

# JOY FOR THE JOURNEY

## CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- 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: TEACH THIS!

Break into small teams of 2-3, and assign to each team a Bible verse to teach to the others. Tell them to be as creative as possible. The teams have a set period to plan their teaching strategy and another set period to do their teaching. Encourage them to be creative and have fun with it. They may wish to use a song, an acronym, a diagram, or some other method. Briefly discuss afterwards which, if any, of the teaching methods resulted in the audience retaining the information. Below are a few suggestions for verse selection.

IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH A GROUP OF THREE OR LESS, ASSIGN EACH TEEN A VERSE TO TEACH TO THE OTHERS. GROUPS OF FOUR OR MORE CAN BE SPLIT INTO TEAMS OF 2-4. IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH MORE THAN FIVE OR SIX TEAMS, PAIR THE TEAMS UP FOR CO-TEACHING, THEN ASK ALL THE TEENS TOGETHER TO COMMENT ON HOW IT WENT.

- Romans 8:18: *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
- Romans 15:4: *For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*
- Ephesians 1:13: *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.*
- Ephesians 2:19: *So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.*
- 1 Timothy 4:8: *For while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*
- Hebrews 10:36: *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*

## 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: MEMORY STRATEGIES

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 is the hardest thing you’ve ever had to memorize?
- What sort of tricks or strategies do you use to try to remember things?
- Do you “cram” for exams? Does it work?

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

- Whether it's French vocabulary, math formulae, or the periodic table, learning often means memorizing material that we find challenging.
- If you did the ice breaker, some of these strategies may have been demonstrated. Perhaps you reread or rewrite your notes. Perhaps you make up a song, an acronym, or a diagram to help you remember something. Perhaps you have cue cards that you flip through.
- "Cramming" for exams may work for some of us insofar as it enables us to regurgitate what we've memorized on short notice. Usually, however, we don't continue to remember that material for very long afterwards. On the other hand, when we study information repeatedly over time, it stays with us longer, even becoming integrated with our thinking and being available to call up in our minds years later.

## THE LESSON: 1 PETER 1

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.

Human beings need repetition. Small infants have to learn through repeated experience that when a favourite toy disappears from view, it has not stopped existing. It's still there, just out of sight.

In many ways, grown-ups aren't that different. We can come to trust only what our senses tell us in the moment, forgetting all that God has done for us in the past. This is why it's so important for us to draw near to God, spending daily time with him in private devotion. For the days when everything is going our way and for the days when *nothing* is going our way – we need to root ourselves in the spiritual reality beyond what we see and feel. We must be a people who "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Remember Daniel? Even though he was living in exile, scripture tells us that "he got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God" (Daniel 6:10). If you are on the road of faith and do not yet have a daily practice of prayer and scripture reading, resolve today to start. Nothing can keep you closer to the heart of God than this, as you navigate the many seasons of life.

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St. Peter understood that the believers he was writing to were not having an easy time. Faced with persecution and the hardships of daily life, they needed the joy-infused reminders of all that God had done for them already, his presence with them in this life, and their glorious future.

Refer to 1 Peter 1:1-12.

(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 are some clues in the text that tell us St. Peter's original readers were having a hard time?
- What purpose does St. Peter see in the trials that his readers are experiencing?
- What is the spiritual reality that St. Peter wants to focus our attention on?
- What evidence does St. Peter provide to show his readers that they are not alone?
- In the same way that the prophets "were not serving themselves but you", whom do you think we might be serving?
- What are you doing (or what do you plan to start doing) to keep from forgetting these spiritual realities?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- In his opening address, St. Peter calls his readers “elect exiles of the dispersion” and then goes on to say, “now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials” (v6).
- This experience of hardship is testing the “genuineness” of their faith, and when proven, it will be “found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v7).
- Our loving God knew beforehand all about the situation we are in (v2). He has provided this amazing salvation to us (v2, 3). We have a future inheritance that cannot be harmed (v4). This is a source of joy (v6). Beyond this, the love we have for Jesus also fills us with an inexplicable and supernatural joy (v8). In short, we are the recipients of God’s amazing promises down through the ages (v10-12), his generous gift of salvation, and an unshakeable joy as we anticipate our future with him.
- St. Peter’s opening language reminds his readers that they and he are family (“he has caused us to be born again to a living hope”, v3). Then, beginning with verse 10, he reminds his readers that they are not alone making a sand castle on an abandoned beach as it were, but part of a Church that spans the ages, in concert with the angels, and guided by the Holy Spirit.
- In the same way that we are encouraged by the faithful legacies left to us by the saints who went before, we are now making our own legacies as we live in obedience, allowing God to use us to encourage and build up other believers today and perhaps even some in the future as well whom we will only meet in heaven.
- Sometimes, we can read passages of scripture that point us to spiritual realities and they can seem very far away and irrelevant to our daily lives. C.S. Lewis wrote, “Meanwhile the cross comes before the crown and tomorrow is a Monday morning”(The Weight of Glory, highly recommended reading!). So what’s to be done about Monday morning? It is by the practice of spiritual disciplines – prayer, scripture study, private and corporate worship to name a few – that we train ourselves for glory. Hopefully your teens are committed to attending worship at your parish and perhaps some already have a practice of private devotion in place. Encourage those who do not to consider setting some time aside, morning and/or evening, to make a start.

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))

*Psalm 119:11 says, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” This week’s At-Home Challenge is to commit a passage of scripture to memory. You may choose to memorize the verse suggested below, or select one from today’s lesson that stood out to you. You will be amazed at how the words of scripture, stored in the heart, will return to you in the moments when you most need them.*

**1 Peter 5:10: “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.”**

- AND/OR -

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Take some time to pray through this prayer.

*O Lord God, who hast bidden light to shine out of darkness, and who hast again wakened us to praise thee for thy goodness and to ask for thy grace: Accept now the offering of our worship and thanksgiving, and grant unto us all such requests as may be acceptable to thy holy will. Make us to live as children of the light, and heirs of thy everlasting kingdom. Remember, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies, thy whole Church, all who join with us in prayer, and all our brethren, wherever they may be, who stand in need of thine aid. Pour down upon us all the riches of thy grace, so that, redeemed in soul and body, and steadfast in faith, we may ever praise thy wonderful and holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

(PRAYER AND INTERCESSION FROM FAMILY PRAYERS, BCP PAGE 729)

## CLOSING PRAYERS (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 1: BORN AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE

<sup>1</sup>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>3</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and enquired carefully, <sup>11</sup>enquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.