

# AMBASSADORS

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

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

## ICE BREAKER: HANGMAN, THE ALIEN VERSION

This is the version of hangman you know but with a bit of a twist. Instead of drawing a stick figure of a man, have your teens complete the stick figure of an (outer-space) alien for this alien-themed activity.

Ahead of time, write out some of the following scriptural phrases on scraps of paper. The teens take turns selecting one of the scraps and drawing out the lines on a board that correspond to the letters of the words in the phrase they have selected. They should write in full the word "ALIENS" wherever it occurs. The other teens take turns guessing letters and try to guess what the full phrase is. Each time they guess a letter which is not there, part of the alien gets drawn until they have no more guesses left.

- Rescue me and deliver me out of the hand of aliens (Psalm 144:11)
- Solomon numbered all the aliens who were in the land (2 Chronicles 2:17)
- You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan (Deuteronomy 24:17)
- Show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt (Deuteronomy 10:19)
- The alien has not lodged outside, for I have opened my doors to the traveler (Job 31:32)
- They have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place (Jeremiah 19:4)
- By faith Abraham lived as an alien in the land of promise (Hebrews 11:9)
- Moses fled and became an alien in the land of Midian (Acts 7:29)
- You were aliens in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19:34)
- You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints (Ephesians 2:19)
- To those who reside as aliens, scattered and chosen (1 Peter 1:1)

FOR LARGE GROUPS, PLAY IN TEAMS. FOR SMALL GROUPS PLAY AS INDIVIDUALS AND TAKE MULTIPLE TURNS. YOU MAY WANT TO ASSIGN BONUS POINTS IF THE TEENS CAN GUESS WHAT PART OF SCRIPTURE THE PHRASE COMES FROM.

## 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: ALIENS, CITIZENS & AMBASSADORS

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.

A NEW CREATION:

# AMBASSADORS

- Ask the teens to offer their own definitions of the words: alien, citizen and ambassador. (Provide definitions using the answers below if necessary)
- How do you think it feels to be an alien? a citizen? an ambassador?

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

- An ALIEN (in the sense that we're talking about today) is someone who does not belong to the country in which they are living. A CITIZEN is a person who belongs to a country and has related rights and responsibilities. An AMBASSADOR is someone who represents his/her own country, while living in another country.
- The word "alienation" comes from the same root as "alien," and suggests that when we are away from home, living in a place where we don't really belong, we can feel lonely and isolated. If we are citizens of something, we hopefully feel a belonging and allegiance. The role of an ambassador is one of privilege, so that person might feel honoured by their position, but also under a burden of responsibility to represent their country well. Ambassadors are first citizens of another country, and then aliens living away from their own country, so they may have all of the feelings associated with those roles as well as the ones that are unique to the position they hold.

## THE LESSON: 1 PETER 2

The first part of the lesson 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.

Many important moments in Israel's story came at times when they were aliens and exiles, living in foreign lands controlled by regimes that were hostile to God. The early Church faced similar persecution. The New Testament epistles describe believers as "aliens and strangers" in this world, suggesting that we do not really *belong* here.

Instead, even if we are living in a country where we are legal citizens, our true citizenship is somewhere else. The Apostle Paul wrote, "You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God". And "our citizenship is in heaven". What does that mean? It means that we don't belong to this world, but rather we belong to God. And yet, for those of us who are reading this right now, it means that God hasn't taken us out of this world.

We are here as "ambassadors for Christ". In the very first book of the Bible, when God called Abraham, he declared his intention of using Abraham's descendants to bless all of the nations of the earth. In the book of the prophet Isaiah, God said to Israel, "I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth". God's intention for his people was always that they would act as a living embassy, reaching out on his behalf. When Jesus ascended into heaven following his resurrection from the dead, he commissioned his disciples saying, "You will be my witnesses... to the end of the earth". So we belong to God, and have the privilege and responsibility of representing him in a world that does not acknowledge him.

Many of the New Testament epistles are concerned with helping believers understand their relationship to God, the world and each other, as well as providing practical advice for living in this tension of being aliens, citizens and ambassadors all at once.

Refer to 1 Peter 2: 9-17.

(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.

A NEW CREATION:

# AMBASSADORS

- What are the things in this passage that point to our role as ambassadors?
- Is there anything in the advice in verses 13-17 that you find surprising? Why do you think it was necessary for Peter to give this advice?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you were called upon to act as an ambassador for Christ? What happened?

*A few notes and reflections for reference:*

- Verse 9 describes who we are, for the purpose that we might “proclaim” the truth about God. An important part of our witness is how we live. Peter’s assumption is that even if believers behave well, they will still be maligned and mistreated. What he wants to emphasize is that no matter what happens, we must conduct ourselves “honourably” because this reflects upon God and may end up bringing others to believe as well, so that one day they might glorify him “on the day of visitation”.
- When we understand that we belong to God and have a place of privilege in his family, we can sometimes become arrogant towards those around us who are not believers. You can imagine people saying, “We answer to a higher law, so we don’t have to do this or that”. In fact, we know this was already an issue during Jesus’ ministry on earth, because he was asked whether or not the faithful had an obligation to pay their taxes. (Unfortunately, the bottom line was “yes”.) Other New Testament passages are also concerned that believers would misunderstand or misuse their new freedom in Christ with the result of harming the witness of the Church. Peter understood first-hand that good conduct is not necessarily going to prevent persecution or false accusations from coming against Christians; however, he sees that even (and perhaps especially) in adversity there is an opportunity to act as an ambassadors for Christ.
- This is a great opportunity to share a personal story. Your teens may have had moments with peers or in school when they felt they did (or did not) stand up for their faith. If a specific ongoing struggle or need arises during discussion, take a moment to pray for that need.

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.

Each morning and evening, follow the rule of prayer that you created for yourself.

(If you didn’t make one, try saying the morning and evening prayers from the “Forms of Prayer to be used in Families,” which begins on page 728 of the BCP. If you don’t have a copy, you can look it up here: <http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer>.)

Spend some time quietly considering what it means to be an alien in this world, and an ambassador for Christ. Ask God to enable you to live out your identity as a citizen of his kingdom. Close with this reading from Ephesians 2:13-22: **“You are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” Thanks be to God!**

- AND/OR -

# AMBASSADORS

---

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

*O Lord God, when thou givest thy servants to endeavor any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished, which yieldeth the true glory; through him that for the finishing of thy work laid down his life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

(PRAYER FOR STEDFASTNESS FROM THE FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED AT SEA, BCP PAGE 635)

## 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.

---

## 1 PETER 2: **WHERE WE BELONG, WHAT WE PROCLAIM**

<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

<sup>13</sup>Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup>For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup>Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor.