

LEAD SHEET

Outward Week 2

"Open Eyes"

November 25, 2012

This Month's Faith Skill Navigate the Bible

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW GOD BETTER READ HIS WORD

Scripture Memorization

Acts 17:23 for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: 'To an Unknown God.' This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I'm telling you about.

GETTING STARTED

As we move outward in the world, we get to proclaim a message of hope and love. This message of Jesus will transform lives. However, we must make sure we're able to speak to people in a language they can understand.

Suppose you wanted to say, "I love you" to a three year old:

- What kind of words would you use?
- What actions would you make so that your message is clear?
- What kind of posture would you take while speaking?
- Would your language change at all? Why?

If you wanted to express your love to a three year old, you probably wouldn't take him or her to a fancy steak dinner. You would not see an action-thriller movie together. You may end playing a game, but you can pretty much guarantee it wouldn't be Scrabble or Monopoly.

Instead, you might take a three old to a restaurant with a play area. You may watch a cartoon or play hide and seek. If you were talking to a three year old, your posture and language may change as well. You might make funny faces and allow yourself to be less mature. All of this would help form a bridge so you could communicate with a three year. Only then could you express love in a way he or she would understand.

We are called to love all people, but there are many different languages, cultures, and traditions found in the world. Because of this, our outward showing of love may change with every new person we meet. It is important to speak to others in a way they can understand. Today, we are going to talk about listening to the world around us and then bridging the gap with our actions before we speak.

DIGGING IN

Read Proverbs 18:13, James 1:19-20

1. Why is it important to listen first to those that we wish to speak? (By listening to them, we will know exactly what needs to be said.)
2. What happens when we don't listen? (If we don't listen, we fail to give others an opportunity to express themselves.)
3. What are some examples or scenarios where it is extremely important to listen?

Read Acts 17:16-23

Downtown Athens was a great place for gossip. There were always people hanging around, natives and tourists alike, waiting for the latest tidbit. Athens was the cultural center of the world with unparalleled philosophy, literature, architecture, art, and education.

• Where would you go to find the intellectual and cultural center of your area?

• Where is the "hang out" place where you will find all the action?

Athens boasted some of the finest and brightest minds of Paul's day and yet they didn't know Jesus. A popular saying from

Petronius was, "It is easier to find a god in Athens than a man."

The ancient historian Pliny recorded that in the time of Nero (AD 60) Athens had over 30,000 public statues in addition to countless private statues in homes, all dedicated to various gods. While Paul stayed in Athens, the people and surroundings became part of his life. He became familiar with their beliefs, habits, and traditions. For Paul, this all became his HERE AND NOW.

Read Acts 17:16-23

1. What do you believe Paul is thinking in verse 16? (Paul's heart grieved for the people of Athens, it frustrated him to see the people in such spiritual darkness.)
2. What are some things that Paul does not do while in Athens? (doesn't quickly leave, doesn't condemn the people, does not worship the idols, does not shake his head saying, "They are so wrong," etc.)
3. What are some things Paul does do while in Athens? Why? (He preaches because his heart breaks for the city. He is burdened people to know Jesus.)

Paul is walking around with a Gospel lens. He's a missionary, not a tourist. You are called to the same mission, to approach life with a Gospel lens and an outward motive. You are not just a sightseer traveling in your neighborhood for mere pleasure or personal advantage. You are called by God to share a powerful message of redemption. You are a missionary.

Tourists are in and out. They take their photos of the sights and then they're gone. Missionaries stay put and remain faithful. They bridge gaps so they can build relationships. Tourists are interested in the cuisine, architecture, and Ferris wheels. Missionaries are interested in bringing truth and love into the messiness of life. Tourists exist to take. Missionaries exist to pour out.

4. How can you influence where you live now as a missionary rather than a tourist? (Allow for answers.)
5. As you observe what is going on around you, how is your **HERE AND NOW** similar to Athens?
6. How is your **HERE AND NOW** different from Athens?

Let's take a moment now to determine exactly what is your **HERE AND NOW. This will help you make the transition from tourist to missionary. During this exercise, you need to think of the people you work with, go to school with, and live near. Consider these questions to define your **HERE AND NOW**. (These questions are in the **POWERUP**.)**

MAKING IT REAL In order to make all of this discussion real, let's talk about the Gospel message in different situations, settings, and cultures.

(Split the students up into groups. Assign one or more of the following situations to each group. Have the groups discuss the questions that follow each situation assigned to them. These are also found in the lesson workbook.)

Situation #1

Eric would never consider himself as a bad person. Sure, maybe he has done some bad things in his life, but he's also done some good things. He is pretty sure that at the end of his life the good will outweigh the bad. On top of this feeling, he is also very responsible. He always looks for ways to help (if he's not busy). He is extremely conscientious about his carbon footprint and sometimes he even attends his local church. He is pretty sure that this allows him to do whatever feels good as long as it is not hurting anyone else.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is wrong with Eric's way of thinking?
2. What is the Gospel message for this situation?

(See Isaiah 64:6, Matthew 10:26, Romans 3:10)

Situation #2

Sean had had a rough life, and he's only 16. His father died when he was only 3 and his mom isn't able to keep up with the bills. Sean is poor, and he is often embarrassed when others see him with food stamps and hand-me-down clothing. Sean's older brother is an alcoholic and although Sean wouldn't admit it, there's really nothing stopping him from becoming just like him. Sean tries to cope with his pain as best as he can, but it has been getting harder and harder. All he has to look forward to is music, drugs, and the occasional girlfriend.

Discussion Questions:

1. What counsel do you have for Sean?
2. Is there a particular aspect of the Gospel that he needs to hear?

(See Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 11:28-30, Romans 8:26-27)

Situation #3

Taneisha's family is SUPER-religious. Her time, effort, and energy all center completely on her church. When she's at home, she'll spend her time indoors gearing up for the next church event. She finds it safe and comfortable to go to a place where everyone believes and behaves the same way. Taneisha believes that her neighbors are all heathens and so has made it very apparent to everyone around her. She has never been the most popular in school, but she doesn't seem to care. Her car is covered in Christian bumper stickers and after talking with her a few times, you will know that what they say basically summarize her beliefs.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would Jesus address Taneisha?
2. What words or actions would help Taneisha become more outwardly motivated?

(See Ecclesiastes 7:15-18, Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 12:3)

Situation #4

Michael's life hasn't been spectacular. He has suffered throughout his childhood with an illness, and therefore did not have many friends. Now, his parents are getting a divorce. God has never been a part of his life, and now because of his circumstances, it is harder and harder and harder for him to believe in anything having to do with God. Lately, Michael will ask you, "If God is so loving, why does he let bad stuff happen to people who don't deserve it?" You can understand Michael's pain.

Discussion Question:

1. How would you answer Michael's questions?
2. What words or actions would help encourage Michael and show him love?

(See Isaiah 42:16, Romans 8:16-17, Ephesians 2:1-10)

CLOSING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Spend a few minutes praying about the HERE AND NOW God has placed you in. Ask Him to prepare your hearts and minds as He leads you out to be His ambassador. Ask Him to prepare the hearts of those who will hear the message of the Gospel. Ask God to give you the right words to say as you run across many who need His love.