

THE JESUS EXPEDITION™



Youth Guide for VeBS® 2003

Extreme Expedition

***“The LORD is my strength and my song, and is become my
salvation.”***

— Psalm 118:14

King James Version

**A Youth Guide for use with
*The Jesus Expedition*TM VeBS[®]**

Written by Frieda Nossaman

The Jesus Expedition™: Exploring the Miracles of Jesus

Very exciting Bible School® Curriculum

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Extreme Expedition Youth Guide

For use with *The Jesus Expedition™* VeBS®

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INTRODUCTION

Living in Extremes . . . the Life of a Teen

Anyone who has been around teenagers knows that these years are full of extremes. Laughter and playful hugs one minute, flaring tempers and sobs the next. Joyful anticipation that changes to woeful anxiety upon learning that a best friend suddenly can't make the party. Why? Many reasons . . . from hormones to a legitimate need for acceptance. The extreme aspect of teenage life isn't something that will go away, but it can be correctly navigated.

All young people are searching and need guidance to get through each day. Not all young people, however, are navigating with Jesus. Their expedition is misguided because their compass is pointing in the wrong direction. *Extreme Expedition* wants to help your students redirect their lives with Jesus as their guide. At the same time, your students will discover Jesus and see ways that He can influence their lives, thoughts, decisions, and steps as they go on an *Extreme Expedition* with Him. Through this program students will take to heart the theme verse, "The LORD is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation" (*Psalms 118:14*), as they learn to trust and walk with Jesus.

Each day you will lead your students in games, discussions, studies, and finally, an applicable challenge. All of these elements have been designed around the Message for each session—the challenge to live and walk with Jesus. *Extreme Expedition* uses the Active InReachOut system to assist you in an enjoyable and profitable teaching and learning experience.

What Is Active InReachOut?

Active InReachOut is a fun, interactive system based on high-energy games and small group discussion. It challenges students to

Reach In and deepen their own commitment to Jesus through personal Bible study and reflection. It is also a way to Reach Out and get them involved in leading their friends to Christ. With the Active InReachOut system, your students will belong and take ownership of their youth ministry as well as take the lead in inviting their friends into a relationship with Christ.

Why It Works

It's Student-Led Evangelism

The best thing about the Active InReachOut system is that it mobilizes your greatest resource—your students. And student-led evangelism—one kid at a time—is the key to a successful program. *Extreme Expedition* lets your students take the lead in reaching out to their friends. The way lessons are set up, your students may be the ones who end up telling their friends about Jesus, based on what you shared. This sense of shared responsibility can carry over to other ministries in your church where your students can make a difference.

It's Small Group Relationships

Church can often mean boredom for your students. But with the Active InReachOut system, your students will play, compete, and discuss in ways other programs never touch. By dividing your students into Extreme Teams (*X-Teams—see next page for more information*) for both the games and session times, your X-Teams will build relationships that are open, accepting, and committed.

It's Faith-Building

Face it, not every student in your ministry was born and raised in church. But you also have several students who seem to know a lot about being a Christian. So what can you do? You can use the Active InReachOut system to engage students of all faith levels. For exam-

ple, an X-Team of mostly visitors might focus its discussion time on what it means to accept Jesus Christ as Savior and how to have a personal relationship with Him. But an X-Team of core church attendees might focus its discussion time on an Extra Study Option where each team member takes “the next step” in his or her walk with Christ.

A note about the Extra Study Options: Photocopy these resources and give them to your students who are ready to examine some of the deeper issues brought up in the sessions. You can discuss them as a group or the students can use them for personal Bible study at home.

Day One of *Extreme Expedition* is specifically geared around discussion of knowing Jesus as Savior. Take special advantage of this awesome opportunity to invite your students to accept Jesus Christ to be their Lord and Savior right from the start.

How the Sessions Work

There are four steps in each session:

1) Opener. This is the first activity after the Crazy Comp tournament. It’s designed to introduce the message topic and ease the transition from the high-energy games. This first activity will get your students thinking about how they can discover Jesus, their true guide through life. A different topic will be covered in each session, but all sessions will tie into our key verse, Psalm 118:14.

2) Table Talk. Using reproducible Table Talk resources, your students will start discussing in their X-Teams about how they can take the journey of life with Jesus as their guide.

3) Message. A creative, engaging way to convey the truth of God’s Word in ways students will understand. From drama to discussion to interactive storytelling, your students will get the Bible. Really get it.

4) Challenge. The final step of the session asks students to let the truth they have

learned change their hearts and help them live with Jesus as their guide. More than just a list of do’s and don’ts, the Challenge step gives students the opportunity to change from the inside out. It helps them put their faith into courageous action.

What Is an X-Team?

Ideally, each Extreme Team (*X-Team*) is made of four to six core students and the visitors these students invite. If possible, team members should already be friends or at least know each other. Two things make X-Teams work:

- **The Leader:** The ideal X-Team leader is an adult who has the respect of the students in his or her group, a teachable and committed heart before God, and an ability to help students work through important spiritual decisions. In some cases, spiritually mature students may also make good leaders.

- **Team Identity:** Teams need names, colors, and a place to sit together during the lesson—cafe-style circle tables work best. Encourage X-Team leaders to find creative ways to build team identity. For example, have them wear team colors, make a banner, create a team cheer, decorate team tables uniquely each day, and so on. Award bonus points for every display of team spirit. Visitors will feel “at home” much more quickly when they connect with a team and an identity.

How to Run the “Crazy Comp” Tournament

You know that games are one of the most effective ways to introduce teens to your group and set the stage for deeper X-Team relationships. All of the games are written so a number of X-Teams can compete at once. We recommend that you keep track of cumulative team scores and at the end of each round of the Crazy Comp tournament, total the team points and announce team standings. At the end of the week, award an impressive prize package (*for example, amusement park coupons or gift certificates*)

to the team with the most points. Be prepared with consolation prizes for the other teams. But remember, handing out points doesn't cost you a thing, so be generous! If you award more points, you will have a more exciting contest.

Publicity Flyers

Effective publicity is an important part of any successful outreach program. Consider using the flyers below as bulletin inserts, or for your students to hand out to their friends. Fill in the bottom section with your church name, date, and phone number. Be creative and have fun!

The world is full of mixed messages. What kind of messages are you getting?

The truth is sometimes hard to find. Well, we have some answers for you and they are answers you can trust! *Extreme Expedition* is a program that will help you find your way in today's world of jumbled communications. We'll help you answer questions about what it means to have Jesus in your life and show you what real Christian living looks like. There will be opportunities to share your thoughts and feelings on all of the craziness that exists in the world, countered with what Jesus has to say about how we should live.

It won't be all talk, that's for sure. After all, it's called extreme for a reason! Wild games, teamwork, and new friends are all a part of this unforgettable package.

C'mon, what are you waiting for?

Where: _____

When: _____

For More Information, Call: _____

Life is a trip, literally. A journey where you can end up in a mess of trouble, or come out on top. The truth is, no one can succeed alone. We're inviting you to join a group of young people who have found the true meaning of success.

Extreme Expedition is a program designed with you in mind. In this program we'll tackle tough issues, ask questions, and dig into truth. We'll see what Jesus has to say about why we should live for Him. **Friends, games, and fun are a huge part of this program, but most importantly, you'll find a place where you can get answers to the tough questions of life.**

For More Information, Call: _____

Where: _____

When: _____

DAY ONE

All games have one thing in common; they will get you moving!

Splash Toss

Supplies:

- Large, plastic food storage bags with tops that can be sealed (*not zipped*) (*one bag per X-Team*); water to fill the bags

Have each X-Team hold hands and form a large circle. (*After circle is formed, teams no longer need to hold hands.*) Have the leaders of each X-Team hand one member of their team a plastic bag that has been filled with water and sealed. Instruct team members to toss the bag to someone else in their team circle. The object of the game is for each member of the team to catch the bag only one time, yet have the bag tossed to every member on the team. Teams lose if the same person catches the bag more than once, the bag drops and breaks, or the water spills out. (*If the bag drops but water stays intact, teams can continue to play.*)

Marshmallow Juggle

Supplies:

- Large marshmallows (*three per X-Team*)

Have each X-Team line up (*one person behind each other*). This relay race is conducted like any other relay except the person running is also juggling three marshmallows! The runner must start with one marshmallow in his or her right hand and two marshmallows in his or her left hand. As the runner runs, he or she must toss the marshmallow in his or her right hand up into the air. The runner must then catch it with his or her left hand as one marshmallow from the left hand is tossed to the right hand. If a marshmallow drops the runner must pick it up, return to the beginning of the line, and start again.

Dominos

Supplies:

- None needed

Have X-Teams line up (*one person in front of the other*). Then have each student create space between him or herself and the next student. (*There should be 5-6 feet between each student in line.*) After students have made space between themselves and the person in front and behind them, have them stay put. When a leader says, "go," the person at the end of the line should fall face down and catch himself with his outstretched hands (*as if doing a push-up*). When he is on the ground he should say, "down," signaling to the person in front of him that it is her turn to fall. This race will create a domino effect among the various teams. The team where all members "domino" first, wins.

Hide the Pickle

Supplies:

- One large pickle (*per X-Team*)

Have each X-Team form a large circle. Choose one member to stand in the middle of each circle with eyes closed as leaders hand one large pickle to each team. Instruct all students in the circle to place their hands behind their backs so they can secretly pass the pickle around. Once the pickle is circulating allow the person in the middle to open his or her eyes. After a minute or two of "pickle passing" allow the person in the middle three guesses as to who is holding the pickle. If he or she guesses correctly, award points to the team. If he or she guesses incorrectly, deduct points. Continue to play with different people in the center of the circle.

GET MOVING

SESSION ONE

OPENER

The Ugly Stuff

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Slimy substance (*sold in cans in gag stores*) or make your own by passing around finger jello, canned peaches, pears, or peeled grapes
- Paper towels or wet wipes for students to clean their hands off
- Poster boards and markers (*one per X-Team*)
- Whiteboard and markers or chalkboard and chalk (*X-Team leaders may want to write the three questions below prior to beginning the Opener*)

After completing one or more of the Crazy Comp games, have the students come together, sit with their X-Teams, and begin the group time. To start, (*without explanation*) pass the slimy substance around, have students feel it, then have them hand it to the person next to them. Allow the substance (*or substances depending on the size of your X-Teams*) to get all the way around the groups. When it has made its way around, pass around paper towels or wet wipes so students can clean their hands.

While students are passing the slimy substance around, say something like, ***We're so glad you came to Extreme Expedition. In this program we are going to deal with real issues. We'll***

tackle tough topics in things we discuss, the activities we participate in, and even in the games we play. We'll also study about Jesus who lived on earth 2000 years ago but has changed the world as we know it today.

In this session we're going to take a good hard look at ourselves. All of us carry around some ugly stuff, even if we aren't aware of it. Past hurts and secret sins can keep us from living for Jesus. Dealing with this "ugly stuff" is the first step toward making things right and really living. But before we can deal with "it," we have to know what "it" is.

The slimy substance we are passing around is pretty hard to miss. When it comes your way you probably will think, "Why on earth do I have to pass this around?" Gross! Although we don't have visible "slime" oozing out of us, many of us carry around ugly, sinful stuff that looks and feels just about as bad.

Have one person from each X-Team come forward and grab a poster board and markers for their team. Write the following questions on a whiteboard or chalkboard and have the teams brainstorm their answers first, then write them down on their team's poster board. (*Note: Not everyone will agree on the answers but try to get groups to come to some kind of a compromise so that each group only produces one answer for each question.*)

Q 1. What do you think is the worst thing a person can do? Why do you think this

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Pick-me-up	Giving my life to Jesus

SESSION ONE

wrong is so much worse than other wrongs? Explain.

Q 2. What are the top five reasons that friends (*or couples*) fight? List them.

Q 3. a. What three character traits make a person “good” or “nice”? List them.

Q 3. b. What three character traits make a person “bad” or a “jerk”? List them.

After each group has finished writing down their answers, take some time and allow a volunteer from each X-Team to share their teams’ responses. (*Have all X-Teams supply an answer to Question 1, then move on to Question 2 and so forth.*)

(Note: It is likely that each team will have had different answers for all of the questions, although some similarities may exist.)

Next, ask students to think about what they believe sin is. Invite a few students to blurt out various sins. As students call these sins out, write them on the whiteboard or chalkboard. After you have made a list of sins ranging from murder to jealousy to thinking bad thoughts, invite students to take a hard look at all of the things on the board. Explain that although it’s easy for us to dismiss some of these sins as “no biggie” and look at others as really wrong, in God’s sight all sin is displeasing. Explain that we’ll take a harder look at this issue and see how sin affects each one of us and our relationship with God later on.

Conclude this opener by inviting questions related to this topic. Keep in mind that the

generation of young people in front of you have a very hard time accepting absolute truth. Many of them also will want to give sins varying degrees of right or wrong. That’s OK, but make sure that they understand that all sin is sin in God’s eyes . . . and that even the “smallest” sins will be condemned by a righteous God.

At this point in the session you won’t want to spend too much time on this topic, but by allowing teens who may be struggling with these issues a chance to voice their questions and opinions you will be on your way to gaining their trust later on.

TABLE TALK Life’s Hurts

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of Table Talk, “Life’s Hurts”
- Pencils

Hand out the “Life’s Hurts” worksheet page

Optional Opener

Give each person in your group a piece of paper and a pencil. Have each person write a short paragraph describing his or her biggest mess-ups. You may want to supply some examples, like royally missing an easy free throw to lose a basketball championship or ignoring their parents’ curfew of 11:00 p.m., sneaking in at 1:00 a.m., and getting caught. After each person has had 5-8 minutes to complete this, go around the group and invite volunteers to read their paragraphs aloud. Ask each volunteer how he or she felt right after the mess-up, then ask how he or she feels now about this event after some time has passed. Mention to the group that everyone messes up at some time or another. It is how we clean up our messes that really counts in the long run.

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and pencils. Allow the students to work in their X-Teams as they go through the questions and discuss them. Remember to let the teens talk and react without the leaders judging their comments. A visiting teenager needs to know his or her opinion will be heard and not instantly rejected.

MESSAGE

If You Were There . . .

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Bibles
- "If You Were There . . ." discussion-starter worksheet
- Pencils

Have students open their Bibles to Mark 2:1-12. Choose a volunteer from each group to read the passage aloud. Invite each person to think for a minute about what this scene must have looked like. Hand out copies of the "If You Were There . . ." discussion-starter worksheet and invite teens to work on it. While the teens are working to finish up, have teens that finish their worksheets early discuss with a neighbor about a time when they were limited physically. (*Some examples might include: a sports injury they received, an illness that kept them in bed for a while, a broken bone that caused them to be in a cast, etc.*) Have these students share some of the inconveniences they experienced as a result of this limitation. When all have finished their work-

sheets, have the students discuss the worksheet answers together.

Recap the Bible passage by sharing, ***The man in this story was paralyzed. In Jesus' time there was no such thing as a wheelchair. If a paralyzed person wanted to go somewhere, he needed good friends to take him there.***

Ask, ***How do you think the paralyzed man's friends might have felt when they arrived (after carrying their buddy for a long way) and found they couldn't even get close to Jesus?***

How hard do you think it must have been to get a paralyzed man up onto the roof? Explain.

What do you think other people inside must have thought when parts of the roof started collapsing as the man was lowered to Jesus?

What did Jesus say to the paralyzed man? (Your sins are forgiven.)

What was the response of the teachers of the law? (They thought Jesus had some nerve to say such a thing. They said, "Why does this fellow talk like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?")

What was Jesus' response to the teachers of the law? (Jesus pretty much summed it up by asking if it is easier to forgive a man or heal him? In the end Jesus did both and amazed all of the people who witnessed the miracle.)

Next instruct teams to turn to Psalm 118:14 and have a volunteer read it out

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loud. Ask, **How was the Lord a strength to the paralyzed man?** (*The Lord Jesus literally healed the man and he was able to walk. Jesus gave the paralyzed man's body strength to get up and walk and to be completely healed.*) **How was the Lord a giver of salvation to the paralyzed man?** (*Jesus not only healed the man physically, but he forgave his sins. In the eternal picture, the forgiveness of sins would prove to be more important for this man than any kind of physical healing ever could be.*)

Mention to students that although physical limitations are difficult, spiritual limitation can have eternal consequences. Let students know that in the Challenge activity they will have a chance to personally reflect on their own physical and spiritual condition.

CHALLENGE

Looking Inside and Out

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Index cards
- Pens
- A wooden cross or other symbolic altar

Hand out index cards and pens to all students, then share the following thoughts. **We began today by playing games that got us moving. We then studied about a man who couldn't move at all because he was paralyzed. Although we might not be physically paralyzed, many of us may find ourselves spiritually paralyzed.** Give students a moment to reflect upon their own lives and think of one physical ailment or personal

Option

Supplies: Costumes (*bathrobes, wigs, large colorful blanket, etc.*)

Have students turn in their Bibles to Mark 2:1-12 and read the passage on their own. Choose five volunteers and have these students reenact the story in a dramatic fashion. Provide costumes if possible and invite ad-libbing to make this activity more enjoyable. Give the drama group five minutes to come up with their ideas but don't allow them to script what they are going to say. Have that part be "off the cuff." Invite other X-Teams to watch the drama and cheer their favorite actors.

After students have finished the drama share, **This paralyzed man went to extremes to receive the healing that he desperately needed. His friends played a major role in his healing process as well.** Ask the students, **Are you as willing to be healed by Jesus? Do you have positive friends that lead you in the right direction? What steps might you need to take to get on track to go where Jesus wants to take you?**

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weakness that they need to be healed from. Encourage students to use their index cards to jot down their thoughts. *(Students need not share out loud although some may want to do so.)* After students have thought of this particular need, have them consider their spiritual lives and think of one or more ways they need to be healed spiritually. *(Again, students need not share out loud but give opportunities for those who would like to, to do so.)*

The man in the Bible that we learned about today suffered both physically and spiritually. Many of us do too. There is only one Person who can help us with both our physical and spiritual condition. None of us can live the Christian life without the giver of that life, Jesus Christ. Thankfully, Jesus has died and risen again for us. All we need to do is put our trust in Him and ask Him into our lives.

Isaiah 1:18b says, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." Scarlet is a deep reddish-purple color. It is about as far away from the whiteness of snow as can be. Yet Jesus can change anyone's heart and life and turn things around. If you have been on your own expedition, following your own instincts, wants, and needs, we're here to say there is another way. Your life can be an extreme expedition where you live for Jesus. It not only is a much better way to live, but it is the ONLY way to be

secure in an eternal destination of heaven.

Give a few moments for teens to comment on what you've just said. Share: ***Today can be a brand-new day in each and every person's life. For those who have never known Jesus Christ's saving power, it can be yours. Simply by asking. For those who know Jesus but have been living apart from Him in recent days, today can be a day of renewal and commitment. Lastly, for those who are walking with Jesus right now this can be the beginning of strengthening your faith journey.***

Encourage students who feel comfortable doing so to come before the cross (or other symbolic altar) and lay down their index card (symbolizing their desire to give their physical and spiritual needs to Jesus). Allow varied opportunities for students to take part in this activity. For example you could dim the lights or move some of the X-Teams outside giving students who want to remain inside the opportunity to do so, etc.

Close by having an X-Team leader lead in prayer. Have X-Team leaders spend a few minutes at the end of the session talking with teens and answering questions they may have. Remind students that living a life with Jesus is the most extreme way they can live. Encourage students to take this leap of faith if they haven't already done so.

Note: As you may have noticed, this lesson lends itself perfectly to offering the

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students an opportunity to accept Jesus as their Savior. Be sure to give your students a chance to talk with an X-Team leader and pray about this decision during this session. Your students can't follow Jesus in life until they know Him personally.

Extra Study Option: The worksheet "A Secure Foundation" would be a helpful handout for those who want to know more about faith in Jesus Christ.

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TABLE TALK WORKSHEET

Life's Hurts

Describe a time when you were physically hurt (a broken bone, a bad scrape, a major wipeout on a snowboard or skateboard, etc.).

Now describe a time when you were emotionally hurt (by a friend, a person of the opposite gender, a teacher who embarrassed you in front of others, etc.).

Which of these circumstances (the physical or emotional) hurt worse? Explain.

In life we all experience physical and emotional hurts. The Bible character that we are going to study today had these kinds of hurts as well. There was only one Person who could make things better for him. As you see how this story unfolds you may notice that this man's biggest need wasn't physical or emotional; it was spiritual!

MESSAGE WORKSHEET

If You Were There . . .

Directions: Read through Mark 2:1-12 again. As you come up with answers to the following questions, write them below.

What do you think prompted this whole outing with the paralyzed man? How do you think the paralyzed man felt during the entire episode?

When Jesus offered to forgive the paralyzed man's sins, how do you think he might have felt initially? Do you think he was worried that Jesus was going to leave it at that and not address his physical state? Why or why not? Explain.

If you had been in the crowd, what might your reaction have been toward the men who were making the racket and bringing down the roof? Explain your answer below.

EXTRA STUDY OPTION

A Secure Foundation

Directions: Read the following Scripture verse or verses, then write your own explanation of what the verse or verses mean to you.

Scripture: Psalm 18:2—"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

Explanation:

Scripture: Acts 2:21—"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Explanation:

Scripture: John 3:16-17—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Explanation:

On the line below, mark where you fall in your assurance of salvation.

0 _____ 5 _____ 10

I'm not sure I'm saved. I think I'm saved but... I am totally confident in my salvation!

If you fell anywhere between 0 and 9.99 find a leader to talk to. There is no reason you can't go home today 100% assured of where you stand before God.

Being a Christian is awesome! It means that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and are trusting in Him, alone, for your eternal salvation. It also means you have a Helper on this earth to guide you along the way—the Holy Spirit. Because of what Jesus did for you on the cross, you can go boldly before God with your requests and needs through prayer. **The Christian life really is an extreme expedition. Be a part of it!**

Extra Study Option: Make photocopies of this Extra Study Option and give it to any student who received salvation today or others who are interested in learning more about salvation. *(For more information about the use of Extra Study Options, see page 6.)*

DAY TWO

All of today's games will help X-Teams get to know each other better.

What's True?

Supplies:

- Pens, index cards

Have individual X-Teams come together. Ask each person to write down on an index card two things that are true and one thing that is not true about him or her. For example, a student might write that he went on a missions trip to Brazil, received five "A's" on his report card last semester, and broke his leg in a ski accident over spring break. Students will then have to guess which of the three things is true and which is not. Give all students a chance to share and guess.

Fun Facts Signature Race

Supplies:

- Fun Facts paper (*complete beforehand and make copies*), pens

Play this game as a mixer between the various X-Teams. Ahead of time, compile a sheet of Fun Facts. For example: someone with 4 or more siblings; someone wearing black tennis shoes; a person who has been outside of the country (*leave space to fill in country or countries visited*), etc. Customize the Fun Facts paper to reflect information about your group of students if possible. Give students 5-8 minutes to mingle and ask other students if they qualify for any of the questions asked. If so, have them obtain that student's signature next to the question that applies to him or her. Award prize points to the students who obtain the most signatures.

Good Labels

Supplies:

- Blank name tag labels, pens

Have students choose one person that they know well or have gotten to know during the *Extreme Expedition* program. Have students come up with one positive attribute this person possesses and secretly write it down on the label (*for example, considerate, helpful, or funny*). After all students have finished doing this, have them stick the label on the back of the person that it applies to. Give students a few minutes to mingle and ask "yes" or "no" questions of their peers in an attempt to guess what has been written on their backs.

Back in da Day

Supplies:

- A watch with a second hand

Have students gather in their X-Teams. Give students a chance to think of one funny thing they did when they were a kid, for example getting locked in the bathroom or getting sick in front of the entire 2nd grade class during Show and Tell. After students have thought of something, go around the group and allow students to share their stories in one minute or less. When all (*or most*) of the stories have been shared, have X-Teams vote on what story they thought was the best. Choose the best stories from each X-Team and have these students retell their story in front of all of the X-Teams as a way for students to get to know each other better.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

SESSION TWO

OPENER

Moving On Out

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- None needed

After groups have finished playing the Crazy Comp tournament games, have groups form one large circle. *(If your program is extremely large you may want to break up into two or three large circles for this activity.)* Choose one student or a leader that is well known by most of the students and likes being in the spotlight. Have him or her stand in the middle of the circle. Say, ***Most of you here know this person standing here. Let's pretend that _____ (insert person's name) just announced that he/she is moving to Cancun, Mexico to become a scuba instructor. Today is his/her last day here with us and we will never see him/her ever again. As a tribute to him/her let's go around the circle and those who'd like to say something about this person and what his/her friendship means to them, can do so.***

Give the teens a few minutes to do this. *(If the atmosphere or comments become too silly, steer the conversation back to attributes this person has that the students find admirable and will miss when he or she no longer is a part of the group.)* After enough time has passed, allow the student or leader to leave the center of the circle.

Optional Opener

Supplies: Paper, pens, chalk or marker, chalkboard or whiteboard *(for writing down names)*

Have teens brainstorm about famous people who have died in recent years. As students come up with names, write them on the chalkboard or on a whiteboard. After students have had a few minutes do this, hand out pieces of paper and pens. Instruct students to choose one of the deceased people listed and make a profile about him or her. *(In other words, write everything they know about this person.)* If he or she was a celebrity and the student was a fan, encourage the student to write about how much this person is missed. After students have had five minutes to complete their profile, encourage them to share what they have written down.

Explain, ***Sometimes we don't realize how interesting or caring someone was in their lifetime until after they have died. The profiles we shared show just how much of an impact each person's life can have on society. After all, none of you knew these people personally, yet they somehow impacted you enough to know a little bit about their lives and to note their deaths. Today we're going to take a good, hard look at death and learn about a Person who has power over it.***

Next, ask for a showing of hands *(or shouted out responses)* as you ask the following questions.

- ***How many of your families have moved in the last 5 years?*** *(Have students raise their hands in response.)*

Slip-up Worrying about death
Pick-me-up Trusting Jesus' power over death

SESSION TWO

• **How many of your families have moved more than 3 times in your lifetime?** (Have students raise their hands in response.)

• **What is the best part about moving?** (Have students call out answers.)

• **What is the worst part about moving?** (Have students call out answers.)

Share, ***It used to be that families would move into a house and live there for 20 years or more. Not anymore. In today's busy world, it is quite unusual for families to stay in one place. On the other hand, moving every couple of years is expected in many business and military communities. "Good-byes" have become commonplace and sometimes are even left unsaid. It's OK to be happy for new opportunities, but people often gloss over the sadness that exists in the hearts of those involved in a move.***

It's hard enough to say goodbye to a friend who moves away, but what about when someone dies? Those good-byes often come too late and are filled with sadness and regret for what could and should have been. Today we are going to talk about something that no one really likes to talk about . . . death. We all know it is going to happen to us sooner or later, but no one really thinks it could happen to them today or tomorrow. The reality is that death can strike at any time and take us or loved ones away. Knowing the

One who has power over death is the most important thing in life. That's what today's study is all about.

TABLE TALK What If?

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of Table Talk, "What If?" (from page 23)
- Pencils

Hand out "What If?" and pencils. Allow the students to work in their X-Teams as they go through the questions and discuss them. (For a description of X-Teams and their purpose, see page 6.)

Remember to let the students talk and react without the leaders judging their comments. Teens need to know their opinions will be heard and not instantly rejected.

MESSAGE Quite the Conversation

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Bibles
- "Quite the Conversation" discussion-starter worksheet
- Pencils
- Cassette recorder (per X-team) (Optional)
- Blank cassette tapes (per X-team) (Optional)

Slip-up
Pick-me-up

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SESSION TWO

Open up the Message session by asking: **How does the media depict heaven?** (Have students describe TV commercials, magazine ads, etc., that they have seen.) Allow several teens to give their answers. Then ask, **How does the media depict hell?** (Have students give examples of T.V. scenes or cartoons they have seen related to hell.) Ask, **What do you think heaven will be like? What about hell, what do you think it will be like?** (Invite various students to share their answers.) **The Bible is clear in its descriptions of both heaven and hell. Heaven will truly be wonderful. Hell, however, will be awful—a place of torment. Often times people will speak about heaven as if it is real but will disregard hell or pretend it doesn't exist. An unfortunate reality for unbelievers is that hell is a real place and it isn't going away.**

Give 5-8 minutes for the X-teams to work on the worksheet, "Quite the Conversation." Teams will need Bibles and pencils. If possible, give each team a cassette recorder and blank cassette tape and have groups record the three conversations. When groups are finished, allow various groups to play their conversations for the other groups.

Regroup and have students turn again in their Bibles to Luke 8:41-42, 49-56. Have a few volunteers read this story aloud for the group. Ask the following questions to recap what happened.

What indications in the passage show that Jairus was desperate for Jesus' help? (Vss. 41-42 uses the phrases "fell down at Jesus' feet," "besought him that he would come into his house," "he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.")

How do you think Jairus might have felt (vs. 49) when a person from his house came out to the crowd and told him that his daughter was dead? (Answers could include: sad, shocked, in disbelief, angry, despairing, etc.)

To hear the phrase, "trouble not the Master" in relation to the news that his daughter was dead must have added to Jairus's pain (vs. 49). Why do you think people are often insensitive when people are hurting most? (Allow students to give their feedback and share from personal experience if appropriate.)

What emotion did Jesus omnisciently know that Jairus was feeling? (Fear. He said, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.") **Why do you think death creates fear in the hearts and minds of people?** (Answers will vary, but might include: Death is unknown, it makes people sad, even if you know a person is a Christian and will go to heaven. That person is still missed by loved ones, etc.)

What happened after Jesus arrived at the house? Allow various teens to summarize the end of the story in their own

Slip-up
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Trusting Jesus' power over death

SESSION TWO

words. *(Jesus went into the house and only allowed Peter, John, and James and the child's father and mother to enter with Him. Outside all of the people were crying and wailing. Jesus reprimanded them saying, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth." At that, all of the people laughed at Jesus, but He silenced the crowd by taking the girl by the hand and saying, "Maid, arise." The girl was raised from the dead and Jesus asked that she be given something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.)*

Have teens turn in their Bibles to I Corinthians 15:22. Invite a volunteer to read it aloud, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Ask the teens what they think this verse means. *(Answers will vary but should incorporate the idea that: Adam's sin makes all humans destined to die physically. Those who trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior, however, will live forever in heaven.)*

Invite various X-team members to share how they feel about death knowing that Jesus has power over it. Spend a few moments on this topic and allow as many students to share as possible.

CHALLENGE

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Pieces of paper and pencils

Let's face it. Death can be scary. It's OK to admit that. In the Bible story Jairus was afraid for his daughter, yet Jesus was able to turn his fear into joy. The good news is that Jesus has power over death. Although we might have fear about death because its time and place are unknown to us, we don't have to live in fear of where we'll be when we die. Heaven is a far greater place than this earth. It is so great that our human minds can't fully comprehend it. It's important to trust what the Bible says about heaven and know that Christians who die physically will live eternally in a wonderful place. Christians really can say, "The LORD is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation." (Psalm 118:14) They don't need to fear death.

Thinking about death also serves as a humble reminder that we have some witnessing to do. Family or friends that don't know Jesus as their Savior are in danger of dying without the hope of heaven. Although only God can change these people's hearts and cause them to turn to Him, we need to do our part to let them know that this life on earth isn't forever.

Slip-up
Pick-me-up

Worrying about death
Trusting Jesus' power over death.

SESSION TWO

Hand out pieces of paper and pencils. Have the teens write on one side of the paper a short note thanking Jesus for giving them the hope of heaven. On the other side of the paper, have students write the name or names of people they know and love that might not have the same assurance. Close the time by having teens and leaders pray for these people whose names appear on the papers. Short sentence prayers around a circle

might work best. Choose someone to open and close the session so teens who don't want to pray out loud won't be pressured to do so.

Note: This lesson lends itself perfectly to offering the students an opportunity to come by faith to Jesus. Be sure to give your students a chance to talk with an X-Team leader and pray about this decision.

Slip-up Worrying about death
Pick-me-up Trusting Jesus' power over death.

TABLE TALK WORKSHEET

What If?

If you knew you were going to die today, what regrets would you have about your life, if any? Explain.

Write down the names of your closest friends below.

How would you feel if one of these friends died? Would you have assurance that he or she would spend eternity in heaven? Why or why not?

What, if anything, scares you about your own inevitable death?

Is there a way not to fear death? Explain.

MESSAGE WORKSHEET

Quite the Conversation

Directions: In your group, come up with three different conversations based on Luke 8:41-42, 49-56. If possible, record these conversations on a tape recorder and play them for the other groups.

Conversation #1: *Jairus and his wife as they realize the deteriorating condition of their twelve-year-old daughter. Before Jairus tracked down Jesus in the crowd, what might they have said to each other?*

Conversation # 2: *The people outside of Jairus's home who are crying and wailing because the girl is dead.*

Conversation # 3: *The girl and her family after she has been brought back to life.*

EXTRA STUDY OPTION

Assurance of Heaven

Read the following passages. ***What do they have to say about heaven? How can these passages give you hope about your future?***

Luke 10:20b—“Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

Luke 15:7—“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

Revelation 19:11, 16—“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

Revelation 21:4—“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

List any fears you have about death.

Read the following passage and come up with three reasons (*based on these verses*) why you shouldn't fear death.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Jesus has power over death. You don't have to fear the unknown future if you have placed your trust in Him. Take a minute and thank Him for what He's done for you and praise Him for conquering death once and for all.

Extra Study Option: Make photocopies of this Extra Study Option and give it to any student who received salvation today or others who are interested in learning more about salvation. (*For more information about the use of Extra Study Options, see page 6.*)

DAY THREE

Today's games all involve teamwork. So help each other out if you want to win!

Shoe Pile

Supplies:

- Everyone's shoes

Have each X-Team member take off both shoes and toss them into a shoe pile. Then have students line up (*one student behind another*). At the command of "Fetch," the last person in line must run to the first person in line and say, "Describe your shoes!" After this person has a feel for what the shoes look like, he or she should run to the pile and find both shoes, return to the person to whom they belong, and put the shoes on him or her. (*Only the person fetching the shoes can put them on. The person who owns the shoes can't help!*) Conduct this relay until everyone's shoes have been returned and put on their feet. The winner is the team that finishes first.

Human Chain

Supplies:

- Various objects, such as a large beach ball, a Bible, a bag of chips, etc.

Prior to the game, hide various objects around the site but keep them visible so students can find them without too much trouble. Have each X-Team line up and hold hands. Explain to the various X-Teams about the objects that have been hidden. At your command, have X-Teams set out in search of the hidden objects. The catch, the entire team must continue to hold hands and move as a human chain! Winners are the teams that find the most objects.

Superball Roll

Supplies:

- One large rubber superball (*per X-Team*), cones or markers to note turnaround area

Have teams line up (*one person in front of the other*). Set up cones or markers to note the turnaround areas for each team. Have the first person in line get into a crawling position. Place a rubber superball in front of each X-team. At "go," teams must conduct a relay where they roll the superball using only their noses. (*No hands allowed.*) Encourage students to cheer for their teams. Award points to the winning team and to the team that was the most enthusiastic during the event.

Trash Bag Three-Legged Race

Supplies:

- Large plastic trash bags with ties (*one bag per pair of students*), obstacles for students to maneuver around

Have students pair up among their X-Teams. Give each pair of students a trash bag. Have students stand next to each other and place the leg closest to their partner inside the trash bag. Have students tie the trash bag closed as best they can (*with their legs in it!*). Conduct a three-legged race and have students maneuver around various obstacles before returning to their lines. If pairs fall down they must return to the beginning of the line and start again.

TEAM APPRECIATION

SESSION THREE

OPENER

Thankful For . . .

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Strips of paper
- Pencils or pens
- Large dry-erase board, dry-board markers, and eraser, or a flip chart and markers
- Stopwatch or watch/clock with second hand
- Small prize (*wrapped candies or chocolates*) for winning team

After completing the Crazy Comp tournament games, divide the large group of teens into two smaller groups. In both groups, give each person a strip of paper and a pencil or pen. Instruct students to write down only one word and keep this word to themselves. This word must be a noun (*person, place, or thing*) that they are extremely thankful for. (*For example, pizza, vacation, money, friends, family, etc.*) Let teens know that personal pronouns [names] are not allowed, but descriptive nouns like mother and father are OK. After all students have written down their word on their strip of paper, have a leader gather all of the strips of paper from each team. (*Have leaders be careful not to mix up the papers from the two teams.*) After both groups' papers have been collected, exchange them so the first group gets the second group's papers and vice versa. Hand out a strip of paper to each student and remind stu-

dents to keep their "word" to themselves. Randomly choose a volunteer from each group and give these volunteers 30 seconds to draw a picture of their word on the dry-erase board or flip chart paper provided. Allow as many volunteers as possible to draw while the others guess. If possible make it a competition between the two groups and award a small prize to the group that guesses the most correctly.

Explain that all of the words that were drawn were things that we are thankful for. Be it a favorite food (*like burritos*) or a person who means a lot—a parent, teacher, or friend. Let students know that today's session is about thankfulness and our need to express it.

Optional Opener

Supplies: None needed

Gather in a large circle or small groups of circles. Allow as many students as possible to share about a time when they were given a big break. (*For example a teacher who extended a deadline for them, a sibling who forgave them for wrecking their favorite outfit, or a parent who let them off with a warning when they really deserved to be grounded, etc.*). After students have shared, the X-team leader should ask if and how the students expressed thankfulness in these situations. Mention that the men we're going to study about today received the greatest break of all, they were healed from one of the worst diseases ever known. Most of their responses to this "big break" was anything but satisfactory, however.

Slip-up
Pick-me-up

Having an ungrateful attitude
Being thankful in all things

SESSION THREE

TABLE TALK Excluded

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of Table Talk, "Excluded" (from page 30)
- Pencils

Hand out "Excluded" and pencils. Allow the students to work in their X-Teams as they go through the questions and discuss them. (For a description of X-Teams and their purpose, see page 6.) Remember to let the students talk and react without the leaders judging their comments. Teens need to know their opinions will be heard and not instantly rejected.

MESSAGE A Thankful Return

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of "Nine out of Ten"
- Bibles
- Pencils

Have each group read Luke 17:11-19 and complete the Message worksheet "Nine out of Ten." After your students have finished the worksheet invite students to give feedback or share what they wrote on their worksheets. Begin by saying something like, **When we're given something we're expected to say "Thanks," even if it's a seafoam-colored bathrobe we know we'll never**

wear. But imagine what it would have been like to be these ten lepers and be given completely healed bodies! To go from not even being able to enter the city gates to being able to go where ever they pleased. They were given the opportunity to see family members and friends that they had been separated from for years. Once again they could worship in the temple—how awesome! It must have been overwhelming for them. Yet only one of the men truly grasped the significance of the gift and returned to thank Jesus.

Ask students, **What was Jesus' response to this man who came back and threw himself in thankfulness at Jesus' feet?** (Jesus compared his actions with the actions of the other nine men. Jesus went on to rebuke the other nine and praised the man who returned by exclaiming that his faith had made him well.) **The man who returned and thanked Jesus was a Samaritan. What is the significance of this?** (Samaritans were a hated people group by the Jews. The fact that this man was a leper and a Samaritan made him very likely one of the most despised people around.) **Do you think Jesus needed or appreciated this man's thanks? Explain your answer.** (This is a tricky question and may generate different opinions. Try to have students explore in their answers whether or not Jesus needed this man's thanks for His own gratification or if the man's thanks were most beneficial in strengthening his own faith and character.)

**Slip-up
Pick-me-up**

Having an ungrateful attitude
Being thankful in all things

SESSION THREE

Jesus deserved a “Thank You” from all ten men. He only received it from one of them. When Jesus told the men to go and see the priest, they all had to leave and do this by faith. However, along the way all of the men were healed—even the nine who forgot to thank Jesus. What the one man who returned received was a greater measure of faith as well as Jesus’ approval. Jesus made sure the man knew that his faith had contributed to his being healed. This man was healed spiritually as well as physically.

Have a student look up and read Psalm 118:28 aloud. “Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.” Invite students to share how this verse applies to us today. After a few students have shared, mention that Jesus deserves our thanks and we deny Him the glory due His name when we forget to give Him the credit. Thanking Jesus is something that we should do because it also strengthens our faith and helps us have grateful hearts.

CHALLENGE

Whole Lotta Thanks

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Large sheets of butcher paper or construction paper folded in half (*forming a card*)
- Markers
- Finger paints and smocks (*Optional*)

OK, so we’re all guilty of being less thankful than we should be. From forgetting to send our grandmother a thank-you card for a birthday gift to neglecting to thank Jesus for all He’s done for us. What we need is a big reminder of the blessings we’ve been given.

Hand out pieces of butcher paper or large poster boards to each X-Team. Let teens know that these cards are thank-you cards that aren’t going to be given to anyone. Instead these cards will help each person think of things they are thankful to Jesus for. The outside of the cards should be covered with drawings; the inside needs to be filled with messages of thanks to Jesus. Give teams time to decorate the outside of the card and write notes on the inside. Encourage students to write the theme verse from Psalm 118:14, “The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation,” somewhere on the cards as well. When teams are finished, allow them to check out the other teams’ cards.

Gather all groups together and say, ***Often enough when we pray we are full of requests for ourselves and others. That’s OK, but it is also important to thank Jesus for what we’ve been given and to praise Him.*** Invite a few volunteers to close the session in short prayers of thanks.

Hand out the **Extra Study Option** “Thankful Hearts” to students who want to spend some time on their own thanking Jesus for what He has done for them.

**Slip-up
Pick-me-up**

Having an ungrateful attitude
Being thankful in all things

TABLE TALK WORKSHEET

Excluded

The men we are going to look at during today's session were excluded in the truest sense of the word. The following questions will help you think about what exclusion is all about.

- 1. *What are some of the "clique-ish" groups at your school? List them here.***

- 2. *Where do you fit in among these groups? Is this where you'd like to fit in or are there any groups you'd like to be a part of but aren't? Explain.***

- 3. *Are there any kids in your school that are completely excluded from all groups? What could you, personally, do to help make life better for them?***

- 4. *Write a short paragraph about a time you were excluded for some reason or a time when you witnessed someone else being excluded. Be sure to include how the incident made you feel.***

All of us will be excluded sometime in our lives. Even Jesus was excluded by certain groups of people. Some of these people eventually killed Him. Yet Jesus was very compassionate to those who were excluded, such as lepers and Samaritans. Jesus' actions can serve as a good reminder for us to be careful to include everyone.

MESSAGE WORKSHEET

Nine out of Ten

Directions: Use the topic provided to fill in the remainder of the sentence the way you see fit. There are no wrong answers here but be sure to give an explanation for why you think nine out of ten people would act in this way.

Topic: Jaywalking

Nine out of ten people would consider this action . . .

Topic: Racing through yellow lights

Nine out of ten people would consider this action . . .

Topic: Not telling the truth (*like having your little brother tell the person on the phone that you're not home when you really are*).

Nine out of ten people would consider this action . . .

In Jesus' day nine out of ten people took off without saying "Thanks" when they were healed from leprosy. Although the guy who returned wasn't in the "norm," he definitely was the one Jesus was looking at. Sometimes in life going against the crowd is what Jesus wants us to do. Let's find out more and see how this one guy who returned was rewarded.

EXTRA STUDY OPTION

Thankful Hearts

Directions: Read the verse(s) below and answer the related questions as best as you can.

Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:18—"In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

What does 1 Thessalonians 5:18 have to say about how you should thank God?

Are you thankful all or most of the time? Why or why not? What could you do to cultivate a "thankful heart"? Explain.

Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18—"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Describe a recent situation that really bummed you out. **Why do you think this particular circumstance was so difficult? Explain. In light of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, do you think the situation might have turned out differently if you had been joyful in it, prayed about it, and been thankful for it?** Explain your thoughts.

Verse: 2 Corinthians 9:15—"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

What do you think God's unspeakable gift is?

Although it is "unspeakable," give it a try and describe what this gift means to you.

Jesus deserves our thanks. We know that! Yet when we stop and think of how often we thank and praise Him, it often falls short. Take some time this week to really thank Jesus for what He means to you. As a result, you may be surprised to find that your thankfulness actually grows!

Extra Study Option: Make photocopies of this Extra Study Option and give it to any student who received salvation today or others who are interested in learning more about salvation. (For more information about the use of Extra Study Options, see page 6.)

DAY FOUR

All of today's games require persistence. So don't give up!

Noodles of Fun

Supplies:

- One or two packages (*depending on group size*) of cooked spaghetti

Have each X-Team form two lines and face each other. Hand the person on the end of the line of each X-Team an equal amount of cooked spaghetti. When you signal, have the person with the spaghetti toss the "clump" of noodles to the person in front of her. After he catches the "clump," he should toss the spaghetti to the next person in line across from him. The winner of this game is the team with the most spaghetti noodles remaining intact once all noodles make it all of the way through the lines.

Baby Food Bonanza

Supplies:

- Plastic jars of "interestingly" flavored baby food (*three per X-Team*)
- *The Jesus Expedition*™ CD, CD player
- Plastic spoons (*three per X-Team*)

Have X-Teams form a circle. Play the music and pass around three closed plastic jars full of baby food. After passing the jars around for some time, stop the music! The students holding the baby food jars luckily are out. Make the circle smaller and start the music again. Play this game until only three people remain. Pass out plastic spoons to these three individuals and encourage them to taste the baby food they are holding as other students look on. [Note: This game is a real crowd-pleaser, however, don't force students to

eat too much of the baby food unless they want to and be sure to check for any food allergies beforehand.]

Never Give Up!

Supplies:

- No materials needed

Explain to the students that today's theme is about persistence. In other words, "Never give up!" Let X-Teams know that at your command, each team will race to make the sentence, "Never Give Up!" on the ground using only their bodies! The first team to write the sentence wins. [Note: If your group is large, have students compose the entire sentence. If your group is small, have students make one letter at a time, then allow them to get up and form the next letter.]

Leapfrog Race

Supplies:

- Various obstacles (*no taller than 1 foot*) and a finish line (*use a rope if outside or masking tape if inside*)

Prior to the race, set up various obstacles. Have X-Team members form lines (*one person in front of the other*). Have the first person in each line crouch down in a leapfrog position (*both hands touching the ground, heels touching, and both knees out to either side*). At the command to "Leap," have the first person in line "jump" the entire length of the race. Be sure students also leap over the obstacles that have been put in front of them. The next person in line may not go until the person in front of him or her leaps across the finish line. The first team with all of its members across the finish line wins.

PERSISTENCE PAYS

SESSION FOUR

OPENER

Tug-O-War

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Long, thick, woven rope (*for a tug-o-war*)
- Masking tape or cones to note center divide
- Prize for winning team members
- *The Jesus Expedition*™ CD, CD player (*Optional*)

After completing the Crazy Comp tournament, divide all students up into two teams. You may want to group X-Teams together or have girls go against boys, etc. After teams have been selected, separate the two teams by having them go to opposite sides of a large room or the gym (*if inside*), or to opposing sides of a large clearing (*if outside*).

Give teams a few minutes to come up with a team name and a short fight song. After both teams have done this, give them a chance to share their team name and perform their song.

As you make a dividing line between the two teams (*with a masking tape or cones*) say, ***We're about to have a tough battle. Neither of these teams wants to lose this battle because there is a prize for the team that wins!*** Have both teams form lines and have the first person in each line face each other as they stand on either side of the dividing line. Bring out the large rope and explain

to the teams that they are going to have a tug-o-war. The first team to have *all* of the opposing team members on their side of the line wins. Allow teams to go at it. (*You may want to play some loud music in the background to add to the atmosphere.*)

After the competition ends and prizes have been awarded, regroup and discuss the following questions:

Optional Opener

Supplies:

- Index cards with clues written on them
- Objects hidden beforehand

Prior to conducting the Optional Activity, hide various items in and around the meeting site and write clues on index cards for each team. Divide groups into two teams and explain that the teams will be racing against each other to find items hidden in and around the site. Teams may not split up but must work together to find each item. Allow teams 5-8 minutes to conduct the searches. Award bonus points to the team that finds the most items.

After the activity, regroup and explain that persistent people often win scavenger hunts. ***A scavenger hunt is no time to dawdle, be distracted, or give up, although after a while, when frustration sets in, that is what typically happens. Systematic persistence is what typically gets the job done. In today's session we are going to look at what it means to be persistent in our Christian lives.***

**Slip-up
Pick-me-up**

Giving up
Being persistent and rewarded

SESSION FOUR

- **Why do you think one of these teams finally won?** (One team proved stronger than the other team.) Mention also that the team that was most persistent in the fight eventually won out.
- **In what ways is this tug-o-war game like real life?** **Explain.** Allow various teens to share. (Some answers might be: forces of good and evil that battle, divorced parents who pull their kids back and forth or want kids to chose sides, negative and positive peer pressures teens face, etc.)

Explain, **During the tug-o-war both teams were persistent in their fight. Eventually one of the teams won out. In life we face many things that tug us in different directions. It's important that we are persistent as we face these struggles each day. In today's session we're going to take a good look at persistence and find out why it is an important component of the Christian life.**

TABLE TALK

Persistence Pays

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of Table Talk, "Persistence Pays" (page 38)
- Pencils

Hand out "Persistence Pays" and pencils. Allow the students to work in their X-Teams as they go through the questions

and discuss them. Remember to let the students talk and react without the leaders judging their comments. Teens need to know their opinions will be heard and not instantly rejected.

MESSAGE

Being Blind

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of "Being Blind"
- Blindfolds
- Obstacles for students to go around

Prior to beginning the Message session have each group blindfold one volunteer. After the student has been blindfolded, encourage the other members to set up a simple "obstacle course" using chairs and tables if indoors and cones or objects from their environment if outdoors. Give students a few minutes to guide the blindfolded student in and around the obstacles. Guides may not touch the student but must help him or her only with verbal cues.

After students finish their worksheet questions have a short time of discussion related to the "Being Blind" activity. Next have each group read Mark 10:46-52. Begin the Bible study session by sharing, ***This guy must have felt pretty hopeless, hollering over and over for Jesus to heal him. Many people in his situation would have given up, especially once the crowd gave him a hard time***

Slip-up
Pick-me-up

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for pestering Jesus. Did this get Bartimaeus down? No way! It just made him all the more persistent in his yelling.

Ask teens the following questions to get them discussing:

- **Have you ever been stubborn about something? Explain what the situation was and why you were so stubborn.** (Invite various students to share. Explain that Bartimaeus was pretty stubborn because he wanted to be healed of his blindness more than anything and he knew Jesus was the only One who could do it.)
- **Have you ever wanted something so badly that you were willing to do whatever it took to get or achieve it? Explain.**
- **How do you feel when people start getting on your case about something? Does what people say influence your actions? Explain.**
- **When it comes to things related to your faith, how persistent are you in following through? Explain and give examples.**

Share, **Jesus probably heard Bartimaeus when he was still a long ways off. After all, the guy was totally yelling, who wouldn't hear him! Jesus very likely waited awhile before acknowledging Bartimaeus's presence. Perhaps Jesus wanted to see how persistent this guy was going to be and how badly he really wanted to be healed. We don't know for certain what Jesus was**

thinking here, but we do know that He commended Bartimaeus for his faith. When Jesus finally let Bartimaeus know that He noticed him, the people who had been making fun of Bartimaeus all of a sudden started cheering Bartimaeus on. How quickly people's reactions can change! What was important was that Jesus was pleased with Bartimaeus's persistence. He considered persistence a visible display of Bartimaeus's faith. For Bartimaeus our theme verse (Psalm 118:14) was something he lived out. The Lord became his strength and his song and ultimately became his salvation!

CHALLENGE Never Give Up!

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Pieces of construction paper (one sheet per X-Team)
- Pens
- Tape dispensers

Bartimaeus was pretty annoying to those around him. Yet his persistence in calling out to Jesus changed his life forever. Bartimaeus was healed, had his sight restored, and most importantly, had his faith praised by Jesus. It's hard to even imagine what a life-changing event this must have been for Bartimaeus. Have a volunteer look up in his or her Bible Hebrews 12:1b

**Slip-up
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and read it aloud. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Explain that "persistence" is a word similar in meaning to "patience." **Jesus rewards those who are persistent—those who persevere in life and don't give up.**

Hand out pieces of construction paper and pens to each X-Team. Have teams brainstorm various needs in their personal and spiritual lives where they need to be persistent or follow through on a commitment. Encourage team members to write down these needs on their construction paper sheet. After a few minutes have gone by, invite one of the team members to roll up the piece of construction paper in the shape of a baton and tape it shut (*with comments visible on the outside*). Explain to X-Teams that they are going to have a relay

race against the other teams using the batons they just created. (*Stagger students from each X-Team at intervals of at least 10-15 yards if outdoors and 5-10 yards if indoors. Have teens wait for your signal before starting the race.*)

Prior to giving a "start" signal, explain to teens that this relay race is symbolic of things in their lives that they need to be persistent in. As they participate in this relay, encourage them to think about some of the things in their lives that are hindering them from running the race that God has set before them.

After teens have finished the race, close the time in prayer. Ask for guidance for teens as they attempt to persistently run life's race. Hand out the **Extra Study Option** to those teens who are interested in pursuing this subject further.

Slip-up
Pick-me-up

Giving up
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TABLE TALK WORKSHEET

Persistence Pays

Before you start discussing these questions, go around the circle and have each person make an annoying sound. Then take a vote to see what sound the group thought was most annoying!

Persistent people can be annoying. Do you ever want to just scream when a telemarketer calls and begins his or her series of questions? Yet persistence can be a good thing as well.

Describe a time when you kept at something even though it was difficult or you wanted to quit.

Have you ever befriended someone (that you didn't think you liked based on a first impression) because he or she was persistent in pursuing a friendship with you? Explain.

What are some areas in life where persistence pays off? List them below.

What has been the most rewarding thing you've ever done that required hard work and persistence? Describe it below.

MESSAGE WORKSHEET

Being Blind

Directions: You will need blindfolds and a few “obstacles” (*chairs and tables if indoors, objects from the environment if outdoors*). Choose one volunteer and blindfold him or her. After he or she is blindfolded, set up a simple “obstacle course.” Those not blindfolded will lead the blindfolded student around the obstacles using only verbal cues. No touching allowed! If time permits, take turns leading and being blindfolded, then regroup and answer the questions below.

How did it feel to be blindfolded and led around? (Answer this question if it applies to you.)

How did it feel to guide this person around using only verbal clues? (Answer this question if it applies to you.)

How might being blind change your life? Explain.

What do you think the hardest part of being blind might be? Explain.

The man we will be studying about in today’s Bible session was blind. He was excited to talk with Jesus because he knew Jesus was the only One who could heal him. Let’s see how his scenario turned out!

EXTRA STUDY OPTION

Persistence Pays

It pays to be persistent! Read the following Old Testament passages that demonstrate persistence, then answer the questions that follow.

Genesis 6:9–7:5: Noah

What do you admire most about Noah’s persistence in this situation?

What happened to Noah (and all humanity since then) because Noah did not give up on his task?

Exodus 17:8-16: Moses

What do you admire most about Moses’ persistence in this situation?

What happened to Joshua and his army because Moses did not give up on his task?

These are just two examples of people in the Bible that refused to give up. There are many more. Take a minute now to reflect on your own life.

In what area do you need to be more persistent? Explain. (For example in prayer, Bible study, sticking by a friend, sharing your faith, etc.)

How might Jesus reward your persistence in this area?

Don’t give up! Jesus rewards persistence. Be encouraged as you run (*with persistence*) the race that has been marked out for you! (*Hebrews 12:1b*)

Extra Study Option: Make photocopies of this Extra Study Option and give it to any student who received salvation today or others who are interested in learning more about salvation. (*For more information about the use of Extra Study Options, see page 6.*)

DAY FIVE

All of these games have to do with getting what we need.

Feed the Need

Supplies:

- A tennis ball
- Assortment of wrapped chocolates or candies
- *The Jesus Expedition*™ CD, CD player

Have all X-Teams form one large circle. (For a very large group, form a few large circles instead.) Have students think of needs that they have. (Needs can be spiritual, emotional, or physical and serious or humorous.) Students pass around a tennis ball while music plays. When the music stops, the person holding the tennis ball must share aloud what his or her need is. After sharing, a leader tosses him or her a wrapped candy as a reward. Allow as many students as possible to share.

Serious Stuff

Supplies:

- A sheet of paper and pen for each student

Have X-Teams mingle. In this game students will go around and write down all of the different "stuff" that others have. Items can't be duplicated so students need to find as many different items as they can. For example, articles of clothing (a pair of jeans, a T-shirt, tennis shoes, a pair of sandals, etc.) all count as different items. Other things might be a pair of sunglasses, a hat, a watch, earrings, a wallet, etc. Students need to be creative as they search out as much "stuff" as they can. Have students raise their hands

if they found more than 30, then 40, then 50 things. When winners have been narrowed down, have a leader check to make sure all things listed are eligible items and none are duplicates.

What-cha Want?

Supplies: None needed

Have each X-Team form a long line and play a game similar to the game "telephone." Have leaders whisper in the ear of the last person in line a fast food order of 10 items. Have this student whisper the order to the next person in line, and so on. The team that recites the order closest to the original order given wins.

Blind Jump

Supplies:

- Blindfolds (one per pair) and one long rope (or jump rope) per pair

Have students pair up within their X-Teams. Have one person blindfold his or her partner. Hand each pair a long rope. Have the pairs jump rope together for three minutes. Encourage the "seeing" partner to guide the "non-seeing" partner, and count how many times they jump together without missing. (When a jump is missed, pairs can continue jumping but must start their count over.) After three minutes, have partners switch roles. Allow three minutes for the pairs to jump again. Regroup and remove blindfolds. Find out which pair jumped together the most times and reward points to that pair's X-Team. Use this opportunity to introduce the idea of people needing one another in order to accomplish a goal.

WHAT U NEED

SESSION FIVE

OPENER

Must Haves!

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Magazines (*preferably magazines aimed at the teenage market*)
- Scissors
- Poster boards
- Glue sticks or tape

After completing the Crazy Comp games have students sit with their X-Teams. Explain, ***We all need stuff. Obvious stuff like a roof over our heads, clothes to wear, and chocolate. OK, we don't really need chocolate, but you get the drift. In today's society, however, we often think we need much more than is really essential. In this next activity we're going to create a poster that shows what a typical teenager "needs."***

Hand out a poster board, a few magazines, and a few pairs of scissors (*per X-Team*). Give teens a few minutes to browse through the magazine pages, find pictures of typical teenagers, and cut them out. Once a few pictures have been cut out, have teens agree upon one teen photo to represent their group. Encourage teens to "name" this teen and glue or tape his or her picture onto their poster. Next have teens once again leaf through the magazines and "accessorize" their teen by finding objects, clothes, and other "must haves" for him or her. Have teens tape these things onto their poster

Optional Opener

Supplies: A flip chart or butcher paper, markers

Have X-Teams write the words "I Need" on the top of their papers. Give teams a few minutes to come up with all of the needs that members of their teams have. Invite teens to list their small and large needs. Some examples of needs might be: a car, a larger allowance, a boyfriend or girlfriend, an acceptance letter from a college, a better relationship with a parent, a job to help pay bills, etc. When teens are finished ask them if they have ever prayed about any of these needs. Explain that although we all have needs, many of us don't think to share them with God. Give teens a chance to explain why they would or wouldn't want to share these needs with God. (*Some students may feel that it is silly or a "waste" of God's time to bring personal wants/needs to Him. Other students may bring all of their wants/needs before God.*) Invite interaction here as to what kinds of needs God

next to the teen's photo. After groups are finished, have various X-Teams "introduce" their teen and describe the things he or she has.

Regroup and explain, ***In today's world we are bombarded with messages that scream, "You need this!" A reality check might show that what we are being told are needs are nothing more***

**Slip-up
Pick-me-up**

Longing for more and more
Knowing Jesus will provide

SESSION FIVE

than glorified wants. Today's session is designed at getting us to think about what our true needs are.

TABLE TALK

Big Gift

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Copies of Table Talk, "Big Gift" (page 46)
- Foam balls (one per X-Team)

Hand out copies of "Big Gift." Have students get into their X-Teams and form a large circle. Give students time to answer all of the questions on the worksheet. When students are finished throw a soft foam ball to each X-Team circle. When a student catches the ball, he or she must share one worksheet answer with the rest of the group. Keep going until all students have had a chance to share aloud. Remember to let the students talk and react without the leaders judging their comments. Teens need to know their opinions will be heard and not instantly rejected.

MESSAGE

Taxed Out

Time: 15 minutes

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Pencils or pens

Have the students open their Bibles to Matthew 17:24-27 and read through the

passage on their own. When students have finished, explain: ***In Jesus' time paying your taxes was a big deal. Actually, paying taxes still is a big deal today! The particular tax mentioned in this passage was paid out once a year and was used to support God's temple. It was known that members of the royal family didn't have to pay this tax. What Jesus was saying in verse 25 as He dialogued with Peter was in effect "Since I am the Son of God, I shouldn't have to pay a tax that supports God's house." Jesus was literally tax-exempt in this case. However, because Jesus didn't want to offend anyone, He paid the tax in a remarkable way. The miraculous catch of a fish and the coin that it produced was enough money to pay for both Jesus' and Peter's tax. It also likely sent those tax collectors on their way in a hurry when they realized the power Jesus had to provide for His and Peter's needs!***

Hand out the Message worksheet "Taxed Out" and allow students a few minutes to jot down their answers. When students are finished invite interaction related to what they wrote.

Share, ***Jesus often supplies money or meets needs in unusual ways when churches, missionaries, or Christians pray.*** Then ask students the following questions related to the passage.

- ***Why do you think Jesus sometimes provides for people's needs in unusual or even amazing ways? Explain.***

Slip-up
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Longing for more and more
Knowing Jesus will provide

SESSION FIVE

- **Why do you think Jesus usually makes us work for the money or things we need? Explain.**
- **How would you feel if Jesus provided for your needs in amazing ways as He did in Matthew 17:24-27?**

Share, *Jesus is our provider! He still provides for our needs in unusual ways today! Yet, Jesus wants us to do our part as well (like Peter demonstrated when he had to fish his tax out of the water)! As we trust Jesus to be our provider, our theme verse (Psalm 118:14) takes root in our lives and Jesus becomes our strength, song, and salvation!*

CHALLENGE

Real Needs

Time: 10 minutes

Supplies:

- Pennies
- Packets of hot sauce (*one per student*)
- Paper towels

Hand a penny, a packet of hot sauce (*available at many fast food chains or supermarkets*), and a paper towel to each student. Encourage students to shine up their penny using the hot sauce. (*The hot sauce will turn a dull, dirty penny into a penny that looks brand new.*) After students have finished doing this and have washed their hands, encourage them to pocket their change and use it as a reminder of how Jesus

wants to work in their lives and provide for their needs. Share, *Like the dull penny, we often are lacking something. What we need to do is bring Jesus into the equation of our lives! Sometimes Jesus will work in very unusual ways; other times He will want our involvement in meeting various needs. Regardless of the circumstances, we have to ask for Jesus to step in and provide for us.*

Close by sharing, *We are to give all of our needs to Jesus in prayer. Philippians 4:6 says, "But in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Jesus wants to provide for us in many ways: physically, spiritually, and emotionally. We need to open up to Him and trust Him with the needs in our lives, both big and small.*

Have students divide into pairs and share one need that they have. Give pairs a chance to pray together about each student's particular need. Allow time after the prayer for teens to share together what they enjoyed most about *Extreme Expedition* and what they hope to take home with them as a result of having been a part of it.

Hand out the **Extra Study Option** worksheet "Our Deepest Need" to students who want to reflect further on what their deepest need is.

Slip-up Longing for more and more
Pick-me-up Knowing Jesus will provide

TABLE TALK WORKSHEET

Big Gift!

Directions: Answer the questions below honestly. (*In other words, don't try to impress if it isn't what you'd really do.*) You have been given \$5,000. Below, list what you would buy or do with the money.

Item Purchased	Cost of Item	Why this Item? Explain:
<hr/>		

Now that you've figured out what you'd use it for, how much of this money was used for your needs? Give a rough percentage.

How much of this money was used to meet other people's needs? Give a rough percentage.

In this session we're going to see how Jesus provided (*in a very unusual way*) for a need that both He and Peter had.

MESSAGE WORKSHEET

Taxed Out

A popular slogan goes something like this: There are two things for certain in life: death and taxes. *What do you think this slogan is really saying? Explain.*

How do your parents react to having to pay their taxes each year? Do they pay early or wait until the last minute? Why?

Have you ever paid taxes on your earnings? How did you feel about it?

When you work full time (if you don't already) how do you think you'll feel about paying taxes?

How can Jesus' example in Matthew 17 motivate you when it comes to paying what is due to others? Explain.

EXTRA STUDY OPTION

Our Deepest Need

What is your deepest need? Write about it here.

Can people close to you help you meet this need? If yes, how? If no, why not? Explain.

If you are never able to have this need met, how will you feel?

Have you given this need to Jesus and asked for His help in meeting it? Why or why not?

Philippians 4:19 says, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Your need might not be met exactly the way you want it to be, but God promises to meet it as He sees fit. Can you trust Him with your deepest need? He says you can!

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