

Introduction: *Engage your group by stimulating their thinking.*

Ask your group, “How many of you have seen the movie *Pinocchio*? The character Jiminy Cricket was told by the Blue Fairy to ‘always let your conscience be your guide.’ Is this a good idea? Why or why not?”

For those who have not seen the movie or have forgotten this scene, you can play it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOZzNOkcEgM> (3 minutes, 20 seconds).

Part 1: *Help your group understand the major theme through use of an imagination exercise.*

This aspect of the lesson emphasizes what an absence of authority does to a society or person. Have your group play the game “Imagine If.” This game is done by setting up a scenario and allowing the class to provide the details. Tell them, “Imagine if a large storm destroys our town. All the power lines are down, the water is contaminated, police and fire officials are overwhelmed, and the town is isolated. What will your life be like?” Have your group member describe the situation specifically and write these details on the board. They will probably get to dealing with rioting, looting, home defense, etc., because of a lack of authority figures to enforce laws. Ask, “What will it take to get the situation back to normal?”

Part 2: *Help your group members connect with the main theme through real-life examples.*

Read the article “Not Bailing Out Your Child” from *The New York Times* at the following link to your group members:

http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/05/not-bailing-out-your-child/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0

After you finish the article, discuss the last two questions to see what your group members would do in this situation.

Part 3: *Help your group members to engage with the main idea.*

Have your students read the His Mission, Your Mission section on page 53 of the Personal Study Guide. The quote by Richard Lovelace reads follows: “In the hearts of the people is a groping, inarticulate conviction that, if the right ruler would only come along, the world would be healed of all its wounds. Creation is headless and desperately searching for its head.”

Have your students comment on this quote. Are the author’s insights accurate? Why or why not? How do we show belief in our world? (You can cite the various U.S. presidential elections where people voted for a candidate thinking he could solve all of their problems. President Obama’s 2008 campaign definitely promoted the idea of his ability to change the country for the better.)

Conclusion: *Challenge your students to live the lesson.*

Ask your students to reflect on whether they live their lives as “practical atheists.” By this we mean, while they make mental assent to believe in God, their everyday lives don’t bear this out. One way they can tell is if they mirror Point #2 of this lesson in their lives where they see this pattern of judgment and deliverance. Have them spend a few minutes in prayer asking God for forgiveness.

Teaching Tip of the Week

“If we have learned anything else, it is that the ideas of the poets and artists penetrate where everything else has failed” (Normal Cousins, *Human Options*, 100). We have a tendency as teachers to focus primarily on the facts and ignore the imagination. If we can engage the imagination of our group members by painting word pictures, using music, or something else that appeals to their imaginations, we will not only affect their heads but their hearts. And isn’t the goal of all good teaching life change? Think about what you can do this week to implement this in your lesson.