

THEME: How to Listen to the News

LOOKING BACK

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

CONNECT

Recognize the Signs of the Times

Resources

Bibles, ten blank pieces of paper, ten notecards, and enough pens for each group member to have one

Icebreaker Activity - Remember to Be Watchful

Things to Prepare: Make a banner with this Bible verse on it: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times” - **Matthew 16:3(b)** (ESV). Prepare ten blank pieces of paper (SIGN papers) and ten HINT cards (notecards with one- or two-word hints for each sign) as follows:

| Signs of the End Times (to be written by children on blank SIGN papers) | HINT cards |
|---|---------------|
| People who say they can fix the world | Fix the World |
| Wars and stories about wars / Nations fighting each other | Fighting |
| Earthquakes | Shaking |
| People not having enough to eat | Food |
| Christians being persecuted | Persecution |
| Christians denying Jesus | Denying |
| Christian leaders twisting the Bible | Twist Bible |
| People behaving badly | Behavior |
| Bad things happen in Jerusalem | Jerusalem |
| A world leader promises peace | Peace |

Activity: Do you remember (from Stage 1, Session 3) that we are called to be like the men of Issachar, who know the signs, recognize them, and know what to do about them? Can you recall what some of the signs of the times are?

If you can think of one, come up and write it on one of these SIGN papers. *(Have the children come up and write their answers on SIGN papers.)* If you can't recall them, you may take a HINT card. Doing so will hopefully help you to remember the signs that we learned. *(Adults can remove the hint cards from the pile as each sign is remembered. If children have difficulty, set a timer and end the activity earlier, writing out the answers together using the HINT cards.)*

Now that we have listed all ten signs let's try to group them according to the **three types of responses** from Stage 1, Session 3 *(Don't be afraid; Stand firm; Don't believe people claiming to bring peace)*. Everybody take one or two signs and try to put them into the correct categories.

Now, let's see if we got this right!? (Give them each the answer page – the attached list of signs from Stage 1, Session 3 –check the answers together, and discuss why they go into those categories).

Discuss

- How many of these signs do you think you'll be able to remember in the future? (*Show the number with your hands.*) We should try to be familiar with these signs so we can recognize them when we see them around us.
- In **Matthew 16:3(b)**, Jesus wasn't happy when His disciples couldn't interpret the signs of the times. Why? Recognizing signs is important so we can respond the way Jesus wants us to and not be fooled by the enemy.
- What negative responses could we have if we fail to recognize the signs as they unfold? Fear, anxiety, depression, hopelessness.
- Today's session is about how to listen to the news. We must try to listen with a biblical point of view. Then, we can respond with prayer and positive action. What is the best way to develop a biblical perspective? Read the Bible every day and try to memorize lots of scriptures.

TRUTH TO KNOW

Faith Focus: We Must Be On Our Guard!

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 **1 Corinthians 16:13-14**.

Did you know the Bible tells us to be on our guard and be watchful?

Background to This Bible Passage

The book of 1 Corinthians is a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. He wrote this letter to help solve some problems that had been developing among the followers of Jesus there. The believers needed some advice on how to be more disciplined so that they could become more spiritually mature. Becoming spiritually mature is especially important nowadays for followers of Jesus, as we are much closer to His return.

The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **1 Corinthians 16:13-14**.

The NIV version of these verses says to "be on your guard," and the ESV version says to "be watchful." Being on guard is important as we wait for Jesus to return. Jesus wants His followers to recognize and respond to the signs as they see and hear about them.

Today's lesson is about how to listen to the news. As we listen to and "watch" the news, we should also be "watching" God's Word. It's a good idea to listen to the news with our Bibles nearby and to have our minds filled with Truth from the Scriptures.

We should also be praying as we listen to the news. Here are some questions to ask ourselves and talk to God about as we “watch”:

1. Is there a link between the news headlines and a sign in God’s Word?
 2. How does God feel about this news headline?
 3. How do you think God wants us to respond?
- **Proverbs 4:23** (NIV) says, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” How do you think this Scripture connects to listening to the news? *As we get closer to the return of Jesus, there will be more bad news that can cause fear, anxiety, or discouragement.*

In **1 Corinthians 16:13-14**, Paul tells us to be watchful so that we can stand firm, be strong, and have hearts rooted in love. As we listen to the news, God wants us to connect these stories to the Bible – especially the signs – and to pray and act. And our actions should flow from love in our hearts.

Activity Suggestion - News Headlines

Aim: To practice listening to the news and making connections to signs of the end times.

Things to Prepare: Write/print news headlines on slips of paper. Make as many sets of 6 as there are groups of children.

For example, a set of headlines may look like this:

1. Famine in India Worsening
2. Stranger Attacks in Manhattan Park During Lunchtime
3. USA Planning to Go to War Against Afghanistan
4. Flight to Iceland Makes Emergency Landing
5. Fighting Erupts on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount
6. 5.7 Magnitude Earthquake Hits Japan

Activity: Separate the children into groups of two or three. Give one set of six headlines to each group of children, and have them decide if there are any connections between the headlines and end times signs from the Bible. You may refer to your Signs sheet from the Icebreaker activity. There will be at least one headline that does not match the end-time signs.

Discuss - News Headlines

- How helpful was it to have your Signs sheet from the Icebreaker Activity handy??

This is why people should be familiar with the Bible and have their Bibles nearby when watching the news. We should know the signs and recognize them when we see them.

- As we approach the time of Jesus’ return, we know that the signs will appear more often. The news is one place that we will hear about these approaching signs.

READY TO GO

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

Think about what you will do when you listen to the news.

TIME FOR ACTION



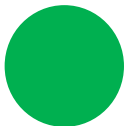
1. “STOP & THINK” Action Point

Take two minutes to think about your life. Which of the signs of the end times do you think is happening most often in the news today?



2. “PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point

Have a conversation with God about today’s lesson. Ask Him for His thoughts concerning the sign you hear about most often in the news. What would He have you do?



3. “GO & DO” Action Point

What are God’s thoughts towards the sign you prayed about, and what is He saying to do? Go and do what the Lord has told you. He may be telling you to pray more about it, take some kind of action, or maybe both. Sometimes, a response may be to send support to people in trouble or to share the good news about Jesus with them.

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:

- How to Pray
- Timeline of End Time Events
- Guard Against Deception

DEEPER STUDY

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

For Study

1. Look into **Philippians 2** (NIV). What does it mean to “shine among them like stars in the sky” (verse 15), and how does this relate to our topic of listening to the news?
2. Read **Leviticus 23:3** and **Isaiah 58:13-14**. God set apart the Sabbath as a day for His people to rest. God has promised blessings for those who honor the Sabbath and delight in the Lord on that day. In light of this, what might be a good idea regarding listening to the news?

For Memorizing

1. **Psalms 119:105** (ESV): “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
2. **1 Corinthians 16:13** (NIV): “Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.”

For Observation

Set aside some time to listen to an Audio Bible. Taking in more of the Word of God, especially by listening, can help prepare our hearts and minds to listen to worldly things, like the news.

For Action

Review the steps for listening to the news:

1. Pray before and during
2. Be familiar with the signs of the times and have your Bible nearby
3. As you listen, ask yourself questions:
 - a. Does this have any connections to end times signs?
 - b. How does God feel about this?
 - c. What does God want me to do about this?

Before the Next IN:Tribe

Watch or listen to the news and choose three headlines. Then, check if any of these headlines link to end-time signs. Write these headlines down and bring them to share at the next IN:Tribe.