



## MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOURCE

### The God Who Sends: Session 3

#### The Presence of the Future

Key Statement: As the bride of Christ, Christians are to 1) Focus on Jesus, 2) Live as Kingdom citizens, and 3) Prepare for Jesus' return

::CONNECT::

- Option 1: Laughing Gauntlet
- Split the students into two teams. Each team should line up, shoulder-to-shoulder, facing the members of the opposite team, forming a gauntlet.
- One person from the end of one team turns and faces down the gauntlet. At the other end, the person from the other team does the same. They now must walk down the gauntlet facing each other. When they meet in the middle, they must continue to face each other, passing each other and walking backwards until they get to the end of the line and rejoin their team (you'll need to have people shift in the line occasionally, or the lines will wander away from one another).
- Here's the trick: during this time in the gauntlet, each team is trying to get the person on the other team to laugh. If one of the gauntlet-walkers smiles or so much as purses their lips, the other team gets a point. Do this until everyone has gone at least once and see how it goes.
- Afterward, debrief. How did the successful people remain so stone-faced? Chances are they focused on something other than the people trying to get them to laugh. Maybe they focused on a spot on the wall, or thought of something else.
- In the same way, we, as the bride of Jesus, are to focus on him alone. We are not to be distracted by all the elements of this world, our flesh, or the devil who seeks to "make us laugh" while we walk this present gauntlet. If you think it would be fruitful, have a discussion about what the distracting elements in our lives are and how we can focus on Jesus instead.
- Option 2: Long-term Planning Committee
- Break your students into groups of three or four. They are to imagine the following scenario:
- Your students are a committee who are in charge of the land of Cozoly (or some other name you want to make up). Cozoly used to be its own island, but

it has since been annexed by a wise and benevolent queen. The queen's desire is that the citizens of Cozoly become patriotic and happy citizens of her Empire (you or the students, by the way, can make up the climate and culture of Cozoly as you see fit). Moreover, the queen's intention is that, upon her passing, her heir, the current Princess, move the capital of the Empire to Cozoly, and she wants the transition, obviously, to be as smooth and as welcome as possible.

- Your students' committee is to help facilitate the queen's two requests in one of the following two ways (their choice):
- A) If they wish, your students can produce some propaganda to instill patriotism in the new citizens. They can produce posters or make a "commercial" for the radio or the internet or YouTube (i.e., in a skit) that will make the people of Cozoly feel more pride in being part of the Empire.
- B) If they wish, your students should produce a long-term plan document. It should include strategies and goals for producing the desired patriotism and eventually receiving the capital.
- Give them time to produce their propaganda or plans, then let them share them.
- Point out that they have just created a parable for the second and third points in our lesson. Just as Cozoly was a newly assimilated colony for the Empire, so we also are newly assimilated people for the Kingdom. Just as Cozoly would one day become the capital, so also we are to be the bride of Jesus. Ask the students to make connections between the ideas they had and how we should be living as kingdom people and as Jesus' bride. You could also point out ways that Jesus' plan for us is even better than what the students may have thought up.

::CONVEY::

If you are pressed for time this week, consider only covering points two and three of the session.

Remember, this is merely a suggested outline adaptation for a middle school group. If you decide to incorporate one or more option into your group time, you will likely have to be very selective on the material you decide to teach through. Keep in mind that each class is different, and as the leader guide suggests, personalize the lesson content for your class by determining what elements are most applicable. Don't feel pressured to teach through all of the content in a single meeting, but instead help middle school students to see the main overall point and big picture the lesson is conveying.

::COLLIDE::

See Leader Guide