

JUNIOR HIGH SMALL GROUP SURVIVAL GUIDE

'26-'27



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STAY CONNECTED WITH HDC STUDENTS

Instagram – Follow us @hdcstudents for all things student ministry.

Text Updates – Stay in the loop with your specific campus by texting: VVstudents, AVstudents, or HSstudents to 64567

Website – For calendars, upcoming events, and general info, visit: highdesertchurch.com/students

HDC STUDENTS PURPOSE STATEMENT

Partnering with parents to prepare students and provide opportunities to change their worlds for Christ.

SMALL GROUP PURPOSE STATEMENT

Our small groups help prepare students to walk with Jesus by developing Christ-centered relationships with a caring adult, grounded in God's Word, where students can ask honest questions, grow spiritually, and be challenged to live out their faith.

Our SG Leaders are Guides, not teachers.

A guide...

- Knows where they want to take the group, but invites students to help shape the journey.
- Builds healthy relationships that naturally lead to trust, honesty, and accountability.
- Embraces tangents and is prepared to navigate them back to the main focus.
- Asks thoughtful questions and continually points students back to God's Word.
- Recognizes that silence is valuable, allowing students time to reflect and process.
- Creates an environment where every student feels safe and has the opportunity to contribute.

Student Involvement in Student Groups

We know that when a student is an active participant in a small group, they grow deeper in their faith, stay more engaged, and connect more naturally with the experiences of their peers.

Each week, we want students to take part in one or more of the following:

- Reading the passage(s) we're studying.
- Sharing a brief update on what God is doing in their life.
- Telling their personal story at least once during the year.
- Asking and answering one of the discussion questions.
- Closing the time together in prayer.

OUR CURRICULUM STRATEGY

As we prepare students for lifelong faith, we recognize the differences in the cognitive and spiritual maturity of junior high and high school students. Both need a caring adult and can understand God's Word, but they require different approaches.

Our questions are tied directly to the teaching series and relevant Scriptures. This provides consistency and clarity across campuses.

High School Groups: Guided Discussion

High school students are ready to dive deeper into God's Word themselves. Each week, we will use three simple questions to explore the passage:

- What does it say?
- What does it mean?
- How does it apply?

Here is a deeper understanding and guide to the type of questions for each section.

What does it say?

These are observation questions.

- Who is speaking? Who is being spoken about?
- What's the main subject or event of this chapter?
- What do you learn about the people, the event, or the teaching?
- When do these events happen? When will they happen?
- Where does this take place?
- Why is this being said or written?
- Are there any words, ideas, or phrases that repeat or stand out?
- Do you see a particular characteristic of God highlighted?
- What other questions come to mind as you read? Does this passage include any lists that you could look at one by one?

What does it mean?

These are interpretation questions.

- What was the author's purpose in writing this?
- How would the original readers have understood this message?
- What was God trying to communicate through this author?
- What circumstances or problems might have prompted this writing?
- Are there other Bible passages that help explain this one?

How does it apply?

These are application questions.

- You are asking the large question of "So what?"
- What does this mean for me today?
- How does this truth impact my life, my choices, my thinking?
- How might this apply to others around me?
What specific actions can I take to live this out?

TAKING ATTENDANCE USING THE APP

- Open The App and Select Groups
- Select My Groups
- Select Take Attendance
- Check All in Attendance
- Then Select Save

Open The App
And Select Groups

Select
My Groups

Select Take
Attendance

Check All In
Attendance Then
Select Save



SMALL GROUP DISCIPLINE:

Our role as adult youth leaders is to help our students look more like Jesus. Discipline issues, at first glance, appear to be a disruption of that goal. It is our hope, however, that as a team, we will begin to see these moments as opportunities for transformation.

Here are some quick tips to guide us in the process.

1. Assess the Risk

- a. Does this need to be dealt with now, or can it wait?
- b. How will this student respond to discipline?
- c. Remember, heart change over behavior change.

2. Diffuse the Situation

- a. Get down on their level.
- b. Ask questions and seek to understand.
- c. Remove the student ("Let's take a walk...").

3. Next Steps

- a. The end goal is always to build up students in order for them to fully participate. Always aim for this.
- b. What we say can never be more important than what they say.
- c. Help the student to determine their own next steps.

4. Don't yell at students or embarrass them in front of the group.
 - a. Handle discipline one-on-one (when possible).
5. Don't assume you know what's going on.
 - a. Ask lots of questions.
 - b. Work to find the heart of the issue.
6. Don't think you are in this alone.
 - a. Ask the staff team for help.
 - b. Include another leader in the conversation.
7. Don't walk them through the issue:
 - a. "Please don't _____ again."
 - b. "I asked you not to _____, if you _____ again, then _____."
 - c. "Since you _____, now you have to _____."

WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

It is easy to get frustrated with your students and their personalities. However, be sure to focus on their positives.

The Distractor/Multitasker

This student gets caught up on the not-so-important stuff. They are easily distracted.

- Ask them to help.
- Meet with them outside of Small Groups.
- Give them a “mission” during small group time.

The Crisis Producer/ Problem Solver

This student always seems to be in crisis mode. They might get labeled the drama queen and feed off emotional responses.

- Let them know they will have a chance to talk with you before or after group.
- Help them to see past the crisis to a solution.
- Only respond with words, not emotion.

The Debater/ Smart Kid

This student always has an answer or a question that is the opposite of what's being said.

- Create ground rules.
- Tell them it is okay to disagree but not attack.
- Direct their participation instead of stifling it.

The Talker/ Mover and Shaker

This student typically speaks before they think and jumps in whenever someone takes a breath. Often they might cut you or other students off when speaking.

Tips:

- Position them next to you.
- Consider letting them lead the small group now and then.
- Get some alone time with them and listen to them.

The Thinker/ Observer

This student almost never speaks unless prompted, and even then, it may be a struggle.

- Position them across from you, in your line of sight.
- Spend one-on-one time with them.
- Don't try to fix the silence.

The Church Kid

These students know their Bible and need to be reminded to focus on how it applies to them.

- Avoid asking questions that have a 'right' answer.
- In your one-on-one time, cultivate a passion for reaching the lost.

GENDER AND SEXUALITY HELP

This is becoming a common conversation among our culture and our groups. We want to give you some general tools for dealing with this topic when it comes up and some specific tools for gender and sexuality specifically. You are beginning a dialogue with students; don't feel like you have to have all the answers.

- Always acknowledge that the student has trusted you with something personal by saying something like, "Thank you for trusting me; let's talk about that."
- Ask follow-up questions in your conversation. It is important that your questions use the student's words so that the student knows you are listening to them.
- Follow up with HDC Staff. The first conversation is always a surprise and can sometimes catch us off guard. Our staff team wants to support you as you process difficult conversations and also figure out when our involvement might be required.
- Follow up with the student. These topics are never a one-and-done. Encouraging the conversation to continue will show the student that you care about them and will allow you to continue shepherding them.

Gender and Sexuality Help

Gender is an identity-based topic, and struggles around gender are at their core a struggle with the big question of “Who am I?” Gender-based topics include gender, name changes, and pronoun preferences.

If the topic comes up in a group setting, ask the student if you can talk with them about that after the group. These conversations are much easier one-on-one, especially because this is a hot topic conversation in our culture today. The key to starting the conversation is just to get the student to open up.

Questions Regarding Gender

- “So, you said in the group that you don’t feel like a girl?”
- “Your name is ___, but you want to be called ___. Can I ask why?”

Questions Regarding Sexuality:

- “You said in a group that you’re gay; what do you mean by that?”
- Some students aren’t very clear on what it means to say this, so make sure you know what they mean.

Follow-up Questions:

- “How long have you been feeling this way?”
- “Why do you think you feel this way?”

How does HDC engage a gender confused or LGBTQ student?

At High Desert Church we believe every person is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with love, dignity, and respect. When we engage a student who is navigating gender confusion or identifies as LGBTQ, our goal is not to single them out, but to walk alongside them with compassion as we point them toward Jesus. We will listen carefully, extend grace, and gently speak biblical truth into these conversations.

We recognize our role is to faithfully present what Scripture teaches about identity, gender, and sexuality. We are committed to upholding biblical convictions while approaching each student with humility and grace.

Practically, we align our strategy with our purpose statement as we partner with parents and prepare students to be worldchangers.

Preparing Students

Student Programming: All students, regardless of how they identify, are invited to attend large group, small group, and event programming. Our heart is for every student to feel welcomed and included as they explore their faith.

Small Groups: Our small groups are divided by gender, and we place students according to the biblical, historical understanding of their biological sex at birth.

Overnight Trips: On overnight trips like summer camp and mission trips, we place students in cabins and rooms according to the biblical, historical understanding of their biological sex at birth.

Dress Code: If a student is a boy and chooses to dress in traditionally female clothing, or a girl who chooses to dress in traditionally male clothing, we will respond with compassion and respect while also upholding HDC's theology and policies. We will talk with the student with grace, encourage modesty, and allow them to dress that way as long as they understand our belief that God has a better plan for them.

Name Change: If a student requests to be called by a different name that is different from the gender they were assigned at birth we will remain steadfast in our commitment to the Scriptures, while extending grace to the student. We will talk with the student and explain that we will be using the name they were given at birth. We do not use names that differ from the biblical, historical understanding of their biological sex at birth.

Pronouns: We do not use pronouns that differ from the biblical, historical understanding of their biological sex at birth.

Partnering with Parents

If parents support their student's decision and challenge HDC's policies for group and cabin assignments, we will arrange a face-to-face meeting. In this meeting, we'll listen with compassion, ask questions to better understand their perspective, and graciously explain our church's theology, policies, and practices.

If a student shares that they are wrestling with their gender or sexuality, we will involve parents as soon as possible. Our heart is for the student to have that conversation with their parents, and our team will follow up intentionally. After this initial conversation, we will gladly offer to meet with both the student and their parents together. However, if the student is unwilling to involve their parents and continues to struggle in these areas, our student team will reach out to the parents directly to set up a meeting, so we can come alongside the whole family in a supportive and caring way.

HDC's Policy

In accordance with HDC's policy, we may ask a student's gender for emergency, safety, and medical purposes.

Cell Phone & Communication Guidelines

As a leader, your communication should be respectful of boundaries. The following guidelines are in place to remove any doubt from parents, students, or others regarding your intentions and involvement as a student ministry volunteer.

- No communication with students after 9:00 PM (unless approved for urgent ministry needs).
- Avoid one-on-one messages with the opposite gender; always include another leader or use group chats.
- Group chats are preferred over private conversations whenever possible.

Social Media & Online Conduct

What you post, like, or engage with online reflects your character.

- Don't post pictures that could be seen as offensive or inappropriate. Don't like or follow posts that could indicate you condone that worldview, behavior, or language.
- You represent Christ and HDC in every digital space, including social media, group chats, and gaming platforms.
- Keep your content, tone, and interactions consistent with a life that honors Jesus.
- Do not private message any student on social media.
- If you comment on a post, it must be public for all to see.

IMPORTANT DATES

VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

10/25 AV Leader Meeting
11/6 VV JRH Leader Meeting
1/16 Global SM Leader Training
4/21 VV HSM Leader Appreciation
4/30 VV JRH Leader Appreciation
4/30 HS Leader Appreciation
4/30 AV Leader Appreciation

REUNIONS/EVENTS

8/19 We Run The Night
11/18 Fall Reunion
3/3 Camp Preview
5/5 Student Choice Awards
6/28-7/2 JRH Summer Camp
6/27-7/3 HSM Summer Camp
7/28 Summer Reunion

WEDNESDAYS OFF

10/14 Fall Break - All campuses
11/11 Veterans Day
11/25 Thanksgiving Break
12/23 Winter Break
12/30 Winter Break
1/6 Winter Break
3/17 AV Spring Break
3/24 VV & HS Spring Break

NEW EVENTS

2/12-15 HSM Mexico Global Missions
7/12-17 HSM Los Angeles Local Missions
JRH Missions TBD

JUNIOR HIGH SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS



GENESIS



8/26 GENESIS WEEK 1

In the Beginning: Creator of All

Genesis 1:1–2:3 teaches that God is the sovereign Creator who intentionally brought all things into existence by His word, ordered creation according to His wisdom, declared it good, and established humanity as His image-bearers to live under His rule and care for His creation.

Icebreaker:

If you could create any animal by combining two real animals, what would you make and why?

Read Genesis 1:1–2:3

1. In Genesis 1:1, what does it mean that God created “the heavens and the earth”? What does this teach us about God?
2. Why do you think God created the world in an organized way, day by day, instead of all at once?
3. Humans are made “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:26–27). What do you think that means about how we should treat other people and ourselves?
4. After each part of creation, God says it was “good.” What does this show us about God’s view of the world He made?
5. In Genesis 2:1–3, God rested on the seventh day. Why do you think rest was important enough for God to include in creation? What can we learn from that today?

9/2 GENESIS WEEK 2

Paradise Lost: The Fall of Humanity

Genesis 3 records humanity's fall into sin as Adam and Eve disobey God's command and bring guilt, shame, and separation into the world. Even as God pronounces judgment on the serpent, the woman, and the man, He promises that the offspring of the woman will ultimately defeat the serpent, providing the first glimpse of redemption. God's provision of garments for Adam and Eve demonstrates His grace and points to His ongoing plan to save sinners and restore what sin has broken.

Icebreaker:

If you could create any animal by combining two real animals, what would you make and why?

Read Genesis 3

1. What lies did the serpent tell Eve, and why do you think those lies were tempting?
2. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God. Why do people sometimes hide their mistakes instead of admitting them?
3. Even after sin entered the world, God still came looking for Adam and Eve. What does this show us about God's character and His desire to save people?
4. In Genesis 3:15, God promises that one day the serpent would be defeated. How does this point forward to salvation through Jesus Christ?
5. God made garments for Adam and Eve before sending them out of the garden (Genesis 3:21). What might this teach us about God's mercy and care, even when people sin?

9/9 GENESIS WEEK 3

Brother's Keeper: Cain & Abel

Genesis 4:1–16 shows how jealousy and unchecked anger led Cain to reject God's warning and murder his brother Abel. The passage reveals how sin damages relationships with both God and others when conflict is handled selfishly rather than faithfully. Through God's confrontation of Cain, we see the importance of taking responsibility for our actions and responding to conflict in a way that honors God and protects relationships.

Icebreaker:

What's the funniest or most ridiculous argument you've ever had with a friend or sibling?

Read Genesis 4:1–16

1. Why do you think Cain became angry when God accepted Abel's offering but not his own? Have you ever struggled with jealousy or comparison?
2. Before Cain sinned, God warned him that "sin is crouching at the door" (Genesis 4:7). What are some warning signs that anger or jealousy might be taking control in our lives?
3. Cain avoided responsibility by asking, "Am I my brother's keeper?" What responsibility do we have toward friends, siblings, classmates, or people in our church?
4. How did unresolved anger damage the relationship between Cain and Abel? What are some healthy ways we can handle conflict before it grows worse?
5. Even after Cain sinned, God still showed mercy by protecting him. What does this teach us about justice, consequences, forgiveness, and how we should treat others when they fail?

9/16 GENESIS WEEK 4

The Flood: A Fresh Start

Genesis 6:5–9:17 highlights Noah's faith as he obeys God's instructions to build the ark despite living in a wicked generation. While God judges the earth because of human sin, Noah demonstrates trust in God through his faithful obedience. Through Noah's obedience, God preserves life and establishes a covenant, revealing that faith is expressed through trusting and obeying God.

Icebreaker:

If you had to save only three personal items during a huge flood, what would you bring and why?

Read Genesis 6:5–9:17

1. In Genesis 6:5–7, God is deeply grieved by human sin. What does this teach us about God's holiness and how He feels about evil?
2. Why do you think God chose Noah to build the ark? What qualities or actions made Noah different from the people around him?
3. During the flood story, we see both God's judgment and His mercy. How can God be both just and loving at the same time?
4. After the flood, God made a covenant and placed the rainbow as a sign (Genesis 9:8–17). What does this reveal about God's faithfulness and promises?
5. What are some ways the story of Noah and the ark helps us better understand who God is and how He relates to people today?

9/23 GENESIS WEEK 5

Tower of Babel: Scattered and Searching

Genesis 11:1–9 describes humanity's attempt to unite and build the Tower of Babel in order to make a name for themselves. Their plans reflected rebellion against God's purposes, but God intervened by confusing their language and scattering them across the earth. The passage demonstrates that God is sovereign over all nations and that no human effort can prevent Him from accomplishing His will.

Icebreaker:

If everyone in the world could only speak one language besides their own, which language should it be and why?

Read Genesis 11:1–9

1. Why did the people want to build the tower and “make a name” for themselves? What does this reveal about human pride?
2. How did God respond to the people at the Tower of Babel? What does this teach us about God’s authority over humanity and nations?
3. The people believed they could reach heaven by their own effort. Why is it important to understand that people cannot become equal with God?
4. Even though God scattered the people and confused their language, how might this action have actually protected humanity from greater sin and pride?
5. What does the story of the Tower of Babel teach us about who God is compared to who humans are?

9/30 GENESIS WEEK 6

The Call of Abraham: Faith to Follow

Genesis 12:1–9 records God's call for Abram to leave his country and go to a land God would show him. In response, Abram obeys by faith, trusting God's promises of blessing, land, and descendants. Through Abram, God begins His plan to bless all nations, revealing that His promises are received through faith and obedience.

Icebreaker:

If you had to move to a completely new place tomorrow without knowing anyone there, what would be the hardest part?

Read Genesis 12:1–9

1. God told Abram to leave his home and go to an unknown land. What would make that command difficult to obey?
2. Abram obeyed God even without knowing all the details. What does this teach us about trusting God's authority?
3. God promised to bless Abram and make him a blessing to others. How can following God impact the people around us?
4. Abram built altars and worshiped God wherever he went. Why is worship an important response to God's leadership and authority in our lives?
5. What are some areas in our lives where it can be hard to let God be the authority instead of doing what we want?

10/7 GENESIS WEEK 7

The Test: Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22:1–19 records God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, testing the depth of his faith and obedience. At the last moment, God provides a ram as a substitute, sparing Isaac and revealing His provision for life in place of death. This event foreshadows God's ultimate plan of salvation, where He Himself provides the substitute necessary for redemption.

Icebreaker:

What's something valuable you would find very hard to give up, even for a good reason?

Read Genesis 22:1–19

1. Why do you think God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac? What does this reveal about faith and obedience?
2. Abraham trusted that God would provide, even when he did not understand the situation. Why is trusting God sometimes difficult during hard moments?
3. God provided a ram in Isaac's place at the last moment. How does this picture the idea of a substitute in salvation?
4. Many Christians see this story pointing forward to Jesus Christ. What similarities do you notice between Isaac's story and Jesus' sacrifice?
5. What does this passage teach us about God's character and His plan to save people?

WHO IS GOD



10/21 WHO IS GOD WK 1

God is Eternal and Unchanging

God exists outside of time and is eternal, with no beginning or end. Unlike creation, He is unchanging in His character, promises, and purposes. Because God does not change, His people can trust Him completely in every season of life.

Icebreaker:

What's something in your life that changes often and sometimes makes it hard to stay steady or focused?

Read Psalm 90:1–2; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8

1. How does Psalm 90:1–2 help us understand what it means that God has no beginning and no end? Why is that important?
2. Malachi 3:6 says God does not change. How is God different from people or situations that are constantly changing?
3. Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What comfort does that bring when life feels uncertain or unstable?
4. Why do you think people sometimes struggle to trust that God is consistent in His character and promises?
5. If God truly never changes, how should that affect the way we trust Him in prayer and obedience this week?

10/28 WHO IS GOD WK 2

God is Omnipresent (Everywhere)

God is not limited by space or location but is fully present throughout all creation. No one can escape His presence, and nothing in the universe is hidden from Him. Because God is everywhere, His people can find comfort, help, and guidance in every moment and place.

Icebreaker:

What's a place you've been where you felt completely comfortable—or completely out of place?

Read Psalm 139:7–10; Jeremiah 23:23–24; Acts 17:27–28

1. How does Psalm 139:7–10 show that there is no place where we can go to escape God's presence?
2. Jeremiah 23:23–24 says God fills heaven and earth. What does this teach us about how big and present God really is?
3. Acts 17:27–28 teaches that God is not far from any of us. How does this challenge the idea that God feels distant at times?
4. If God is always present everywhere, how should that change the way we live in private compared to in public?
5. How can the truth of God's constant presence bring both comfort and accountability in your daily life?

11/4 WHO IS GOD WK 3

God is Omnipotent (All-Powerful)

God has unlimited power and is able to accomplish all that He wills. No obstacle, circumstance, or enemy can resist His authority or weaken His strength. Because God is omnipotent, His promises are certain, and His purposes will always prevail.

Icebreaker:

What's something you've seen or experienced that felt impossible at first but ended up happening?

Read Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 19:6

1. How does Genesis 1:1 demonstrate God's unlimited power at the very beginning of creation?
2. Jeremiah 32:17 says nothing is too hard for God.
What situations in life are hardest to trust God with?
3. Matthew 19:26 says that with God all things are possible. How does this challenge the limits we often place on what God can do?
4. Revelation 19:6 shows God reigning with power and authority. What does this tell us about God's power over history and the future?
5. If God is truly all-powerful, how should that affect the way we pray, trust Him, and respond to difficulties?

CHRISTMAS



12/2 CHRISTMAS WEEK 1

The Promise of the Gift

Luke 1:26–38 records the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will conceive and give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. Though she does not fully understand how this will happen, Mary responds in humble faith and surrender to God's will. This passage highlights that God's purposes are fulfilled through those who trust and submit to Him, even when His plans seem impossible.

Icebreaker:

If someone asked you to do something really important but you didn't understand all the details, would you want to say yes or no? Why?

Read Luke 1:26–38

1. When the angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to Jesus, what was her initial reaction? What does this show about real, honest faith?
2. Mary asked, "How will this be?" but still chose to trust God. What does this teach us about asking questions while still having faith?
3. The angel explained that nothing is impossible with God. Why is this truth important when we face situations that feel overwhelming or confusing?
4. Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant." What does it look like in real life to have that kind of attitude toward God's plan?
5. How does Mary's example challenge the way people today think about control, fear, and trusting God's direction?

12/9 CHRISTMAS WEEK 2

The Arrival of the Gift

Luke 2:1–11 describes the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem during the reign of Caesar Augustus, fulfilling God's prophetic plan. Though born in humble circumstances, Jesus is announced by angels as the Savior, Christ the Lord. This passage reveals that God works through history to bring salvation to the world through the birth of His Son.

Icebreaker:

If you could only visit one important historical event, what would it be and why?

Read Luke 2:1–11

1. Why do you think God chose to announce the birth of Jesus during a time when Caesar Augustus was ruling? What does this say about God working through world events?
2. Jesus was born in a humble manger, not a palace. What does this teach us about the kind of Savior God sent?
3. The angels announced "good news of great joy for all the people." What does this tell us about who Jesus came to save?
4. The angel said a "Savior" had been born. What does the word Savior mean, and why do people need saving?
5. How does the birth of Jesus in this passage help us understand God's plan for salvation in a simple, clear way?

PARABLES



1/13 PARABLES WEEK 1

The Good Samaritan: Loving Beyond Limits

In Luke 10:25–37, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan to answer the question, “Who is my neighbor?” While religious leaders pass by a wounded man, a Samaritan stops to show compassion and provide care. Jesus teaches that genuine love for others is demonstrated through mercy and action, regardless of social, ethnic, or personal differences.

Icebreaker:

If you saw someone at school sitting alone at lunch, what are some different ways you could respond?

Read Luke 10:25–37

1. In this story, a religious expert asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Why do you think Jesus responds by telling a story instead of just giving a direct answer?
2. Why do you think the priest and the Levite passed by the injured man? What are some modern reasons people might ignore someone in need today?
3. The Samaritan stopped to help, even though he was from a group that was often looked down on. What does this teach us about loving others beyond social boundaries?
4. Jesus says the Samaritan showed mercy. What does real mercy look like in everyday school life, friendships, and family situations?
5. Jesus ends by saying, “Go and do likewise.” What are some practical ways students can live out this command this week?

1/20 PARABLES WEEK 2

The Prodigal Son: The Father Who Runs

In Luke 15:11–32, Jesus tells the parable of the prodigal son, who leaves his father, wastes his inheritance, and eventually returns home in repentance. Instead of rejecting him, the father compassionately welcomes him back and celebrates his return. This parable reveals God’s great love, grace, and joy when sinners turn back to Him.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever made a mistake and been surprised by how someone responded to you afterward?

Read Luke 15:11–32

1. In this story, the younger son demands his inheritance early. What does this show about how he viewed his relationship with his father?
2. The younger son ends up in a very broken and humiliating situation. Why do you think people sometimes wait until things get really bad before asking for help?
3. When the father sees his son returning, he runs to him and welcomes him. What does this reveal about God’s heart toward people who have messed up?
4. The older brother feels angry and left out when his brother is celebrated. Why is jealousy or comparison sometimes a struggle even when we’ve done the “right thing”?
5. What does this parable teach us about identity—whether we see ourselves as deserving, unworthy, or loved—and how God actually sees us?

1/27 PARABLES WEEK 3

The Lost Sheep: God's Pursuing Love

In Luke 15:1–7, Jesus tells a story about a shepherd who searches for a single lost sheep even though he still has ninety-nine others. The shepherd's determination shows the value he places on each sheep. Jesus uses this example to teach that God deeply values every individual and celebrates when someone is brought back into a right relationship with Him.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever lost something important and felt relieved when you finally found it? What was it?

Read Luke 15:1–7

1. Why do you think Jesus tells a story about a shepherd leaving 99 sheep to find 1 that is lost? What does that say about how valuable each person is to God?
2. In this parable, the lost sheep represents someone who has wandered away. What are some ways people today can feel “lost” even if they look fine on the outside?
3. Why do you think the shepherd celebrates more over the one lost sheep than the ninety-nine that stayed? What does this reveal about God's priorities?
4. How does this story challenge the idea that people have to “earn” God's attention or love?
5. What does this passage teach us about identity—especially when someone feels overlooked, forgotten, or not important?

2/3 PARABLES WEEK 4

The Lost Coin: God's Persistent Pursuit

In Luke 15:8–10, Jesus tells of a woman who diligently searches for a lost coin until she finds it. Her persistence shows the importance and value of what was lost. Through this parable, Jesus teaches that God actively pursues people and delights when they are brought back into relationship with Him.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever lost something small but important and completely panicked trying to find it? What was it?

Read Luke 15:8–10

1. In this parable, why do you think the woman searches so carefully for just one coin?
2. What does this story teach us about how God views people who feel “lost” or far from Him?
3. Why do you think Jesus uses everyday objects (like a coin) to describe something so important?
4. How does this passage challenge the idea that some people matter more to God than others?
5. What does this parable teach us about God's response when someone turns back to Him?

2/10 STAND-ALONE

Valentine's Message

In Psalm 139:13–18, David praises God for intentionally creating him and knowing him completely. He recognizes that every part of his life was formed by God's wisdom and care, making him wonderfully made. This passage reminds us that our worth and identity are found in God's love and design, not in the opinions of others.

Icebreaker:

What's something about yourself that you think most people don't notice or don't fully understand at first?

Read Psalm 139:13–18

1. What does this passage teach about how involved God was in creating you personally?
2. Verse 14 says we are "fearfully and wonderfully made." What do you think that means in your own words?
3. How does knowing that God planned every part of your life affect the way you see your worth?
4. Why do you think people often struggle to believe they are valuable or "enough," even when Scripture says otherwise?
5. According to this passage, God's thoughts about you are "precious" and countless. How should that truth change the way you think about yourself this week?

2/17 PARABLES WEEK 5

The Talents: Faithfulness with What You've Been Given

In Matthew 25:14–30, Jesus tells the parable of servants entrusted with different amounts of money while their master is away. Two servants faithfully use what they were given and are rewarded, while one hides his talent out of fear and is rebuked. The parable teaches that God expects His people to faithfully use their gifts, opportunities, and resources for His purposes.

Icebreaker:

If you were given \$100 and told to use it wisely for a group project, what would you do with it?

Read Matthew 25:14–30

1. In this parable, a master gives different amounts of money (talents) to his servants. What does this teach us about how God gives people different gifts and opportunities?
2. The first two servants use what they were given and make it grow. What are some gifts, skills, or opportunities students your age might already have from God?
3. Why do you think the third servant buried his talent instead of using it? What are some modern reasons people “hide” their abilities or avoid serving others?
4. The master calls the faithful servants “good and faithful.” What does faithfulness look like in everyday life, not just big or impressive actions?
5. How does this passage challenge us to think about using our lives to serve others and honor God instead of just staying safe or doing nothing?

2/24 PARABLES WEEK 6

The Mustard Seed: Small Faith, Big Kingdom

In Matthew 13:31–32, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, which is very small at first but grows into a large tree. This shows that God often begins His work in ways that seem small or insignificant. Over time, His kingdom expands and accomplishes far more than anyone would expect.

Icebreaker:

What's something small you've seen grow into something really big (like a plant, skill, or hobby)?

Read Matthew 13:31–32

1. Jesus compares God's kingdom to a mustard seed. Why do you think He chose something so small to describe something so important?
2. What does this parable teach us about how God often works in ways that start small but grow over time?
3. Why is it sometimes hard to trust God when we don't see immediate results or big changes right away?
4. How can small acts of faith (like prayer, kindness, or obedience) grow into something much bigger in a person's life or community?
5. What does this passage teach us about patience and trusting God's timing when it feels like nothing is happening yet?

3/10 PARABLES WEEK 7

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector: The Heart of God

In Luke 18:9–14, Jesus tells the parable of a Pharisee and a tax collector who both pray in the temple. The Pharisee is proud and trusts in his own righteousness, while the tax collector humbly asks God for mercy. Jesus teaches that God justifies those who come to Him with humility and repentance, not self-righteousness.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever tried to act more confident than you really felt? What happened?

Read Luke 18:9–14

1. In Jesus' parable, why do you think the Pharisee is so focused on listing his good actions instead of asking God for help?
2. The tax collector simply says, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." What makes this prayer honest and different from the Pharisee's prayer?
3. Jesus says the tax collector went home justified. What does it mean to be "justified" before God, and why is humility important for that?
4. Why is it easy for people to compare themselves to others when thinking about their own goodness or faith?
5. What does this passage teach us about confession—being honest with God about who we really are—and how that affects our relationship with Him?

WHEN EVERYTHING CHANGED



3/17 W.E.C. WEEK 1

From Fear to Faith

In John 20:19–23, Jesus appears to His disciples who are hiding in fear and gives them peace. He sends them out to tell others about forgiveness through Him, just like we see them do in the book of Acts. Jesus also gives them the Holy Spirit, showing that they are not sent alone but are empowered to live on mission.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever felt nervous to talk to someone after you made a mistake or let them down? What helped (or didn't help) in that situation?

Read John 20:19–23

1. The disciples were hiding in fear even after hearing that Jesus had risen. Why do you think fear can still affect people even when they know the truth?
2. Jesus appears to His disciples and says, "Peace be with you." Why is peace an important gift when someone is called to serve others?
3. Jesus shows His wounds to the disciples. What does this tell us about His identity and how He relates to people who are afraid or uncertain?
4. Jesus sends His disciples out just as the Father sent Him. What does it mean to be "sent" by Jesus in everyday life at school, home, or with friends?
5. Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit and connects forgiveness with their mission. How does serving others include things like forgiveness, encouragement, and sharing God's love?

3/24 W.E.C. WEEK 2

From Doubt to Belief

In John 20:24–29, Thomas doubts the resurrection of Jesus until he sees and touches Jesus for himself. When Jesus appears, He gently corrects Thomas and calls him to believe without needing physical proof. This passage shows that real faith trusts Jesus even without seeing, which is how believers in the book of Acts and today are called to follow Him.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever said, “I’ll believe it when I see it”? When was that, and did you end up believing it?

Read John 20:24–29

1. Why do you think Thomas had a hard time believing that Jesus had risen, even though others had already seen Him?
2. Jesus invites Thomas to see and touch His wounds. What does this show about how Jesus responds to doubt?
3. Jesus says, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” What does this teach us about faith that trusts without physical proof?
4. What are some reasons people today might struggle with doubt in their faith, especially during hard times?
5. How can someone grow from doubt into deeper trust in God without feeling ashamed of their questions?

3/31 W.E.C. WEEK 3

From Shame to Restoration

In John 21:15–19, Jesus restores Peter after his failure by asking him three times if he loves Him. Each time Peter responds, Jesus gives him the responsibility to care for and lead His followers. This passage shows that when Jesus restores us, He also sends us back into mission to love and serve others.

Icebreaker:

Have you ever had someone give you a second chance after you messed up? What did that mean to you?

Read John 21:15–19

1. Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Why do you think He repeated the question, and how might Peter have felt?
2. This moment happens after Peter denied Jesus. What does Jesus choosing to restore Peter instead of rejecting him teach us about God’s grace?
3. Jesus tells Peter, “Feed my sheep.” What does this new responsibility show about how God can still use someone after they fail?
4. How does Jesus redefine Peter’s identity—not by his failure, but by his love and calling? What does that say about how God sees us?
5. What does this passage teach us about how God treats people who are broken, regretful, or ashamed of their past?

4/7 W.E.C. WEEK 4

From Worship to Witness

In Matthew 28:16–20, the risen Jesus gives His disciples a clear mission to go and make disciples of all nations. He calls them to baptize and teach others to follow everything He commanded. Jesus also promises to be with them always, showing that this mission is something every believer is called to live out with His help.

Icebreaker:

If you were given a mission to help your school become a better place, what would you focus on first?

Read Matthew 28:16–20

1. In this passage, Jesus meets His disciples on a mountain and gives them a mission. Why do you think Jesus chose to give this command in a group setting instead of individually?
2. Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” What does it mean for you today to be part of this mission in your everyday communities?
3. Jesus promises, “I am with you always.” How does knowing Jesus is present change the way people live and serve others?
4. Why is community important when it comes to growing in faith and sharing it with others?
5. What are some practical ways you can help build a healthy, encouraging faith community at school, church, or home?

4/14 W.E.C. WEEK 5

From Waiting to Power

In Acts 1:3–11, Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection and teaches them about God’s kingdom. He tells them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit, who will empower them to be His witnesses. Jesus then ascends into heaven, and the angels remind the disciples that they are called to faithfully continue His mission while they wait for His return.

Icebreaker:

If you were given an important job to deliver a message to people far away, how would you prepare for it?

Read Acts 1:3–11

1. In this passage, Jesus appears to the disciples over 40 days after His resurrection. Why do you think He spent time teaching and encouraging them before sending them out?
2. The disciples ask Jesus about restoring the kingdom of Israel, but Jesus redirects them to their mission. What does this teach us about focusing on God’s purpose instead of personal expectations?
3. Jesus tells them they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes and then be His witnesses. What does it mean to be a “witness” for Jesus in everyday life?
4. Why do you think Jesus told them to start in Jerusalem and then move outward to the whole world? What does this say about how faith spreads through community?
5. The angels ask why the disciples are standing and looking at the sky. What does this teach us about moving from waiting to actively serving others?

