A man with dark hair, seen from the back, wearing a blue ribbed sweater and light blue jeans, stands on the right side of the frame. He is looking out over a vast, flat, white salt flat that stretches to the horizon. In the distance, there are green mountains under a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is bright and open.

SALT

CREATING THIRST

LEADER'S GUIDE

GREG STIER

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A Word to Leaders

Jesus said, “*You are the salt of the earth.*”

We’re here to awaken others’ thirst for God and offer them Living Water.

But sometimes the hardest thing about sharing the gospel with those who need Jesus is just getting the conversation started.

Salt...Creating Thirst is designed to prepare and empower your students for initiating authentic, give-and-take spiritual conversations that point people toward Jesus.

Each lesson preps your students to use a different, thought-provoking YouTube *Salt* clip to initiate spiritual conversation with their unreached friends. These creatively engaging YouTube clips pose a thirst-creating question. Each week’s curriculum lesson explores one of these questions in greater theological depth and also provides practical, “how-to-share” insights specific to the YouTube *Salt* clip, along with a challenge to share it. The five questions *Salt* tackles are:

- Have you ever wondered about God?
- How valuable am I?
- What happens after we die?
- Why does God let bad things happen?
- What makes for good relationships?

But *Salt* is about more than evangelism! These are five bedrock, life-impacting questions every student—Christian or not—needs to wrestle with. No matter where someone falls on the spiritual maturity spectrum, these spiritual topics ripple through all of life. It’s vital that our students understand deep in their souls what God’s Word has to say on these foundational issues.

After all, what Christian student doesn’t sometimes...

- ...wonder what God’s really like
- ...struggle with their self-worth
- ...wonder what lies beyond death
- ...question God’s goodness when bad things happen, and/or
- ...struggle with messy relationships?

Part of the beauty of *Salt* is that it intersects at the twin ministry goals of every leader: discipleship **and** evangelism. *Salt* cultivates a deeper understanding of God in the lives of Christian students, while simultaneously training and equipping them to reach out to their friends who need Jesus. It’s a win-win for discipleship **and** evangelism.

How to Use This Curriculum

This Leader's Guide, your *Salt* DVD, the free YouTube *Salt* clips and the companion *Salt* student books will drive your group toward authentic discussion, walk you through Scripture and challenge and equip your students to reach out to those who need Jesus.

Each week's lesson opens with a fun group activity before guiding you through the lesson's video content, discussion questions and a variety of student activities laid out in the *Salt* student books. You'll need to acquire individual student books for all your students.

The structure for each lesson is built around the following S-A-L-T grid:

Search the Bible Explores the Biblical truth that answers the question.

Apply the Truth Personally Unpacks how this Biblical truth applies to you.

Listen to Others Deeply Suggests questions to ask others as you initiate spiritual conversations.

Talk About the Gospel Explains how a gospel conversation on this topic might unfold.

Each lesson includes step-by-step directions, discussion questions, Scripture, gospel presentations and more. Remember that your objective during your group time is not to plow through all the questions, but to engage in deep spiritual discussion that motivates students toward action. If your discussion times go well, there will be more content in this Leader's Guide than your group has time for, so feel free to pick and choose what to cover and what to cut. Oftentimes, fewer questions will be the better way to go.

If your group is hesitant to participate in the discussion time, I encourage you to ask your question and wait patiently for your students to engage. Waiting creates tension, and tension is a tool for change. But, in any case, you know your students best, so customize your use of the materials to your own situation. The detailed lesson flow provided here is simply a sample script.

To help you customize the materials to best fit your group, you'll find both a PDF and an editable Word format version of this Leader's Guide on your DVD. There are also a couple PowerPoint background slides you can customize. For your convenience, you have permission to make up to ten copies of the *Salt* DVD and Leader's Guide for use within your church. The *Salt* student books, however, should not be reproduced—please purchase the number of copies you need. Bulk prices are available.

The evangelism takeaway for each lesson is to share the *Salt* clip with someone and have a follow up conversation about it. There's a report back "storytelling" time built into your weekly leader's material. Creating a storytelling culture where students encourage and pray for each other's efforts to use the *Salt* clips and be "salt" to their friends helps keep evangelism on everyone's radar. And don't focus on just the success stories—make it a time for the good, the bad and the ugly—there's always something to be learned.

Also built into each lesson is a clear gospel presentation. I strongly encourage you to share the gospel message each week. Don't simply assume that all your students have previously understood or embraced the gospel. Plus, you're modeling how important it is to share it!

Follow up with those who make a decision to trust in Christ. Get them grounded and growing in their new faith. For help discipling new believers, check out the free follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos at www.somethingamazing.net/moving-forward.

May God bless you as you help your students be salt and create a thirst for Jesus in the lives of their friends!

Greg Stier
President, Dare 2 Share



GOD?

[Intro & Session 1]

Introducing *Salt* & Have You Ever Wondered About God?

KEY SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 5:13, COLOSSIANS 1:15, PHILIPPIANS 3: 8-9

Supplies

- DVD projection equipment
- *Salt...Creating Thirst* DVD
- Student Books – one for each student
- Pens/pencils
- Bibles
- Printed list of words for Icemelter Opener

Note that you may need a little extra time the first week to cover both the introductory video and the first lesson. Depending on your time constraints, feel free to pick and choose from the discussion questions.

Icemelter: Text Me

“Text Me” is a texting version of the old telephone whisper-in-your-ear game. Instead of whispering a word or phrase person-to-person, students use their finger to write a word on the arm of the next person.

Organize your students into teams of 8-10, with each team forming a separate line. Using the list of words provided below, secretly communicate to the first person in each team’s line the exact same word to pass along via the “arm texting” method of communication. The word gets passed from person-to-person

silently, through the writing motion on each arm. Those on the team who haven't received the text yet must keep their eyes closed so that they can't see the spelling of the word being passed along the chain. Absolutely no peeking or whispering allowed—this is tactile communication only. Have the final person in each line shout the word out loud immediately when the message gets to them. Award a point to the first team that finishes with the correct word. Word-by-word, simultaneously run the teams through the list of words. Tally the cumulative points to determine the winning team.

Work from this word list:

- exercise
- popcorn
- ham
- heat
- pickles
- Doritos
- P90X
- peanuts

Introducing the Series

After the opening activity, settle your students, gather their attention up front and open with prayer. Then reread the entire list of words just used in the game.

ASK

Did anyone pick up any sort of common thread across this list of words that we used when we played our game? (All make you thirsty. But if no one picks up on the common thread, encourage them to think about the question as they watch the video introduction to the *Salt* series, and then revisit the question.)

EXPLAIN

Let's take a look at the intro video. It will help give us a feel for our new five week series.

▶ VIDEO

Play "Introducing *Salt*."

EXPLAIN

What was the common thread in our word game? Things that make you thirsty.

Creating thirst—that's what this series is about.

ASK

- **In Matthew 5:13, Jesus said to His followers, "You are the salt of the earth." Does this seem like a strange thing to say? What was Jesus talking about when He said this?**
- **What is salt used for?** (Brings flavor, makes things taste better)
- **Is Jesus talking about physical thirst, like you get when you consume lots of salty foods?**

Pass out the *Salt* student books and pens/pencils, one for each student.

EXPLAIN

Open your books to page 2. There you'll find *The Message* paraphrase of Jesus' statement about us being salt: *"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth."*

ASK

- How do followers of Jesus add flavor to things?

EXPLAIN

As believers, we're to bring a God-flavor—or you could say, a God-focus—to everything we're about! And our God-focus should improve everything we touch: at our school, in our relationships, our music, our entertainment, our clubs and teams, our job, everything. Everywhere we are, as Christians, Jesus says we're to add a God-flavor to things—including our conversations.

So for the next five weeks, we're going to be learning how to be "salt" in our conversations. We're going to learn how to initiate give-and-take spiritual conversation with others, especially with those who don't know Jesus.

Each week we'll be exploring a different spiritual question people often wonder about. For each question, we'll take a look at a different, thought-provoking YouTube clip that you can use to get a conversation about Jesus started with your friends.

Trust me. This is not in any way going to be an exercise in shoving your beliefs down someone else's throat. On the contrary, this series and the YouTube clips we're going to be talking about are designed to help you learn how to engage in real, authentic, relevant, spiritual conversations about topics people care about. And the goal is to awaken a thirst in others that can only be quenched by Jesus, the Living Water.

This is about inviting people into conversations that matter for all eternity, until everyone around us has the chance to hear the good news of the gospel from someone they know and trust.

Granted, for some of us, the thought of talking about Jesus with others can feel scary, intimidating and outside our comfort zone. But don't worry, that just means there's more room for God to move in and help you along the way.

So now it's time to jump into the first topic *Salt* addresses, "Have you ever wondered about God?" But before we watch our video session, let's turn to page 5 in your book. Take a minute and respond to the question you see there: What are the first five words that jump into your head when you hear the word "God"?

Pause for a minute to give students time to write down their thoughts, and then ask for volunteers to share some of their words.

There are lots of different views of God out there, which is evident from the variety of our responses just here in our own group. And that makes this question particularly intriguing. So let's take a look at our video now and dig a little deeper.

▶ VIDEO

Play the training session “Have You Ever Wondered About God?”

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Do you think most people have wondered about God at some point in their lives? Why do you say that?
- Do you agree that people pick and choose their view of God like they pick and choose their hats? Why do you think that?
- Where do people’s views of God come from?
- Why are there so many different views of God?
- What do you think are some of the most commonly held views about God among your friends?
- Are some of the different views of God contradictory to each other? Can all the different views of God be right? Why or why not?

EXPLAIN

It’s fine to exercise our personal preference when we choose our hats, but it’s a whole different thing when we’re talking about God...It’s about more than personal preference, it’s about GOD. Who He is and what He’s like is not determined by US, it’s determined by God.

So let’s take a look at what the Bible has to say to those who “wonder about God” and want to know what He’s like.

Search the Bible

ASK

- Can I have a volunteer look up John 14:8-9 in their Bible and read it out loud for us?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

John 14:8-9: *Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”*

Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! ...”

ASK

- So here we have Philip wondering about God. What does Jesus say to him here?
- Now let’s take a look at the passage Zane talked about in the video. Can I have a volunteer read Colossians 1:15 and 20? You can find these verses in your book on page 6.

THE BIBLE SAYS...

Colossians 1:15, 20: *Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation...and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.*

ASK

- **What is the apostle Paul saying in this passage about how to get to know the invisible God?**
- **The Bible is an amazing source of insight for us when it comes to knowing Jesus. What specific things does this passage we just read tell us about Jesus? I see five things here in just this short passage. Let's talk it through as a group and you can write down your own notes in the space provided in your book.** (Preexistent, supreme, reconciler, made peace with everything, sacrificially went to the cross)
- **Next, let's look at the passage Greg mentioned in the video. Can I have a volunteer read Philippians 3:8-9 out loud for us?**

THE BIBLE SAYS...

Philippians 3:8-9: *Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him.*

Apply the Truth Personally**EXPLAIN**

So what does this mean for us personally? If you want to know who God is, know Jesus.

But we don't want to just go around spouting religious words to others. We want to apply what we're learning to our own lives, so we don't turn into hypocrites who say one thing, but do another.

ASK

- **What does "knowing Jesus" look like?**
- **What does "knowing Jesus better than you currently do" look like?**
- **Is "knowing Jesus" about more than filling your head with facts about Jesus? Why do you think that?**

Jesus died for us because He wanted to restore our relationship with Him. That means He considers our relationship with Him immensely important—and we should too!

Two of the primary ways we get to know Him are through prayer and reading the Bible—these help us get to know Him better and better. So here’s a simple example of a way you can get to know Jesus better. I’m going to read through four of Jesus’ “I Am” statements in the book of John—there are more than these four, so if you want to do a study on them sometime, it would be a great way to go even deeper.

As I read these four statements, be thinking about which one attracts you the most, given where you’re at in your relationship with Jesus right now.

Jesus’ “I Am” Statements

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35) (Satisfies my spiritual needs)

“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.” (John 8:12) (Shows me how to live)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) (Restores my relationship with the Father)

“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5) (Lives in me and empowers me)

EXPLAIN

Turn to page 7 of your book and in the space provided draw a simple sketch depicting whichever “I am” statement intrigues you most. Place yourself somewhere in the sketch you draw. (OPTIONAL: If time allows, give your students a few minutes to share with a partner what they drew and why.)

Listen to Others Deeply

EXPLAIN

So now it’s time to talk about how to use the *Salt* clip we watched earlier with your friends. It’s called *Have You Ever Wondered About God?* You can find it on YouTube at [somethingamazing.net/God](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=somethingamazing.net/God). Share the video link however you want—on Facebook, by text, tweet, email, side-by-side on your phone or sitting at your computer with your friend, whatever fits you best. Share it with at least one person this week and follow it up with, “Let’s talk about it. I want to know what you think.”

In your book on page 8, you'll find a few questions that can help you get the conversation going when you follow up. Questions like...

- What did you think of the video?
- What do you think God is like?
- Do you come from a religious background? If so, what was it like?
- Where does your view of God come from?
- Do you think it's legit to just pick and choose what we want God to be like and then believe that about Him?
- Have you ever thought about the God-human connection as a "relationship," instead of as a "religion"?

Talk About the Gospel

EXPLAIN

Once you've opened up the conversation and better understand where the other person is coming from, talk about the gospel.

Say something like...

Jesus' gospel message tells us a lot about what God is like—relational, loving, giving and forgiving. Has anyone ever explained the gospel to you?

Then take them to the cross and talk about John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (NIV).

If you're looking for help explaining the gospel to your friends, you can also use the "Something Amazing" video available at www.somethingamazing.net. Just to get you familiar with it, let's take a look at it right now.

► VIDEO

Play the video "Something Amazing" found at the bottom of the Training Sessions menu on your *Salt* DVD.

Next week, we'll be talking in more detail about the core essentials of how to explain the gospel to someone. But in the meantime, if you're not sure what to say, just talk about the cross or use this video that explains the gospel.

Come back next week prepared to share what happened in your conversations with your friends.

Closing

Close the meeting by allowing time for questions and praying for friends who don't know Jesus. Provide an opportunity for students to trust Christ. Say something like...

Maybe you're here today and all of this talk about Jesus is new to you, or made sense to you for the very first time. If you've never put your trust in Jesus before, I want to invite you to do that right now. Like the "Something Amazing" video explained, by simply believing, you can receive this free gift of life with Jesus that starts now and lasts forever.

Invite students who made a decision to trust Christ to see you after the meeting so you can get them some follow up materials to help them grow, or send them to somethingamazing.net/moving-forward to use the new believer follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos.

[Session 2]

HOW VALUABLE AM I?



KEY SCRIPTURE: JOHN 8:3-11, JOHN 3:17

Supplies

- DVD projection equipment
- *Salt...Creating Thirst* DVD
- Student Books – one for each student
- Pens/pencils
- Bibles
- A variety of everyday objects and their corresponding prices for playing “The Price is Right”
- Prize for the Icemelter winning team

Icemelter: The Price is Right

Divide your students into teams of four and play “The Price is Right.” Using various objects that you’ve privately noted the price of, display each item, one at a time. Each team must agree among themselves on a price to guess. The team closest to the real price, without going over the actual price of the item, wins the point. Continue through all the items, tally the team scores and give the winning team a small prize like a bag of candy.

Gather your students back together and open with prayer.

EXPLAIN

In our game, we were talking about the value of objects, but like it or not, we also have a tendency, either consciously or subconsciously, to assign value to people. Including ourselves.

Maybe you've sometimes questioned your own value.

Many people's sense of value comes from things like the approval of others, appearance, accomplishments, athletic ability, popularity, and so on. Open your student book to page 11. Take a minute and think about some of these things I just listed, plus some more you'll see there. Do you look to any of these kinds of things to get your sense of value? Which ones? Circle your top three, or if none of these are a fit for you, add your own.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLOTHES SMARTS
SELF ATHLETICS APPEARANCE
POPULARITY GRADES GOD PARENTS
TEACHERS DRAMA ART PARTYPING
MONEY TECH TOYS ABILITIES COACHES
MUSIC CARS WIT FRIENDS

EXPLAIN

Keep those thoughts in mind as we take a look at our next *Salt* video which addresses the question of our value.

▶ VIDEO

Play the training session "How Valuable Am I?"

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Zane talked about getting his value from what others thought of him...his sports ability, his clothes, his alcohol consumption. Did you identify with him?
- Zane described how he came to a point where he was so down—so in the muck and mud of the gutter—that he didn't believe he had value. Where can those kinds of feelings lead us?
- Do you think most people who struggle with feeling worthless lose their sense of value because of things they've done, or because of things others have done to them, or both? Why do you think that?
- Why is bullying so devastating to the individual being targeted?



Search the Bible

EXPLAIN

Let's take a closer look at what Jesus has to say to those who feel like they're in the gutter of life—either because of the things they've done, or the things others have done to them.

ASK

- Can I get a volunteer to read John 8:3-11? It's there on page 12 in your book.

THE BIBLE SAYS...

John 8:3-11: *As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.*

"Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

ASK

- What do we learn about the woman in this story?
- What do we learn about her accusers?
- What do we learn about Jesus from this story?
- What would you have written in the dust, if you'd been there?
- Can I get a volunteer to read John 3:17?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

John 3:17: "God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Who's speaking here in this verse?
- Jesus is here not to condemn us, but to save us. Why do you think so many people think of God as condemning, rather than as forgiving?
- Does the voice of the accuser sometimes try to tell us something different than what this verse says?
- Do we all need forgiveness?

Apply the Truth Personally

ASK

- Consider Zane's statement: "You can tell the value of something based on what someone is willing to pay for it." Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Based on this thinking, how valuable are we to God?

EXPLAIN

Take a minute or two, and in your own words, finish the sentences you see in the Apply section on page 13.

No matter who I am, where I've been or how I've been used, I know that God _____.

Because I've sinned, I need a _____.

Jesus came and died on the cross for me, not to _____ me, but in order to _____ me.

Listen to Others Deeply

EXPLAIN

Before we launch into talking about how to use this *Salt* clip about the \$20 with our friends, I'd like to hear about some of your experiences during this past week as you tried to initiate spiritual conversations with last week's clip, "Have You Ever Wondered About God?" Does anyone have a story they're willing to share with the group? (As students share, stop and pray for the individuals involved.)

So now, let's talk a bit about how to use today's *Salt* clip to start a conversation. The clip is called "How Valuable Am I?" You can find it on YouTube at [somethingamazing.net/value](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=somethingamazing.net/value). After you share the video, be sure to follow it up with, "Let's talk about it. I want to know what you think."

In your book, you'll find a few questions that can help you get the conversation going.

Questions like...

- What did you think of the video?
- Where do you think a person's value comes from?
- Do you sometimes try to find your value in what people think of you? Or your clothes...your tech toys...your sports ability...or whatever?
- Have you ever felt like you don't matter?
- Do you think people are ever beyond the reach of God's love and His valuing them?

Talk About the Gospel

EXPLAIN

In the video, Greg and Zane provided a step-by-step example of how to talk through the gospel after someone has seen the clip. They used an acrostic as a general outline that lays out a clear, concise summary of the gospel message. You can find this GOSPEL acrostic in your book.

We're going to take a few minutes right now and give you each a chance to role play a clear gospel presentation. I encourage you to use the GOSPEL acrostic as a guide. But it's not a script for you to spout off to someone; it's a guide to help you cover the essentials of the gospel. So break into pairs now and do a little role playing of how YOU would explain the gospel to someone who has never heard Jesus' message of hope and forgiveness.

Give students a few minutes to pair off and role play explaining the GOSPEL to each other.

EXPLAIN

Another tool you can use to share the GOSPEL is the virally popular "Life in 6 Words: The GOSPEL" video. It's found at www.lifein6words.com. (If time allows, show the video to your group.) It's a spoken word presentation of the GOSPEL acrostic by the Christian rap artist Propaganda. The video is also available on the free Dare 2 Share mobile app, so you can either watch it on your smart phone with a friend, or check it out together on the website noted in your book.

UNITED STATES YOUTH LEADERS NOTE: Another gospel sharing tool to consider making available to your students is the *Life in 6 Words* outreach book. Drawing from the spoken word video, this visually engaging faith-sharing book uses the six words of the GOSPEL acrostic—God, Our, Sins, Paying, Everyone, Life—to clearly communicate Jesus' invitation to trust in Him. Go to www.share6campaign.com to learn more.

Closing

Close the meeting by allowing time for questions. Pray for friends who don't know Jesus, then provide an opportunity for students to trust Christ. Say something like...

Maybe you're here today, and when you heard Jesus' gospel message explained it was news to you. Or maybe you understood it for the very first time. If that's true for you, I invite you right now to put your trust in Jesus as your only hope for a restored relationship with God and for your eternal salvation.

Invite students who made a decision to trust Christ to see you after the meeting so you can get them some follow up materials to help them grow, or send them to somethingamazing.net/moving-forward to use the follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos.



[Session 3]

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

KEY SCRIPTURE: JOHN 3:16-18; JOHN 14:6; 2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-10, ACTS 20:26-27

Supplies

- DVD projection equipment
- *Salt...Creating Thirst* DVD
- Student Books – one for each student
- Pens/pencils
- Bibles
- Two blenders, food items and brown paper lunch bags for Icemelter game
- Prize for the Icemelter winner

Icemelter: This Is Your Life

Place two blenders on a table up front. Have the food items listed below placed in separate brown paper lunch bags numbered as follows (i.e., you will have two different #1 bags, one with maple syrup in it and another with chocolate syrup in it, etc.):

- Round #1 Bags: Maple syrup; chocolate syrup
- Round #2 Bags: Baked beans; Spam
- Round #3 Bags: Sour cream; vinegar
- Round #4 Bags: Iced tea; caffeinated soda
- Round #5 Bags: Thousand Island dressing; Caesar Salad dressing
- Round #6 Bags: Baby food peas; baby food green beans
- Round #7 Bags: Ketchup; hot sauce
- Round #8 Bags: Pudding; Jell-o

Select two outgoing, gutsy students with strong stomachs. Flip a coin to determine which student gets first choice in selecting which mystery bag they want during Round #1, then alternate first choice between the two students with each subsequent round. As each student selects their bag, dump a portion of their bag's food item into their respective blenders, until you have a final "customized, delicious" drink for them to down. Be sure to add plenty of liquid in Round #4 so that the drinks blend well.

Script your emceeing of the game something like this:

Life is full of twists and turns that add all sorts of flavor to our journey along the way. So let's have a little fun blending together some food items to represent some of your potential life choices... because _____ [insert your two students' names here] _____, THIS IS YOUR LIFE...

- **Round #1: You're a student now, but your next major milestone is...GRADUATION from high school. Congratulations! Sweet! Choose your bag.**
- **Round #2: Then what? Job or college. In either case, money is tight, so you'll be eating lots of this. Choose your bag.**
- **Round #3: Then what? Fall in love. But the romance sours and things end badly—breakup time. Choose your bag.**
- **Round #4: Then what? Get a good job. Pay's good, but loooooong hours to get ahead. You'll need this. Choose your bag.**
- **Round #5: Then what? Fall in love again. This time, marriage and a sweet honeymoon to the Greek Islands! Choose your bag.**
- **Round #6: Then what? Surprise! Surprise! Babies arrive! Choose your bag.**
- **Round #7: Then what? Kids grow up. Plenty of scrapped knees and sassy back talk. Choose your bag.**
- **Round #8: Then what? Kids raised, grandkids arrive, you go bald, retire, grow old, lose your teeth. No more steak dinners or corn on the cob. You'll need this. Choose your bag.**

Then what? You die. Then what? We'll talk more about that later... But now, it's time for you two to drink your very own special, "THIS IS YOUR LIFE" concoction that was custom created just for you!

Blend the contents of the mixers, and pour each student's drink into clear glasses of identical size. The first one to finish their drink wins! Give the winner a prize.

After the activity, transition and open with prayer.

EXPLAIN

We've just had some fun exploring the "Then What?" nature of our journeys through life. But you probably noticed that when we got to the "next, you die" part at the end, I stopped the game there. And here's why. I didn't want to give the impression that what happens after we die is just a random chance sort of thing. It's not a goofy, humorous choice that you can wait to make until after you die.

You can't treat the afterlife like a game.

ASK

- Turn to someone next to you and answer this question: What kinds of things do people believe about what happens after we die?

Gather your student attention back up front.

EXPLAIN

Almost everyone is at least a bit intrigued by the question, "what happens after we die?" Let's take a look at today's video and see what it has to say about this topic.

▶ VIDEO

Play the training session for "What Happens After We Die?"

ASK

- Zane commented that "10 out of 10 people die." It's obvious, but yet it seems that many people live as though they don't take this spiritual reality seriously. Do you agree or disagree? Why do you think that?
- Do you think most people are uncomfortable talking about death?
- While many people find the topic of death uncomfortable, most are intrigued by the idea of an afterlife. Why do you think that is?


Search the Bible
EXPLAIN

According to Scripture, there are two distinct options for what happens after we die: praise or pain. Let's take a closer look at the verses Greg and Zane talked about, and also some additional passages where Jesus talked about this further.

ASK

- Turn to page 17 in your book. Can I have a volunteer read John 3:16-18?
- This is Jesus speaking here. What is He saying the difference is for those who believe in Him and those who don't?
- Can I have a volunteer read John 14:6?
- What is Jesus saying about other ways to God?

- Are these words from Jesus difficult to hear? Why or why not?
- As believers, can we just dismiss them if we don't like them?
- Should they bring urgency to our efforts to share our faith with others? Why or why not?
- Can someone read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10?
- How does this passage make you feel?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

John 3:16-18: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (NIV).*

John 14:6: *Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.*

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10: *...He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don't know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power. When he comes on that day, he will receive glory from his holy people—praise from all who believe. And this includes you, for you believed what we told you about him.*

Apply the Truth Personally

EXPLAIN

The passage we just read used the phrase, *"forever separated from the Lord."* Turn to page 18 of your book. There you'll find an interesting quote from C.S. Lewis, a famous Christian author. Here's what he said about hell:

Sin is man's saying to God throughout life, "Go away and leave me alone." Hell is God's finally saying to man, "You may have your wish." It is God's leaving man to himself, as man has chosen.

ASK

- What do you think of this statement?
- Does it surprise you to hear that people choose hell when they choose to push God away? Why or why not?
- How do you reconcile the reality of a loving God and the reality of hell?

EXPLAIN

This last question is one many people struggle with. But the struggle comes because often, we don't grasp the full character of the God of the Bible. Love *and* justice are both part of God's very essence.

Oftentimes, the 21st Century version of God is that He is *just loving*, instead of just *and* loving. The just part of God that demands absolute justice, holiness and perfection has been minimized in our culture, and the loving part of God that shows mercy, grace and forgiveness has been maximized.

ASK

- Do you think it's possible that God's attitude toward sin and evil are actually born out of His great love of us? Why or why not? [God hates sin and evil because they harm us and separate us from Him.]
- How did God demonstrate His love for us?
- What wipes out the penalty of sin so that individuals don't have to suffer separation from God?
- Is hell necessary? Why do you say that?

EXPLAIN

Hell is necessary, because God's love is not coercive—He does not force us to love Him back and accept His free gift of salvation available through Jesus' work on the cross. People are free to choose to reject God's love and remain "*forever separated from the Lord*" like it says in the passage we just read.

But enough about hell. Let's talk about heaven for a bit.

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- What do you think heaven will be like?
- If hell is a place of isolation, do you think heaven will be a place of relationship? Why do you think that?
- Do you think it will be more like a church service or a big party? Why or why not?
- Surveys show that more people believe in heaven than hell. Why do you think that's the case?

EXPLAIN

Most conversations you'll have about the afterlife will brush up against the reality of heaven and hell. So we're going to take a few minutes right now, so you can solidify in your own head some of what we've just been talking about. On your page there's some space to write down your thoughts. Take some time right now and respond to the question you see there: How would you describe what heaven and hell are like to someone who has never read the Bible? Write a brief description of each.

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Which do you think would motivate you more, seeing the pain of hell for 24 hours or seeing the joy and excitement of heaven for 24 seconds? Why?
- Zane posed the question he sometimes asks himself: "What am I doing about this? If there's really a heaven and really a hell, and people are going to one or the other based on Jesus and

what they believe about Him, what am I doing?" Does this eternal reality create any urgency within you to tell others about Jesus? Why or why not?

- Do you agree that you don't have to have all the right things to say or be the best at explaining things in order to talk about your faith with your friends? Why or why not?
- Zane used the word "warn" in his discussion. What kinds of things can you do to "warn" your friends about the eternal realities we will all face?

EXPLAIN

Greg talked about Acts 20:26-27. Let's take a closer look.

ASK

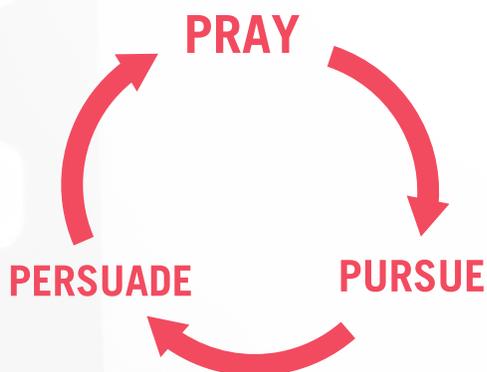
- Can someone read that out loud for us? It's on page 19 of your book.
- If you had the cure for cancer, would you tell a friend who was dying of cancer about it?
- If you have the cure for an eternity spent apart from God, should you tell your friends about it?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

Acts 20:26-27: *I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it's not my fault, for I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know.*

Explain

Take a minute or so right now, and on page 19 write down the names of some of your friends who need Jesus. You'll find a little circular graphic there, to remind you that these are the people you want to pray for with passion, pursue with love and persuade with truth. This pray-pursue-persuade process may take days, months or even years, but the important thing is to never give up on your efforts to introduce others to Jesus.



Note: If you'd like a more detailed explanation of the Pray-Pursue-Persuade approach to sharing your faith, check out Appendix A. This strategic tool can help your students be more structured and purposeful about sharing the gospel with their friends.

After you get your list written, pair off with someone near you, and specifically pray for the people on both your lists. Pray, too, for the determination and courage you'll need to stick with sharing your faith with these people in coming days, months and years.

Listen to Others Deeply

EXPLAIN

Before we launch into talking about how to use this specific *Salt* clip to start a spiritual conversation, let's hear about some of your experiences during this past week as you tried to share your faith. Does anyone have a story they're willing to share with the group? (As students share, stop and pray for the individuals involved.)

So your challenge this week is to use today's clip to start a conversation with someone who needs Jesus. Pray for the person, share the video, and then follow up. Remember that almost everyone is interested in talking about the afterlife because it's intriguing. The *Salt* clip is titled "Then What?" You can find it on YouTube at somethingamazing.net/then-what.

On page 20 in your book, you'll find a few questions that can help you get the conversation going. Questions like:

- What did you think of the video?
- What do you think happens after we die?
- If there is a heaven, what do you think determines whether or not someone goes to heaven?
- Is being "good enough," compared to other people, enough for God to let you into heaven?
- How does being "good enough" measure up against God's standard of perfect holiness?
- Have you ever wondered how a loving God could send people to an eternal hell?
- If you were to die tonight, do you know where you would spend eternity?

You should be aware that one of the most common response to what it takes to get into heaven is "to live a good life" or be "good enough" compared to other people. Therefore, it's helpful to have an illustration that explains why Jesus said "good enough" isn't "good enough." Here's one illustration you might use:

Let's say I baked you a cake and burned it. If I covered it with white frosting and gave it to you, the cake would still be burned, even though you couldn't see it. Putting frosting on it doesn't change the fact that the cake is ruined. Thinking that we can cover our sin with our "good enough" efforts is like putting frosting on a burnt cake. God sees right through the "frosting" to the sin that lies inside each and every one of us.

Talk About the Gospel

EXPLAIN

Once you've opened up the conversation and better understand where the other person is coming from, talk about the gospel. Say something like...

Did you know that the Bible says that “nothing impure will ever enter” heaven (Revelation 21:27)? That means our efforts to be “good enough” by doing good things are like putting white frosting on a burned cake. Underneath the frosting, the cake is still burned. That’s why we need the forgiveness of sin that Jesus came to provide...

Then explain the message of the gospel.

Closing

Close the meeting by allowing time for questions. Provide an opportunity for students to trust Christ. Present the gospel by saying something like this...

As we close, there may be some of you here who realized today that you don’t know where you’re going after you die. The Bible tells us that if we put our faith in Jesus alone to forgive us for our sins, we can be restored to a relationship with God, and receive the free gift of eternal life that starts now and lasts forever. But it takes a decision. I invite you to make that decision today.

Close in prayer. Encourage those who make a decision to see you after the meeting so you can get them some follow up materials to help them grow. Or send them to somethingamazing.net/moving-forward to use the new believer follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos.

[Session 4]

WHY DOES GOD LET BAD THINGS HAPPEN?



KEY SCRIPTURE: JOHN 16:33, 2 PETER 3:9, 1 CORINTHIANS 13:12, 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

Supplies

- DVD projection equipment
- *Salt...Creating Thirst* DVD
- Student Books – one for each student
- Pens/pencils
- Bibles

Icemelter: Would You Rather?

As you ask the following “Would You Rather” questions, have students move to opposite sides of the room to vote their choices. After each question, ask one or two students to explain why they made the choice they did.

Would You Rather...

- ...step in dog poop barefooted or be dive bombed by a bat?
- ...be gossiped about or totally ignored?
- ...break your collar bone or a rib?
- ...be shipwrecked on an island alone or with someone who's a continual nag?
- ...visit the doctor or the dentist?
- ...be addicted to video games or shopping?
- ...vomit or clean up someone else's vomit?
- ...get 20 beestings or be thrown from a horse?
- ...drop your cell phone in the toilet or get pneumonia?
- ...be trapped in an elevator for two hours with someone with serious B.O. or for eight hours alone.

Settle your students after the activity and open with prayer.

EXPLAIN

While the game we just played was semi-humorous, sometimes in real life, when bad stuff happens, it can feel like we're stuck between two bad choices, doesn't it? Would you rather lose your arm or your leg in a car accident? Would you rather lose your home to a tornado or a hurricane? Would you rather see your mom lose her job, or your dad lose his job? In the real world, sometimes these kinds of bad things happen, regardless of our best efforts to make good choices and our best attempts to be good people.

ASK

- What do you think, why does so much bad stuff happen in the world around us?
- Could God stop all the bad stuff that happens if He wanted to?
- Why doesn't He?

EXPLAIN

These are incredibly difficult questions that can be real stumbling blocks for people when it comes to believing in God. So this is the question we're going to be tackling in today's video: Why does God let bad things happen?

▶ VIDEO

Play the training session for "Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?"

ASK

- So we ended up with a world where bad things happen. Are those bad things God's "fault"? Why or why not?
- Why doesn't God wipe out all evil here and now?
- What would happen to us if God wiped out all evil?

[S]earch the Bible

ASK

- Did Jesus promise us that bad things wouldn't happen to us if we follow Him?
- Can someone read John 16:33 out of their Bible for us?
- How would you put this verse in your own words?
- What does He mean when He says, "I have overcome the world"?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

John 16:33: *"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

EXPLAIN

Like Zane said, in the end God will make everything right for those who trust in Him. Revelation 21:4 puts it like this: *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."* But let's take a closer look at the verse Zane mentioned, 2 Peter 3:9. It's in your book on page 23. It says: *"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."*

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- What does this verse say about why God is waiting?
- God *"wants everyone to repent."* Jesus told us that we're "salt." What are some of the implications when you consider these two statements side-by-side?
- Does this verse motivate you to share the gospel? Why or why not?
- Greg said, "God gives us enough truth to go on, but He doesn't give us all the details. There are still some shadowy areas out there we don't understand fully." What do you think of this statement?

Have a volunteer look up 1 Corinthians 13:12 in their Bible and read it out loud.

THE BIBLE SAYS...

1 Corinthians 13:12: *Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.*

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- How does this verse speak to people's sometimes unanswered questions about God?
- Do our best attempts at addressing this particular difficult issue about why God allows evil things to happen totally answer this question?
- Does it make you uncomfortable not to have all the clean and easy answers? Why or why not?
- What should we do with our uncomfortable feelings?

EXPLAIN

It's true that we don't always have all the nice, pat answers to difficult questions. But like Greg and Zane talked about, that doesn't keep us from experiencing God's comfort personally in the midst of the hard stuff of life, or bringing comfort to others.

ASK

- Can I have a volunteer read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, found on page 23 in your book?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

[A] pply the Truth Personally**ASK**

- How does comforting others in times of need help demonstrate what God is like?
- Can we comfort others well if we haven't experienced God's comfort ourselves?

EXPLAIN

Experiencing pain and suffering in our lives, or watching it hit the lives of those we love is a difficult thing. When we find ourselves on that road, it doesn't mean that God doesn't love us, or isn't there with us in the midst of the hurt.

As believers, we're promised access to God's comfort. What does that look like? Well, it looks different for different people. Let's spend a little time in smaller groups learning more about what this can look like.

Divide your students into groups of three or four.

On page 24 of your book, you'll find four verses about God's comfort. As you read each verse in your small group, stop, verse-by-verse, and discuss the three questions you see there in your book:

- What does this say about God?
- What does this say about troubles?
- What difference does this make in real life?

THE BIBLE SAYS...

*God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble. Psalm 46:1*

*You keep track of all my sorrows.
You have collected all my tears in your bottle.
You have recorded each one in your book. Psalm 56:8*

*The Lord is good,
a strong refuge when trouble comes.
He is close to those who trust in him. Nahum 1:7*

*So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.
Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. 1 Peter 5:6-7*

Gather your students back into the larger group.

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Can God use the difficult things that happen in our lives and “redeem” them?
- What are some examples of what it might look like for God to “redeem” the difficult things that happen in our lives?
- Greg said that Jesus understands the sting of sin at an even deeper level than we do. Does knowing that even Jesus experienced pain and suffering provide a source of comfort to you in your own difficulties? Why or why not?

Look at page 25 of your book. It says: “The worst thing that’s ever happened, happened to the best person who ever lived.” Take a couple minutes individually right now to think about that statement, and respond to it in the area provided in your book by drawing a sketch and writing a caption about what this means to you.

[L]isten to Others Deeply

So the challenge this week is to use today’s clip to start a conversation with someone who needs Jesus. The video is titled “Why Does God Let Bad Things Happen?” You can find it on YouTube at somethingamazing.net/why. Pray, share it and then follow up.

I have a special caution for you this week because of the difficult nature of this topic. Please be sensitive as you approach people. Some might be badly hurting, and may be angry at God for some reason that you aren't even aware of. In fact, let's talk about that a little bit right now.

ASK

- How do you think a person in deep emotional or physical pain would react if you "lectured" them about why God allows bad things to happen?
- How should we respond when others are in intense pain?

It takes sensitivity to have the right timing when it comes to talking about highly emotional, painful topics. Sometimes, people need you to just be there with them for awhile in their pain, before they are ready to hear anything at all about sin and evil and God's love for them. You can say something like, "I don't understand, but I'm so sorry and I'm here."

So you need to pray and use good judgment. Try to ask plenty of follow up questions after you share the video with someone, so you can get a sense of where they are in terms of being angry at God about something bad that's happened in their life.

Once you get a pulse on where they're at, you can decide whether it's a time to just comfort someone in pain, or it's a time to explore this theological question with them. Either way, your goal is to take them to Jesus' gospel message of hope at some point in your relationship with them. The gospel is good news because it is the only thing that ultimately deals, once and for all, with the problem of evil in our world.

On page 26 in your book, you'll find a few questions that can help you get the follow up conversation going.

Ask questions like...

- What did you think of the video?
- Have you ever wondered about this question before?
- What's your theory about why the world is so messed up?
- Why doesn't God just wipe away everything bad?
- I've heard it said that if God wiped away all evil, we would all be wiped away too. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Have you ever been mad at God?
- Do you have the kind of relationship with God that you can go to Him with your anger or pain?

[T]alk About the Gospel

Once you've opened up the conversation, talk about the gospel. Say something like...

Did you know that God wants the kind of intimate, personal relationship with you where you can always come to Him with your anger and pain?

Then explain the message of the gospel. Share how Jesus identifies with our suffering, because He suffered too. Explain what the Bible says about how, in the end, God's going to make things right because of what Jesus did on the cross.

Let your students pair off in twos and spend a few minutes role playing how a conversation about this video might unfold.

Closing

EXPLAIN

Lastly, before we close, let's hear about some of your experiences during this past week as you tried to initiate spiritual conversations with last week's clip. Does anyone have a story they're willing to share with the group? (As students share, stop and pray for the individuals involved.)

If there's anyone here today who has never entered into the kind of personal relationship with God that we've been talking about, I want to invite you to do that right now. So with every head bowed and every eye closed, I invite you to pray this prayer silently along with me. Keep in mind that saying a prayer isn't what opens the door to this life-transforming relationship with God. Praying a prayer like this is just one way for you to express your new-found faith in Jesus. Let's pray.

Dear God, I know that my sins have broken my relationship with You and that nothing I could do could ever change that. But right now, I believe that Jesus died in my place and rose again from the dead. I trust in Him to forgive me for my sins. Through faith in Him, I am entering an eternal relationship with You. Thank You for this free gift!

And for the rest of us here today, we pray that You would make Your comfort real in our own lives. For those of us who are personally wrestling with this difficult question, and experiencing pain and hurt in our lives, please wrap us in Your arms.

Father, as we share this video with our friends, go before us. Prepare their hearts for the truth of Your gospel message and give us the courage and wisdom we need to share about You with others, so they can come to know You too. In Jesus' name, amen.

Invite students who made a decision to trust Christ to see you after the meeting so you can get them some follow up materials to help them grow, or send them to somethingamazing.net/moving-forward to use the new believer follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos.



[Session 5]

WHAT MAKES FOR GOOD RELATIONSHIPS?

KEY SCRIPTURE: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7, ROMANS 5:8

Supplies

- DVD projection equipment
- *Salt...Creating Thirst* DVD
- Student Books – one for each student
- Pens/pencils
- Bibles
- Worship music that focuses on God's love; possible options include: *How He Loves* by the David Crowder Band, *10,000 Reasons* by Matt Redman, *I Was Made to Love* by TobyMac.

Icemelter: Name That Movie

Instruct your students to turn to page 29 of their book. Give them two minutes to fill in the blanks for "Name That Movie." OPTION: Form teams of 4-5 and instruct them to collaborate on their answers. Run through the answers noted below as a group and ask for a show of hands of those who got 100% right, one wrong, two wrong, and so on.

- Lois & Clark (any title from the *Superman* series)
- Westley & Buttercup (*The Princess Bride*)
- Charlie & Sam (*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*)
- Ron & Harry (any title from the *Harry Potter* series)
- Beca & Jesse (*Pitch Perfect*)
- Timon and Pumbaa (*The Lion King*)
- Jack & Rose (*Titanic*)
- Kat & Patrick (*10 Things I Hate About You*)
- Winnie & Christopher (*Winnie the Pooh*)
- Katniss & Peeta (any title from the *The Hunger Games* series)
- Han & Leia (*Star Wars IV, V, and VI – A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back, The Return of the Jedi*)
- Cosette & Marius (*Les Misérables*)
- Sam & Frodo (any title from the *The Lord of the Rings* series)
- Elizabeth & Jane (*Pride and Prejudice*)
- Tony & Pepper (any title from the *Ironman* series)
- Ted & Bill (*Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*)
- Edward & Bella (any title from the *Twilight* series)
- Jake & Elwood (*The Blues Brothers*)
- Scout & Dill (*To Kill a Mockingbird*)
- Rick & Ilsa (*Casablanca*)

Settle your students and open with prayer.

EXPLAIN

Relationships are incredibly important to us, aren't they? That's why most every movie, in one form or another, touches on relationships.

ASK

- **Why do you think relationships are so important to us?**
- **What do you think a healthy relationship looks like?**
- **What kinds of things nurture our relationships?**
- **We generally associate healthy relationships with the word love. What do you think "love" looks like?**

EXPLAIN

When you start to think about it, love can look different to different people, can't it? So now it's time to consider what it looks like to you, personally. Turn to page 30 in your book and take a minute or so to rank which description on that list best captures what love looks like to you. Then after you've got your top five noted, we're going to break into groups of 2-3 and talk in your groups about why you chose what you did as your top two.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry | <input type="checkbox"/> Compliments | <input type="checkbox"/> Touch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers & Chocolates | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gifts | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouragement | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Puppies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Helping | <input type="checkbox"/> Romance | <input type="checkbox"/> Unselfishness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

Gather your students' attention back up front.

EXPLAIN

In a perfect world, our relationships would always be wrapped in perfect love—delivered to us just the way *WE* want it, wouldn't they? But sadly, sometimes our relationships get complicated, messed up, painful and broken.

ASK

- What are examples of the kinds of things that damage our relationships?

EXPLAIN

Whether it's a friend who lets you down, a sibling spat, a couple breakup, a parent-teen conflict, or whatever—we've all experienced relational challenges.

That's one of the reasons why the video clip we're going to be talking about today strikes a chord with most people. Let's take a look.

▶ VIDEO

Play the training session for "What Makes for Good Relationships?"

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- Did any of you identify with Greg's story of being dumped? Actually, let's not go there...But how about Zane's statement to his sister that at some point, all human relationships will let you down? Do you agree or disagree? Why do you say that?
- Where do you turn when others let you down?
- Do you think that deep down inside, everyone wants to be loved unconditionally?
- Why is it so hard for people to love each other unconditionally?

Search the Bible

EXPLAIN

Sin and selfishness damage our relationships, while pure, unselfish love nurtures them. This is what makes God's love so amazing. His love for us is pure, unselfish, sacrificial and unconditional.

ASK

- Greg mentioned that in Greek, the original language of the New Testament, there are actually three different words for three different kinds of love. Does anyone remember what those three kinds of love are? (*Eros*—erotic love, *phileo*—friend-to-friend, brotherly love, *agape*—God’s love)
- Let’s take a closer look now at God’s *agape* love. Can I please have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 out loud? You can find it on page 31 in your book. And as this is being read out, I’d like you to underline each word or phrase that helps us get our mind around what God’s *agape* love is actually like.

THE BIBLE SAYS...

1 Corinthians 13:4-7: Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Romans 5:8: But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

EXPLAIN

This is an incredible description of God’s love—unconditional *agape* love.

ASK

- Can I have a volunteer read Romans 5:8 out loud?
- Consider this verse and the quote Greg mentioned: “God gave us His best while we were at our worst.”(Source: Tullian Tchividjian, *Free at Last* sermon series.) What do these mean to you?
- How does this make you feel?

Apply the Truth Personally

ASK (PICK ONE OR TWO.)

- What does God’s unconditional love mean for us when we feel unlovable?
- Do we have to have our act cleaned up before we come to God and put our trust in Jesus? Why do you say that?
- When your human relationships let you down, what does it look like in your life to “run to God” for love, acceptance, comfort and hope?
- Does God still love us if we continue to struggle with sin after we become Christians?
- Do you really believe God loves you? Not just “if” you perform, “if” you serve Him, or “if” you do the right things?

EXPLAIN

On page 32 in your book, there's a spot to write a note to God. Take a minute and silently reread the verses in 1 Corinthians 13 that we talked about. Think about the statement: **God doesn't love you "if," He doesn't love you "because," He loves you. Period.**

Revel in God's unconditional love and thank Him for it in the note you write.

Take a few minutes to worship God with music that focuses on His *agape* love. Possible music options include: *How He Loves* by the David Crowder Band, *10,000 Reasons* by Matt Redman, or *I Was Made to Love* by TobyMac.

Listen to Others Deeply

EXPLAIN

Before we launch into talking about how to use this *Salt* clip about relationships to start a spiritual conversation, let's hear about some of your experiences during this past week using last week's clip. Does anyone have a story they're willing to share with the group? (As students share, stop and pray for the individuals involved.)

So the challenge this week is to use today's "What Makes for Good Relationships?" clip to start a conversation. You can find it on YouTube at somethingamazing.net/relationships. Pray for the person you're going to share it with and then follow up.

Ask questions like...

- What did you think of the video?
- What do you think makes for a good relationship?
- What do you do when your relationships bring pain?
- Have you ever experienced a relationship where even if again and again you let someone down, they would still always be there for you?

A LICENSE TO SIN?

Is God's unconditional love and forgiveness a license to keep on sinning?

If time allows, discuss Romans 6:1-7.

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

Talk About the Gospel

EXPLAIN

Once you've opened up the conversation. Say something like...

Can I tell you about someone you can turn to for love, acceptance, comfort and hope when your relationships let you down?

Then explain God's unconditional love for them and walk them through the message of the gospel.

Let your students pair off in twos and spend a few minutes role playing how a conversation about this video might unfold.

Closing

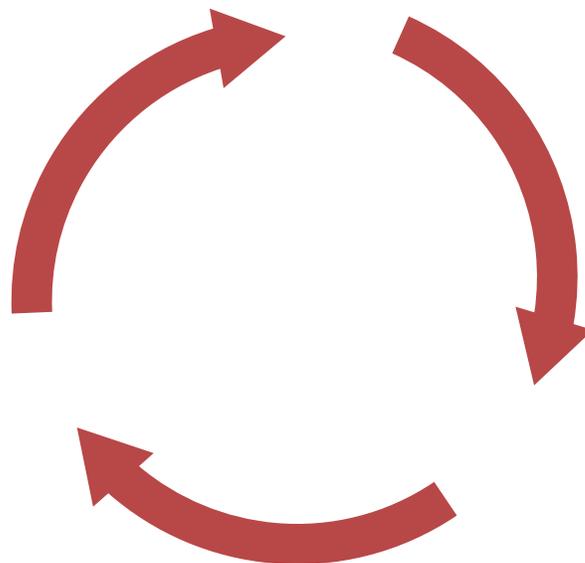
Close the meeting by allowing time for questions and praying for friends who don't know Jesus. Provide an opportunity for students to trust Christ. Present the gospel by saying something like this:

As we close, I realize there may be some of you here who have never before understood the unconditional love of God. Maybe you're longing for this kind of relationship with the God who created you to be with Him. The thing is, because God gave us free will, we humans have repeatedly chosen to rebel against God and push Him away. As a result of our sinful choices, we deserve to be separated from a holy and perfect God forever.

Still, God longed so deeply to bring us back into relationship with Him that He took the first step toward us. Because His love is relentless, He designed a plan to pay for our sin and restore us to Himself. He sent His own perfect, sinless Son, Jesus, and while we were still sinners, Jesus came to earth and paid for our sin on the cross, so that we don't have to live apart from God.

If we put our faith and trust in Him alone, we can receive total forgiveness for all our sins—past, present and future—and receive the free gift of eternal life. He will come into our lives and walk with us, both now and forever. But it takes a decision. I invite you to make that decision today.

Encourage those who make a decision to see you after the meeting so you can get them some follow up materials to help them grow. Or send them to somethingamazing.net/moving-forward to use the new believer follow-up *Ignition Seven* discipleship videos.



[Appendix A]

THE Cause Circle ...Pray-Pursue-Persuade

“FOR THE SON OF MAN CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THOSE WHO ARE LOST.” —LUKE 19:10

Students today inhabit a cause-centric world. They resonate with causes—environmental causes and social justice causes, to name a few. Go Green! No More Sex Trafficking! Send Mosquito Nets! Many of the causes vying for their attention are good and worthy causes.

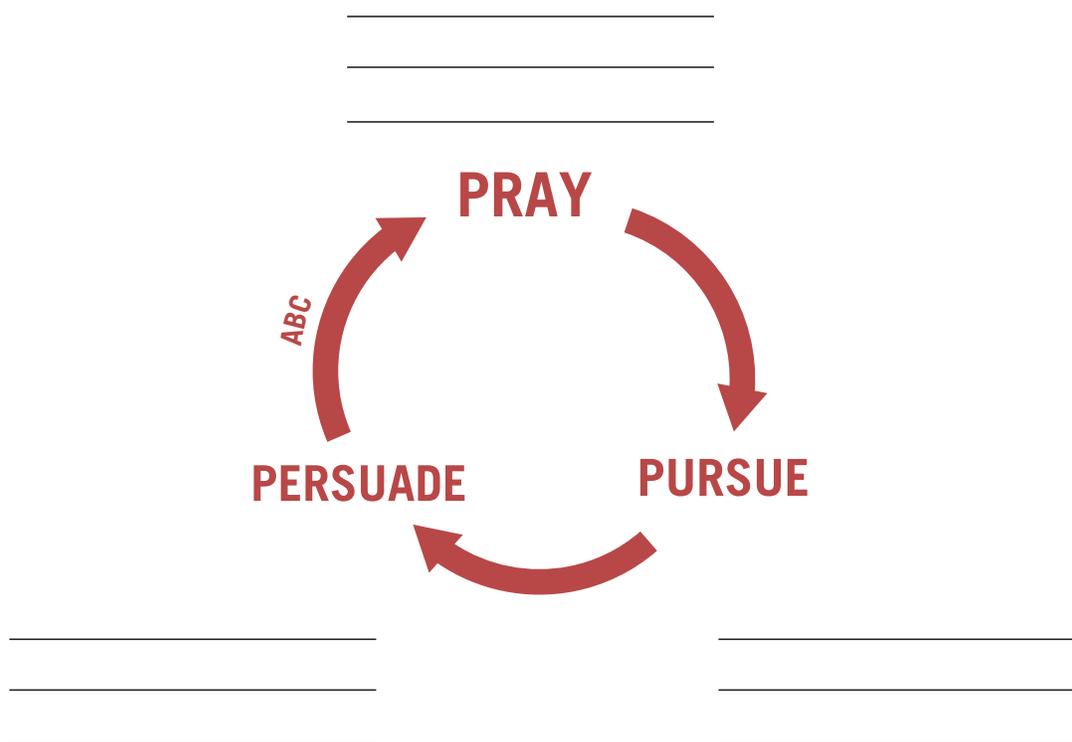
But there’s one cause that should rise to the top of the list. One cause every believer must embrace. It is THE Cause that Jesus left us with before He ascended into heaven—His timeless command in Matthew 28:19 to *“Go and make disciples of all nations...”* Jesus is calling us to join Him in His mission *“to seek and save those who are lost”!*

So why not leverage students’ interest in causes and unleash them for THE Cause of all causes—THE Cause of Christ?

Evangelism in a Cause-Centric World

One approach to encouraging your students toward more purposeful, relational evangelism is THE Cause Circle. The Circle is a tool designed to help them identify the friends they are going to pray for, pursue and lovingly persuade regarding Jesus’ message. It involves the following elements.

THE CAUSE CIRCLE



Pray with Passion

Prayer connects us to God—His presence, His power and His wisdom. Challenge your students to identify three friends they want to reach with the gospel, and start to pray for them. Ask God to prepare their hearts for His gospel message. Ask Him to provide courage and wisdom as they step out and share their faith. Ultimately, your students are not alone as they seek to reach their friends, because the Holy Spirit of God is the one who is moving in the hearts of their friends to do the real work of convicting, convincing and persuading (John 16:13-15).

Pursue with Love

Pursuing friends spiritually simply means caring for them with the love of Christ and being purposeful about weaving spiritual topics into your conversations. This can be done by sharing the five *Salt* clips, somethingamazing.net or lifein6words.com. It also happens by just asking questions and listening, or by simply bringing God up in conversation. For practical how-to's on how to reach friends who are coming from a wide variety of spiritual worldviews, please check out Dare 2 Share's free "[How to Share Your Faith With...](#)" web pages. As your students seek to find opportunities to lovingly pursue spiritual conversations with their friends, they can note their name in the "pursue" area of the circle.

Persuade with Truth

Don't be afraid to persuade! The Greek word for persuade is used eight different times in the New Testament in direct connection with evangelism. This is not a used car salesman-type pitch, but a sincere, yet convincing appeal to the heart and mind of the unbeliever. It's the same approach that Paul used when he wrote, *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God"* (2 Corinthians 5:20, NIV).

Sure, persuasion can easily become manipulation or coercion if done in the flesh. But when we persuade others out of a pure heart that is overflowing with the Spirit of God, it becomes a powerful thing.

Making disciples who make disciples is about more than bringing people to a decision point of trusting in Christ. We want to see them grow into followers of Jesus and then, in turn, make disciples who make disciples. So here are the three actions we're persuading our friends to embrace—these are the ABC's of becoming a disciple:

Accept Jesus.

This is the point in time when they believe the gospel message and trust in Jesus as their only hope of salvation.

Belong to a church.

The Bible says in Hebrews 10:25 that we shouldn't forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It is vitally important to help new believers connect to other Christians so that they can get strong roots in their newfound faith.

Commit to THE Cause.

Students who come to Christ and connect to a church should be challenged to commit to THE Cause. They must be motivated to grow deep in their relationship with God as they go wide to accomplish THE Cause.

As your students find opportunities to go deeper in their spiritual conversations with others, they can move those friends forward along the circle to the "persuade" section.

Evangelism that's Relational and Relentless

THE Cause Circle is a simple tool that may help your students be more purposeful about sharing Jesus' message with their friends. It will remind them to pray with passion, pursue with love and persuade with truth. The goal is to be **both** relational and relentless about sharing the gospel with those in our circle of influence.

Because sharing Jesus' message with the lost is the most impacting cause we can be about!