

## SESSION 2 LEAD IT: COLLEGE AGE



### GOALS

Through this session students will...

- learn about the origins of God's Law/commands and why the Law was given
- see how other nations would come to know Him through the way Israel obeyed the Law.
- see how God uses His commands today to allow people to see Him at work in us.

### MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers

### MATERIALS: Each Student

- Session 2 Scripture sheets
- the student journal pages for Session 2
- a Bible and pen (Students should bring their own Bibles. You can decide if you would like them to use a physical Bible or a Bible app like, "YouVersion")

### Leading Up to the Session:

Check in with students to see how they are processing everything they learned last week. Ask if they've applied things to their own lives. If not, take the opportunity to encourage them into action. Of course, be patient. They might be exercising spiritual muscles they've not used before. You can also help by offering practical advice and ideas to help them follow through on commitments

Also, check in with the prayer team that you assembled. Give them an update on how your group is responding. Your team will appreciate a list of specific prayer concerns so consider creating a list and sharing it via email.

### Prayer

Open with a prayer of thanksgiving for what God has done in and through your group this week. Pray that during this session God would reveal himself to you through His Word and that He would find open hearts and minds. Pray that this time would be fruitful in helping your group accomplish what God has called them to.

### Open

Begin with a short review of the previous session. (This can be a catch-up for anyone new joining you this week.) Here are a few talking points:

- **God is looking for groups that are willing and faithful to work with him.**
- **God found this kind of faithfulness first in Abraham, then in his son Isaac, and finally in Isaac's son Jacob.**
- **We see that in these men's stories that when God calls us to serve Him, He is faithful to follow through with all that He has promised.**


Challenge students to recall how God acted similar in each of these men's stories. (If you get stumped review the "God's Actions / Man's Reactions" section from last week's journal pages.

Finally, ask if anyone came up with any new ways (other than those mentioned last week) that God might be choosing to use their group.

## DIGGING IN

Share with your group that in this session they'll be discovering God's purpose for the Nation of Israel. You'll be exploring what God expected from them and how this would ultimately shape their purpose.

To help students understand the dynamics of the relationship between God and Israel, have them read Exodus 19:3-8. Instruct them to look for the following as they read:

- **Mark any reference to Israel (including pronouns like "you") with a Star of David** .
- **Underline any expectations that God has for the nation (look for "if you" statements).**
- **Circle (or draw a rainbow over) any promises that God makes.**

After students have read the Scripture passage instruct them to list on their journal pages what they found, organizing the information into two parts, the first being God's expectations for Israel, the second being God's promise to Israel if they are faithful. As students are working on this step, take the opportunity to draw a diagram similar to the one below on your whiteboard or paper (without the answers; you'll be filling those in with your group).

| Expectations of Israel   | God's Promises   |
|--|--|
| <b>If they:</b><br><br><i>-obey God fully</i><br><i>-keep God's covenant</i> | <b>Then they:</b><br><br><i>-will be God's treasured possession</i><br><i>-will be a kingdom of priests</i><br><i>-will be a holy nation</i> |

After you have assembled a list that looks similar to the one above, ask students to discuss the following questions.

**While this is clearly a good deal for the nation of Israel, do you think they completely understood the implications of "fully obeying God?"**


**Why is complete faithfulness to the Law necessary for God to fulfill His promise to them?**

**Based upon what you know of Israel from the rest of the Bible, did they always fulfill their commitment to the promise? What were the results when they didn't?**

## DIGGING DEEPER

Share a quick review with your group from your Prep It to set up Deuteronomy 4:5-9. Here are a few talking points:

- **The Israelites are finally getting ready to inherit the land that God had promised them.**
- **It's the same promise that He had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**
- **Moses stops to remind the people of the Law that God had given them and of the importance of that Law to their nation.**

Once you have set the scene, have students read Deuteronomy 4:5-9 using their Scripture sheet. As they read have them mark any reference to God's laws, decrees, commands, etc. with a book . Once they have marked these references, have them record on their journal pages what Moses reveals about these laws. Make sure they don't miss any references to the Law that appear as pronouns such as "these" and "them."

After they have finished ask students to circle on their Scripture sheets what they think are the two most important points about God's laws. After a minute ask them to share what they circled and record their responses on the whiteboard. Below are possible responses.

#### God's Laws

- to be taught by God to Moses
- to be followed
- to be observed carefully
- obeying them will show wisdom and understanding
- they are righteous
- they are not to slip from our hearts
- they are to be taught

Ask students to read the passage one more time. This time encourage them to note any reference that is made to other nations. Have them mark these references with a flag. Once they have finished work as a group to list on the board, while students list them on their journal pages, how other nations will react to the Law given to Israel.

#### Other Nations

- If Israel observes these laws, other nations will see their wisdom and understanding
- They will say that Israel is a great nation, wise, understanding
- They will notice the nearness of Israel's God

Have your group discuss the following questions. Record their responses on the board.

**Based upon what you read in this passage, what was God's purpose for His relationship with Israel? (Hint, there are several).**

**How was God's Law a part of this purpose?**

**How important was the Law to the people?**

**How important are God's commands to us today? Why?**

**What are some consequences of not obeying God's commands today?**

### **TAKING IT INWARD**

Explain to your group that often when we think of God's Law we think of just the Ten Commandments which God gave Moses in Exodus 20. But this was only the beginning (and the ten greatest commands) of the Law. God continued giving the nation of Israel His Law throughout the book of Exodus and spent the majority of the book of Leviticus laying out a very detailed series of laws and commands for His people to follow. You may even want to reference a few passages of Scripture that show just how detailed these laws were.

**Exodus 23:14-19:** Details three annual festivals that God decrees.

**Exodus 28:** Describes the garments the priests were to wear.

**Leviticus 13:47-59:** shows the Israelites how they are to deal with moldy garments.

Ask:

**Can you think of any other laws that God gave to Israel?**

*Here are a few suggestions.*

- Laws for what foods were "clean" that they were permitted to eat, and which foods were "unclean" and not acceptable for consumption
- Laws for sacrifices for sin
- Laws for constructing the temple
- Laws for constructing the Ark of the Covenant.

Share in your own words:

**God's Law was given to Israel as an opportunity for a relationship with a holy God, and to give them a picture of what holiness would require of them. This in turn would cause the surrounding nations to take note that Israel's God was at work in the people. Since the nations around Israel did not know of the Lord, you can imagine how following God's laws might create curiosity from neighboring nations.**

**Even though times have changed, God's decrees still remain. Today we have the opportunity to look at what living a holy life might cost us by looking at God's Word. During Jesus' time on earth He told people that He had not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17-20). Jesus helped his followers by interpreting the Law into practical ways to follow God.**

**What are some things that Jesus commanded of us, that if we obeyed, might cause others to take note of us?**

*Examples:*

- Loving our enemies (even people who intend to do us harm)*
- Loving our neighbors (going out of our way to help those we come in contact with)*
- Loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength*

**Note:** We know that college age ministry is a moving target. It ebbs and flows with the school calendar; some churches have a much defined ministry, others more *ad hoc*, springing up as needed for a time. The exercises from this point forward are geared to help students in your group see themselves as a ministry, whether your group is long-standing and well-defined or simply gathered for a season.

As students share ways to live out the commands, list their ideas on your board on the left side of your whiteboard, keeping the right side open. Below are possible responses. Encourage students to come up with practical ways to accomplish this. The examples below might help guide you in this.

#### **Group Decrees to Live By**

- Love one another (avoid petty arguments and putting people down)*
- Pray (set a designated time weekly to join together in prayer)*
- Know God's Word (encourage one another to grow in the knowledge of God through personal and group Bible Study)*
- Love my neighbors (reach out to the homeless in your community)*

After you've listed a few decrees, discuss the questions below as a group.

**How do you think people outside of our faith community perceive our group? Our church? Our ministry?**

**What types of things have we done (or failed to do) to deserve that reputation?**

**What are some mixed messages that people outside of Christ might be receiving about who God is from the Church today?**

**Do you think that people outside of our group see how great our God is through the lives we lead? If so, how? If not, what needs to change?**

**How might this be better if we really live up to the decrees that we listed above?**

**Sometimes the only thing people know about God is what they observe in you and me. If this is true would you say that people have a good picture of who God is through our lives?**

**What do you want your life to communicate to others about the God you serve?**

Explain to your students that one of God's purposes in calling a group, whether it is a nation like Israel, or a group of people like this group, is to let His traits be seen through these people. The best way for people to get a good view of our God, and the things he values, is for people to follow and obey His commands.

With this in mind, take a few moments to brainstorm the purpose of our group. You can draw some inspiration from the "Group Decrees" that you just created. List these on the right side of your whiteboard, alongside the list of "Group Decrees." While you might get a host of responses, organize the ideas into a couple overarching categories. You might notice that certain ideas, like reaching the lost, reaching people in our schools, reaching people in the community might all fit together in one category that you simply call "reaching out to the lost." Don't stifle ideas, but just do your best to organize ideas into categories that can be simplified into one response. Here are some examples:

**Our Group's Purpose:**

- Reach the lost
- Disciple other believers
- Demonstrate God's love by serving others

**PUTTING INTO PRACTICE**

In order to encourage students to act upon what they have discussed in this session, lead them in developing a mission statement for your group. If you already have a mission statement, encourage students to discuss how the group is accomplishing its mission. An easy way to get things started here is to match a "Group Decree" with a "Purpose" listed above. You might want to organize the statement as follows:

***Our Group Exists to:*** (insert a purpose from the list "Our Group's Purpose")

***We plan to accomplish this by:*** (list a decree from the list "Group Decrees" that supports the purpose you just noted)

As you come to what you consider to be a final product, encourage students to record this statement for themselves on their journal pages. Discuss how to reproduce the statement onto something that they can carry with them. Some ideas:

**Bigger Budget:** Have the statement professionally printed on t-shirts, wristbands, lanyards, etc.

**Small/No Budget:** Consider printing your statement on business cards (check out some online printing companies that allow you to print your first 100-200 for free), or on some nice card stock paper that students can place in their Bibles or wallets.

**Keep Momentum Rolling**

How does your group communicate outside of your group time? Tap into this and employ creative ways to keep the discussion going outside of your meeting time. You know your group best. Is a texting app (like GroupMe) a good way to keep the conversation going? Or is social media a better venue? Try several to see what works best. This is an excellent way to keep people thinking about the session topic all week long!

Close this session in prayer. Pray that God would give your group the strength and courage to fulfill this mission. Pray that He would continue to shape and refine the group throughout the course of the series, and that as a result other people would come to know Him through the lives you lead.