SESSION 3
LEAD IT: MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

As students experience Jude in Session 3, they will...

- explore the "certain men" who prompted Jude to write his letter.
- examine their own susceptibility to deceptive philosophies and thinking.
- be asked to take up Jude's challenge to contend for the faith.

MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers
- Colored pencils (enough for one color per student)
- 3"x5" blank cards, one for each student
- Option: collect and show images of movie villains; you'll need to prep this beforehand

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Jude Scripture sheets
- the student journal pages for Session 3
- their student journal pages from Session 1 if handy
- a Bible and pen (Students should bring their own Bibles or Bible apps.)

INTRO

After your group has gathered, spend some time in prayer. Give your students a minute or two to detach from the busyness of the day and focus their minds on God and His Word.

Review

To help your group keep track of key principles from Jude, ask a few review questions:

What were the three "anchor" descriptions of Jude's readers we saw last time?
They were called, loved, kept.

How would you describe Jude's relationship with his readers?
They were close; definitely friends.

How would you describe the faith of Jude's readers?
They were devout Christians, possibly with a Jewish heritage.

Bonus Question: We looked at the fact that Jude's readers were called, loved and kept. But who, specifically, loved and kept them?
They were loved by God and kept by Jesus (v. 1).

Open

Have your students recall, or glance at their Session 1 journal pages if they're handy, and then ask:

Who did Jude refer to most in his letter?
"Certain men."

What kind of guys were these men?
They were godless men who'd slipped in among Jude's readers.

Game: Who's the most evil of them all?

In this game the point is to help students think about those "certain men" in Jude's letter. Another way of putting that idea would be to say, "They were these guys who pretended to be like you but they weren't." Disney has done a great job of always showing villains who would somehow convince others they weren't really "bad." Sometimes they did this through magic, sometimes others just put themselves into a place of making others think they weren't "that bad." This can be true of some of the most iconic movie villains from fantasy and superhero movies.

We will be "pitting" a Disney villain against an iconic movie villain. We will be dividing into two teams and spending a few moments debating which villain would "win" if matched up against each other.

Game instructions:

- Pick out three judges (volunteer adult leaders would be best).
- Split your group into two teams.
- Write the pairings on the board or show images of the pairings prepared beforehand.
- Have the "judges" sit at the front of the room.
- Each team has 3 minutes to "plead" its case as to why their villain is the most villainess of the two.
- The judges pick a winner based on those with the best argument.
- The winning team gets to pick 3 new judges.
- Move to the next pairing and start a new debate.
- Do this for as many pairings as you would like to take the time for.

Feel free to use these match ups or any other popular movie villains:

- Jafar from *Aladdin* vs. Darth Vader from *Star Wars*
- Captain Hook from several Disney stories/films vs. Scar from *The Lion King*
- The Evil Queen From *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* vs. The Wicked Witch of the West from *The Wizard of Oz*
- Magneto from *X-Men* vs. Lord Voldemort from *Harry Potter*

DIGGING IN

Explain that the focus of this session is to learn who the "certain men" were and what they were up to. Ask your students to pick out a new symbol they could use every time they mark these men in Scripture.

Then ask them do the following:

> **Read Jude 4–19 using your Scripture sheets and mark with a colored pencil every mention of these men, including words like "these" and "they." Jude used many illustrations from history to paint a picture of these men. If you find these, mark these too.**

When most have finished, share that they could have found more than twenty facts about these men.

Since Jude spent sixteen out of twenty-five verses on these guys, we should figure out what God is trying to tell us about them!

STUDY TOOL: Make Lists

Explain that the best way to get a handle on a Bible passage that contains a lot of info on one subject is to list everything you learn about that subject.

Point out:

> **The act of listing the facts gives you a chance to use more of your five senses, which will help you remember what you've read.**

Sometimes Scripture even gives the facts in the form of a list (see Galatians 5:22–23 as a reference if you would like).

Ask your students to record this truth under "Study Tools" on their journal pages:

When there's a list, check it twice:

1. **Read it.**
2. **Record it.**

Suggest that the facts about the "certain men" could be organized into two lists— actions and descriptions. Ask your students to look at the verses and to circle three descriptions and three actions that most stand out to them. For your reference, the descriptions and actions of these men are listed below. After they've circled three actions and three descriptions, have them list these in the space provided on their journal pages.

Actions	Descriptions
–They secretly slipped in among believers (v. 4). *–They change the grace of God into a license for immorality (v. 4).* *–They deny Jesus (v. 4).* *–They pollute their own bodies (v. 8).* *–They reject authority (v. 8).* *–They slander celestial beings (v. 8).* *–They speak abusively against whatever they don't understand (v. 10).* *–They eat with believers without qualms (v. 12).* *–They follow their own evil desires (v. 16).* *–They boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage (v. 16).* *–They follow their own ungodly desires (v. 18).* *–They divide believers (v. 19).* *–They follow mere natural instincts (v. 19).*	*–They're godless (v. 4).* *–They're dreamers (v. 8).* *–What things they understand by instinct destroy them (v. 10).* *–Their condemnation was written about long ago (v. 4).* *–They're godless (v. 4).* *–They're dreamers (v. 8).* *–What things they understand by instinct destroy them (v. 10).* *–They've taken the way of Cain (v. 11).* *–They rushed for profit into Balaam's error (v. 11).* *–They've been destroyed in Korah's rebellion (v. 11).* *–They're blemishes at love feasts (v. 12).* *–They're shepherds who only feed themselves (v. 12).* *–They're clouds without rain; wild waves of the sea;* *–wandering stars (v. 12–13).* *–They're grumblers and faultfinders (v. 16).* *–They're scoffers (v. 18).* *–They don't have the Spirit (v. 19).*

Suggest that, rather than list all the actions and descriptions during your group time, you're going to use the info to play a game of "Mad Libs." Ask your group to supply the following from the things they have circled and write their responses on your whiteboard:

1. **two adjectives that describe these men in Jude**
2. **one noun that's used to describe these men**
3. **one action phrase, something these men do**

Then read the sentence that's created using these words.

These men in Jude are _____ (adj.), _____ (adj.), _____ (noun) *who* _____ (action phrase).

Create two or three Mad Lib sentences, using different words each time, and then discuss these questions:

What seems to be a common thread in these sentences?
These men are bad news.

It seems like the behavior of these men would be easy to notice! But what tips you off that Jude's readers were unaware?
They'd secretly slipped in among the believers (v. 4).

What does this tell you about these men?
They must blend in with believers somehow.

What was the major issue with these guys? What were the bottom-line problems with them?
They had a problem with authority.
They had a problem believing in truth and holding to it.

What specific dangers did Jude spell out in verses 4 and 19?
The certain men:
-change the grace of God into a license for immorality (v. 4)
-deny Jesus (v. 4)
-cause divisions among believers (v. 19)

Have your students write these points in the spaces on their journal pages. Note to your group that Jude used some crazy illustrations to make his point about these men!

TAKING IT INWARD

Share in your own words:

There are two ways to take Jude's warnings to heart. First, we should protect ourselves against the influence of people who are like the "certain men" in our own lives. Second, we need to guard against their influence in Christian groups like our youth ministry. Glancing at the actions and descriptions you listed under "Digging In" (or looking at your Scripture sheets), write down the answers to these questions:

1. **Which of the actions or descriptions of these men are weak spots in my life, spots where I could be open to the influence of people like the guys in Jude? Might you tend to be more worried about fitting in than with avoiding people like these "certain men"?**

2. **Which of the actions or descriptions of these men are weak spots where our group could be vulnerable to influences from these people?**

Jude told his readers—including you!—to contend for the faith. You can't ignore your weak spots! If the Holy Spirit is talking to you about ways you can be influenced by ungodly people, take a minute to pray. Think about some ways you could slam the door on this kind of influence. Write some specific ideas on your journal page.

Then ask:

What beliefs or teachings today are similar to these dangers in Jude?
Possible answers include:
-The belief that Jesus was a good teacher or social reformer, but that He wasn't God.
-The idea that Jesus was a historical figure who lived and died, but who has no authority in our lives today.
-Moral relativism; the idea that truth is whatever you want it to be.
-The idea that you can be saved but live however you want.
-The belief that you can accept parts of the Bible but ignore other parts, or that God's Word isn't to be taken literally at all.

What needs to change—in our personal lives or in our group—to close the door on this kind of influence?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

Wrap up by sharing these thoughts in your own words:

> **The danger of the "certain men" was obvious to Jude, but it wasn't to his readers! That's why his letter was written with such a sense of urgency. The same dangers exist today and have a way of slipping in unnoticed. "Contending for the faith" means being alert and aggressive in guarding against places where we are weak.**
>
> **We need to be honest with those places in our lives where we want to please others. This can make us susceptible to people who are not a great influence in our lives.**

Distribute index cards, one for each student. Ask them to be honest with themselves about ways they can be like Jude's original audience.

To help your group remember these dangers ask your students to think up a creative description that can jog their memories about the men Jude described. (We've listed a couple to get you started.) Have them write these on their note cards.

> *The men of Jude were rude, crude and lewd.*
> *The men of Jude were a horror like Gomorrah.*

After a few minutes, ask any volunteers to share their phrases and vote on the funniest or best. Then collect the cards and use them to create a reminder of this session. Convert them into an electronic image (a single collage or each card as a separate image) and do something with them like:

- Post them on your group's Facebook page
- Tweet them
- Text them to your students throughout the week

Before closing in prayer, have your students write two Jude Takeaways on their journal page:

1. **A thought or phrase that will warn them of the influence of the "certain men." (This could be the phrase the group voted best.)**
2. **Something they can do to prevent this kind of influence in their lives.**