

Lesson 1: The God of Relationship

Objective: The point of the lesson is that students would understand that God has always had a heart for being in relationship with all of humankind, and this truth should impact the way they view other people.

Scripture Focus: Genesis 1:26-31, Genesis 3:1-8, Genesis 12:1-4, Exodus 19:3-6, Deuteronomy 7:6-7, Isaiah 42:6-7, Luke 2:25-32, John 3:16

Overview: Evangelism is simply the communicating of the “good news” of the Gospel, the message that by faith, we may find forgiveness of our sins through Jesus’ atoning death and resurrection. This call to salvation, to a restored relationship with God through Christ, is almost always thought of in New Testament terms. But when we stop and think about it, we realize that God has always been calling people to know Him and to be in relationship with Him. Throughout the next three lessons, your students will see how God has always been calling people to Him, how Jesus tasked His followers with sharing the story of His work with all people, and what role your students play in bringing hope and purpose to the lost in this world. In this first lesson, your students will be challenged to begin to see all people as God sees them: as valuable and worthy of saving.

Teacher Prep Video

The *elements Teacher Prep Videos* are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “*Evangelism Teacher Prep Video*,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/evangelism-teacher-prep>

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, while *The Main Point* gives you an overview of how the passages are all 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. *But don’t feel like you have to read everything written in the Bible Background for each Book.*

The Details

Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy

- **Author:** While there’s no specific author named within the text, the traditional authorship of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy and (as well as the rest of the Pentateuch) is attributed to Moses.

- **Time frame:** It's hard to know when Genesis was written. There are two different arguments for the date of the exodus of the Jewish people from Israel, an earlier date (around mid-1400s B.C.) and a later date (around the mid-1200s B.C.). The writing would fall sometime around these general dates.
- **Purpose:** *Genesis* is the record of God's creation of the world, and His unique and of humanity. It tells the story of an intimate relationship with God that is destroyed because of sin. This sets the stage for God's redemptive plan to restore His relationship with humanity beginning with the patriarch, Abram.
- *Exodus* is the continuation of Genesis. As such, it's the continuation of the story of God's covenant with His people, His desire to uphold and act on His covenant, and the emergence of Israel's inability to uphold their end of the covenant.
- *Deuteronomy* means "second law." It was a reminder of the law of God for the second generation of Israelites in the desert before they entered the Promised Land. It reminded the people that the Lord is God. He is faithful to keep his promises to His people.

Isaiah

- **Author:** Isaiah, son of Amoz wrote the book of Isaiah.
- **Time frame:** The events of Isaiah occurred between 740 and 681 B.C., though some of the books would have been constructed at a later date.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this book was to call the nation of Judah back to God, to warn of coming judgment, and to tell of God's ultimate salvation through the Messiah.

Luke

- **Author:** Luke was a doctor, a Gentile Christian and a companion of Paul.
- **Time frame:** The Gospel of Luke was written around 60 A.D.
- **Purpose:** Luke is the only Gentile author of the Bible. His entire purpose was to write an accurate account of the life of Jesus so as to present Jesus as Savior, fully God and fully man. It is one of the synoptic Gospels and has much in common with the Matthew and Mark.

John

- **Author:** The apostle John, the one whom Jesus loved, wrote the Gospel of John.
- **Time frame:** John was written between 85-90 A.D.
- **Purpose:** John wrote his Gospel on the island of Patmos while he was in exile. He was the only Gospel writer who was in the inner circle of Jesus' closest disciples. John wrote his account to prove that Jesus is truly the Son of God and that everyone, everywhere who puts their faith in Jesus would have everlasting life.

The Main Point

Each of these passages serves to communicate the idea that God loves His creation, specifically humanity. Because of our value and the complexity of our separation from God, the solution is equally complex and intentional as God implements His plan for salvation. These passages paint a picture of a God who has always loved and valued His people and desires for all of humanity to experience His love and grace.

These grouping of Scriptures are to serve as the foundation for students to wrestle with their value and the great lengths God has gone in order to make possible salvation and inclusion into the family of God. This is the foundational idea that shapes this lesson and shapes our heart for others as we share the Good News with others.

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 for students to start the lesson by understanding how valuable they are to God and the extraordinary lengths He went to rescue us.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need some scratch paper and pens, and a dry-erase board and pen, or something to make a list the entire group can see.

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to engage them in an interactive discussion. Explain that in order to begin, you'll need them to listen to the instructions. This first exercise has two parts. Pass out scratch paper, a half sheet would work perfectly, and have them write the numbers 1-5 down the side of the paper. Then ask them to rank five things in their life of value, with 1 being the lowest value and 5 being the highest. (The other three simply get to be in the middle.) Their list could include people, places, things, etc.

THEN, when they are done with their lists, have a few people share their most valuable and their least valuable. Once they've shared explain the following scenario to them:

- **Pretend for a moment that you have had the most valuable and the least valuable things on your list taken from you and held captive by an evil super-villain, someone like your math teacher or your PE coach. In 30 seconds, come up with two plans: one for what you would do to get back your most valuable possession and one to get back your least valuable.**

Allow students a few minutes to do this. Then, lead them in a discussion. Ask something like:

- **What is your plan to recover the thing of most value?**
 - *Answers vary.* Facilitate a brief discussion of how they would do almost anything to recover something of such great value. The discussion is simply to get them to identify that the way they value things changes how they care for them and the effort they would put in to recover them if lost.
- **How did it differ coming up with your plan to recover your least valuable thing?**
 - *Answers vary.* But lead them to see that we don't normally expend nearly the same amount of energy or interest in things we don't value compared to what we'll do for things we think are important.

NEXT, share an illustration of one of the greatest rescue efforts of all time.

- *On Aug 5, 2010, 33 Chilean minors were trapped over 1000 feet underground when the mine they were working in collapsed.*
- *They should have been left for dead.*
- *But because they are humans, somebody's father, son, brother, the world joined together to rescue them.*
- *It took over 2 months, 6 countries, \$20 million dollars to rescue them.*
- *The world rallied, the money was raised, and the plan was put in place because these men were of utmost value!*

FINALLY, explain that this lesson is the first in a three-lesson look at evangelism. Explain that evangelism is just the churchy word for sharing the Good News of God's love and grace with the world. Explain that as they will come to see, God has the highest regard and value for humans. And because He values us so highly, He came

up with a plan in order to make it possible for all of humanity to experience His love and grace. Transition in to your time of Bible study by saying:

- **In the story I just gave you, the Chilean Miners got trapped and were in mortal danger. They were not only separated from their family, and friends, they were separated from food, water, and oxygen. The problem was very complex, and the solution was going to be just as complex and extremely costly. But because of the minors' value, the world rallied and rescued them. In the exact same way, all of humanity, you, me, and everyone we come in contact with is in need of rescue. God came up with a plan, and it was a no brainer because we are of such value to Him. Let's see what that plan looked like.**

The Main Event

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to get a "30,000 foot" view of God's plan to rescue us as told through Scripture.
- **Set Up:** You will need a dry-erase board, poster board, or a similar means of displaying a timeline. You'll be writing a good bit. But don't worry: it's totally worth it to give students this glimpse of God's love stretching through Scripture.

FIRST, explain to students that you're going to be doing a very different kind of Bible study today than they might have ever done before. You're going to be cruising through six passages of Scripture that span thousands of years. The idea is not for an in-depth Bible study, but to get an overview of the timeline, players, and plan that God implemented to rescue His people. Make sure all of your students have a Bible and are ready to go.

THEN have a volunteer write all of Psalm 8:4 at the top of the dry-erase board: **"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"** Ask if anyone knows the answer to this question? Lead them to come up with a few thoughts on why they think human beings are so special in God's eyes. Then let them know that they're going to see the answer to this question through Scripture and see the plan that God has implemented to care for us.

Ask:

- **Can anyone can guess where we're going to start this timeline?**
 - *Answer:* With Creation in Genesis.
- **Does anyone know what the word Genesis actually, means?**
 - *Answer:* Explain that Genesis means "beginnings."
- **Who can tell me why "beginnings" is a good name for Genesis?**
 - *Answer:* Genesis tells the story of the beginning of the world, and the family that would begin the rescue effort by God. You can use the details from the Bible Background section to fill in the story.

Begin a timeline with a point on one end and an arrow on the other. Then draw 6 hashes between the beginning and 2/3 of the way to the other end. Something like this:



NEXT, get ready to jump in. Explain to your students that for every passage of Scripture you cover you're going to:

1. Write the passage above the hash mark.
2. Have a student read it out loud as the entire group reads along.
3. Have students identify what this passage says about any one of three important concepts the Bible speaks to: our **VALUE** to God, the **PROBLEM** we needed to be saved from, or the **PLAN** to rescue us.

Below you'll find six passages with some notes on how they speak to these three concepts. Work through them as a group, enjoying the narrative aspect of this type of Scripture study.

BEGIN, with **Genesis 1:26-31**.

- This passage speaks to our VALUE.
 - We are the pinnacle of creation.
 - We are made in the actual image of God.
 - God says that humanity is "very good!"

THEN, **Genesis 3:1-8**.

- This passage speaks to the PROBLEM.
 - Humanity rebelled against God and sinned.
 - That sin caused us to hide from each other and from God.
 - *Important point:* Sin severed our relationship with God, we see this when God calls out, "Where are you?"

THEN, **Genesis 12:1-3**.

- This passage speaks to the PLAN to rescue us.
 - God sees Abram.
 - God desires to bless him.
 - God is going to use Abram to bless all of humanity.
 - *Important point:* Even while we were out hiding from God, God initiated His plan through Abram.

THEN, **Exodus 19:3-6**.

- This passage speaks to the PLAN.
 - The descendants of Jacob are actually the descendants of Abram (Jacob is Abraham's grand son).
 - These descendants were rescued out of Egypt.
 - These descendants are called to be a special people.
 - The descendants are to be a kingdom of priests.
 - *Important point:* A priest was someone who would stand in the gap between a Holy God and the sinful people. They are the ones who would offer prayers and sacrifices and build the bridge between God and the people. As you can see, right away, there needed to be some mediator between God and humans and the Israelites, God's people were to be those people, the people to bridge the gap between God and humanity.

THEN, **Deuteronomy 7:6-7**.

- This passage speaks to our VALUE.
 - Before the Israelites were to enter the Promised Land they were reminded of their identity.
 - They were a chosen people, Abraham's descendants, and they were of highest value.

- The Israelites were reminded that God’s affection towards them was not earned but was simply a gift of grace.

THEN, Isaiah 42:6-7.

- This passage speaks to the PLAN.
 - God’s people, Israel, have been called to be righteous, to be an example to the world.
 - They were tasked with being a “light to the Gentiles.”
 - Ask students if they know who Gentiles are.
 - God’s solution begins with a particular family, Abraham’s family.
 - But as we see in this passage of Scripture, God’s concern is for the entire world.
 - Israel was to be a light, to exemplify the character and purposes of God, and to be a pathway for Jesus to come through and eventually bring salvation to all people.

THEN, Luke 2:25-32.

- This passage speaks to the PLAN.
 - Simeon was waiting for the Messiah.
 - Ask the students if they know what a Messiah is.
 - Messiah: the promised deliverer of the Jewish people, the anointed one; the rescuer!
 - *Important point:* In this passage we see that Jesus is the fulfillment of the prophesy in Isaiah, that God’s plan was not to just save Israel, and it was not to have Israel be an example to the world, but that Israel would be the family line where the savior of the world would be born through.

THEN, John 3:16.

- This passage speaks to the our VALUE and the PLAN.
 - It is out of God’s love for the entire world that God came up with this plan.
 - It is Jesus who invites the entire world, not just Israel, to relationship with God.
 - It is our faith in Jesus that restores our relationship and rescues us.

FINALLY, you can wrap up the timeline by closing with this short thought. Say something like:

- **This story is the heart of evangelism! In our next lesson we’ll take an in-depth look at the Gospel and how Jesus brought this whole timeline full circle. Ultimately, Jesus is the solution to the problem of our sin and separation from God. He is the grandest note of the PLAN to rescue and save God’s most valuable possession, humanity. Because our sin problem was so complex and the value of what was lost so high, God was willing to implement a long and costly plan so that you, me, and the entire world might know the love and grace of God.**

Ask if anyone has any final thoughts or questions about the Bible study. Then, transition into the application section of your teaching time.

The Last Word

- **Goal:** The idea is for students to reflect upon the amazing answer to the question, “What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?”
- **Set-up:** None.

FIRST, remind students of the lengths they would go to rescue and recover the thing of highest value to them. The more valuable the greater lengths you would go! In fact, explain that you can tell how valuable something is by how far people would go to get it. We see from these passages of Scripture that humans are of highest

value to God. Ask students to reflect on how God has shown how valuable we are to Him with some of these questions

- **What has God done through history to show how He values humanity?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **Do you have an example of how God has shown he values you specifically? How has God blessed your life?**
 - *Answers will vary.*
- **For what purpose do you think that God has blessed you?**
 - *Answers will vary.*

THEN, lead students to really consider these three truths:

- God loves and values your neighbor, friend, classmate, co-worker, sister, and brother just as much as He loves and values you.
- God's action in history has been to run after His lost people. And when He has grabbed a hold of them, He blesses them for the specific purpose of blessing others. Abraham was blessed to be a blessing, Israel was to be a light to the Gentiles, and you are to be salt and light to your friends and family.
- God has implemented a gigantic plan to rescue you. What is the plan that God might have for your friends and family?

NEXT, on a piece of paper, invite students to write the names down of 3-5 people in their life who need to know the love and grace of God. Explain that for the next three weeks we are going to pray for these friends. This week their only job is to pray that God would soften their friend's hearts as well as grow their own heart for them.

THEN, give them a minute or two to write down those names. Invite them to put that piece of paper in their Bibles and remind them to be praying for them this week.

FINALLY, remind them that God had a complex and costly plan to rescue them that culminated in Jesus. God also has a plan for their friends and family as well. We have the privilege with partnering with God to share His love and Grace with them. For now we are going to simply pray. Close by saying:

- **Over the next couple of weeks we are going to see different ways Jesus reached out to people, and we are going to come up with our own plans to reach out to others as well. But for now, know that you are loved and valuable. God considers you and desires to bless you. And God is inviting you to be part of His grand plan to rescue others. Be praying for your friends and family, and I'll be praying for you.**

Close with prayer.

- Don't forget to distribute the element devotions to your students. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're texting a link, posting them on Facebook, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.
 - Consider texting students a couple of times during the week to encourage them to follow through with reading the devotions.
 - Consider reminding your students throughout the week to be praying for the people on their list.
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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.

