

THEME: How to Be in the World and Not of It

LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

CONNECT

We Are Different From the World

Resources

Bibles, blankets/towels/small rugs

Icebreaker Activity - Staying Afloat

Things to Prepare: Have a room with enough space for children to act out the scenario below. Blankets, towels, or small rugs.

Activity – Act It Out:

1. Give each group of two people a blanket, towel, or rug to sit on. This is their boat.
2. Ask them to pretend that they are floating in their boats. Then, suddenly, small holes start to form in their boats. Water is leaking in, just a little bit.
3. First, tell everyone to either not notice the water leaking in OR decide it's not a problem and they won't patch the holes. Eventually, the boat will fill up with water and sink.
4. Then, tell everyone to get in a new boat with holes in it. This time, they notice the water leaking in and quickly patch up the boat.

Discuss

- Think about the theme of this session. How is this boat illustration similar to living the Christian life? The boat is like our lifestyle. We are to be on the water, over the water, on top of the water, but not in the water. We should try to keep the water from coming into our lives.
- What does the water represent here? The water represents the world that does not believe in God and does not live according to His ways.
- Why are we called to be in the world if we are so different from it? Jesus wants us to shine His light and love to a world that does not yet know Him.
- What does the water coming into the boat represent, and why is this a problem? It is a picture of what happens when we begin to become like the world - we won't be an effective representative of Jesus to the world.
- As we get closer to Jesus' return to the earth, do you think more or less water will come into people's boats? As time passes, more water will leak into people's boats because the world is becoming more distracting, confusing, and less tolerant. As the world deceives Christians, it will become more challenging for them to stay afloat in their faith.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: Being Different Can Be Hard

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **John 17:14-18**.

Did you know the Bible tells us that the world may hate us for being like Jesus?

Background to This Bible Passage

In John 17, Jesus is praying out loud to God the Father. He first prays for Himself and then for His disciples. Jesus is stating to His Heavenly Father that He is not praying for the world but for His followers: the ones that God the Father gave to Him. Later in the chapter, Jesus also extends His prayers to all His future followers.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **John 17:14-18**.

- In **John 17:14**, Jesus says that He has given God's word to His followers.
- Why does the world hate Jesus' followers? Like Jesus, they are not of this world.
- In what ways are we not of the world? We have different beliefs, priorities, and values. We should always put God first.
- How are we in the world? We are not supposed to run away from the world. Instead, we are like boats in the water, but without letting the water leak into the boat (like in the icebreaker activity).
- What should we do if we are leaking and becoming more like the world? Draw close to Jesus and listen to Him, not the world. Read the Bible, pray, and spend time with other believers.
- But even if we do that, it can be hard to float in our boat on the sea of a very different world system. It can feel kind of lonely. Jesus warned His disciples of this when He prayed to the Father in **John 17**.
- Does Jesus pray that we will be taken out of the world? No, even though we will be hated.
- What does He pray? That we would be kept from the evil one and that we would be set apart and purified by Truth.
- Why has Jesus sent us out into the world? The same reason He came – to bring people to God.

Activity Suggestion - Living for Jesus

Aim: To consider strategies for living for Jesus in a world that is not living for Him.

Things to Prepare:

- Pens, colored pencils, or markers (enough colors so that each group member has their own)
- Stickers (two per person) for the "Go & Do" in the "Time for Action" section
- Three large sheets of paper, each with one of the main ways of living for Jesus at the top:
 - Be in Community
 - Listen to God's Voice
 - Live like Jesus

Activity – Silent Carousel:

1. Each person can choose one unique pen, pencil, crayon, or marker color.
2. Introduce the three main ways of living for Jesus in a world that is not living for Him.
3. Walk around silently while everyone adds their thoughts and ideas to the three sheets. Before they write, they should check that others have not already written their idea down.
4. Make sure everyone has a chance to answer all three sheets (check the different colors).
5. Ask the children to sit down once they are done.
6. Go over everyone's answers and begin the discussion.

Possible ANSWERS:

Be in Community

- Spend time with friends who are also living for Jesus
- Go to Sunday School or Youth Group
- Ask your parents to organize gatherings with others with similar values, beliefs, and priorities

Listen to God's voice

- Pray every day
- Spend time listening to God, not just speaking
- Read the Bible
- Memorize Scriptures
- Pray as a family
- Keep a journal of what you hear God saying

Live Like Jesus

- Be kind to those who mistreat you
- Decide ahead of time how you will respond
- Show mercy
- Show forgiveness
- Be humble

Discuss - Living for Jesus in a World That Is Not Living for Him

- We have many good ideas for living for Jesus, even in a hostile world. What do you think is the very first step to doing this well? There are many possible answers. A great starting point is to expect our lives to look and be different from those who do not follow Jesus.
- Jesus says we should expect to be rejected by the world and maybe even hated. What gives us comfort from today's Bible verses? Jesus knows it is hard, and He prays for us. Jesus has sent us into the world to live for Him and shine His light and love to others.
- We looked at three strategies for living for Jesus. Being in community is important so that we do not feel alone. How else might it be helpful? We can support, encourage, and pray for one another, especially when things are tough.
- Another strategy is to listen more to the voice of Jesus than to the voices of the world. Listening to Jesus' voice is very important so we can stay close to Him and cope when people are not kind to us. What might you be tempted to do when people reject or hate you because you believe in Jesus? We might be tempted to blend in with the world instead of standing out, but we are called to follow Jesus without compromise. We might want to hurt them back (this is the world's way). However, Jesus' way is to love our enemies and do good to those who hurt us. The world and Jesus' way do not mix, just like in our opening activity, where the boat will sink if the water of the world leaks in. Remember from Stage I, Session 5: Oil and water do not mix!
 - But remember what happened when water leaked into the boat in our opening activity. We must not compromise.
- Jesus really wants His followers to live and act like Him. This includes loving people who do not love us and being kind to those who reject or hate us. Hands up if you have ever had to

do this before. Acknowledge anyone who responds and, if time allows, have them share their examples.

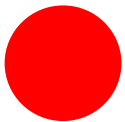
- Living like Jesus in the middle of a challenging moment can be hard. A good idea is to decide how to respond to challenging situations ahead of time. **Micah 6:8** sums this up: God wants His people to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God.
- As we wait for Jesus to return to earth, the world will get darker, and the light of Jesus will shine brighter as we seek to live for Him.

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.

Think about what you will do to live for Jesus even when people reject or hate you.

TIME FOR ACTION



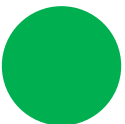
1. “STOP & THINK” Action Point

Take two minutes to think about your own life. Are you living differently from the world, or are you trying to blend in and live like the world?



2. “PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point

Have a conversation with God about today’s session. Ask Him to help you decide ahead of time how you’ll respond when someone rejects or hates you because of Jesus.



3. “GO & DO” Action Point

Go and get two stickers and put them next to the two ideas you would like to focus most on in your life right now on the papers from the *Silent Carousel* activity.

SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- Stand Firm
- Don’t Be Afraid
- Whose Life Is It Anyway?

DEEPER STUDY

For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.

For Study

1. Read through **John 15:18-27**. What do you learn in these verses about the world's hatred?
2. Read these two passages from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: **Matthew 5:13-16** and **Matthew 5:43-48**. Both these passages are important for knowing how to live like Jesus. Which one seems more significant for your own life, and why?

For Memorizing

1. **Micah 6:8** (ESV): "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
2. **John 17:14** (ESV): "I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."

For Observation

As we come closer to Jesus' return, more and more people will reject Jesus and His followers. We are called to live for Jesus in a world that is not living for Him. One way to do this is to become more like Jesus. Watch this [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze7w3-BL3OM) about the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus taught His followers to love and bless their enemies. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze7w3-BL3OM>

For Action

Think about the two stickers corresponding to the strategies you placed on the Silent Carousel papers in this session. Decide what you will do to work on these strategies in the coming weeks.

Before the Next IN:Tribe

Matthew 5:10-12 tells us we are blessed when people reject and hate us because of Jesus. Based on these verses, make a sign or small poster for your room as a reminder of what Jesus said about being persecuted for His sake. Write key words or write the scripture out entirely. You may wish to draw or add color to your poster. Bring your poster to the next IN:Tribe to show others what you have made and share how it may help you.