

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH

**What we want students to learn:** That the Holy Spirit is with every Believer, guiding them in their day-to-day interactions with the world.

**What we want students to do with what they've learned:** To define in their own words what it means to "walk by the Spirit," and to commit to being mindful of walking by the Spirit and not by the flesh.

**Scripture Focus:** Galatians 5:16-18, Ephesians 5:15-21

**Overview:** The Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He works to empower us, encourage us, guide us, keep us, and make us fruitful. And while the purpose of this lesson is less of an exhaustive look at the Holy Spirit and more of an overview of His role in the Trinity, your students will still grasp the importance of God's Spirit and His work in and through them. This final lesson in your three-lesson look at the Trinity will challenge your students to keep in step with the Spirit as they live their lives as Christ-followers.

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## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each **Activate** lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These are short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your **Trinity** lesson 4 Teacher Prep Video, login to your Lesson Manager, navigate to lesson 4, and click on the "Background" tab. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video near the top of the Lesson Manager window.

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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

The **Bible Background** is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you'll be studying. The Details gives you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what's happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by "context"?** In every **YM360** Bible study lesson, you'll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By "context" we mean at the very least helping students know **who** wrote the book, **when** it was written, and **why** it was written.
- **What's the big deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don't get a "big picture" understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God's plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

## THE DETAILS

Galatians

- Author: Paul, the persecutor-of-Christians-turned-missionary, is the author of the Letter to the Galatians (see Acts 7:57-8:3 and 9:1-31). After his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul set out on several journeys to proclaim about the salvation that is available through Jesus and His death and resurrection. Several

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH

churches were planted as a result of Paul's leadership, including the church in Galatia.

- **Timeframe:** Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians sometime between 48 and 53 AD, most likely by 49 AD.
- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of Paul's letter to the Galatians was to respond to a particular issue: a group of Jews—claiming to also be Christ-followers (many early Christians were Jewish Christians)—had begun to argue that Christians are not just saved by faith, but that they also were required to keep the Mosaic Law. This, of course, went against everything Paul knew to be true about Jesus. The main thrust of Paul's teaching was that there is no work we could accomplish to be saved (Ephesians 2:8), including the keeping of the Law (Galatians 2:16).

## Ephesians

- **Author:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letters to the Ephesians. Of course, we know Paul as the one-time chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- **Timeframe:** Ephesians was probably written by Paul from prison in the latter years of his life, sometime around 60 or 61 AD.
- **Purpose:** Paul had a very close relationship with the church in Ephesus. It seems as if the motivation for the letter was simply that the church would know how he was faring in his imprisonment. But, true to form, Paul couldn't help but teach. The letter covers general teaching on the work of Christ to redeem believers, unity among believers, and how believers are supposed to conduct themselves.

## THE MAIN POINT

Paul helps us understand the work the Spirit does in the life of a believer. Paul shows us in several different ways what it means to live a life in line with the Spirit and His ministry in the lives of Believers. Paul urges us to "walk by the Spirit" and to be "filled with the Spirit." He knows that the empowerment of the Spirit makes it possible that our lives could be lived according to God's standard if we will but surrender to the Spirit's leading. This lesson will challenge your students to do just that.

## LESSON PLAN

The **Lesson Plan** contains three elements: An introductory activity called **The Lead In**; the Bible study section called **The Main Event**; an application-focused segment called **The Last Word**.

## THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** The idea is to get students thinking about what it's like to have a comforting presence with them as they go through life.
- **Set-Up:** You need to be prepared to tell a story of a time when you and a friend (preferably a close friend) experienced something exciting, scary, or otherwise thrilling.

FIRST, explain that you want to start the lesson by telling students a story of a time when you and a friend had an awesome experience. Share the story you have prepared to tell. Make sure you finish by reinforcing how funny/important/

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
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OF FAITH



scary, etc. the experience was because you had a friend there with you.

THEN, ask for volunteers to briefly share stories of funny/scary/adventurous experience they have had with their friends. When volunteers have finished, ask those who shared the following questions:

- **Would the experience have been the same without your friend with you?**
- **What about your friend being there with you made it so much better?**
- **Can you describe what experiences like this do for our friendships?**

FINALLY, begin to transition to The Main Event by saying something like:

- **There are plenty of things that happen to us in life we have to go through without a friend beside us. That's what makes those times when we're with friends so great. There's nothing like having someone you know and trust to experience the ups and downs of life with. It's part of what makes life so rich. As we wrap up our final lesson in our three-week look at the Trinity, we're going to take a look at how the Holy Spirit works in our life. What we're going to find is that the Spirit walks through life with us, leading us as our faith journeys unfold. And we're going to see that our lives are richer as a result. Let's take a closer look.**

## THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To teach students that the Holy Spirit is with every Believer, guiding them in their day-to-day interactions with the world.
- **Set Up:** You may choose to use a dry-erase board if you have one, though it is not essential.

FIRST, without giving it away, see if your students can give you a solid definition of the Trinity based on your last couple of lessons. If you want, go even further by asking them if they can hit the high points from what you've studied so far. The bullet points below will help you:

- **Working definition: God exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully God, and each unique, yet without division.**
- **Lesson 2: The Trinity is a powerful, wonderful truth that is sometimes hard to grasp, but awesome to consider.**
- **Lesson 3: That the Son, Jesus, came to earth to redeem His creation from the effects of sin.**

THEN, explain that as you mentioned last lesson, you'll spend your time together considering a specific person of the Trinity. Last lesson you looked at the Son. This lesson you'll look at the Holy Spirit. But, explain that this isn't a lesson that fully fleshes out the role of the Spirit. That's a little beyond the scope of a 30-minute Bible study. However, remind students that the purpose of this lesson is to understand that the Holy Spirit is our daily guide to living a godly life. You're going to do this by looking at a couple passages of Scripture. If students don't have any comments or input, go ahead and get started.

Direct students to turn to Galatians 5:16-18. As they are finding it, make sure you introduce the context of the passage using the Bible Background portion of your lesson plan. When students have had time to locate the passage, read or have a student read Galatians 5:16-18. Then, lead them in a short discussion. Ask:

- **Two things are being contrasted with one another. What are they?**

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH

- o Answer: The desires of the Spirit and the desires of the flesh.
- **Even if you don't know exactly what these two things are, can you take a stab at guessing based on the context of the verse? When Paul is talking about the Spirit, what is he talking about? When Paul is talking about "the flesh," what is he talking about?**
  - o Answer: The Spirit is obviously referring to the Holy Spirit. The "flesh" is Paul's way of describing our sinful nature, that part of us that wants things that are opposed to God.
- **Paul says that the Spirit and the flesh are opposed to each other. What do you think that means?**
  - o Answer: The Spirit, being God Himself, is holy and true. Our "flesh" is our desire to feed our sinful habits and natures. Our sinful natures will always be set in opposition to the things of God.
- **Now, knowing what we're comparing here when Paul says that we are to "walk by the Spirit" and not "gratify the desires" of our flesh, can you put into your own words what he is encouraging us to do?**
  - o Answers will vary. The idea is to help your students grasp that Paul is calling them to live by the leading of the Spirit. When we "walk by the Spirit," we're listening to and trusting God's Spirit to guide us.
- **Let's get practical here. If we were to make a list of what it means for a 21st Century teenager to "walk by the Spirit" in your everyday contexts, what would that list look like? Give me some examples.**
  - o Answers will vary. If you have a dry-erase board, consider writing their list on the board as they go.

Explain to students that if you wanted, you could most likely go out beside each of the things they have just listed and come up with an opposite action or thoughts that would represent the desires of our flesh in that specific situation. Remind them that what Paul is saying here is that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, is our guide for living a godly life. Say something like:

- **One of the truths from Scripture is that the Holy Spirit is our ever-present guide to help us live the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is given to all who come to saving faith in Jesus, permanently, as a way of God being present daily in the lives of His children. The great thing is that you don't have to walk by the Spirit under your own power. You don't have to live a godly life under your own strength. That's kind of the point! The Spirit not only guides you along a path that is in line with God's ways and character, But He also gives you the power to walk the path. He fills us up with God's presence.**

NEXT, explain that you want to look at one final passage that paints a really solid picture of what it looks like to be in relationship with the Spirit and live a life where the Spirit is at work. Have students turn to Ephesians 5:15-21. Provide the context using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read the passage. When they have finished, lead them in a discussion by asking questions similar to the following:

- **Paul encourages his audience twice to be wise and not to be foolish. He then goes on to sort of define being wise as living a life where we are in tune with the fullness of God's Spirit in us. Why does being connected to God demonstrate wisdom?**
  - o Answer: Wisdom is having knowledge and awareness of the best ways to approach something, in this case, our lives. When we see our lives and how we are to live them through the lens of God and His Spirit, that's pretty wise! Taking the opposite approach, i.e., living our lives according to our desires and wishes, would be pretty unwise!

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH

- **Now, Paul says something about the Spirit in verse 18. What does he say?**
  - Answer: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."
- **While this is good biblical teaching about avoiding drunkenness, our big-picture purposes here aren't really about abusing alcohol. And it wasn't Paul's either. Paul used drunkenness here as a sort of representative of what it looks like to be filled with anything other than the Spirit. We could substitute materialism, or lust, or any other sin for drunkenness and the message would be the same: Allowing anything other than God's Spirit to "fill your life up" is wrong and unwise. Can you think of some things that teenagers your age allow to "fill up" their lives in a way that leads them away from God?**
  - Answers will vary. Help students see that you're talking about anything worldly that takes over their lives. You're talking about anything that takes precedence over God's leading, anything that steers or directs their lives that is not of God.
- **Finally, Paul gives a sort of example of what it means to be filled with the Spirit. What examples does he give?**
  - Answer: he encourages us to speak to each other in "psalms," and to praise God with a spirit of thankfulness.

FINALLY, wrap up this time of discussion by saying something like the following:

- **What Paul is doing here in Ephesians is picking up the same comparison he made in Galatians. He is contrasting a life guided by the Spirit with a life guided by our desires. When we allow anything other than God's Spirit to lead and define our lives – relationships, sports, academic performance, and so on – we're not living out our identities as God's children. Living life in step with the Spirit is a life where our interactions with each other are defined by the Spirit working in and through us. Our decisions and our actions flow out of what God is doing in our lives through the Holy Spirit. It's a powerful way of understanding how God interacts with us through His Spirit.**

Then, proceed to transition into The Last Word where you'll help students begin to nail down how to apply these truths in their lives.

## THE LAST WORD

- **Goal:** To help students define in their own words what it means to "walk by the Spirit," and to commit to being mindful of walking by the Spirit and not by the flesh.
- **Set-Up:** Before your lesson, purchase a bag of rubber bands, enough for your students to each have one. You'll want to purchase the thicker ones as you're going to have them write on them. Also, provide a handful of permanent markers.

FIRST, explain to students that each of us has our struggles. While there are overarching, general weaknesses all people have, for better or for worse, we each have specific shortcomings that we struggle with. Maybe for some of your students it's pride or materialism. Maybe other students struggle with lust or anger. Explain to them that what you want them to take away from this lesson is that the Holy Spirit is there to guide them in dealing with their fleshly desires, and to help equip them in living a life that imitates God and His ways.

# activate

THE  
BUILDING  
BLOCKS  
OF FAITH



THEN, distribute the rubber bands to your group. Explain to students that you want them to each take a rubber band. Say something like the following:

- **The good news is that if we have come to saving faith in Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit living within us to guide us and empower us to live a godly life. BUT, one of our struggles is learning to listen to the Holy Spirit. We have to train ourselves to be mindful of the things we struggle with, to be more aware of them so that we can tune our hearts and minds to listen to the Spirit's leading. Believe it or not, this simple rubber band can help us do this.**

NEXT, pass out the markers. Instruct students to take a marker and write the letters "WBTS" on their bands. Explain that these letters represent Paul's encouragement to "walk by the Spirit." Once they have written the letters on their bands, encourage them to put them on. Once they have, say something like this:

- **Here's how I want you to think about these rubber bands: this week, when you struggle with those few sin habits that seem to trip you up (you know the ones), look at this rubber band and be reminded of the call to walk by the Spirit. Say a prayer to God asking the Spirit to lead you. Listen to your heart. Follow God's leading. Allow God to guide you away from doing the things your sinful nature wants to do. Be mindful of what the Holy Spirit is revealing to you and how He desires to use you to impact others. Being aware of God and what He is trying to teach you is the first step toward a deeper walk with the Lord.**

Encourage students to reach out to you this week if they need prayer or encouragement. Then, if no one has any additional thoughts or questions, close in prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the devotions to your students this week. If you're posting them on Instagram, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
- Use the **Social Media** guide to stay in touch with students via text or Instagram, and to encourage them to follow through with reading their devotions.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at [feedback@youthministry360.com](mailto:feedback@youthministry360.com).

# activate

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