

Break the Good News

JOHN 1:1–5, 14

2



GOAL

Youth explore the importance of words—both the tone and the context—that God uses to share news with us and that we use to share news with others.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- AT** Abstract Thinking
- C** Conversation
- CT** Concrete Thinking
- D** Drama
- G** Game
- M** Music
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Holy One, when I am overwhelmed with news, help me quiet the voices that do not belong to you and focus on the people in my care. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Jesus' coming and ongoing presence in the world is the *news* part of the good news. Jesus and his followers share this good news: Jesus is God-made-flesh living among us. Jesus' message for us is not a human-interest story to be buried on the eighth page of the newspaper or tacked on to the last five minutes of the newscast. Jesus' good news is the lead story, the headline. Because of this headline, everything is changed. All parts of our lives are shaped by the news that the Word of God, God's only Son, is born fully human and lives with us now and always.

THE BIBLE STORY

As one of the Gospels, the Gospel of John focuses on the life of Jesus; however, John also focuses on demonstrating the divinity of Jesus. John 1:1–5, 14 establishes this focus. John wants the reader to recognize Jesus' equality with God immediately. In calling Jesus the Word of God, we see Jesus' divinity, and we begin to understand what a radical claim that it is. Jesus is both God among us and the Word of God with us. We participate in telling this ongoing news of God to others.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth think of news as information about the world, about events or activities that are going on currently. In their lives, news could be a school event, an upcoming paper due, or an upcoming sports tournament. Youth usually view church and Jesus as something steady and true, a place that will always be there for them, a person they can pray to when in need. The crux of today's session is convincing the youth that the good news of Jesus impacts them now and shapes their lives daily. The challenge is to draw on the constant presence of Jesus when encountering the ups and downs of the ever-changing news around them.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the choices you make:

- “Taboo” (p. 14): Create game cards using Resource Pages 1 and 2, and gather a buzzer and a timer.
- “Reading about It” (p. 15): Download and print copies of “Challenging Church Leadership to Take a Stand on Racial Issues” (bit.ly/FMBeloved) or read on internet-connected devices.
- “Spreading News” (p. 16): Draw a five-column chart on newsprint and use the *Go Tell* infographic poster (bit.ly/FMInfographicPosters, Year 2 Set).
- “Recording a 60-Second Sermon” (p. 16): Preview the 60-second sermon “Attitude in Prayer Is Key!” (bit.ly/FM60SecPray, 1:00).

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Construction paper
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Tape

WHAT'S GOING ON?

CT AM

As youth arrive, invite them to write headlines from television or social media that they have heard throughout the week. Have them tape their headlines on the wall. When all youth have arrived, discuss similarities in the stories that caught their attention and ask follow-up questions about the headlines and the news they tell.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

TELLING THE GOOD NEWS

CT

Lead a responsive reading. The leader begins with the first line of the refrain of the song “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” Youth respond to “Go tell . . .” with “over the hills and everywhere.” You repeat “Go tell . . .” They ask, “Wait, go tell what?” Finally, you say a line of good news, which they repeat. You will use this responsive pattern in each session.

Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.
Go tell it on the mountain . . .
Wait, go tell what?
Jesus came to live among us.
Jesus came to live among us.

NEWS!

C CT

Have youth imagine that their lives are the subject of a newscast being broadcast today. Tell them to think about a headline from the past few days of their lives. Give each person an opportunity to share their headline to prompt curiosity about one another's lives. Invite follow-up questions. Ask if there are other headlines from their school or other parts of their lives to share.

Tell the youth that, during this session, they will be looking at how Jesus is God's *news* or *headline*.

- ☐ Game cards from Resource Pages 1 and 2
- ☐ Buzzer
- ☐ Timer (a cell phone timer is fine)
- ☐ Paper and pen



Teaching Tip: Before the session begins, cut apart the game cards from Resource Pages 1 and 2. Place the cards in a pile, facedown at the front of the room.

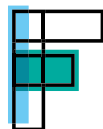
TABOO

G X

Form two teams. From each team, select one person to be the first clue-giver. Each team's clue-giver comes to the front of the room and faces their team. One person will give clues while the other uses the buzzer. Set the timer for 30 seconds.

The clue-giver draws a card from the pile of game cards. Using only words (not actions), the clue-giver tries to get their team to guess the bold word at the top of the game card. The clue-giver cannot say any of the five words below the bold word. When a word is guessed correctly, the clue-giver draws a new card. The clue-giver should hold the game card where the member of the other team can see it and buzz the clue-giver if they say a word from the list. If the clue-giver receives a buzz, the game card is discarded and a new one drawn. After the 30 seconds, the other team's member becomes the clue-giver, and the previous clue-giver becomes the buzzer.

Use paper and pen to keep score. Teams earn one point for each bold word guessed within 30 seconds. Teams also earn a point each time the other team is buzzed during the round. Play as many rounds as you can with the game cards provided. Switch clue-givers after each round. At the end, declare the winner. Tell the youth that, in this session, they will be looking at the word/words of God and what these have to communicate with us.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options

DRAWING THE WORD

A AT

Distribute copies of Resource Page 3 and colored pencils. Have youth move to a quiet space in the room to work independently. Tell them that you are going to read today's Scripture passage slowly, three times, with silence between each reading. During the reading and silence, youth draw images and write words that stand out to them about the passage. There are no right or wrong answers to what youth write and draw.

Read John 1:1–5, 14 three times, slowly, leaving silence between each reading. After the final reading, invite youth to create a title or headline for their creation. Youth may share their creations with the group if they wish.

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Copies of Resource Page 3
- ☐ Colored pencils

READING THE WORD

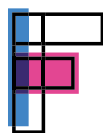
C AT

Explain that, in the Scripture passage you are about to read, youth will hear the word *word* repeated often. In Greek, the phrase that we translate as *word* is *ha logos* (pronounced “ha lo-gahs”). In Greek, this means reason, thinking, and word. It refers to someone's intellect. Think about this meaning as the passage is read aloud.

Read aloud John 1:1–5, 14 as written in the Bible. Read the verses again and, when you see *word*, substitute “word, reason, thinking” to emphasize the broader meaning. Following the two readings, ask these questions:

- ➡ What does it mean that “all things came into being with the word”?
- ➡ Imagine you were among the first hearers of this message; how would you have responded to hearing that the word of God had come to live among you?
- ➡ What kind of news would these verses have been for those who lived in that day?
- ➡ What kind of news is it for us to hear that God's word lives in us now?

- ☐ Bibles



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

READING ABOUT IT

C

Direct youth to “Challenging Church Leadership to Take a Stand on Racial Issues” (bit.ly/FMBeloved). Explain that Abby was 16 years old when these events happened, and she was 17 when she penned the article. Read the article together. Ask these or similar questions:

- ➡ How did Abby respond to the stories going on around her?

- ☐ Smartphones or internet-connected devices
- ☐ Copies of bit.ly/FMBeloved (optional)

- ➔ How was her response different from that of the adults in her church?
- ➔ What news can you create within your church? What stories does your church need to hear?

- ☐ Go Tell infographic poster (Year 2 set)
- ☐ Newsprint and markers

SPREADING NEWS

CT C

On newsprint, create a five-column chart with these headings: Type of Media; Who Creates Material?; Audience; What's Good?; What's Bad?.

Invite youth to brainstorm at least five forms of media/ways of sharing news. These could be electronic devices, social media platforms, or simple conversations. Refer to the *Go Tell* infographic poster for ideas. Have youth work together to fill out the newsprint chart reflecting particular forms of sharing news. (Example of column responses: TikTok videos; created by young people; young people; fun and playful; can seem silly).

After completing the chart, use these questions for discussion:

- ➔ Which type of media is best for sharing the good news of Jesus?
- ➔ Which allows people to hear Jesus' story in ways that they could interact with?
- ➔ What media does your church use well?
- ➔ What media could your church use better to share the good news of Jesus? How can your group assist in using new media?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

- ☐ Internet-connected device
- ☐ Smartphones



Teaching Tip: Preview this 60-second sermon on prayer (bit.ly/FM60SecPray, 1:00).

RECORDING A 60-SECOND SERMON

QC T X

Explain that a popular movement once had people challenging themselves to preach a sermon in sixty seconds. It was thought that people would not listen to a 15–20 minute sermon. Show the 60-second sermon “Attitude in Prayer Is Key!” on YouTube (bit.ly/FM60SecPray, 1:00).

Challenge youth to work in pairs or teams to create their own “60-second Sermon” videos. The topic of their sermon should be good news that is relevant and informative and speaks to your church or community. Brainstorm, create, and record their sermons. Once completed, encourage them to share recordings with the group.

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Smartphones
- ☐ Paper and pens
- ☐ Props (optional)



Teaching Tip: If you have a youth or adult who is good at technology, they may record these broadcasts and edit them together to share with the whole congregation via social media.

BREAKING NEWS

D AM

Form groups. Encourage each group to think of a Bible story they know well. They can look up the story in the Bible to recall details. Have groups create a breaking-news broadcast about the Bible story. They may include an anchor, an interviewer, a witness, and props. They can write a script. Encourage them to convey an urgency in their broadcast as newscasters do.

Invite groups to perform their breaking-news broadcasts for one another. Use these questions for discussion:

- ➔ What makes the Bible story urgent or important news?
- ➔ How do you think people of the day responded when they first heard this story?
- ➔ How can you tell this story today so others can hear it as good news?

GOOD NEWS IN SEVEN WORDS

CT

☐ Paper and pens

Explain that a Christian magazine once invited writers and readers to express the good news in no more than seven words. “It’s instructive,” the editor of the project wrote, “to see what Christian proclamation boils down to when someone is put on the spot and only has a few words. What is the essence of the essence of Christianity?”¹

Distribute paper and pens. Invite youth to express the good news in seven words. Have them share their messages. Note similarities and differences. Discuss ways to share their work with the wider church.



FOLLOWING JESUS

JESUS SAYS “GO!”

CT

Gather in a circle. Have youth send each other out using Jesus’ words from Matthew 28:18–20.

- Turn to the person on your right and say, “Jesus said, ‘Go!’” Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Turn to the person on your left and say, “Jesus says, ‘Tell!’” Have each person do the same, one by one.
- Each person looks to the center and says, in unison, “Jesus says, ‘I am with you.’”
- Let everyone say together, “Amen!”

1. David Heim, “The Gospel in Seven Words,” *The Christian Century* (August 23, 2012), www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-08/gospel-seven-words.

Taboo

Newspaper

Print
Press
Daily
Reporters
Read

Arrest

Criminal
Thief
Robber
Police
Jail

Church

Sanctuary
Jesus
Worship
Pray
God

Sports

Ball
Athlete
Play
Team
Win

Ambulance

Siren
Paramedics
Emergency
Hospital
Medical

Fame

Celebrity
Fleeting
Hall
Glory
Fortune

Christmas

Santa
Tree
December
Presents
Jesus

Lost

Found
Missing
Misplaced
Island
TV Show

Fake

Fraud
Con
Real
Phony
News

Follow

Pursue
Chase
Replace
Leader
Yellow Brick Road

Headline

News
Act
Performer
Title
Star

Disguise

Mask
Hide
Change
Look
Appearance

Concert

Music
Arena
Hall
Band
Sing

Decipher

Decode
Interpret
Secret
Read
Figure

Guess

Know
Answer
Question
What
Who

Taboo

Press

Weights
Reporters
Newspaper
Media
Conference

Reporter

TV
Newspaper
News
Story
Interview

Podcast

Record
Interview
Play
News
Story

Bible

Testament
Book
Jesus
Read
Church

Jesus

Miracle
Resurrection
Cross
Easter
Son of God

Weather

Clouds
Rain
Sunny
Storm
Temperature

Story

Tell
Plot
Parable
Fairy Tale
Once Upon a Time

Twitter

Tweet
DM
Follow
Hashtag
Social Media

Snapchat

Text
Picture
Selfie
Delete
Streak

Hashtag

Social Media
Twitter
Instagram
Tic-Tac-Toe
Photo

Instagram

Selfie
Photo
Tag
Follow
Post

Word

Speak
Say
Sentence
Mouth
Syllable

Politics

President
Republican
Democrat
Election
Congress

Good

Great
Bad
Happy
News
Best

Break

Smash
Fall Apart
Fracture
Split
Destroy

