

AND NOW

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable 622 service booklet
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- 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: ALPHABET WORKS-OF-LOVE

Gather in a circle and explain how the memory game works. The first person to take a turn says the phrase, “Because I love my neighbours, I’m going to give them...” and then chooses something that begins with the letter “A”, (for example, “Apples”). The next person must remember what the first said, but add something else that begins with the next letter in the alphabet, (for example “Because I love my neighbours, I’m going to give them apples *and balloons*”). Continue around the circle for the whole alphabet (feel free to keep going if you have a group that’s really good at it!). Keep it going as long as you can before someone forgets.

DEPENDING ON YOUR GROUP SIZE AND COMPETITIVENESS, YOU MAY WANT TO ELIMINATE PEOPLE AS THEY FORGET TILL THERE IS ONE WINNER.

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: DOES IT CHANGE US?

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.

- Does the stuff that happens in church have any impact on what happens in life outside of church? If yes, how? If no, how might it if we were willing?
- Think of an example of someone who is not allowing what happens in church to have an impact on their life. (You might need to ask the teens to keep it hypothetical).
- Think of an example of someone who is allowing what happens in church to change how they live.
- Is it easy to change your life?

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

- *Phrases from our worship service might come to mind and challenge us to examine ourselves, to pray for someone, or to live out our faith in some particular way.*
- *An example of someone not allowing church-stuff to impact everyday life might be someone who is rude to their parents or teachers; someone who engages in any kind of sin without repentance (e.g. lying, cheating, stealing, etc.)*

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- *Those who allow church-stuff to make a difference may notice their conscience starting to bring certain things to their attention. Maybe they start to show kindness to unpopular kids at school, or decide to volunteer at a soup kitchen or an old folks' home.*
- *It takes willingness on our part to allow God's word to begin to change us, but it also requires God's help.*

THE LESSON: JUDE'S BENEDICTION

The first part of the lesson explains what a benediction is, and what its purpose is. It then introduces the text from Jude. Next the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

A "benediction" is a short prayer invoking God's blessing, guidance and help – an appropriate way for a worship service to close as we consider what comes next!

Sue Careless wrote about it this way: "We are heading out into the week and into the world. There we will be greeted by curses and blasphemies as we live and work in a world that does not rightfully and fully acknowledge a holy God. We will be tempted to curse as well. So we desperately need God's blessing upon us, his benediction, which is the exact opposite of a curse."

So it is that at the end of our 622 service, as we are about to head back into normal life, we pause to call upon God's blessing, using the closing words of the Apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. This particular passage is often used because it refers to all three persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore. Amen.*"

Many of the epistles (or apostolic letters) in the New Testament close with similar words of blessing, which also make for great benedictions. The writers of the epistles are leaving the readers with a job to do, but firmly rooted in the care of God. When we leave the church building, our relationship with God doesn't end! There is so much more after we say, "Amen".

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In a moment we'll take a look at the closing verses of Jude's epistle. Jude is the second last book of the Bible, and only 25 verses long. Jude's letter is concerned with encouraging believers to defend the faith and to stand firm against false teachings. His closing remarks offer a good summary for us of what we face in the world, the job we have to do, and our God who is able to uphold us through it all.

Refer to Jude 1:17-25.

(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 the text suggest believers should be prepared to face?
- What does Jude exhort his readers to do?
- What are the qualities of God's character that Jude underlines in his closing verses? Why do you think that is?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- Readers are warned that they will face “scoffers” who follow “ungodly passions” and “cause divisions”.
- Jude tells them to build themselves up in the faith, to pray, and to persevere in the love of God and mercy of Christ. He tells them to show mercy to others, by “snatching them out of the fire” – evangelizing so that they too many know salvation. Jude’s phrase, “hating even the garment stained by the flesh”, is a strong reminder to his readers that sin is not something they can be casual about, but rather something which is wholly in opposition to the Christian calling. However, notice that they are not called upon in this passage to fight with the scoffers, merely to carry on in faithful devotion.
- Jude refers to God as he “who is able to keep you from stumbling” – in spite of the difficulties and antagonism in the world. He is also the one who is able “to present you blameless... with great joy” – this is in the face of temptations and persecutions. There is joy to come. After commending us to the care of this amazing God, Jude breaks into further praise of God’s power: his “glory, majesty, dominion, and authority” – we can be in no doubt when we consider these things, that God is indeed “able”.

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.

Choose one of the benedictions in the New Testament epistles to pray with. You may want to rewrite it in your own words, using it as a springboard to offer your own life and worries to God.

Here are a few suggestions:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.
- 2 Thessalonians 3:16
Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all.
- Hebrews 13:20-21
Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 2 Corinthians 13:14
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

(THE PRAYER OF SAINT CHRYSOSTOM, BCP PAGE 15)

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.

JUDE 1: **A JOB TO DO, A GOD WHO IS ABLE**

¹⁷But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” ¹⁹It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

²⁴Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.