



MIDDLE SCHOOL RESOURCE

The God Who Sends: Session 11

Witness

Key Statement: As the church, Christians are to 1) uphold the Bible, 2) preach the gospel, and 3) testify to the world.

::CONNECT::

Option 1: Upholding the Bible as Jesus' Story

- Break your students into pairs or, at most, trios. Explain to them that they've been selected to speak on a popular daytime or morning TV show. They'll be interviewed as representatives of the evangelical church.
- They'll receive the questions the hosts will ask them about ten minutes before air time. They'll need to come up with good, coherent, compelling, winsome answers during that time.
- Ask each group to pick a different number between 1 and 37. That number corresponds to a book of the OT (example, 5 = Deuteronomy, 18 = Job, 36 = Zechariah, so forth). The first question the host will ask them is this: "We've heard that Christians consider the entire Bible to culminate in Jesus [Luke 24:44-45]. How does your book find its consummation in Jesus?"
- Give them time to prep an answer. This one can be tough, and feel free to go around and help them. For instance, the praise in the Psalms is ultimately directed to Jesus; the promises of Isaiah are promises secured by and pointing to Jesus; etc.
- Second question: how does your particular Bible text fit in the big picture of redemptive history, especially the story of the Messiah? Again, give them time to wrestle with the question (it's a hard one); give guidance as necessary.
- Then, conduct the interviews, with yourself as the talk show host. Afterward, ask the students if they, as a class, feel like they did a good job presenting an overview of the Bible. If so, why? If not, why not, and how can they address that issue? How can they read all the Bible, including the OT, looking for it as a picture and pointer to Jesus? Be sure to talk about the essential role of the Holy Spirit in helping us see Jesus for who He is throughout the biblical witness. Discuss, too, how they did in articulating what they knew to others, particularly a non-Christian witness. Did they use "Christianese"? Are there analogies they could use that would be helpful?

Option 2: Heavenly Witness Proclamation Program

- Your students may have heard of the federal witness protection program. They have now been assigned to the heavenly witness proclamation program!

- Split your students into four (or less) groups. Each group has a different assignment for the program:
 - Group 1: They're to handle the "repentance" idea (point 2 of the lesson; see especially the top half of page 123 of the leader's guide). They are to create either a series of simple drawings or a skit showing the appropriate understanding of repentance. Be sure it's not simply the call to change your ways mentioned in the text, but rather an invitation to come let God change their ways by changing their hearts.
 - Group 2: They're to handle the "forgiveness of sins" idea (point 2 of the lesson, bottom half of page 123 through the top of page 124 of the leader's guide). As with group 1, their job is to produce a series of simple drawings or a skit showing the appropriate understanding of forgiveness of sins. Be sure to point out a big element in this step is confessing our own sins. We're not perfect, but we're forgiven, imperfect people inviting others to that same forgiveness we've experienced. Make sure this is somehow an element in their skit or drawing.
 - Group 3: Witnesses in Jerusalem: This group is to come up with an action plan or strategy guide for testifying in "Jerusalem," your local region. They should demonstrate this action plan with either a series of drawings or a few skit-vignettes.
 - Group 4: Witnesses to the nations: This group is to come up with an action plan or strategy guide for testifying to the nations. As with group 3, they should demonstrate this action plan with either a series of drawings or a few skit-vignettes.
- Call the formal meeting of the Heavenly Witness Proclamation Program. You can get all formal and business-like if you want to ham it up (or not). Have the students share what they came up with.
- Debrief by talking about what were excellent ideas. Critique and correct ideas that might be well-meant but slightly misguided. Ask what of these ideas the students could actually implement. If any of them are doable, go ahead and make a plan to start implementing them. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and bless your efforts.

::CONVEY::

If you are pressed for time this week, consider only covering points one 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