

RESILIENT

FORGING A FAITH THAT LASTS

2022 Connect Material

Group Leaders,

We are thankful that you chose to come to Crossings this summer. We know that Connect time is an important time for your group to spend together. With that in mind, we have created Connect curriculum that you can use at your leisure with what best fits your group. Connect is a time created to give you, as the leader, an opportunity to learn and grow your group and help the camp connection continue after you return home. We believe this time can be used in many ways.

Four ways we believe this time can grow your group.

1. Leading your group through TAWG. What a great opportunity to teach your group about how to spend time alone with God each day.
2. Build relationships in your group. Team building activities are a great way to help students learn about one another and work together. This breaks down boundaries and distractions from home that prevent students from truly having deep relationships with others. And let's be honest, they need one another and their leaders.
3. Recap what you are learning at camp and let students talk and support one another. Use Connect time as a safe place to debrief Bible study as a group.
4. Play! Another way you can use Connect time is for students to play. Bring games if you want, play some that don't need any supplies, and just use the time to have fun together. Natural conversations will happen here strengthening relationships that will make an impact, both student-to-student relationships, and adult-to-student relationships.

Most importantly, we want this time to be used for your group to have what they need. As the group leader, take some time to pray about the best way to use this time. We'd love to hear how your time was spent and how it benefitted your group upon returning home.

What you will find included are games to play together and learn more about each other, questions to discuss from the morning's Large and Small groups, and guided questions for spending time in prayer together.

Day 2 Connect

Game: Two Truths and a Lie

Large Group Main Theme: God Is Faithful

Summary:

- King Nebuchadnezzar builds a giant statue. This statue was designed to bring the King glory, not God. The king decrees all must bow down and worship the statue. Those who refuse will be thrown into the furnace.
- Everyone bows except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The king sticks to his word and orders them to be thrown into the furnace.
- God saves them from death. A fourth person is seen in the furnace with them. They are taken out of the flames without a singed hair on their head.

Small-Group Review:

What does this story teach us about God?

- God didn't abandon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

Ask: How did God not abandon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?

Answer: God didn't abandon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by saving them from the fiery furnace. He sent a fourth being into the furnace in order to save them from the flames. God was with them.

Ask: In what ways has God stood by us?

Answer: God has stayed by our side through everything. Even in hard circumstances, God was there for us. (Invite students to give personal examples.)

In your TAWG time, you read a passage about God's presence.

Ask: In what ways does Psalm 23 describe God's presence?

Answer: God is described as our shepherd. He is with us in the valley of the shadow of death. He prepares a table for us. We will dwell in his house forever.

What does this story teach us about ourselves?

- We are created to worship.

Ask: What does the first commandment tell us about worship? Hint: Exodus 20:2.

Answer: In the first commandment, God tells his people not to have any other gods before him. There is only one God, Yahweh. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. We shouldn't give the worship he deserves to anything or anyone else.

Ask: How did King Nebuchadnezzar disobey this commandment?

Answer: King Nebuchadnezzar disobeyed this commandment by creating a statue and compelling his entire kingdom to bow down in worship to it. This is worshiping something completely different than the one true God.

While some religions today have idols that they worship, most of us probably don't have the same temptation to bow down to a statue like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did.

Ask: Are idols only little statues of gods? What other forms can idols take in our lives?

Answer: No, idols for us can come in any form. Whatever gets in the way of our worship and relationship with God is an idol. Sin, sports, school, friends, jobs, money, etc. These are all examples of idols that are prevalent in our lives today.

Quote: "While we may not be confronted in the precise way these Hebrew men were, we can be certain the idols of our day will present themselves to us again and again. Some may come quietly and without drawing much attention. Others, however, will be public and put on display for many to witness. When that happens, what will you do? We may not live in the ancient city of Babylon, but we are exiles in a foreign land that is not our home, and idols can be seductive. The fact is many idols are good things when properly viewed and used. But when a good thing becomes a god thing, it then becomes a bad thing. It becomes an idol. And do not be in doubt or deceived: God's people will be confronted with the idols of this world."^[1]

- We must fear God more than we fear others.

Ask: What does it mean to fear God more than others?

Answer: It means to be more concerned with obeying God than with the opinions of others. There is no doubt that what other people think of us can hurt us, but when we start disobeying God in order to please those people, we have more fear of man than of God.

Ask: How were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego able to stand up to King Nebuchadnezzar even when faced with certain death?

Answer: They feared God more than they feared King Nebuchadnezzar. They knew that God was infinitely more powerful than King Nebuchadnezzar. There was nothing that King Nebuchadnezzar could do to them that God couldn't deliver them from.

What does this story teach us about Jesus?

- Jesus is the one who saves.

Ask: How does the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego point towards Jesus?

Answer: The way that God saved Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is just like he saved all of those who trust in him. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were on their way to death and destruction, but God sent one who would go into the fire with them and protect them. In the same way, those without Christ are on their way to eternal death and destruction. But God sent one, his son Jesus, to save us from the clutches of sin and death. We are saved to eternal life with him.

Quote: "The flames have no power over those who are faithful to Yahweh (3:27). Death is defied as Yahweh saves his people through the judgment of their captors' vain attempt to enforce idolatry. Nebuchadnezzar's gods have no power over Yahweh's people, and the king confesses, 'There is no God who is able to deliver like this' (3:29)."[2]

Prayer Time: Open to today's TAWG section in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God. Confess to him the idols that are getting in the way of your relationship with him. Ask him for help in removing those from your life. Thank him for sending Jesus to die for your sins.

- "Lord, I confess that these things are more important than you: _____"
- "Help me to put you above all"
- "Thank you for loving me and forgiving me and for sending Jesus Christ to die for me."

[1] Daniel Akin: Exalting Jesus in Daniel, 32.

[2] James M. Hamilton Jr.: God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology, 328.

Day 3 Connect

Game: Gorilla, Man, Dart

Large Group Main Theme: God is Powerful Over Everything.

Scripture: Daniel 4

Summary:

- King Nebuchadnezzar has his second dream of the book. This dream alarmed him. He called in his supposed “wisemen,” the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and the astrologers, but they couldn’t interpret this dream either.
- Then Daniel comes in and the king shares the dream with him.
- The dream contains a great tree that “reached to heaven, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth.” But then this tree is chopped down by a “holy one” from heaven. Its stump is left and bound with a band of iron and bronze.
- The man in the dream has his mind changed from a man’s to a beast’s.
- Daniel interprets this dream and prophesies some bad news for King Nebuchadnezzar. The king is the tree and the man in the dream. While his kingdom is great now, Daniel tells him that it will be cut down. He also says that King Nebuchadnezzar will be given the mind of a beast. “You shall be made to eat grass like an ox.”
- But Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that God may find mercy on him and might lengthen his prosperity. Daniel says, “break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed.”
- King Nebuchadnezzar didn’t listen to Daniel’s warning. As he was walking on the roof of his palace, he was boasting about all that “he” has accomplished. Instantly, the dream became a reality. God spoke from heaven and turned his human mind into that of a beast for seven periods of time.
- After the time had passed, the king lifted his eyes to heaven and his reason was returned to him. He praised and honored the Lord.

Small-Group Review:

What does this story teach us about God?

The main theme of today’s Large Group and Small Group was “God is Powerful Over Everything.”

Ask: Who in this story lived like God was actually in control of everything? Which didn’t?

Answer: Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego all lived like God was in control of everything. In the story yesterday, they trusted God’s power to save them from the fire. These four men are obedient to God because they trust His power.

King Nebuchadnezzar did not live like God was in control of everything. While he did acknowledge God’s power when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were saved from the fire, he continues on living the same way. He is pretty prideful as we see in Daniel 4.

God is powerful enough to give dreams, reveal dreams, and make dreams a reality.

Ask: How do you think that you would have reacted if God sent this dream to you?

Answer: You probably would have been just as nervous as King Nebuchadnezzar. The dream was so specific and had such bad news for the king.

Ask: In what ways did God give the opportunity to King Nebuchadnezzar to repent?

Answer: God sent this dream and Daniel's interpretation to warn the king about the road he was heading down. Daniel ends his interpretation with these words in Daniel 4:27, "27 Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity." Sending Daniel was an act of grace by God. He didn't have to warn the king, but he did, and the king didn't listen.

Ask: What are some ways that God warns us of our sins today? And how do we respond when he does?

Answer: God warns us through internal and external means. He convicts our hearts when we do what we know is wrong. Sometimes this is called our conscience. It is the Holy Spirit working in us to do what's right. God also warns us through the people that he puts in our lives. Maybe your parents have caught you doing what you shouldn't have been doing. Or maybe your youth leader or people at church have corrected you. These are all ways God is molding and shaping us to be more like Jesus. He wants us to obey him.

What does this story teach us about ourselves?

- We admire "our kingdoms" (the things we boast in).

Ask: What is pride?

Answer: Pride is boasting in ourselves or things other than Jesus. Pride is when we think we deserve something because of our merit.

Ask: What does our pride show us about how we feel about God?

Answer: It shows us that we think we don't need God. We think we are fine on our own. It says, "We have the we need on our own."

Ask: How does the Gospel kill pride?

Answer: The Gospel kills pride because there is nothing we can do to deserve God's grace and mercy. The only thing that we deserve is judgment for our sins. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Quote: Daniel Akin writes, "God hates pride because it challenges his sovereignty and questions his will and ways (4:37). It claims a position and power for mere mortals that rightly belongs only to 'the King of the heavens (v. 37). Daniel 4, through the humiliation and restoration of the most powerful man on the earth in that day, reminds us that God is in control and we are not. He is sovereign over all and 'is ruler over human kingdoms' (4:17,25,32). These are words of assurance and comfort. They are also words of warning and wisdom for all of us. What God did to King Nebuchadnezzar he can also do—and will do if necessary—to you and me." [1]

What does this story teach us about Jesus Christ?

Jesus gives us salvation through grace.

Ask: What happened to King Nebuchadnezzar after he turned his eyes to heaven?

Answer: King Nebuchadnezzar was restored, and he worshiped the Lord.

Ask: What happens to us when we accept the free gift of grace, salvation, that God gives us?

Answer: We are restored. We cross over from death to life.

- Jesus will never be cut down.

Ask: How did Jesus use his power to help others?

Answer: During Jesus's earthly ministry, he healed the sick, fed the hungry, and preached the kingdom to come. Jesus deserves all praise which gives him reason to be prideful and be served by all his followers, but instead, he humbled himself and died on the cross for our sins.

Prayer Time: Open to today's TAWG section in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God. Pray that God would remove the pride in your heart. Ask God to remind you that he is in control of everything. Confess ways that you have tried to control everything.

- "Father, I am sorry for the ways that I am prideful. Remove that from my heart."
- "God, I know that you are in control of everything. But my heart struggles with that. I want control in these areas: _____. I can't control them, so I trust that you will be faithful."
- "Help me to be like Jesus in serving in this way: _____"

[1] Daniel Akin: Exalting Jesus in Daniel, 44.

Day 4 Connect

Game: Signs

Large Group Main Theme: God Will Rule.

Scripture: Daniel 7

Summary:

- So far, we have seen two other dreams in the book of Daniel, and both were from King Nebuchadnezzar. This time Daniel has a dream of his own.
- The Lord gives him a vision of four great beasts:
 - Lion with eagles' wings
 - Bear with ribs in teeth
 - Leopard with four wings and four heads
 - Beast with ten horns
- Daniel also mentions the presence of "the ancient of days." Daniel 7:10, "a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." This is describing God the Father.
- The "Son of Man," Jesus, comes and has dominion over the beasts. He will reign forever.

Small-Group Review:

What does this story teach us about God?

- God's kingdom is ultimate.

Ask: How do we see God's sovereignty over the beasts in Daniel 7?

Answer: In verse 9, the Ancient of Days, or God, comes and destroys the beasts. Verse 11, "the beast was killed, and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire." Then the Son of Man, or Jesus, is given a dominion that will never pass away. No beast can stand against God.

Ask: In Daniel 7:12, it says of the beasts, "their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." What does this mean?

Answer: This means that even though God has taken dominion from the beasts, they still might be present in the world. Evil rulers with evil plans will exist until Christ returns. Christians must be ready to endure persecution.

What does this story teach us about ourselves?

- The kingdoms we create will fall.
- Human kings and kingdoms bring suffering.

Ask: What are the strengths and weaknesses of human kingdoms?

Answer:

Strengths: Power. Control of huge groups of people. Money. Fame.

Weakness: Finite, they all have an ending. Betrayal. Other stronger kingdoms. Death. Destruction.

Ask: What are the strengths and weaknesses of God's kingdom?

Answer: God's kingdom has no weaknesses. He is a ruler who is absolutely just. He rules with justice, love, mercy, grace, and truth. There is no end. He rules forever.

Quote: James Hamilton writes about the purpose of Daniel's visions, "The main function of these visions is to comfort the people of God with the knowledge that God is in sovereign control of what will take place; indeed, he is directing events to their intended outcome. These events will lead to judgment on their enemies, through which their own deliverance will come. The knowledge that God has the future mapped out and can reveal it is to give his people high thoughts of him. This reassures those whose beleaguered lives might tempt them to think that their God has been overcome. God has not been overcome; each added piece of evidence that things look dark for his people heightens the drama and deepens the meaning of his certain triumph."^[1]

- Believers belong to a different kingdom.

Paul says in Phil 3:20, "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."

Ask: What does it mean that Believers belong to a different kingdom? How does that change how we live here on earth?

Answer: It means that this life isn't all there is for us. Our lives on earth are a vapor compared to the eternity after death. Those of us who know God look forward to eternity with him in the new heavens and earth. This means that the struggles and pains of this life are momentary. They still hurt but we will be free from them soon.

What does this story teach us about Jesus?

- Jesus will have dominion.
- Jesus will be on the throne for eternity.
- Jesus already won.

Ask: In what way has Jesus already won?

Answer: When he resurrected, he defeated sin and death. He conquered the grave.

Ask: In what ways does the Kingdom still need to be completed?

Answer: Sin, death, pain, and suffering still ravage life on this earth. We see the effects of it every day. Jesus promised that he will return to establish His eternal kingdom where those things will be no more.

Prayer Time: Open to today's TAWG section in your Bible Study Booklet. Spend some time writing a prayer to God. Share with God your worries about the future. Ask God to help you trust in him for everything. Pray for the people in your life that need to hear about the promises of eternal life with Christ.

- "Father, I feel anxious about these things: _____. Help me to remember that you are in control.
- "God, you and you alone are my sustainer and helper. I trust in you for everything I could ever need."
- "I pray for these people who do not know you: _____. Change their hearts. Give them the hope that you have given me.
- "Lord, as we leave camp tomorrow, help me to be more faithful to you in this specific way _____. Help me to love you more."

[1] James M. Hamilton Jr.: God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology, 331.

Connect Games

Two Truths and a Lie

Time- 10 minutes

Set-up – None

Instructions

Each member of the group introduces themselves by stating two truths and one lie about themselves. The statements don't have to be intimate, life-revealing things—just simple hobbies, interests, or past experiences that make each person unique. The lie can be outrageous and wacky, or it can sound like truth to make it harder for the other participants.

One at a time, each person shares their statements. The group has to guess which statements are true and which statement is a lie. You can keep score to see who correctly guesses the most lies, or just play for fun to get to know one another—it's up to your group.

Gorilla, Man, Dart

Time- 10 minutes

Set-up – None

Instructions

This is just like “Paper, Rock, Scissors”, except the kids will act out “gorilla” (both hands in the air and a big growl), man (arms folded with one hand on the side of the chin/jaw with a sophisticated look), and dart (however you choose to model blowing a dart).

Once each student in the group has a partner, have them get back to back and teach them the rules in song form:

“The gorilla beats the man, and the man beats the dart. The dart beats the gorilla, if you tie you’re out.” and then count all together “1, 2, 3!”

That’s when each back-to-back partner turns around like a gorilla, man, or dart. Then match up the winners and repeat until you get the final group and have a prize for the winner (optional).

Signs

Time - 10 minutes

Set-Up – None

Instructions

Signs is a simple party game involving stealth, silliness, and not getting caught! Players seated in a circle attempt to “pass” a sign (hand motion or gestures) to each other while a guesser tries to catch the person who currently has the sign.

Have everyone sit in a large circle, facing inward towards each other. Every player seated now must choose a “sign,” some kind of movement or motion that is unique to them. A sign must be easily detectable by others, although not too obvious to attract a lot of attention.

- Examples of signs: waving your right hand, squeezing your nose, sticking out your tongue, putting two thumbs up

To play around, choose one person to be the “guesser.” Have the guesser close his or her eyes. Have the group silently choose one person in the circle (randomly) to be the person who begins with the sign.

·Player 1 (who starts with the sign) now “has” the sign, and his/her goal is to “pass” the sign on to any other player without being caught by the person in the middle. To pass the sign, Player 1 must perform his own sign and then any other player’s sign. For example, if Player 1’s sign is to make two thumbs up, and if Player 3’s sign is to pat the top of his head, Player 1 must make two thumbs up and then pat the top of his head in order to “pass” the sign onto Player 3. Player 1 is now safe, and Player 3 has the sign.

Player 3 now must do his or her symbol and then someone else’s symbol in order to continue “passing” the sign. The process continues, while the guesser (the person in the center) attempts to catch a player who currently has the sign. The guesser constantly looks all around the circle, trying to detect any movements. The guesser is allowed 3 guesses. To guess, he or she points to one player and asks, “Do you have the sign?” If he or she is correct, then the guesser wins the round and the person caught with the sign becomes the new guesser. If he or she makes three wrong guesses, then the guesser loses the round.