



BE BOLD

Aim: Lead students to prepare and deliver a missions-topic speech.

Outcomes:

- ➔ Students will research, write, and deliver a 20-minute speech on missions.

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Bible
- ✓ Whiteboard
- ✓ Markers for whiteboard
- ✓ Computer with Internet, if one is available

Leader Preparation:

All of us, as leaders, have been called on to speak to groups before. As a leader, you are a speaker to Challengers each week. However, many of us feel uncomfortable at times. Our Challengers are not any different. Some are very confident in speaking to groups and many are intimidated. They can speak about their involvement in missions and let others know why missions is important to them. This lesson is going to focus on helping Challengers research, write, and deliver a 20-minute speech about missions.

Start the lesson by asking your Challengers the “Get Prepared” questions. After they have answered the questions have them turn in their Bibles to Ephesians 5:1. Have one of the Challengers read the verse aloud. Let the Challengers know that in Ephesians 5:1 we are called to be imitators of God. We can be imitators, if we as Christians learn how to convey the message of Christ to other people. Tell the Challengers they can speak about their own missions experiences and lead others to learn more about missions.

To get started they need to know that you research your material first. Some good places to start researching are your own church, state convention, the North American Mission Board (NAMB), and the International Mission Board (IMB). Encourage the Challengers to research how your church is involved in missions. They can also look to see if your state has a partnership with another state or country. Finally, they can look on Web sites like www.namb.net or www.imb.org. You may want to show them the Web sites if you haven’t viewed them earlier.

Once the Challengers know where to find the information they need to write their speeches, they will need some time on their own to gather the information. As the leader, you can help them get some ideas of what to write about. Have the Challengers play the “Win, Lose, or Draw With A Twist.” The whole idea is to have them think about

missions as being more than just going on a trip or hearing someone talk about missions. Guide them to think again about the “Get Prepared” questions used earlier in the meeting. Talk about what helps them pay attention to speakers. For example, did the speaker use props or a video to make their speech more interesting. Tell the guys as they write their missions speech to think of something to grab the attention of the audience. Tell the Challengers you will read anything they write if they want you to do so.

Explain to the Challengers that the writing and delivery are both equally important. Tell the guys another way to help them decide what to write about in their speeches is to brainstorm ideas. Finally, have the Challengers complete the “Important Delivery” activity. Tell them that this activity can help them in completing their speeches and developing their delivery. The last thing is a great delivery. Tell the Challengers that once they have written their speech they can prepare by practicing. One of the best ways to practice is to give your speech while looking in the mirror. Another way is to tape yourself giving the speech and listen to it. Regardless, close the session by telling them to remember God helps us in all ways. If He is leading them to speak about missions He will give them the strength. Have the Challengers gather in a circle and pray asking God to use them to speak about His work.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children” (Ephesians 5:1).



Get Prepared

Start by asking Challengers the following questions.

- ➔ Have you ever heard a preacher or speaker that kept your attention the whole time?
- ➔ What made you want to keep listening? (Example: talk about some of the techniques used like visuals)
- ➔ How can you as a Challenger prepare a missions speech?



Win, Lose, or Draw With A Twist

Break the Challengers into two teams. You will need a large surface like a whiteboard to draw on and something to draw with for this activity. Tell the Challengers they are going to play a game that will help them with ideas for their missions speeches. The rules of the game are simple. Have a player from one of the teams go to the board. Give him an object to draw that has something to do with missions. Make sure none of the other players can hear you. Tell him he has 20 seconds to draw the object and for his team to guess what the object is. When they guess the object drawn, they have to state a way a missionary could use the object. (For example, you tell the Challenger to draw a canoe. The team guesses canoe. The reason the group could give is canoes could be used in international areas to reach certain people groups.) If the team gets the object right and gives a way to use it in missions, the point goes to them. If they do not get the object right in 20 seconds, the other team gets 15

seconds to guess and give a way the object can be used in missions. If they can, they get the point and the next turn. The team with the most points is the winner.



Important Delivery

Most speakers have five parts to their speeches. They have an introduction, three points, and a conclusion. To help your Challengers in their writing and delivery have them brainstorm using this help. First, have them trace the outline of their hand on a piece of paper. Next, have them label the thumb-introduction, the three middle fingers-point, and their pinkie finger-conclusion. Then, have the Challengers write their ideas on each finger to organize their speech. (For example, the introduction could be I went on a mission trip to Peru. The main points on the middle fingers were we led worship, we led a soccer camp, and we had three children accept Christ. The conclusion is we allowed God to use us in ministering to the people in Peru.) Tell Challengers not only can they organize their thoughts this way, but it will also help them in writing their speeches.



WHAT NOW?

Continue to encourage your Challengers to work on their speeches. Tell them you will allow them to practice by giving their speeches to you or you will find them an audience. Make sure they know about all the resources that are available to them on www.namb.net or www.imb.org. Another idea is to check and see if your state convention has a missions speak-out contest for Challengers. If they do, help your Challengers enter the competition.



Lesson By: Brian Spearman

Brian Spearman is a student pastor at Marietta First Baptist Church in South Carolina. His wife's name is Angela and they have two sons, Nate and James Patrick.

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IT'S NOT BRAIN SURGERY, BUT IT'S CLOSE

Aim: Lead students to order their lives around these 10 virtues (Faith, Loyalty, Courage, Perseverance, Friendship, Compassion, Honesty, Self-discipline, Responsibility, Teamwork).

Outcomes:

- Students will learn and articulate the Challengers virtues.
- Students will form accountability partners to support one another in maintaining their virtues.

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Craft sticks (3 or 4 boxes—available at discount stores)
- ✓ Duct tape (12 rolls)
- ✓ 5 or 6 heavy items (bowling ball, bricks, sandbags)
- ✓ Copies of The Challengers Vigil
(At end of lesson or at www.challengerscentral.com)
- ✓ Bibles
- ✓ Pens

Leader Preparation:

If you had only one chance to get something right you'd pay special attention to details. You'd be meticulous in your planning and implementation. You'd get the right people and the right resources and use the best materials to ensure success. With one shot, you'd give 110 percent. There would be sleepless nights and intense notetaking in the process. When the day of execution came, you'd watch while you held your breath to see if your one shot would pay off.

There have been numerous "one shot" moments in our lives—we've either watched them as a spectator or we've been immersed in them as the guide of their success or failure. We like this kind of thing, too. We want to get it right when it counts. And, we want it to be right when it counts in our lives. For example, we wouldn't want a brain surgeon doing a tricky procedure on our brain to botch his first attempt. In fact, we want only one attempt. We'd want his hands to be precise and to get the issue resolved right away. In 2003, the United States led the invasion of Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein. The United States deployed its armed forces in a rapid way that was intended to inspire fear and to dominate the opponent quickly. This was called "shock and awe." American military leaders knew that they'd have one chance at surprise when it came to the capture of Baghdad. In battle, the element of surprise is always important—you only get one chance to get it right. Perhaps you've even heard the old saying, "You only get one chance to make a good first impression." It's really true when it comes to impressing a client or even making a good showing to a guest at your church. Getting it right the first time is vitally important—we've got to get it right when it comes to people's souls!

When it comes to our Challengers, there's a lot more at stake than losing a good client or even a battle—there's the possibility of losing a soul. Helping Challengers



understand that their behavior and their decision-making is a life-changing thing is one of the unique challenges of leading a Challengers group. Of course, it's not all your responsibility to help Challengers to learn how to be young men of virtue. Their parents are primarily responsible for that, but you do have a role to play so it's important to get it right. Pay close attention to making these virtues relevant to their lives. Ask them to talk about what that virtue might look like in their everyday life or in their context. Get them to really think through what the virtue of loyalty would look like in their lives. Ask them to consider what friendship means and why it's so important to be a good friend—a godly friend. This is going to require some discussion during your session, so make time to really talk about these virtues. Cultivating a relationship with your Challengers all along will give you the freedom and right to talk to them about a great many topics. Remember, be real.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

"For a man's ways are before the Lord's eyes, and He considers all his paths" (Proverbs 5:21).

Your Future is at Stake!

On the surface, it may be hard for your Challengers to fully understand why being a man of virtue is a big deal. Teenagers are notorious for living for the moment and not thinking ahead to what their futures hold. Get them to think about their futures for a moment and how having the 10 virtues (Loyalty, Friendship, Courage, Responsibility, Honesty, Faith, Compassion, Perseverance, Teamwork, Self-discipline) in their lives can be a blessing and a guide for making great choices. Ask these questions to get your discussion started.

- ➔ What do you hope your life will look like in 10 years? Do you ever hope to be strung out on drugs, homeless, and hopeless? Why not?
- ➔ Why do the choices you make now matter so much? If you could find a fool-proof way to make good decisions that would help you make the right choice 9 times out of 10 would you be interested? How interested would you be?
- ➔ Making the 10 virtues of loyalty, friendship, courage, responsibility, honesty, faith, compassion, perseverance, teamwork, and self-discipline a part of your life will help you make right decisions. If you could apply these to your life in practical ways how would your life be different?

Integrity Quest

Get your Challengers to thinking creatively about the 10 virtues. Lead them to take craft sticks and duct tape and build a virtue bridge that is going to be put to the test with varying weights that will represent challenges in life. Break your Challengers into four teams and give each team a large number of craft sticks and three rolls of duct tape to make bridges. Using the shape of a plus sign position teams across from one another so that the bridges all are being built to a common central location (a box works well here). Give each team a box to start their bridge and tell them to build a bridge that will be strong.

Gather several items that are of varying weights all the way up to a very heavy object. Once each team has had time to build their bridge, bring out the objects and

put them on each bridge in turn. Name each object something that is a challenge to overcome and see if each team's bridge of virtue is strong enough to hold up under the strain (fear–courage, doubt–faith, drinking–self-discipline) Test each bridge until the last bridge is standing and award a prize to the winning team for the strongest bridge of virtue. Use these questions to discuss the experience.

- ➞ How is this exercise like life?
- ➞ How can virtues help you withstand the forces of life that are sometimes too much to bear?
- ➞ If you have these 10 virtues in your life, you'll be able to withstand those hard times. How does that make you feel?



The Challengers Vigil

The Challengers Vigil is designed to help Challengers and their leaders pause and evaluate their personal progress in their commitment to living the on-mission lifestyle. This section of today's session is designed to introduce the Vigil and encourage the Challengers to make it a part of their accountability groups. You can find the Vigil at the end of this lesson and online at www.challengerscentral.com. Give each Challenger a copy of the vigil. Set aside time for each person to review his own relationship with God and his commitment to being on mission. This activity will be helpful in getting a baseline for where they are so that when they come back to meet with their accountability group they'll have an idea of how they can help each other and where each Challenger needs help. Provide pens and Bibles along with the Vigil.

WHAT NOW?

Ask each Challenger to learn the ten virtues before the next session. Provide an incentive for them to do it. Take time to discuss each virtue and to define them so that each Challenger knows what the virtues are and how they're important to their lives. Ask them to think of ways that they can begin to model these virtues to the people in their lives (or in their mission fields). Discuss why the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board would be more interested in someone who lives a life of virtue over someone who doesn't and why a person of virtue might be more successful on the mission field than someone who isn't a person of virtue.

Lesson By: Billy McDaniel

Billy McDaniel is the executive pastor at Fredonia Hill Baptist Church in Nacogdoches, Texas, and is married with two boys who are RAs. He's been a writer for Challengers for several years and loves to see young men passionate about Jesus.

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Challengers Vigil

The Challengers Vigil is a tool and opportunity for Challengers and their leaders to periodically pause and evaluate personal progress and development in living out their on-mission commitment. Challengers should periodically (annually or twice yearly) get alone with God in an unhurried setting to evaluate how they are developing as an on-mission Christian.

Withdrawing from ministry to reflect and regroup is a practice modeled by several men of the Bible. Jesus often withdrew from the crowds and from His disciples to spend time alone with His Father. Moses spent 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd before God gave him his mission from out of a burning bush. Jacob wrestled alone with God as he came to grips with changes necessary in his life. David, a man after God's own heart, came to know and trust God as he spent many days alone tending his father's sheep. When Elijah experienced burnout in his ministry, he was led to a place of solitary, rest, and consultation with God. Paul spent several years in the wilderness reorienting his theology and worldview soon after his conversion.

To complete the Challengers Vigil, each person will need a copy of these pages, a Bible, and a pencil. The setting for the Vigil should provide each person with a quiet place and plenty of uninterrupted time. The Vigil is a time of worship, reflection, personal evaluation, confession, thanksgiving, and commitment. Ideally, all members of a Challengers group would complete the Vigil at the same time, but separately, in an open-ended setting. The leader(s) should be available for counseling or sharing as needed. A time of voluntary sharing soon after all members have completed their Vigil is appropriate and helpful. Campouts, lock-ins, and retreats are excellent opportunities for the Challengers Vigil.

Your Vigil

A vigil is a "watch" with God. It's a time when you pay attention to what God wants to say to you. It's a time for you to look at yourself and your situation through God's eyes. To listen and watch with God, you need to stop, get alone with God, and take time to think and listen. The best way we have to listen to God is through His Word.

Take your Bible now and turn to Psalm 139. Slowly read verses 1-12.

Now read the same verses again and this time read them aloud. Do not be surprised or embarrassed by the sound of your voice. Go ahead. Speak up as you read. Yes, God is present. He is with you right now. In the same way that He was with Moses speaking out of the burning bush, He sees you and knows all about you—even your thoughts. In fact, He knows you better than you know yourself. Can you be objective and honest with yourself? The best way to be honest with yourself is to be honest with God.

This is the time in your Vigil to be honest with God and yourself. Look at Psalm 139 again. This time read verses 23 and 24 aloud.

Now, let God help you search yourself. As a Challenger, you have made a mission commitment to God. Read and answer each of the following questions related to your development and progress as an on-mission Christian.

The Challengers Spiritual Checkup

I will gather regularly with other youth for fellowship, mission study, and mission action;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do I intentionally involve myself in groups and activities with others in an effort to grow spiritually?
- ☐ ☐ Do I deliberately try to become better informed about missions opportunities through my church and denomination?
- ☐ ☐ Do I give myself regularly to sharing my Christian life and faith with others?
- ☐ ☐ Do I try to help others discover their gifts for ministry?
- ☐ ☐ Do I try to encourage others to reach their full potential?
- ☐ ☐ Do I develop friendships with Challengers and other Christians in an effort to grow and minister?
- ☐ ☐ Do I belong to a group of Challengers as a way of gathering for fellowship and mission accountability?
- ☐ ☐ Do I encourage others to show up for times of fellowship, study, and missions/ministry activities?
- ☐ ☐ Do I accept responsibilities in ministering to others?
- ☐ ☐ Do I take time to regularly read literature devoted to missions activity?

I will encounter God daily through a time of personal prayer and Bible study;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do I have an established time and place to meet God each day?
- ☐ ☐ Is Bible reading a part of my daily life?
- ☐ ☐ Do I allow God to speak to me daily through the Scriptures?
- ☐ ☐ Do I take time to study the Bible using commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and other study helps?
- ☐ ☐ Does prayer have a central part in my daily life?
- ☐ ☐ Are worship, confession, thanksgiving, and petition all regular parts of my prayer life?
- ☐ ☐ Do I intercede persistently for specific lost people?
- ☐ ☐ Do I pray for others in my family, my pastor and other church leaders, school leaders, neighbors, and my mission partners?
- ☐ ☐ Is my devotional life truly meaningful to me?
- ☐ ☐ Are my daily devotional times satisfying to God?

I will discover my calling to and gifts for service, witness, and ministry;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do I ask God to form and shape me into the person He wants me to be?
- ☐ ☐ Do I offer God my personality and skills for His daily use?
- ☐ ☐ Have I been sharpening my spiritual gifts and mission skills?
- ☐ ☐ Do I want to share God's love and message with others?
- ☐ ☐ Am I involved in witnessing to others?
- ☐ ☐ Am I receiving training in witnessing and other mission and ministry skills?
- ☐ ☐ Am I developing my own personal and natural style for sharing the gospel with others?
- ☐ ☐ Do I find personal satisfaction and fulfillment in serving others?
- ☐ ☐ Am I willing to explore new avenues of ministry and develop new skills?
- ☐ ☐ Do I consult with others to help me find my place of service?

I will participate in ongoing mission projects and ministry opportunities through my church;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Am I sensitive to and aware of the needs of others at home, at work, and around the world?
- ☐ ☐ Do I allow my awareness and sensitivity of the needs of others to move me to action?
- ☐ ☐ Am I involved in ministry with my Challengers group?
- ☐ ☐ Am I a minister of God's love in my family?
- ☐ ☐ Do I use ministry action as opportunities to share the gospel?
- ☐ ☐ Do I encourage other Christians to join in ministry?
- ☐ ☐ Do I undertake my share of leadership roles in my church?
- ☐ ☐ Am I growing in my ability to effectively meet the needs of others?
- ☐ ☐ Do I find joy and fulfillment in ministering to others?
- ☐ ☐ Is missions and ministry my lifestyle?

I will give willingly to support missions around the world through the Cooperative Program;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do I see myself as a steward of God on earth?
- ☐ ☐ Do I thank God for all He has given me?
- ☐ ☐ Do I willingly tithe my income?
- ☐ ☐ Do I financially support other Christians who are on mission with God?
- ☐ ☐ Do I understand how the missions offerings of my denomination are used to spread the gospel?
- ☐ ☐ Am I a “cheerful giver”?
- ☐ ☐ Am I an advocate for missions giving to others in my church?
- ☐ ☐ Do I support my church and denomination through the Cooperative Program?
- ☐ ☐ Do I view time as a gift to be given to my family, church, and others?
- ☐ ☐ Do I joyfully give my time to ministry and service?

I will become an informed and responsible follower of Christ;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Do I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?
- ☐ ☐ Do I love others as I love myself?
- ☐ ☐ Am I following Jesus’ example in my relationships with other people?
- ☐ ☐ Do I know the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ?
- ☐ ☐ Am I becoming a “fisher of men?”
- ☐ ☐ Do I try to see the world through the eyes of Christ?
- ☐ ☐ Is it important to me that everyone in the world have the opportunity to hear the gospel?
- ☐ ☐ Do I live as an example of the believers?
- ☐ ☐ Do I follow rules of physical and mental health to help reach my fullest potential as a follower of Christ?
- ☐ ☐ Is pleasing Christ a sincere goal in my life?

I will celebrate the Christian life through weekly worship in my church;

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Am I an active member of a local church?
- ☐ ☐ Do I regularly attend the worship services of my church?
- ☐ ☐ Do I prepare to worship?
- ☐ ☐ Do I participate in all aspects of the worship services—singing, praying, hearing, and responding?
- ☐ ☐ Do I truly meet with God in worship?
- ☐ ☐ Do I prayerfully support the worship leaders of my church?
- ☐ ☐ Is worship a lifestyle for me or merely a Sunday activity?
- ☐ ☐ Do I see my everyday work as a way to worship God?
- ☐ ☐ Do I seek to bring glory to God in all I do?
- ☐ ☐ Do I fulfill my share of leadership responsibilities in church worship services?



CAREER

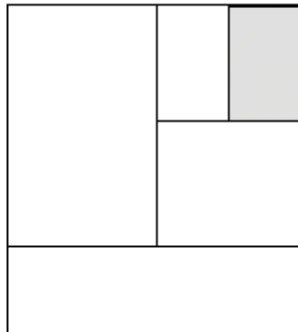
Aim: Lead students to understand how their career can reflect their calling.

Outcomes:

- ➔ Students will learn that God's calling to be on mission within a given vocation is as valid as vocational missions and ministry.
- ➔ Students will explore skill sets that can help them discern what their career choice might be.
- ➔ Students will learn about marketplace ministry and evangelism.

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Board game, Game of Life®
- ✓ A line of floor-safe tape across the floor separating your meeting room 80/20 percent
- ✓ A line of a different color floor-safe tape dividing the larger segment in half
- ✓ Continue dividing these segments in half two more times for a total of five segments (see illustration)
- ✓ A copy of pre-printed paper (see form at the end of the lesson) for each Challenger taped to the wall in the smallest corner (see shaded illustration)



Leader Preparation:

Adolescence is a difficult time of life with a seemingly unending stream of questions and few definitive answers. Today it is not uncommon for teens as young as seventh graders to have to make plans in school that set their course of study for many years. By the time they graduate from high school, they will have been able to maximize their learning opportunities to give them the best opportunity to reach the next level of schooling.

For teens who are uncertain about what they want to do this upcoming weekend, such long-range planning can be overwhelming. Rare is the teenager who knows exactly what they want to do, where they want to go to prepare for that life, and never have any doubts along the way toward accomplishing that life goal. It has been estimated that

eighty percent of college students change their major focus of study at least once in their college career. It is also estimated that the average college graduate will have seven different jobs in his life.

Regardless of what life plans each of your Challengers ultimately chooses God has placed a call on his life for him to discover and pursue. While it is no surprise that one of the most common questions a person asks is, “What is God’s will for my life?” most people are surprised to find the answer is actually found in the simpler question, “What is God’s will?”

Pursuing God’s will should be a wonderful adventure of discovery and blessing, rather than some anxiety-filled, tip-toe excursion through a theological minefield where a person is terrified of stepping outside of God’s perfect plan. God has repeatedly presented Himself as a shepherd who guides His flock, and not a dictatorial dance instructor who demands that His students get every step perfectly placed at the perfect moment.

While God will at times reveal specific actions for His children to take, biblical instruction exhorts Christians toward the general discipline of knowing God’s revealed will and determining not to walk outside of it. Then, within the broad parameters of God’s good will, a person can seek wisdom and discernment to make the best choice possible, knowing that God is good and His plans are good. While God alone knows every potential of every potential, every person can make decisions, and especially life-defining decisions, with confidence in the good will of God.

In this week’s activities, you will lead Challengers to explore the “shepherding will of God” and see that regardless of the options they would like to consider for their life’s directions, every option has at its essence the opportunity to be on mission with God. They will learn about the term “marketplace missionary” and explore how the unique skills and interests that God has developed in them can be used for serving God and reaching others with the gospel.

The Great Commission’s “Go Command” is not relegated to ministry professionals and missionaries. These activities are designed to help Challengers embrace the reality that whatever they undertake in their life’s pursuit will be an opportunity to do deeds in the name of Jesus Christ and for the cause of His kingdom. A major objective will be to encourage Challengers to see their vocational opportunities and interests as legitimate occupations that God can and will use to accomplish His purposes through them.



SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

“Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord—you serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23-24).

Forward Thinking

Use any or all of the following questions as discussion starters. Give the Challengers time to respond to each question. Do not insist that each boy answer the questions. Be sensitive to Challengers who are not Christians.

- What do you want to do as a career?
- Most people want to be successful. What does it mean to you to be successful?
- Which would you rather have, a life of success or a life of significance? Why?

Say: "Today, we're going to focus on your future. We will explore what it means to serve God in your vocation, and how to make wise decisions about your career, so that whatever you do, it will bring glory to God."



The Game of Life

Gather students around a table where the board game, Game of Life®, is set up. Ask if they are familiar with the game. Tell them that choosing a career is one of the first activities of the game. "Players" first have to choose whether or not they will go to college. Ask teens if they are planning on some school or training after high school. Those who are not, according to the game, choose a single career randomly from the deck of careers and a salary the same way. "College graduates" select three careers and salaries and take the preferred of each. Use this approach to determine the careers and salaries of your Challengers. Ask:

- How is this method realistic and how is unrealistic?
- How many of you are happy with your career? How many are unsatisfied?
- What careers have been excluded?
- How are you going to choose what your career will be?



A Better Way

Ask, "What is God's will?" (Answer: To bring Him glory with your life)

Say, "Some careers will not bring God glory (represented by 20% of the room), and all others will (80%). Choose the side where you want God to find you."

Ask, "Are your career interests still available to you?"

Say, "You must first choose to remain in God's will. From there, ask God for wisdom" (James 1:5).

- What are wise choices when choosing your career? Answers include:
 - ➔ Choose a career you enjoy
 - ➔ Providing for family
 - ➔ Get training or education

Say: "Every decision causes you to become more focused (keep Challengers moving into smaller segments of the room until they are in the shaded area). Within your focused choices, as long as you stay within God's moral will, you can have



CHALLENGERS LESSON ➞ PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

tremendous freedom to choose a career that brings God the most glory. Some of you will become a minister or a missionary. Others may become a doctor or an engineer. One of you may become a mechanic where you can deal fairly with customers and witness as you serve people. God holds all these in equally high regard.”



WHAT NOW?

Have each Challenger go to a piece of paper on the wall and write all of his career interests and options. In the middle column, have them write what they will have to do to pursue that career. In the right column, have them brainstorm how they can use that career to bring God glory.

Say: “While you may not have discovered your life’s career today, you have learned some important decision-making principles that will be true whether you are planning today or twenty years from now. Whatever you choose to do keep these practices as a way to keep God at the front of your plans to bring Him glory in whatever you do.”



Lesson By: Bryan McAnally

Bryan McAnally is a teaching pastor at First Baptist Church in Grapevine, Texas. He leads his church’s missions and evangelism teams.

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DATING DONE RIGHT

Aim: Lead students to honor God and women in their dating life.

Outcomes:

- Students will learn about God's plan for gender roles in the family and society.
- Students will learn about God's plan for sexuality.
- Students will learn about practical and healthy forms of dating.

Materials Needed:

- ✓ A full package of Oreo cookies or other sandwich-type cookies.
- ✓ Several magazines (Such as *People*, *Us*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Sports Illustrated*, *ESPN*, *Rolling Stone*, etc. Preview and remove objectionable content.)

Leader Preparation:

A trip through the radio dial will let you know that people have a hard time understanding anything about love. A rock singer cries, "I want to know what love is, and I want you to show me." Another asks, "Is this love that I'm feeling?" An old country-and-western song laments that the singer was "looking for love in all the wrong places." Artists will tell you that love bites, that love hurts, and that love is a battlefield. It should be no surprise that so many relationships fail, marriages collapse, and most people don't know what real love looks like, how to give it, or how to receive it.

Love was never supposed to be so complicated. In the beginning of human history when God was busy about the work of creation, He did so because He was compelled by love to do it. And He did it perfectly. In creating man, God determined that it was not good for man to be alone. Accordingly, He created woman from the man's rib so that she would be his helpmate. God, in His goodness, created woman for man and man for woman, so that neither would have to be alone. He instilled in each of them a good, healthy, and appropriate longing for the other.

This Scripture indicates that in giving them to each other, God instituted marriage. He designed this relationship for one man to be united to one woman in faithful covenant for life. He declared that they would be "one flesh." This means that they shared everything: they would not be independent of one another physically, mentally, emotionally, nor spiritually. This union was established before the interruption of sin into creation; therefore, it was established perfectly and is the ideal relationship between man and woman.

Unfortunately, Satan corrupted this perfect union and brought division and distrust into the perfect marriage relationship. For all the generations that have followed, men and women have struggled in relating to the opposite sex. Men and women fail to understand their roles and responsibilities in dating and marriage. For many people, God's purpose for marriage is either forgotten or unknown. Sadly, too many people

begin dating for wrong reasons, marry foolishly, and give up as soon as they encounter troubles. The result is increasing divorce rates, alarming rates of abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, and children who never know their biological fathers.

One of the most important things an adult can teach a boy is to understand the purpose of dating and the importance of dating the right way. Peer pressure, a conflicting worldview, and the temptation of the flesh are all combating this biblical message. Pray over today's gathering, asking for the Holy Spirit to give power to the teaching and that the Lord may give you influence and favor with the boys. Ask God to protect their purity and lead them to be young men marked by integrity. Pray for the girls they will date, and for the families of both.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

"Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being...Then the Lord God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: 'This one, at last, is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called woman, for she was taken from man.' This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:7,22-24).



The Dating Game

Use any or all of the following questions as discussion starters. Give the Challengers time to respond to each question. Do not insist that each boy answer the questions. Be sensitive to Challengers who are not Christians.

- ➞ What type of girl would you rather have as a girlfriend: a girl who is very attractive and popular, but selfish and insecure; or a girl who is somewhat pretty and has a small group of friends, but is confident, nice, and friendly?
- ➞ What do you think is the right age to start dating? Why?
- ➞ What are some of the reasons that guys and girls start dating?
- ➞ What do you think is important for a girl to know about you if she wants to consider you as someone to date?



Oreo Face Race

Distribute one sandwich cookie to each Challenger. Instruct the boys to carefully remove one side of the cookie leaving as much icing as possible on the other side. The challenge is to have each Challenger apply the icing-sided cookie to his forehead, and without using his hands, manipulate the cookie into his mouth. The first Challenger to accomplish this task, wins.

Ask Challengers how this activity can be a symbol for the challenges of dating. (*Answers could include: following simple instructions, have to try to do it the right way, try to be cool but look silly along the way.*) Tell Challengers, "Just like you weren't meant to eat cookies off your forehead without using your hands, most people start dating for all the wrong reasons and never learn the right way to date. We want you to avoid those mistakes so you don't look silly when it is time for you to start dating."

The Perfect Mate

Distribute some popular magazines among the Challengers (preview the magazines and remove any provocative or inappropriate photos). Give boys five minutes to “build” the ideal girl. This time is intentionally brief because it highlights how many people make their decisions on the other person based on shallow, external factors. Allow Challengers to ‘introduce’ you to their ideal girl.

Now, ask Challengers to brainstorm qualities and characteristics that they want to find in the girl. Help them see the importance of biblical virtues such as honesty, integrity, selflessness, modesty, patience, self-control, discretion, faithfulness, and wisdom. Assign each boy the task of finding a Scripture for a specific virtue. Encourage Challengers to look in Proverbs, or to use a concordance.

Ask: How do you know if a girl has any of these characteristics? Now why do you think dating is important? How does understanding the real purpose of dating change how you will date?

WHAT NOW?

Dating should be fun! Dating is ultimately the search for the women these young men will be marrying! However, ‘fun’ should never become the primary purpose for dating because it opens the door for moral and spiritual compromise. Encourage Challengers to “take inventory” of their dating circumstances and evaluate whether or not the girls they date or are interested in would be someone they can one day be “one flesh” with in terms of shared faith, worship, obedience, and service to the Lord. Invite boys into accountability to date with integrity and purity, with moral and spiritual excellence.

Lesson By: Bryan McNally

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BUDGETING & PERSONAL FINANCE

Aim: Teach students how to budget their money, the importance of tithing, and how to save money.

Outcomes:

- Students will learn how to plan annual and monthly budgets.
- Students will learn the biblical basis of the tithe.
- Students will learn how to make long-range financial plans.
- Students will learn practical guidelines for spending.

Materials Needed:

- ✓ An assortment of “money” from a board game
- ✓ Whiteboard
- ✓ Marker
- ✓ Copies of budget form (provided at the end of the lesson)
- ✓ Copy of Expenses List (provided at the end of the lesson)

Leader Preparation:

Money and financial management are timeless challenges. Jesus preached extensively on money because He understood the problems it caused people. He told the “rich young ruler” to give away all his earthly possessions before he could become a Christ follower. He taught people to give the money they owed in taxes to the government because that was the right and appropriate act to take as citizens. He also instructed people to be good managers of whatever resources they were given authority to administer, and not merely to hoard what they had been given for fear of losing it. Jesus taught these lessons to people who struggled with money and were conflicted about finances because He knew that the love of money is truly the root of all kinds of evil.

Two thousand years later, this is still true. The global economy seems to be in continual turmoil and there is little public confidence that it will stabilize any time soon. Many people who invested in personal retirement accounts for the last twenty years saw the values of those accounts slashed drastically because of unfortunate turns in the stock market. Some people who had made plans to enjoy these days in retirement have instead returned to work to replace the funds they lost due to market busts.

Sadly, emerging generations receive far too little instruction about how to manage the financial blessings God provides. Instead, they are exposed to credit debt and high-interest loans almost immediately upon leaving home, and coupled with the onslaught of marketing that promotes excess and materialism, it is no surprise that many young adults quickly find themselves drowning in overwhelming debt.

In light of timeless and current financial woes, the Bible speaks with unyielding authority about how to manage one’s personal resources. First, God’s children are told to trust in God alone as the provider of every good gift. He alone meets needs, using every

resource at His disposal to do so. He expects people to tithe, or give back the first tenth of their income as an expression of thanks, praise, and faith to God for what He has given. He even tests His children in this, promising blessing for those who trust Him enough to follow through with the tithe.

Financial giving is not merely an Old Testament exercise. Jesus exhorts people to invest in the kingdom of God. He directs people to sow seed that will bear eternal fruit. Yet, He also provides strong, practical counsel for people to serve as wise stewards over their financial resources, so they do not become slaves to the very money they've been directed to master.

In this week's activities, Challengers will be provided with some practical advice as well as timeless biblical principles to apply to the stewardship of their own finances. Leaders should emphasize that stewardship is an opportunity to prove God's loving faithfulness and to be partners in the work of the gospel. Share your testimony of how God has been honored as you have been obedient in your giving. Strive to instill in Challengers the reality that God loves a cheerful giver, and the only way to be cheerful is to be fully obedient to what God calls them to do by faith. Faithful stewardship is a practical opportunity to walk by faith, rather than by sight.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS:

"No one can be a slave of two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves of God and of money" (Matthew 6:24).



Money Matters

Use any or all of the following questions as discussion starters. Give the Challengers time to respond to each question. Do not insist that each boy answer the questions. Be sensitive to Challengers who are not Christians.

- The median income in the United States for households in 2008 was approximately \$52,000 (see www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/maps/iy2008/med_hh_inc2008_state.pdf). Does that seem high or low to you?
- Imagine that you made the median income. Fifty-two thousand dollars a year figures out to \$1000 a week. If you made that, how do you think you would spend it?
- What are some things you think you would have to spend it on before you could "splurge"?

Say: Today, we are going to explore what God has to say about money and we're going to take a look at what it means to be a good steward of the financial resources that God provides. We'll learn how to set up a budget and talk about tithing and saving. The goal is to introduce you to responsible principles to help you live within your means so you can master your money, rather than have your money master you.

Spending Spree

Distribute \$1000 in board game currency to each Challenger. Tell students they can spend the \$1000 any way they like, according to the expenses you have written on the board (see the list at the end of the lesson for an example). The only stipulation is that once the \$1000 is gone, it is gone. They are allowed to save money for future weeks.

Ask for volunteers to share how they spent their earnings. As Challengers detail their expenses, point out the difference between wants and needs. Address the challenge of having money available for wants only after needs are covered. Teach Challengers that the tithe is the first ten percent of earnings and that God invites His children to test Him in giving the tithe faithfully (Malachi 3:10). Explain that the second activity of setting up and living by a budget helps people live within their means and use their money wisely for good purposes.

Budget-it Budget

Distribute handouts of the budget (see the form at the end of the lesson). Lead Challengers to once again “spend their paycheck.” This time, though, they will be using a budget that is provided, and a full month’s salary (\$4,000). Point out the additional expenses that have to be considered (taxes, insurance, etc). Ask the following:

- ➔ What do you like about a budget?
- ➔ How does it help in your spending?
- ➔ How does a budget help in your saving?
- ➔ What surprised you about your expenses?
- ➔ How does a budget fit in your overall responsibility toward finances?

WHAT NOW?

Lead Challengers to create a real budget using the form you have provided. Share with them that it is never too early to begin budgeting, even if their financial resources are limited. By developing the principles of tithing, saving, and wise spending when they have little money, they will be able to execute these actions with discipline when they have greater financial resources. Provide additional copies of the budget form to the Challengers, and allow them the opportunity to share their real, completed budget with you or the group.

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EXPENSES LIST

Housing

Utilities

Car

Food

Clothes

Books/Internet service

Entertainment

Debt/Credit cards

Savings



BUDGE-IT BUDGET WORKSHEET

Monthly Gross Income (wages, alimony, child support, pensions, social security, etc.)

Income Deductions

Taxes (Federal, State, FICA, etc.)

Savings Plan (401k, 403b, ESPP, etc)

Other (medical, dental, vision, life insurance, etc.)

Total Income Deductions

Monthly Net Income

Expenses

Tithes & Offerings

Rent or Mortgage

Other Housing Costs (property taxes, home insurance, etc.)

Utilities (water, sewer, garbage, electricity, telephone)

Home Maintenance (laundry, toiletries, upkeep)

Transportation (car payment, bus or taxi fees)

Auto Upkeep (gas, insurance, license, parking)

Food (groceries, restaurant expenses, deliveries)

Clothes (and other related shopping expenses)

Books, Periodicals, Online Services (Internet services)

Entertainment (cable, satellite, DVD rentals, theater, vacation, travel, etc.)

Debt (credit cards, school loans, boat loans, etc.)

Other Monthly Expenses (child care, housekeeping, hobbies, etc.)

Total Expenses

Amount Left Over to Save or Invest

