

Making a Mark...That's Hard to Erase

INTRODUCTION FOR LEADERS

Tony Campolo popular speaker and Professor at Eastern College, Pennsylvania once said,

“If we lose this generation of students, it won’t be because we challenged them too much, but because we challenged them too little.”

I agree. Surveys show that many kids drop out of church after high school because they never felt needed. Students long to do more than show up for our meetings. They want to make a difference in their world. But they need equipping. They need a strategy. They need encouragement. That’s what this series is all about - opening students’ eyes to their incredible potential and releasing them into the world to make their mark.

This series will be a success only if it moves students past head knowledge and motivates them to actually make a difference in the lives of others. Here are some ideas on how to make this happen:

- 1) **Think through how God has motivated, equipped and used you in ministry.** Reflect on why you are impassioned about your current ministry. As you teach, use examples from your own life to pass the baton of ministry to the next generation. And as always, read the purpose statement of each lesson and then “SIT ON THE LESSON.” First come before God to jot down Scriptures and your own ideas for getting the message across. Then, come back to my lesson to use as a resource. As usual, I have more material in each lesson than you can cover. Don’t feel obligated to cover everything. Pick and choose as the Spirit leads. Some people like to teach from the “Overhead” outline.
- 2) **Plan activities that will give your students opportunities to apply the lessons.** For example, plan an “Act of Kindness” following Session Two. Students could visit nursing home residents, help an elderly person with his house, take food to the hungry or give toys to the poor. You can use this series as preparation for a summer mission trip or local summer outreach projects. If you teach this series but fail to give them specific opportunities to apply it, you may be breeding more guilt than passion. With your youth and adult leaders, brainstorm ideas of specific projects you could plan as a group.
- 3) **Plan ahead to have college students and youth share about the ministries they’ve been involved with.** When youth hear peers sharing each week about their excitement in being involved with various services and ministries, something clicks in their minds: “Hey, this isn’t just for adults. It’s for me!”
- 4) **Adapt the lessons to your youth group and your culture.** Only you can know what will most effectively motivate and train your youth group for ministry in your community. So please pray through and think through each session with your group in mind. These sessions provide a track to run on, not your final destination.
- 5) In preparation for this series, I interviewed students who were impacting their friends for Christ and interspersed their quotes throughout the material. But to hit closer to the mark for your specific setting, **interview students who are reaching students successfully in the settings that**

your students live in from day to day. Then intersperse their comments (better: bring them in to do live interviews in front of your group) throughout the series.

6) Apply these messages to your own heart first. When I was leaving my last youth group for the mission field, many students told me what I had impacted them about my life. Not one youth mentioned a series of messages. But several mentioned the impact of seeing me share Christ with people wherever I went. Oh that I'd been more consistently obedient in this area! Youth need more than messages. They need models.

7) Overhead Sheets and Student Handouts for all lessons are included after the final session.

8) Plan ahead by ordering:

The *Jesus No Equal* booklet. You will need this in Session 6 as you train youth in presenting the gospel. Order about five copies of the booklet for each student, one to use for practice during the session and the other four to share with friends during the week.

9) Consider using the following resources:

- **Taking Your Campus for Christ (By Radically Loving Your Friends)**, by Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor, will give you other great ideas on strategy.
- **An Awesome Way to Pray**, by Barry St. Clair, together with the accompanying journal, helps connect students' prayer lives with impacting their friends.
- **Giving Away Your Faith** and **Influencing Your World**, both by Barry St. Clair, are books four and five of Reach Out's "Moving Toward Maturity" discipleship series.

To order these resources, either go to Reach Out Youth Solutions' website at www.reach-out.org and click "Buy Resources" or call our office at 770-441-2247.

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Impact Key #1 - Catch the Vision (Session I)

PURPOSE: By the end of this session, I envision my students having passion and a plan for making a difference in their world.

LEADERS: Note that we have student sheets (with blanks to be filled in) and overhead/powerpoint sheets available for download in a separate file.

Introduction

IDEA: Adapt this illustration to whatever sport or activity you personally enjoy. You could also use it as a skit.

I LOVE FOOTBALL! I love the raw power of the awesome linemen, the lightning speed of the receivers, the quick-thinking of the quarterbacks and the strategy of the coaches. No wonder thousands of fans follow their teams, memorize their statistics and go absolutely nuts when their team wins.

But although football's fun to play and watch, I wouldn't dare wrap my entire life around it or any other sport. Why not? Because it won't last.

Think of it this way. The year is 3000 A.D., over 1000 years from now, and you're walking down a golden sidewalk in heaven. You notice that everyone keeps shaking the hand of a man who's walking toward you and you overhear people whispering, "It's 'The Apostle.'" You fumble for words as you stick out your hand and say, "You're the Apostle Paul aren't you, the guy who risked his life to turn the first century world upside down and wrote most of the books of the New Testament."

Paul responds, "Sure, but we all have a story to tell. What did you do with your time on earth?"

You respond, "I didn't have much time for ministry because I played football! In fact, I was the best player in high school, the top draft pick out of college and the best professional player that ever lived. You should have seen me throw that football!"

Paul responds, "What was football?"

You explain, "Football was this cool sport where your team tries to get a ball past the opposing team's goal line."

Paul responds incredulously, "Let me get this straight. You were a Christian who knew about these golden streets in paradise, and you spent all your days consumed with getting a ball across a line? Why didn't you use your fame as a way to direct people toward heaven?"

You say, "You don't understand. Thousands of fans saw me as their hero. They watched my games on TV and read about me in all the magazines. And..."

Paul cuts him off, "I know, I know. But that reward lasted only for your short earthly life? What did you do that paid off in eternity?"

IDEA: Perhaps put a time line on an overhead or poster board or Power Point. Show a long line with an arrow that indicates it keeps going forever. Explain that the line goes out of the room, across town and infinitely into the universe. Then put a small dot on the front end of it to represent the mere 70 years here on earth.

So, from eternity's view, football is getting a ball across a line. That makes cheerleading getting people excited about those who get footballs across lines. That makes fans those who spend their time memorizing statistics about those who get balls across lines!

Now don't get me wrong! Remember, I love football. I like to play it and love to watch it. All I'm saying is don't wrap your entire life around it. If you're good at it, use it as a platform to impact people for eternity.

You see, all of us who know Jesus will live forever and this life is merely a tiny mark on the line of eternity. Doesn't it make sense to get fired up about rewards that last far beyond our short 70 years here on earth?

PRAYER (I usually ask students to bow their heads and pray silently for themselves that God will teach them, and pray for me that God will speak through me.)

Once I realized the excitement of making an eternal impact on people's lives, I could never again get excited about things that would one day rot, rust, or disappear. I wanted to make a mark that would still be visible 1000 years from now. As Jesus put it,

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19,20)

POP QUIZ ON "ETERNITY": *What are some things people live for that will not last past this lifetime? What are some things we can do that will last for eternity? (Matthew 6:1-17 – acts of kindness and prayers and sacrifices done for God's glory. I Corinthians 13:8 – love. Reaching people for Christ.)*

Break down the barriers

I believe that inside all of us resides a longing to do more than float down stream with the crowd. We want to do more than make a living. We want to make a difference. We want to make a mark on the world that will never be erased. So today we're starting a series to help each of us discover how to leave our mark on this world. In this first session we will try to break down some of the barriers that hold us back from making our mark.

- **Flush Your Stereotypes**

DISCUSSION: *What is a "stereotype?" What are the stereotypes of Christians who try to impact others? If your idea of the type person who makes a mark looks like these stereotypes, no wonder you're turned off!*

"EVANGELIST EVAN" This guy preaches the Bible in public situations, always wearing a coat and tie, usually oblivious to what people think of him, speaking with weird inflections in his voice. (Could someone in the group do a TV evangelist imitation?)

Ask, “Why is “Evan” a stereotype?” (Because God never said we had to wear formal clothes or speak in unfamiliar tones of voice to impact others.)

“FANATICAL FRED” Always obnoxious, Fred makes people want to NOT be Christians by his intolerant attitude about anything but his own way of doing things. Can always be identified by the huge, black, King James Bible under his arm.

Ask, “Why is “Fred” a stereotype?” (Because the bible never says we are to be obnoxious, intolerant about everything and showing off a huge bible.)

“TALENTED TAMMY” This girl is Miss Everything. She’s pretty, popular, sings, makes great grades, and leads out in the youth group.

Why is Tammy a stereotype of a person God can use? (Because some think they would have to be popular and talented to be used of God.)

ILLUSTRATION: *I’ll never forget a man who lived in the country named Albert McMakin. He wasn’t a preacher. In fact, he’d only been a Christian a few months. But he had an old vegetable truck and decided to use it for God. You see, there was a young kid named Billy that he wanted to spiritually impact, but Billy thought all religion was, in his own words, “hogwash.” Instead he was consumed with girls and with racing his father’s car down the country roads, sometimes turning curves on two wheels!*

*But Albert lured the young man into going to a Christian event by telling him that he could drive the vegetable truck. I’m so glad that Albert used what he had for God, because God touched that teen’s life at that meeting. You may know him. He became a man who made an incredible mark on the last century and this century for God – Billy Graham. But Billy may have never made his mark had a new Christian named Albert not made his mark. You see, it’s not so much our popularity or ability that God’s looking for. It’s our **availability**.*

- **See through the lies.**

Lie #1: *It’s only for the church staff.*

How would you answer this? Sure, they have lots of training and some great gifts. (Check out Acts 8:1-4. Who was spreading the Word?) But most impact is made by normal people. Why do they have so much impact?

ILLUSTRATION: *In a survey, people were asked why they started coming to church. On your student sheet, guess the percentage that came primarily because of each factor. (Give them time before you tell.)*

| Why They Came to Church | Percentage That Came for that Reason |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Advertisements | 2% |
| Pastor Contacted | 6% |
| Organized Visitation | 6% |
| Friends or Relatives Invited | 86% |

Lie #2: *It's only for the outgoing.*

How would you answer this? It takes us all. Some will do more talking. Others will do more serving. Others will be more strategists and motivators. But it takes us all. (I Corinthians 12:1ff.)

Lie #3: *It's too scary.*

In one sense is true. I'd be lying to tell you that is as natural as talking about football. If you want to make a mark for God, you'll have to fight spiritual battle against forces that will try anything to stop you. (See Ephesians 6: 10ff).

ILLUSTRATION: *A prison chaplain had been around long enough to know the ways of his spiritual enemies. So one day in his office, when he was talking privately to a convict about his personal salvation, he wanted to make sure Satan couldn't interrupt. So he unplugged the phone. But as he shared the gospel and the convict was listening, the phone rang. It was just enough of a distraction for the convict to say he just wasn't ready.*

Lie #4: *Nobody's interested.* According to one of the latest large scale surveys of teens in America, the overwhelming majority believe in God and two out of three say they strongly desire to have a relationship with Him. (Barna Research Group, Ltd., "Teenagers Embrace Religion...", January 10, 2000, www.barna.org. Did you get that? The great majority of your classmates are saying that they strongly desire to have a relationship with God! But someone needs to have the guts to open up the conversation.

ILLUSTRATION: *One of the greatest running backs in the history of football was interviewed in a magazine and asked about his fears. You'd think that he had no fears. After all most defenders feared him! But when the journalist asked him, "What are your fears?" He responded, "Dying and going to hell. That is one of my greatest fears. I think I live a good life though, so hopefully that fear will never come true."*

ILLUSTRATION: *One high school student was known for being wild and outgoing. But one night on a school trip someone began to talk to him about God. He responded, "You know, sometimes I just stay up at night wondering where I will go for eternity."*

Students do think about these issues, both the popular and unpopular ones. We hold the answer to people's deepest needs:

- How to live a full life (Ps. 84:11 versus Pro. 10:24)
- How to have a great eternity (Rev. 21:3-7 versus Rev. 21:8)

Lie #5: *Everybody's happy without Christ. Why bother them?*

Proverbs 10:24 versus Ps. 84:11. What are some of the big problems you personally know that students are facing (Let them tell specifically of some of their classmates who are facing death from illness, suicide, drug problems, serious problems with the law. The more descriptive they get of individuals, the more compassion they will feel.) Then there are the private things that so many hide behind their smiles, like abuse in their families, depression, anorexia, etc.

ILLUSTRATION: *A school was shocked when a popular football player committed suicide. So a writer for a newspaper interviewed his best friend and asked, "You were his best friend. Did you know about his problems? He responded, "No, I suppose we were just too macho to talk about things like that."*

TRANSITION: So once we get past the roadblocks and uncover the lies that hold us back, what's the next step to making our mark?

Give Up Your Small Ambitions

So you want to make an impact. What's the first step?

- **By making sure you know God personally.**

To make a mark, a really big mark in this world, you'll have to overcome obstacles that seem insurmountable and dream dreams that seem unachievable. To be successful, you'll need to rely on a God who's unstoppable. As Jesus said to His disciples in John 15:5:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Apart from Jesus we can do how much? (Nothing.) So you must make sure that Jesus is in your life and that you are trusting fully in His power. Have you have accepted Christ as your personal Savior? (If you think that there are those in your group who have not accepted Jesus, consider taking a moment to go through the gospel and give them a chance to receive Jesus.)

- **By losing interest in temporal things.** (Mt. 6:19,20)

Jim Elliot lived on the edge for God by trying to reach a violent tribe of people for Jesus. When he first came to meet them, they killed him. But God used his story to inspire untold numbers of Christians to go into missions. How did he make such an impact? I think it was the passion that drove him, expressed in his own words:

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

- **By adopting a personal mission**

Why did the first century Christians turn their world upside down? Surely a large part of the reason was their passion to achieve their mission. Look up Colossians 1:28,29 to find the apostle Paul's mission.

"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:28,29)

What strikes you about this mission? Was he content to impact merely one or two people? (No. He was aiming to reach everyone.) What kind of effort did he put into his mission? (He labored at it with all his energy.)

ILLUSTRATION: *One man had the job of conducting job interviews for a large company. His method was intriguing. An applicant would walk in the door and the interviewer would ask him to be seated. Then he would get the applicant really loose by serving drinks, laughing and cutting up. But then, suddenly, he would lean toward the applicant and ask, "What's your purpose in life?" He did this because he found that people who knew where they were going in life were better workers for their company.*

So one day he was interviewing a fellow, had him all relaxed and broke in suddenly with his question: "What's your purpose in life?" Without hesitating, the man shot back, "To go to heaven and take as many people with me as I can!" (Heard from Josh McDowell)

This man knew precisely what he was about in this life. How do you think that affected his choices and his values? (Let them answer.) Have you ever written a mission statement for your life?

ACTIVITY: *Look at almost any successful business and you'll find a mission statement that tells what they want to accomplish. Let's do this for our personal lives. On your student sheet, make your first attempt at writing a personal mission statement. To start your thinking, ask yourself questions like, "Why am I here on earth? What do I want to accomplish that will be remembered in heaven?" Then, try to put it all in one sentence.*

Conclusion

ILLUSTRATION: I heard about a doctor who died and went through an out of body experience before being revived. He said that he found Himself before God, who asked him what he had done with his life. He began to talk some about the nice things he had done and God said, "*But what have you done for Me?*" As you can imagine, when he came back to life, he reset his priorities.

Does your life make sense in the light of eternity? If you were to come before God and He were to ask you, what have you done for Me, would you have anything to say?

PRAYER: Time for personal reflection and prayer and commitment.

PREVIEW: In the next session we will begin to look at a practical strategy for making your mark on this world.

PREPARATION: Read over the next lesson and try to come up with an "Act of Kindness" that you could challenge your group to rally behind.

Impact Key #2 – Join a Conspiracy of Kindness (Session II)

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO BE MOTIVATED TOWARD KINDNESS AND TO HAVE THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO IMPACT THEIR WORLD THROUGH KINDNESS.

Introduction

Someone has said that there are three kinds of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened!

Sadly, most students find themselves in the last two categories. Their loftiest goal is to get through each school day without screwing up and embarrassing themselves. Desperately wanting to fit in, they follow instead of lead. Instead of standing for something, they fall for anything.

But some of you would love to break out of that mold. You'd like to know,

- *“How can I become the type person who not only makes a living, but makes a difference?”*
- *“How can I move from watching things happen to making things happen?”*
- *“How can I move beyond fitting into the crowd into impacting the crowd?”*

If you want the answer to those questions, this series is just for you. We're calling it *“Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase.”* It's for those of you who want to leave a mark on the earth that will be around long after you are gone.

DISCUSSION/REVIEW: Last week we talked about the first key to making your mark - breaking down the barriers that hold us back from a life of impact. We said that we must flush some stereotypes of Christian ministry. (They can look back at the notes from the last session.) Do you remember what some of them were? Do you remember any of the lies we must see through? What small ambitions must we give up?

Let's **PRAY** as we begin Session II.

Today's secret for making mark is so simple that anyone can understand it. And it's so easy that anyone can do it. But many of us can't make a difference in other's lives because we've totally missed it. To introduce the principle, I'll first introduce you to a pastor who figured it out.

ILLUSTRATION: *Steve Sjogren (pronounced “show’grin”) was one frustrated pastor. He worked hard at his ministry, speaking to people day after day about God’s love and his vision for starting a church. But people just didn’t seem interested. Ninety seven percent of the 1000 plus people that he talked to rejected him. That’s over 970 rejections! After two full years of rejection after rejection, he had a small group of 37 people in his church to show for all his efforts. But then something happened, something so amazing that after seven years, over 2000 people were attending his church! And beyond that, they launched 12 other churches in the area. And it didn’t stop there. After 10 more years, 4,500 people were regularly attending. What turned things around?*

Instead of trying to pull people into the church, pastor Steve and his tiny group of believers began looking for ways to show love to people. They did it by finding needs in the community and figuring out creative ways to meet those needs. They washed the windows of passing cars, cleaned toilets at businesses, gave away hot drinks on cold days, cold drinks on hot days, wrapped people’s gifts at malls during the Christmas season, and served in many other ways. And everything was free with no strings attached. When people asked why they were doing it, they’d reply, “We just want to show you God’s love in a practical way” and leave them with a business card with the name and address of the church on it.

People couldn't believe it. Some would begin to weep. Some would begin to ask questions and open up their hearts. Some would ask for prayer. You see, people expected Christians to preach at them or ask them for money. Instead, these Christians caught them off guard with love, confusing them with kindness. For most people, there was no immediate response. But over time people began to talk about the church that showed God's love by serving.

Pastor Steve and his flock don't serve people just to get them into their church. They serve because their Master served. But as a result, in one year alone, 5,000 people visited their church, 60% of whom were unchurched. I think the saying etched over the entrance to their church explains their "secret" well:

"Small things done with great love will change the world."

(Source: Conspiracy of Kindness, by Steve Sjogren, Vine Books, 1993. Their website: <http://www.cincyvineyard.com/>)

DISCUSSION: *So what was it that changed pastor Sjogren's church from a discouraging flop to a high impact ministry? (They began to show love to the community through acts of kindness.) Why do you think that it's so important to find creative ways to show love to people? (It breaks down people's barriers and makes them feel comfortable enough to open their lives to us.) How do most unchurched people view Christianity? If they get their idea of churches and preachers and Christians from the media, what is their idea of each? (We are a bunch of party poopers who are very strict, intolerant of people who don't believe like us, like weird forms of music, follow pastors who are just out for the money, hypocrites. We build fancy buildings as monuments to our egos when we should be spending the money helping the needy.)*

So, when we want to influence someone for Christ, we're starting out with some major roadblocks. Some have weird ideas of Christianity from the media. Others grew up in a family where the father was publically a leader in the church, but privately he abused the family. *If I try to invite these people to church or encourage them to become Christians, what do they think? (Since they have a bad view of Christians and the church, they don't want anything to do with us.) So how did pastor Sjogren's approach "confuse them with kindness?" (People saw Christians doing acts of love for no ulterior motive. They weren't raising money for their church. They weren't preaching at people. They were simply loving people.)*

Let's dig into a few Scriptures to see why loving acts of kindness are so important. First of all, someone read the second half of what Jesus called The Great Commandment in Matthew 22:39:

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

Why do you think Jesus called it "The Great Commandment?" (It is of supreme importance. If you miss everything else, don't miss this.)

Francis Schaeffer called love "The Mark of the Christian." Why? I think the following Scriptures give us the answer. Let's let one person read them and have some others try to put them in our own words.

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:46,47)

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.” (I John 4:7,8)

Jesus, in praying to God concerning His followers, said, *“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (John 17:23b)*

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”(John 13:35)

But what do these verses about love and unity have to do with making our mark on the world? For pastor Sjogren, Romans 2:4 gives an answer:

“...God’s kindness leads you towards repentance”.

You see, without understanding the kindness of God, people may never believe. And how will they see the kindness of God unless it is through His followers?

So are you struggling to make a mark on the world for God? If so, ask yourself these questions and answer either “yes” or “no” on the blanks in your student sheet:

- *When people think about me as a person, is my outstanding characteristic how much I love people? _____* If not, don’t be surprised if you’re missing your mark.
- *When people think about our youth ministry, are people amazed at how much we love each other and how much kindness we show to others? _____* If not, don’t be surprised if our youth group is neither growing nor impacting others.
- *When people think about our church, even if they don’t buy into all the spiritual stuff, do they have to admit that we have a remarkable love for one another and an incredible compassion for people outside the church? _____* If not, don’t be surprised if our church isn’t making much of an impact.

So, enough of the guilt trip! Let’s unleash kindness on our world. Here are three ways to do it.

I. Build Relationships through Friendliness.

IDEA: Consider using the optional “Friendliness: 101” activity at the end of this session.

One long-term youth minister says that the longer he’s in youth ministry, the more he sees that Christianity flows through relationships. If this is true, then until we can establish friendships, we’ll never make much of a mark on people’s lives. And friendliness is the door that leads us into relationships. The more you master the art of friendliness, the

more your potential for impact.

“My impact starts with being friendly to everyone I meet. Several started calling me on the phone and I listened a lot and treated them kindly. Then I do things like invite them to Christian concerts. In the 9th grade, students can’t get out much. So they’re not very hard to please. One girl

told me, 'People in one church were mean to me and called me a Satanist. I thought all Christians were mean. But now that I've met you, I'm all confused.' Now she writes messages about Jesus on her backpack! (Andrew, ninth grade)

IDEA: You could easily develop a humorous skit showing the habits of unfriendly people: putting down people, refusing to talk to certain ones, oblivious to the needs of those around them, consumed with self, etc. Following the skit, ask youth to list these habits.

BRAINSTORM: How many of you have ever gone to a meeting where you didn't know anyone? How did you feel? Let's list on our overhead/blackboard ideas for making our youth group a more friendly place. Now let's work on our individual friendliness both out in the world and in youth group. Let's list as many characteristics of friendly people as we can. As people share ideas, write the ones you need to work on under "Action Points." (After they share, you may want to add ideas from the following list.)

Seven Habits of Highly Friendly People

Habit #1 – They listen more than they talk. Rather than constantly talking about themselves, they try to get other people talking about their interests.

ILLUSTRATION: Dale Carnegie wrote a tremendous book on relationships entitled, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Carnegie did massive research into the relational traits of successful people. One trait he found so important that he called it "The Big Key." Do you want to know his big key to making friends? Here it is:

"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you"

Habit #2 – They find things in common rather than emphasize differences.

Habit #3 – They encourage rather than condemn.

Habit #4 – They accept rather than judge. They refuse to judge a person based on lifestyle, race or social status. In fact, Jesus' seemed to especially go for those at the bottom of the social ladder. He talked to those that others despised, like the prostitutes and lepers and tax gatherers, encouraging us to follow His example by helping "the least of these." When the Pharisees complained about Jesus eating with the unpopular folk, the tax collectors and sinners, He responded, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." (Matthew 9:12) Are there people you refuse to be nice to?

Habit #5 – They care. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. So when a person shares about a problem, friendly people remember the problem, pray about it, and ask the person about it the next day. They might call the person on the phone or send a note of encouragement.

Habit #6 – They are more concerned with helping others than clawing their way up the social ladder.

Habit #7 – They are more positive than negative. Do you know people who seem to have “happy power” – the ability to make people smile and long for their companionship? These are generally people who see the positive side of things.

In sum, I’ve noticed that people with the gift of evangelism tend to be friendly. One college student said of a couple of Christians, “What is it about you guys? You’re contagious!” Work on your friendliness skills and you’ll become contagious as well. Watch your impact begin to multiply as others feed off of your enthusiasm for life and for people.

After you’ve developed friendships through practicing friendliness, you can move on to impact your friends by one of the most powerful forces in relationships.

II. Discover the Power of Encouragement

IDEA: Encouragement is such a powerful key to making a mark that you may wish to take an entire lesson to deal with it. A full lesson can be found in lesson four of the Friendships series in the Legacy Curriculum, at www.reach-out.org.

ILLUSTRATION: *Mel Gibson is one of the most successful actors/directors in Hollywood. You know him from such movies as Brave Heart, Lethal Weapon, The Patriot, and even a voice in Chicken Run. But he would have never gotten into acting had it not been for the encouragement of his big sister. You see, his dad won \$21,000 dollars playing Jeopardy and moved his family to Australia to keep his children from being drafted into the Vietnam war. As a teen Mel hated school and hated being teased for his accent. He turned into a loser who kept getting in trouble and skipped school for the pool hall. After high school, he did odd jobs like waxing surfboards and bagging groceries.*

His life was headed nowhere.

But Mel’s sister cared too much for him to let him waste his life. Although he’d never considered acting, she encouraged him to audition at the prestigious National Institute of Dramatic Arts in Sydney. And her encouragement went past mere words. She paid his audition fee and helped him prepare for the audition. He got his first part as “Romeo” and the rest is history. But catch the impact of this: If it hadn’t have been for the encouragement of his sister, Mel Gibson could have been still waxing surfboards and bagging groceries. She changed the entire course of her brother’s life by forgetting her personal interests long enough to encourage her brother.

What would our youth groups be like if we caught the vision of becoming people blossoms – instead of walking into the group each week thinking “I hope everyone thinks I’m cool,” you come thinking “I wonder who I can encourage today?” That one change could revolutionize your youth group and change the course of many lives.

In the light of that, who will read for us Hebrews 10:24,25:

“And let us consider how to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

So we see the power of encouragement and God’s challenge to encourage one another. Now lets do it.

ACTIVITY: Arrange your chairs in a circle and I'll call the name of a student to bring his or her chair to the middle. (Make sure it's someone who would not be embarrassed and is well known by others in the group.) Now, others of you share out loud something that you like about this person. (Go for a few minutes and then choose another person.) Should we do something like this regularly to keep us focused on encouraging one other?

BRAINSTORM: Come up with as many ways to encourage people as you can. Who will write these on our overhead (blackboard)? Make sure to write any ideas that you need to put into action under your ACTION POINTS section. (If they miss some of the following ones, add them to your list: Write a note of encouragement to each of your church leaders, have one person each week to be honored at your youth group for their character or deeds each week, have a "circle of encouragement" each week in youth group for a month, tell a friend why I appreciate him or her, compliment my parents each day on something they are doing right, compliment my brothers or sisters,

III. Practice Acts of Kindness

LEADERS: Think through what you can do to ensure that your group stays involved with acts of kindness. Ideas: one church has two adult volunteers who seek out needs in the community and rally the youth to meet these needs on a regular basis. You may have a ministry team of youth who see this as their main ministry.

Acts of Kindness are great because that they are:

- **High Impact.** Kindness makes a major mark on people's lives. Illustration: *A 10th grader went to a classmate's house to help him move. Twenty seven years later, at a class reunion, that classmate, now a medical doctor, sought him out his old friend and said, "I wanted to tell you that I always remembered your helping me move that day."* What will your friends remember of you 27 years from now?
- **Low Risk.** People won't get mad at you.
- **Require Minimal Skills.** Anyone can do acts of kindness.

BRAINSTORM: Do you remember the activities that pastor Sjogren came up with to impact his community, like washing windows, wrapping Christmas gifts and cleaning bathrooms? What are some acts of kindness that you could do as an individual or that we could do as a group that you think would impact our community?

(Use some of these ideas, if they fail to come up with them: older students tutoring struggling younger students, delivering food to shut-ins, shoveling snow from driveways and sidewalks, visiting orphanages or nursing homes, helping someone with his garden, making bird feeders or bird houses for convalescent homes, shining shoes, washing windows on homes or businesses, greeting people who come to youth group, inviting a person who has no friends to eat with your group for lunch.)

Conclusion and Action Points

After you graduate from high school, will you look back and realize that all you accomplished was to fit in really well and not screw up? Or will you be able to say that you impacted people in such a way that their lives on earth and in eternity will never be the same? I'm giving you a

moment to pray to God to help you decide which things in your action points that He wants you to do.

I need to be more friendly by:

I need to encourage these people by (write a note, call them on the phone, etc.):

I or my youth group should do one of these acts of kindness:

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: “*Friendliness 101.*” Many youth lack friendliness skills. In order to give them some training, let them practice these skills by dividing up two by two. Give them the following questions on a handout and let them practice starting conversations with these questions. One should play the part of a first time visitor to the youth group and the other is the greeter. Then switch.

Is this your first time to visit?

What school do you go to? What grade are you in?

I really like this group because (come up with something positive)...

Are you involved with any sports or activities? (Find something in common if possible.)

Is it okay if I introduce you to some people and let you know where to go for small group? (Take them to small group and introduce them to friends.)

If you don't see any friends here, would you like to sit with us?

Would you like to come to the (name an upcoming event, like paintball war or retreat) with us?

Impact Key #3: Unleash the Power of Prayer (Session III)

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO BE MOTIVATED TO PRAY AND TO BE EQUIPPED WITH PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR PRAYER.

LEADERS: According to J. Edwin Orr, a noted authority on spiritual awakenings, “*Young people in student-led prayer bands have been at the forefront in almost every awakening.*” Let that sink in for a moment. This session could launch prayer bands that will spark a spiritual awakening! So prepare with special diligence and expect opposition from the enemy. Make the lesson your own by reflecting on principles that have helped your prayer life. Think of the hindrances that keep your students from praying and how you could best counter them. And beyond all else, prepare with prayer!

Introduction

George Mueller's diary contains so many instances of answered prayer that, were it possible, a person could be bored by the miraculous. His life of impact started when his heart went out to England's orphans in the mid 1800's. Seven-year-olds worked 12 hours a day in factories. Escapees lived on the streets as thieves. Mueller launched out by faith to do a ministry that could only succeed through the power of God. Although he was poor, he determined to build and operate an orphanage by faith and prayer alone, asking no person for financial assistance, telling no person of his financial needs, and never buying on credit.

All by faith, Mueller eventually operated 5 orphan houses caring for 2000 orphans. During his lifetime he cared for over 10,000 orphans and saw over \$8,000,000.00 come in to support them. When money ran out or emergencies arose, the money always came, so that their needs were always supplied. For example, in the two years from August 1838 to August 1840 "there were fifty occasions on which they were either penniless, or had insufficient means to pay their way for the day. But the money always came." (See The Diary of George Mueller, Great Man of Prayer, compiled by A.J. Rendle Short.)

Let me give you just one dramatic incident. One morning Mueller had neither bread nor money to buy bread for the orphans. Rather than despair, he sat the orphans at the table and instructed them to bless their food. "What food?" the orphans must have thought. But they went ahead with the prayer. Just then, a knock came at the door. A bread truck had broken down nearby and the driver wished to donate the bread to the orphanage.

To make such a huge mark on the world, Mueller had to do more than acts of kindness. To accomplish something beyond the humanly possible, he had to unleash the power of prayer. Do you want to make a mark on this world that will never be erased? First "Catch a Vision." Second, "Join a Conspiracy of Kindness." And **Impact Key #3** is "**Unleash the Power of Prayer.**"

PRAY

DISCUSSION: Why is prayer so necessary to make an impact on the world? (It unleashes the power of God on your ministry. Also, it is necessary to open up people's eyes to the truth.)

I. What's So Great About Prayer?

A. It taps into God's power.

There are hundreds of verses in the Bible on prayer. I need some volunteers to read just a few of them. As they read, try to grasp what God is trying to tell us about prayer.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3)

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..." (Ephesians 3:20)

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him." (I Jn. 5:14,15)

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” (John 15:7)

“And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the father.”
(John 14:13,14)

“...apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

What are some of the main things you learn about prayer from these verses? (Examples: God wants us to ask. Prayer is important. God answers prayer.)

ILLUSTRATION: I heard the story of a fellow named Fred who died and went to heaven. As St. Peter was showing him around, he inquired about a huge storage building where angels were busy bringing out boxes and flying off with them. Peter took him inside the building and explained, “This is the central storage facility for answered prayers. People pray for these items and when God decides the time is right, He sends an angel to deliver them.” Fred was fascinated at the size of the structure and the vast number of boxes, great and small. Suddenly he asked Peter, “What about all those huge boxes in the back? Why aren’t the angels delivering any of them?” Peter responded, “Oh, nobody ever asks for those.”

God has promised us the unlimited resources of heaven to use in making our mark. But most people pray such small prayers! It’s like we’re using deep-sea gear to pull the drain out of the bathtub!

As Jack Murray has said, *“You should have plans for your spiritual life that couldn’t possibly be fulfilled without a supernatural act of God.”*

If you really believe that God has unlimited resources...

If you really believe that He answers the prayers that are in His will...

What are some BIG THINGS that you want to pray for regarding your impact on the world?

B. It opens the eyes of the lost.

OBJECT LESSON: Take a volunteer from the youth group and ask her to close her eyes and put her fingers in her ears so that she is both blind and deaf. Now, bring up your most persuasive talker to try to talk her into accepting Christ as her savior.

DEBRIEFING: Why couldn’t she understand the gospel? What if he got discouraged and decided that what he most needed was to go home and practice his presentation? Would it help in this case? What if he got three friends to go talk to her as well? What if we took her to the best evangelistic meeting that was ever created? Would it help?

Has it ever occurred to you that this is exactly what we are dealing with when our enemy has people blinded? Someone read to us II Corinthians 4:4:

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

DISCUSSION: Who do you think “*the god of this age*” is? (A god with a little “g.” Satan.) So how can we take the blinders off and unstop her ears? (Without intense prayer cover, don’t be surprised if your efforts to reach friends are fruitless.)

ILLUSTRATION: *George Mueller not only prayed for the physical needs of the orphans. He also prayed for the souls of lost people. Mueller said that he felt that the Lord had given him more than 30,000 souls in answer to his prayers. Some he prayed for every day for 50 years! (The Prayer Life, by Andrew Murray, pp. 123, 124) I heard that all but two of those he prayed for were saved before his death, and those last two were saved at his funeral!*

II. Get Personal!

Prayer is not something that we do to show off our spirituality before people. Lots of it is done in secret. Someone read what Jesus said about personal prayer in Matthew 6:6:

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

DISCUSSION: Let’s face it, sometimes private prayer can be boring. Imagine that you’re talking to a new Christian who’s having trouble developing his prayer life. What are some hints you would give him? (Here are some things you can mention if they don’t come up with them):

- **Start small.** One student started out with a goal of praying for two minutes per night. After he had finished praying for his family and the missionaries, he looked at his watch and didn’t know what to do with the last 30 seconds! But over the years he grew to where he could pray for hours.
- **Be practical.** One student prayed kneeling beside his bed and laying his forehead on the bed. Guess what happened? He kept falling asleep. He solved that problem by walking around the bedroom as he prayed. He never fell asleep while he was walking! But his mind would wander as he walked. So he decided to pray out loud and had no more problems with his mind wandering.
- **Use variety.** Sometimes use a prayer list. Sometimes don’t. Write a prayer to God. Go outside to pray as you walk in the neighborhood or in the woods. Pray some of the prayers in the Bible. Pray through a Psalm by reading a verse and praying back to God whatever it brings to mind. Try “yearbook praying” where you pray through your school’s annual. Learn to talk to God as a way of life, wherever you are just like breathing.
- **Pray for motivation to pray.** We know that this is God’s will and He will answer it!
- **Use different types of prayer.** Many use the acrostic ACTS:

Adoration – *“I love you God.”* Praising Him for His character.

Confession – *“I’m sorry God.”* Telling Him you’ve blown it and asking forgiveness.

Thanksgiving – *“Thank You God.”* Thanking God for all He’s done.

Supplication – *“Help my friend.”* Asking God to help you and others.

I’d add another type: Just talking. Often in Psalms we find a person simply pouring out his heart to God about what his bad times and good times. Sure God already knows all that. But He loves our fellowship.

ACTIVITY: [Lead your group in some type of **creative prayer**. Here's one way: Say that not every one has to pray out loud, but you'd urge them to try even if they've never done it before. Start by asking them to confess their sins silently to God. Then, go down part of the alphabet, letting students come up with words that describe God to them that start with each letter ("A" = abba, always there; "B" = best, bright). Next have each person think of something they're thankful for and then mention it out loud to God.]

III. Get Specific!

It's boring to pray in generalities, like "God bless the missionaries." How will you ever know if God answers? Do you expect to pick up a newspaper one day and see a headline that reads "*Missionaries Blessed!*"?

Mueller knew that 30,000 people had come to know the Lord because he prayed for them specifically, some for 50 years!

ACTIVITY: The FBI targets dangerous criminals by making up a "**Ten Most Wanted List.**" They know that people can't remember the faces of 10,000 criminals, so they narrow it down to concentrate on a few. On your student sheet, write down your own "Ten Most Wanted List" of people you want to pray for regularly to get saved. Start with those who you already have some relationship with, like lost members of your family, lost neighbors or lost friends. Then you may want to think of casual acquaintances that God may lay on your heart.

IV. Get Together!

Someone read for us Mt. 18:19,20:

"Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

So what's the big deal about two or three getting together? Why is there special power in group prayer? I'm not sure. But neither do I understand how a brown cow can eat green grass and produce white milk. But it does. And I drink the milk! It's enough for us to know that something special happens when we pray in groups.

There are many ways students pray in groups. Millions of students participate in "See You at the Pole" each September at their school. Some gather before Christian meetings to seek God's blessing on the meeting. Others students meet each week at a designated home to pray and worship.

Another way that many students harness the power of agreeing together in prayer is "**Prayer Triplets.**" Have any of you been involved with prayer triplets? Here's how it works:

Three friends...
Meeting three times a week to pray...
For three friends who need Christ.

- **Three friends.** They will encourage you and hold you accountable. What a gift that is!

- **Meet three times a week to pray.** Arrange your schedule to pray whenever you like - before school, after school, free time, over lunch, at night, on the weekend, on the phone. You get the idea. Work it out together. Just make sure you get 10-15 minutes together when you meet.
- **For 3 friends who need Christ.** Who are 3 friends that you want to come to Christ? Pray for those 3 friends every time you meet to pray. Ask God how He wants to use you to reach them.

When the 3 of you meet together to pray, you are asking God to change the lives of 9 of your friends. If that happens you will have the beginning of a spiritual revolution on your campus. Imagine what could happen if all the other Christians on your campus begin to pray like this. It would change your school in ways you never imagined! (Prayer triplets information taken from Barry St. Clair, on Reach Outs site at www.reach-out.org. Used by permission.)

It can all begin with you!
Will you and your friends take the challenge?

ACTIVITY: As I read a story of a guy who took on the prayer triplet challenge, write down three names from your “Ten Most Wanted List” that you would like to especially pray for. Then write down a couple of names of friends who might be willing to form a triplet with you.

FROM THE FRONT LINES: *As a junior in high school, Scott started a prayer triplet with his friends. They met in a classroom and in the bleachers of their football field. Over the Spring semester, here’s what happened to the three guys he was praying for. His friend Teague showed up at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting for his first time that year. He accepted Christ at the meeting. Chris struggled with his divorced parents and his sister’s problems. One night, frustrated with his life, he cried out to God and gave his life to Jesus. Robert came up and asked, “Scott, did Jesus die for me?” Robert then asked if Scott prayed for him and he answered, “Yes, every day.” With misty eyes, Robert asked him to keep up the prayers. (From Taking Your Campus for Christ, by Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor, Victor Books, p. 84)*

ACTIVITY: Get in groups of three to pray for each other and the nine friends (3 X 3) that each of you listed.

IV. Expect Opposition

If you decide to take on the challenge we left you with today, don’t be surprised if things don’t work out like you planned. Remember, this is a spiritual battle and there are forces that desperately don’t want to see you establish consistent prayer for your friends. As Samuel Chadwick once wrote:

“The one desire of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom; but trembles when we pray.”

Conclusion and Action Points

ILLUSTRATION: In the movie *“Mission Impossible II,”* Ethan Hunt (played by Tom Cruise) talks to a superior (played by Anthony Hopkins) about the extreme difficulty of his mission. Hopkins comments: *“It’s not Mission: Difficult Mr. Hunt. It’s Mission: Impossible.”*

I’m challenging each of you to start praying God-sized prayers. I challenge you to dream of a life impact that’s so difficult it could be called *Mission: Impossible*. But remember, with God, all things are possible (Luke 1:37).

I’m giving you a few moments of silence to come before God, look over this lesson and come up with a few actions that you feel God wants you to take in order to make prayer a priority in your life.

PRAYER

Impact Key #4 - Share Your Story (Session IV)

LEADER: This session and the next move past *teaching* into *training*. Students will actually practice sharing their testimonies and the gospel. Just remember that if non-Christians are at the meeting, they won’t have a Christian testimony to share. In that case, either save the practice parts for a more appropriate discipleship or training setting, or during the practice times gracefully say, “If you aren’t comfortable with this or feel that you aren’t far enough in your spiritual journey to have much to share, go in with another group of two people and just listen in. Or, you could come up with me and I’ll share my spiritual journey with you.”

ADVANCE PREPARATION: 1) During the week, ask a student to prepare to share his or her personal testimony with the entire group during this session. Find someone who would be fairly confident. Offer your help in preparation. 2) Everyone will need a pencil or pen and a student sheet or blank paper.

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION: *(Use the clip to make it more effective.) How many of you saw the movie “Crocodile Dundee?” For those of you who didn’t see it, Paul Hogan plays the part of a man who’s mastered life in the outback of Australia. He can get out of almost any tight squeeze with his quick, backwoods thinking. But when he travels to New York City with his American girlfriend, she knows that he’s out of his element. My favorite scene in the movie is where a young thief pulls a small pin knife on them and demands their money. “Do what he says,” she urges Dundee. “Why? Asks Dundee. “Because he has a knife,” she explains. But Dundee casually looks at the would-be thief and replies, “That’s not a knife. This is a knife!” And as he pulls out his knife, which is close to the size of a machete, the poor punk realizes that his weapon looks like a butter knife in comparison and proceeds to tuck tail and run.*

I think this comparison may help us to see what the apostle Paul means when he compares what the world considers life to what he calls *“life indeed.”* (I Tim. 6:17-19).

“...so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.” (I Timothy 6:19b, NASB)

You see, the punk in the movie found that there was a difference between a knife and a “*knife indeed.*” It’s the same way with our quality of life. There is life. Then there is “*life indeed.*” So while some guys think they have a life because they have lots of money and friends, they still go to bed at night feeling empty inside, knowing that something’s missing. And some of them probably look at me, a guy who doesn’t get drunk or hang out with wild women, and say, “*Man, you need to seriously get a life!*” But I know the emptiness they face. I know the end of the road they’re headed down. I know a joy they don’t know. And I desperately want to say to them, “*That’s no life. THIS is life!*”

And once you find life, real life, you desperately want your friends to find it too. Don’t we all want our friends to have a personal relationship with God here on earth and to spend eternity with us in heaven after they die? Of course! But how can we share it with them without coming across like we’re putting them down or trying to lay our religion on them? That’s what this session is all about.

PRAYER

I. Get a life!

What are some of the biggest excuses people give for not wanting to be a Christian? (One will surely be “*I’m turned off by hypocrites!*”) Now I’m gonna shoot straight with you here. If you’re known on campus for cutting down the nerdy crowd and cheating and exploding with your temper, do us all a favor and don’t let anyone know that you claim to be a Christian. Our walk has to match our talk.

Jack Taylor says that “*The greatest threat to Christianity is an unexcited Christian.*” Notice he didn’t say the *imperfect* Christian, because we all mess up. I think the opposite of Taylor’s statement is also true. “*The greatest asset to Christianity is an excited Christian.*” Students who have a real walk with God and are committed to living it out have something that other people want.

ILLUSTRATION: *One college student, after hanging out with some excited Christians asked them, “What is it about you guys? You’re contagious!”*

The stronger and deeper your life with Christ, the more you have to share with others. That’s why the first step to reaching your friends is to grow in Christ. How do you do that? Commit yourself to a strong local church. Hang out regularly with the strongest Christians you know. Talk to God about everything. Spend time in His Word each day. The stronger your walk, the more powerful your talk.

II. Have a Heart!

It doesn’t take a lot of boldness to do acts of kindness in the community or to set up chairs for the youth meeting. But if you’ve ever tried to talk to a non-Christian about your faith, you know that your heart begins to flutter and your mind manufactures every excuse in the world to forget the whole thing. A big part of the solution is what we dealt with last week – prayer. But in addition to prayer, if you’re ever going to personally lead a person to Christ, your compassion must be great enough to overcome your timidity. Who will read Matthew 9:36-38 to see what motivated Jesus?

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

What feeling motivated Jesus? (Compassion.) How would you define compassion?

Compassion = “Pity for the suffering or distress of another, with the desire to help or spare.”
(Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary)

If you want to impact people the way Jesus impacted them, you’ve got to feel the way Jesus felt about them. He wasn’t fooled by their outward appearance: well-dressed, unkept, nerdy, popular. Instead he looked beneath the outward appearance to see their needs.

So as you go down the halls at your school, don’t look at people and think: jock, nerd, preppy, freak, beautiful, popular, wild, smart. Instead, look deeper and see the emptiness and hurt they experience without Christ.

DISCUSSION: In your mind, look around the lunch room at your school. Look beyond their outward appearance and social status. What are some of the problems they are likely facing? (After they share, mention some of these below.) Of those kids in your lunch room:

- More than one out of three say they are **stressed out** (Barna, 1999)
- Over 1 out of 10 describe themselves as **lonely** (Barna, 1999)
- **Suicide** is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds. (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, November, 1998) In Los Angeles county alone, it is estimated that between 50 and 100 teens attempt suicide every day. One per day succeeds. (Los Angeles Unified School District)
- One in four teens who have sex will get a **sexually transmitted disease**. (Centers for Disease Control)
- One in five teens will eventually have **Herpes**, a sexually transmitted disease for which there is no cure.

You may object, *“But it doesn’t look like people are doing that badly. All those sexually transmitted diseases? So many of those partiers seem to be having the time of their lives!”* But what do you expect? That one day you’ll notice a bunch of bumper stickers in the student parking lot that read, “Honk if you have Herpes!” Or that one day you’ll see a group of popular students eagerly handing out flyers for people to join the Ghonorrhea support group? Most of their suffering is silent.

Sure you have your own struggles. But you have God and Christian friends to turn to. But if you can begin to see people as Jesus saw them and feel as Jesus felt for them, you’ll have the boldness to touch their lives as Jesus touched them.

III. Share Your Story

In the next few minutes I’ll help you develop one of the most powerful tools that you could ever have to impact your friends spiritually. I’m talking about your personal testimony of what Christ has done for you. I’ll give you lots of hints to help you share your testimony. But don’t get the idea that since I’m giving so much input that it must be really complicated.

A testimony is simply you telling the story of something that's exciting to you. Some of you do it on the phone every day when you tell your best friend what happened during the day. That's a testimony. A *Christian* testimony is simply telling someone how Christ has changed our lives.

One neat thing about a personal testimony is that people can't really argue with you about it. After all, it's what happened to you. You just care enough about them to share something that's important to your life.

Another good example of a personal testimony is found in John 9:1-33. I especially like the part where the man says, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" (v. 25) This guy didn't know much, but what he knew he shared. We don't have to know all the answers to share our story.

I need a few people to read out loud Acts 26:9-29 to see how the Apostle Paul shared his personal testimony when he was called to testify before King Agrippa. (Let them read it to the group.) As you can see, Paul simply shared in pretty much detail the story of how He came to know Jesus.

Other Scriptures record people sharing shorter versions of their testimonies in order to impact people in other settings. For example, someone read a two sentence version of Paul's testimony in I Timothy 1:13,14:

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

Let's try to develop our testimonies in these two different ways: a full testimony and bits and pieces that you can use in conversations. Listen carefully, because during this session you'll actually write your personal testimony:

TESTIMONY #1: Bits and Pieces.

Explanation: If you are growing as a Christian, you're finding that God makes your life better in many practical areas. One day you were lonely and He comforted you. Your relationships were on the rocks and some of His teachings pulled you through. You had a bad self-image but God helped you feel important and loved. Those little testimonies of how God has made your life better can be used very naturally when you're talking with your friends.

REPORT FROM THE FRONT LINES: "My senior year in high school, a friend called me one night and told me that his girlfriend had left him. I let him get it all out before I said anything. Then I told him how I used to worry about my relationship with girls. But after my I put my life in God's hands, I knew that He was in control. So if the girl I like doesn't like me, then either God's going to change her heart or He has somebody better for me. Wow! Did that take the worry out of my relationship with girls! Then, I told him about how I came to know God. The next day he told me he accepted Christ. Years later, he went to the mission field." (Steve)

Hint: Don't think you have to bring God into *every* conversation with your unbelieving friends. If you get obnoxious about it, they may start avoiding you. Remember, it often takes time for things to sink in.

Do it!

Let's all pray silently that God will help you put together your personal testimony. (Let them pray.)

Now get into small groups (about five people) and brainstorm practical ways that Christ makes life better. (Examples: forgiveness, joy, love, helps you get along with your parents, purpose in life, ability to change bad habits, peace about eternity, power to stand against the crowd, etc.) Now, under "Testimony #1" on your student sheet, write down specific ways that Christ makes *your* life better. Don't just say, "*Now my life is full of peace.*" Rather, say, "*Now I no longer worry so much about what other people think of me. I can concentrate on being the person God made me to be and trust Him to bring me the friends He wants me to have.*" These may be many of the same things that your group just came up with. Finally, explain to your group in more detail (specific instances in your life) what you wrote down about how Christ makes your life better.

Congratulations! You just shared a personal testimony! It's really that easy!

TESTIMONY #2 - Full Testimony.

Explanation

- A friend is spending the night over at your house. After watching a movie, you're sitting around talking and you say, "Do you know the story of how I got excited about spiritual things?" Then you share your story.
- Your youth minister asks you to share your testimony during a youth meeting. You know you need more than bits and pieces.

Your "full testimony" tells the story of how you came to know Jesus and how He has changed your life.

Do it!

I've asked ____ to share her personal testimony with the group. Give her your full attention. (However she does, give plenty of applause and point out something positive about her presentation afterwards.)

Now we want each of you to prepare *your* personal testimony.

Step 1 - Look back at the benefits of being a Christian that you wrote under "Bits and Pieces." Choose two or three of the ones that are most important to you and write them under "**Point 3 – My Life After I Met Jesus**" of your "Full Testimony" outline. (Give them time.)

Step 2 - Write this sentence at the very end of "**Point 3**": "*But the greatest thing about knowing God personally is that I can know that I have eternal life. Would you like to know how?*" I like to

end with that statement because it naturally leads me into sharing with a person how they can become a Christian.

Step 3 - Under **“Point 1 – My Life Before I Met Jesus”** write some interesting things about how your life was before you met Christ. Did you think Christianity was irrelevant? Did you think Christians were hypocrites? Were you afraid that God would ruin your life if you gave it to Him? Think of things that might relate to the person you’re talking to. Did you struggle with worry or self esteem or other problems that Christ later helped you with? (**HINT:** If you trusted Christ at such a young age that you don’t remember your life before Christ, don’t put anything here. Use this time to keep refining Point 3 and adding detail to it.)

Step 4 – Under **“Point 2 – How I Met Jesus”** write how you became a Christian. Were you at a camp, at home or at church? Tell about what led you to trust Christ for your salvation and how you received Christ. (**HINT:** If you are trusting Christ for your salvation, then you are a Christian (John 3:16). But you may not know the time when you *first* trusted Him and were actually “born again” (John 3:3). If so, simply write under **“Point 2”** something like *“At one point in my life, I believed that Jesus was the Son of God and trusted Him to be my Savior and Lord. I’m really glad I made that decision, because He has done so much for me.”* (Then go on to point #3.)

Step 5 – If you’ve ever rappelled off a cliff, you know that the hardest part is backing up over the ledge. Once you’re over and get started down, it’s fun. I think it’s the same way with sharing your testimony. It’s hard to get started, but easy once you get into it. To help you get started, come up with a couple of “Introductory Statements” to transition from a normal conversation into your testimony. They will help “get you over the ledge.” Write down a statement under **“Introductory Statement.”** Here are a couple of ideas:

- *“You know that I’ve been going to _____ (FCA or church events or Christian Clubs, etc.) a lot. Did I ever tell you about why I’m interested in spiritual things?”*
- *“Do you ever think about spiritual things, like God and stuff like that? (Let them respond.) Did I ever tell you how I got interested in spiritual things?”*

IDEA: In high school, I well remember my bible study teacher taking me with him to share my testimony as he spoke at various churches. These speaking opportunities stretched my faith and helped me develop my gifts. Always look for opportunities for youth to share what God is doing in their lives in front of groups.

Step 6 – Everyone find a partner. Using your outline, share your testimony with your partner.

Tips for Better Testimonies

- **Avoid religious jargon**, such as, “converted,” “born again,” “convicted,” or “saved.”
- **Don’t mention church denominations**, especially in a bad way. They may have had a bad experience with the one you love or be intensely loyal to one you were about to cut!
- Make it more interesting by **being specific and painting verbal pictures**. For example, instead of just saying, “I grew up in the country,” give some details of the place so that they can visualize it.
- **Don’t stretch the truth**. God wants to use your story exactly the way it happened. It doesn’t have to be dramatic to be powerful.
- **Speak naturally**. You’re not trying to develop a formal speech with flowery language. Develop it in the style you normally speak to a friend.

- **Use some verses** from the bible, especially if you're sharing before a group. Remember, the Word of God has power.
- **Relax!** You don't have to do things perfectly. Trust God and He will take over.
- **Practice** sharing your testimony in your bedroom until it no longer sounds canned or memorized. Record it and listen back to help you get rid of distracting "Uh's" and "Ah's" and "You know's". Tell it to a Christian friend and have him/her critique you. You want it to come across natural, like when you share something exciting with a friend.
- Take opportunities to **share your testimony** wherever you can. Would any of you like to volunteer to share your testimony before the entire group next week? What about the next? Remember: practice makes perfect!

Conclusion

When I go into all the specifics of how to share a personal testimony, some of you start saying, *"It's too hard. Could never do it. I'd screw it up."* But if all my suggestions just make it too confusing, forget them and remember that all you're doing is telling someone what Jesus has done for you. If some of you girls went to see your favorite band in concert last night, the first chance you had the next day you'd be on the phone telling your friends a testimony of what happened at the concert. You wouldn't have to write it out or practice it in front of your mirror. You'd just figure out a way to tell them.

To show you how easy it is, I'll give you excerpts from a testimony of a fan of shock rocker Marilyn Manson. I found it on a site dedicated to Manson and have reproduced it here exactly as it was written. I'm sure that this fan hasn't been trained in how to share his personal testimony. He just knows that he loves Manson and is delighted to tell the world his story.

"I attended my first, and definitely not last, manson show on dec. 15th in san antonio, tx. it was the most incredible experience of my life. i was lucky enough to get back stage passes, so i was able to actually touch, talk to, and gaze into the eyes of MARILYN MANSON. i haven't been the same since. all i have been able to think about is that encounter and how incredibly amazing it was.... meeting manson made my life a more tolerable one and now all i can do is look forward to my next chance to see him again."

Was that an effective testimony? Do you think it would make some people want to go see Manson in concert? What do you think motivated this guy or girl to take the time to write this testimony? (He *loved* Marilyn Manson.)

All I'm asking of us is this: Will we do for Jesus what this person did for Marilyn Manson? Will you commit to tell your little brother or sister what God has done for you? What about a friend?

Impact Key #5: Share the Good News (Session V)

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO BE EQUIPPED AND MOTIVATED TO SHARE THE GOSPEL.

PREPARATION: For this session you will need five copies of the “Jesus No Equal” booklet, one booklet for your students to practice with and four for each student to take home to share with friends. They can be ordered from Reach Out Youth Solutions at 770-441-2247 or through their website at www.reach-out.org. If you can’t get this booklet, try to find another booklet that explains the gospel well and is attractive for students. If you can’t find any booklet, just make copies of the portion of the “Jesus No Equal” booklet as I reproduced a portion of it at the end of the lesson.

Consider having a student share his/her testimony at the beginning of the session.

Introduction

I want to start of this session with a story about a dumb person who just happened to be blonde.

A blonde woman named Brandi finds herself in dire trouble. Her business has gone bust and she's in serious financial straits. She's so desperate that she decides to ask God for help. She begins to pray, "God, please help me. I've lost my business and if I don't get some money, I'm going to lose my house as well. Please let me win the lotto."

Lotto night comes and somebody else wins it.

Brandi again prays... "God, please let me win the lotto! I've lost my business, my house and I'm going to lose my car as well."

Lotto night comes and Brandi still has no luck.

Once again, she prays, "My God, why have you forsaken me?! I've lost my business, my house, and my car. My children are starving. I don't often ask you for help, and I have always been a good servant to you. PLEASE, just let me win the lotto this one time so I can get my life back in order."

Suddenly a blinding flash of light pierces the darkness of her bedroom as the heavens open and Brandi is confronted by the voice of God Himself, saying

“Brandi, work with Me on this. Buy a ticket!”

Now don’t go home and tell your parents I told you to play the lottery! That’s not my point! The message is this: God isn’t going to do everything for us. For example, some people truly love their friends and do acts of kindness for them. They pray for them regularly. They may have even shared their testimony with their friend. But nobody’s becoming a Christian. So they pray, “Why, God?” I’ve got to wonder if God wants to answer, “*Work with me on this one. Tell them how to be saved.*”

I. We’ve Got a Part

I need someone to read Romans 10:12-15.

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how

can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent?"

What do these verses tell us about our responsibility in sharing the gospel? (In order to be able to call on the name of the Lord, some person has to tell them.)

Listen to how the apostle Paul describes his part in I Corinthians 9:22:

I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

But I thought only God could save people. What do you think Paul meant by trying to “save” people? (Although people can only be saved through Jesus, someone has to bring them the message of Jesus. So we are in a sense saving people by telling them about Jesus.)

Some Are Eager to Hear

I struck up a conversation with the owner of a teenage nightclub named Bart as he sat at the entrance collecting people’s cover charge. I made a transition into spiritual things and could tell that this guy was eager to hear about the gospel. In fact, he was so eager that he kept cutting off everyone else who tried to talk to him, saying that this was an extremely important conversation. I left him with a booklet about how to receive Christ. Later that week he told me that the night after I gave him the booklet he and his wife had both prayed to give their hearts to Jesus! He said, “You know, I always wanted to know how to become a Christian, but nobody ever told me.” (A graduate student)

It’s interesting that Bart and his wife had gone to church but never understood the gospel. Perhaps the church never presented the gospel. So why didn’t God just speak to Him or write the gospel in the sky one night? I’m not sure. Apparently God has given the task of spreading the gospel to us.

Isn’t Living the Life Enough?

ILLUSTRATION: *I heard of a businessman who thought it was enough to live a good life in front of his colleagues. So day after day he was careful to try to live a good life. So one day a colleague announced to him that he had become a Christian. The man shared his excitement and told him that he also was a Christian. The new Christian said, “Well why didn’t you ever tell me? I always thought that if you could be a good person without being a Christian that I could be one too.”*

DISCUSSION: How was this person’s lack of verbal witness a stumbling block to his coworker? What are some of the greatest obstacles to sharing our faith?

One problem is that many Christians simply don’t know how to share their faith.

ILLUSTRATION: *That was Leroy Eims’ problem. As a marine machine gunner in the heat of battle on a South Pacific beachhead, one of his buddies was seriously wounded. As he died, he pleaded for someone to tell him about God. Eims didn’t know what to say. From that harrowing experience, he vowed that he would learn about God for himself. Not only did he find God, but he learned how to share his faith with others and became the leader of a worldwide Christian organization. (Source: Winning Ways, by Leroy Eims)*

If you were in a car wreck with a lost friend and she was seriously injured, would you be able to tell that friend how to know God? By the end of this session I want you to know how to share the gospel. Let's pray that God will help us.

PRAYER

I realize that some of you have had bad experiences with people sharing their faith. Some of you have been accosted by a person who pulled you aside in a public place and began to preach to you with a Bible in one hand and a booklet in the other. Please just forget all about that experience.

That's not what we're talking about. We want to make it as natural as possible.

SKIT IDEA: A week ahead of time, have some students prepare a skit on "*How Not to Share the Gospel*." (Someone could also do a video of this with the actors in some public place.) This can be very funny, but demonstrate some great points. **Skit ideas:** 1) The witnesser is obnoxious and puts the person down, with phrases such as "You know you're going to hell, right?" 2) He dresses very nerdy. 3) He uses nothing words like "Uh" continually. 4) Tells his testimony in monotone and makes the Christian life seem boring. 5) Ignores his questions. 6) Wipes a bugger on the tract to bookmark a page. After the skit, ask students to point out all the bad things they saw.

II. We've Got a Message

Transitioning into the gospel.

Just like with sharing your personal testimony, the most difficult part is transitioning into it. Here are some ways:

Approach #1: "Could you give me your opinion?"

Explanation: This gets the gospel into people's hands when you don't have time to explain it. Carry booklets like the "*Jesus No Equal*" tract. When you sit with a friend on the bus or another place, say something like,

"Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I've never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it. I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you take a copy and look it over when you have time? I'm not trying to push anything on you. It's just that this meant so much to me that I want you to know about it too."

Either on the phone or at another time, follow up by asking the friend what he thought of it. Just let the Spirit lead as you discuss your faith!

Let's Do It!

(Hand out the booklets to each student.) Find a partner and roll play giving this booklet to the other person. Use either my suggested introductory statement, (see the statements in your student handout) or some other statement that makes it natural to you.

Approach #2: "Freestyle"

Explanation: Memorize each main point of the booklet and a Scripture for each one. Then you don't have to be dependent on using a booklet.

Since we don't have time to memorize it, we'll leave that to whoever wants to do it at home.

Approach #3: “Let’s go through it together.”

Explanation: In a relaxed setting, read through the booklet with your friend.

Benefits:

- You know that your friend has heard the gospel.
- Your friend can ask any questions he or she wants to.
- Your friend has a comfortable place to keep his or her eyes when you go through the gospel. Sometimes, if you do a freestyle, memorized presentation, it can be like you’re giving a personal lecture! It’s much more comfortable to have somewhere to look.
- Your friend can always keep the book and know exactly what decision he made, in case at a later time he forgets or begins to doubt.
- Having the booklet in front of them keeps them on track in case their mind is tempted to wander.

Hints:

- Some say that you should both look at the same booklet. I think it’s more comfortable to **give my friend a booklet and keep another one for myself**. Maybe it’s just because I’ve got moose breath and the distance makes it easier on my friends!
- **Practice reading through it at home** until you’re so comfortable with it that your presentation sounds more like you’re telling it than reading it.
- **If they start asking questions** that could get you off track, say, *“If it’s no problem with you, let’s get through the entire presentation and then talk about whatever questions you like.”*
- Be aware that **often weird things happen** when you come to the point of receiving Christ. Remember, it’s a spiritual warfare. People come to the door, phones ring, dogs run into the room.
- **Don’t introduce it by saying, “This is how you become a Christian.”** Lots of non-Christians think they are Christians already. That approach might offend them. Others have weird ideas of Christians. Often I start with the classic sentence, “Have you ever come to a point in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you died tonight you would be in heaven tomorrow?” Or, “The message of this booklet helped me come to a real assurance of my faith. Could I share it with you?” Or, I use one of the approaches we talked about earlier.
- **Occasionally ask, “Does this make sense to you?”** That keeps them involved and makes the presentation more like a conversational than a lecture.
- **If you make a mistake, just laugh about it and keep going.** God can even use your mistakes.
- **If she says, “I’ve already heard this before,” ask her what she thinks about it.**
- **Don’t use high pressure tactics** to get a decision out of people. Trust the Spirit to work on their hearts.
- **Use a transitional statement** to get you into it. For example: *“Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I’ve never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it and I’d like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?”* Or, after you share your personal testimony, you could say, *“This booklet tells all about the decision I made that changed my life so much. I’d like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?”*

- **When you get to third page of “Reality #4,”** let the person answer the question at the top of the page. Then tell him to listen to the example prayer as you read it, to see if this prayer expresses what he’d like to say to God. After you’ve read it out loud, ask him if he’d like to pray that prayer to God. If so, you could either read it together to God, or you could read a short phrase and he could repeat after you.

Demonstration: (Go through the gospel with a person in front of the group. You could have a table set up like you’re at McDonalds together.) We’re going to demonstrate for you how this works. Watch closely because you’ll be doing this with your partner next!

(Do the demonstration.)

Do you have any suggestions as to how we could do it better?

Let’s Do It!

Step One: **Read through the booklet** silently to familiarize yourself with it. (Give them time.)

Step Two: **Get with your partner.** Share a bit of how Jesus changed your life. Say some transitional statement (see example above). Then go through the booklet with him or her. After you’ve finished, reverse rolls and let your partner share with you. Expect to feel a little weird. Just remember, you’ve got to start somewhere!

All right! You’ve shared the most important message you could ever share. You can do it!

How do you spell SUCCESS?

Bill Bright defines successful witnessing as *“Sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results with God.”* Did you get that? Does a person have to receive Christ for you to be successful? No. You are successful if you share the gospel. Then it’s up to your friend and the Holy Spirit to work things out.

Don’t give up!

At Billy Graham crusades, people on the average accept Christ on the third meeting that they attend. This means that most people don’t receive Christ the first time they hear the gospel. So don’t see sharing the gospel with a friend as your final effort. Continue to invite her to youth services, bible study groups and Christian concerts. Continue being a friend and being there when she needs you. Here’s a real life illustration of how this works:

ILLUSTRATION: *Chris was a loner. He went to school by himself, walked to class by himself, ate lunch by himself. As the manager of his football team he endured the football players yelling him for a couple hours every day. Then he went home to his mom and grandmother. He never knew his dad. No one ever called for him.*

So you can understand that Chris just wasn’t the social type. He didn’t have that winning personality or a way of telling a story that made people love to be around him. Chris needed Jesus and some Christian students began to pray for him. They invited him to meetings and he’d promise to come. But he’d never show up.

They must have been tempted to give up, but they kept looking for ways to love him and serve him. They noticed that he had some pretty heavy responsibilities as manager, such as taping the players, setting up equipment and filling water coolers. After the games he cleaned up all the messy equipment. So different members of the group started coming early to games to help Chris with his chores. Then they'd stay late to help clean up the mess. During the two years that they reached out to Chris, he seemed to show no spiritual interest.

But then, one day, he surprised everyone by showing up. That night he accepted Christ! It's no surprise that Chris told them later that his life had always been lonely and sad. In his own words, "The truth is I've never experienced so much love. I asked Christ into my life the other day. I never thought I could be so full." And it's also no surprise that he went on to prepare to be a trainer for a professional football team, with a personal mission to express the love of Christ to the football players he serves every day." (Source: Taking Your Campus for Christ, by Barry St. Clair and Keith Naylor, pp. 90-95)

Conclusion/Action Points

Do you know a Chris at your school? Or maybe you know some people who appear to have it all, but are hurting inside. If you don't love them to Jesus and share with them, who will?

If not you, who?

If not now, when?

In the next few moments, write the names of some people that you need to share the gospel with . (If you're in a camp or conference setting, consider having students write one person a letter during a session.) Now pray silently that God will give the opportunity and the boldness to share the gospel with your friends.

WARNING: ONCE YOU EXPERIENCE THE EXCITEMENT OF SEEING FRIENDS MAKE ETERNAL DECISIONS BECAUSE OF YOUR INFLUENCE, YOU MAY LOSE ALL INTEREST IN THINGS THAT WILL ONE DAY ROT, RUST OR FADE AWAY. YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME!

Jesus No Equal

REALITY #1: GOD LOVES US AND CREATED US TO KNOW HIM

GOD LOVES US. Jesus said, "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

GOD CREATED US. We read in the Bible, "For You [God] created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13).

GOD WANTS US TO KNOW HIM. God's Word tells us, "*Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent*" (John 17:3).

Since reality #1 is true, why is it that many people don't know God?

REALITY #2: OUR SINS KEEP US FROM KNOWING GOD.

Some people think of sin as getting drunk, or telling lies. True, but sin involves much more.

WHAT IS SIN? Sin is our choice to disobey God and go our own way, "*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way*" (Isaiah 53:6).

WHO HAS SINNED? Everyone. In the Bible we read, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SIN? Sin results in separation from God, leading to death and judgment, "*The wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23), and, "*Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27).

As long as sin separates us from God, we cannot know Him.

What, then, is the solution to our separation from God?

FACT 3: WE CAN KNOW GOD ONLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus Christ is the only solution to our sin problem.

JESUS DIED FOR OUR SIN. "*God demonstrates His love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8).

JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD TO GIVE US LIFE. "*Just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life*" (Romans 6:4).

JESUS OPENED THE WAY FOR US TO KNOW GOD. "*For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God*" (1 Peter 3:18).

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ bridged the gap from God to us.

How can we know Jesus Christ?

REALITY #4: TO KNOW JESUS WE MUST RECEIVE HIM.

Many people know *about* God, but don't know Him *personally*. The only way to know God personally, is to receive Jesus Christ. So how can we receive Him?

TURN AWAY FROM OUR SIN. Jesus said, *“The time has come....Repent and believe the Good News!”* (Mark 1:15) To repent means to *turn away* from sin.

BELIEVE IN JESUS. *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved”* (Acts 16:31). To believe means to *turn to* Jesus.

Jesus promises, *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with Me”* (Revelation 3:20).

Which way will you choose? Is there any good reason why you cannot choose Jesus Christ right now?

You can turn away from your sin and ask Jesus into your life now. You receive Jesus by praying to Him.

Prayer is simply talking to God. He will hear your prayer. Can you say this to God and mean it?

“Dear Jesus, I know that You created me, love me, and want me to know You. My sin has kept me from knowing You. I turn from my sin. I receive Jesus Christ, who died to forgive my sin and rose from the dead to live in me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Now that you have received Jesus Christ, what happens?

REALITY #5 – JESUS CHANGES OUR LIVES WHEN WE KNOW HIM.

Receiving Jesus Christ is just the beginning. When He comes into our lives, we experience many changes – come immediately and others gradually.

[At this point, the booklet shares exciting truths that new Christians need to know: Jesus give His children a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17), forgiveness (Psalm 103:12), love (I John 4:19), freedom (John 8:36), confidence (I John 3:21,22), victory over temptation (I Corinthians 10:13), guidance (Proverbs 3:5,6).

Then, it tells ways for new Christians to grow, such as spending time in God’s Word daily, studying His Word, submitting to Him consistently, searching for a church, sharing Jesus with others and seeking Jesus completely.]

Impact Key #6: Why Add...When You Can Multiply? (Session VI)

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS SESSION, I WANT MY STUDENTS TO HAVE A PASSION AND VISION FOR HELPING YOUNG CHRISTIANS MATURE IN CHRIST TO THE POINT THAT THEY CAN REACH AND DISCIPLE OTHERS.

LEADER: Like with every session, there is much more material here than you probably need to cover in one session. I’ve seen many otherwise powerful messages ruined by going ten minutes longer than my attention span. So begin your preparation by setting aside the lesson and asking

questions like, “What has helped me to grow spiritually?” “In what way is my group strong in assimilating new people (so that I can encourage the group with what they are doing right)?” “Where are we falling short?” “When a youth accepts Christ, are we helping him or her grow up in Christ?” Ask some of your youth how they perceive the friendliness of your group. Then look over the lesson to see if it helps you achieve these goals. But if you’re convinced that most of this lesson needs to be covered, consider dividing it into two weeks. Better to leave them eager for more than overloaded and bored.

SUPPLIES: Some youth should bring calculators. Have a sheet of paper (besides their student sheets) for each youth.

TOOLS: Barry St. Clair has published a small book called “*Getting Started*,” which is great for teens or adults to take new believers through to introduce them to the Christian life. Order some copies to make available to those who are nurturing new believers. Barry’s “*Moving Toward Maturity*” series is designed to take students deeper through a small discipleship group, one on one, or personal study. To order these resources, either go to Reach Out Youth Solutions’ website at www.reach-out.org and click “Buy Resources” or call our office at 770-441-2247.

During the praise time prior to the message, have a person share a testimony or an experience in sharing the gospel.

Introduction

SKIT:

SCENE I: YOUTH LEADER, PREACHING TO A GROUP OF ABOUT SEVEN OR EIGHT YOUTH. “So, as you see, Jesus didn’t expect us to merely sit around and be nice until He comes again. He wants us to impact our world by rescuing the perishing. Do you want to leave your mark on this world? (Students shake their heads enthusiastically) Then we’ve got a lost world out there to reach! This week, let’s go out and spread the word! We want to see some new spiritual babies around here. This place should have the excitement of a maternity ward!”

SCENE II: A STUDENT WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE WITH A SIGN THAT SAYS, “NEXT WEEK’S MEETING”

YOUTH LEADER WALKS IN WITH TWO NEW BABIES (DOLLS) IN HIS ARMS. AS THE YOUTH WALK IN, A COUPLE OF THEM BRING IN BABIES AS WELL.

STUDENT #1 – “This is what it’s all about! Look at these baby Christians! I led this one to Christ in the lunch room. He was a huge football player then. Look! Now he’s a baby Christian.”

STUDENT #2 – “There’s nothing more exciting than bringing people to Christ. I’m really on fire now. Next week I’m coming back with more baby Christians!”

SCENE III: LIGHTS DIM. ACTORS EXIT THE STAGE. A STUDENT WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE WITH A SIGN THAT SAYS, “NEXT WEEK’S MEETING”

THE DOLLS FROM LAST WEEK ARE LYING ON THE FLOOR AND ON THE CHAIRS. NOW THE GROUP STARTS TO ENTER.

YOUTH MINISTER – “Look at my new baby!” (HE PUSHES THE DOLL FROM LAST WEEK OFF ONE OF THE CHAIRS SO THAT HE HAS A PLACE TO SIT.) “I led him to Christ Tuesday night at the concert! Isn’t he precious!”

STUDENT #3 – (WALKING IN WITH ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS, AS THEY KICK LAST WEEK’S BABIES OUT OF THE WAY) “I’ve got two new babies! They became Christians at our Friday night retreat. They’re so precious! This is the greatest feeling ever!” (AS THEY LEAVE THE MEETING, THEY LEAVE ALL THEIR BABIES THERE.)

SCENE IV: LIGHTS DIM. ACTORS EXIT THE STAGE. A STUDENT WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE WITH A SIGN THAT SAYS, “NEXT WEEK’S MEETING”

SCENE V: (ALL THE STUDENTS COME IN WITH NEW BABIES, TALKING ABOUT HOW GREAT THEY ARE, DOING LITTLE BABY SOUNDS AT EACH OTHER’S BABIES AND ADMIRING THEM, BUT ARE COMPLETELY IGNORING THE BABIES FROM THE LAST WEEKS, KICKING THEM OUT OF THE WAY, SITTING ON THEM, ETC. THEY EXIT AND LEAVE ALL THEIR BABIES THERE.)

SCENE VI: THE JANITOR ARRIVES WITH HIS BROOM AFTER ALL THE STUDENTS HAVE LEFT. (HE LOOKS AROUND IN SHOCK AT ALL THE BABIES LEFT UNATTENDED.) HE SAYS IN DISMAY, “WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE THEY DOING TO ALL THESE BABIES?”)

DEBRIEFING: Let’s give our actors a hand! Now tell me, what is the point of this skit? (It’s not enough to see people become new Christians. We must take care of them. We can’t forget them in our excitement to lead others to Christ.)

If you want to make a mark on your world, you’ll want to make your mark on new and weak believers. In this session we’ll discuss how. Before we start, go to the “Action Points” section of your student outline. Write down the names of several new Christians, or some who are weak or struggling or having trouble fitting into the church or youth group. Pray that God will give you some insight during this lesson on how to help them spiritually.

PRAYER

1. Welcome Them Into The Family!

ILLUSTRATION: *Bill was an unusual college student in Portland, Oregon. Although he was brilliant intellectually, he always had this far-away look in his eyes and seemed to care nothing about his appearance. His hair was always a mess and he never wore shoes, all year round. This was probably during the 60’s, during the hippie movement when there was a vast generation gap between the older, conservative folks and the young radicals. It was like the older and the younger lived in different worlds. So Bill became a Christian and decided to go visit the church across the street from his campus. Problem was, this was a middle-class church full of well-dressed folks. So picture the scene in your mind as Bill strolls into the church, hair going everywhere, wearing blue jeans and a tee shirt, and of course, bare footed. He makes his way up the aisle but so many people are there that he can’t find a seat. No problem for Bill. When he gets to the front, he just squats down on the carpet. Now that would be fine a laid back student ministry. But at a formal church?*

As you can imagine, the air was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Some of the people must have been thinking, "What does this kid mean coming in here dressed like that and sitting on the floor." So it was no shock to them when an elderly gentleman began making his way down the aisle toward Bill. Some of the people who were there thought, "You can't blame him. He'd never guess Bill is a Christian. And his world is too distant from Bill's to understand. You can't blame him for what he's going to do."

*So the church fell silent as all eyes focused on the old man. But to their amazement, he slowly and with some difficulty seated himself on the floor beside Bill. There on the carpet, Bill and the old man worshipped God together that Sunday. And members of the congregation wept. I doubt anyone remembers the sermon that was preached that Sunday. But nobody will forget that act of love. (Reworded from *Out of the Salt-Shaker and Into The World*, by Rebecca Manley Pippert, 1979, Inter-Varsity Press, pp. 177,178)*

POWER PASSAGE: Someone read **I Peter 3:8** for me.

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."

DISCUSSION: Which characteristics of this verse did the old man display? Do you admire him for what he did? If our youth group had the humble attitude of this old man, how would we act toward people who visit our group who are different from us? (We would be friendly to everyone, geek or great, new or regular.)

POWER PASSAGE: Why is it so important that we be friendly and accepting to everyone in the group? (Let them respond.) Someone read **I John 4:7** and let the rest of us reflect on what this has to do with friendliness and acceptance in our youth group:

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

So, what is the mark of the Christian according to this verse? (Loving one another.)

POWER PASSAGE: Now read **John 17:23** to see what Jesus has to say about the importance of unity in our group:

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

DISCUSSION: According to this verse, what does our unity as a group prove to the world? How would our unity make us different from many other groups people are in? Why do you think our unity is so important?

Our unity somehow shows outsiders that Jesus is real. So we can't allow the divisions in our schools to invade our church. In other words, the cool people can't ignore the uncool people. The uncool can't despise the cool. The ground's level at the bottom of the cross. If we're serious about Jesus, we've got to declare war on all cliques. If you can't handle that, then deal with it. Because we'll never impact the lost if students visit our church and see the same conflicts they see in the world.

BRAINSTORM: So get into groups of five. Your group is in charge of making making this a friendlier, more accepting, more loving group. What can we do to make this happen? (After you've given some time, let each group report to the larger group. Below I've bulleted some ideas, should they not come up with them and if you think they are appropriate for the group.)

- **Start a “Welcome Team,”** a group of students who stand at the doors and make sure that everyone feels welcomed and knows where to go when they enter.
- **Adopt a code phrase** that you can use as you are leading to remind the youth group to welcome new people. My youth counsel knew that when I said during the meeting, “Youth counsel, please remember ‘Project Friend,’” they were to look around for any people who were either new (that they should introduce around) or sitting alone (that they should ask to sit with them).
- **Plan on coming early and staying late.** Much of the true fellowship of church goes on before and after meetings when we casually interact with each other. Purpose to get to know several people better each week. You can't have true “fellowship” if you don't know each other.
- **Personally invite loners and visitors to youth group events.** Going to a house with the group or off on a trip builds memories that tie them with the group.

2. Help them grow!

ILLUSTRATION: *The story is told of a man who wanted to travel by ship from America to Europe, but could only scrape together enough money for a ticket, with nothing left over to purchase food at the ship's restaurant. Instead, he packed his own cheese and crackers, and avoided the restaurant, where people feasted daily on the most delicious foods. Over time, as you can imagine, the crackers became stale and the cheese began to mold. Finally a fellow passenger pulled the wretched man aside and inquired, "I noticed that you never dine with us in the cafeteria. Would you mind telling me why?" He confessed his inability to pay for anything except for the ticket, to which his new acquaintance replied, "But didn't you understand? The food came with the ticket!"*

OUR GOAL: Beyond leading peers to be born again (John 3:3), students should develop a passion to lead peers to become “disciples” of Christ (Matthew 28:19) and to one day present them “complete in Christ” (Colossians 1:28).

He was missing all that delicious food that he had paid for. He simply didn't know what he had! Just as this man missed out on all that came with his ticket, so many Christians never experience all that came with their salvation. They live defeated, powerless lives when they have all the resources of heaven at their disposal.

I suppose that's a part of why the apostle John could write what he did in 3 John 4:

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

No greater joy? Not even Six Flags Over the Roman Empire? Not even chocolate? Once you begin to see your life impacting other Christians, opening up for them the riches that are their inheritance in Christ, you'll be hooked just like John.

Brainstorm: One of your friends has just come to Christ. You've got her coming to youth group with you regularly. What else will you do to help her grow as a Christian? (Cover each of these as they bring them up. Add important points that they miss.)

A. Help them Understand Grace.

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”(Colossians 2:6)

It’s one thing to be saved by grace. It’s quite another to live by grace. So many Christians accept God’s free gift of salvation, but think that as His child they have to earn His love through their works. Let them know that we serve God *because* He loves us, not in order to achieve His love.

B. Help Them Understand Who They Are in Christ

“Sure, I left my mark while I was in high school. But looking back, I could have accomplished so much more had I understood who I was in Christ. You see, I was witnessing and serving God in order to be justified by Him. And I didn’t know what to do with those condemning voices I heard in my head. I lacked power and confidence. Neal Anderson’s book, Victory Over the Darkness has really helped me in this area. Now I can minister out of the security and confidence of knowing that I’m secure in Christ. I wish someone had explained this to me two years ago when I became a Christian. (Nick, a freshman in college.)

God loves us. Period. And the same God who saved us empowers us to live the Christ life.

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Heb. 4:16)

C. Help Them Get to Know God Better

“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.” (I Peter 2:2)

When people taste the Lord’s goodness, they want to get to know Him better. Help new Christians do this by establishing a personal quiet time – bible reading and prayer. You may have a quiet time with a young Christian to demonstrate how to do it.

D. Encourage Them

Someone read for us Hebrews 10:24,25:

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

What are some ways we can spur one another on toward love and good deeds? How can we encourage one another? (Get their ideas.)

ILLUSTRATION: *One powerful way to encourage people is by complimenting them for things they are doing right. In a popular business book, a successful manager tells an inquirer how he keeps an eye on the new people he is training for a job. The inquirer asks, “Oh, to catch them doing something wrong?” “No,” the wise manager responds, “To catch them doing something right so that I can encourage them for it.” He did this because he found that positive reinforcement was an incredible motivator. (From The One Minute Manager.)*

As you help young Christians grow, catch them doing things right so that you can compliment them and encourage them. Then watch them blossom before your eyes.

(Other ideas for helping young Christians grow include: Inviting them to Christian events (like retreats and concerts), introducing them to powerful and relevant Christian music, helping them with their needs, etc.)

3. Help Them Deal With Their Sin.

As we sin, we must develop the daily habit of confessing our sin and asking forgiveness. Someone read I John 1:9 for us:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

When we confess, God forgives. It’s that simple. We don’t have to pay for it. We don’t have to sit around feeling miserable about it. We get back up and keep going.

4. Answer Their Questions.

It may be four years before your pastor speaks on “*How to Handle Peer Pressure*.” But your babe in Christ needs to know today. Develop your relationship so that she knows she can ask any question without you passing out from shock. And if you don’t know the answer, don’t be embarrassed and please don’t make something up!

ILLUSTRATION: *A mature Christian teaching in a Bible college once said, “The more I grow as a Christian, the more comfortable I get with the little phrase, ‘I don’t know.’”*

So if you don’t know the answer, or only know part of the answer, encourage her to keep asking good questions and assure her that you’ll search the Word this week and get some advice from some wise Christians.

5. Hook Them Up With Strong Christians.

Someone read Proverbs 13:20 for us.

“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.”

Does going to church and youth group guarantee that a person will walk with wise people? (No.) Why not? (Both fools and the wise attend church.) If you want your spiritual child to grow wise, introduce him to the most spiritually mature people in your church and encourage those relationships to blossom.

“One of the greatest helps to my spiritual growth in high school was a close friend who kept me accountable in my Christian walk. Each morning when I woke up, I knew that when I saw my friend in school he would ask me what I got out of the Word that morning. That accountability kept me strong when I was too weak to stand on my own.” (Steve)

3. Help them find their niche!

“Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (I Corinthians 12:7)

Every Christian has a spiritual gift! Take new believers with you on service opportunities so that they experience the thrill of seeing their life touching both the church and the world.

4. Help them reach their friends and teach their friends to reach their friends and...

“Therefore go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:19)

Has it ever occurred to you that since Jesus commanded the disciples to make disciples, that one of the things His disciples should teach their disciples was to make disciples? That one may take a little thought! In other words, we can't be satisfied with just making new followers. We need to teach those new followers to make new followers.

Why teach new believers how to reach their friends?

A. Who's got more relationships with non-Christians, new Christians or old Christians? (Almost always the new Christian.) That's why **some of the most effective evangelists are new believers.**

B. Reaching others is one of the greatest joys of the Christian life!

B. It sets off a chain of multiplication.

ACTIVITY: (This will work only if you have a large group of at least 30 people or so.) We're going to have a race between two people. The object is to bring the most people to the front of the room as possible before the game ends. **Person #1** (choose someone who is rather athletic) will run into the group and take one person by the hand and lead him to the front, then return to the group to get a second person to bring to the front, etc. **Person #2** can only walk briskly. She walks into the group and gets one person and brings her to the front. Then both of them walk back and each grab the hand of a student (two students bringing two students) and bring those to the front. Then those four walk back and grab four more, etc.

DEBRIEFING: What we've just witnessed is two strategies of evangelism. Which strategy started off faster? (The first group where one person did the running.) Which strategy produced the most stressed out worker? (The first group.) Which strategy reached the most people in the end? (The second group.)

What you've just witnessed is the power of multiplication over addition. The first group added one at a time. The second group kept doubling. But you can't really see the power of multiplication unless you had a million people here, because multiplication completely overcomes addition the longer you go. I'll give you a couple of illustrations:

Need Some Grain? (This is most effective if you actually show the group a checker board and point to each block as you mention it (or a drawing of one on an overhead/powerpoint). If you take a grain of wheat and put it in the first block and then add one for each new block, you will have two on the second block, three on the third block and 64 grains by the 64th block. Right? But let's see what a difference multiplication makes. If you start again with one grain of wheat on the first block and double it for the second block, you have two grains on the second block. Now *you* tell me: how many on the third block (4), how many on the fourth block (8) (then keep letting them double in their head until they can't do it any more). Do see how fast multiplication begins taking off? So do you know how many grains you would have by the 64th square? *Enough to cover the entire country of India 50 feet in grain! That's the incredible power of multiplication!* (From Allen Hadidian, *Successful Discipling*, Moody Press, 1979, p. 43.)

So You Like to Tear Paper? Take a sheet of paper and let's imagine that it's 1/1000 of an inch thick. Now tear it in half and stack it together. (Actually do this in front of them or have them tear individual sheets of paper.) Now it's 2/1000 of an inch thick. Do it again and it's 4/1000 of an inch. You see, we're doubling the height every time. (Let them do it until they can't tear it any more.) How thick do you think it would be once it was torn 50 times? Approximately 17,000,000 miles high, about the distance of 34 trips to the moon! That's the power of multiplication! (Hadidian, opt. cite)

So You Want to Reach the World for Jesus? Get out your calculators and let's compare two strategies.

FRED'S STRATEGY – Spiritual Addition. Fred takes Jesus' great commission seriously and tries to win as many people as he can for Christ. He's an incredible evangelist and wins 300 people each year. That's close to a person every day! Within 30 years, he's won an incredible 9000 people to the Lord! Pretty impressive! Let's give Fred a hand!

GEORGE'S STRATEGY – Spiritual Multiplication. George also takes the great commission seriously. But he's not as outgoing and gifted as Fred. In that first year, while Fred reached 300 people, George reached only one. But during the second year, he not only reached one other person. He also taught his new Christian how to reach someone. So at the end of the second year there are four believers. Looks like he'll never catch George, right? But remember, Fred is adding each year and George is multiplying. Let's get out our calculators and see what happens over time. (Put this chart on an overhead/powerpoint/poster board and start putting up numbers as they calculate them.

| YEAR | FRED THE ADDER | GEORGE THE MULTIPLIER |
|------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 300 | 1 |
| 2 | 600 | 2 |

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 3 | 900 | 4 |
| 4 | 1200 | 8 |
| 5 | 1500 | 16 |
| 6 | 1800 | 32 |
| 7 | 2100 | 64 |
| 8 | 2400 | 128 |
| 9 | 2700 | 256 |
| 10 | 3000 | 512 |
| 11 | 3300 | 1024 |
| 12 | 3600 | 2048 |
| 13 | 3900 | 4096 (George has overtaken Fred here. Now watch out!) |
| 14 | 4200 | 8192 |
| 15 | 4500 | 16384 (George has over 3x as many converts as Fred!) |
| 20 | 6000 | 524,288 |
| 30 | 9000 (Fred will reach 300 people this year, but he's older now and boy is he getting tired!) | 536,870,912 (George will reach just one person again this year and will train him to reach another. But together with all his disciples, they will reach over 500,000,000 people this year!) |
| 34 | 10,200 (Fred has reached the total population of a small city. Good work Fred!) | 8,589,934,592 (George has reached 2 billion more than the current world population! During the last year he ran out of humans to reach and he had to evangelize aliens! George reached the world!) |

So if you want to make a huge mark on the world, don't just add, multiply. And tell me, how do you multiply disciples? (First you've got to reach a lost person for Christ. Each time you reach someone, get her into a strong group of Christians and help her to grow. Then, teach her how to reach others and how to grow others to reach others.)

Conclusion/Action Points

Take the names of those you wrote in your action points and ask God to help you become a spiritual encourager in their lives this week.

Silent Prayer

Impact Key #7 - Find Your Niche (Session VII)

Key passages on spiritual gifts: Romans 12:3-8, I Corinthians 12:1 - 14:40, Ephesians 4:1-16, I Peter 4:7-11.

PURPOSE: STUDENTS SHOULD COME AWAY FROM THIS STUDY UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY HAVE GIFTS, MOTIVATED TO USE THEIR GIFTS AND HAVING A PLAN TO GET INVOLVED IN SOME MINISTRY. (PLEASE REFLECT ON

THIS PURPOSE. IF DURING THE NEXT MONTH, MORE YOUTH ARE NOT ACTUALLY INVOLVED WITH THE MINISTRY, I HAVE FAILED.)

IDEAS: Before teaching on this topic, get with your other leaders and discuss what areas of ministry you could involve youth in. If you have no areas for them to work in, they will not be able to apply this lesson and may end up frustrated.

This lesson was consolidated from the two week series, “Where do I fit in?” in Reach Out’s Legacy Curriculum at www.reach-out.org, which also includes a “Ministry Teams” strategy for getting students involved. If you want to spread this out to two weeks, consider using those lessons instead of this one.

Have a student share a personal testimony before you begin?

Introduction

VIDEO CLIP: (Find a football video and set it to a clip with a spectacular play that, upon further observation, shows many team members doing their part.) Show it to the group and then ask, “Who were the heroes in this play?” (Let them respond.) On the surface, it looks like the quarterback and receiver. Right? But I want to play the clip again and see who else made this play happen. (Hopefully, they’ll see some other players who contributed. On a third re-run, stop the action a couple of times to show them all the people involved.) You see, had these offensive linemen failed to keep the quarterback safe from the defense, he would have never had a chance to throw the ball. And if this other receiver hadn’t run out the other direction to keep his defender out of the action there may have been an interception. And if this linebacker hadn’t made this block... And if the coach hadn’t sufficiently drilled the team on this play...and if the owners didn’t have sufficient funds to hire players of that caliber...

So you see, football is a team sport. The team is successful only when every member of the team contributes his or her part with excellence. How is that like Christianity? (Give time to respond.)

But most youth will never make their mark because they never get off the bench. They show up for church meetings, but never get the thrill of being a part of making it all happen. In this session we’ll give you some input on how to find your place on the team, so that you can get off the sidelines and get into the action.

PRAY

#1 – You’re Gifted!

“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” (I Cor. 12:4-7)

What an exciting discovery! Problem is, most church members don’t get it. They show up each Sunday to watch the leaders perform, but have no clue as to how they can be a part of the team.

ILLUSTRATION: *To use another football analogy, someone compared the church to a professional football game: 22 men on the field, desperately in need of rest, being watched by 10,000 people in the audience, desperately in need of exercise. On a smaller scale, does that describe your youth group?*

My challenge to you is, “Get out of the stands!” If you are a Christian, you have a gift from God. God wants to work through you to impact your world. Once you begin to unleash your gift in the church and in the world, you’ll be a vital part in the greatest movement of all human history. Do you believe it? Do you want to find what your niche is? If so, you must understand a second principle.

#2 – Singing and Teaching Are Not the Only Gifts!

Some students feel that they can’t impact the world because they can’t teach or sing. But I need someone to read Romans 12:4-6 for us:

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.”(Romans 12:4-6, cr. I Corinthians 12:4-6)

According to this passage, do we all have the same gifts? (No. Different gifts.)

Bible Activity: We need to expand our thinking as to the ways God uses people. Here are the gifts that God mentions to us in the Bible: (Appoint 4 youth to read some of the following passages. As they read, have someone else list the gifts on a blackboard or overhead.) Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:8-11, 27-30; Eph. 4:11-13; I Pet. 4:10,11.

Do you get the picture (point to all the gifts)? There are lots of ways to serve God. You just need to find where you fit in. But some feel inferior because some gifts are very visible, but theirs get little recognition. You need to understand another principle...

#3 -- Your Gift is Important.

(Ask several students to read I Corinthians 12:14-26 out loud to the group.)

How is the local church like a body? (It has many members. And even the members that don’t get a lot of attention, like a big toe, are incredibly important to the proper working of the body.)

ACTIVITY -- Play the "Untangle Game". Divide into groups of 4 people. Stand in a circle and hold out your right hand. Hold someone's right hand. Next, put your left hand in the circle and hold a different person's left hand. Now, without letting go of a hand, try to get untangled. After this, try again with 6 people in the circle, then 8, then as many as you dare! (The point: Ask how many groups had a leader that took charge? Perhaps that person has a gift of leadership. Maybe others simply offered suggestions (wisdom?) and others were simply servants who were willing to do what needed to be done (helps?), and others encouraged not to give up (exhortation?). But it took everyone's cooperation and help to make it work.

IDEA: Allow several students and adults share short testimonies of how they are using their talents and gifts to impact the church or world.

Intersperse the testimonies throughout this lesson. Make sure their services are varied (sound engineer, worship leader for children, writer, greeter, small group leader on a campus, etc.) and their presentations exciting enough to make ministry sound appealing.

ILLUSTRATION: *I heard it said that back in the Middle Ages, a man was observing the building of a castle. One worker walked by with a cart, carrying some mortar. The observer asked, "What are you doing?" The worker replied, "Not much, just carrying some mortar." Another came by, carrying some stones. "What are you doing?" the man asked? "Oh, just carrying some stones," the worker replied. Then a third worker passed by, carrying some building materials. "What are you doing?" asked the man. The worker replied, "I'm building a cathedral."*

How do you think this last man's understanding of his task affected his attitude on life? How did it affect the quality of his work?

When you set up chairs for our youth meeting, do you see yourself as doing a trivial task, or as reaching the world for Christ? When you greet a new person coming to youth meeting, is this trivial, or crucial to God's work?

#4 -- Go on a Gift Hunt!

I can almost hear some of you thinking, "But I don't know what my gift is? How can I serve?" Here are some hints for finding your gift:

A. Pray for wisdom.

Someone read James 1:5 and tell me what it has to do with finding your gifts.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

THOUGHT: Although I've given a spiritual gift analysis to a group of youth, some challenge that practice. Students have limited experiences to pull from and are in still developing in so many areas that the results may be of questionable value. If you use such tests, use them with caution, not with finality. I now prefer to give students many opportunities to serve until they find both their strengths and passions.

Believe or not, God had something in mind when He made you. So who better than God can help you find your way?

B. Serve now in as many ways as you can.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...." (I Pet. 4:10)

Don't sit around waiting for God to give you a vision. Take whatever you've got and start ministering! We should be serving, whether we know our gift or not.

ACTIVITY: Write down some ideas of how you could start immediately to get involved with ministry. (Let all the youth brainstorm as to possible areas as they write. Add some of your own. Set up chairs, greeter, Power Point, run sound system, acts of kindness, clean up, teaching, worship team, encourager, shepherd for small group, records keeper, note writer, organizer of activities, prayer warrior, visionary for ministry, research, editing, etc.)

C. Note what you enjoy. (Psalm 37:4, 84:11)

“Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)

Activity: Make a list of sports, hobbies, and other things you already enjoy doing and share ways God might use them.

Often God will give you special fulfillment and motivation to do the things He has gifted you to do.

D. Note where you excel.

Since gifts are empowered by the Spirit, a special power or effectiveness should eventually manifest itself. For example I have found that planning socials and games is not my thing. (Leader: Use whatever gift you’ve found you don’t have.) Not only do I not enjoy the planning, but they never seem to go as well as when others plan them.

E. Get wise counsel from others.

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.” (Prov. 15:22)

Ask people who know you well or have seen you working in special areas, if they feel you are gifted. Caution: Gifts must be developed and often are not noticed or appreciated by others when we are young. Which brings us to our next point.

#5 -- Develop your Gifts.

Just because the gift is from God does not mean it does not have to be developed.

ILLUSTRATION: Dan Dehaan was an unusually gifted Bible teacher. He started a Bible Study group in a home which exploded to over 2,000 people meeting every week. But he was not always a gifted communicator. When in High School, he had to give a speech to a class. His teacher responded, "Whatever you do, don't go into public speaking."

Take advantage of all training activities. (Guitar, keyboards, teaching, small group leading.)

Give it time!

ILLUSTRATION: Little Amy sang a song for her grandmother accompanied by the guitar. The grandmother laughed and said, "Amy, I don't think singing is your thing." Amy cried but didn't let the discouragement stop her. She continued to write songs and sing as she had opportunities. I'm glad she didn't stop. She's one of the most popular Christian singers today, Amy Grant.

The point? Don't get discouraged if the gifts you are developing seem slow in coming. If you have the desire, keep working at it!

Work hard!

Just because the gift is of God doesn't mean we don't have to put forth our own effort. Someone read Colossians 1:28,29 for us to see how Paul used his gifts.

"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:28,29)

ILLUSTRATION: We stand in awe at how perfectly de Vinci could paint a human body. But was he just a natural? What we don't realize is that at one time de Vinci painted 1000 hands in order to get it right. But how many of us give up after failing only a few times?

ILLUSTRATION: We know that Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, but some don't realize that he succeeded only after 1000 failures. How many of us would have declared it impossible by try number five?

So what can de Vinci and Edison teach us about our gifts? (Let them respond.) A lot of ministry is hard work. Learning to work a sound board is no game of Old Maid. Becoming a powerful teacher may involve lots of flops and other lessons. But we've got a goal worthy of our best labor: to see the world reached with the good news, before the end of time.

Lean Totally on God

Afraid you don't have what it takes? Look back at the Colossians passage. God doesn't leave us to gut it out on our own. He works through us, supplying the strength that we lack.

Conclusion and Action Points

IDEA: Before this session, print up a list of areas where your youth can serve in your ministry. For example, you could list greeters, research assistants, game planners, testimony sharers, teachers, worship leaders, decorators for the youth room, set up/clean up crew, etc. At the end of the lesson, ask youth to sign up for one area to start serving in this week. If you have a larger group, you may want to start ministry teams and put an adult or a responsible student over each team.

Are you already heavily involved with ministry? Don't grow weary! God's using you! Are you a spectator, comfortably watching the game from the stands? It's much more exciting out here on the playing field! I'm giving you a few quiet moments before God for you to take one or more ministry ideas from your list to plan on doing as soon as possible. Write them here for your action points:

PRAYER

Remember, the most significant thing you can do with your life is to leave a mark on the world that will never be erased. I challenge you to get involved in the work of the ministry

this week and begin to touch lives for eternity.

(Alternate Conclusion)

VIDEO CLIP: *I want to play you the last few minutes of one of the most popular films of all time - Star Wars. But the part of the film that I want to grip you comes after the movie is over. (Start the movie, giving just enough time to get them into the mood of the film. Then, as the credits start rolling, turn the volume down enough for your voice to be heard.) So, who made Star Wars successful? (Point to the names as they come up) Sure, George Lucas was a great visionary and director. And actors Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher and Harrison Ford did a great job. But where would they have been without the great sound track? (Actually, Lucas did an early showing of the movie without the sound track to some studio executives prior to its release. They were so uninspired that some fell asleep and expected it to be a major flop!) And what if these animators hadn't done a good job, or the caterers had failed to come through? What if the guy who designed R2D2 made him look like a trash can? (Just start pointing out all the people and the niches they filled.) What if the costume people decided to go the easy route and just buy something from the costume shop? It took hundreds of people, each diligently doing their part with excellence to make an epic film like Star Wars.*

So what about your youth group? What if, at the end of your youth meeting, the lights go off and the youth minister begins to run the credits of everyone who had been involved in ministry over the last week? How long would the list be? Would your name be on the list? And what if God were to run the credits after the great commission has been completed? Will your name be on the list as having a significant part?

I hope that from now on, every time you watch a movie, that you'll always stay through part of the credits and dream of getting every member of your group involved with your ministry.

Impact Key #8 - Go Extreme

(Session XIII)

Optional Titles: Get Radical; Going Global; Extreme Impact; Going Extreme)

PURPOSE: BY THE END OF THIS MESSAGE, I WANT MY YOUTH TO BE WILLING TO GO ANYWHERE AND DO ANYTHING TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST.

PREPARATION: You will need the movie “The Matrix” and two colors of candy (preferable half colored or wrapped in red, the other half blue), enough for each student to have one piece of each color. If your group is large, you’ll need to enlist several leaders to hand out the candy at the appropriate time in the session, instructing them to throw all but a few pieces to the first couple of rows.

Have a person share a testimony before you begin?

Introduction

ILLUSTRATION: *From what I know of the “Beavis and Butthead” series, it’s a satire of two pitiful lives that epitomize what these lessons are trying desperately to save each of us from. These two losers seem to have no ambitions, no compassion for the needs of those around them, no passion to make a mark on their world.*

Although I don’t watch the series, I did catch a portion of the movie that left an indelible impression on me. Throughout the movie Beavis and his friend were totally clueless regarding the events going on around them. For example, while visiting Yellowstone National Park, they got bored listening to the tour guide talk about the “Old Faithful” geyser, which would soon unleash it’s hot water in an incredible display of natural wonder. They opted out of seeing the geyser to go to the bathroom, where they became utterly fascinated with the automatic flushing toilets. Bored with the significant, their lives are spent pursuing the trivial.

But the most memorable scene to me was one where they found themselves hopelessly lost in a desert. They become so exhausted and dehydrated that Beavis comes close to death. His life begins to flash before his eyes. Do you know what he sees? (wait for an answer). He sees Scene I: he and his friend sitting in front of the TV. Scene II: he and his friend sitting in front of the TV.

Scene III: he and his friend sitting in front of the TV. You see, that was the totality of what Beavis had accomplished with his life.

IDEA: The clip that comes to mind here is at the end of Schindler’s List, when Germany has been defeated and Schindler begins to realize how many more lives he could have saved. For example, he looks at his car and calculates how many Jews he could have gotten in exchange for that money. Depending on how you approach this lesson, this clip could fit somewhere.

Sadly, I fear that for many people, watching the rerun of their life would be just as boring. Just like Beavis, if you watch an average of two hours of TV per day (which is below the national average) for the next 60 years, then a full 7 ½ years of the rerun of your life would be of you sitting in front of the TV!

I hear some people say, “Even if I impact only one person during my life, it will have been worth it.” But I say, if I impacted only one life when I could have impacted hundreds, or impacted an entire country, I’d feel like I had

blown it.

For eight weeks we've talked about "Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase." We've talked about that desire inside each of us to do more than just have a girlfriend or make a good grade or make it to the top of the social ladder or watch TV. We've said we don't want to just make a splash that quickly goes away. We want to leave our mark on this world.

REVIEW: Can you review with me some of the things we will have to do to make that mark. Think back and tell me any things you remember from the series. (Let them share. Contact some students during the week who have been making an impact with their lives, to have them share short testimonies of how God is using them.)

Today's session completes the series. And today challenges us further than we've been challenged so far. That's why I'm calling "**Impact Key #9**" "**Go Extreme.**"

PRAYER

Do you want to go beyond just "doing some good" while you're here on earth? Here are some hints for extreme impact.

I. Dream Big Dreams

ILLUSTRATION: *I read of a man who was thrown out of his car in a collision, was trapped under the car and bleeding so profusely that he knew he wouldn't survive. So he asked someone standing nearby for a pen and piece of paper to write a note to his family before he died. Now I don't know what he wrote, but I can tell you some things he did not write:*

"Hey, could you pick me up a Big Mac and some fries?"

Or, "Man, you know that navy shirt I always wanted from Abercrombie and Fitch? Would you see if you could run buy it for me before I die?"

No way! Last words are important. They cut through all of life's trivia and get to the heart of what's important. In that light, I'd like for someone to read some of Jesus' last words to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Someone tell me, in a sentence or two, what was Jesus saying here? (An incredible challenge. Go out and reach the whole world.)

But many Christians live as though Jesus' last words were,

- *"Guys, you've got about 50 years left on earth before you die. Now try to stay out of trouble till I return. Okay?"*
- *"Girls, make sure to go to church every Sunday, be nice to your parents and please try to not get pregnant till after you're married."*

But Jesus' challenge was so much more. And if we take His challenge seriously, we'll be caught up in a mission that's worth the investment of our lives.

Reflecting on Jesus' great commission, I've made this prayer my own: "Lord, work through me to use the gifts You've given me to make the biggest mark possible on this world while I am here."

As one pastor said,

*It's better to shoot for a star and to hit a mountain peak,
Than to aim for a mudpuddle and hit it every time!*

ACTIVITY: *Let's take a small break so that I can do a little act of kindness for you. I have enough candy for a few pieces for each of you, so I'll throw it out for you. (Before the session you should have alerted several people on the front two rows to keep asking for more. Throw out only blue candy for now. So, you throw the great majority to the front couple of rows, while throwing only an occasional one into 90% of the audience.)*

DEBRIEFING: *What happened here? Was it unfair? Don't blame the students on the front row. I told them before the session to keep asking for more! Some of you were probably thinking, "It's unfair. You keep giving to the first couple of rows while the great majority of the group only gets on occasional piece.*

(Now have the students that have more than one piece of candy distribute their extra candy to the rest of the group. Then have students hand out the red candies evenly among all the group, so that each student has both a red and a blue piece of candy. Instruct them not to eat it for now.) What do you think my point is regarding making a mark on the world? (We keep giving the gospel over and over to the same groups of people, while other groups never hear at all. What right have we to hear the gospel over and over when some have yet to hear once? It's unfair. Does that ever bug you?)

In other words, while you're dreaming of making your mark, why not dream big? Do you want to go beyond making a little mark to making an extreme impact with your life? Why not start by considering locating in places that have the greatest needs. For example, in America we have lots of needs for sure. But if a person wants to seek God, the gospel is within close reach. He can find a bible in every hotel room, a Christian radio station, a nearby Christian bookstore with books on every topic imaginable and a wide variety of nearby churches to choose from. But look at the rest of the world:

- *If you're itching to make an extreme impact, why not consider Eastern Europe. While America has youth ministers in most towns, and thousands of sharp ones all around the country, several years ago in Romania I heard that the number of full time youth ministers doubled - from one to two! You might could be in the top 3 of all youth ministers in the country!*
- *Ninety percent of the Christian workers work with 10% of the world's population. That leaves just 10% of the Christian workers to work with the other 90%. And there are still 3000 to 4000 cultural groups that have never been penetrated by the gospel. Over a billion people in the world have not only never heard the gospel, but don't even have a church nearby to tell them. Not only do we have the gospel, but we've got it in every flavor you could possibly want. Do you like movies? We've got Christian movies. Do you like music? We've got it in a style you like,*

whether it's country, retro, rock, rap, alternative, pop, hard core, punk or grunge. But go to some countries and mention Jesus and they say "Jesus who?"

- *In North Africa, Missionaries are outnumbered two million to one. If the situation was proportionally the same in the US and Canada, there would be about 120 full-time Christian workers and 7 small churches to choose from. When you left for church on Sunday morning, you might have to leave at 4:00 AM and drive 5 hours to get to the nearest church!*

Now I'm not saying that all Christians need to leave their home country. I'm simply saying that if God's serious about reaching the world, then lots of Christians must not be listening for His call.

ILLUSTRATION: *Imagine that you have a heart to serve needy people. You walk outside your door to find 10 people trying to carry a Telephone Pole. But something's weird. Nine people are carrying one side of the pole and only one is straining with the other side. Unless God tells you which side to go to, which side of the pole would you volunteer to help with? (Obviously, the side with the greatest need.) (This could be done as a skit.)*

ILLUSTRATION: *I think that Christian author and speaker Josh McDowell took this approach when he met with a Christian couple over a meal. Both were Christians and the man mentioned that he was studying medicine. Josh commented "Missionary medicine?" The man responded, "No, but if God opens the doors I'm willing to go." Josh replied, "Opens the doors! Right now there are thousands of doors wide open. Why don't you start praying like this, "Lord, I'm planning to go into medical missions. If you don't want me to go, please close the doors."*

ALTERNATE ILLUSTRATION: *Imagine that you're a linebacker on your high school team. Your purpose is to run the ball as far as you can on each play. The center snaps the ball to the quarterback and hands off to you. Your offensive line opens up a hole the size of a Mac Truck in the line. Now do you stop and pray, "Lord, do you want me to go through that hole?"*

Can you see why C.T. Studd, a popular athlete with an excellent education, chose to spend his life reaching lost continents for Christ? He summed up his commitment with this little rhyme:

*Some want to stay within the sound
Of church or chapel bell
I want to run a rescue shop
Within a yard of hell*

Do you want to make an extreme impact with your life? Unless the Lord leads otherwise, go to the places with 1) the greatest needs 2) that you could impact most greatly with your gifts. Consider making life decisions based on how you can make the greatest splash possible in the light of your gifts unless God leads otherwise. If the most effective place to minister is your native country, stay here. If somewhere else, make plans to do some short term missions experiences to see if God's leading there.

II. Dream the Right Dreams

ILLUSTRATION: *A former missionary likes to ask this question: "What's more important, leading a successful ministry that touches the lives of thousands of people, or watching the water*

drain out of the bathtub?” How would you answer that question? (Let them respond.) His answer? “Whichever God wants me to do at the moment.”

You’ll understand his response and its significance when you understand his story. I’ll just read it to you in his own words,

“Ever since Jesus saved me, I’ve always wanted my life to make the greatest impact possible for Him. For years I led youth groups and eventually moved my family to Eastern Europe to train youth workers. But while we were there, my wife was diagnosed with cancer and we had to return to the States to care for her. For the next four years, ministry outside of my home was sparse. I seldom left the house. I did what writing I could to supply resources for Eastern Europe, but most of my days were filled with trips to doctors, preparing baby food and caring for my dear wife. For a person wanting to make a mark on the world, things looked bleak. Or did they?

Two of my boys are twins – David and Paul. They were 8-months old at the time their mom’s cancer was diagnosed. As they got older they wouldn’t let me scoot them off to their bedroom immediately after their bath. Instead they’d cry, “The roun-de-round! The roun-de-round!” Does anybody have an idea what the “roun-de-round” was? (Let them guess.) It was that cool little tornado that forms when the bath water begins to run out the drain. They just *had* to watch it after each bath.

And do you know what this missionary with a master’s degree, this leadership trainer, this international writer with super limited time would do? I’d stand there and enjoy the roun-de-round with my little twins. Why? Because enjoying the roun-de-round with David and Paul was a way I could show an interest in their lives, a way to show love to them. Sure, it wasn’t the type ministry that wows Christians or that looks great on a ministry report. But God didn’t call us to look good. He called us to serve. And whatever we do for the least of these is important. So at that moment, for me, watching the water drain out of the bathtub was more important than witnessing, teaching the bible or even prayer.

The point? This “*Making Your Mark*” stuff can become a head trip, kind of like making a name for yourself or being cool around the committed crowd. But if you can do lowly service, you can make an impact. If you can love, you can make an impact. Just because your ministry may not be highly visible doesn’t mean it can’t be high impact. Taking your little sister to church and praying with her about the bullies on the bus is just as important as planning a mission trip if that’s what God wants you to do for now.

My dear wife went to be with Jesus two years ago today. Now I spend my days caring for my four boys and writing materials from my home to make youth workers more successful in reaching students. In fact, I wrote this series of lessons. But writing this lesson is no more important than reading a bedtime story to my children. So don’t expect to come before God one day and hear, “Well done dynamic servant!” or “Well done brilliant servant.” Instead, I hope to hear,

“...well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:21)

III. Hang Onto Your Dreams

Someone read I Corinthians 15:58 to the group:

“Therefore, my beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

DISCUSSION: Why do you think that we need to hear this verse? (It’s easy to get discouraged during the tough times and to think that we’re not making any progress for Jesus.)

If you decide to make a mark for God, don’t expect a calm knitting party. Prepare for war. Some of you will be slandered. Some will lose friends. Some may go to jail. I’ve heard that more people have been killed in the last hundred years for Christ than all the former centuries combined.

So don’t be surprised when ministries fail, friends forsake you, discouragement sets in and you hear a tempting voice whisper, *“It’s not worth it. Get back in the comfort zone and relax.”*

Jesus’ disciples must have faced this temptation at one time in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus had just said some stuff that was so hard to swallow that many of His followers began to grumble and turned away from following Him. Then Jesus looks at His twelve closest followers and asks,

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” You see, times were hard. It wasn’t fun to be a disciple any more. There was a cost. But someone read to us how Peter answered in John 6:68:

‘Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God.”’

DISCUSSION: Why do you think the disciples were able to hang in there with Jesus when the going got tough? How will that same attitude keep us going during the tough times?

Conclusion

MOVIE CLIP: I want to wrap up this entire series with a segment from the movie *“The Matrix.”* How many of you have seen it? In the movie, the main character was referred to as a Savior. There’s a prophecy of his coming, a character named Trinity, a transport called the Nebuchadnezzar (from the book of Daniel), a betrayal of the Savior by a Judas figure, the death and resurrection of the Savior (and I could go on and on). Now unless the angel of “duh” just flew over your head, you know that the producers are using biblical analogies. Are you following me?

I want to start the clip at a point where Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, is being taken to meet Morpheus. Now Neo already knows that there’s something wrong with the world. Morpheus will offer him the truth and bring Neo to a point of decision. Let’s play the clip:

(Setting your counter at 00 at the first of the tape [before previews], go to about 2040, where a car is pulling up to a building in the rain. Play it to about 2319, where Neo takes the red pill and Morpheus says, “Follow me.”)

Just like Morpheus, I’m offering you two choices. Just like Neo, you have two pills - a red pill and a blue pill (the candy).

You can take the **blue pill** and go home and forget about this series. You can act like there’s no God, no purpose in your life, no eternal existence awaiting us after this life. You can go back to

school, get as popular as you can get, get a job, get a spouse, have 2.5 children and a car and try to fit into this world as comfortably as you can. Just keep trying to believe the lie that the emptiness in your soul will soon be filled with your next girlfriend or boyfriend, your next job, or your next toy.

Or, you can take the **red pill**. It won't be easy. You seek the truth and live according to it. You purpose in your heart to set free as many people as you can from the Matrix of spiritual blindness that imprisons them and you can't rest until the whole world knows the truth. Your commitment is, Lord I'll do:

Anything
Anytime
Anywhere

You'll fail miserably at times. But you'll bounce back because where else have we to go? Jesus has words of eternal life.

Let's **bow our heads** and let you decide before God which pill you want to take. Take the pill of your choice.

Action Points

For those of you who took the red pill, here's what you can do.

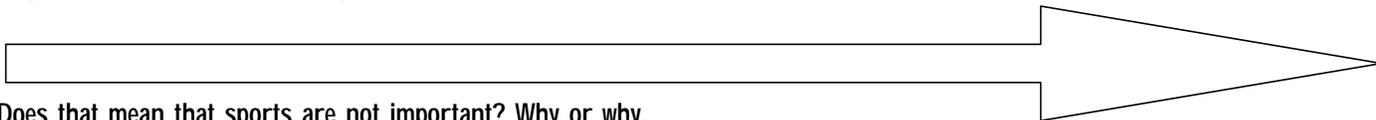
- Start to grow. Read your bible. Pray. Meet consistently with other believers who are as charged up as you are.
- Find a place to serve.
- Find a short term mission experience to take. (Leader: this is a good time to push a mission trip that you offer.)

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #1: Catch the Vision

"A Really Cool Sport, Viewed From Heaven"

The Time Line: Put a dot in the time line to represent our earthly life. How important are our activities which have value only in that one dot (our earthly life)?



Does that mean that sports are not important? Why or why not? _____

POWER PASSAGE: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."* (Matthew 6:19,20)

DIGGING IN: *What are some things people live for that won't last past this lifetime?* _____

What are some things we can do that will last for eternity? (See Matthew 6:1-17 and 1 Corinthians 13:8)

I. Break Down the Barriers



A. Flush Your Stereotypes

DISCUSSION: What is a stereotype? _____

What are some stereotypes of Christians who try to impact others?

Evangelist Evan: Why is he a stereotype? _____

Fanatical Fred: Why is he a stereotype? _____

Talented Tammy: Why is she a stereotype? _____

"Albert Makes His Mark"

B. See Through the Lies

Lie #1: It's only for the church staff

POWER PASSAGE: Read Acts 8:1-4

DIGGING IN: Where were the apostles? _____ Who was impacting the region? _____

NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS AN EVANGELIST, BUT HEY, MAYBE I AM!!



Why They Came to Church Percentage That Came for that Reason

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Advertisements | 2% |
| Pastor Contacted | 6% |
| Organized Visitation | 6% |
| Friends or Relatives Invited | 86% |

Lie #2: It's only for the outgoing people. (1 Corinthians 12:1ff)

Lie #3: It's too scary. (Ephesians 6:10ff)

"A prison chaplain gets distracted."

Lie #4: Nobody's interested.

Two out of three American teens say that they strongly desire to have a relationship with God.

"A great running back."

"A wild student reveals his heart."

Lie #5: Everybody's happy without Christ. Why bother them? (Proverbs 10:24 versus Psalm 84:11)

"A popular student takes his life."

II. Give Up Your Small Ambitions

- **By making sure you know God personally (John 15:5)**

"Mission: Impossible II"

- **By losing interest in temporal things (Matthew 6:19,20)**

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

SURE I WANT TO MAKE MY MARK! BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO SET THE HIGH SCORE ON THIS COOL GAME!



- **By adopting a personal mission**

POWER PASSAGE: Read Paul's mission statement in Colossians 1:28,29.

DIGGING IN: What strikes you about this mission?

_____ Was he content to impact merely one or two people during his life? _____ What kind of effort did he put into his mission?

"An Applicant Who Knew His Mission"

MY MISSION IN LIFE:

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #2: Join a Conspiracy of Kindness

There are three kinds of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened!

"A frustrated pastor breaks through to big time impact"

"Small things done with great love will change the world."

POWER PASSAGES:

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39)

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:46,47)

WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER!

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7,8)



Jesus, in praying to God concerning His followers, said, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:23b)

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

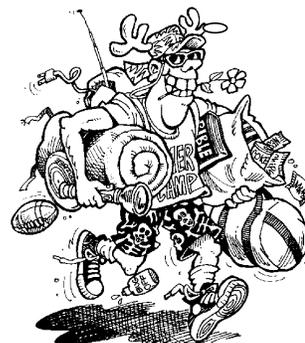
"...God's kindness leads you towards repentance". (Romans 2:4)

FINALLY! I'VE FOUND
SOME PEOPLE WHO
ACCEPT ME AS I AM!

Kindness Inventory

- When people think about me as a person, is my outstanding characteristic how much I love people? _____
- When people think about our youth ministry, are people amazed at how much we love each other and how much kindness we show to others? _____
- When people think about our church, even if they don't buy into all the spiritual stuff, do they have to admit that we have a remarkable love for one another and an incredible compassion for people outside the church? _____

1. Build Relationships Through Friendliness



Habits of Highly Friendly People

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- etc.

"What is it about you guys? You're contagious!" (College girl to some Christian guys)

II. Discover the Power of Encouragement

"Mel Gibson gets into acting."

"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

BRAINSTORM! How Can We Encourage People?

III. Practice Acts of Kindness

Conclusion and Action Points

I need to be more friendly by...

I need to encourage these people by (write a note, call them on the phone, etc.):

I or my youth group should do one of these acts of kindness:



Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #3: Unleash the Power of Prayer

"George Mueller Shakes the World Through Prayer."

I. What's So Great About Prayer?

A. It taps into God's power.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3)

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..." (Ephesians 3:20)

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 Jn. 5:14,15)

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." (John 15:7)

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the father." (John 14:13,14)

"...apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

"Fred Goes to Heaven"

"You should have plans for your spiritual life that couldn't possibly be fulfilled without a supernatural act of God." (Jack Murray)

B. It opens the eyes of the lost.

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (II Corinthians 4:4)

"Mueller Wins the Spiritual Battle"



II. Get Personal!

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:6

HINTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE:

III. Get Specific!

TEN MOST WANTED LIST

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

IV. Get Together!

“Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Mt. 18:19,20)

PRAYER TRIPLETS

***Three friends...
Meeting three times a week to pray...
For three friends who need Christ.***



IV. Expect Opposition

“The one desire of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom; but trembles when we pray.” (Samuel Chadwick)

Conclusion and Action Points

“Mission Impossible”

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #4: Share Your Story

I. Get a Life!

"...so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." (1 Timothy 6:19b, NASB)

"You're Contagious!"

II. Have a Heart!

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" (Matthew 9:36-38)

Compassion = "Pity for the suffering or distress of another, with the desire to help or spare." (Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary)



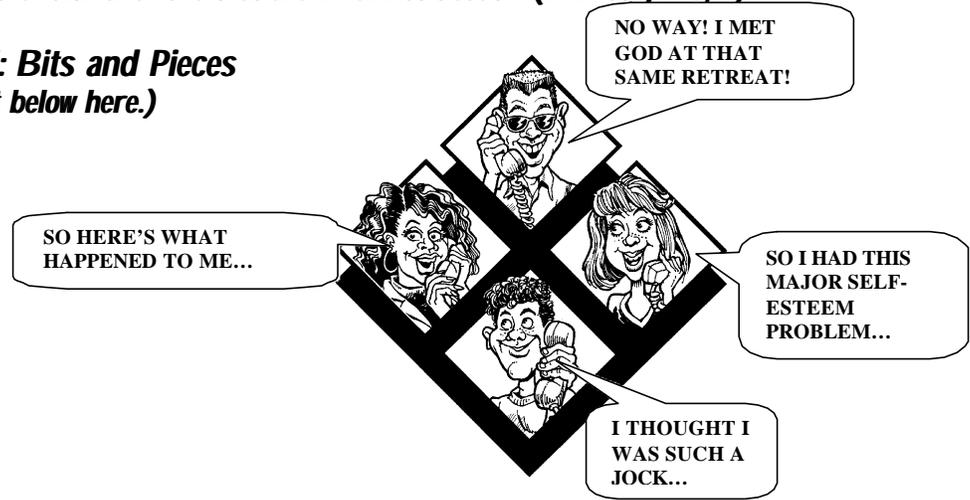
- *More than one out of three teens say they are stressed out (Barna, 1999)*
- *Over 1 out of 10 describe themselves as lonely (Barna, 1999)*
- *Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds. (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, November, 1998) In Los Angeles County alone, it is estimated that between 50 and 100 teens attempt suicide every day. One per day succeeds. (Los Angeles Unified School District)*
- *One in four teens who have sex will get a sexually transmitted disease. (Centers for Disease Control)*
- *One in five teens will eventually have Herpes, a sexually transmitted disease for which there is no cure.*

III. Share Your Story

A testimony is simply you telling the story of something that happened to you. A Christian testimony is simply telling the story of how Jesus changed your life.

“Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 1:13,14)

TESTIMONY #1: Bits and Pieces
(Write it out below here.)



TESTIMONY #2: Full Testimony

Introductory Statement:

Point 1 – My Life Before I Met Jesus

Point 2 – How I Met Jesus

Point 3 – My Life After I Met Jesus

CONCLUDING STATEMENT TO TRANSITION INTO THE GOSPEL: “But the greatest thing about knowing God personally is that I can know that I have eternal life. Would you like to know how?”

Tips for Better Testimonies

- ***Avoid religious jargon, such as, “converted,” “born again,” “convicted,” or “saved.”***
- ***Don’t mention church denominations, especially in a bad way. They may have had a bad experience with the one you love or be intensely loyal to one you were about to cut!***
- ***Make it more interesting by being specific and painting verbal pictures. For example, instead of just saying, “I grew up in the country,” give some details of the place so that they can visualize it.***
- ***Don’t stretch the truth. God wants to use your story exactly the way it happened. It doesn’t have to be dramatic to be powerful.***
- ***Speak naturally. You’re not trying to develop a formal speech with flowery language. Develop it in the style you normally speak to a friend.***
- ***Use some verses from the bible, especially if you’re sharing before a group. Remember, the Word of God has power.***
- ***Relax! You don’t have to do things perfectly. Trust God and He will take over.***
- ***Practice sharing your testimony in your bedroom until it no longer sounds canned or memorized. Record it and listen back to help you get rid of distracting “Uh’s” and “Ah’s” and “You know’s”. Tell it to a Christian friend and have him/her critique you. You want it to come across natural, like when you share something exciting with a friend.***

- ***Take opportunities to share your testimony wherever you can. Would any of you like to volunteer to share your testimony before the entire group next week? What about the next? Remember: practice makes perfect!***

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #5: Share The Good News

"Blonde Prays for the Lottery"

I. We've Got a Part

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:12-15)

I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:22)

"Not Enough to Live the Life"

YOU KNOW, I THINK
IT'S ENOUGH TO JUST
BE A NICE PERSON.

"A Machine-Gunner Learns His Lesson"



II. We've Got a Message

Transitioning into the gospel

Approach #1: "Could you give me your opinion?"

Explanation: This gets the gospel into people's hands when you don't have time to explain it. Carry booklets like the "Jesus No Equal" tract. When you sit with a friend on the bus or another place, say something like,

"Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I've never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it. I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you take a copy and look it over when you have time? I'm not trying to push anything on you. It's just that this meant so much to me that I want you to know about it too."

Let's Do It!

Approach #2: "Freestyle"

Explanation: Memorize each main point of the booklet and a Scripture for each one. Then you don't have to be dependent on using a booklet.

Approach #3: "Let's go through it together."

Explanation: *In a relaxed setting, read through the booklet with your friend.*

Hints:

- *Some say that you should both look at the same booklet. I think it's more comfortable to give my friend a booklet and keep another one for myself. Maybe it's just because I've got moose breath and the distance makes it easier on my friends!*
- *Practice reading through it at home till you're so comfortable with it that your presentation sounds more like you're telling it than reading it.*
- *If they start asking questions that could get you off track, say, "If it's no problem with you, let's get through the entire presentation and then talk about whatever questions you like."*
- *Be aware that often weird things happen when you come to the point of receiving Christ. Remember, it's a spiritual warfare. Visitors come to the door, phones ring, dogs run into the room.*
- *Don't introduce it by saying, "This is how you become a Christian." Lots of non-Christians think they are Christians already. That approach might offend them. Others have weird ideas of Christians. Often I start with the classic sentence, "Have you ever come to a point in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you died tonight you would be in heaven tomorrow?" Or, "The message of this booklet helped me come to a real assurance of my faith. Could I share it with you?" Or, I use one of the approaches we talked about earlier.*
- *Occasionally ask, "Does this make sense to you?" That keeps them involved and makes the presentation more like a conversation than a lecture.*
- *If you make a mistake, just laugh about it and keep going. God can even use your goofs.*
- *If she says, "I've already heard this before," ask her what she thinks about it.*
- *Don't use high pressure tactics to get a decision out of people. Trust the Spirit to work on their hearts.*
- *Use a transitional statement to get you into it. For example: "Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I've never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it and I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?" Or, after you share your personal testimony, you could say, "This booklet tells all about the decision I made that changed my life so much. I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?"*
- *When you get to third page of "Reality #4," let the person answer the question at the top of the page. Then tell him to listen to the example prayer as you read it, to see if this prayer expresses what he'd like to say to God. After you've read it out loud, ask him if he'd like to pray that prayer to God. If so, you could either read it together to God, or you could read a short phrase and he could repeat after you.*

How do you spell SUCCESS?

"Successful witnessing is sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results with God." (Bill Bright)

“Loving Persistence Pays Off With Chris”

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #6: Why Add...When You Can Multiply?

"Skit: Stompin' on Babies"

1. Welcome Them Into The Family!

"A Weird Guy Visits a Conservative Church"

POWER PASSAGES

"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."
1 Peter 3:8



"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7)

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:23

BRAINSTORM: How will you make this group friendlier, more accepting, more loving?

2. Help them grow!

"Show Them What Comes With the Ticket!"

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (3 John 4)



It's Time to Do Some Growing!

A. Help them Understand Grace.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."(Colossians 2:6)

B. Help Them Understand Who They Are in Christ

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Heb. 4:16)

C. Help Them Get to Know God Better

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Peter 2:2)

D. Encourage Them

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24,25)

"Catch Them Doing Something Right."

3. Help Them Deal With Their Sin.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

4. Answer Their Questions.

"The more I grow as a Christian, the more comfortable I get with the little phrase, 'I don't know.'" (Christian College Professor)

5. Hook Them Up With Strong Christians.

Someone read Proverbs 13:20 for us.

"He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." (Proverbs 13:20)

3. Help them find their niche!

"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

4. Help them reach their friends and teach their friends to reach their friends and...

"Therefore go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19)

GET OUT YOUR CALCULATORS!

THREE ILLUSTRATIONS OF MULTIPLICATION



Making a Mark...That's Hard To Erase

Impact Key #7 – Find Your Niche

"Who Was the Hero?"

#1 – You're Gifted!

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

"The Church is Like a Football Game"

#2 – Singing and Teaching Are Not the Only Gifts!

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." (Romans 12:4-6, cr. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

#3 -- Your Gift is Important

"The Untangle Game"

"I'm Building a Cathedral"

#4 -- Go on a Gift Hunt!



A. Pray for wisdom.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

B. Serve now in as many ways as you can.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others..." (1 Pet. 4:10)

How I Could Get Involved...

C. Note what you enjoy. (Psalm 37:4, 84:11)

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)

D. Note where you excel.

E. Get wise counsel from others.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." (Prov. 15:22)

#5 -- Develop your Gifts.

"Whatever You Do, Don't Go Into Public Speaking"

Give it time!

"Amy, I Don't Think Singing Is Your Thing."

Work hard!



"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:28,29)

"Da Vinci Draws 1000 Hands"

"Edison Succeeds After 1000 Failures"

Lean Totally on God

Afraid you don't have what it takes? Look back at the Colossians passage. God doesn't leave us to gut it out on our own. He works through us, supplying the strength that we lack.

Conclusion and Action Points

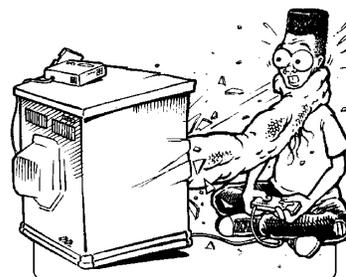
Making a Mark...That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #8 - Go Extreme

Introduction

"Beavis' Life Flashes Before His Eyes"

If you watch an average of two hours of TV per day (which is below the national average) for the next 60 years, then a full 7 ½ years of the rerun of your life would be of you sitting in front of the TV!



I. Dream Big Dreams

"The Importance of Last Words"

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

***It's better to shoot for a star and to hit a mountain peak,
Than to aim for a mudpuddle and hit it every time!***

ACTIVITY: Take a Candy Break!

- ***Several years ago in Romania I heard that the number of full time youth ministers doubled - from one to two!***
- ***Ninety percent of the Christian workers work with 10% of the world's population. That leaves just 10% of the Christian workers to work with the other 90%. And there are still 3000 to 4000 cultural groups that have never been penetrated by the gospel. Over a billion people in the world have not only never heard the gospel, but don't even have a church nearby to tell them.***
- ***In North Africa, Missionaries are outnumbered two million to one. If the situation was proportionally the same in the US and Canada, there would be about 120 full-time Christian workers and 7 small churches to choose from. When you left for church on Sunday morning, you might have to leave at 4:00 AM and drive 5 hours to get to the nearest church!***

"Which Side of the Pole Would You Help With?"

***Some want to stay within the sound
Of church or chapel bell
I want to run a rescue shop***

Within a yard of hell (C.T. Studd, popular athlete in an excellent school, who gave his life to pioneer missions)

II. Dream the Right Dreams

"What's more important, leading a successful ministry that touches the lives of thousands of people, or watching the water drain out of the bathtub?"

"...well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21)

III. Hang Onto Your Dreams

"Therefore, my beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

'Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God."' (John 6:68)

Conclusion

MOVIE CLIP: "The Matrix."

Two Choices: The red pill or the blue pill.

**Anything
Anytime
Anywhere**



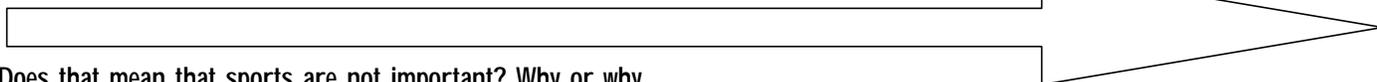
Action Points

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #1: Catch the Vision

"A Really Cool Sport, Viewed From Heaven"

The Time Line: Put a dot in the time line to represent our earthly life. How important are our activities which have value only in that one dot (our earthly life)?



Does that mean that sports are not important? Why or why not? _____

POWER PASSAGE: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."* (Matthew 6:19,20)

DIGGING IN: *What are some things people live for that won't last past this lifetime?* _____

What are some things we can do that will last for eternity? (See Matthew 6:1-17 and 1 Corinthians 13:8)

I. Break Down the _____

SHATTERING STEREOTYPES

A. _____ Your Stereotypes

DISCUSSION: What is a stereotype? _____

What are some stereotypes of Christians who try to impact others?

Evangelist Evan: Why is he a stereotype?

Fanatical Fred: Why is he a stereotype? _____

Talented Tammy: Why is she a stereotype? _____

"Albert Makes His Mark"

B. See Through the _____

Lie #1: It's only for the _____ staff
POWER PASSAGE: Read Acts 8:1-4

DIGGING IN: Where were the apostles? _____ Who was impacting the region? _____

NEVER THOUGHT OF MYSELF AS AN EVANGELIST, BUT HEY, MAYBE I AM!!



Why They Came to Church Percentage That Came for that Reason

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Advertisements | 2% |
| Pastor Contacted | 6% |
| Organized Visitation | 6% |
| Friends or Relatives Invited | 86% |

Lie #2: It's only for the _____ people. (1 Corinthians 12:1ff)

Lie #3: It's too _____ . (Ephesians 6:10ff)

"A prison chaplain gets distracted."

Lie #4: Nobody's _____ .

_____ **American teens say that they strongly desire to have a relationship with God.**

"A great running back."

"A wild student reveals his heart."

Lie #5: Everybody's _____ without Christ. Why bother them? (Proverbs 10:24 versus Psalm 84:11)

"A popular student takes his life."

II. Give Up Your Small _____

- **By making sure you know God personally (John 15:5)**

"Mission: Impossible II"

- **By losing interest in temporal things (Matthew 6:19,20)**

SURE I WANT TO MAKE MY MARK! BUT FIRST I'VE GOT TO SET THE HIGH SCORE ON THIS COOL GAME!



"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

- **By adopting a personal mission**

POWER PASSAGE: Read Paul's mission statement in Colossians 1:28,29.

DIGGING IN: What strikes you about this mission?

_____ Was he content to impact merely one or two people during his life? _____ What kind of effort did he put into his mission?

"An Applicant Who Knew His Mission"

MY MISSION IN LIFE:

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase Impact Key #2: Join a Conspiracy of Kindness

There are three kinds of people in this world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened!

"A frustrated pastor breaks through to big time impact"

"Small things done with great love will change the world."

POWER PASSAGES:

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:39)



WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER!

"If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?" (Matthew 5:46,47)

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7,8)

Jesus, in praying to God concerning His followers, said, *"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* (John 17:23b)

"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

"...God's kindness leads you towards repentance". (Romans 2:4)

Kindness Inventory

- When people think about me as a person, is my outstanding characteristic how much I love people?

- When people think about our youth ministry, are people amazed at how much we love each other and how much kindness we show to others? _____
- When people think about our church, even if they don't buy into all the spiritual stuff, do they have to admit that we have a remarkable love for one another and an incredible compassion for people outside the church? _____

I. Build Relationships Through _____

Habits of Highly Friendly People

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
- etc.



"What is it about you guys? You're contagious!" (College girl to some Christian guys)

II. Discover the Power of _____

"Mel Gibson gets into acting."

"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

BRAINSTORM! How Can We Encourage People?

III. _____ Acts of Kindness

Conclusion and Action Points

I need to be more friendly by...

I need to encourage these people by (write a note, call them on the phone, etc.):

I or my youth group should do one of these acts of kindness:



Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #3: Unleash the Power of Prayer

"George Mueller Shakes the World Through Prayer."

I. What's So _____ About Prayer?

A. It taps into God's _____.

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jeremiah 33:3)

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us..." (Ephesians 3:20)

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (Matthew 21:22)

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 Jn. 5:14,15)

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you." (John 15:7)

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the father." (John 14:13,14)

"...apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

"Fred Goes to Heaven"

"You should have plans for your spiritual life that couldn't possibly be fulfilled without a supernatural act of God." (Jack Murray)

B. It opens the _____ of the lost.

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (II Corinthians 4:4)

"Mueller Wins the Spiritual Battle"

II. Get _____!

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:6

HINTS FOR YOUR PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE:



III. Get _____!

TEN MOST WANTED LIST

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

IV. Get _____!

“Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Mt. 18:19,20)

PRAYER TRIPLETS

***Three friends...
Meeting three times a week to pray...
For three friends who need Christ.***

NOW IT'S MY TURN TO PRAY WHILE YOU PULL AHEAD AND WATCH THE PATH!!



IV. _____ Opposition

“The one desire of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom; but trembles when we pray.” (Samuel Chadwick)

Conclusion and Action Points

“Mission Impossible”

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase Impact Key #4: Share Your Story

I. Get a _____!

"...so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." (1 Timothy 6:19b, NASB)

"You're Contagious!"

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"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" (Matthew 9:36-38)

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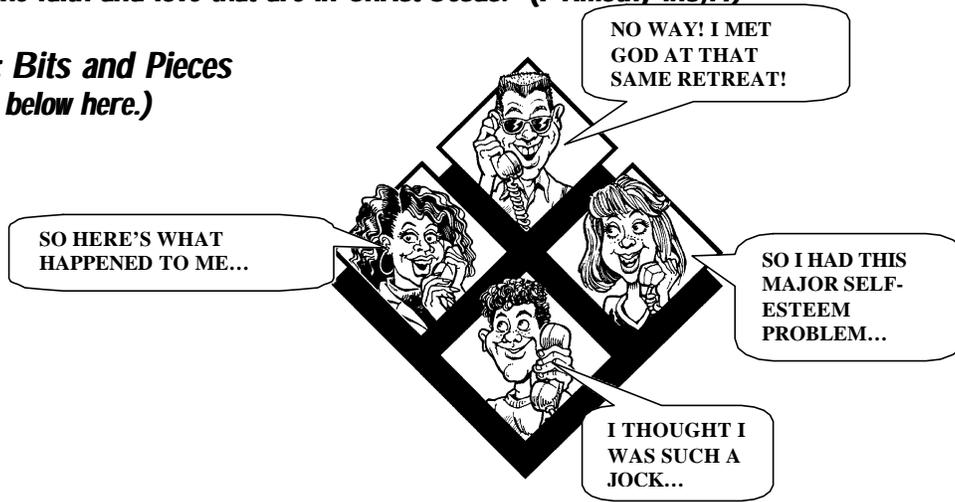
- *More than one out of three teens say they are _____ (Barna, 1999)*
- *Over 1 out of 10 describe themselves as _____ (Barna, 1999)*
- *_____ is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds. (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, November, 1998) In Los Angeles County alone, it is estimated that between 50 and 100 teens attempt suicide every day. One per day succeeds. (Los Angeles Unified School District)*
- *One in four teens who have sex will get a _____ _____ . (Centers for Disease Control)*
- *One in five teens will eventually have _____, a sexually transmitted disease for which there is no cure.*

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TESTIMONY #1: Bits and Pieces
(Write it out below here.)



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Point 1 – My Life Before I Met Jesus

Point 2 – How I Met Jesus

Point 3 – My Life After I Met Jesus

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- ***Don’t mention church denominations, especially in a bad way. They may have had a bad experience with the one you love or be intensely loyal to one you were about to cut!***
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Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase

Impact Key #5: Share The Good News

"Blonde Prays for the Lottery"

I. We've Got a _____

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:12-15)

I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Corinthians 9:22)

"Not Enough to Live the Life"

"A Machine-Gunner Learns His Lesson"

YOU KNOW, I THINK
IT'S ENOUGH TO
JUST BE A NICE
PERSON.



II. We've Got a _____

Transitioning into the gospel

Approach #1: "Could you give me your opinion?"

Explanation: This gets the gospel into people's hands when you don't have time to explain it. Carry booklets like the "Jesus No Equal" tract. When you sit with a friend on the bus or another place, say something like,

"Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I've never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it. I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you take a copy and look it over when you have time? I'm not trying to push anything on you. It's just that this meant so much to me that I want you to know about it too."

Let's Do It!

Approach #2: "Freestyle"

Explanation: Memorize each main point of the booklet and a Scripture for each one. Then you don't have to be dependent on using a booklet.

Approach #3: "Let's go through it together."

Explanation: *In a relaxed setting, read through the booklet with your friend.*

Hints:

- *Some say that you should both look at the same booklet. I think it's more comfortable to give my friend a booklet and keep another one for myself. Maybe it's just because I've got moose breath and the distance makes it easier on my friends!*
- *Practice reading through it at home till you're so comfortable with it that your presentation sounds more like you're telling it than reading it.*
- *If they start asking questions that could get you off track, say, "If it's no problem with you, let's get through the entire presentation and then talk about whatever questions you like."*
- *Be aware that often weird things happen when you come to the point of receiving Christ. Remember, it's a spiritual warfare. Visitors come to the door, phones ring, dogs run into the room.*
- *Don't introduce it by saying, "This is how you become a Christian." Lots of non-Christians think they are Christians already. That approach might offend them. Others have weird ideas of Christians. Often I start with the classic sentence, "Have you ever come to a point in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you died tonight you would be in heaven tomorrow?" Or, "The message of this booklet helped me come to a real assurance of my faith. Could I share it with you?" Or, I use one of the approaches we talked about earlier.*
- *Occasionally ask, "Does this make sense to you?" That keeps them involved and makes the presentation more like a conversation than a lecture.*
- *If you make a mistake, just laugh about it and keep going. God can even use your goofs.*
- *If she says, "I've already heard this before," ask her what she thinks about it.*
- *Don't use high pressure tactics to get a decision out of people. Trust the Spirit to work on their hearts.*
- *Use a transitional statement to get you into it. For example: "Several years ago I made a decision that changed my life and I've never gotten over it. This booklet tells all about it and I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?" Or, after you share your personal testimony, you could say, "This booklet tells all about the decision I made that changed my life so much. I'd like to get your opinion of it. Would you mind if I read through it with you right now?"*
- *When you get to third page of "Reality #4," let the person answer the question at the top of the page. Then tell him to listen to the example prayer as you read it, to see if this prayer expresses what he'd like to say to God. After you've read it out loud, ask him if he'd like to pray that prayer to God. If so, you could either read it together to God, or you could read a short phrase and he could repeat after you.*

How do you spell SUCCESS?

"Successful witnessing is sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results with God." (Bill Bright)

“Loving Persistence Pays Off With Chris”

Making a Mark That's Hard to Erase Impact Key #6: Why Add...When You Can Multiply?

"Skit: Stompin' on Babies"

1. _____ Them Into The Family!

"A Weird Guy Visits a Conservative Church"



POWER PASSAGES

*"Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble."
1 Peter 3:8*

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7)

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." John 17:23

BRAINSTORM: How will you make this group friendlier, more accepting, more loving?

2. Help them _____!

"Show Them What Comes With the Ticket!"

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." (3 John 4)



It's Time to Do Some Growing!

A. Help them Understand

_____.

"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."(Colossians 2:6)

B. Help Them Understand Who They Are in _____

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Heb. 4:16)

C. Help Them Get to Know God _____

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good." (1 Peter 2:2)

D. _____ Them

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24,25)

"Catch Them Doing Something Right."

3. Help Them Deal With Their _____.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

4. Answer Their _____.

"The more I grow as a Christian, the more comfortable I get with the little phrase, 'I don't know.'" (Christian College Professor)

5. Hook Them Up With _____ Christians.

Someone read Proverbs 13:20 for us.

"He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm." (Proverbs 13:20)

3. Help them find their _____!

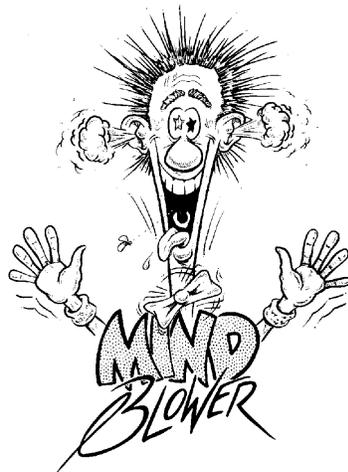
"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Corinthians 12:7)

4. Help them reach their _____ and teach their friends to reach their friends and...

"Therefore go and make disciples...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matthew 28:19)

GET OUT YOUR CALCULATORS!

THREE ILLUSTRATIONS OF MULTIPLICATION



ACTION POINTS

Making a Mark...That's Hard To Erase

Impact Key #7 – Find Your Niche

"Who Was the Hero?"

#1 – You're _____!

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1 Cor. 12:4-7)

"The Church is Like a Football Game"

#2 – Singing and Teaching Are _____ the Only Gifts!

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us."(Romans 12:4-6, cr. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

#3 – Your Gift is _____.

"The Untangle Game"

"I'm Building a Cathedral"

#4 – Go on a Gift _____!

A. _____ for wisdom.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." (James 1:5)

B. _____ now in as many ways as you can.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...." (1 Pet. 4:10)

How I Could Get Involved...

C. Note what you _____. (Psalm 37:4, 84:11)

"Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)



D. Note where you _____.

E. Get _____ from others.

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." (Prov. 15:22)

#5 – _____ your Gifts.

"Whatever You Do, Don't Go Into Public Speaking"

Give it time!

"Amy, I Don't Think Singing Is Your Thing."

Work hard!



"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me." (Col. 1:28,29)

"Da Vinci Draws 1000 Hands"

"Edison Succeeds After 1000 Failures"

Lean Totally on God

Afraid you don't have what it takes? Look back at the Colossians passage. God doesn't leave us to gut it out on our own. He works through us, supplying the strength that we lack.

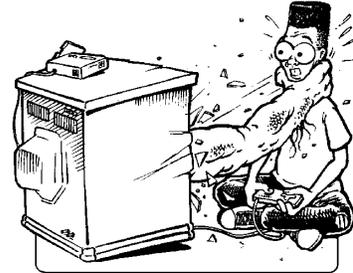
Conclusion and Action Points

Making a Mark...That's Hard to Erase **Impact Key #8 - Go Extreme**

Introduction

"Beavis' Life Flashes Before His Eyes"

If you watch an average of two hours of TV per day (which is below the national average) for the next 60 years, then a full 7 ½ years of the rerun of your life would be of you sitting in front of the TV!



I. Dream Big _____

"The Importance of Last Words"

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

***It's better to shoot for a star and to hit a mountain peak,
Than to aim for a mudpuddle and hit it every time!***

ACTIVITY: Take a Candy Break!

- ***Several years ago in Romania I heard that the number of full time youth ministers doubled - from one to two!***
- ***Ninety percent of the Christian workers work with 10% of the world's population. That leaves just 10% of the Christian workers to work with the other 90%. And there are still 3000 to 4000 cultural groups that have never been penetrated by the gospel. Over a billion people in the world have not only never heard the gospel, but don't even have a church nearby to tell them.***
- ***In North Africa, Missionaries are outnumbered two million to one. If the situation was proportionally the same in the US and Canada, there would be about 120 full-time Christian workers and 7 small churches to choose from. When you left for church on Sunday morning, you might have to leave at 4:00 AM and drive 5 hours to get to the nearest church!***

"Which Side of the Pole Would You Help With?"

***Some want to stay within the sound
Of church or chapel bell
I want to run a rescue shop***

Within a yard of hell (C.T. Studd, popular athlete in an excellent school, who gave his life to pioneer missions)

II. Dream the _____ Dreams

"What's more important, leading a successful ministry that touches the lives of thousands of people, or watching the water drain out of the bathtub?"

"...well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21)

III. _____ Onto Your Dreams

"Therefore, my beloved brethren be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

'Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that You are the Holy One of God."' (John 6:68)

Conclusion

MOVIE CLIP: "The Matrix."

Two Choices: The red pill or the blue pill.

*Anything
Anytime
Anywhere*



Action Points
