thing, but by being faithful in the moment. However, one thing we can plan ahead on is on becoming people of character and virtue through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

THEN, lead students in a short discussion. Ask:

- **If God has called us to be messengers of His Kingdom, in essence influencing others in Christ's name, why is it important that we are growing closer to Christ and deeper in our faith?**

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- o Answers will vary. But the idea is to help students understand that to influence others, we have to have substance to what we say and do. This is particularly true when it comes to influencing people in regards to faith.
- **Every one of us will grow in our walk with God differently, but there are some areas of growth that will be common for all of us. What could some of those areas be?**
 - o Answers will vary, but make sure you point out the difference between values that are true for everyone versus practices that are personal choices. (For example, "We should spend some type of time talking and listening to God each day" versus "You need to spend five minutes every morning reading the Bible.")
 - o Help students come up with some practical ways they can grow in their faith in order to be more of an influence on those around them.

FINALLY, have students discern one of the ideas that were brainstormed or an entirely new one that they will focus on in their journey to be more of a Kingdom influence on others. Have them consider areas of their lives they may be inconsistent in, such as language or attitude. Close by saying something like:

- **Whether you realize it or not, you're one of God's messengers of His Kingdom. Let's pray that God uses us to give evidence of His Kingdom in our day-to-day lives so we can help the Lord grow His Kingdom.**

Close your time in prayer, inviting students to read lift a prayer of praise for who God is. End by praying for the students yourself.

- 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.