

Tell the Right Story

LUKE 1:46–55; 4:16–21

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GOAL

Youth explore the messages and audience of Jesus' preaching and ministry to glimpse the radical realm that God envisions.

- 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, I come with my questions and concerns. Meet me with your Spirit and your power. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Before diving too deeply into *Go Tell*, we want to be clear about what we are telling. We go and tell of the realm of God, the vision God has for God's people to see and know and live God's generous and just realm on earth as in heaven. We look at the actions and promises of Jesus and consider their radical implications. Jesus proclaims, lives, and points to God's realm of justice, equity, compassion, healing, and peace. Ultimately, the good news that Jesus proclaims may not be good news to all who hear it. Although Jesus brings welcome promises to those who are imprisoned, poor, blind, and lowly, he brings a level of discomfort for the privileged.

THE BIBLE STORY

In Luke, the first sermon of Jesus' preaching career comes in Luke 4:16–21. He had just been tested by the devil during his time in the wilderness. After a trying forty days, Jesus returns to Nazareth. His first action upon returning to his hometown is to go to the synagogue to worship. He reads aloud from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. The words will come to define Jesus' ministry.

Mary's *Magnificat*, Luke 1:46–55, can serve as an Advent text. After learning of her pregnancy, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth. She sings the promises that the child within her will fulfill.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Some young people are keen to notice inequity and injustice in the world and in their communities. The justice that God ushers in through the words and actions of Jesus is good news they can trust and respond to. Some youth will identify with those who are poor and oppressed, perceiving themselves to be marginalized in an adult world. They feel as if others have control over their lives, and they do not have the same opportunities as adults. Youth may feel empowered by the promises of Jesus, but they could feel overwhelmed at the work it will take for the promises of the text to be fulfilled.

SESSION PREPARATION

- “Commercials” (p. 6): Search YouTube.com for a compilation of commercials that can be shown on a loop.

Depending on the choices you make:

- “Whispering Words of Wisdom” (p. 7): On an Internet-connected device cue bit.ly/FMLetItBeLyr to display the lyrics to “Let It Be.”
- “Nelson Mandela” (p. 7): Download and make copies of the primary resource page about Mandela from bit.ly/FMMandelaNatGeo.
- “Creating Commercials” (p. 9): Gather props (optional).

GETTING STARTED

- Internet-connected device
- Compilation of commercials

COMMERCIALS

T X

Display a compilation of commercials on a loop on an internet-connected device. As young people arrive, have them watch the commercials, paying attention to the messages that are communicated. Gather the group and discuss the commercials, asking questions such as:

- ➔ Would you buy the products? Why?
- ➔ Do you believe the commercials' claims? Why?
- ➔ What messages are being communicated?

Tell the youth that you will be exploring messages that are communicated and received through words, images, and actions.

INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

TELLING THE GOOD NEWS

CT

Invite youth to participate in a responsive reading. Explain that you will begin with the first line of the refrain of the song “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” They respond to your first “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. Use the litany below and prompt them to repeat their lines. 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 brought good news.
Jesus brought good news.

- Resource Page 1

TAGLINES

G

Form two (or more) teams and assign team captains. Use the instructions on Resource Page 1 to explain and lead the game.

 Teaching Tip: If there are popular brands or products among your youth, look up their taglines in advance and add them to the list on Resource Page 1.

- Copies of Resource Page 2
- Pens

HASHTAGS

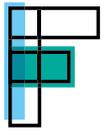
QC G AT

Distribute copies of Resource Page 2 and pens. Direct youth to find quiet places in the room, away from others. Read aloud the instructions on the Resource Page and have them work independently.

Once they have created their hashtags, collect their Resource Pages. Mix up the sheets. Select one hashtag from the top sheet and invite youth to guess who wrote it. For example, “Who thought their school hashtag was ‘#MathWizard?’” After you receive a few guesses, invite the person who

wrote it to reveal themselves. Then move to a new page and read a new hashtag. Continue this until you have read a hashtag for each person.

Tell the youth that today's session will focus on the promises Jesus gives in his ministry. Suggest that they think about some hashtags for Jesus.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

UPDATING THE MESSAGE

AT C

Have participants locate Luke 4:16–21 in their Bibles. Emphasize that this passage tells about the *starting* place of Jesus' ministry. Ask youth what message they might give if they were starting a new ministry or preaching their first sermon.

Have youth take turns reading the passage aloud verse by verse. Form pairs and ask youth to imagine Jesus standing in their own church today, reading aloud verses 18–19. Have them rewrite and update the language of these verses. Youth might consider what it means to be anointed, who the poor and the captives are, and who is metaphorically or literally blind. They should consider who Jesus would want to talk to and what message Jesus would convey.

Have youth read aloud their Scripture with the updated language. Point out similarities in their messages. Ask them to think of any promises Jesus gave in this passage that have been fulfilled today.

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- Bibles
 - Paper and pencil

WHISPERING WORDS OF WISDOM

M AT

Have youth turn to Luke 1:46–55 and explain that this is a song Mary sang to her cousin Elizabeth when she learned that she was pregnant with Jesus. Read the Scripture in unison, pausing after each verse to ensure that everyone understands the meaning. Invite youth to ask questions or give their impressions of Mary's song (known as the *Magnificat*).

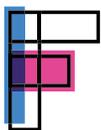
Display the lyrics to "Let It Be" bit.ly/FMLetItBeLyr and play the YouTube music video "The Beatles—Let It Be (Official Music Video)" (bit.ly/FMLetItBeVid, 4:19). Ask these or similar questions:

- ➔ Who is "Mother Mary" in the Beatles' song?
- ➔ To whom does this passage seem to be written?
- ➔ What do you imagine the "words of wisdom" are?
- ➔ How is the message of the Beatles' song similar/dissimilar to the song that Mary sings?

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- Bibles
 - Device for playing music videos



Teaching Tip: If your church has a favorite musical setting of the Luke text (the *Magnificat*), consider playing it to emphasize that Mary sang these words.



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or more options.

NELSON MANDELA

CT C

Distribute copies of the primary resource page about the life of Nelson Mandela. Invite volunteers to read aloud the parts that detail Mandela's life. Ask these questions:

- ➔ What actions does Mandela take that reflect the priorities of Jesus?

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- Copies of the primary resource page about Nelson Mandela (bit.ly/FMMandelaNatGeo).

- ➔ Mandela’s life and work indicate that he believed that the promises made by Jesus have not yet been fulfilled. What does Mandela do that indicates that we are supposed to assist in achieving the promises of Jesus?
- ➔ What can we do to bring our community closer to the fulfillment of one or more of the promises of today’s Scripture text?

Internet-connected device

ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO

CT C

Show the YouTube video “Oscar Romero Animation” (bit.ly/FMRomeroAnimate, 4:16). Invite youth to identify themes from Archbishop Romero’s life and sermons that are similar to themes in Jesus’ first sermon and Mary’s song. Use these questions for discussion:

- ➔ How was Archbishop Romero’s life a witness to the sermon Jesus preached in Luke 4?
- ➔ How did Archbishop Romero’s work reflect the message of Mary’s song in Luke 1?
- ➔ Archbishop Romero was martyred for his faith and his actions. Given that he wanted to help the suffering, why do you think people wanted to kill him? What risks come with living the message Jesus brings?

Newsprint and markers
 Paper and pens

NEW RULES

AT QC

Explain that today’s Scripture passages focus on Jesus’ promises and purpose and what his life reveals about the realm of God. On newsprint, list possible characteristics of the people whom Jesus addresses. For example, who are captive or oppressed? Who are the blind, or what are people blind to? Who are the rich?

Distribute paper and pens. Invite youth to create new rules for a community that follows the example Jesus presents in his teaching. They may consider teachings beyond today’s passages. Have them identify what sorts of behaviors might be expected of citizens in God’s realm. What actions would be forbidden? How do these new rules make a community that is fair, just, and helpful?

Have youth share their new rules. Discuss whether it is possible for us to live by these new rules or laws in our current world and circumstances.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

Copies of Resource Page 3
 Posterboard
 Markers

MAKING POSTERS

A CT S

Distribute copies of Resource Page 3 with Jesus’ descriptions of the realm of God. Provide materials for making posters. Invite youth to select quotations and create posters to illustrate them. Display their posters in public areas of your church or in the space where you meet.

CREATING COMMERCIALS

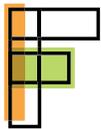
T AT D

Refer to the commercials viewed at the beginning of this session and the messages communicated by them. Invite youth to make a commercial about Jesus. Follow these steps:

- Discern a tagline, motto, or central message from today's Scripture.
- Determine a target audience and how the audience might be enticed to consider the message for themselves.
- Outline a commercial to communicate the central message.
- Provide random props for the commercial. (*optional*)
- Use a smartphone to record the commercial.

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- Smartphones
 - Random props (optional)

Many youth will have the ability to add effects and music and perform edits to their commercials. When they complete their recording, have them send their videos to you. Consider posting these commercials on the church's social media accounts or showing them as part of a worship service.



FOLLOWING JESUS

SUM IT UP

CT QC

Invite youth to think of a hashtag or tagline for Jesus' ministry. Once they each have one, gather the group in a circle. Have each person tell their hashtag or tagline and explain its connection to Jesus. Encourage them to share these as they *Go Tell* in the coming week.

JESUS SAYS "GO!"

CT

Remain in a circle. Tell the youth that they will send each other into the world 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!"

Instructions: Read aloud taglines from popular products listed below. Each team determines what the products are. Once a team has the answer, the team captain raises their hand. Call on the first hand raised, giving them the opportunity to answer. Correct answers receive one point. At the end of the game, calculate points and announce a winner.

Possible taglines:

- Just Do It (Nike)
- Think Different (Apple)
- Everything We Do Is Driven by You (Ford)
- See What's Next (Netflix)
- Where's the Beef? (Wendy's)
- Open Happiness (Coca-Cola)
- Often Copied, Never Equaled (Birkenstocks)
- The Happiest Place on Earth (Disney World)
- Melts in Your Mouth, Not in Your Hands (M&Ms)
- We Love to Fly and It Shows (Delta)
- Every Day Should Feel This Good (Vineyard Vines)
- Can You Hear Me Now? (Verizon)
- Coffee That Inspires (Starbucks)
- Faster, Higher, Stronger—Together (the Olympics)
- I'm Lovin' It (McDonalds)
- Feel Better (Tylenol)
- Better Ruins Everything (Hulu)
- Off the Wall (Vans)
- Work Hard. Have Fun. Make History. (Amazon)
- Rebuild the World (Lego)
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Below are places, relationships, and activities. Think about your role or behavior in each and create a hashtag for it. For example, at school you may be #MathWizard, but at home your family is #BehindOnLaundry. The categories are intentionally broad so your hashtag can describe you personally or the situation that your entire family/team finds themselves in. Write answers that you don't mind sharing with the group. If one item does not apply to your life, write n/a.

Home _____

School _____

School subject or activity _____

Sports _____

Siblings _____

Parent(s) _____

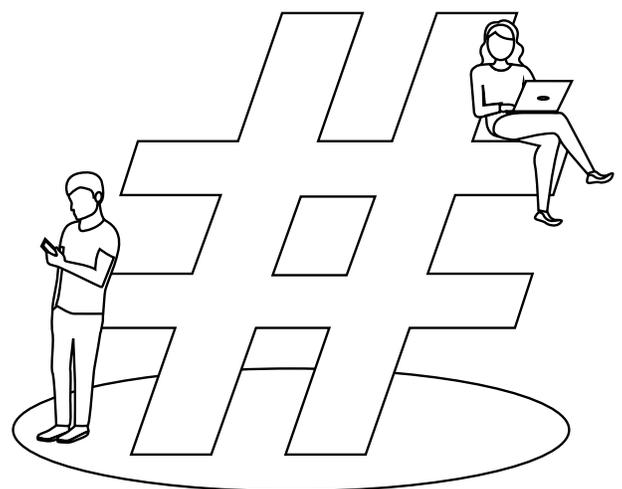
Music _____

Weekends _____

Summer _____

Church _____

Job _____



Jesus Describes God's Realm

"The Spirit of the Lord . . . has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free."

—Luke 4:18

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself."

—Luke 10:27

"You are the light of this world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden."

—Matthew 5:14

"The kingdom of God has come near to you."

—Luke 10:9

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

—Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

—Matthew 5:3

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

—Matthew 6:21

"The kingdom of God . . . is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

—Luke 13:18-19

Jesus says, "The water that I will give . . . will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

—John 4:14

"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you."

—Matthew 7:7

Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

—John 14:6