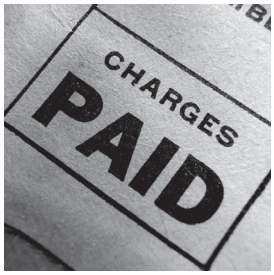
SESSION 4
LEAD IT: COLLEGE AGE



GOALS

As students experience this session in Faith Basics, they will…

- Understand the link between salvation (last week's study) and redemption.
- Examine Scripture to lead them to a deeper understanding of WHY God chose to redeem us.
- Examine and discuss what God has redeemed us from as well as the life that He has redeemed us to!

MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard or Post-it pad (the 25"x30" variety)
- Dry-erase markers or Sharpies for Post-it pad
- Materials for "Putting Into Practice" activity. (See Putting Into Practice at the end of this guide; each suggestion will require some pre-session prep.)

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Different colored markers or colored pencils
- Highlighters
- Student journal pages and Scripture sheets
- Bible

OPEN

Begin this session with a quick review of the basics of the faith youth covered so far.

If you've been distributing the suggested objects in each Putting Into Practice exercise, you can use those as a memory jog, asking students to recall the significance of each object. Give students a moment to write down what they remember in the Open exercise on their journal pages. Here are some reminders to help.

- **Session 1:** Commitment Card, to remind us of the importance to commit ourselves to knowing God's Word.
- **Session 2:** Rock or Sinker, to remind us that sin drags us down (to sink us) and separates us from our Creator.
- **Session 3:** Paracord bracelet or Lifesavers, to remind us that we have a great need to be rescued from sin and are powerless to save ourselves.

As you wrap up your review of these items, take a few moments to highlight some of the important points from last week's lesson.

- Because of the problem of sin and our inability to *atone* (to make amends for or reparation) for it, we have a great need for someone to save us.
- At some point all of us have experienced life where sin ruled our lives and the result of that sin ultimately is death. But being set free from sin and death means a life that leads us toward holiness and righteousness—being more like Jesus.
- Because of God's grace and mercy He offers us salvation through the sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ.
- Salvation, as you saw in Session 3, explains ***what*** God did. Redemption explains ***why*** God did it and why we need salvation. A clear understanding of redemption helps us see our true situation. Before Christ, we are slaves to sin and darkness, and we face certain death. After Christ, we are free!

Transition into the subject of redemption with this brainstorm discussion:

Name a favorite movie you've seen or book you've read that has redemption as a major theme
If you need to prime the pump a bit: Les Miserables, The Hurricane, Groundhog Day

How is redemption illustrated or demonstrated in the story?

Why does redemption make for such a compelling story?

Have you ever experienced redemption in a similar manner? What was it like to experience that redemption?
Encourage students to share their story if they are comfortable doing so.

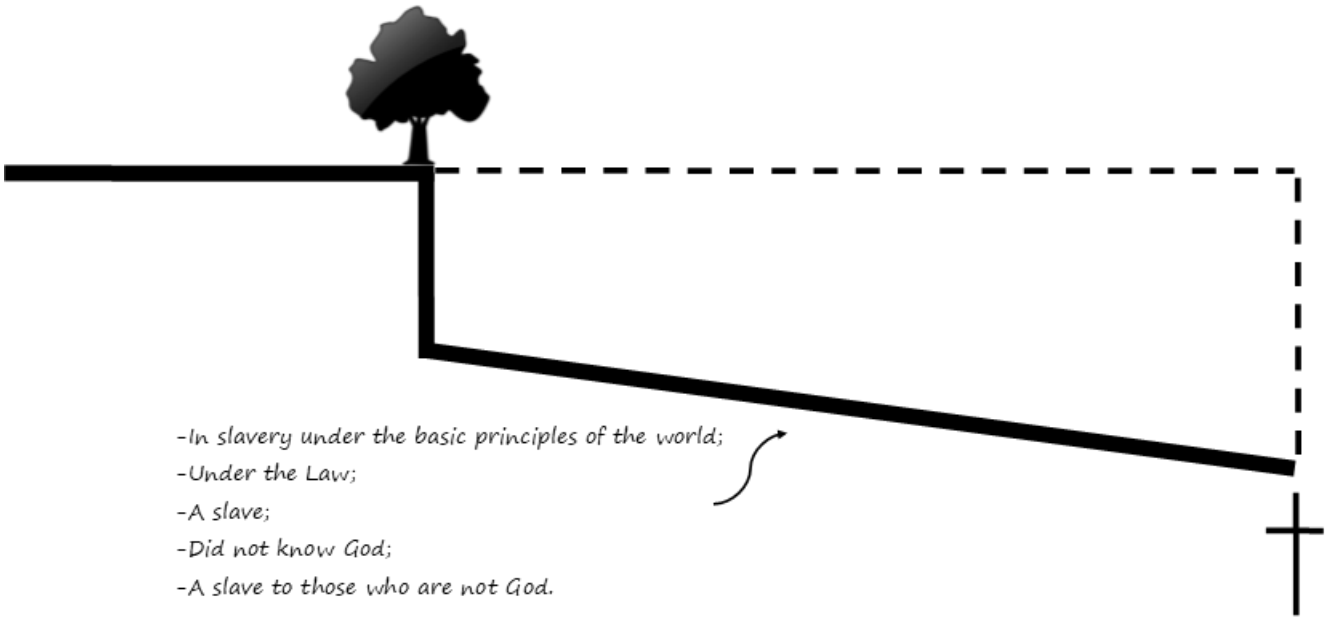
DIGGING IN

As a matter of review and for ready reference, have your students re-draw their diagram from Session 2 on their Session 4 journal pages. You may also want to draw it on the board or sticky note pad.

Then have your students read Galatians 4:3-8 using their Scripture sheets. As they read, ask them to do the following:

Mark anything that describes our life while we are separated from God.

After they've finished, as a group place these descriptions where they belong on the diagram on the board or note pad. The result will look something like the following:



Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Romans 5:6-8 out of his or her Bible. Using the cross as a symbol for Christ's act of redemption, have the class discuss where on the diagram the cross should be placed so that it depicts when redemption happened.

Eventually, you will want the cross to be placed on the part of the diagram that represents the time when we were separated from God. But let your group come up with that on their own, and let them decide why. If many of them already have the cross drawn on their diagrams, discuss as a class why the cross needs to be placed at a point when man was separated from God. A beautiful fact of redemption is that Christ took on our sin and died for us "while we were still sinners."

DIGGING DEEPER

Ask your students to read Romans 6:6 and 6:16-18 using their Scripture sheets. As they read, have them do the following:

Highlight any reference to slaves or slavery.

After they're read the passage, invite them to list everything they learn about slaves and slavery on their journal pages.

Slavery

-we are slaves to sin before our old bodies are crucified
-people are slaves to the one they obey
-slavery to sin leads to death
-we used to be slaves to sin
-we are able to be slaves to righteousness

Once they are finished with the step above, discuss the following questions.

What word or words would you use to describe mankind's condition prior to Christ's intervention?

What word or words would you use to describe YOUR condition prior to Christ intervening in your life?

What are we slaves to before we meet Christ?

How have you experienced this in your own life? Did you ever feel almost compelled to do a wrong thing that you knew you shouldn't do? Could it be because you were a "slave" to that sin?
It is important for students to grasp the "slavery and bondage" thing! Scripture uses this image to describe our situation without Christ. The imagery of being slaves to sin certainly sets up the meaning of redemption. The better we understand the bondage we are in before we meet Christ, the more we will value what He did for us in setting us free from this bondage.

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER

Ask your students to read the Galatians 4 passage again. As they read this time, have them do the following:

Mark any description of us after Christ has done His work.

After they've read the passage, list on the board how the passage describes us after Christ has done His work.

Life After Christ

-receive the full rights of sons
-we are sons
-God has sent His Spirit of His Son into our hearts
-we are no longer slaves, but sons
-therefore, we are also heirs of God!

INSIGHT

Share with your group the meaning of the word "redemption." If you really want to sound intelligent, tell them what that Greek word is — *apolútrosis* (ah-pah-LOO-tro-sis), which means "to let go free for a ransom." Stress that redemption means payment for a ransom; it implies that someone was in slavery, that their freedom was paid for, and that now they are free. Have your students write this definition on their journal pages.

TAKING IT INWARD

By now a vivid picture of redemption should be emerging. Discuss the process of redemption, using the following questions as prompts:

Why is the word "freedom" so closely associated with redemption?

How is Christ able to redeem us?

What is Christ's role in your personal redemption story?

FINAL DIGS: Optional

Option 1: Redemption Retreat

As you might expect, God has a lot to say about redemption in His Word. While you've covered a lot of ground in this session, your students may benefit from one more exploration from Scripture. In fact, you may want to create a "retreat" atmosphere, giving students an opportunity to find some solitude in the area around you so that they can experience God and His Word without distraction. Before they "retreat," share the following instructions:

Look up the passages printed on your journal pages using your own Bibles or Bible apps. Each passage contains information that helps complete the chart on your journal pages. As you read each passage, place on the chart any information about redemption you find in that passage.

When they finish, have students reassemble as a group. Have them work together to complete the chart on the whiteboard or notepad.

Once you are finished your chart should look similar to the one below.

Why do we need redeemed?	Why did God redeem us?	How did God redeem us?	Benefits and instructions because we are redeemed
because all sinned *-Rom. 5:12-13* *-Rom. 3:23-24*	*-because He loves us* *-Gal. 2:20*	*-through Christ's blood, God was able to forgive us* *-Eph. 1:7-8* *-Col. 1:13-14* *-grace through Christ* *-Rom. 3:24*	*-follow God's example* *-walk in the way of love* *-Eph. 4:32-5:1-2* *-holiness, eternal life* *-Rom. 6:22*

Have each student look over their chart and circle one thing that is the most meaningful piece of information on that chart.

Then ask each student to share what he or she circled and why.

Point out to your group that the instructions given in Ephesians 5:1-2 represent actions we are to take out of gratitude for our redemption. Because we have been forgiven and set free, ***follow God's example and walk in the way of love!***

How can you keep the connection fresh between your gratitude for redemption and following God's example?

How can you let gratitude for your redemption drive your desire to "walk in the way of love" in daily life (think classes, work, family, roommates, etc.)?

Optional 2: Your Redemption Psalm

Psalm 107 is an entire psalm written out of gratitude for God's redemption. Invite students to read the first chunk of this psalm, Psalm 107:1-9, and focus on what the psalmist says about God's redemption. You can use this psalm as a spark for students to create their own redemption psalm, like Psalm 107, that expresses their gratitude for redemption. These can be done on the spot in your session or on their own. Here are some ideas:

-Write a few sentences or a short paragraph to describe your personal redemption.
-Write a short poem or lyrics for a song.
-Sketch or paint something that depicts your gratitude.
-Choreograph a liturgical dance.
-Create a digital graphic from your own pictures or images online.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Again, we want to give you the freedom to choose the approach that would connect best with your group. Below are a couple of suggestions that should help your students connect with the theme of redemption in this session.

Option 1: Chains

Prior to your group's gathering, purchase from your local hardware store (or big-box home improvement store) short lengths of chains—maybe 6 to 8 inches in length and you can certainly use lightweight chain. Purchase enough for each student to have one. Most stores will cut chains to the length you desire.

As you close your session, distribute these chains to students to help them connect the theme of redemption with being set free from sin. The chains symbolize the broken chain of sin that is used to enslave us. You may even want to tie a tag to the end of the chain that says "Redeemed."

Option 2: Paid Admission Ticket

If you are a desktop publishing pro, prior to this lesson print out a few "Admit One" tickets on some nice card stock paper (or use the template supplied with the student pages). You may want to even include some of the Scripture references that were used in this session on the tickets. As you distribute these tickets explain to your group that because we have been redeemed, our freedom from sin has been paid. Use this time to lock in some of the key points from this session. Invite students to do something creative with this ticket so that it can serve as a daily reminder that their redemption has been paid.