



MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOURCE

The God Who Sends: Session 5

A Crucified People

Key Statement: God's people 1) deny themselves, 2) die to certain desires, and 3) do good in suffering.

::CONNECT::

- Option 1: Things Left Behind
- In John 4, after Jesus has his conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, she leaves her water pot behind at the well to go share Jesus with others (John 4:28). She had come to the well desiring water, but she found something so much better that her original desire was left behind.
- Some Hollywood movie executives really like this idea. They want to produce a movie about “things left behind;” things, like the water pot, that people leave behind because they find something better in Jesus (cf. also Matthew 13:44). Your students are assigned to pitch a movie idea that will then be considered for full-scale production.
- Break your students into smaller groups. Give each group time to consider what “thing left behind” they want their movie to focus on, and then have them produce a short, three-minute skit to pitch their movie. Some ideas might include:
 - someone leaving behind their PS4 or Xbox One score in order to spend time ministering to people with special needs
 - someone leaving behind their books in order to spend time with senior citizens
 - someone's facebook page not being updated very regularly because they are ministering to other people in some way.
- Let them share their movie pitches (skits). Point out the strengths of the skits. The main idea is that these things are left behind joyfully; they are easily forgotten because of the superior joy of Jesus. Connect this idea to the first and second points in the lesson.
- Alternative: if you don't necessarily want to do skits with your group, you can ask each student to produce a drawing focusing on something left behind. For instance, perhaps one student leaves behind an application to a really fancy college because they are, instead, joyfully going to a smaller college or even an extended mission trip. You could tell the students these drawings are to be

put together into a book to be used to explain to new Christians how Jesus gives greater joy than the world's best offerings.

- Option 2: Suffering for...
- Ask your students to help you produce a list of examples or situations of people suffering. The more real life, the better, though it'd probably be good to avoid specific people or situations by name. Write that list on the board or some paper. Here are some potential ideas:
 - A student not making the basketball team
 - A grandfather with cancer
 - A single mom with insufficient funds
 - Someone with few, if any, friends
 - A student-athlete with career-ending injuries
 - A persecuted Christian in a North Korean concentration camp
- Break them into groups of three or four. Have each group pick a situation from the list; no repeats, please.
- Their job now is to put on a skit showing that suffering, but the suffering must be an example of the third point of the lesson: it must be an example of doing good in suffering. I suggest you incorporate at least one of the three italicized points on page 59 of the teacher's guide. For instance, the sufferer, in the midst of her pain, might say to herself, "This is for my ultimate good; I trust God when he says that this light momentary affliction is gaining up for us a far greater eternal weight of glory. He is disciplining me as his daughter." Or, their suffering might be a testimony to the world; a non-believer in the skit could see the joy and integrity the person maintains in their suffering and could think, "There must be something more to that person." Or, to use the final of the three italicized points, the sufferer could use their suffering as an opportunity to enjoy God all the more and find his rest in God, not in the circumstances he might wish he were in.

::CONVEY::

If you are pressed for time this week, consider only covering points two and three of the session.

Remember, this is merely a suggested outline adaptation for a middle school group. If you decide to incorporate one or more option into your group time, you will likely have to be very selective on the material you decide to teach through. Keep in mind that each class is different, and as the leader guide suggests, personalize the lesson content for your class by determining what elements are most applicable. Don't feel pressured to teach through all of the content in a single meeting, but instead help middle school students to see the main overall point and big picture the lesson is conveying.

::COLLIDE::

See Leader Guide