



# DESTINED

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Pencils and pieces of paper; small container
- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- OPTIONAL: Clock or watch with second hand for timing
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

## ICE BREAKER: ON THE SPOT, THE DESTINY VERSION

Write out some of the topics listed below on small pieces of paper (you may wish to add your own), fold them, and place them in an opaque container. Have the teens sit in a circle. One at a time, ask each teen to select a question from the container and speak on the topic/question selected.

YOU MAY WANT TO ALLOW FOR ONE "PASS" PER TURN IF TEENS SELECT A QUESTION THAT THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE SPEAKING ABOUT. FOR SMALL GROUPS, YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. FOR LARGE (OR TALKATIVE) GROUPS, YOU MAY HAVE TO TIME RESPONSES (FOR EXAMPLE, EACH PERSON HAS THIRTY SECONDS TO ANSWER).

- Describe the most beautiful place in the world
- What would the ideal adoptive parent be like?
- What do you think makes people truly happy?
- What is the best smell in the world?
- Bagpipes or Harp: What do you think the music of heaven will sound like?
- If someone were to write an article about your life in a hundred years, what would you want it to say?
- Describe "the good life".
- If you could spend all day every day doing just one thing, what would it be?
- Describe your dream vacation.
- What is the most delicious food in the world?
- If you had to spend the rest of your life with one person, what would you want that person to be like?
- What would the perfect future look like?

## 622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

## DISCUSSION: IS DESTINY FOR REAL?

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What does "destiny" mean?



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- Do you think destiny is for real? Why or why not?
- Is the Christian idea of destiny different from the secular (worldly) one? How?
- Read together the following quote, and then invite comments on it:  
*“If we find in ourselves a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.” - C.S. Lewis*
- If you believed that you were made for “another world” (that is, heaven), would it change how you look at life?

*A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):*

- *Note #1: This is a somewhat abstract topic, so if you have a relevant personal anecdote that you can share, this is a great moment for it!*
- *Note #2: The lesson is going to unpack this further, so don't worry too much about doing more than cracking open the topic at this point.*
- *The idea of destiny suggests that there is a divine power that controls what happens in the future. Sometimes in secular thinking destiny is a way of being fatalistic about human events—of viewing humanity as powerless and therefore not responsible for our actions. The Christian idea of destiny is rooted in the character of God and his desire for us—to be made right with him through Jesus—but while God is in control, he gives us choice. So the Christian idea of destiny is not one that makes us feel hopeless, but one that gives us hope instead!*
- *Sometimes theologians talk about “the Christian hope” when they are referring to “last things”. These last things specifically refer to the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting—that is, heaven. So when Christians talk about the future and our destiny, there are a number of events and ideas included in that.*
- *Here's what the Bible tells us about heaven: that we will be with God, who loves us; that we will be like Jesus, who is perfect; and that there will be no tears, illness or pain there.*
- *Knowing that this is our destiny, that we were “made for another world”, can help us to better understand who we are (our identity), and what God has for us to do in this life (our purpose). Knowing these things can help us to face the many difficulties that we will encounter throughout our lives with hope and courage.*

## THE LESSON: EXCERPTS FROM PAUL'S LETTERS

The first part of the lesson begins with a few notes about the Apostle Paul and the epistles in general, which can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

*The Apostle Paul is one of the most interesting figures in the New Testament. The Book of Acts tells much of his story—how he went from persecuting and hunting down Christians, to becoming a convert himself and then facing great challenges (and eventually martyrdom) to preach the Gospel to the early churches.*

*The Bible texts we're about to look at are taken from two of the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians. Each of these letters was written to a unique church with specific concerns, but both have been included in our Bible because the Church recognized that these teachings have relevance for all Christians no matter where or when they live.*

*The specific passages that we are about to look at explore the “eschatological” (end times) hope that believers have.*

Refer to 1 Corinthians 15:51-53, 57-58 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.



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(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE FIRST READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-58.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- What does Paul mean when he talks about “sleep” in these passages? Why do you think he uses this language?
- What does he say is the destiny of believers?
- Paul hints in both passages at his reasons for writing about this. According to what we just read, what are these teachings about “last things” supposed to do for us?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- *“Falling asleep” is Paul’s way of talking about death in these letters. This is also a phrase Jesus used to describe a little girl who had died and whom he brought back to life during his earthly ministry (Luke 8:52).*
- *Speaking of death in terms of sleep reminds us that God’s plan for humanity is much larger than what we can see and know in the here and now: What looks like death from our point of view, looks like sleep to God.*
- *Both passages talk about the return of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. There is a great deal that we do not know about when and how all of this will happen. For example, we don’t know what our new bodies will be like, but we believe that we will continue to be uniquely ourselves, although transformed—made imperishable and without imperfections.*
- *One clue about heaven in this passage is that “we will always be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:17). Elsewhere scripture tells us that heaven is a place of glory that is characterized by the removal of all evil, sadness, and grief, where we will rest from our work on earth, worship God, and serve him. We don’t know all the details—but we believe that the experience of heaven will surpass anything that we have experienced or could experience on earth.*
- *What scripture reveals to us about the last things is meant to be a comfort and provide hope (1 Thess 4:13,18). It is also meant as an incentive to holy living and faithful service (1 Cor 15:28).*

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

## PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

**At home, find a quiet space and spend some time reflecting on what it means that God KNOWS you completely, LOVES you unconditionally, and that he has DESTINED you for eternity.**

**Ask him to help you see yourself through his eyes: who you are and what he has for you to do.**

**Then spend a few minutes in silence, listening for his voice.**

- AND/OR -

**Take some time to pray through this collect, pausing to reflect after each phrase.**

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*O God, who by the leading of a star didst manifest thy only-begotten Son to the Gentiles: Mercifully grant, that we, who know thee now by faith, may be led onward through this earthly life, until we see the vision of thy heavenly glory; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ, who with thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.* (COLLECT FOR THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD, BCP PAGE 117)

## 622 (AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

### PART ONE: 1<sup>ST</sup> CORINTHIANS 15

<sup>51</sup>Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup>For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality... <sup>57</sup>thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup>Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

### PART TWO: 1<sup>ST</sup> THESSALONIANS 4

<sup>13</sup>But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.