

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes – *note fifth page re ice breaker, you may want multiple copies*
- 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: DRAMA ON THE JOURNEY

As the teens arrive have them clear a space in the room to act out a skit. They will be acting out the story of the rich young man (RYM) from Mark 10:17-27. (The text is provided on page five.) The suggested roles for this activity will work differently depending on your group size; see the suggestions below. Assign roles, distribute the text, allow a few moments for coordination, and – action!

- For groups of one or two, assign only a narrator and an actor, playing one of the roles yourself if need be. The narrator reads – and mimes – all of the narration, and the actor reads *expressively* everything in quotations.
- For groups of three to five, you can assign different actors for each of the parts with lines: the RYM, Jesus, the disciples (these can be one actor or several – for example, you might double up the RYM and disciple role in groups of three), plus the narrator. Each one’s task is to both read expressively and mime or act out the parts related to their character (or in the case of the narrator, use gestures to illustrate).
- For groups of six to ten, divide those four/five parts (narrator, RYM, Jesus, and the disciples) into speakers and actors. So the speaking narrator reads the parts while the acting narrator mimes them. In the case of the characters, the speaking character reads the lines while the acting character acts them out.
- For groups of more than ten, split the group and have each team perform for the other(s).

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

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: IMPOSSIBLE HOPES

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.

- If you did the opening activity, give your teens the opportunity to respond to the passage.
What stood out for you?
- What are some things that we think of as being impossible?
- Are there things that people living 100 years ago would have thought of as impossible that we know are possible now? Name as many as you can think of.
- Are there things that you hope for in your own life that you think of as being impossible? Have you ever prayed about those things?

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

- Some of your teens may wonder why, if Jesus is God, he tells the young man “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone”. Jesus is in fact challenging the young man to think through the implications of his calling Jesus “good”. Jesus’ instruction to the young man (to sell everything that he has) is not one he gives to everyone, but one that is uniquely designed to show this person the obstacle he must overcome in his own heart.
- You may want to point out that even though Jesus is delivering some bad news to this rich young man (that he actually has a whole area of his life that he’s not willing to surrender to God), the text also tells us that Jesus loved him, and that nothing is impossible with God – that includes removing the obstacles that stand between this rich young man and the eternal life he seeks.
- You may want to start them off with a few ideas: pigs flying, money growing on trees, getting younger instead of older. They may want to reference idioms or ideas explored in movies.
- The last century has been one of rapid change so this could be a long list! The internet, advances in medicine and transportation are just a few. Sometimes our ability to believe that something could be possible is impaired by our lack of imagination and experience. God, who is outside of time, all-powerful, all-knowing – is not limited in the ways we are!
- When we pray, we do so believing that God is able, that with him all things are possible. The hard part is knowing also that God doesn't always say “yes”, and we don't always understand why he says “no” or “wait”. But if we believe that God is able and also that he loves us, then we must strive to pray in a spirit of trust, following the example of Jesus when he said, “not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). And we should try to keep in view the greatest impossible thing that he has overcome – our separation from him because of our sin.

THE LESSON: EPHESIANS 2

The first part of the lesson (below) 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.

...Spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood.

In the words of the Litany we appeal to God's goodness when we say: “Spare us, good Lord”. When we talk about the goodness of the Lord, we are speaking of his moral righteousness, as well as his loving-kindness. As the Psalms say, “Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him” (Psalm 34:8).

Scripture makes it clear that *we* cannot claim to be good. Rather, we are fallen people, living in a fallen world, separated from God, and headed for destruction. Yikes! So we know that our position is one of being offenders before a holy God, a situation that we by ourselves cannot repair. But this is not the end of the story because our good Lord “gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

Refer to Ephesians 2:1-9.

(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.

- How does this passage describe our position *without* Christ?
- How does this passage describe our position *with* Christ?
- What are some of the indications in this text that we haven't accomplished this ourselves?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- Of all of these descriptors, which one stands out for you the most? Why?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- Without Christ, we were “dead” in sin (v1), we were followers of “the prince of the power of the air” and belonged with the “sons of disobedience” (v2). We were at the mercy of the “passions of our flesh”, doing whatever we wanted, “children of wrath” (v3).
- With Christ, we are made “alive”, “saved” (v5), “raised up” and “seated in the heavenly places” (v6). Verse 7 says that “in the coming ages” God will continue to show “the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us”.
- Verse 5 tells us that it is “by grace you have been saved”. Again, verse 8 repeats this to make it perfectly clear: “this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God”. Verse 9 goes on to say that it is “not a result of works (that is, our own efforts), so that no one can boast”.
- God is “rich in mercy” and loved us with a “great love”. He wants to show us the “immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness” (v7). He is gracious and the giver of good gifts (v5,8)!
- The first four questions dig into the text, check for comprehension, and explore some of the details, which are easy to lose sight of because the passage is so dense. In this last question, give your teens the opportunity to explore what the text means for them by sharing what resonates most.

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 your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE 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.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer/))

If you have never specifically asked God to save you by his grace, you may want to use this time to re-read the text from Ephesians 2, confessing your need for Jesus and asking God to make these things real for you.

Spend some time quietly reflecting on the “impossible” things in your life. Pray together with the words of Jeremiah 32:17: “Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you”. Offer to God your “impossible” requests. Close your time of prayer with the words of Christ: “Not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

O Lord, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR SEPTUAGESIMA, BCP PAGE 132)

CLOSING PRAYERS

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", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

EPHESIANS 2: **GOD'S GOOD GIFT**

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

ICE BREAKER: MARK 10:17-27

[As Jesus and his disciples were] setting out on the journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “*Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?*” And Jesus said to him, “*Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honour your father and mother.’*” And he said to him, “*Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.*” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “*You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.*” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “*How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!*” And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, “*Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.*” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, “*Then who can be saved?*” Jesus looked at them and said, “*With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.*”