

▲ Relationship With God, Part 1 ▲

Objectives: LEAD participants will be able to define a relationship with God and assess the status of their own.

Plan ahead:

- Time required: 50 min
- Plan how you will run the verses (does everyone or just one LEADer look them up, etc.)

Supplies:

- Bibles, pens, pencils (1 per LEADer - they should always bring their own to class)
- String or Yarn, about 20 feet per LEADer
- Scissors

Accompanying documents:

- Relationship with God note page, last page of this file
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Notes to the instructor: The notes page differs slightly from the outline of the lesson. The notes page is designed as more of a stand-alone reference for the girls at camp or after they leave. It is in a different order than the lesson but contains the same basic information. You might use the notes page for the verse references, or you may have the girls look up the verses in their own Bibles (this is better). Neither technique is specified in the lesson, so plan ahead how you will run this.

❖ **Get Started (hook, 5 min)**

Pick one LEADer to hold the end of all the strings. The others each hold the far end of a string and stand in a circle or half circle around the one who holds the other end of all the strings. There should be about 15-20 feet between the center and outside of the circle. The goal is to follow each string to the person in the center. But the LEADers on the outside must first close their eyes, turn their backs to the person in the center and wait for you to say "Go." As soon as you say, "Go," cut the strings close to the center person. Let the girls try to feel their way to the LEADer in the center. Make sure they don't trip or get themselves in a dangerous place.

Have the LEADers sit back in their places and summarize: This is a picture of us and God. There is a sense in all of us that "God exists" and "there is more to life than we can see" (**Ecclesiastes 3:11** ...*He has put eternity into man's heart...*). So in some ways or others we try to connect with Him, following whatever in us seems to lead toward God (like the string that leads to the center person). But it doesn't get us there because SIN has broken the string (hold up the scissors and broken string ends). Until Jesus came and re-tied the string (tie together two ends of a string you cut), there was no way to get there. Now that Jesus did re-tie the string, we can have that relationship with God that is our hearts want. Let's talk about it a little more in detail.

❖ **Learn / observe (book / look, 30 min)**

God wants a relationship with you.

- Who is this "God" we are talking about? (Brief review of Bible Ex from this morning.)
- God created you exactly as He wants you (though sin has marred His creation).
- God loves you as you are (though because He loves you, He wants to rid you of the sin that hurts you).

1John 4:9 *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (payment) for our sins.*

Why would we want a relationship with Him?

- LEAD is about developing Christian leadership - and at the very basic level, a Christian is someone who has a relationship with God. So we need both the "leadership" and the "Christian" parts of that.

But more fundamentally,

- Because this is the deepest need and desire of our hearts, even if we sometimes aren't even aware of it. (**Ecclesiastes 3:11** ...*He has put eternity into man's heart...*)

- Because God created us to be in relationship with Him - not only connected by a string (the "hook") but standing in the center of the circle with Him, interacting with Him all the time, choosing to be with Him, loving Him even as He loves us. Until we are there, we feel and know in our hearts that we are missing something.

He wants a relationship with us and on some level, we want one with Him as well. But something gets in the way.

What prevents a relationship with God? Lots of things! But the show-stopper is our sin. SIN is the thing that "cuts the string" and makes us wander around, groping in the dark, like people do spiritually when they don't have Jesus.

- **What is sin?** (Get some answers from them. A great answer is this: Imagine your life as a movie being played at a drive in theater on a hue screen. Are there parts you wouldn't want shown? Let's call those parts "sin." We are ashamed of them because God has given us a conscience that tells us when we're doing something we shouldn't.)

Romans 3:23-25 *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption (being saved from sin, or bought back from punishment) that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation (payment) by his blood, to be received by faith.*

- **What is the problem with sin?** What does sin "earn" us? Romans 6:23 - the "wages" of sin is death. Through our own sin, we deserve death. But Romans 6:23 goes on to say that God solved that problem.

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

- **How did God solve the problem of sin?** (How did He re-tie the string?)

Isaiah 53:6 *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Romans 5:8 *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

1Peter 3:18 *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.*

So in summary, we wronged God by our sin and that destroyed any relationship we might have had with Him. But He provided a solution to pay the debt we owed and re-establish a relationship with us.

Imagine a relationship that you have, where a friend wrongs you. You feel hurt. You choose to forgive them and not hold it against them, but is the relationship back to what it was? Why not? **What is missing?** (The friend needs to ASK for forgiveness - they need to own up to their part, their "sin.")

It's the same with God. He's done everything necessary to *reconcile* the relationship with Him. But until we "own up" and ask forgiveness, the relationship is not reconciled and back to what it was before Adam and Eve every sinned. (Recommend reading this yourself, with or without them following in their Bibles.)

2Corinthians 5:18-20 *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

So, how do we get a relationship with God? What is our part in this relationship? (Get some answers and affirm them if you can. Try to use their answers to build the four main points below. As a technique, you could use 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 on their Note Page to build these points.) The very basics of having a relationship with God are:

- Understanding that your sin has separated you from God and apologizing to Him for your sin
- Accepting that Jesus paid what you owe, the debt that results from your sin, and thus bridged the gap between God and you
- Living daily in conscious, intentional relationship with Jesus
- Submitting more and more to Him (obeying Him) in daily life as a result of increasing faith or belief

So there is a part that we need to say, a part we need to believe and a part we need to do, that shows what we believe.

Romans 10:9-10 *...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

James 2:14-17 *What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.*

"Faith alone saves...but the faith that saves, is not alone" (that is, actions result from it).

In summary, there are a few things involved in starting and having a relationship with God (review as needed).

❖ **Get Practical (took, 10 min)**

Once you have started a relationship with God (asked forgiveness and accepted Jesus' work), what does it look like to "have a relationship" with Him? (If they have trouble answering, or to help the discussion, ask what it means to have a relationship with a friend or a parent, teacher or coach that you respect. Bottom line: you *interact* with anyone with whom you have a relationship.)

HOW do you interact with God? (Get some answers. Obvious ones are Prayer, Bible reading, Fellowship, Worship. Others might come up. Do NOT focus on this - there is a whole lesson on this. This is just a quick question to set up for the next one, which is more the focus of this lesson. The important thing is that we DO interact with God, like we interact with a human friend.)

How would you rate your relationship with God? (Have them rate it on the bottom of their Notes Page from this class. This is for their info ONLY. No one else will see this.)

What is one thing you would like to do at camp to move closer to a relationship with God, or deepen your relationship with Him? (Have them write down one or two things they might do, like read their Bible consistently, spend intentional time in prayer, worship more regularly, talk about Jesus with a staff member, get their questions or concerns about Christianity answered, etc.)

As you go through your day, consider that when you sing worship songs, you are singing to God who is there with you, in relationship with you. When you hear a message or read your Bible, that is God speaking to you - you personally. Camp is a great place to be away from the distractions of the world and keep in your mind - often if not always - that Jesus is there with you, in relationship with you. And if not yet, then He wants to be.

So keep that thing that you just wrote down in mind - and figure out how to get it done. Ask if you need help. This just might be *the most important thing* you do in your whole time at camp.

❖ **Homework (follow up assignment)**

