

Making it

REAL

AND

RELEVANT

A

Multi-Media Enhanced,

Lectioary- Based

Bible Study

for

Youth

Sample

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Before Classes Start...

An Overview of *Making it Real and Relevant*

Making it Real and Relevant is a youth Bible study curriculum for use in a 45-55 minute class period. The course is available in two formats, a lectionary-based format and a topic-based format. The **lectionary-based format** follows the 3-year lectionary cycle as found in your choice of the Revised Common Lectionary, Roman Catholic or Book of Common Prayer. Therefore, one or more of the readings that will be heard in church during the Sunday morning service will be the focus of the class that Sunday. Readings are usually based on the New Testament readings, although Old Testament readings and occasionally the Psalm assigned for that Sunday become the focus reading for a lesson as well. The **topic-based format** examines a topic in some detail over a 3 to 4-week period of time. The topics are based on the characteristics of spiritual development, which are to learn that one has a life-purpose and that it is possible to discern what that purpose is; to seek connection with the inner self (the spirit, as opposed to the outer self, the ego); to seek connection with God and with the world around one, both natural and human; and to experience transcendence (meaning seeing how one fits into the bigger picture). The year will progress from inward to outward, focusing on "me" issues first, then progressing to "God" issues, and then examining "community and world" issues.

Regardless of the format (lectionary-based or topic-based) you have chosen, the weekly lessons in *Making it Real and Relevant* follow the same structure. The curriculum is designed to address multiple learning styles by incorporating small group and general group discussion, movie clips, music, current events and a variety of interactive activities to bring Bible readings to life. Through this varied style of presentation, youth can explore God, Jesus, the Bible, their faith and values in ways that show them how real and relevant these topics are in their lives. The curriculum is sectioned into four parts: an "Opener," "The Heart of the Lesson," "Wrapping it Up," and a "Closing." The "Opener" is primarily used to bring everyone's attention to the class and the topic being studied. "The Heart of the Lesson" and "Wrapping it Up" offer the substance of the class, and the "Closing" allows youth the opportunity to reflect on the discussion and readings for the class. The lessons are designed to be usable for small (2-6 students) or large (7 or more students) classes, and directions are included in each lesson plan for leaders of groups of both sizes.

There will be two opportunities for outreach during the year. The lessons during the seasons of Advent and Lent suggest projects and build in time to work on those projects, since they are perfect times to be thinking about how we can be more Christ-like as we remember why Christ was born into this world and why he died and rose again.

Some Words About Time and Discussion

Timing

Making it Real and Relevant lesson plans include suggested times for each section of a lesson. Times are located in parentheses in the line below each of the lesson section headings. For example, for the first section of the lesson you will see,

Opener
(10 minutes)

These times are only suggestions, based on pilot study results. Every class is different, however. You may have a class that really enjoys discussion but is not musically inclined. In this case, you may decide to not use the music clips and to extend the discussion time. Or, you may have a group that prefers to do the opening activities or spend more time in prayer at closing than in discussion following a Bible passage or movie clip. Again, you may choose to extend the time given for the activities the students like and seem to be getting the most out of.

Consequently, you will need to decide whether or not you will follow the suggested times for each section. If you choose to follow the suggested times, plan on cutting activities and discussions off at the end of the allotted time in order to move through the whole lesson in one class. If you choose to extend the time on a section that is holding your class's attention, think about what other section of the lesson you are willing to skip or condense. You may also decide to extend a lesson over two Sundays because the class is finding a lot to talk about or is taking time to absorb concepts being presented.

Discussion Questions

Making it Real and Relevant makes use of discussion questions following movie clips, Bible passage readings, music clips, and some activities. The questions are designed to get conversation rolling. There are often more discussion questions than you will have time to cover, so think about the questions that will be most meaningful for your group, and start with those questions first. You may also find there are questions not listed in the curriculum that would be appropriate for your unique group. You are encouraged to add questions as you would like. Remember that when asking questions, frame your questions so that students are required to give more than a "yes" or "no" answer. One way to do this is to ask students, "Why?" or, "Explain your reasoning."

Sometimes the conversation that develops from a discussion question will lead away from the original topic. As long as it is a topic of relevance to the spiritual growth and moral and faith development of your youth, allow the conversation to have a life of its own. It is amazing what can be learned and discovered when you get "off track." If you wish to cover a certain number of the discussion questions, you can place a time limit on "off track" conversations that develop out of a discussion and move the class back on topic by introducing the next question.

Some Words About Multimedia

This curriculum makes use of popular movie and music clips and information from recent world events. Therefore, it is very important that you, the instructor, take the time before class to familiarize yourself with what will be seen or heard in class. To save yourself from unpleasant or uncomfortable surprises, always have your movie clip cued up before you start class and watch it before you show it to your students. G, PG and PG-13 rated movies are the primary resources for video clips, but occasionally an R-rated movie (such as *The Matrix*) will have a scene that is too good not to use. The clips shown in class will be acceptable for any audience; however, unacceptable content may be in the preceding or following scenes, which is why it benefits you to know what is happening around your clip before you show it and why you should have the scene cued up ahead of time.

When you receive the curriculum for each quarter, a separate page listing all the movie and music clips will be included so that you can plan ahead. Most classes will make use of either a video clip or a music clip. Sometimes lessons will have both music and video and occasionally there will be neither. My advice is to save money on the music and either burn the clips yourself or find a tech-savvy youth who can burn these clips onto one CD for you from sites such as Napster, I Tunes etc. You can rent videos, borrow from church members who are movie fans, or purchase used videos inexpensively through sites such as amazon.com or a local video store. If the software is available to do so, you can burn a DVD with the movie clips in order ahead of time as well.

When you are preparing for classes that include music clips please consider making copies of the lyrics available for youth; sites such as www.christianlyricsonline.com or www.lyricsondemand.com offer lyrics for free. All you have to do is cut and paste the lyrics into a separate document and then photocopy the lyrics for the youth to follow along when you play music clips. I highly recommend doing this because this music is chosen for the lyrics—no matter how good the music is, there is always a point where words get lost because of the drums, guitars, or poor annunciation on the singer's part. When the youth don't hear the lyrics, they lose part of the meaning of the lesson. It is also helpful to have lyrics to refer back to when discussing the song after playing it.

Finally, current events do not stay current for long. If you find something that fits with the lesson plan that is more current than the plan suggests, use it! For example, at the time of this writing, Hurricane Katrina had just devastated the Gulf States. Lessons that may have used 9/11 or the tsunami as examples or discussion starters will have much more impact if they refer to Hurricane Katrina.

Some Words About Group Discussion

Some portion of each class will be devoted to group discussion. Therefore, facilitators should go into the first class with some goals regarding group discussion rules and building trust and a sense of community in a group. Here are some things to think about:

Respect is the key to making a discussion format work.

Respect silence. Let silence happen after a question. Respect the students' need to ponder a question, to have the time to think about how they want to put words together, to let the Holy Spirit go to work in that space of silence. The first ten seconds after a question has been asked can be the most anxious ten seconds a group leader will endure. Please endure! Curb the inclination to fill the silent space with your thoughts and reflections. This class is about their thoughts and reflections—let them own the silence.

Respect for each other is also important. There will be talkative youth and silent youth. You'll know pretty quickly who is not going to talk in your class, but there will inevitably be a class that strikes a spark for the silent one; make sure that the ones who like to talk respect the right of all other group members to speak.

Along that line, remember to *temper your enthusiasm*. It's good to have examples from your life experiences to share that encourage discussion, but try to keep your input to a minimum.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, respect each other by making it clear to the group before you start the lesson that personal reflections offered during class stay within the group and are not to be shared with people outside of class. Nothing kills trust in a group more quickly than having something personal and private shared with the world. *Show respect for each other by fostering trust.*

If you find typos, errors, activities that went "splat," or if you or your youth have suggestions for music clips or opener activities and games, please email me so that I may continue to improve upon this work in progress. If you find things that go exceptionally well, I'd love to know that too! My email address is included below. Please put "real and relevant suggestions" in the subject line so I don't mistake it for junk or infected mail.

Thank you!

Heidi K.E. Hawks

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Proper 22: Year C/A
Focus Reading
2 Tim 1: 6-14

Opener
(15-17 minutes)
I Believe Debate

Before youth arrive, copy the page of Debate questions and cut the page so that each question is on its own strip of paper (kind of like a fortune cookie fortune) so that each team will have a copy of their topic. You may also wish to have paper and pens available for students who want to write their arguments down while they prepare for debate.

After youth have arrived and settled, explain that today's opener is going to be a debate around three topics. Depending on the size of your class, you will either create two teams that will argue for the "I believe" or "I do not believe" sides of each of the three subjects of debate, or you will have teams (or individuals if you have six youth in attendance) determine the three questions and then you will assign each team to defend one side of one question. Each side will have one minute to present their argument for each side of the debate. Allow youth five minutes to develop their arguments, and if they are in teams, to choose a representative who will present their defense. They need to argue convincingly for their side, presenting information that is to the best of their knowledge. Since you don't have time to research, some information may not be accurate, but this is often the case when people defend their beliefs. When they have developed their arguments, give each person or team one minute to defend their belief.

Do you believe scientists can find a way to instantly transport people from one place to another (like they did in Star Trek..."Beam me up, Scottie!")?

Do you believe you were born with a purpose?

Do you believe the universe is infinite in its expanse?

Do you believe there is intelligent life on other planets?

Do you believe extra terrestrials have visited the earth?

Do you believe some people can "see" the future, read minds or have other psychic abilities?

Do you believe computers can learn emotions?

Do you believe you will see world peace in your lifetime?

Supplies

Copy of debate questions to pass out to each debate team

Movie clip from *Second Hand Lions*

Music clip of "A Shame" by Pillar from the album, *Fireproof*

Copies of lyrics for "A Shame"

The Heart of the Lesson (15 minutes)

Following your debates, ask the group,

- What are the reasons for believing the things you believe, even when people try to convince you otherwise?
- What are some things you believe in that are important to you; important enough that if other people, such as friends or people you know, don't believe the same things you do, you will still hold on to your beliefs? (Some ideas include, belief in God, belief in marriage, belief in democracy, or in the idea that good conquers evil)

Today we're going to look at a movie clip from *Second Hand Lions*, a movie about a boy, Walter (Haley Joel Osment), who has been dropped off by his neglectful mother to live for a while with his two uncles, Uncle Garth (Michael Caine) and Uncle Hub (Robert Duvall), whom he has never met. While living with his uncles, he discovers that he can trust his uncles to be honest with him and they will care enough about him to make him feel secure and safe, things his mother could never do for him. While living with his uncles, he learns about their wild adventures as young men in the Foreign Legion, and how they became rich. He has to decide whether to believe the fantastic stories Uncle Garth is telling him, but he finds it difficult to do so because all he has ever heard from his mother is lies.

In this clip, Uncle Hub gives him a part of his "becoming a man" speech, where he tells Walter how to decide what to believe. The clip starts at 1:10:41 (part way through Chapter 14 on DVD), when Uncle Hub turns to Walter and asks, "You cold, son?" and ends at 1:12:35 when Walter tells Uncle Hub, "That was a good speech." After the clip plays, ask:

- What are the things Uncle Hub tells Walter that people need to believe in the most? (some answers are: honor, courage, virtue, good wins in the end, true love never dies)
- Do you think these are things worth believing in? Why or why not?
- Uncle Hub thinks that true love never dying is a really important thing to believe in because of his own experience with true love. He met Jasmine, a very wealthy sheik's daughter, and they fell in love. They

Space for Notes

married in spite of fierce opposition from her father, a very wealthy sheik who wanted to marry Jasmine off to another sheik. Jasmine's father tried several times to separate the two and get rid of Hub, but, as Hub would say, "true love won out." Hub and Jasmine were not together for long, however, because she died while giving birth to their child (who also died). Hub never stopped loving Jasmine. Do you think this kind of deep, abiding love is real?

- Can you use the statement that true love never dies to describe Christianity? Why or why not?
- Hub tells Walter that things may or may not be true, but you have to decide what you are going to believe in. Do you agree or disagree with this advice? Why or why not?

Wrapping It Up (7-10 minutes)

Now let's look at today's Bible passage, 2 Tim 1:6-14. Have someone read the passage aloud. After the passage has been read, ask:

- Timothy tells us that God "didn't give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline" (verse 7). What does this mean? Why are these things good to have when we are deciding what we believe?
- Timothy also reminds us of the things God has done for us in verse 9, and asks us to join him in suffering for the gospel (verse 8). How would we "suffer for the gospel" in our society today? (This is not difficult to do anymore, since our society seems to be turning anti-Christian - removal of 10 Commandments from courthouses, arguments about removing "Under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance, removing "in God we trust" from our money.)
- What are some ways in which you might hold to your beliefs about God that could be seen as "suffering for the gospel"?
- According to this passage, Timothy has been arrested for telling people about God. He writes that he is not ashamed and does not mind suffering as he is because of his beliefs. Why does Timothy believe so strongly in God, when his very beliefs have caused him the shame of being put in prison and the suffering that goes with prison life? (hint, see verse 12)

Closing
(7-10 minutes)

Timothy's encouragement of his readers to not be ashamed of the things they do that show their beliefs is a message that is still needed in today's world, as we see when we talk about how our society seems to be becoming anti-Christian. It is enough of an issue that a popular Christian alternative rock band, Pillar, wrote a song about it. To close out today's lesson, hand out lyrics to the song, "A Shame," from Pillar's album, *Fireproof*, and then play the song. You can find lyrics on such websites as

<http://www.christianlyricsonline.com/artists/pillar/a-shame.html>.

After playing the song, ask:

- The song suggests that people are afraid of the price they'll pay in standing up for their belief in God, and that people would rather back down than stand up for their beliefs. Do you think this is the case? Where do you fall on this issue?
- What does it mean when the singer says that a person is "ashamed of God"?

When you have concluded your discussion of the song, invite the group to sit in silence for a minute and reflect on what you have talked about today. Tell them you will close with prayer after the minute of silence. Wait one minute, then close with prayer.

Space for Notes

Debate!

Do you believe scientists can find a way to instantly transport people from one place to another (like they did in Star Trek..."Beam me up, Scottie!")?

Do you believe you were born with a purpose?

Do you believe the universe is infinite in its expanse?

Do you believe there is intelligent life on other planets?

Do you believe extra terrestrials have visited the earth?

Do you believe some people can "see" the future, read minds or have other psychic abilities?

Do you believe computers can learn emotions?

Do you believe you will see world peace in your lifetime?

Proper 22 Year A/B
Sunday closest to October 5
Focus Reading
Phil 3:14-21

**Opener
(10 minutes)**

Choices:

Another favorite youth group ice breaker game!

Directions: Explain that you are going to call out pairs of words. Each person has to pick which word of the pair best describes them. If they think the first word best describes them, they are to stand up. If the second word best describes them, they are to remain seated.

Read the following word choices, giving time for everyone to make their decisions. After you read a word pair and people make their choices, ask one or two people to explain how their choice describes them. If you have an occasion where most of the people chose one word while one or two chose the other, ask the smaller group what it feels like to be in the minority.

Pringles or Snickers Bar
Light or Dark
Sports car or Pickup truck
Florida or Alaska
Beach or Mountains
12 noon or 12 midnight
Dog or Cat
Happy or Sad
Coke or Pepsi
Suit or Jeans
Camping or Cruise ship
Photograph or Camcorder
Seeing or Hearing
Wash and go or blow dry and spray
Basketball or Baseball
Shoe Laces or Velcro
Poodle or Doberman
Sunshine or Rain
Smoothie or Starbucks Coffee
Hotdog or Hamburger

**Heart of the Lesson
(25 minutes)**

Before the lesson, either go to the following websites and print the articles about role models—all are about needing better

Supplies

Video clip of
*The Lord of the
Rings: The Two
Towers* (the second
in the series)

role models— or, if you prefer, search for more recent articles about role models.

Start the lesson by splitting the youth into groups. Give each group one of the articles from the sites listed below. One is an editorial about the need for better role models for teens, another is an article about the results of a poll indicating a large portion of Americans think movie stars are poor role models, and the last is an article about Will Smith's plea to rap stars to be better role models (Please note: these links were still active as of July 2009

<http://pd.ilt.columbia.edu/banneker/savan/etonya.htm>

http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1118948620042_114357820/?hub=Entertainment

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/4629815.stm>

In their small groups, the youth will read the story and summarize it. Then they will analyze what it is that teens find so appealing or attractive about the role models being discussed in the article.

Have groups come together and share their results. Ask:

- Are role models important?
- Who are your role models or heroes? Who do you want to be like?
- What is it about that person that you are impressed by?
- Do you think Jesus, if he was alive and among us today, would be a famous role model?

Now read Philippians 3:14-21 out loud. Ask the class:

- What does this passage have to say about role models? (Answers might include the importance of choosing the right role model, the encouragement to look for role models in people who are demonstrating exemplary behavior, the need to find people who can model for us what we should be doing.)

The end of the second movie in *the Lord of The Rings* trilogy offers a great scene that describes the making of role models. It is not easy for role models or heroes to travel the paths they choose, and often in life they have to choose between continuing to do what is right even when it's much easier to give in or quit. However, they continue to go forward for a reason, and that reason is what makes them heroic and worthy of modeling. Samwise (also shortened to Sam) defines the choice to go forward despite everything that encourages role models and heroes to turn back as "Recognizing that the world is good and worth fighting for."

This clip about role models from *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* shows Frodo facing a point in his journey to destroy the Ring of Power, where he has to decide whether to take the easier path and give up, or continue battling against the odds and go to Mordor. Frodo is exhausted and weighed down by the Ring, which wants him to give up and be taken back to the ring's forger. Sam, his loyal friend and support, pulls Frodo away from certain death at the last moment, and Frodo realizes how hopeless his journey is. Sam rallies and they gain their freedom from Faramir, who thought the ring would bring his father power and turn the tide against the enemy, and Frodo and Sam return to their quest.

The clip starts at 2:43:10, when Frodo comes out of hiding for the Nazgul to see him and ends at 2:49:37 just after Sam says, "Samwise the Brave," and Frodo, walking ahead of him, smiles. Cut it off there, because it segues into a disturbing scene where Smeagol and his alternate personality, Gollum, get into a fight over betraying Frodo.

After the clip, ask:

- The ring that Frodo carries offers a temptation of great power. Several times throughout the series he has had to fight off men who wanted the ring for themselves, their desire for power masked by their plans for the honorable things they will do with the power the ring wields. Why is Frodo a better role model? What are his aspirations? (that's a question for those who've seen the movie...he took the ring because he had no desire for power, but he recognized the evil it spawned and was willing, for the good of mankind, to take it and destroy it).
- How is Frodo behaving in a Christ-like manner in this movie? Or is Frodo behaving in a Christ-like manner?
- Why does power so often turn good people bad?
- Do you agree with Samwise's explanation that even the darkest times are followed by a dawn? Can you think of a time in your life, or a time in the life of someone you know, that you or that person felt like things were pretty gloomy?
- Can you think of any times in recent history in the world where people might have believed at the time events were unfolding, that things have gotten as bad as they can get? Have those times been followed by good, or highlighted by good things happening?
- What is a good definition of a role model or even a hero, based on this passage?
- Would you hold the person who fits Samwise's idea of a

- Who is the hero in this scene? Why?
- Can you think of any people who have the qualities that make a hero in this clip? Who are they? What qualities do they have?
- Are role models perfect? What happens when their imperfections appear?
- Does Jesus have the characteristics of a hero or role model this clip demonstrates?

Wrap it Up
(5-7 minutes)

Think about those role models we tend to gravitate toward in our society.

- What do these people do that makes them role models?
- Who do you suppose their role models are?
- Would you consider Jesus to be a role model? Why or why not? If yes, what about our society makes it hard to talk about Jesus as a role model as compared to a famous athlete or movie star?

Closing
(5-7 minutes)

Speaking of Jesus as a role model... Read Luke 22:41-44. How is this similar to today's movie clip? Talk about what Jesus does in the face of his darkest hours. How does he deal with it? How can we translate this to our lives? Does this example give us any direction when we face change?

Close with prayer.

1st Sunday after Epiphany Year B/C
Focus Reading
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Space for Notes

**Opener
(10-15 minutes)**

The youth have been out for a break from school and Sunday school, so let them ease back into class this morning. Invite them to get settled by inviting them to talk about their vacation and going back to school. When everyone has arrived and settled, use the following opener to get conversation rolling in the direction of today's lesson.

You'll need a couple of objects to use as demonstration, preferably two of the same thing, only one should be an original or very well made item and the other should be cheap, easily breakable, or obviously not the real thing. For instance, a real cell phone and a dollar store toy cell phone, a real bouquet of flowers and an inexpensive silk bouquet, a real painting and a picture of a painting, a Tonka toy (the real metal dump truck!) and a plastic toy dump truck. Toys are best, because youth easily understand that one is just for play until you are old enough to handle having the real thing.

Show the youth the two objects and ask them:

- What are the main differences between these two objects?
- Which one would you rather have? Why?
- If you prefer the genuine one over the imitation, why do you suppose these imitations are made? (This one is especially good to answer if you are using something like a toy cell phone and a real cell phone)
- Can you think of anything in life where the imitation of the original is just as good or better than the original version? Why are they just as good? (generic prescriptions, foods, some types of clothing, etc.)

**The Heart of the Lesson
(15 minutes)**

We've looked at things that weren't the genuine article and talked about the difference between the imitation and the genuine, now let's talk about other areas in our lives where genuineness is more valuable than imitation. Ask the youth to describe a time in their lives when they have come across someone who was not being genuine; perhaps they were pretending in order to get someone to like them or to do

something for them. Or, perhaps they saw a really poorly acted movie or someone trying to sing a famous singer's song. Or, maybe they were doing the imitating or pretending themselves!

Ask:

- If you were not the person doing the imitating, how could you tell that what you saw or heard wasn't the real thing?
- Why does a person pretend or imitate something (such as an emotion or a song) or someone else?
- Are there any benefits to imitating or pretending? If yes, what are they?
- Are there any drawbacks? If yes, what are they?

We're going to look at a clip from the movie, *The Incredibles*, to see another example of the imitation paling in comparison to the real thing. In this clip, the bad guy has just shown Mr. Incredible all the gadgets he's made so that he can act like a superhero. He goes off to save the town from a gadget he created in order to make him look good, and Mr. Incredible and his superhero family have to go in and save the day. The clip starts at 1:29:29 with Syndrome showing the news reports of the robots he has set loose on an unsuspecting city and ends at 1:34:28 when Syndrome gets knocked out.

- What is Syndrome's reason for creating the gadgets?
- Syndrome tells the Incredibles that when he sells his gadgets everyone will be super, which means that no one will be super. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? How is this like having a gift?
- Does Syndrome perform any superhero deeds? What does he or doesn't he do? (he doesn't go in to save the town, he sets the town up to be hurt in order to make himself look good, and then when the going gets tough, he gets going...away from where people need help, instead of in to save them!)
- Based on today's clip, besides the ability to do fantastic feats of strength and physical ability, what are the qualities of a superhero? (caring for others you don't even know, teamwork, putting others before yourself)
- Which is better, the imitation or the genuine article? Why?

Today's Bible passage is another instance of recognizing the genuine article. In this short reading, John talks about baptism, and the difference between being baptized by John and being baptized by Jesus.

Read the passage aloud, and then ask:

- What does John say Jesus' baptism will do for you?
- While baptism by John was real, it was missing something that came about with Jesus' baptism and allowed Jesus to baptize differently than John. What was different? (Answer: John baptized with water. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, God sent the Holy Spirit into Jesus, which is the added ingredient that Jesus had to offer when he baptized people.)
- We are baptized by a priest today since Jesus isn't walking the earth doing baptisms himself. Is the baptism we receive today the equivalent of Jesus' baptism? Support your answer.

Let the youth discuss the last question for a few moments before having them turn to the Book of Common Prayer to read the baptismal service.

**Wrapping it Up
(15 minutes)**

Read the baptismal prayers and vows in class.

According to the service of baptism, the Holy Spirit enters us and we are sealed as Christ's own forever. Ask:

- What does that mean for us? Are we the genuine article or an imitation? (we're the real thing).
- How are we supposed to behave if we have the holy spirit within us?
- Do you think you act like the genuine article or an imitation?
- Does knowing that you are a real part of the body of Christ and really have been filled with the Holy Spirit make you feel any differently about how you look at your life?
- Is the baptism we receive today the equivalent of Jesus' baptism?

**Closing
(2-3 minutes)**

Close with prayer.

2nd Easter: Year C/A

Focus Reading

John 20: 19-31, and Luke 22-23:46

Opener

(10 minutes)

This Sunday may be the first Sunday school class after a break for Holy Week and Easter, so give the class a few minutes to get settled and caught up with each other before easing into today's lesson.

After youth have gotten settled, ask if any students are familiar with the reality show, *Survivor*. Invite the class to:

- Describe the purpose of the TV show (for those who are not familiar with it).
- Discuss who their favorite winners are.
- Discuss why people get voted off the island/location they are inhabiting. (There are two reasons for this: 1) the person voted off is slowing the team down and making it difficult to win challenges, which means this person is a liability. 2) the person voted off has great potential to win, thus being a threat to the others who think they have a chance to win.)

After you have reviewed the show, explain that today's class is going to be a little different: we're going to do some imagining. Would Jesus would have been voted off the Island if he had been chosen as one of the contestants for a reality show today, entitled, "Survivor: This Island Earth"?

The Heart of the Lesson

(25 minutes)

Divide the class into two teams. Choose between one of the two following challenges, or make up your own challenge for the two teams to tackle.

Challenge A: Eating Worms

Have each team pick a representative to face off with the other team's representative. The challenge is, in true Survivor fashion, eating worms. However, the worms the challengers will eat are gummy worms (the sour neon worms are even more challenging to eat), not live worms. The challenge is for each team member to eat two gummy worms, one at a time; the first team finished wins the challenge. Place gummy worms on a table across the room. Each team will have one member run across the room, pick up a worm, chew it, swallow it, pick up another worm, chew and

Supplies

Bibles

Copies of handout, "This Island Earth," found at the end of this lesson.

Items for Team Challenge:

A bag of sour neon gummy worms (one or two worms per student)

Or

2 regular sized, blown up, balloons (not helium filled; these will not stay on the floor)

1 straw per student

swallow it, then go back across the room to the team. As soon as the first member crosses the starting line, the next team member races over to the table to eat a worm. Remind students that they cannot leave the table until the worm is swallowed!

If you would rather not do a challenge that requires students to eat food:

Challenge B: Balloon Relay

Students will blow a balloon across the floor using straws. Give each student a straw. Divide the teams in half, so that one half of a team is on one side of the room at the starting line, and the other half of the team is on the other side of the room at the finish line. A student from each team gets on their knees and holding a straw between their lips, they must blow a regular sized (blown up) balloon across the room. As soon as they cross the finish line, the next team member at the finish line blows the balloon back across the room. When the balloon crosses the finish line, a team member at the starting line blows the balloon back to the finish line. Continue until all team members have blown the balloon. If you have an uneven number of students, have each team pick two or four players, one or two on each side of the room, and the rest of the team will cheer their representatives on.

You will make use of the challenge winners and losers at the end of class.

Hand each student a copy of the handout, "This Island Earth" to use during the lesson. Each student will also need a slip of paper, upon which they will write their vote when they finish their discussion. Explain to the students that each team will use the handout to review why Jesus got voted off the Island the last time he was here. Suggest that everyone should skim over Luke 22—23:46 (this is also written in the directions) before beginning their discussion to use as backup or for details. The last thing they will do before returning to the large group is decide for themselves whether, if Jesus was on their team, he should be voted off their team. They will write their vote on a separate piece of paper and an explanation for their decision before turning it in to the "tribal leader" (the instructor).

Give the teams 15 minutes to discuss and fill out their handouts and vote.

**Wrapping It Up
(15 minutes)**

Bring the group back together. As the group comes back together, have each person bring their vote to you and turn it in.

Discuss the answers to the questions (Hopefully, someone will decide that Jesus may have been voted off the Island, but he still won, and because of that, the rest of his team won too! Also discuss whether Peter was on Jesus' team or he was actually one of the "other players.") After discussing your answers, in true tribal fashion, the leader will mix up the votes and then read them out one by one, to determine whether Jesus stays or gets voted off "This Island Earth" in the rematch round. After the votes are read and tallied, ask:

- Do you agree with the group's decision?
- What are the implications for this island, Earth and all of its inhabitants based on the decision?

**Closing
(5 minutes)**

Close by reading the Gospel for this Sunday, John 20:19-31. Have a minute of silence to reflect on the gospel, recognizing that Jesus DID win, and not only did he win, but we won through our belief in him.

This Island Earth

In modern day terms, Jesus' life among us could be described as a reality-based show, "This Island Earth". If we review the events leading to Jesus' trial, death and resurrection, how would you answer the following questions? If you need help coming up with answers look in Luke 22—23:46.

Who did Jesus have alliances with?

Who was on the "other team"?

When it came time to decide, what are some reasons that other players voted against him?

What are some reasons that other players voted for him?

Did Jesus get voted off the island or did he win?

On a separate piece of paper, write down whether Jesus stays or goes and the reason that you would give for either keeping Jesus or voting him off if Jesus were here today playing a rematch round of "This Island Earth." Do not write your name unless you want to. Fold up your answer and turn it in for a tribal vote when the leader asks for it.

References

Movie Clips

Weinstein, J., Weinstein, B., Shaye, R., Ordesky, M., Lynne, M., Jackson, P., Osborne, B., Porras, R., Selkirk, J., & Walsh, F. (Producers) & Jackson, P. (Director). (2002). *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* [Motion Picture]. United States: New Line Cinema.

Loop, K., Kaufman, M., Emmerich, T., Cooper, K., & Rothbard Chaskin, J. (Producers) & McCann, T. (Director). (2003). *Secondhand Lions* [Motion Picture]. United States: New Line Cinema.

Lasseter, J., Rae, K., Sarafian, K., & Walker, J. (Producers) & Bird, B. (Director). (2004). *The Incredibles* [Motion Picture]. United States: Walt Disney Pictures.

Music Clips

Pillar. (2003). A Shame. On *Fireproof*. (CD). United States: Mca.