



GOALS

- To learn what God can do to meet the deepest needs of our unbelieving friends.
- To consider the role we can play in connecting our spiritually need friends with everything God offers through Jesus Christ.
- To understand that we all have a redemption story.

MATERIALS: Group

- Variety of colored pencils
- Whiteboard and markers
- Props (optional): peruse each story in Psalm 107 and provide convenient props that come to mind

MATERIALS: Each Student

- Student journal page
- 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 your favorite “metamorphosis” (for example, caterpillar/butterfly; tadpole/frog)?

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 teaching them the part they can play in the lives of their unbelieving friends.

After you have shared your story, share the following in your own words:

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 exploring 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: Story 1

Today's group session will be a bit different in that the groups will be acting out the psalm in addition to studying it on paper. Draw students' attention to their Scripture sheet for Psalm 107 and to their Session 5 journal pages. Hand out at least two colored pencils per person.

While this is going on divide the group into two groups: Group 1 and Group 2.

Share that today's psalm gives us a "before and after" look at four different groups of people who experienced salvation. The way we know this is 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?

Now share that the two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) are going to take turns acting out the stories from the psalm. First Group 1 will leave the room and prepare to act out Story 1. Here are their instructions:

Choose someone as the narrator. This person will read the story of the psalm aloud while the others pantomime the action. Those "miming" should be as dramatic as possible! And feel free to use anything you see in the room as a prop.

Give the group about five minutes to prepare to perform their story.

While Group 1 is out of the room, those remaining (Group 2) should read the story that is being prepared (Story 1). As they are reading, have them use a color or a symbol to mark the people in this story in a unique way. After they've read and marked the passage, they should list on their journal pages everything they learn about the group of people being described.

After a few minutes (it shouldn't take long), call Group 1 back into the room and have them perform their story. After they've finished, ask the entire group the following questions. Be sure to record their thoughts on the board as they note the info on their journal pages.

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?

How would you describe them after their turning point?

TAKING IT INWARD

Now challenge students to picture one person in their life who might be described as spiritually "hungry and thirsty." Are they wandering through life with no direction? (i.e., as if they were a desert wasteland?) Based on this passage, what does God want to do for them?

DIGGING IN: Story 2

Now follow the same format with Group 2, inviting them to prepare and perform Story 2. While they are preparing, ask Group 1 to read and mark the passage using their Scripture sheets.

When it comes time for the discussion, use the same questions you used for Story 1, noted below.

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?

How would you describe them after their turning point?

TAKING IT INWARD

Now challenge students to picture someone in their life who might be described as spiritually “in utter darkness.” Based on this passage, what does God want to do for them?

DIGGING IN: Story 3

Now back to Group 1, asking them to prepare and perform Story 3. After Group 1 has acted out Story 3, discuss the passage:

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?

How would you describe them after their turning point?

TAKING IT INWARD

Now challenge students to picture someone in their life who might be described as spiritually “rebellious.” Based on this passage, what does God want to do for them?

DIGGING IN: Story 4

And finally, back to Group 2, asking them to prepare and perform Story 4. After Group 2 has acted out Story 4, discuss the passage:

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? How would you describe them after their turning point?

TAKING IT INWARD

Now challenge students to picture someone in their life who might be described as spiritually “up and down” or stressed out in general. Based on this passage, what does God want to do for them?

CROSS-CHECKING

Be sure to 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 students’ 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 parallel what the group saw in Psalm 107.

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. Focus on the people your students “pictured” when applying each story.

- **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.**