

Thursday Bible Study 2019: Life in the Valley

Big Question(s): How do we acknowledge God's presence in the valley? How do you hear from God? How can God use our stories to connect with others? How can we live vibrant lives in the valley?

Theme Verse: Colossians 3:17 (To the tune of Jingle Bells)
No matter what you do whether in word or deed
Do it all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ giving thanks
To God the Father through Him

Morning Chapel Skit Discussion Questions:

1. Who were the characters in the skit?
Reindeer (2), Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, Buddy the Elf, Mr./Mrs. Claus, narrator
2. What were their problems and how did they solve them?
*Mr./Mrs. Claus – she threw parties to keep the Christmas spirit alive – we can experience Jesus's presence anywhere.
Frosty – was in the freezer to stay alive and grew lonely – remembered God was always with him even when he couldn't see anyone around him.
Buddy – he did smaller tasks compared to the tasks he did during the Christmas season and felt less important – even when my tasks seem unimportant and boring, they can make an important impact in the world for God
Reindeer – they did conditioning/training and they were exhausted and bored – they can do their best for God and He is still there with us when the days can get long and boring
Rudolph – (was the Jesus-like character didn't really have an issue)*
3. What character do you relate to most in your life right now?

Opening Activity:

Have students spend time looking at creation. Leaders read Lamentations 3:22-23 (*Set boundaries ex. 3 minutes, silence with God*)

IMPORTANT: *Before you begin, explain to campers that one of the ways we can see God everyday of our lives is through creation. Make sure the observation is silent, come back together after a few minutes and discuss how you see God in creation. Could also act as a "follow the leader" activity.*

Activity Questions:

1. Where did you see God in creation that you may not have expected?
2. In the upcoming Bible Reading, be sure to listen for what Philip and the Eunuch did when traveling.

Bible Reading 1: Acts 8:26-40

What is the valley??

-A low area between hills or mountains and must be longer than it is wide. The valley is the "normal" life that occurs. The valley represents our everyday walk with Jesus. The valley is

NOT the low point, but where significant growth occurs. Think of a mountain, the majority of plants and vegetation grow in the valley, just as our faith.

General Questions:

- 1. Recap the story in your own words.** *You can have campers act the story to get them up and moving. Spend this time making sure that everyone is on the same page. Check in here to make sure that everyone is engaged and that everyone is participating.*
 - **Who is the angel talking to?** Philip
 - **Where is Philip supposed to go?** South on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza
 - **Who did he meet on the road?** Ethiopian eunuch (if you don't know this word, look it up and be prepared with an age appropriate explanation)
 - **What was he doing when he met Philip?** Reading the book of Isaiah.
 - **How did Philip help the Ethiopian?** Explained the scriptures to him. Told him about Jesus, baptized him.
- 2. What stood out to you in this passage? What words/phrases stood out to you?**
Clarification/Questions? *Answers will vary. Take time to address and use these answers to discuss. Kids will feel their voices are being heard when you do this. These moments can make a HUGE impact so don't skip over them and miss an opportunity to share the gospel.*
- 3. What is the significance of this passage?** *^^^ See above ^^^*

Beginner Questions:

1. Who are the main characters in the story? *The holy spirit, The eunuch, Phillip*
2. How did the eunuch and Phillip meet? Did they know that they were going to meet each other? *Phillip and the Eunuch met along the path and were not intending to see each other.*
3. What did Phillip do in the passage? *Phillip was called by the spirit to go and meet the eunuch. God then used Phillip to share the Gospel.*
4. Was Phillip in the mountains, storms, or valleys of life when he met the Eunuch?
In the valley, we can have important conversations with people about God!
5. Why does this matter? *God often comes to us in the randomness of life to call us to action and ministry. God can call us at any point in our lives. It is up to us to be willing to listen and act.*
6. What did the Angel say in verse 26?
"Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza"

Intermediate Questions:

4. How did the eunuch and Phillip meet? Did they know that they were going to meet each other? *Phillip and the Eunuch met along the path and were not intending to see each other.*
5. Where is God in the story? *God is ever-present. From the angel to the conversation and the baptism, God was always there.*
6. How is Isaiah relevant to the story of Jesus? *Isaiah is the prophet that is known for speaking of the coming messiah. Surprise! That is Jesus.*
7. How did Philip and Eunuch react after being baptized? *Eunuch went on his way praising the lord. Philip was taken away and brought to a town to the north and started preaching and sharing the gospel to others.*
8. How does this story relate to our lives? *We find ourselves many times in both positions. When we are at camp we get poured into and can leave camp praising God for all God has done. We also are like Phillip where we share the gospel, but many times are not there to see the*

seeds we plant grow. Even when Phillip was in the valley, he had the chance to connect and share the gospel with others.

Advanced Questions:

1. Why is the Eunuch's authority important in this passage? *The eunuch has earthly authority and riches. Despite this, he still understands that God has the power and that Jesus Christ has authority in his life.*
2. How do eunuch and Phillip meet? *Phillip and the Eunuch met along the path and were not intending to see each other.*
3. Where do you see Jesus in this passage? *Jesus is present in the scripture and the gospel message*
4. How do we see the Holy Spirit in our valleys? *The holy spirit walks with us and points us to God. The holy spirit also allows us to better understand and connect to the will of God and God's plan in our lives. It is important for us to remember that God is always with us because the holy spirit is within us.*
5. What is the importance of the fact that Phillip left after being baptized? *Answer: The campers leave camp and live life in the valley and continue to grow; brothers and sisters in Christ being sent out (schools). Matthew 28:19. We also don't always see the end product of the work we do for the lord. We often live our lives planting seeds. Sometimes it takes 300 times hearing the Gospel for someone to come to Christ. That doesn't make times 1-299 any less important. Ministry is a relay race with each person carrying the baton before passing it to the next.*

Main Point Recap:

The Holy Spirit goes with us and God meets us in the everyday and the ordinary. We have to open our hearts and minds to act on these moments going forward in our daily lives. We are shown through this story that God is working for our good at all times. We may not see the end of God's plan, but we are confident in the promise that God will use us to change the lives of those around us.

IMPORTANT: *This part of the bible study is very freeform. We set this up in the hopes that each section can be used in different situations. We encourage you and your co-leader to prayerfully consider what message God is wanting your cabin to hear.*

Activity: Have water and a drink mix packet. Take the water and share with your campers that this is your life WITHOUT God and the drink mix is your life WITH God. Mix them together and stir the mix. Our "normal" life and our God life CAN'T be separate. They need to be joined together in every aspect! Then read Acts 1:8 and talk about how the activity fits with this verse and seeing God in everything.

If Time Ideas

1. Question/Answer session with anonymous questions answered by counselor
2. Luke 24:13-35 (Walk to Emmaus)- God is with us ALWAYS
3. Genesis 1-2 (Creation story)- God is in EVERYTHING since the beginning of time