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Created to Connect

1 Corinthians 12:27

CAMP BIBLE STUDIES

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Dear Leaders,

Bible study leaders, youth ministers, or small group organizers, thank you for the space before camp to prepare your students in bible study. I wrote these with a more traditional youth group in mind, but please feel the freedom and flexibility to adapt them however is best appropriate for your students. I know some groups will fly through the activities and for others it will take a good deal of time. My hope and prayer is that each of the students will hear the texts and wrestle with the ways that they too are Created to Connect with God and with others.

Written by Rev. Caitlin Childers Brown

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Before each study:

- **Read** through the lesson & scripture passage(s) to familiarize yourself & be able to talk through the stories and verses.
- **Gather** needed supplies.
- **Pray** for your students and the entire Impact experience.
- **Recognize** that a question mark -?- indicates a question to ask your group. If they are slow to answer, give them a minute or two and feel free to rephrase it. My hope is that these questions spark their curiosity about the bible and so they are often open ended instead of driving towards one central point. The questions are posed to encourage the youth the wrestle with the text so feel free to encourage them however you like.

Many of you have different rules, regulations, and abilities this summer because of COVID-19 and the precautions in place to protect the youth. Because of this, I tried to offer a variety of activity options for the students to engage with. Please tailor the lessons to fit your group, your restrictions, and feel free to adjust or add to them as needed.

I also recognize that some groups will fly through everything listed, while others will really engage with just a few questions or an activity. This all depends on group size, group culture, and age. Feel free to add or omit sections for time limitations or need.

Bible Study 1: We are Created to Connect with Others

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2

Supplies:

Gathering:

- A whiteboard, chalk board, or large paper
- Writing utensils
- Cards and envelopes/ paper
- Writing utensils

Group Gathering: Name a More Iconic Duo Competition

Have students name different iconic duos (or pairs), writing out somewhere visible the list of names.

If your group is small or might need some prodding, spend a few minutes before the lesson listing out a few pairs of people who are relevant to your youth and or context. Make a competition bracket on a paper or white board, place the different duos into the competition bracket in random order.

If your group is using technology to meet, there are many websites to generate brackets easily found through a google search, or the old-fashioned handwritten bracket will do just as well. For the sake of time, just having one bracket here will be handy.

Through speed elimination, have the students vote on which duos/pairs would win against one another. The students can define on their own how these pairs are competing. Once a winning pair has been selected, be sure to congratulate the student who suggested this pairing.

Opening Questions (5 minutes)

- What makes the duos/pairs you listed great?
- Do you think the individuals in the pairs would be as great on their own or do you think they are better together?

Bible Lesson

Have a student read the passage aloud.

Genesis 2:15-23 NIV

Questions:

1. What do you think of God declaring that Adam needed a suitable helper?
2. While this passage can be used to refer to marriage, it also can be used to describe friendships and people you get to work alongside. God didn't want Adam to go through life alone! Who are the suitable helpers in your life?
3. Share a story about a task you did alongside someone else, what good things and what hard things happened because you worked together? What did you learn?
4. Why do you think God did not want humans to go through life alone?
5. What ways are your life enhanced by having suitable helpmates?
6. What ways can you enhance other people's lives by being their suitable helpmates?

Study Time:

Activity:

Have the students write a letter to encourage and thank a friend, classmate, family member, or someone else that they get to work alongside whether that's in a chore, class, or other activity. Encourage them to express gratitude for getting to live life with the people to whom they are writing the letter.

After they are writing the letters, have the students share the ways that they are grateful for partners in life.

Closing Prayer:

Have the students take time to pray for the people in their life that they identified as helpers. Spend a moment in gratitude for the people that God has given us to walk alongside.

Bible Study 2: **Insiders or Outsiders?**

“And there were many in Israel with leprosy[a] in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.” Luke 4:27

Supplies:

- Sticky notes
- Paper
- Pens

Group Gathering: Guess the Insiders

Write a sticky note with the name of a famous person on it for each student present. Have the names come from a variety of categories such as musicians, actors, movie characters, and other names that the students may recognize. Give each student a sticky note without letting them see the name, and have them stick it to their forehead. Set a timer for this next part, based on your group size and speed. A time that will encourage them to go quickly would be best so it's a little chaotic (and silly so 3 or 5 minutes).

When you say go, have them guess what name is on their sticky note among themselves using yes or no questions. When they think they have the name, have them group themselves with other names based on what they think their sticky note name is.

After time is called, have them go around and announce the name they think they have, along with what identity they are grouped around.

If time permits, they can play again but with a shorter amount of time now that they know what they are doing.

Opening Questions (5 minutes)

- How did it feel trying out your sticky note name?
- What did you think about trying to find a group while guessing your sticky note name?
- When have you felt like an outsider?
- When have you felt like an insider?
- Why do you think we all want to be insiders?

Bible Story:

Break down this passage into smaller chunks and ask different students to read.

2 Kings 5 NIV

Scripture Notes:

This story centers on Naaman, who is an outsider and believes that the God of Elisha will heal him. He acts in faith, even though he is not an Israelite. By acting in faith and doing as Elisha instructs, he is healed and declares he will worship God. He offers to pay Elisha and is turned down, told "Go in peace".

Gehazi, an Israelite, on the other hand sees the opportunity to make some money and chases after Naaman to collect a reward for the healing. Elisha confronts him and he denies that he has taken anything from Naaman. Elisha calls his lie and declares Gehazi and his descendants will have leprosy forever.

Questions:

- What makes Naaman and Gehazi different?
- What is different about their identity?
- What is different about their actions?
- What is different about their faith?
- Who is the real outsider in this story?
- In Luke 4:27, Jesus mentions this story as he is beginning his ministry. Why do you think he would do that?

Study Time:

- What does this have to say for our lives today?
- What does this story have to say about our understanding/definition of insiders and outsiders for following God?
- What are ways that we can be faithful to God like Naaman?

Activity:

The story of Naaman shows that it is our heart and willingness to listen to God that determines our insider-ness to God. No label, identity, or perception determine our ability to be in God's family. It's easy to forget that God calls us all insiders. It's easy to forget that it is our hearts that determine our place in God's kingdom.

For this activity, give the students paper and pen to let them respond in prayer to the story. They can use the time to create a reminder that they have a space in God's kingdom, or to write about a time when they found themselves like Naaman, choosing to do something that seemed silly because God called them to it. Remind the students that God wants to connect with them, just like Naaman, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Closing Prayer:

Regather the group and lead a prayer time centered on this:

God wants to connect with each of us. May we open our hearts to see where God is present with each of us today and may we be a little bit more like Naaman

Bible Study 3: Created to be Restored

“but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.”

Luke 13:17

Supplies:

- Write a list for the gathering activity (see example below)
- Tape/glue
- Items for the students to create with (the more random and slightly broken the better)

Group Gathering: Guess the Insiders

Never have I ever: body/sickness edition

For this game of Never Have a I Ever, the leader will come up with a list ahead of time of different illnesses and injuries the group could have gotten over time. Here is a sample:

Never have I ever had a cold

Never have I ever had the flu

Never have I ever broken a bone

Have the students sit in a circle, with one less seat than the number of participants. Because this edition is based on bodily experiences, give the students the list of Never have I ever options you have compiled to give the game some boundaries. Have the student in the center of the circle come up and read an option, all participants who have had that experience are to stand up and switch seats. Play until all students have had a chance and/or you've worked through your pre-written list.

Opening:

In our modern world, we don't always think about getting sick very often, or we don't often think too much about it because we have great doctors and medicine. But today's story is another one about healing, so we are going to spend some time thinking about sickness, health, and what it would be like to be healed.

Opening Questions:

- Can you share with the group about a time that you were sick?
- In addition to feeling bad, how did you feel while you were recovering?
- What did you think about your body as it was sick?

Bible Story:

As we prepare to read today's story, put yourself in the woman's shoes. Think about how she would experience this interaction with Jesus.

Select a student or two to read the passage.

Luke 13:10-17

Questions:

1. What similarities do you see between this story of the woman and the story about Naaman in 2 Kings 5?
2. Why do you think Jesus healed this woman on the sabbath?
3. What do you all think the woman was thinking as she interacted with Jesus?
4. Why do you think the community was "delighted with all the wonderful things Jesus was doing?"

Activity:

For this activity, gather random things you have access to that the students can use to create with. This can run the gamut from old magazines, or lost and found, or even broken toys or paper trash. The more random and useless in this object lesson the better. Provide glue and tape.

Divide the students into manageable groups of less than 5 and give them items to create with. Setting a timer for 5-10 minutes instruct the students to make something beautiful, good, or delightful with the random assortment of things or paper in front of them.

When the timer is up, have each group present what they have made, and demonstrate why what they made is delightful, good, or beautiful.

Closing:

What Jesus did for this woman is a little like our creations, he takes something that is random, ignored, or abandoned and makes it good, beautiful and delightful. Back in Jesus' day body deformities would have made people think something was wrong with the person or that they were bad. In this story Jesus shows that he can make all people well and restores them to the good of society.

Have you ever felt like there was something wrong with you?

What does it mean to you if God can make you good, delightful, and beautiful?

What does it mean to your life that God wants to restore us all to be fully a part of community?

Closing Prayer:

In moments of connection with God, we are restored no matter what is holding us back. In our closing prayer time today, break off into groups or pairs. Instruct the students to spend the time praying for what they need today, whether that is to experience the healing and restoration of Jesus, or to see the ways that God has made them good and delightful.

Bible Study 4: Connecting with Christ in our Normal Lives

Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. Luke 24:35

Supplies:

- Paper
- Pen
- Markers
- Crayons/colored pencils

Group Gathering: Marooned Game

Have the students break up into smaller groups. Each group is given 5 minutes to dig through the purses, wallets, pockets, whatever they brought with them to pick 5 items that would help them survive on a deserted island. After the five minutes is up, have each group show what they have selected. If your group is competitive, have the whole group select a winner of either best item or best items to survive on a deserted island.

Opening:

Today's bible study begins with the disciples feeling a little deserted or abandoned by Jesus. They don't know what to think and aren't entirely sure if the rumors of resurrection are true.

Can you share about a time you felt marooned or abandoned?

Or a time you felt like you were on your own in a project, school, or at home?

What was it like?

Bible Story:

As you prepare to have the students read the story, have them hold that feeling of being on their own as they listen to what the disciples have been through.

Luke 24:13-35

Scripture Notes:

The followers of Jesus that He met on the road had been through a lot, and they were processing all that they had seen and done. They had been following this man who had died, and they were not sure if the rumors of the resurrection were true. They talked with Christ, and did not know who he was. He stayed with them, ate with them, and then finally their eyes were open- they could see that they had been going through their normal day with them.

Questions:

1. Why do you think we remember this story about Jesus today?
2. Why do you think Christ walked with them and ate with them?
3. What do you think it meant to these followers of Christ that he met them on the road and spent time with them?
4. What do you think the followers of Christ thought when they realized who they had been spending time with all along?
5. Where do you think Christ can meet you in your daily life?
6. How might our eyes be opened to see Christ's presence in our daily lives?
7. What ways can we enjoy time with Christ?

Activity:

For this activity, provide paper, pens, drawing material to let the students choose between. Have them prayerfully consider what it would look like to spend time with Jesus in a normal day in their life. Have them draw, write a narrative, write a poem, or even a song about what going through a day with Christ would look like. This is intended to show the students that Christ is and can be present in our normal days, if only we are willing to look.

Some prompts for their creations:

- Where would Christ meet you on a normal day?
- What would you be doing?
- What would be different about a day that Christ was present with you verses yesterday? (or a random Tuesday)
- Who would you want to also be there to meet with Christ as well?
- What do you think you would learn or experience?

Closing Prayer:

Have the students take their creation and in pairs pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal ways that Christ is and can be present in their everyday lives. That He may meet each of us on the road to Emmaus.

Bible Study 5: We are made One in the Holy Spirit

*“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.” Acts 2:17*

Supplies:

- White board or large piece of paper for group conversation
- Print out the pieces to a puzzle, or if you have time use a blank puzzle. Google has many different printable blank puzzles available.
- Markers or pens to decorate their puzzle pieces

Group Gathering:

On a white board, or on a large piece of paper, have the students name aspects of their identity or things that make them unique. See how long of a list you can write in 5 minutes. If the students are struggling to come up with identity things- encourage them to look at what language they speak, gender, age bracket, etc.

Opening Questions:

- Which of those identities do you like the most?
- Is there one of the identities you listed off about yourself that makes your life more difficult?
- Do some of those identities you listed bother other people?

Bible Story:

This is a very vivid passage to imagine and if it's a good fit for your group, have them act out the passage by making up gibberish and then all of a sudden pretending to understand one another.

Acts 2:1-13

Scripture Notes:

This story of the coming of the Holy Spirit shows people from all different languages and races coming together, it's our first glimpse of the body of Christ. Like any other family, the children of God can be a bit dysfunctional but we come together through the work of the Holy Spirit overcoming all national, race, and language barriers- how wonderful is that!

Questions:

1. Have you ever been around predominantly non-Christians before? If so, what did it feel like to find someone else who also loves Jesus?
2. Have you ever bonded with someone (not in church) over a love of Jesus? Can you share about that friendship?
3. Have you ever met someone from another country (or part of our country, or a different culture) who loves Jesus? What did you have in common?
4. Why do you think the Holy Spirit helped everyone understand each other in Acts 2?
5. What does it make you think about Christianity to have brothers and sisters that cross nationality, language, and racial barriers?
6. What does it mean for our lives today that Christians can come from all different nationalities? How does it affect how we treat others?

Activity:

Give each student a puzzle piece, and have them decorate their piece to represent an identity they like about themselves. Have each student show off their puzzle piece and what they put on the piece, explaining why they chose what they did. This is a great chance to celebrate what the students are proud of themselves for and affirm them.

After everyone has shared, have the students put the puzzle together.

Standing around the puzzle, have the students make observations about what kind of picture it makes together. Reflect on the question, "How does this completed and decorated puzzle compare with our understanding of the body of Christ?".

Closing Prayer:

Close in a prayer of gratitude, giving thanks for the things that make our puzzle beautiful, diverse, and the ways we are made one through the Holy Spirit.