SESSION 5
LEAD IT: MIDDLE SCHOOL

GOALS

As students experience this session in Jude, they will...

- explore Jude's instructions concerning our behavior toward those who keep God at a distance.
- identify people in their lives who need the mercy Jude describes.
- be challenged to imitate God's heart toward those who don't walk with Him.

MATERIALS: Group

- Whiteboard and markers
- A computer or ability to show a video from YouTube
- Video Pre-Watch: Before your session you'll want to watch the video in "Digging In" called "Evangelism Linebacker" at http://tinyurl.com/evangelismlinebacker (Note: This is a humorous look at what will "happen" to followers of Christ hesitant to share their faith.)

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Jude Scripture sheets
- the student journal pages for Session 5
- 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")

INTRO

Prayer

Spend a few minutes praying that your students will glimpse the compassion and mercy of Jesus in this session.

Review

To help your group keep track of the major themes in Jude, ask a few review questions:

What was Jude's purpose in writing his letter?
-To urge his readers to contend for the faith.

Who were the "certain men" Jude talked about? What were they like?
-They were ungodly men who rejected authority and rebelled against truth.

What were Jude's three instructions that relate to the inner spiritual life?
-Build yourselves up in your most holy faith.
-Pray in the Holy Spirit.
-Keep yourselves in God's love.

Bonus Question: What three dangers could Jude's readers (including us!) avoid by following these instructions?
-Changing God's grace into a license for immorality (v. 4)
-Denying Jesus as Lord (v. 4)
-Causing division (v. 19)

DIGGING IN

Remind your group that in the last session, they looked at Jude's instructions—particularly those that dealt with our hearts and inner spiritual life. Now ask them to look back at the instructions they marked on their Jude Scripture sheet (in Session 4) and, particularly in verses 22-25.

What common theme do you see in the other instructions Jude gave?
After some discussion, help your students conclude that these instructions deal with how believers should act toward nonbelievers or those who struggle with the Christian faith. You might say that these instructions deal with the outer spiritual life.

Write the instructions directed toward the "outer" spiritual life on the board, leaving space to write beneath each entry. Invite students to write these in the space provided on their journal pages.

The Outer Spiritual Life

-Be merciful to those who doubt. (v. 22)
-Snatch others from the fire and save them. (v. 23)
-To others, show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (v. 23)

Share in your own words:

In a moment we're going to dig into Jude's instructions for how those of us who are believers are supposed to act towards those who are non-believers. In other words this is a way we talk about "sharing our faith." To get us thinking about this, we're are going to watch a video that highlights the idea of telling people about Jesus.

Show the video: http://tinyurl.com/evangelismlinebacker "Evangelism Linebacker" by former NFL football player Derwin Gray.

After you watch the video (which is intended to be lighthearted) share that, while you know an ex-pro football player is not going to track them down and tackle them if they're not sharing their faith, the video does point out how it can be intimidating to share our faith. We often don't always know how to respond to non-believers. In fact, how do we even know when someone doesn't believe in Christ? Is it someone who goes to a different kind of church?

Revisit the instructions students observed in Jude before they watched the video.

Now work through these instructions as a group, asking your students what types of people are being described with each category. Possible questions:

What kind of people would "those who doubt" be?

What kind of people would we need to "snatch from the fire"?

What people would we need to "show mercy, mixed with fear"?

Record their ideas beneath the instructions on the board. (You may need to prompt them with a few ideas of your own.) Your board will look something like this:

Be merciful to those who doubt. (v. 22)
-People who have lots of questions about Christianity.
-People who want all their questions answered before they commit.

(Note: You may have students in your group who are actually struggling with some deep doubts of their own when it comes to Christ; they might even be acting like they "get it." Point out there is a reason why this passage talks about being merciful to those who doubt. It is not a sin to have questions. Sometimes this presses us to move closer to Christ. The sin comes when we use our questions as an excuse to not get to know Jesus better. Take time to answer questions about who the "doubters" are and what God thinks of them.)

Snatch others from the fire and save them. (v. 23)
-People who've walked away from the faith completely.
-Those who've rejected God.

To others, show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. (v. 23)
-People like the "certain men" in Jude, who've walked away from the faith and want to take others with them.

CROSS CHECKING

In accommodating the attention span of middle schoolers, this guide does not include the Cross Checking exercise you did in your Prep It, exploring the Zechariah vision and the words of Jesus. If, however, you feel your students are up for the exercise, you can lead it out of your Prep It book. For your ready-reference, the pertinent verse references are below:

Zechariah's vision: Zechariah 3:1-7
Jesus' words: Matthew 5:7; Matthew 9:13; Luke 6:35-36

TAKING IT INWARD

Help your students internalize these instructions from Jude with this exercise.

Ask:

What are some ways we don't show mercy to those who doubt or who walk away from Jesus?
-We try to win discussions or arguments.
-Avoid them.
-Bug them about it.
-Boycott them.

Point out the chart on their journal pages entitled "Mercy Action Plan." Explain that the left column describes the stages of the faith journey Jude mentioned in his letter. Ask them to think about people in their lives who might be at each stage. They should write these (or their initials) in the right column.

(If you need to take some extra time to talk about how we interact with those who are in a different stage of faith than we are. It might be necessary to be honest about where we are in our own faith journey.)

Mercy Action Plan:

Stage of Faith	Names
Be merciful to those who doubt. *These could be people who have questions about faith in God. They may be confused and wanting all their questions answered before committing to Christ.*	
Snatch others from the fire and save them. *These could be people who've made a decision to reject the faith completely.*	
To others, show mercy, mixed with fear, hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. *These could be people like the "certain men" in Jude, who've walked away from the faith and are trying to take others with them.*	

After a few minutes, discuss ways you could show mercy to those who doubt. Encourage your students to write down any ideas that could help them show mercy to the people they've listed. Take a few moments to let them express any concerns about the people they noted.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

For their Jude Takeaway, have your students record a thought that will challenge them to imitate the behavior God desires toward those who doubt. Close with some silent prayer for the people who've come to mind during the session.