

A CERTAIN HOPE

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: THE HELP DESK

Break into teams of 3-5 members each. Each team is tasked with creating a skit called “The Help Desk”. The skit should showcase a “help seeker” and several unhelpful help desk workers. Tell your teens to be creative and to make their skits as entertaining as possible. After allowing a short time to plan, have your teams perform their skits for one another.

IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH A GROUP OF THREE OR LESS, YOU MAY WISH TO PARTICIPATE YOURSELF AND IMPROVISE THE SKIT TOGETHER, RATHER THAN PLANNING IT OUT FOR A PERFORMANCE. IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH MORE THAN FIVE OR SIX TEAMS, PAIR THEM UP FOR CO-PRESENTATION, THEN ASK THE GROUP AS A WHOLE TO COMMENT ON HOW IT WENT.

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: HELP COMETH FROM...

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.

- Share about a time when you needed help. Were others helpful or not?
- Share about a time when someone came to you seeking help. How did it go?

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

- *Perhaps you’ve had a device break and needed to contact customer service to get it fixed. Or perhaps you needed someone to explain some homework that wasn’t making sense to you. When we seek people’s help, we’re hoping not only that they understand the problem we’re facing, but that they have the knowledge and expertise to fix or solve it.*
- *Being equipped to help when someone else is in need can be a great feeling, but that’s not always our experience. Sometimes we simply feel helpless to really be useful because we do not have the skills necessary to solve the problem. Sometimes the best that we can do is to refer people to someone else who does know how to solve the problem, or to say, “Let’s try to get as far as we can in figuring it out together”.*

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THE LESSON: 2 CORINTHIANS 4+5

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.)

For most people, death is a frightening prospect. We fear losing to death those whom we love, and we fear dying ourselves. But Christians believe that the victory of Jesus has taken the “sting” out of death. He gives us eternal life (John 3:16). This means that believers see death differently, “walking by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Scripture tells us to remind one another of these things often.

So when a believer dies, Christians grieve. But we do not “grieve as others do who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). The words spoken at the grave-side remind us of the promise to which we hold:

“[We commit this] body to the ground... in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our mortal body, that it may be like unto his glorious body”. (BCP p. 602)

“We meekly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him... and that, at the Resurrection in the last day, we with him may receive that blessing, which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”. (BCP p. 603)

Though death may separate us from our loved ones for a little while, we have assurance that those who belong to Jesus will one day be reunited with each other and with him. Though death may bring an end to the life we have known in “our earthly home”, we can hardly wait for what we know comes next.

Refer to 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:9.

(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.

- What are some of the words that St. Paul (the writer of both letters to the Corinthians) uses that show he is certain about what he is saying?
- What does the text tell us about the here and now?
- What does text tell us about the future?
- What is this knowledge supposed to do for us?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *St. Paul says we know that “he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence” (4:14). Again, he uses similar language in 5:1 when he says, “We know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”. Then, when he speaks of God having prepared all this for us he refers to the Spirit as a “guarantee” (5:5).*
- *The passage recalls words from Psalm 116:10, making the point that the verbal testimony the apostles have given has grown out of a deep and sincere belief, a belief unshaken by challenging circumstances. All this was for the benefit of those who would read this letter (4:13,15). In the here and now our bodies are “wasting away”, but we*

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can experience spiritual renewal regardless of hardship because we know we are being prepared for glory. The things that we see right now are “transient” but the unseen realities are “eternal” (4:16-18). The “tent” of our earthly bodies will not last forever, but we are confident of receiving heavenly bodies prepared for us by God. And we have the Spirit as a guarantee (5:1-5). So for now we must “walk by faith, not by sight” (5:7), longing to be “at home with the Lord”, but seeking to please God whether we are here on earth or with him in heaven (5:8-9).

- *The text tells us that we will be raised and brought into the Lord’s presence together with other believers (4:14). What the future holds for us is “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (4:17).*
- *God’s grace being preached and accepted by “more and more people” should cause us to give thanks and rejoice (4:14). The knowledge of the Gospel should result in our “not losing heart” and being “of good courage” (4:16, 5:6,8). It should fill us with longing for eternity (5:2,4), call us to focus on the eternal things, “walking by faith and not by sight” (4:18, 5:7), and it should motivate us to honour God with our lives (5:9).*

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))

Spend some time asking God to comfort and encourage those who are grieving or dying, especially anyone who is known to you. Ask him to help you to point others to the real hope that we have. Close your time with the following two prayers:

O heavenly Father, whose Blessed Son Jesus Christ did weep at the grave of Lazarus, his friend: Look, we beseech thee, with compassion upon those who are now in sorrow and affliction; comfort them, O Lord, with thy gracious consolations; make them to know that all things work together for good to them that love thee; and grant them evermore sure trust and confidence in thy fatherly care; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort: Deal graciously, we pray thee, with those who mourn, that casting every care on thee, they may know the consolation of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (PRAYERS FROM THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD, P. 600)

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 PRAYERS FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

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2 CORINTHIANS 4+5: **A REASON TO TAKE HEART**

4¹³Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

5¹For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, ³if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,

⁷for we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.