



Making it Real and Relevant



A Multi-Media Enhanced
Lectionary-Based
Bible Study for Youth

By Heidi K. E. Hawks

Lent
(Year C)

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SAMPLE PAGES

This SAMPLER includes a small number of pages from this three-year lectionary cycle curriculum (with summer sessions)

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Before Classes Start...

An Overview of Making it Real and Relevant

Although there are many ways you could use this program, ***Making it Real and Relevant*** was originally designed to be a youth Bible study curriculum for use in a 45-55 minute class, perfect for Sunday School or other regular youth group meetings.

There are two formats of similar materials by the same author.

MAKING IT REAL & RELEVANT (lectionary-based) --- this format follows the 3-year lectionary cycle (Year A, B, C) as found in your choice of the Revised Common Lectionary, Roman Catholic or Book of Common Prayer. Therefore, one or more of the readings that will be heard in church during the Sunday morning service will be the focus of the class that Sunday. Lessons are usually based on the New Testament readings, although Old Testament readings and occasionally the Psalm become the focus reading for a lesson as well.

GOD TALKS! (topic-based) --- this format examines a topic in some detail over a 3 to 4-week period of time. The topics are based on the characteristics of spiritual development, which are to learn that one has a life-purpose and that it is possible to discern what that purpose is; to seek connection with the inner self (the spirit, as opposed to the outer self, the ego); to seek connection with God and with the world around one, both natural and human; and to experience transcendence (meaning seeing how one fits into the bigger picture). The year will progress from inward to outward, focusing on “me” issues first, then progressing to “God” issues, and then examining “community and world” issues.

Regardless of the format (lectionary-based or topic-based) you have chosen, the weekly follow the same basic lesson plan structure. The curriculum is designed to address multiple learning styles by incorporating small group and general group discussion, movie clips, music, current events and a variety of interactive activities to bring Bible readings to life. Through this varied style of presentation, youth can explore God, Jesus, the Bible, their faith and values in ways that show them how real and relevant these topics are in their lives.

Each lesson plan is sectioned into four parts:

1. **Opener** --- focuses everyone’s attention to the topic being studied
2. **The Heart of the Lesson** --- the substance of the class
3. **Wrapping it Up** --- final points and review
4. **Closing** --- opportunity to reflect on discussion and offer thanks

The lessons are designed to be usable for small (2-6 students) or large (7 or more students) classes, and directions are included in each lesson plan for leaders of groups of both sizes.

There will be two opportunities for outreach during the year. The lessons during the seasons of Advent and Lent suggest projects and build in time to work on those projects, since they are perfect times to be thinking about how we can be more Christ-like as we remember why Christ was born into this world and why he died and rose again.

Some Words about Time and Discussion

Timing

Making it Real and Relevant lesson plans include suggested times for each section of a lesson. Times are located in parentheses in the line below each of the lesson section headings. For example, in the first section of the lesson you will see:

Opener
(10 minutes)

These times are suggestions based on pilot study results, but each class is different. You may have a class that really enjoys discussion but is not musically inclined. In this case, you may decide not to use the music clips, but to extend the discussion time. Or you may have a group that prefers to do the opening activities or spend more time in prayer at closing than in discussion following a Bible passage or movie clip. Again, you may choose to extend the time given for the activities the students like and seem to be getting the most out of.

Consequently, you will need to decide whether or not you will follow the suggested times for each section. If you choose to follow the suggested times, plan on cutting activities and discussions off at the end of the allotted time in order to move through the whole lesson in one class. If you choose to extend the time on a section that is holding your class's attention, think about what other section of the lesson you are willing to skip or condense. You may also decide to extend a lesson over two Sundays because the class is finding a lot to talk about or is taking time to absorb concepts being presented.

Discussion Questions

Making it Real and Relevant makes use of discussion questions following movie clips, Bible passage readings, music clips, and some activities. The questions are designed to get conversation rolling. There are often more discussion questions than you will have time to cover, so think about the questions that will be most meaningful for your group, and start with those questions first. You may also find there are questions not listed in the curriculum that would be appropriate for your unique group. You are encouraged to add questions as you would like. Remember when asking questions to frame your questions so that students are required to give more than a "yes" or "no" answer. One way to do this is to ask students, "Why?" or, "Explain your reasoning."

Sometimes the conversation that develops from a discussion question will lead away from the original topic. As long as it is a topic of relevance to the spiritual growth and moral and faith development of your youth, allow the conversation to have a life of its own. It is amazing what can be learned and discovered when you get "off track." If you wish to cover a certain number of the discussion questions, you can place a time limit on "off track" conversations that develop out of a discussion and move the class back on topic by introducing the next question.

Some Words About Multimedia

This curriculum makes use of popular movie and music clips and information from recent world events. Therefore, it is very important that you, the instructor, take the time before class to familiarize yourself with what will be seen or heard in class. To save yourself from unpleasant or uncomfortable surprises, always have your movie clip cued up before you start class and watch it before you show it to your students. G, PG and PG-13 rated movies are the primary resources for video clips, but occasionally an R-rated movie (such as *The Matrix*) will have a scene that is too good not to use. The clips shown in class will be acceptable for any audience; however, unacceptable content may be in the preceding or following scenes, which is why it benefits you to know what is happening around your clip before you show it and why you should have the scene cued up ahead of time.

A separate page listing all the movie and music clips is included at the beginning of each unit so that you can plan ahead. Most classes will make use of either a video clip or a music clip. Sometimes lessons will have both music and video and occasionally there will be neither. You can rent videos or music DVDs, borrow from church members who are movie fans, or purchase used videos inexpensively through sites such as amazon.com or a local video store. It is not legal to burn a DVD with the movie clips; you *must* use the original (as per the July 2010 ruling) and queue it up to the starting point ahead of time. You need to obtain a license to play movies from an organization such as www.cvli.com. Some argue that short movie clips used in an educational context are exempt but I encourage you to get a license to be safe – and it allows your church to show a movie whenever you choose! While printed lyrics used in an educational context may be covered under “fair use,” it is best to get a license from an organization such as www.ccli.com or a comparable group.

When you are preparing for classes that include music clips please consider making copies of the lyrics available for youth. Sites such as www.christianlyricsonline.com or www.lyricsondemand.com offer lyrics – all you have to do is cut and paste the lyrics into a separate document and then photocopy the lyrics for the youth to follow along when you play music clips. I highly recommend doing this because this music is chosen for the lyrics—no matter how good the music is, there is always a point where words get lost because of the drums, guitars, or poor enunciation on the singer’s part. When the youth don’t hear the lyrics, they lose part of the meaning of the lesson. It is also helpful to have lyrics to refer back to when discussing the song after playing it. Again, getting a license before copying lyrics ensures that you are legal. And in any case, make sure you destroy the copies when you are finished so no one inadvertently uses them illegally.

Finally, current events do not stay current for long. If you find something that fits with the lesson plan that is more current than the plan suggests, use it! For example, at the time of this writing, oil that had been gushing out from a broken well into the Gulf of Mexico had just been capped. Lessons that may have used 9/11 or the tsunami as examples or discussion starters will have much more impact if they refer to more recent events.

For more info about using multimedia, check out this free article by LeaderResources:
http://www.leaderresources.org/sites/default/files/LR_Copyright_Guidelines_010711.pdf

Some Words About Group Discussion

Some portion of each class will be devoted to group discussion. Therefore, facilitators should go into the first class with some goals regarding group discussion rules and building trust and a sense of community in a group. Here are some things to think about:

- **Respect** is the key to making a discussion format work.
- **Respect silence.** Let silence happen after a question. Respect the students' need to ponder a question, to have the time to think about how they want to put words together, to let the Holy Spirit go to work in that space of silence. The first ten seconds after a question has been asked can be the most anxious ten seconds a group leader will endure. Please endure! Curb the inclination to fill the silent space with your thoughts and reflections. This class is about their thoughts and reflections—let them own the silence.
- **Respect for each other** is also important. There will be talkative youth and silent youth. You'll know pretty quickly who is not going to talk in your class, but there will inevitably be a class that strikes a spark for the silent one; make sure that the ones who like to talk respect the right of all other group members to speak.
- Along that line, remember to **temper your enthusiasm**. It's good to have examples from your life experiences to share that encourage discussion, but try to keep your input to a minimum and the focus on your students' experiences.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, respect each other by making it clear to the group before you start the lesson that personal reflections offered during class stay within the group and are not to be shared with people outside of class. Nothing kills trust in a group more quickly than having something personal and private shared with the world. **Show respect for each other by fostering trust.**

If you find typos, errors, activities that went “splat,” or if you or your youth have suggestions for music clips or opener activities and games, please email me so that I may continue to improve upon this work in progress. If you find things that go exceptionally well, I'd love to know that too!

My email address is included below. Please put “Real and Relevant Suggestions” in the subject line so I don't mistake it for junk or infected mail.

Thank you!
Heidi K.E. Hawks

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First Sunday in Lent, Year C

Temptation

Focus Reading

Luke 4:1-13

Opener

(5-8 minutes)

Open the lesson today by asking:

- Have you given any thought to what you are going to give up for Lent, or if you are going to give up anything?
- What kinds of things do people give up? (things that they like) Why do they give up things they like instead of things they don't like?
- Why do we give things up for Lent?

The Heart of the Lesson

(25 minutes)

Today's lesson is about temptation. In our society, it is easy to want something and then have it almost immediately. We are tempted by so many things, but rarely encouraged to not reach out and take whatever it is we think we want when we see it. Is it a good or a bad thing to always get what you want?

Play the movie clip from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In this clip, Veruca Salt, a spoiled little girl who gets everything she wants, decides she wants one of Willy Wonka's squirrels. When she is not given what she wants, the temptation is too much and she goes and gets the squirrel herself.

The clip starts at 1:11:32 when Veruca's father says, "Ah, this is a room I know all about" (Chapter 23 on DVD) and ends at 1:17:01 when Willy Wonka opens the gate to let Veruca's dad pull her out of the garbage chute. After the clip plays, ask:

- What is Veruca tempted by?
- What tempts you?

Before we talk any more about the clip, let's pause here and talk about temptation a little more. Everyone has to stand up to temptation – even Jesus.

Supplies List

Movie clip from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (We used the 2005 version, starring Johnny Depp)

Music clip "Cry Out to Jesus" by Third Day from their album *Wherever You Are*

Copies of lyrics for "Cry Out to Jesus"

Today's Bible passage is about Jesus being tempted by Satan. Before you read the passage aloud to the youth, ask them to listen for the three temptations that Satan offers Jesus.

Read the passage, Luke 4:1-13 to the class. After reading the gospel, ask:

- What are the three temptations that Jesus faced?

List the temptations on the board or flip chart. Trying to label the three temptations should generate some discussion, as they try to define what Satan was tempting Jesus with. (You should get something along the lines of material comfort/security, political or civil authority, and personal power)

- Why are these things temptations for Jesus? (You might point out that the third is the worst one for Jesus, because this is his chance to save the whole world, without having to die himself. If he gave in to the temptation, however, he would be giving himself more power than God, and in exchange for personal power, he would be serving Satan instead of God. There's always someone you're going to end up serving ... make sure that it's the one you want to serve before you give in to temptation!).

Now let's go back to the movie clip.

- Does it seem like Willy Wonka wants the children to win or is he setting out temptations on purpose? How is this scene like the story of Jesus we just read?
- After watching Veruca go after her squirrel, do you think it is possible to have too much? Why or why not? Do you know anyone like Veruca? Without naming names, explain how having everything he or she wants affects this person.
- Christmas is always a great time of year that can exemplify too much of a good thing. Did you get everything you wanted last Christmas? If you did, how did you feel afterwards? If you didn't, how did you feel afterwards?
- Is it good to get everything you want?
- What are the pros and cons of delayed gratification?
- Which is better, getting everything you want just by asking, or by having to work for what you want? Explain your answer.
- What can you do if you start to feel tempted by something in order to avoid the temptation? What is causing the temptation?
- Do we today still face the same temptations that Christ faced? Can you give some modern day examples of the temptations

Christ faced? (Examples might be for the first temptation that job security is an example of material dependence. If you were guaranteed job security for the length of your career, but you'd have no control over where you had to live and how often you would have to move, would it be worth it? For the second temptation, how about being given the guarantee that you are going to be elected into political office, but you have to vote on key issues the way your backers want you to. For the third temptation, think of a famous person you would like to be like. What would you be willing to give up to be that person, or to be as famous as that person?)

Wrapping it Up

(10 minutes)

Play "Cry Out To Jesus" by Third Day, from their album *Wherever You Are*.

After the song, ask:

- The song gives some examples of things that might tempt people, things we don't normally think of when we talk about being tempted. For example, if someone you loved was dying, would you be tempted to give up hope? Would you be tempted to believe that you could never be happy again?
- Think about the other examples that were given in the song and give examples of temptations that can arise because someone is unhappy, depressed, out of control or grieving. Why is it so much easier to be tempted at these times in our lives?
- How do we deal with situations that present a hard temptation that we can't just buy a fix for?

Closing

(3-5 minutes)

Close with prayer. You might have youth think about the things that are great temptations to them, and then say something like,

"Dear Heavenly Father, we ask your help in overcoming our temptations this season of Lent. We realize that our temptations take our attention away from what is important in our lives, but we are often not strong enough to walk away from them. Help us to find the strength and the support to give up the things we are tempted by so that we may focus our attention on what really matters in our lives. Amen.