

RAISED WITH CHRIST

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper, pens, markers
- 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: WHERE THE ROAD ENDS

Divide your group into teams of two or three. Give the teams a set period of time to design a “maze” on a sheet of paper. Challenge them to illustrate their maze with interesting images showing where the journey starts and ends and what some of the obstacles along the way might be. After a few minutes, have the teams swap mazes and attempt to complete the maze created by another team. Allow a few minutes for this and then provide an opportunity for the teens to share whether they found the challenge easy or hard, and why.

FOR GROUPS OF FEWER THAN FOUR, HAVE YOUR TEENS WORK ON THE MAZES AS INDIVIDUALS BEFORE SWAPPING.

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: THE FUTURE MATTERS

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 do you expect from the future? What effect do you think your expectations have on you?
- Have you ever felt like you were experiencing an “ending” that turned into a new beginning?

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

- *The future we think we will have may be one that we look forward to with hope, dreaming of a happy and fulfilling life. But we may also lack hope that the future will provide us with a good life, and in this case we may avoid thinking about our future at all. Our expectations, and whether we think of the future with hope or despair, can have a big impact on the here and now. Our expectations can motivate and inspire us. But they can also paralyze us. They can comfort us or leave us feeling cold and empty. Hope and despair have everything to do with the way we see the road ahead, where it leads, and where it ends.*
- *This may be a good opportunity to share a story of your own. Perhaps you've had to move to a new city and felt that leaving behind friends and familiar places was like a little death, but then your new life gradually began to fill with new friends and new favourite places, beyond what you had previously thought possible. This sense of grief*

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at having to say “goodbye” often happens in life when one “chapter” of life ends for us and a new one begins. But beyond our “goodbyes” there is always something new, even if it takes time to recognize and appreciate.

THE LESSON: 1 CORINTHIANS 15

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.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND “DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS” BY SUE CARELESS.)

Until Jesus comes again, death is the normal conclusion to each human life. We’re born. We live. We die.

So, what makes Christians different? Well, because of Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf, *life* is different. Scripture says that believers have been “buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith” (Colossians 2:12). Being raised with Christ means leaving sin behind and living in a new way. But *death* is different too. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live” (John 11:25). Death is not the end of the believer’s road. For this reason, we “do not grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

The Nicene Creed was written in 325 AD. It is still the most universally accepted statement of what Christians believe across all denominations. We believe that God sent his son Jesus to be born as one of us. He suffered death, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Yet the Creed doesn’t just tell us about what *has* happened in the past. It also speaks about what *will* happen in the future:

*“And he [Jesus] shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead:
Whose kingdom shall have no end...”*

And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the world to come” (BCP p. 71-72).

In other words, Christians believe that death is not the end. There’s more to come. And for the believer, what comes after is something to anticipate with confident hope and great joy.

Refer to 1 Corinthians 15: 35-38, 50-58.

(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 “sleep” mean?
- What does this passage tell us about the resurrection body?
- How does this passage describe “the end”?
- What is the “therefore” of this teaching? (What impact should this teaching have on our present lives?)

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- Verse 51 says, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed”. St. Paul, who wrote the New Testament letters to the Corinthians, used the word “sleep” to refer to those who have died, but await the resurrection.
- The resurrection body is not one of “flesh and blood” but one that is changed, imperishable, and immortal (v50-53). The analogy that St. Paul uses (v37-38) is helpful: the body that dies is like a seed, and what will grow from

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that seed is not a replica of the seed, but a glorious plant which it is hard to imagine just by looking at the seed. Moreover, each seed corresponds to a specific plant so that the seed of a marigold will produce a marigold and not a different kind of flower. In the same way, the “seed” of our earthly body will produce a resurrected body that is uniquely blossomed from that seed.

- *The passage describes a triumphant and victorious end: very suddenly a trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised – imperishable and immortal (v52-57). Human beings often think of “the end” as a sad or catastrophic defeat, but this image – for believers – could not be further from the truth.*
- *Verse 58 gives us the “therefore”. Since we have this amazing future for which we hope, we are to be faithful, diligent, and confident in living for Christ now.*

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))

How do you think about “the end”? Are there superficial concerns that have overshadowed spiritual ones? Has a sense of despair weighed you down? Offer these things to God, and ask him to help you to think of the future through the lens of his Word. Close with the following prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who [at this evening hour] didst rest in the sepulchre, and didst thereby sanctify the grave to be a bed of hope to thy people: Make us so to abound in sorrow for our sins, which were the cause of thy passion, that when our bodies lie in the dust, our souls may live with thee; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

(FROM AN ORDER FOR COMPLINE (NIGHT PRAYER), BCP, P. 727)

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.

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1 CORINTHIANS 15:

THE MYSTERY AND TRIUMPH OF THE RESURRECTION

³⁵But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” ³⁶You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body...

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²in 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. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.