

Serving God Wholeheartedly

Theme Lesson

PREPARATION

Objective

Students will understand that, in the end, God will accomplish his purpose – all peoples will worship him.

Outcomes

1. Students will use the models of Jesus and Heroes of History to see the eternal value of a life of service.
2. Students will consider a personal commitment to develop godly character in all areas of their lives.

Directions

1. Review the Theme Lesson, scripture references, and response. Consider how this lesson will apply to your unique group of students.
2. Review the “Key Word Wheel,” and the “Key Word Cards” with definitions and verses. Consider which words relate to this lesson. Suggested: “Purpose,” “People,” and “Proclamation.”
3. Locate the song “The Change” by Steven Curtis Chapman (*Speechless*) and a CD player.

**PREPARATION: 20 min.****TEACHING: 30 min.**

Materials

- “Key Word Wheel” poster (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- small prizes (optional)
- song “The Change” by Steven Curtis Chapman from *Speechless* CD, recommended
- CD player
- Bible for each student

TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: FOLLOW THE LEADER

Directions

1. Warmly welcome students to your time of discovering God's purpose together.
2. Invite students to play a game with you. Choose one student to be the leader. He or she may do anything (within classroom safety limits), but must stay within an area near the front of the teaching area. The leader should try to make himself or herself difficult to follow.
3. Divide the rest of the students into groups of 4-5. Tell students they must exactly copy this leader's movements. Invite one group to come to the front for the first round.
4. Designate someone to watch and judge each round. Their decision is final.
5. Have the leader begin. As soon as a student "messes up," he or she must sit down. The last student still "following the leader" wins a small prize (optional).
6. Repeat for each group of 4-5 students. Give several students turns to be the leaders.
7. After all groups of students have had a turn, discuss the activity. Ask, *"What makes it difficult to copy the leader exactly?"* Allow responses. *"What is the secret?"* Allow responses. Summarize by saying, *"It's important to keep your eyes on the leader at all times, being ready to do anything."*
8. Explain, *"Jesus knew this secret."* Read John 5:19. *"I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; but he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."*
9. Then add, *"This is a secret for our Christian lives as well. Keeping our eyes on our leader, Jesus, enables us to always be ready to do anything to serve him and his wonderful purpose – to help all people, everywhere, know him."*

THEME LESSON: GOD IS WORTH SERVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY

Directions

1. Read Hebrews 12:1-2 aloud together.
2. Say, *"Using Heroes of History, we have surrounded ourselves with stories of many witnesses, real people who have served God wholeheartedly. They have run the race God marked out for them, never giving up. They have followed Jesus' example. How was Jesus' life a good example of perseverance? What was the end goal of his life?"* Allow responses.
3. Ask, *"According to verse two, what enabled the witnesses to persevere, even when it was difficult?"* Allow responses. (fixed eyes on Jesus) *"They kept their focus on Jesus, always. They didn't let themselves get distracted. They followed Jesus and obeyed him, and not other people."*
4. Ask, *"Who are some of the Heroes of History we have learned about?"*

Materials

- small prizes
- Bible marked at John 5

Materials

- Bibles

Allow responses. For people mentioned, ask, *“How did they show their spiritual eyes were focused on Jesus? In what way were they ready to do anything to help God’s name be known and worshiped in the earth? In what way did their lives honor God?”* Listen for student responses.

5. Explain that God is still at work around our world. *“In the end, God will accomplish his purpose of making himself known and worshiped by all peoples.”*
6. Ask, *“Do you know anyone right now who is focused on Jesus, ready to do anything he asks? Who? How do you know this is his or her attitude?”*
Allow brief responses.

IN CLOSING: COMMITMENT

Directions

1. Invite students to consider their own personal lives. *“What will you do with all the knowledge you have received about God’s purpose?”*
2. Challenge students to a time of personal, quiet reflection as you play “The Change.”
3. Close in prayer. Invite students to talk with you individually after class if they have questions or comments about growing a deeper commitment to knowing God and following him.

Materials

- “The Change” by Steven Curtis Chapman from *Speechless* CD
- CD player



HEROES OF HISTORY: COUNT ZINZENDORF

Before the Activity Directions

1. If you are reading the monologue, place props on a table near your teaching area for easy access.
2. Optional: Make an overhead transparency of “The First Fruits” painting (p. 9). Set up the overhead projector.
3. Optional: Invite someone in your church or group who is good at drama to dress up as Zinzendorf and read the monologue to the students. Costume suggestions: long sleeved button down white shirt, jacket with buttons, solid-colored knickers, over-the-calf socks, and loafers. A Pilgrim costume would work as well. The pants need to have pockets.
4. If you are using an actor, give him props to put in his pockets.

Directions

1. Set the stage for the monologue. Say, “*Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born in 1700 in Germany. He influenced how missionaries were sent out and helped send out more than seventy missionaries in just ten years. His goal was to see the unreached, people who had no one to tell them about Jesus, given the chance to hear about Christ and his love for them. Count Zinzendorf shaped the thinking of many famous Christians who followed him, including William Carey.*”
2. Introduce vocabulary words:
Commit: to pledge or promise yourself or some act to someone else
Count: a nobleman
Moravian: someone from the country of Moravia, part of present-day Czech Republic
Vigil: a time of observing or keeping watch
3. Read the monologue or have someone dramatize it for the students. Ask them to think about how Zinzendorf’s ministry affected the way missionaries were sent into the world and to whom they were sent to tell about Jesus.
4. Discuss the questions together or in small groups.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- small seed
- small photo frame or necklace with locket
- change purse or money
- copy of “Count Zinzendorf” illustration (p. 5)
- copy of “Count Zinzendorf Story” (pp. 6-7)
- copy of “Count Zinzendorf Discussion Questions” (p. 8)
- copy of “The First Fruits” painting photo (p. 9)
- overhead transparency sheet (optional)
- overhead projector (optional)
- table

Count Zinzendorf



Zinzendorf Monologue

(Enter and face the group as if strongly appealing to your comrades.)

Friends, comrades, let us commit to one another. Let us not get discouraged. We need to encourage each other to stand strong. This will not be the last time we are made fun of and laughed at. This will not be the last time we must run from temptation and flee youthful pleasures. Let us have faith together that the Lord will uphold us and strengthen us.

(Change voice to narrating tone.)

When I was a teenager, five friends and I pledged loyalty to Jesus, committing to love each other and grow together as believers in Christ. We called ourselves the Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed because God can use our small faith to do the impossible. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20). With God in charge, nothing is impossible.

(Address the audience.)

How about you? Have you ever been teased and made fun of for believing in Jesus and living the way God wants you to, doing what the Bible says? Don’t give up. We must try to obey no matter what comes our way. See this tiny mustard seed. (Show the seed from your pocket.) Someday it will grow into a big shrub.

Your faith can start small and grow. You can trust God more and more each day and get stronger and stronger as you stand for him. Do you have some Christian friends that you can commit to love and grow with in faith?

(Show the family picture.)

My father died when I was a baby. When my mother remarried, I went to live with my aunt and grandmother in huge a castle. Grandmother was a remarkable woman who loved God with all her heart and read the Bible to me every day. She made sure she passed her faith on to me. I grew not only in the knowledge of God but grew close to Jesus. Jesus was

like a brother or best friend to me. We had a very personal relationship and spent many hours together talking and praying. Sometimes I wrote letters to Jesus and tossed them out of the window in the castle tower. The people and things on Jesus’ heart became the people and things on my own heart.

When I was ten, my grandmother sent me to a Lutheran school. The teachers and teachings at the school inspired my heart even more to follow after Jesus. Then I went to law school because my family expected me to become a lawyer and be Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. I wanted to become a minister, but my family was one of the most noble and richest in Germany and there was a lot of pressure to do what they wanted me to do. My grandmother kept reminding me that my place was in service to my country. I struggled with my inheritance and my destiny. Was this what God wanted for me?

(Address the audience.)

That is a good question for you to ask in your own heart. What special way did God create you? What gifts or talents did he give you and what does he want you do to with them?

After my graduation, before taking my position as a lawyer for the king, I took a trip – a “grand tour” of Europe. While visiting an art museum, I saw a painting called, “Behold the Man.” It portrayed Jesus wearing a crown of thorns. The inscription below read, “I have done this for you; what have you done for me?” As I gazed at the painting of my Savior, it was as if Jesus was looking at me and asking me that question. “What have you done for me?” Jesus had sacrificed his life for me so I could live with him in eternity. At that moment, my heart was changed forever. (Put your hand over your heart.) I had loved Jesus for a long time, but I had never really done anything for him. (Put both of your hands out in front of you.) I determined to serve God with my whole life.

A few years later, I bought my grandmother’s large estate, a big piece of land with a little village on it. At the same time a group of believers from Moravia sought shelter on my land. I granted them permission

COUNT ZINZENDORF STORY, CONTINUED

to build a new community on it and they did. They called it Herrnhut, which means “under the Lord’s watch.” More and more Moravians moved to Herrnhut as they heard it was a safe place to escape the persecution many Moravian Christians were facing. Soon there were more than 300 people living on my land! We were building our own Christian town.

As with any group of people, disputes arose among them. Because of my background as a lawyer, I was able to help them work things out and come to an agreement. It was amazing how God used my educational training for his glory and purpose. My heart was challenged by the Moravian believers’ difficulties, but out of these troubles God brought a revival to all our hearts.

When I was 27, a group of us living at Herrnhut committed to pray around the clock for the salvation of all men. This prayer vigil lasted more than 100 years! God knit our hearts together and brought much fruit from our prayers. We were the first church that believed sending out missionaries was the duty of the whole church. So we did.

Because of my rank as a count, I was invited to a coronation, a crowning ceremony of a king in Denmark. At first I didn’t want to go, but my fellow believers thought I should. There, I met Anthony Ulrich, a black man who had been a slave in the West Indies. After hearing about Jesus in Europe, he had accepted Christ as his Savior. Anthony begged me to send missionaries to his people to tell them about Jesus.

As I told Anthony’s story to the people in Herrnhut, they were deeply moved. After a year of praying and planning, we all decided to send two men of our own community as missionaries to Anthony’s people, the black slaves in the West Indies. In the next ten years,

we Moravians sent out more than seventy missionaries to many parts of the world where people had never heard about Christ!

(Pull coins out of your pocket.)

I spent my fortune to send missionaries around the world. This brought me much joy because I was investing in something of eternal value. My wife and I lived in a simple house with this saying inscribed above the door:

“As guests we only here remain;
And hence this house is slight and plain.
We have a better house above,
And there we fix our warmest love.”

As a group, our goal and desire was to see the lost reached for Christ. Many people in the community gave all they had, even their lives, for the sake of reaching the ends of earth with the gospel. In the first thirty years, the Moravian church sent out more than 200 missionaries. We concentrated on areas and cultures with no Christian witness and called the people who accepted Jesus in these cultures “the first fruits.”

(Show the “First Fruits Painting” photo.)

This painting called “The First Fruits” shows people from different nations worshiping God in heaven, just like God promises in Revelation. These are real people, the first believers in Jesus from the cultures where Moravian missionaries were sent.

(Address the audience.)

God can do much with a heart fully devoted to him. Do you know the heart of God – what he loves and desires? Do you know why he created you? He wants to have a personal relationship with you and give you a mission and a purpose right where you are.

Count Zinzendorf Discussion Questions

ZINZENDORF MONOLOGUE

Let's Talk About It

1. What gifts did God give to Zinzendorf to reach the unreached with the gospel? Even though Zinzendorf had these gifts, what steps did he need to take before God could use these gifts?

God gave Zinzendorf intelligence, education, status, money, and land. Zinzendorf had to give his gifts back to God and give his heart to God so God could reach the unreached through Zinzendorf.

2. What kind of prayer lives did the Moravians have? How did prayer make a difference in their lives? How does it make a difference now?

Answers will vary. The Moravians started a round-the-clock prayer vigil that lasted for 100 years. Prayer helped them to get along and to be able to hear God when he wanted to send people from the community out into the world as missionaries.

3. How did God show his love to the people of the West Indies?

He allowed Zinzendorf to meet Anthony Ulrich so that the Moravians would know to send missionaries to the West Indies.

4. Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians were involved in pioneer missions before William Carey and Hudson Taylor. How does the “The First Fruits” painting show that the Moravians had a clear understanding of God’s purpose and acted on it?

They understood that some people from every people group will worship God in heaven. They went to cultures without a gospel witness. They understood that the first believer in a culture was the beginning of a movement for Christ among that people.

The First Fruits

