

Main Point: The Good News of Jesus changes lives.

Opening Activity: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow.

Supplies: A bag of candy

Set-Up: Divide your group in half

How to Play: When everyone is situated, have each person share 3 different, truthful things about themselves: something they did yesterday, something they did today, and something that they will do tomorrow. After all the students have shared their 3 “events,” THEN ask one student to try and accurately recall all the other students’ events. If they get them right, give them a prize of some sort. If they get them wrong (and time permits), allow another student to try.

Ask: What was hard about this game?

Say: Because we don't live a consistent life, things are always changing! It's hard to remember all the differences and all the changes others go through.

Ask: What are some things that never change? What are some things that stay the same?

Say: The Good News of Jesus never changes. It's always the same! But thankfully, our lives are totally and radically changed when Jesus comes into the picture!

Say: We're going to start our study on the book of Galatians today and I'm really excited! Let me go ahead and tell you the main point of tonight's study: **The Good News of Jesus changes lives.**

Have a student read Galatians 1:1-5

Ask: When was the last time you wrote a letter? To whom did you write it? Why did you write it? What was it about?

Say: Paul is writing a letter to a church. This particular church met in Galatia, an ancient region in what is now modern day Turkey. This church was having some BIG issues and Paul wanted them to get straightened out. But before we get to the issues, let's find out who Paul was.

Ask: Who does Paul say he was in these verses? What's an apostle?

Say: An apostle was a follower of Jesus who had physically seen Jesus. Most of the ones we are familiar with were called Jesus' disciples. Paul was the last of the apostles.

Have a student read Galatians 1:13-14

Ask: What was your life like before you became a Christian?

Say: Paul had previously been named Saul. He was a devote Jew who tried to destroy the Christian faith. Then Jesus showed up and completely changed Paul.

Ask: How has your life changed since becoming a Christian? How are you different?

Say: Paul changed in a huge way. Namely, instead of persecuting the church, he began to help start churches! The church of Galatia was one of the churches he helped to start. But now, the churches were having big problems.

Have a student read Galatians 1:6-9

Ask: When was the last time you were lied to? How did you figure out you were being told something different from the truth? What were the consequences?

Say: *(Leader, this is a good spot for a personal story if you have one!)* Paul had heard that there was a lie being spread around the church at Galatia. The lie was that Jesus wasn't the only thing you needed to be saved! People were beginning to preach that there were other things, real

important things that you had to do in order to be right with God. Paul was shocked that the people at that church were so easily enticed into believing that Jesus wasn't enough. But sometimes we do the same thing.

Ask: What are some things people believe you need to do in order to be "right" with God?

Say: A lot of the time it sounds like "live a good life" or "do more good than bad" or some other variation of that theme. The terrible truth is that those are all lies! The Gospel (or Good News) is that Jesus is all anyone needs in order to be made right with God. And Paul wanted to prove that he knew this for a fact.

Activity #2: World War Alphabet

Supplies: Pens, Paper

Set-Up: Give out a pen and paper to each student. Have them write the ABC's vertically on the paper (up and down).

How to Play: Tell them that you're going to give them a topic, and they have to try to list as many different words as they can: one for each letter of the alphabet. (Apple for A, etc.) Here's some topic ideas: Friends, Fun Activities, TV Shows, Food. Give a prize to the student has the most answers.

Ask: What was the hardest part of this game?

Say: For me, it's coming up with new words for each letter! I start running out of ideas! I'm glad, though, that God had ONE idea for taking care of our sin problem: Jesus!

Have a student read Galatians 1:11-12 and Galatians 1:15-21

Ask: Who told you about Jesus? Who helped you learn how to become a Christian?

Say: Paul became a Christian by meeting Jesus. His message to the church at Galatia was the message that he received straight from Jesus. It wasn't a message from His followers. It wasn't a message from other important believers. It wasn't from people who might get the message mixed up. It was all from Jesus.

So why were people trying to add something to the Good News that Jesus had come to save us from our sins? Paul gives us a hint right here.

Have a student read Galatians 1:10

Ask: Who's the most recent friend you've made? How did you become friends?

Say: It's one thing to become friends with someone because you share a common interest or are in the same activity. It's another to try to get people to like you by twisting words around to make yourself look better than you really are. And that's what the people who were spreading the false Gospel in Galatia were doing; trying to win influence by preaching a Gospel that was appealing, but wrong.

Ask: Why is Paul so concerned about the authenticity of the Gospel message?

Say: To change the Gospel is to make someone miss the Gospel. Missing the Gospel is the difference between someone being right with God or not.

Ask: What harm can a misunderstanding of the Gospel do for someone who is already a Christian?

Say: Being in a faith relationship with Jesus makes you right with God. You don't need other things to add to it to get "more right" with God. Paul wanted to make sure the church in Galatia knew that all they needed was Christ.

Application

Ask: What's the difference between being saved from your sin and being close to God?

Say: When you are saved, in God's eyes you are perfect and whole. Your position is set in stone. But how close you "feel" to God can vary depending on your heart, actions, or habits. They are two VERY different things, though often connected. Paul was dealing with people who thought it took more than Jesus to be saved. Let's never get that wrong! All you need is faith in Jesus to be right with God.

Ask: Why do you think there is a temptation to make being right with God something other than faith in Jesus?

Say: There is something in our nature that wants to EARN God's favor. It goes against us to "just believe." I hope looking over Galatians will help us understand this wonderful truth better!

Pray: God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us from our sins and make us right with You. Remind us that all we need is Jesus.