TEACH IT **TALK** SESSION 3

This talk guide is just that: a guide. It's not intended to be a manuscript to read aloud. It's here to give you ideas, structure, and stories to blend with your personal study (Prep It) as you prepare your talk.

The content complements the other Teach It guides, allowing you to give a talk on the same topic students are studying in other settings (like small groups) without too much overlap.

1. Materials (Optional)

- A promo video from a child sponsorship or humanitarian relief organization. You can find these on the Web sites of organizations such as Compassion International and World Vision, or on a video-sharing Web site such as YouTube. Search for the name of the organization, or an impoverished region such as Darfur.
- Images from a child sponsorship or relief organization (or any charity of your choice) from Web sites or promotional material. You may want to create a two- to three-minute media presentation using the images, a music background, and a few of the following quotations. Or you may want to simply print and distribute some images at the beginning of the talk.

2. Optional Openings

VIDEO CLIP
Begin your talk with a promo video from a child-sponsorship or relief organization, or one of the YouTube videos noted above. The intent is to show how people respond to needs. After showing the clip, transition into your talk by sharing a personal story about a time when you were inspired to action (see Digging In).

VISUAL ILLUSTRATION
As students are gathering, roll a media presentation showing images from various child-sponsorship or relief organizations. You may want to set the presentation to loop, so that it plays continuously until you begin your talk. If you printed the images, have them dispersed throughout the room; encourage students to pass them around as they're seated.

QUOTATIONS
Introduce the idea of the need for believers to heed the needs around them by sharing a few of the following quotations:

In the midst of a generation screaming for answers, Christians are stuttering.
—Howard G. Hendricks (1924-present, respected Christian teacher, speaker, and longtime professor at Dallas Theological Seminary)

It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
—Howard Ruff (1931-present, entrepreneur and business consultant)

The young have aspirations that never come to pass; the old have reminiscences of what never happened.
—Hector Hugh Munro (1870-1916, British writer also known by the pen name Saki)

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.
—Aldous Huxley (1894-1963, English writer and intellectual)

3. Digging In

Personal Story

Share a personal story about a time you were inspired to action. Here's an example:

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to get busy? It's so easy to simply fill up our days, sometimes with meaningless things. And then we can check out relationally and start going through the motions…all the while trying to feel good about our walk with Christ. The truth is, when I find myself in those kinds of times, I'm not really living out much of a walk with Jesus at all. I'm just doing what I think I am supposed to be doing—just checking something off my list. It's insane that I have access to the Creator of the world but get so busy I ignore him. And then I find myself wondering what it is he wants me to do—what his will is for my life.

Imagine what it'd be like to have your parent come into your room and say, "Hey, Michael Jordan is here" (or Lebron James or Tiger Woods or any world-class athlete) and you say, "That's great, but I'm just going to hang out in my room," and you keep watching TV. Later your friends start talking about the all-time greats of basketball. Inevitably, Jordan's name comes up. So you say to them, "Oh yeah, he came over to my house earlier." Your friends go nuts. "He did what!?" they scream. "Yeah, I was watching TV though, so I didn't see him," you say.

"You did *what!?*" They'd think you were crazy.

When you have the opportunity to hang out with Michael Jordan, the President, or whomever is a big deal in your world, you do it. The thing is, we each have the opportunity to hear from the God who created the heavens and the earth—and yet we choose to do something meaningless like watch TV instead. There may be great things in store for us, or there may be people in our lives with problems we are perfectly suited to help with, but we'll never know. We're too busy living our lives.

Continue with—

A while back I was in a place where I was simply content to zone out—to watch TV. I didn't really care whether God had anything he wanted me to help with. Then I kept hearing about Compassion International, a child sponsorship program. I had read that every 14 seconds, a child is orphaned by AIDS—and it made me think about what would happen if my own children were orphaned. What would they do? Who would take care of them? How would they be cared for? God now had my attention, and I turned off the TV and turned my attention to him.

I looked into Compassion International, and I realized I could be a small part of the solution for another family. I could provide hope to one child. I might not change the world, but I'd help to change his or her world. So I did it. I started sponsoring José. They sent me his picture and updates, and I got to be a part of this little guy's life. And it all started when I let God get my attention.

Life is like that. Sometimes we get busy, and we get wrapped up in the world and ignore the Josés out there. We don't take the time to see what's happening outside of our little world, and we neglect the people in the world around us.

Funny thing. As I read the updates about José's life, I found that I wasn't wondering so much about what God's will was for my life. I realized I was doing it.

4. Digging Deeper

Tell your students—

It boils down to the universal question we all ask: what is God's will for my life?

So, what's God's will for your life? You might be thinking, "I just wish God would write on a piece of paper what he wants me to do and give it to me." Well actually, he did. He gave us about a thousand pieces of paper—or however many pages are in your Bible.

God talks a lot about his will in this Book. If you want to know what God desires for you, you have to start by getting into his Word. He tells us throughout the Bible what he wants for us. He points us in the direction of hope and purpose. He wants even more for us than we want for ourselves—but it can't happen without us plugging into his lead and attempting to follow. Doing God's will for your life begins with doing God's will for your day.

Tell your students—

James 1:27 says, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress."

Based on this verse, you can start doing God's will for your life by reaching out to a widow or widower. Ask your parents about a widow the family knows. If you don't know anyone, get in touch with your church offices to find out who could use your help. James specifically mentions "widows in their distress"—maybe someone needs help around the house, babysitting, help with groceries, or simply a listening ear.

It's easy for any of us to help an orphan through a child-sponsorship organization. We could even set that up as a group today. So maybe it's time we quit asking God to show us his will, and just start doing it.

This is religion that God accepts as pure and faultless. It's what he likes. If we are reaching out to widows and orphans, we're guaranteed to be doing something God wants us to do. It's just not that complicated.

OPTIONAL MIX-INS
You may want to point out a few expositional points about James:

-The book of James contains more instructions per verse than any other book in the Bible.

-In fact, in James 1:19-27 you'll see eight instructions in nine verses.

-James reflects a theme that appears all through Scripture, especially in Jesus' teachings: hear the Word and do the Word.

5. Wrapping It Up

Finish with—

I'm going to read a list of instructions from James 1 in rapid fire. As you hear these, there's a good chance you'll be able to picture how to follow through on one more than the others. Maybe a name will come to mind, or you'll think of a specific task you could do today or tomorrow. If that's the case, then it's likely that God has already been working on you about this. So take a few seconds to clear out your mind and open your heart to God's Spirit.

Pause for a few seconds, then continue with—

Okay, minds clear? Hearts open? Here's the list:

- **Be quick to listen, slow to speak (1:19).**
- **Be slow to become angry (1:19).**
- **Get rid of all moral filth and evil (1:21).**
- **Humbly accept the Word planted in you (1:21).**
- **Do what the Word says (1:22).**
- **Keep a tight rein on your tongue (1:26).**
- **Look after orphans and widows in distress (1:27).**
- **Keep from being polluted by the world (1:27).**

Did something pop into your mind—something you can do today or tomorrow to obey one of these instructions? Do it, and you've started living God's will for your life.