

## SESSION 2 LEAD IT: MIDDLE SCHOOL



### 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
- Option: Data projection for Scripture sheets onto butcher paper or poster board (see Digging In)

### 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 up this 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 student journals.
- 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.

Transition into your study time with this discussion.

**What is the purpose of the following groups?**

**The military:** *to protect America from its enemies and insure peace*

**Congress:** *to introduce bills and pass laws regarding the way America is governed*

**The Salvation Army:** *to help those in need by providing clothing, supplies, and assistance in Christian love*

**Police:** *to enforce the law and protect the community from criminal activity*


**The Church:** *to spread the gospel, to baptize and make disciples of all nations, to love and serve like Christ.*

**Any other groups you'd like to suggest and describe?**

## DIGGING IN

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 God's Law and the importance of that Law to their nation.**

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

**Option:** Consider projecting Deuteronomy 4:5-9 onto poster board or butcher paper (or a giant whiteboard) and asking for volunteers to mark things while the group coaches them along. Another option: hand copy the passage onto butcher paper or poster board.

After they have finished this process 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.

Then ask:

**How will other nations react to God's laws?**

*Invite students to note these on their journal pages. Below are possible responses.*

### 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 for not obeying God's commands today?

### **TAKING IT INWARD**

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.

Share in your own words:

**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?**

*If responses are slow in coming, here are some 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

**What are some ways that we can live out these commands as a group? We might even call these "Decrees to Live by."**

*Encourage students to come up with practical ways to accomplish this.*

As students share ways to live out these 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.*

### Youth 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 (help a new student who is lonely)

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

**How do you think people outside of our group view us?**

**Do you think "outsiders" to our group see God through the way we love and serve Him? If so, how? If not, what needs to change?**

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

**If the only thing someone outside of this group knows about God is what they see demonstrated through your life, would they have a clear picture of who God is?**

**What are things we do that cause people to get an inaccurate picture of who God is?**

**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 and brainstorm the purpose of your group. You can draw some inspiration from the "Youth Group Decrees" that you just created. List these on the right side of your whiteboard, alongside the list of "Youth 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 Youth 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 up a "Youth Group Decree" with a "Purpose" listed above. You might want to organize the statement as follows:

***Our youth group exists to:*** (insert a purpose from the list "Youth Group's Purpose")

***We plan to accomplish this by:*** (list a decree from the list "Youth 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.

**Smaller 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.

**No Budget:** Create a sign to take a picture of, or have a student design a digital piece, that students can use for phone or computer screen savers and wallpaper.

**NOTE:** You may want to wait until the end of the study to create a permanent item in case your group's mission evolves as you explore this subject more.

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.