

Alley SG - October 27-28, 2018

Bible Story: (Don't Look Back) Israelites Long for Egypt • *Exodus 16:2-21; 17:1-7*

Bottom Line: Don't miss out on what you have now.

Key Question: What is good in your life right now?

Memory Verse: "Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15 NIV)

Opening Activity: Lesson Extension

What You Need: Note Cards (1 per student), Pens

What You Do:

- **Pass Out** Note Cards and Pens to each student.
 - **Once ready**, a 3-minute Countdown will be played with Instrumental Music.
- **Allow** students 3-minutes to answer the Key Question on Screen.
- **Let** students share what they wrote, after the countdown, if they are comfortable in doing so.
- **Continue** Small Group, as normal, with the below activities.

1. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Masking tape (1 roll per group), "Out of Egypt" Activity Page (1 set of cards per group), markers

What You Do:

- **Help** students tape their thumb to the palm of their hand, on their writing hand. Use a big piece of tape to go around a few times– leaving their fingers free.
- **Distribute** all of the "Out of Egypt" cards. It's okay if some students have more than one card.
- **Give** a marker and sheet of paper to each student.
- **Instruct** the group to take a couple of minutes to draw a simple picture that goes along with the caption written on their cards.
- When they're finished, **ask** the students if they were annoyed about drawing with their thumbs tied down. Would they complain if they could never go back to using their thumbs again?
- **Challenge** the group to arrange the cards based on what they remember of the order of events in Exodus 16:2-21; 17:1-7.
- **Remind** students that God had given the Israelites what they needed when they needed it. Sadly, they were so focused on what they left behind in Egypt that they missed out on the amazing things God was providing for them along the way.
- **Keep their thumbs taped down** as you ask everyone to look up and read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in their Bibles or on their phones.
- **Lead** a discussion:
 - While it's true that the Israelites didn't have the tasty Egyptian food they liked, what were some HUGE things they DID have?
 - If you could have given the Israelites some advice, what would you have told them?
 - God asks us to always give thanks. Why is that? What if you don't feel like giving thanks? Can you still give thanks without feeling grateful?
 - What does being grateful in the good and the bad and the ugly show others about God?
 - What do you often hear kids complain about?
- **Encourage** students to look for something to be grateful for the next time they're not feeling content over something they miss that they used to have OR because they can't wait for something that they're going to get in the future.
 - Taking a moment to think about what they have right now and giving thanks is a great step toward contentment.

- **Remove** the tape from their hands—or **suggest** they leave it on for some part of the day and when asked why they're not complaining about having no thumbs, encourage them to share what they learned this month about contentment.

3. Discussion Questions

Ask:

- Why is contentment such a big deal? What's wrong with complaining when things in your life really do stink?
- Whether you feel content where your life is right now or you wish things were different, you can make the decision to be thankful.
 - Name three things you can be grateful for every day, no matter how old you are or what you have or don't have.
- What does it mean to "adjust your attitude" when you feel like complaining?
- We usually base how we're feeling on how great things are going or how much we have. Why is that not the best way to determine how we're going to feel?
- What's your best definition of contentment?

4. Verses to Take with You

What You Need: Sticky Notes (5-10 per student and leader), "Heads Up" Verse Cards (1 set per bin), pens, Bibles (campus supplies)

What You Do:

- **Discuss** scenarios in which kids and adults tend to complain like the Israelites.
- **Help** them come up with at least five "gripes" by providing prompts of the common areas of life we wish could be the way they were in the past or can't wait for things to be different in the future.
 - School (*homework, sports, teachers, coaches, unfairness*)
 - Work (*parent's job change, financial struggles, parents always working*)
 - Friends (*better friends at a previous school, want to be more popular, wish they had stuff other kids have*)
 - Home (*parents, siblings, where they live*)
- As you come up with the gripes, have everyone in the group (including the leader) **write a summary** of the 5 complaints they can relate to on separate sticky notes – and place their sticky notes on their shirt.
- **Remind** the students that complaints represent thoughts and bad attitudes that "stick" to us and make us think and react in negative ways sometimes.
- **Scatter** the verse cards in a pile in the middle of the group and have each student pick one.
- **Have them look up the verse** in their bible and take turns reading them aloud.
- **Ask** them if one or more of the verses stood out to them as a way they could adjust their thinking when they feel like complaining.
- Have students and leader **write the verse** on another sticky note, and... **stick it on their forehead.**
- **Tell them** these verses are like a "Heads Up" reminder that if we keep God's Word in front of us, in our thoughts, it can help us react to the things in our life the way He wants us to.
- If you have time to continue, you can have the students pull off their sticky notes, discuss each scenario, and how they can better adjust their reaction to the things that cannot always change.

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: Timer (volunteer in your group, or smartphone timer)

What You Do:

- **Take** turns seeing how many times each person can say “thank you” in five seconds.
- **Remind** your group that the lack of gratitude on the part of the Israelites was a clear signal that something wasn’t right in their attitude.
- **Ask** them to rate their levels of gratitude on a scale of one to 10. They don’t have to share their answers unless they want to.
 - One = a grumbling Israelite
 - Ten = Paul (from Week One), who was content no matter what
- **Challenge** them to continue to learn contentment and grow their gratitude by thanking God for ten things every day this week.
 - When they feel like complaining, the best fix is to start thanking God for all that He is and all that He does for them.
- **Encourage** them to begin right now by silently giving thanks for 10 things.

What You Say:

“Dear God, this week, when something starts to steal our contentment, help us adjust our attitudes and be grateful instead. Help us remember that You are always in control. Please forgive us for complaining and comparing and forgetting to give You thanks. Help us to trust and even thank You when life is frustrating or we just don’t understand why stuff happens the way it does. We’ve learned so much this month about contentment. Now, help us live it out. In Your name we pray, Amen.”

HAND OUT GOD TIME SHEETS TO EACH STUDENT, REMINDING THEM THAT IF THEY BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE \$3 IN ALLEY CASH!