



Summer 2004 *Go! Online* Bible Study

Your Mission Field, Your Campus

Materials:

- *Go! Online* Download Video: “Your Mission Field, Your Campus”
- Computer, monitor, or video projector to display video
- Copies of *Go! Online* Group Activity for “Your Mission Field, Your Campus” (one per student, as described below)
- Copies of Summer 2004 *Go!* magazine for each student (unless they’ve already been distributed)

Note on scheduling this Bible study: We’re including this study in our summer quarter for a reason. It’s helpful to motivate students to get serious about reaching their campuses before the school year starts. It might be most effective to teach this study a week or two before the first day of school.

Group Activity:

This introductory activity will require a little bit of space for students to move around in.

Before your group time, make copies of both group activity sheets. Give copies of the “It!” sheet to about 20 percent of your group and copies of the “Not It!” sheet to the other 80 percent. (Note: Include a minimum of three students in the “It!” group, even if your total number of students is small.)

Ask everyone in the “It!” group to stand on one side of the room and everyone in the “Not It!” group to stand on the other side of the room. Have the “It!” group pick one person to go and stand in the middle of the “Not It!” group. Explain that you’re going to play a game of freeze tag. Depending on your space, this can be all-out running tag—or you can restrict both the chaser and the runners to taking teeny-tiny walking steps. However you work it, everyone in the “Not It!” group who gets touched by the “It!” tagger must freeze in place.

Explain that when you say “Go!” the “It!” person will have 30 seconds (or longer, depending on your space) to tag as many “Not It!” people as possible. When the time is up, say “Stop!” Count the number of people who are tagged. The idea here is that the tagger should not be able to tag very many people in the limited time frame. So you may have to adjust the rules to keep the “It!” from being overly successful.

Next, explain that you’re going to play one more round. Ask everyone in the “Not It!” group to stand again on their side of the room. This time, however, ask all the “It!” students to stand strategically among the group of “Not It!” students. This time



when you say, “Go!” the “It!” group should be able to tag many more of the “Not It!” group than the one tagger was able to do on his or her own.

After the same time period, say “Stop!” Then count the number of tagged “Not It!” students. It should be significantly higher. Ask everyone to return to their seats.

Transition:

Ask someone to explain why the “It!” group was so much more successful the second time than they were the first time. The obvious answer should be that they were all working together and they started right in the middle of the “Not It!” group.

Now say something like the following:

We usually think of missions as sending one or a few Christians to a place in the world where there are lots of unbelievers. We expect missionaries learn the language of the people they’re going to reach and commit themselves to living in that foreign culture. And that makes sense for foreign missions.

But there’s a mission field full of unbelievers right here in our town. In fact, it’s one of the biggest mission fields in the world. It’s called the public school system, and it offers a huge opportunity to Christian students to be missionaries right now. You don’t have to raise financial support. You don’t have to learn the language or the culture. You already know it. You’re part of it.

Just before He left the planet, Jesus said, “You will be my missionaries.” Like it or not, we represent Him wherever we’re at. And the plan He laid out for His followers was to start by spreading the truth about Him at home in Jerusalem:

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem [first], and in all Judea and Samaria [larger region], and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Where should we be most effective at reaching people with the Good News about Jesus that has changed our lives? Right where we live everyday or in a faraway country? Which time was the “It!” group most successful? When they sent one player over to tag people or when they all tagged the people around them?



Today, we’re going to study how we can make the most of our opportunity to be missionaries right on our own campuses. What we’ll talk about can also apply to reaching

out to unbelievers at work, in our families, and wherever we spend time with people who haven’t yet trusted in Jesus.

1. Know the Message

The reason some of us are afraid to live like missionaries for Jesus is because we can't really explain what we believe. We know we're Christians. We know we're going to heaven. But we're not sure how to put the basics into words. The first step to being a missionary is to know your message.

Of course, the message is very simple: Every living person has a problem, and we believe there is only one solution.

The Problem

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23, NIV).

“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23, NIV).

God is all-good, all-powerful, perfect and holy. Every human is born into sin. By nature, we live for ourselves. Since God's goodness can't mix with human sin, we're all doomed to live apart from Him forever. Eternity without God is death and hell.

Some religions teach that you can solve this problem by living a really good life or by following a bunch of rules or giving lots of money to a church. We don't believe that. The Bible doesn't teach that. Instead, it teaches that there's only one way out of this separation from God.

The Solution

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NIV).

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6, NIV).

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9, NIV).

God was not satisfied with being separated from humans. He loves us too much for that. So He made the choice to send Jesus to earth as a man to pay the death we owed for our sin. We believe that the only solution to finding peace with God and going to heaven is to trust in Jesus for our salvation. We're convinced that He is the only way to have a right relationship with God.

Message Practice: Ask your students to divide into pairs and practice explaining the problem and solution as clearly and briefly as possible. Encourage them to help each other make it clear and easy to understand. Allow them to practice for several minutes.





2. Live the Message

Remember what Jesus said? “You will be my witnesses.” Your life is a testimony for the reality of Jesus, whether you like it or not. If Jesus is real—and if the Holy Spirit really brings power to believers to live differently—then it’s going to show up in the lives of His followers. If trusting Jesus doesn’t change anything, why should anyone pay attention to your message?

Live in God’s Power

So far, we’ve been quoting the second half of Acts 1:8. Here’s how it starts:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

At the moment of salvation, every believer receives God’s Holy Spirit in his or her life (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). God’s Spirit is our power source for living in a way that will stand out in the world. Galatians 5:22-23 lists just a few of the changes that will make you different from those without Jesus: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (NIV).

If those character traits are showing up in your life, people at school, work, and home will notice the difference. And, eventually, they’ll want to be able to have that same peace, joy and love.

Be Real About Your Struggles

One wrong idea lots of unbelievers have about Christians is that we think we’re perfect. Often, non-Christians accuse us of hypocrisy because they have the impression that we think we don’t sin anymore.

Obviously, being a Christian doesn’t mean we don’t fail. It means that we’re growing to become like Jesus. But we still make a lot of wrong choices along the way. One of the best things we can do in front of unbelievers is to let them see us struggle and admit when we make mistakes.

Sometimes we’re afraid to do that because we think we’ll drive people away from Jesus. And our sinful choices can distract from the message we want unsaved friends and family to hear. But the truth is always the most powerful thing. And the truth is that we want to do what’s right, but sometimes we still fail.

We’re Christians because we know we need God—not because we think we’re better than anyone else.

Love Conquers All

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8, NIV).

The one thing that should make Christians in public schools and work-places and families stand out from everyone else is love—love for each other and love for those who don't believe as we do.

Who wants to follow a Savior whose followers are unkind, mean, angry, judgmental and always fighting with each other? Love requires us to give up our own way and give ourselves away to others. Love requires us to refuse to get even and to look for ways to do good for those who hurt us. Love requires us to show kindness both to the unpopular and the homecoming court.



Would that kind of living stand out at your school?

3. Be Ready to Pay the Price

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.... They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me” (John 15:18,21, NIV).

No matter how closely we follow Jesus—no matter how much kindness, love and peace shines out of our lives—some people will not like us because of who we follow. If you think about it, it makes sense. The message we're trying to spread came from someone who was killed for delivering it.

People who deliver the Good News of Jesus aren't likely to become popular in the world.

In fact, it's more likely that some people just won't like us. Or respect us. Or even treat us fairly. We should expect that.

For some reason, we expect foreign missionaries to face opposition for telling others about Jesus, but we're sometimes surprised that anyone where we live would be opposed to that message.

Being a missionary for Jesus—even on our own high school campus or in our workplace—can be expensive. It doesn't cost money, but it might cost us a reputation or popularity or position. But you can afford it. God gives you that power through the Spirit. You can find the courage in Him.

4. Start Talking

When you understand what you believe and you've been living it in front of people—and you're ready to pay the price for representing Jesus—you've still eventually got to say something. In the end, being a witness for Jesus often involves telling someone about Him. Out loud. With our own voices.

It's strange that this is so hard for us. (And it is hard for almost every Christian.) We

wouldn't hesitate to tell people about winning a million bucks or getting asked out by someone we've had a crush on. But this Good News doesn't spill out so naturally, does it?

A few things that help:

Pray

Ask God for opportunities to tell your friends about your relationship with Him through Jesus. Ask Him for the courage to start talking at the right time and the wisdom to know what to say.

Look for Moments

When witnessing to people you have a relationship with, it's not always best to just lay it on them every time you see them. God will provide moments when they're open and you're available. Be ready for those times.

Drop Seeds

If you're a believer, your relationship with God is a huge part of your life. You don't have to keep Him out of all your conversations with unbelievers. It's okay to mention in passing things that include Him. Don't be afraid to mention your youth group or a Christian song you like or the fact that you pray.

Of course, we don't want to force these things into conversations just to call attention to our faith. But we don't need to hide them, either. And those natural mentions of God in our lives can become seeds that eventually sprout into conversations about Him.

Ask a Hard Question

To get to the heart of the matter, you sometimes have to ask a hard question. The article "Live It! Say It! Count It!" in the Summer 2004 issue of *Go!* magazine suggests this question: "Do you believe you're going to heaven?" And then, "Why?"

People will often answer yes to the first question no matter what they believe about Jesus.

The second question can open the door for you to tell them why you believe you're going to heaven—and why you're convinced that "being a good person" just isn't good enough to get anyone there.

Leave Room for More

If someone isn't ready to trust in Christ, you don't have to shut the door on him or her. You can leave the door open for more conversations in the coming days, weeks or even years. Of course, that means they'll be watching you to see if your faith actually makes a difference in your life. They'll notice whether you still like them, pay attention to them, care about what they say. It's always possible you'll get another chance to make the case for Jesus. And even if you don't, someone else down the road might.



Video Conclusion:

This would be a great time to play the downloadable video clip that accompanies this Bible study. It's also called "Your Mission Field, Your Campus." It's 2 minutes, 53 seconds long, and it's designed to remind and motivate your students of the importance of reaching out to their friends at school with the Good News about Jesus.

Finally, this would also be a great time to present the FiSH program to your group if you're interested in seeing your students start an outreach club on their campuses. FiSH offers an excellent student-led strategy for reaching unbelievers in public schools. To find out more about the program, go to www.catchthis.net.

Close in prayer, asking God to give you and your students the passion and courage to represent Jesus effectively to your friends and family members this school year.

Scripture quotations taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission.



Copyright © 2004, North American Mission Board, 4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30022, www.go.studentz.com/leader