

A BETTER WAY TO LIFE

LEADER'S GUIDE

Welcome to A Better Way to Life Programme

This nine-lesson teacher's guide is designed to be used in association with the A Better Way to Life Teen Book. Each teen should be provided with a book. While the teen book can be read independently, the lessons inside this teacher's guide have been created to help teens dig deeper into God's Word and into topics that are important in their daily lives. Some relevant topics discussed in this course are: social media

addiction, sexuality, and mental health. These may be sensitive in nature to many teens which means creating a safe space within the classroom will be very important. These lessons are intended to be used in a

These lessons are intended to be used in a church or in school programmes to help 13-19-year-olds address hard topics in a guided and structured manner. Although the lessons are designed for a series of one-hour classes, meeting weekly for nine weeks, the material can also be presented in a variety of ways to meet your needs, the composition of your group, the setting, and the length of time available. We hope that you find the content helpful and engaging for your teens.

This book has been designed to help teachers accomplish three outcomes:

1. Teens will recognise that they are

1. Teens will recognize that they are made by God in his image, and their identity, worth, and purpose are rooted in this truth.
2. Teens will identify God as the ultimate source of all truth and

- recognise the Bible as God's trustworthy Word which is full of guidance for our lives.
3. Teens will recall how God's Word reveals the truth about key issues in their lives (sexuality/gender, mental health, social media addiction, identity etc.)
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How to Use *A Better Way to Life* Programme

This section includes the lesson summary, Scripture references, lesson goals, and




materials as well as additional information to help manage the classroom experience. It is recommended that teachers read through the entire lesson in the Teacher's Guide and Teen Book to prepare to teach their class.

Teachers should practise reading the lesson

aloud and put the teaching into their own words if they feel comfortable. Preparing beforehand will bring understanding to what is included in each lesson and resolve any questions that may arise before class begins.

- **LESSON GOALS:** These goals will guide instruction by stating what teens should be able to do once they have completed the lesson.

- **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** This section includes tools for teachers to facilitate each lesson in a more effective way. This information may include deeper theological points to keep in mind as you teach the lesson or provide tips to navigate questions regarding difficult topics like social media addiction, mental health, love, or sex.
- **WELCOME:** In this section, teachers will welcome teens to class and review the previous lesson's weekly challenge.
- **REVIEW:** This section will review the previous lesson's content to help teens retain what they have learnt.
- **GAME OR ACTIVITY:** Most lessons include a game or activity to get teens comfortable and participating in the daily topic.
- **TEACHING:** Each teaching section

- includes a focus question(s) which will guide the learning for that day as well as the main presentation and lesson activities. This section will also include reading, partner work, and group activities to engage the teens each week.
- **CLOSING AND REFLECTION:** This section gives teens an opportunity to reflect on the topic and what it means for their lives. It also includes a closing prayer that the teacher or the teens will pray as they end the lesson for the day. The Call to Action/Weekly Challenge section of the closing will empower teens to consider and act on their learning before the next lesson.
- The Teacher's Guide includes symbols to help guide the lesson content. These icons are listed below.**
-  **Read Symbol:** This symbol indicates when the teacher or the teens will read from their lesson book.
 -  **Ask Symbol:** This symbol indicates a discussion question(s) for the teens.
 -  **Activity/Game Symbol:** This symbol indicates any time during the lesson where the class will engage in a game or activity.
- ### Tips for Classroom Facilitation
- This Teacher's Guide has been developed with activities that encourage interaction, communication, and good conversation to engage teens within each lesson. Below are some tips for facilitating communication within your classroom.
- **Share your stories:** The easiest way to be relevant and connect with teens is to share personal stories from your own life. Topics could include: sharing how you became a believer, struggles you have experienced, funny stories, or experiences from when you were their age.
 - **Large group discussion:** These discussions will include teens sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences with the whole class. When conversation begins to go off-topic, always bring it back to the main purpose of the discussion. Remind teens that they do not have to share if a discussion or topic makes them feel uncomfortable.
 - **Small group discussion:** Putting teens into small groups of two or three people gives them the comfort and freedom to express themselves before participating in a large group discussion.
 - **Closing and reflection:** Each lesson will provide time for students to reflect on their learning. Allowing teens time to spend alone as they consider the material helps them to think about personal application.
 - **Addressing hard topics or questions:** Below are some ways to create a safe environment within the classroom:
 - Instruct teens to actively listen and not interrupt when someone else is sharing.
 - Encourage teens to commit to not share other people's sensitive stories outside of this classroom, unless granted permission.
 - Do not force teens to answer a question if they are uncomfortable.
 - Give teens the opportunity to come and talk to you separately, after class, if they have a sensitive topic they would like to discuss.
 - If an inappropriate question or statement arises during class, ask to speak with the teen privately after class.
 - **Teachable moments:** Teachable moments are unplanned opportunities, during a lesson, when you can provide special insight into the topic for the benefit of the

- **Resources for teens:** If a question arises that you are not equipped to answer, direct the teen to connect with a local pastor or

the teen to connect with a local pastor or leader in a church, a counseling centre or to a resource that would be appropriate for them. Do not send the teen to simply search online for the answer, especially if the question is connected to a potentially sensitive topic such as mental health, sex,

LESSON 1

"The Best Version of Yourself"
"Knowing Your Creator"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary



Many teens are asking questions like, "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" These questions can only be answered by our Creator, God. In today's lesson, we will discover that our identity is rooted in our relationship with God. When we seek him, we will find that he has a wonderful plan and purpose for our lives!

Scripture References



Jeremiah 1:5; 1 Corinthians 1:20; Matthew 7:7; Psalm 8:3-5; 103:5, 139:7, 13-14, 17-18; Ephesians 2:10; Acts 17:25, 28-30; Proverbs 2:3-8

Lesson Goals



Teens will recall that God created everything, including them, according to his good design in order to have a personal relationship with him.

Teens will reflect on the Scriptures that speak the truth of how much God personally loves and values them.

Materials



Paper

Pencil or Pen

Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life

Article: "The Best Version of Yourself" - page 1

Article: "Knowing Your Creator" - pages 2-3

Additional Information



- Teens often determine their identity by cultural traditions, family, friends, and the expectations they feel from people in those circles. Today's lesson will help them define their identity according to their relationship with their Creator, God!

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

🕒 20 MINUTES

Say: Welcome! Over the next few weeks, we will be exploring some of life's hardest questions. As I pass out your books, look through them. Flip through the pages and preview the topics. Once you have looked through the book, go back to the table of contents. Put a mark next to the articles you are most excited to read. In your book, write about why you chose them. Add questions you have about these topics and do not be afraid to write down hard questions! You do not have to share your questions with the class.

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the Focus Question on the board: Who are you?

🗋️ **Ask:** How do you define yourself? Raise your hand and share the words you might use to talk about who you are. (Allow teens to respond. If they need help, start with words like, "daughter" or "schoolmate." Write their answers around the focus question.)

Say: Many of you used words describing the relationships you have with others, like: "son," "sister," or "friend" or that you are a part of a tribe. You also added the things you do, like: "musician" or "soccer player." And while all of these titles, interests, and tribal names do shape you, the core of who you are is deeper. To find out who you truly are and how you should live, you need to look to the One who designed you: your Creator, God.

Say: Now, open your books to "The Best Version of Yourself" on page 1. Follow along as I read and underline anything that stands out to you.

📖 **Read:** "The Best Version of Yourself" on page 1 of the teen book out loud.

🗋️ **Ask:** What stood out to you as we read page 1? (Allow teens to respond.)

- When you have big questions about life, where have you looked for answers? Why would it make sense to look to God for the answers? (Answers should include: because God made me, he knows everything about me, he has a purpose for my life, the world's wisdom is foolish, etc.)
- What does it mean to live wisely? (Answers should include: to live according to God's design, in a personal relationship with him.)

Say: The world has drifted a long way from God's wisdom, but there is good news: God promises that if you look for him, you will find him. Matthew 7:7 says, "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you."

Say: Now, turn to the article, "Knowing Your Creator," on page 2 in your books where we will learn more about who God is. As you take turns reading out loud to the class, follow along and circle words that show God's love for you. Stop when you get to the Selfie Challenge.

📖 **Read:** Have teens take turns reading page 2, "Knowing Your Creator," out loud. Do not have them read the "Selfie Challenge" section yet; it will be read at the end of the lesson.

🗋️ **Ask:** What words did you circle that show God's love for you? (Allow teens to respond.)

- What does this article tell you about how much God values you? (Answers should include: God created amazing things like the moon and stars, but it is people that he crowns with glory and honour; he cares for you, and he knit you together in your mother's womb; he thinks of you constantly; he never leaves you alone.)
- What do you think it means that human beings are the masterpiece of God's creation? (Answers will vary.)
- After you read this page, how does it change how you see God and how he sees you? (Answers will vary.)

Say: You had some really good answers to those questions. Let us discover what else we will learn as we continue on page 3; follow along as you take turns reading out loud to the class. Be sure to watch for who God is and what he does.

📖 **Read:** Have teens continue taking turns reading page 3 of "Knowing Your Creator" out loud.

🗋️ **Ask:** What do these passages from the Bible tell us about who God is and what God does? (Answers should include: God creates like an artist, cares for us, gives life and breath, is near to us, satisfies, grants wisdom, invites us into a relationship, etc.)

- In society today, where do you see people turning to find satisfaction? (Answers should include: money, popularity, fame, romance, power, etc.)
- Why do we need God to be truly satisfied? (Answers should include: We were made for a relationship with God. God is our source of life.)
- How can you develop a personal relationship with God? (Answers can be found on page 3 of the teen book and should include: reading the Bible, praying.)

Say: The Bible says God is our loving father, and we are his children. It makes sense that we would look to God to find our purpose because he is the one who designed us. God wants us to seek him so we can experience life to the fullest!

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

🗋️ **Ask:** Do you ever feel like you do not matter or like you have to earn love? Look back to the words you underlined on page 2. God's Word is clear. God made you on purpose. You are his work of art. He thinks about you constantly. He is always with you because he loves you.

🙏 **(Optional Activity)** In the space provided, write a short prayer to God thanking him for creating you with such care and being present with you always.

Prayer: God, thank you for your good design. You are the awesome Creator. Thank you for creating us with a purpose and giving us an identity as your masterpiece. Forgive us for forgetting you and looking for satisfaction in other places. Help us to seek you and grow to know you more as we read your Word, the Bible. Help us to show your love to others. Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: Look at the "Selfie Challenge" on page 2 of your book. This week, take a moment to capture a picture of something beautiful God has made—include yourself, too! Share the image on social media and use this hashtag: #ABetterWaytoLifeAfrica.

If you do not have a cell phone or social media, give a meaningful comment to someone close to you.

LESSON 2

"Turn of Events"
"The God Who Rescues"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

Our world is full of brokenness. Your teens see the brokenness in society; they feel it in their homes and even within their own hearts. What they might not realise is that all of this brokenness is the result of sin: humanity's rejection of God and his wisdom. In today's lesson, we will discuss how pain, suffering, and injustice are all a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. Our purpose, identity, relationships, and our world are all broken because of it. We desperately need God to rescue us from our sin and bring us back to the right path.

Scripture References

Genesis 1-3; Proverbs 14:12; Judges 17:6; Romans 1:21, 25, 28, 5:12 ; Luke 19:10; Psalm 40:1, 4-5, 8, 11-13, 16-17

Lesson Goals

- Teens will discuss the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve to all of humanity.
- Teens will identify the ways in which God rescues them as written in Psalm 40.

Materials

Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life
Article: "Turn of Events"- pages 4-5
Article: "The God Who Rescues"- pages 6-7

Additional Information

- Even as we discuss difficult topics like pain and suffering, we want to remind our teens of hope. Every conversation we have about sin should include the hope we have in God: He saves us and makes a way for us to have a right relationship with him.

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

🕒 5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask them if they did the "Selfie Challenge" and if they got any responses. Ask those who chose to compliment a friend what the response was from their friend. Thank them for sharing.

REVIEW

🕒 5 MINUTES

Say: In our last lesson, we talked about how God created everything in the world, including you, according to his good design.



Ask:

- But why did God create you? (Answer should include: to have a personal relationship with him.)
- Can you tell me something you learned about God's love for you from page 2 in your book? (Answers will vary.)

Say: God loves you. He created you and all humanity, according to his good design, to enjoy a relationship with him and each other.

In our lesson today, we will go back to the beginning when everything was created, and it was good. The world we see today is much different. We are surrounded by pain and suffering. Can anything be done to make things right? Yes! God had a plan!

Now before we learn about God's plan, let us play a game!

GAME

🕒 10 MINUTES



Life Experiences Activity

Have teens stand up. You will read a statement, and the teens will sit down if they have experienced it. Before you move on to the next statement, have all of the teens stand back up again.

Say: Everyone please stand up. Sit down in your chair if you agree with the statement I read out loud.

As the class plays the game, everyone should have a reason to sit down. Remember to have the teens who sat down for one statement, stand up again for the next statement. Once they understand how the game works, use the following statements:

1. You like to dance.
2. You have a younger sibling.
3. Someone has spread a rumour about you or your friends.
4. You have repeated a rumour about your friends.
5. Someone has stolen something from you before, or you have stolen something.
6. Someone you believed was a close friend has betrayed you.

Say: Chances are you sat down at least once. This activity demonstrates that we have all done and experienced bad things. This is not part of God's design. It is the result of people rejecting God and choosing to live their own way. God's Word calls this "sin," and today we are going to talk about how sin first entered God's good world.

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the Focus Question on the board: What happens when people follow their own ways and reject their Creator's ways?

Say: The story we will read today is going to explain why the world is full of suffering and brokenness. As we read, think about this focus question on the board: What happens when people follow their own ways and reject their Creator's ways? Turn to page 4 in your books and follow along as I read the first paragraph of "Turn of Events" out loud.



Read: the first paragraph of "Turn of Events" on page 4 out loud.

Ask: Think about your favourite stories or movies. Do they have a plot twist? Raise your hand and tell us about it. (Allow a few teens to respond.)

Say: Those were some interesting plot twists! Follow along in your books through page 5 as you take turns quietly reading out loud in groups of two or three. Look out for the plot twist.

Read: Have teens finish reading "Turn of Events" on pages 4-5 quietly out loud in groups of two or three.

Ask:

- What choice did Adam and Eve have? (Answers should include: to trust their Creator to guide them into the fullness of life or to reject their Creator by taking the fruit and seeking to make their own way in the world.)
- What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's choice to take the knowledge of good and evil? (Answers should include: Their relationships with God and others were broken. Sin spread like a disease to everyone. Death entered the world.)
- What happens when everyone "does what is right in their own eyes?" How have you seen this play out in the world today? (Answers will vary.)
- What is the hope that is offered at the end of the story? (Answers should include: The hope is that God does not leave us lost and separated from him. He had a plan to rescue us.)

Say: Many of us think of sin as a mistake. But this story shows us that sin is more than a bad choice: It is a rejection of doing life God's way. Sin is a condition of the heart that wants to rebel against God. Sin separates us from God and leads to death. Because of sin, we experience pain and sorrow. We desperately need God to rescue us from our sin and bring us back to the better path.

Say: Now, turn to page 6 as we read a Psalm from the Bible. Psalms are poetic prayers and songs written by various people as a way to express their emotions to God. This Psalm was written by King David who experienced first-hand just how much suffering sin can cause. He knew that his only hope for rescue was in God. As you listen, follow along and circle words that describe God's character or actions as our rescuer.



Read: "The God Who Rescues" on pages 6-7 out loud.



Ask: Look back at the words you circled. What words from this Psalm describe who God is? (Answers should include: helper, trustworthy, no equal, rescuer, saviour)

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

Say: Though sin corrupted our world, God promises to save us. This Psalm expresses that great hope, and now you can express your feelings to God, too. In the empty space on page 6, write a one sentence prayer to God. If you are not sure what you feel, ask God to show himself to you over the next few weeks as you study the Bible.

Prayer: Thank you, God, for the hope we have that you will rescue us from the evil of sin. Even when our world seems hopeless, help us to remember the hope we have in you. Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: The best way to grow more in our relationship with God is to read the Bible and talk to him through prayer. This week, your challenge is to read Psalm 40 every day. Come back to class ready to share something God taught you through this Psalm!

LESSON 3

"The Biggest Mistake of My Life"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

Research shows that teens spend hours on social media and online, and are turning to social media to find affirmation and a sense of identity. Instead, they experience comparison, restlessness, and even addiction. Only God can give your teens satisfaction, joy, and rest. In today's lesson, we will discuss a scenario that contains sensitive content. We want to encourage teens to interact with social media in healthy ways and help them overcome their addictions.

Scripture References

Romans 7:18-19, 21-25; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Psalm 34:18

Lesson Goals

- Teens will discover that a relationship with God will help them fight the battle with sin within them.
- Teens will explore healthy ways of interacting with social media.

Materials

Paper
Pencil or Pen
Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life
Article: "The Biggest Mistake of My Life" - pages 8-9

Additional Information

- In general, African teens are spending more time online daily than the global average for their generation and find a sense of belonging online. Even though these communities are taking place virtually, they have an incredible impact on them. While it provides a greater quantity of ideas and people to connect with, the quality of those connections cannot compare to genuine, real-world relationships. Online relationships are limited. Everyone's image is filtered to show their online friends exactly what they want them to see. As Christians, God invites us to examine how we can use social media in a healthy way, rather than letting it control us.
- Today's article contains a reference to nudity. Use your judgment when asking teens to discuss the content. If an inappropriate comment or question arises, redirect the discussion back to the topic at hand and speak to the student privately after class.
- All addictions, whether they are to social media, substance, or a behaviour are based on a lie: that something else other than God will satisfy us. Emphasise that while our addictions may look different on the outside, we are all struggling with the same thing on the inside: our sinful nature. We all need Jesus to free us from our addictions.
- Be sensitive to how much teens are willing to share. This lesson might lend itself to more quiet reflection than an interactive discussion.
- Take some time to check out the statistics in the Global Youth Culture report at <https://oneh.pe/globalyouthculture>

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

⌚ 5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask them to share what God taught them through Psalm 40. Thank them for sharing.

REVIEW

⌚ 5 MINUTES

Say: Last week, we read about how Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God,

Ask: What were the consequences of Adam and Eve's choice to take the knowledge of good and evil? (Answers should include: Their relationships with God and others were broken. Sin spread like a disease to everyone. Death entered the world.)

Say: Sin entered the world. We still feel the effects of that choice today: The brokenness and pain we see around us and feel within ourselves is a result of sin. But sin is more than one choice two people made a long time ago.

Ask: What happens when everyone "does what is right in their own eyes?" (Answers will vary.)

Say: Each of us is guilty of rebelling against God, too. Our sinful nature leads us to do things we know are bad for ourselves and others, but we cannot make ourselves stop! Even though we know our addictions to social media, substances, or behaviours are wrong, we cannot quit them. It can feel like a battle inside that we are not strong enough to fight on our own.

The good news is that we do not have to fight our addictions alone. God knows our weaknesses, and he will help us do what we cannot do by ourselves. God gives us a new nature, and by his power, we can be free!

GAME

⌚ 10 MINUTES

Two Truths and a Lie

Create groups of two to three. Each teen will share two truths and one lie about him or herself. The other members of the group guess which one is the lie.

Say: Raise your hand if you were able to trick your classmates. This game is meant to help people get to know each other better, but it also teaches an important lesson: It is easy to pretend to be someone you are not. This is especially true on social media.

TEACHING

⌚ 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the Focus Questions on the board: Why are we so influenced by other people's approval? Why do we do things we know are bad for us and others?

Say: Today you tried to see if your friends were telling you the truth or a lie. None of you wanted to get tricked by lies in the game, but sadly, many of us believe lies in real life. Maybe you are telling a lie on your social media and pretending to be somebody different, so your friends like you. Or maybe you believe the lie that doing something wrong will not have a negative consequence.

Ask: Why is it that even when we know the right thing to do, we still feel the impulse to do things that are bad for us? Why do we believe these lies? (Answers will vary.)

Say: The answer to why we do things that are bad for us is because of sin. When the sickness of sin entered the world, it spread and infected every individual – twisting our desires and leading us to destructive behaviour.

This generation faces a unique challenge that other generations have not: the internet. In some ways, social media can be good. But in other ways, it sets the stage for sin in new ways older generations did not have to face.

Draw a vertical line on the board, forming two columns. Write: The Positive and Negative Things about Social Media over the top of both columns and underline this title. Under the title in the left column, write Positive and in the right column, write Negative.

Say: The internet can be a very useful tool, but our sinful nature can lead us to misuse it in ways that are harmful to ourselves and others. Raise your hand and share something good that social media brings into your life or some negative ways it can influence you.

If teens need help getting started, you can give them ideas like this:

- Positive: connects us to family members that live far away, teaches us about new topics, recipes, crafts, fashion, and music.
- Negative: bullying, comparing yourself to others, time wasted, feeling left out, loneliness, and addiction.

Say: You are about to read a text conversation between two friends discussing a sensitive topic. They express embarrassment and regret but ultimately come to a message of hope. Turn to pages 8-9, "The Biggest Mistake of My Life," and read it silently. If you finish before the rest of the class, look back at the positive and negative things we wrote on the board and write down which ones you connect with.

Read: Have teens read pages 8-9, "The Biggest Mistake of My Life," silently.

Say: We all want to feel happy, loved, and satisfied. But instead of looking to our Creator, God, to find joy, people often look to the wrong things to satisfy them. That is what addiction is: using something over and over again hoping to finally feel better. But only God can give us satisfaction that lasts.

Ask: Ada said that she "tried but could not stop" her unhealthy social media behaviours. Zora shared that her issue with drinking was addictive. She couldn't go one day without it. What happens when someone is addicted to something? Why do addictions happen? (Answers will vary.)

- Zora found words in the Bible that describe the battle she felt in herself between the desire to do good and the impulse to do bad. Can you describe what she is talking about in your own words? Can you relate? (Answers will vary.)
- How does Zora describe the change she experienced? (Answers should include: Zora describes God transforming her when she believed in Jesus; an old part of her died, and something new came alive in her; Jesus now lives in her, and she trusts in him.)
- How can we fight the battle with sin within us? (Answer: by having a relationship with God and trusting in Jesus.)

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

⌚ 10 MINUTES

Say: We talked about some very difficult things today. In every circumstance, God gives us hope. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Social media is a part of our lives, and God will help us use it in good ways! Let us share ideas on how we can enjoy social media for good and not let it control us. As you share your ideas, I will write them on the board.

Sample Ideas:

- Download the Bible app and share a verse of the day.
- Communicate with your friends face-to-face, not just through messaging.
- Set a limit for how much time you spend online and share with a friend. Ask them to keep you accountable.
- Before you post, ask: "Would I be embarrassed if my parents/younger siblings/grandparents saw this?"

Say: God promises to help us overcome any addiction we face. All of the practical steps we have talked about will fail unless we are trusting God. Let us pray and ask him to help us.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us despite any addictions or weaknesses we have. Even when we are not faithful to you, you are faithful to us. Heal us from our addictions, show us the way of escape, and lead us out of temptation. Help us to trust you and live free. Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: Choose one or two of the strategies we discussed in class. Incorporate these strategies into your life and pay attention to how long you are on your phone this week. You can turn on notifications to help track your phone usage and keep you accountable for healthy phone usage habits. Next week, we will share how God helped us use social media in a healthy way!

LESSON 4

"The Way, the Truth, and the Life"
"Adan's Story"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary



In today's lesson, teens will learn that no matter what mistakes they have made, God is not disappointed in them. He loves them so much that he sent his son Jesus to save us! Like a shepherd searching for his lost sheep, Jesus rescues us from our sin and celebrates when we come to him.

Scripture References



Luke 9:23-24, 15:4-7, 19:10; Isaiah 43:1-2, 4, 53:6; 59:2; Psalm 118:1, 23; Romans 3:24, 5:6, 8, 10; John 3:16-17; 1:1-3; 14:6; Ephesians 1:4-5; Proverbs 3:5-6

Lesson Goals



- Teens will recall that because of God's love, he sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to seek and save those who go their own way.
- Teens will recognise that because God claims them as his own their lives can be changed.

Materials



Book of Hope: A Better Way to Live
Article: "The Way, the Truth, and the Life" - pages 10-11

Article: "Adan's Story" - pages 12-13

Additional Information



- Teens should know that Jesus was more than a prophet or a good moral teacher: He is the eternal son of God through whom all things were made. He came to reconcile us with God through his death on the cross.

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

🕒 5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask them if they did the "Selfie Challenge" and if they got any responses. Ask those who chose to compliment a friend what the response was from their friend. Thank them for sharing.

REVIEW

🕒 5 MINUTES

Say: Last week, we talked about how we all face struggles: Maybe yours is with social media, or maybe it is partying, drinking, or using drugs. Whatever it may be, all of these outer struggles are the result of the same inner problem: sin. Sin is more than a bad choice. It is turning away from God as our source of truth and turning to other things to make us feel better. Only God can give us hope.

- 🗉 **Ask:**
- How did God promise to help us overcome any addiction we face? *(Answers should include: God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability.)*
 - Addiction is using something over and over again hoping to feel better. This never works. How can we truly be satisfied? *(Answers should include: Only God can give us satisfaction that lasts.)*

Say: In the first lesson we asked these questions: "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" The world tells you that the answers depend on things like popularity, talents, and your family name.

- 🗉 **Ask:** How does God answer these questions? *(Answer: He invites you to find your identity and purpose in a relationship with him.)*

Say: You can have a relationship with God, through his Son, Jesus, who we will be talking about today.

GAME

🕒 10 MINUTES

🎮 If I Were an Animal

Say: If you were an animal, which one would you choose? Think about your answer and why you would choose to be this animal. Then, raise your hand and give us hints about which animal you chose. We will try to guess your animal.

Example: Teens may say something like, "My animal is powerful. It moves quickly. It can hunt many animals for prey. It lives in the savannah. It has sharp teeth and a mane." The class should guess "lion."

Say: Did you know the Bible compares us to a specific animal? Close your eyes and listen while I describe this animal and try to guess which animal it is.

This animal lives in a big group. It does not hunt for its own food. It eats grass. This animal becomes very scared and gets lost easily. It has to rely on someone to lead it around and protect it.

- 🗉 **Ask:** Can you guess what animal it is? *(Give teens time to guess.)*

Say: None of us would choose to be a sheep, but God says that is what we are. We tend to lose our way in life sometimes and need someone to take care of us. God gives us a shepherd. And like sheep, we can learn to listen to his voice.

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus question on the board: *Why do we need Jesus?*

Say: Turn to page 10 in your books. We are going to read a story Jesus used to help people understand why he came to earth. As you listen to me read the story, follow along and ask yourself:

- Who does the man represent?
- Who do the sheep represent?
- What does this story show us about humanity and about God?

📖 **Read:** the first paragraph of "The Way, the Truth, and the Life" on page 10 out loud.

Go back to the three questions above and allow teens to respond.

Say: Jesus is comparing you and me to the sheep in this story. Just as sheep need a shepherd to care for them and lead them, we need Jesus to lead us. Like the man in the story, Jesus seeks us out when we are lost and rejoices when he finds us!

- 🗉 **Ask:**
- Have you ever lost something important, only to find it later? How did you feel when it was lost?
 - How did you feel when you finally found your lost item?

Say: The great thing about the story we read is that the man found his lost sheep and threw a great big party to celebrate. Jesus feels this kind of joy when we come to him. He is looking for you and ready to welcome you as his own.

📖 **Read:** Have teens continue reading "The Way, the Truth, and the Life" on pages 10-11.

- 🗉 **Ask:**
- According to the article, who is Jesus, and why did he come to earth? *(Answers should include: Son of God who came to seek and save the lost; eternally God; all things were created through him; he is our Way, Truth, and Life.)*
 - What does Jesus mean when he says we must give up our own way and take up our cross to follow him? *(Answers should include: We let go of our sinful ways of life and trust Jesus to show us new ways; we gain everlasting life, have hope, will not be alone, find our purpose.)*

Say: Jesus came to earth to show us a better way of life. We do not have to feel lost, alone, and afraid. We can belong to Jesus and walk in a new life of hope. Following Jesus does not mean our lives will be easy. We still experience difficult times. But we will not face those challenges alone! Let us read Adan's story on page 12.

- 🗉 **Ask:** What could it look like to trust Jesus?

📖 **Read:** Have teens take turns reading pages 12-13 with a partner.

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

- 🗉 **Ask:**
- How did Adan's story make you feel? *(Answers will vary.)*
 - Can you relate to any parts of this story or Adan's situation? *(Answers will vary.)*
 - When Adan heard this phrase, "God loves me and wants to claim me as his own child," how did it change his life? *(Answers should include: He found the family he always desired in church and his purpose in serving God.)*
 - How would you have reacted if you had heard those words? *(Answers will vary.)*

Say: Just like Adan, you can experience what it means to trust Jesus. Your circumstances might not change, but Jesus promises to change YOU: Knowing God loves you and forgives you will transform your life!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to seek and save the lost. Thank you that Jesus defeated sin and death so that we can have everlasting life. Show us how to love and trust you more as we follow you. Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: Reread Adan's story and reflect on how God was with him throughout his difficult situation. Use the story to write a prayer for God to help you through the difficult things in your life.

LESSON 5

"Better Your Selfie"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

God offers hope and salvation from sin through his son, Jesus! Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, who is God's presence, to live with us. The Holy Spirit leads us into wisdom, empowers us to put our sinful nature to death, and transforms us to be like Jesus. Today's lesson is about God's power to change the way we think and act from the inside out!

Scripture References

Romans 5:5; 8:11, 13, 16; 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16, 22-23; 2 Corinthians 3:18; John 14:17; 15:26

Lesson Goals

- Teens will explain the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who follow Jesus.
- Teens will contrast what the world says about them with what God's Word says about the Holy Spirit.

Materials

Book of Hope: A Better Way to Live
Article: "Better Your Selfie" - pages 14-15

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

🕒 5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask a few teens to share the prayer they wrote from the previous week.

REVIEW

🕒 5 MINUTES

Say: Last week, we talked about an important decision to follow Jesus. Let us review what we learnt.

Ask:

- How are we like sheep and Jesus like a shepherd? (Answer: We get easily lost, but Jesus seeks us out and brings us home. He celebrates!)
- Why did Jesus come to earth? (Answer: to seek and save the lost; to show us a better way of life.)
- Why should we put our trust in Jesus? (Answer: If we put our trust in Jesus, he forgives us of our sin, blesses us, and leads us to eternal life.)

Say: We learnt that when we trust in Jesus, he forgives our sin, and we can be a part of a new life with him. But you may have noticed something: Deciding to follow Jesus does not magically change your circumstances or struggles. That is because God invites everyone into a process. Over time, he will transform your heart and mind to be more like his through the Holy Spirit. Today, we will talk about ways we can allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into who God made us to be.

GAME

🕒 10 MINUTES

The Perfect Friend

Draw a stick figure on the board and label it: "The Perfect Friend." Put teens in pairs and ask them to list qualities of the perfect friend. Encourage them to be creative and specific, thinking of the things an ideal friend would say, do, think, and feel! After a few minutes, ask them to share and write their answers around the stick figure.

Say: We all want a friend like the one you described. Maybe this activity motivated you to be a better friend. No person can be a perfect friend at all times. Even our best friends will disappoint us, and we will disappoint them, too. Thankfully, Jesus sends us a friend who is everything and more than a human friend could ever be to us: the Holy Spirit!

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus question on the board: *How does the Holy Spirit transform us?*

Say: Last time, we talked about how God the Father sent his son, Jesus, to seek and save the lost. When we trust Jesus to save us, we receive the Holy Spirit: God's personal presence with us. Like God the Father and Jesus, the Holy Spirit is also God. Follow along in your books on page 14 as I read out loud.

Read: "Better Your Selfie" on page 14 out loud, stopping at the chart.

Say: We hear messages from many people and social media. While some of these messages can be good, others can make us feel confused and insecure. You might notice that after you spend time with certain people or on certain websites, you feel dissatisfied, upset, or angry. That is because their voices are not from God. Instead, you can listen to the voice of your Creator who loves you and wants only the best for you. The more time you spend reading God's Word, the more your life will be changed by the Holy Spirit.

Say: The Holy Spirit is God's presence within us, given to all who choose to follow Jesus. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as our Helper, Guide, and Advocate who will never leave us! When the Holy Spirit is guiding your life, you might begin to feel uncomfortable doing things that never used to bother you, or you might sense the Holy Spirit encouraging you to read the Bible or spend more time in prayer. Pray to God and ask him to use the Holy Spirit's presence in your life to transform you.

Activity: Think-Pair-Share

Teens will read the chart on page 14 in pairs. Then they will discuss the following questions: (Write them on the board.)

- Have you believed any of the statements under "The world says"? Which ones?
- What does God's Word say in response?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in the lives of those who follow Jesus? Look back at the chart if you need help. (Answers should include: guides and teaches you, helps you grow in your relationship with God etc.)

Ask a few teens to share with the class. Make sure you review question #3 about the role of the Holy Spirit.

Say: The world's message is wrong and leaves you feeling empty and lost. The Word of God is truth. It says that you are never alone, you are God's child, and the Holy Spirit is with you. If you follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will transform you into a new person. Follow along as I read the Romans passage on page 15.

Read: Romans 12:1-2 on page 15 out loud.

Say: These verses tell us that Christians should be different from the world around us. Instead of copying the world and listening to the voices telling us how to think and act, we should listen to the Holy Spirit. That is how God will change us into the people he created us to be!

Ask:

- What are some of the "behaviours and customs of the world" followers of Jesus should not copy? (Answers will vary.)
- How can we change and stop following the ways of the world? (Answer: It is by God's power, not our own ability. We need God's help. This is a big relief!)
- God wants to transform you, but you must choose to allow him to do this. How can you allow God to transform you? (Answers should include: avoid bad influences, seek good influences like church, Christian mentors, reading the Bible.)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to rely on you more and more as you transform us into the people you made each of us to be. Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: This week, share a positive message with your followers and start a conversation about what you have been learning. Post a selfie holding up your book with your friends in the programme and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in a way you can share something you have learned with a friend! Remember to use the hashtag #ABetterWaytoLifeAfrica.

If you do not have a cell phone, share with a friend or family member something you have learnt in this programme about God and his purpose for your life!

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

Have teens reflect on the messages that they have heard from the world and how God's Word is different from those messages. Then have them pray silently, asking God for the help of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Ask:

- In what ways has the Holy Spirit begun to transform your life? (Answers should include: He helps me to resist temptation, provides wisdom, fills me with peace, patience, kindness, and goodness.)
- Which kind of help from the Holy Spirit do you need most in your life right now?

LESSON 6

"Let us Talk about Sex"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

In this lesson we will discuss sensitive topics regarding relationships, sexual experimentation, and God's perfect design for sex. The world tells us that sex equals love, which is far from the truth. The healthiest way to understand our sexuality is to look to the one who designed sex: God! Today, you will help your teens understand that sex is a good gift from God, but it has been corrupted by sin. God's boundaries on sex are not meant to deprive us but to free us. When we obey God in this area, we are able to enjoy the good gift of sex in the right way, at the right time!

Scripture References

Jeremiah 17:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5; Romans 6:10, 12; 8:13, 38; Matthew 5:27-30; 19:4-6; Galatians 5:16; 6:2; 1 Peter 5:10; Psalm 34:18; 1 John 1:9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 18; Genesis 1:27

Lesson Goals

- Teens will recognise that God's design for sex and marriage is good, but sin has corrupted that design.
- Teens will examine what they need to remove from their life to resist sexual sin and confess it to God.

Materials

Opaque box with a lid and an assortment of items such as a squishy ball, grass, piece of bread, or other obscure items
Paper
Pencil or Pen
Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life
Article: "Let's Talk About Sex" - Pages 16-19

Additional Information

- According to the Global Youth Culture report, African teens are the most likely of their global generation to engage in sex outside of marriage. Christian teens are most likely to be sexually active of any religious group. Even so, there is a great deal of uncertainty and lack of knowledge about this topic. Pornography is also a rampant problem among Africa's youth.
- Be encouraged: The report also shows that regular Bible reading and Christian influences can make a difference! You can read the full report <https://oneh.pe/globalyouthculture>

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME AND REVIEW

🕒 10 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask a few teens if they were able to share what they have learnt with a friend and what their response was.

Draw five columns on the board and label them Lessons 1-5 with the titles listed below. Ask teens to share a key word for each lesson with the class. As a class, guess which lesson fits the key word best and write the word in the corresponding box. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Some words could fit into multiple columns!

Read the prompts for each lesson below. See sample key words in parentheses:

- Lesson 1: "In the beginning" (God, creation, design, good, purpose, beautiful, relationship)
- Lesson 2: "Plot twist" (The Fall, Adam and Eve, sin, broken, choices, rejected, corruption, mistakes)
- Lesson 3: "Things We Cannot Stop Doing" (addiction, social media, new habits, self-control, hope)
- Lesson 4: "The Rescue Plan" (Jesus, salvation, hope, new life)
- Lesson 5: "Holy Spirit" (helper, guide, voice, lead, truth)

Say: That was a great overview of the key words in each lesson! When we put those keywords together, we can better understand all that we have learnt. But first, let us play a game.

GAME

🕒 10 MINUTES

Mystery Box
In this game, you will put an assortment of items into a box or container through which teens cannot see. Do your best to pick objects that will be difficult to guess. For fun, include items that are squishy, slimy, and otherwise disgusting feeling. You could include bread, squishy ball, rock, grass, or other items.

Teens will take turns reaching into the box and trying to identify the objects using only their sense of touch. For time's sake, have one or two of them participate in the activity.

Ask: Why was it so hard for you to guess the objects correctly? (Answers will vary.)

Say: When you cannot see something clearly, you get a distorted idea about what that thing is. This is true for concepts like love, sex, and relationships. Sin has distorted our view of these things, and we believe things about these topics that are not true. It is like we are in the dark! God wants to open our eyes to see his good design for sex and relationships.

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus questions on the board: What is God's design for sex? How can I resist sexual temptation?

Read: the first three quotes and the next two paragraphs on page 16 out loud.

Ask:

- What is God's good design for sex? (Answers should include: God designed sex to be a life-giving expression of love between one man and one woman who are married to each other.)
- What happened to God's plan for sex? (Answers should include: Sin has broken our desires, so we want what is not good for us.)

Say: God designed love and sex for a good purpose. We rejected God's design to follow our own ways. Because of sin, our hearts and desires are corrupt. Jesus invites us to leave behind our old ways and follow him. God gives us the Holy Spirit to help, lead, and guide us!

Say: You might not be used to talking about sex. Sometimes, it can feel like this topic is something to talk about only in secret. But it is important for us to understand what God has to say about love and sex. It is not bad or shameful: It is a beautiful gift. When we learn God's design for sex, we can understand how to enjoy it in the right way, at the right time.

The world says to "follow your heart." This advice actually leads to heartbreak because it means we listen to ourselves, not to God.

Read: Have teens finish reading the article on pages 17-19 silently.

Say: God designed sex as a gift for a man and woman united in marriage. Outside of marriage, sex can leave us feeling broken, hurt, used and empty. Sin and brokenness have distorted this gift.

Say: We are all tempted in different ways to misuse sex. Maybe you can relate to one of the specific struggles you just read about. Hopefully you see that you are not the only one struggling! Many young people are fighting the temptation to use pornography, have sex before they get married, or misuse sex in other ways.

Say: Sinning sexually can make us feel ashamed, broken, or powerless to stop. But it does not have to be that way! God has given us his personal presence, the Holy Spirit, to help us resist temptation and obey God.

Read: Matthew 5:27-30 out loud, starting with where Jesus said, "You have heard the commandment that says."

Ask:

- How would you put Jesus' advice in your own words? (Answers should include: remove the part of your life that is causing you to sin.)
- Turn to page 17 and reread the three ways we can resist temptation. What is one way that you will commit to resisting temptation? (Answers will vary.)

Say: Jesus teaches us that resisting temptation means we have to take action and trust the Holy Spirit to help us. Resisting temptation might mean you stop visiting inappropriate websites or decide not to spend time alone with your boyfriend or girlfriend. It might even mean ending a relationship. These things seem hard, but we do not have to do them in our own strength. We can pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help us. The Holy Spirit empowers us to say "no" to our desires, so we can say "yes" to something better: God's plan for our lives. Now turn back to page 19 and follow along as I read the last paragraph out loud.

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

Read: the ending paragraph, "There is hope..." on page 19 out loud.

Say: Is there anything you need to remove from your life to resist temptation? Write your answer in your book. Remember that even if this seems impossible, you do not have to do it alone: Ask God to help you. If you are currently living a sexually pure life, thank God for his protection and guidance. Ask him to help you remain pure in your actions, thoughts, and choices.

Prayer
Say: Instead of praying together today, each of us will spend time in prayer confessing our sin to God. He knows your heart, and he will forgive you! Ask God to help you as you fight temptation and trust that his ways are best.

After a few minutes of silent prayer, let teens know that if they are struggling with any of these questions or topics, they can talk to you privately after class.

Call to Action / Weekly Challenge
Say: Challenge yourself to incorporate the three steps to "resisting temptation" that we discussed today into your daily life.

LESSON 7

"Letter to the Editor"
"Which Way Will You Choose"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

Today's teens deal with personal struggles, loneliness, anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Sadly, these mental health struggles are often invisible and no one sees the pain they are feeling inside. Today's lesson is about bringing those struggles out of the dark and into the light. Instead of hiding in shame, we want to give them hope: God knows them, sees them, and will free them from the mental health challenges they face!

Scripture References

Psalm 1, 55:1-2; Matthew 11:28-30; Philippians 4:6-7

Lesson Goals

- Teens will recall how they can rely on God in difficult situations.
- Teens will discuss Psalm 1 and how they can grow and prosper, like the tree, even in difficult situations in life.

Materials

Paper
Pencil or Pen
Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life
Article: "Letter to the Editor" - pages 20-21
Article: "Which Way Will You Choose?" - Psalm 1- pages 22-23

Additional Information

- Global Youth Culture reports that African teens mental health struggles relate to loneliness, high anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation. Factors that may increase a young person's risk for suicide include: substance abuse, bullying, gender confusion, anxiety or depression. Regardless, some teens are in very dark places leading them towards taking desperate action. For more statistics on mental health, you can find this report at <https://oneh.pe/globalyouthculture>
- Mental health issues contribute to an individual's spiritual health. A person struggling with mental health may often also struggle to believe the truths about God's love and care. Their struggle with mental health is not a sin. It is a part of how our physical bodies and brains are broken by the fall.
- By learning coping and emotion regulation skills can allow teens to consider new perspectives. Teens can seek solutions to mental health such as prayer, scripture reading, basic self-care routines like getting enough sleep, eating nutritious foods, and exercising. Taking care of their bodies in these ways increases the chemicals in us that make it easier to function.
- When talking about mental health with the teens, do not feel pressure to speak as an expert or know all the answers. The goal is simply to help teens feel comfortable talking openly about mental health and to present them with the hope God provides.

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

⌚ 5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask them to share what God taught them through Psalm 40. Thank them for sharing.

REVIEW

⌚ 5 MINUTES

Say: God has a good purpose and design for our lives. When we reject God's will to follow our ways, it leads to sin, but Jesus invites us to leave behind our old ways and follow him. And when we put our faith in Jesus, he gives us the Holy Spirit to guide our lives.

Ask:

- How does the Holy Spirit help Christians leave their old way of life and follow Jesus into a new way of life? (Answers should include: The Holy Spirit transforms us, gives us new desires, helps us to listen to God.)
- God has created a design for sex and marriage. We learned in lesson 6 that sex is good according to God's design. What is God's good design for sex? (Answers should include: marriage and sex should be between a man and a woman, sex should be within marriage.)

Say: Even as we follow Jesus and his way of life, we still face the hardships of living in a sinful world. This includes struggles with our mental health and feelings like loneliness, anxiety, and depression. God wants us to be honest with him about our struggles. That is what we will be talking about today!

GAME

⌚ 10 MINUTES

Sit-Stretch-Support

Ask four teens to come to the front of the group to demonstrate this activity. Two people will sit in the chairs and turn their bodies so they are sitting sideways in the chair, with the back of the chair to their left or right. Have the second person stand behind them. Have the sitting person lean back until they feel tension in their abs.

Next, have them lift their feet off the floor and stretch their arms out in front of them. They should be in a "sit-up" position, tilting their bodies, not the chair. Now have them compete to see who can hold this position for the longest time. When they can no longer hold the position, tell them to raise their hands up as a signal. Now the person behind them will push against their back, allowing the sitter to relax.

Allow teens to repeat the activity with a partner.

Say: Holding this position requires a lot of core strength, but when your partner steps in to support your back, it is not as much of a struggle. Our struggles with mental health – loneliness, anxiety, depression – are similar. We feel them at the core of who we are, and we need support to deal with them.

TEACHING

⌚ 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus questions on the board: During hard times, whom do you rely on? Whom should you rely on?

Say: We all need support. In fact, it is part of how God designed us. God created us to live in healthy relationships, with him and with others. When you are struggling, it is okay to rely on other people for help. In fact, we should rely on God and a support system found in trusted relationships to help us through difficult times.

Read: Have teens take turns reading pages 20-21 out loud.

Say: Maybe you can relate to the person who wrote this letter to the editor. She is someone who feels anxious and all alone, but she hides those feelings from everyone.

Have you ever tried to cover up your feelings of sadness with distractions that only ended up making you feel more depressed? These mental health struggles are a part of being human!

Ask:

- Why do you think people find it so hard to talk about mental health struggles? (Answers should include: Our African culture does not always recognise mental health issues as a real struggle or see them as a weakness. They feel like God is punishing them; it makes them look weak or broken; it could feel like a curse is on their life.)
- Whom can we always rely on when we are struggling? (Answers should include: God because his way is better; Jesus because he invites us to come to him when we are burdened, and he will give us rest.)

Say: Look at Psalm 55 on page 20. The writer, David, does not hide his struggles. He tells God the way he feels! God invites us to be honest with him and encourages us to share our struggles with others who can help us. We do not have to pretend to be perfect.

Say: At some point in our lives, all of us will experience mental health challenges. But we do not just have to sit around waiting for these challenges to go away. God gives us tools to face these difficult times. We can take action! Let us look at some of the steps God invites us to take.

Activity: Teens can work with a partner to talk about the action steps on pages 20-21 of the student book. Have each pair share which action step they think is the easiest and which one is the most challenging and why. After a time of sharing, review the action steps.

Sample Responses:

1. Talking to God: This is easy because God already knows our thoughts, but also hard because we do not always have time to pray, or we feel like praying does not change anything right away.
2. Sharing your feelings with a trusted adult: This can be easy if we have strong families and friendships, but very hard if we do not feel we have someone we can trust.
3. Staying active/getting enough sleep: Easy if we have time and activities we enjoy; hard if we are busy studying or working.
4. Limiting screen time: Easy if we have self-control; hard if we are addicted (refer back to lesson 3—God can heal us and give us hope when we take action and trust him!)

Say: Some of those practical steps might seem easy, while others are more challenging. Even when it is hard, we can trust that God will use time in prayer, conversations with others, and lifestyle changes to change us, over time, into the people he made us to be. Follow along on pages 22-23 as we read Psalm 1.

Read: Psalm 1 on pages 22-23 out loud to the class or ask a volunteer.

Say: Look at these two trees. We can clearly see which tree is dead and which one is alive. What happened? Both trees started the same: as tiny seeds, with potential to grow healthy and strong. But only the tree planted close to the river grew healthy and strong because it had access to ongoing, continual watering. Throughout all the seasons, hot or cold, this tree produces fruit because its roots are getting nourishment from the river. The Bible tells us that we are like these trees. Far away from God, we'll become like that dry, barren tree. But when we stay close to God, we will grow strong even in hard times!

Ask:

- What do you think the river represents? (Answers should include: life, nourishment, refreshment—all things we receive in our relationship with God.)
- What are some ways we can plant ourselves close to God? (Answers should include: reading the Bible, coming to church, spending time with other believers) .
- Every good tree blossoms and bears fruit. The fruit is the evidence of the tree's health. What do you think the fruit symbolises? (Answers should include: peace of mind, kindness, patience, self-control, trust, faithfulness, love for God and others.)

Say: We have to choose to stay connected to God to be healthy in tough times. The rest of the Psalm describes what happens to the ungodly. Chaff is unusable waste. God is telling us that unless we stay rooted in him, our lives will feel meaningless and empty, too. We won't last through hard seasons!

Even in the most difficult times, like when we are struggling with mental health, we can stay connected to our source of life and strength. We can still grow and even thrive in life!

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

⌚ 10 MINUTES

Have teens silently read Philippians 4:6-7 at the bottom of page 21.

Prayer: Ask teens to write a short prayer based on these Scriptures, reflecting on their own struggles with mental health and asking God to help them get through whatever they are going through right now.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: One way we can continue to flourish in our lives is to set our minds on the ways God is working in us guiding our path. Take one of the practical actions taught in today's lesson and incorporate it into your life this week.

LESSON 8

"Finding the Strength to Conquer"
Living the Reurrection Life"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary

God offers us a better way of life through Jesus who rescued us from the power of sin. Jesus did not come to earth as a conquering king or fierce warrior. He was a humble servant who was obedient to God even in death. On the cross, Jesus revealed the wisdom and power of God. When we choose to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit works in our lives with the same life-giving power that raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus calls us to die to our old sinful nature so that we can be raised to a new life with him.

Scripture References

Psalms 103:14; John 16:33; Philippians 2:6-8; 4:13; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 24-25; 15:14, 57; Acts 2:24; Romans 6:3, 5-10; 8:1, 28; Mark 8:35; Revelation 21:5; Ephesians 1:7; 2:4-5; Isaiah 54:4; Ecclesiastes 4:3; Galatians 2:20

Lesson Goals

- Teens will discuss the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- Teens will reflect on what Galatians 2:20 means to them personally.

Materials

Sheet of paper
Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life
Article: "Cross and Resurrection: Finding The Strength To Conquer" - pages 24-27
Article: "Living the Resurrection Life" - pages 28-29

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME

5 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Allow them to share which of the mental health action steps they implemented from Lesson 7. Thank them for sharing.

REVIEW

5 MINUTES

Ask:

- We have talked about social media, sexuality, and mental health. Which do you think is the biggest struggle and why? (Allow teens to respond.)
- Psalm 1 says, "They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do." What does this Psalm illustrate about our life with God? (Allow teens to respond.)
- We can even talk to God about our temptations, struggles, sin, and emotions. Have you tried doing this? How has it helped you to pray about these things? (Allow teens to respond.)

Say: The world tells us that if we are strong enough, we can overcome our struggles. We often become tired and give up. Thankfully, God offers us hope through Jesus!

Say: Through his death and resurrection, Jesus achieved victory over sin and death. This means that through Jesus, we can have victory over our struggles, fears, and temptations. Instead of our own willpower, we can rely on God's life-giving power working in us! How can you experience God's power in your life? By living according to God's plan for your life. This may seem foolish to the world, but for those who believe, it is the wisdom of God leading them on the way of life.

GAME

10 MINUTES

Know-Want to Know-Learn Chart

Create a chart on the board with three columns and label them "Know," "Want to Know," "Learn."

Say: This chart will help us think about what we know about Jesus and questions we have about him.

Ask:

- Can you tell me what you know about Jesus? (Allow teens to respond.)
- What questions do you have about who Jesus is and what he came to do? (Guide them toward the sample answers below.)

Sample Answers:

1. Know: Jesus is the Son of God, he came to earth to save us, he seeks and saves the lost, and forgives us from our sins.
2. Want to Know: How did Jesus save us? How do his death and resurrection save us from sin? What difference can Jesus really make in my life? How can Jesus help me in my struggles with mental health, relationships, etc?

Say: Those are good questions about Jesus and how he can change our lives.

TEACHING

30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus questions on the board: How does Jesus' death and resurrection save us? What does God's resurrection power mean for your life today?

Say: Many of us know that Jesus died and rose again, but it is unclear how something that happened so long ago has the power to change our lives today. As I read from the book, write down any questions you have.

Read: page 24 out loud.

Ask: How is Jesus different from a hero you might expect to save the day? (Answers should include: He was humble, like a slave, obedient, he became weak, he was beaten, he died.)

Read: page 25 out loud.

Ask: Why does God's plan seem foolish to the world? (Answers should include: Jesus was not successful or strong by the world's standards. Jesus became weak. Suffering and death seem like failure/defeat. What kind of god would lay down his life for people?)

Read: page 26 out loud.

Say: Jesus defeated sin and death through his death and resurrection, and he makes it possible for us to share in his victory by following him. Following the path of sin leads us to eternal death, but by faith in Jesus we can go another way.

Ask: What does it mean that Jesus defeated the power of sin and death? Why is this significant? (Answers should include: Our sins are paid for through his death; our sin no longer defines or enslaves us; we no longer have to live in fear of death because we now have eternal life; Jesus helps us in our struggle against sin.)

Read: page 27 out loud.

Say: Jesus came alive again to bring us new life. Just as Jesus died on the cross, the sinful parts of yourself have to die too.

Ask: What do you think it means to lay down your life at the cross for Jesus' sake, or to "die in your old, sinful self"? (Answers should include: surrendering your life to Jesus; turning away from your old life of sin and receiving a new life from God.)

Say: We learnt many concepts that are hard to understand at first. But one of the most challenging concepts is Jesus' invitation to "lay down your life." Jesus is saying that to receive new life, you first have to let go of your old life. When you surrender your life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit works in you, transforming your thinking and helping you become a new person. This transformation is a life-long process: Everyday you must choose to die to the sins of your old self so you can walk in a new life with Jesus.

Activity: Small Group Activity

Say: Now you will read three testimonies about the difference Jesus can make in your life as you face hard times and struggles.

Divide teens into small groups and assign one of the three character scenarios on pages 28-29 to each group. Each group will read and discuss their assigned scenario and answer the following questions: (Write the questions on the board.)

1. What did this person struggle with?
2. Who or what helped the person turn to God?
3. What has each person learned from this situation about God?

Each group will share with the rest of the class what they discovered.

Say: You can probably relate to parts of each teen's story. Write down things you are struggling with on page 28.

Give teens time to write. Then have teens read the Scripture at the bottom of page 29 and reflect on what the verses mean to them personally.

Say: But through Jesus we can find healing and hope for everything we go through. Let us return to our Know-Want to Know-Learn chart to add what we have learnt about Jesus today.

Ask: How can Jesus help us with our struggles? (Add teens' answers to the chart on the board.)

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

10 MINUTES

Say: Following Jesus is a choice that will affect every day of our lives. It is a choice that changes us. Think about some of the ways that Jesus could change your outlook on life, your response to hard times, and your reaction to temptations.

Prayer: Have teens silently pray as they reflect on how Jesus can transform their lives.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: Think of someone who needs to hear the message we learned today: Jesus defeated sin and death and promises new life to all who believe. Share that good news with a friend, family member, or neighbour this week!

LESSON 9

"Quiz: How Well Do You Know Yourself?"

"Dear Reader"

"Where Do I Go From Here?"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Lesson Summary



We began this programme with a simple question: "Who am I?" The way we answer that question affects all of our choices, thoughts, and actions. In a world filled with confusion and pain, understanding our God-given identity will bring us freedom from sin and hope for the future. God's Word reveals the many ways finding our identity in God will transform our lives.

Scripture References



John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Psalm 33:4; 107:9; 139:14; Genesis 1:27; Ephesians 1:9; 2:10, 15; Romans 8:38; 10:9; 15:7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:11, 17; Matthew 28:19

Lesson Goals



- Teens will discuss their identity as found in God's Word.
- Teens will review one or two things they have learned from the course.

Materials



Book of Hope: A Better Way to Life

Article: "Quiz: How Well Do You Know Yourself?" - page 30

Article: "Dear Reader" - page 31

Article: "Where Do I Go From Here?" - page 32

INSTRUCTION

WELCOME AND REVIEW

🕒 20 MINUTES

Welcome the teens back to class. Ask them if they were able to share what they learnt about Jesus with someone. Thank them for sharing.

Review: Be the Teacher

Say: Today you will get a chance to be the teacher. You will work with a small group to come up with a few key takeaways from previous lessons. Then you will act as teachers to present these key points to the class.

Assign one lesson to each group. As they are working, circulate the room to provide assistance. After ten minutes, invite each group to present their points. Use the sample answers below to add information after each group's lesson presentation.

- **Lesson 1:** God created you uniquely and on purpose.
- **Lesson 2:** All people have turned away from their Creator and gone their own way. We need a saviour.
- **Lesson 3:** We are addicted to sin. Only Jesus can free us.
- **Lesson 4:** Because of his great love for the world, God sent his son, Jesus, to rescue us from our sin. Jesus seeks us and saves us and invites us to follow him.
- **Lesson 5:** When we make the choice to follow Jesus, he sends us the Holy Spirit to help us and transform us on the inside.
- **Lesson 6:** God designed sex as a good gift, but sin has corrupted it. We can rely on the Holy Spirit to help us obey God.
- **Lesson 7:** Even when we follow Jesus we still face struggles with our mental health. God knows us and will help us.
- **Lesson 8:** Because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, we can tap into his resurrection power to live a new life of freedom.

TEACHING

🕒 30 MINUTES

Introduction: Write the focus question on the board: What is God's response to the world's confessions about you?

Say: God's Word speaks directly to the world's confessions we have heard, and reminds us that our identity comes directly from God. God's word says that we are loved, and his masterpiece. Let us read about this more on page 31 in our books.

Read: "Dear Reader" on page 31 out loud or ask a volunteer to read.

Ask:

- What is one thing that stood out to you from the article? (Allow teens to respond.)
- What does God's Word say about your identity? (Allow teens to respond.)
- What part of the article do you find most encouraging? (Allow teens to respond.)
- How does your faith in Jesus help you to become the best version of yourself?

Say: We may hear that our identity is something we choose, create, or achieve. But God's Word says that our identity is something we receive from God. You are his masterpiece. If you embrace God's Word, then you are God's son or daughter! You were created to enjoy a relationship with God. When you choose to receive Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to transform you. When anyone is in Christ, it is a whole new world. The old things are gone; suddenly, everything is new! This means that the answer to the question "Who am I?" is not found in your achievements, family expectations, or your popularity: Your identity is now in God!

Say: We are works in progress. Even as we follow Jesus, we will still struggle with temptations, old habits, harmful thoughts, and criticism from others. But we must remember that no matter what the world says about us, we can rely on God's Word at all times. He will provide answers to the questions we have and the challenges we face.

Activity:

Quiz: How Well Do You Know Yourself?

Have teens take the quiz on page 30.

Answer Key: 1.f, 2.a, 3.d, 4.b, 5.h, 6.e., 7.c, 8.g

After a few minutes, review the answers that connect to the world's confessions. In your discussion, explain each of God's Answers for the quiz:

- **Say:** I am wonderfully made. God designed every part of you for a good purpose.
 - **Say:** I have a purpose. I am loved. Our worth comes from our identity in God.
 - **Say:** I have a sound mind. I have peace. Because of Jesus' victory over sin and death, we have victory over mental health struggles like anxiety, loneliness, and depression.
 - **Say:** I am made in God's image. I am God's workmanship. God created us to reflect his love, goodness, and care to the world.
 - **Say:** I find all of my satisfaction in God. Success and popularity will come and go. But God's love is forever.
 - **Say:** I am a Child of God. I am bought with a price. You don't have to earn love from anyone else. God loves you so much that he gave his son, Jesus, for you.
 - **Say:** I am forgiven. I am a new creation. Your mistakes do not define you. Jesus died for your sins and forgives you. The Holy Spirit will guide, help, and change you into the new person God made you to be.
 - **Say:** I am loved unconditionally by God. Even though we will still struggle and make mistakes, God's love will never change.
- Say:** The foundation for these answers is in knowing our identity comes from God.

Ask: Which one of God's answers do you need in your life right now? (Answers will vary.)

CLOSING AND REFLECTION

🕒 10 MINUTES

Have teens read "Where Do I Go From Here?" on page 32 silently.

After a few minutes, ask teens to share which of the next steps (Find a Church, Read the Bible, Pray, Share) they feel are the most important for them to put into action going forward.

Say: That's wonderful that you want to grow in these areas. Ask a friend to help you follow through. Most importantly, ask God to help you! Remember that you have his power and presence working in you!

Say: Remember, God loves you and created you to experience a full life. You can use these words to help you commit your life to Jesus:

Jesus, I recognise you are my Creator. It is only through you that I can find my true identity. Thank you for choosing to die on the cross and pay the price for my sins. I confess with my mouth that you are Lord, and I believe in my heart that God raised you from the dead. You promise that you will send your Spirit to be with me and never leave me. You say that even after my life here is over, I can live with you without death, pain, and sorrow. I want you. I believe that you made me for a purpose. I trust that when you look at me, you tell the world that I am your masterpiece! Amen.

Call to Action/Weekly Challenge

Say: Turn back to page 30 and look at God's Answers.

Ask: Which one did you choose as the one you need most in your life? (Allow teens to respond.)

Say: This week, ask God to help you believe that statement. Write it down, pray about it, or repeat it out loud to yourself. Share the statement with a friend or family member, too!

Recent research in Africa shows:

- 1 in 4 teens in Africa (24%) reported having had **suicidal thoughts** within the last three months.
- 4% of teens reported that they actually **attempted suicide**.
- 55% of teens in Africa say they have viewed **pornography** recently, which is above the global average for this generation.
- 45% of unmarried teens have been **sexually active** in the past three months, with African countries being in the top 4 globally to report this.
- Most teens in Africa reported feelings of **loneliness**; over half reported **high anxiety**; and almost half reported **depression**.

BUT

- The same study shows **Christian teens** who regularly read their Bible, pray, and attend church are **less lonely, less depressed, less suicidal**, and **less likely to be engaged in drinking, drug usage, and pornography**.

Use the link
<https://www.globalyouthculture.net/reports> to learn more about this research.