



GOALS

- For students to learn what God can do to meet the deepest needs of their unbelieving friends.
- For students to consider the role they can play in connecting their spiritually need friends with everything God offers through Jesus Christ.

MATERIALS: Group

- Variety of colored pencils
- Whiteboard and markers
- “Spiritual Predicament” items: binoculars, sunglasses, garden trowel, yo-yo (feel free to substitute)
- Note: if your high schoolers respond to skits and acting, you may want to check out the Lead It guide for middle school for Session 5

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal pages
- Scripture sheet, Psalm 107
- A Bible
- A pen

SESSION INTRO

Prayer

Psalm 18:19 tells us that God rescued us because He delighted in us! Thank God for delighting in you and for rescuing the ones in your group who’ve called out to Him. Pray that through this session your students will gain insight that will better help them reach out to their friends.

Open

Open your session with a discussion on “before and after” by asking:

What’s a favorite “before and after” project you’ve been a part of? Examples include: painting/improving a house, getting a “most-improved” award, re-organizing your room or a desk, etc.

After a few minutes of discussion, share a personal example from your faith journey of “before and after”—something that changed when you came into relationship with Jesus. (“Before I knew Jesus...”; “After I knew Jesus...”)

Helping students recognize that things change when people come into relationship with Jesus is a crucial piece in recognizing the role they can play in the lives of their unbelieving friends.

After you have shared your story set up today’s session with this:

Today we will take a look at four different groups of people—each with a different story regarding their faith journey. We will spend our time studying their “before and after” salvation experience. By looking closely at these stories we will better be able to recognize that turning point in the life of any Christian which can best be summed up with the phrase, “Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble.”

DIGGING IN

Today’s group session will be a bit different in that students will be teaching each other about sections of the psalm. Share that the psalm describes four spiritual stories, all four of which exist today. Ask the group to divide itself into four equally sized groups based on which story of the psalm they prefer. Place the items representing each story around the room and explain what each item represents.

Story 1: People who are **spiritually searching** (binoculars)

Story 2: People who are in **spiritual darkness** (sunglasses)

Story 3: People in **spiritual rebelliousness** (garden trowel, representing grave digging)

Story 4: People who are **spiritually up and down** (yo-yo or super ball)

Ask students to move to the item that represents the story they'd like to explore further in Psalm 107. If the groups are not evenly divided, ask a few students to go to their second choice.

Once divided into four groups, be sure each student has a Scripture sheet for Psalm 107 and the Session 5 journal page. Before dispersing, share the following in your own words:

Today's psalm gives us a "before and after" look at four different groups of people who experienced a salvation story. We know they experienced salvation by reading Psalm 107:2, which tells us that the subject of the psalm is going to be "those he redeemed from the hand of the foe."

Ask students these questions to be sure they understand before moving on.

Who is the "he" in this verse?

Who is the "foe" he redeemed us from?

Share that each group is going to have 10 minutes to study their story and then teach the other groups about that story. Share the points below before groups disperse to prep their story.

Ways to teach:

- **Act it out as a story**
- **Mime it out with a narrator**
- **Re-write it in modern-day language and read it**
- **Lead the group in a study**

Things to draw out from your passage:

- **What were the people like before their turning point?**
- **What was the big turning point in their lives?**
- **What did God do for them?**

After a few minutes of prep time, call the groups back together. Beginning with Group A, have the group teach the other students about Story 1 of Psalm 107. Ask students to follow along in their journal page and supply answers to questions provided. After the "teaching," process the section of the psalm with these questions:

What were these people like at first?

What was the big turning point in their lives? (Have them tell you the specific verse.)

Why would you call this a turning point?

What did God do for them when they cried out to Him?

Do you have anyone in your life who is in this spiritual predicament?

Proceed through the psalm with each group teaching its respective story; after each teaching, process the story as a group using the questions above.

TAKING IT INWARD

After the stories have been taught, point out to your students that in this Old Testament psalm, we learn that when a person cries out to God for salvation, He's able to meet them exactly at the point of their deepest spiritual need. In the New Testament, we see the same thing about Jesus Christ.

On their journal pages are four separate sets of Scripture. Ask your students to look up these passages and write down what Jesus can do for people based on what He says in these verses.

John 6:35

John 8:31-32, 34-36

Matthew 11:28; John 8:9-11

John 14:27; 16:33

Discuss how each of these passages parallels what the group saw in Psalm 107.

Help your students internalize this psalm with one simple question inspired by verse 2, *Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story*:

So, what's your story?

To prompt discussion, ask if anyone relates to one of the four stories in Psalm 107. Or ask students to share their story in a "before/after" fashion.

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

As you move toward the close of your session, ask a volunteer to read Psalm 107:43 from the Scripture sheet.

Use the questions and thoughts below to do what verse 43 suggests: *heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord*.

- **Brainstorm with your group on how to connect these truths about Jesus with friends who really need them.**
- **Challenge students to make a list of friends, neighbors or family members they can reach out to who are in any of these spiritual predicaments.**
- **Encourage each other with ideas on how to reach out to friends in these predicaments, to help them complete their story.**