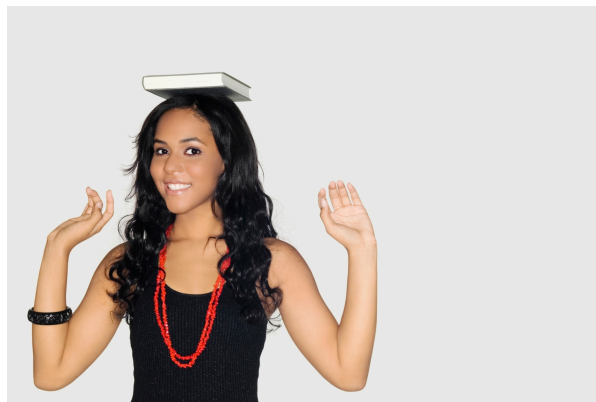


SUB TOPIC THEME:

Life – It's a Balancing Act

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

To develop the students' understanding of what it means to have a balanced life. Studying Scripture and openly discussing your personal experiences, triumphs, and failures can accomplish this. It is important to teach kids how to grow and develop in every area of their life and that they understand the effects of neglect. It would also be beneficial to talk about how we can often soothe or bolster an area by addressing another area (i.e. physical activity to help your mood)

**Set Up Info:***Supplies Needed*

1. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
2. A way to watch a YouTube movie trailer (optional)
3. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story and central Bible passages (or copies of the ones below)
4. A passion to see students transformed in their understanding of God's love and presence in their lives!

Instructive Prep:

Kids often begin to feel overwhelmed by their lives in Middle School or High School. With the added pressure of college looming, as well as increased responsibility at school and home, and a larger amount of commitments in general, it is amazing how quickly self-care can fall by the wayside. For some students, this may be the first time they even consider the concept of self-care and what areas might make up their being as a whole.

With that in mind, it is important for you as their leader to spend some time beforehand considering what from your own life would serve as helpful and instructional for the kids. Be honest and speak from the heart.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: *learn, feel, do and what next*. We want students to learn something new, connect at an emotional level to some degree, and participate in doing something during the study (like making a hand gesture as a tool/reminder). Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change in attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the movement is toward spiritual and emotional transformation in kids'

lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

INTRO:

We have all had those times when life just seemed like it was too much. The day-to-day tasks have piled up and you feel completely unequipped to handle it. That's where balance comes in. It's important to God that we are healthy and have growth in every area of our life. In fact, when we start spending a lot of time in Scripture we realize that being balanced in the midst of life's overwhelming situations is at the centre of learning how to be a Christ follower.

INTRO STORY:

One way to break down who we are and understand the different areas of ourselves is by using S.P.I.E.S. (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Social) If we make sure that each of these areas are healthy and are receiving regular attention and growth, then it is going to be a heck of a lot easier to handle life's overwhelming situations. When we are balanced between soul and body, we are more in tune with God's will for our lives, and figuring out how to handle tough times will be simpler and easier!

(Trailer for Eat, Pray, Love: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjay5vglwt4>)

You've probably heard of the book *Eat, Pray, Love*; or you might have seen the movie trailer with Julia Roberts. That story was insanely popular! Everyone seemed to love it and get so much out of it. Why do you think that is?

Because we all have a desire to be fulfilled and balanced in our life.

If you know anything about the story you know it follows a middle-aged woman as she travels the world searching for answers and completion. She is dissatisfied with her life and knows that things are off and something is missing. She just isn't sure how to fix it.

People everywhere connected with the story for the same reason. We all loved *Rocky* and *Lion King* and *Lord of the Rings* and *Frozen* and many other movies – and we recognize that deep longing within ourselves to find our purpose and peace (balance) in this life.

While the woman in this movie travels the world on this journey, let me tell you that this peace is exactly what Christ offers us! He has brought the answer. He is the missing piece that we long for, and he can show us how to bring balance and purpose into our lives! Through a relationship with him and devotion to him as our Lord, we begin to experience fulfilment and transformation.

It doesn't stop there, though! Scripture shows us how seeking balance in our lives and working to grow, even as we pursue a life of servitude, will bring ultimate satisfaction! God loves us and wants us to live healthy and fulfilled lives. He wants that so much that he has given us every tool we need and stands ready to help us along the way!

So ask yourself what is keeping you from receiving the gift of redemption for Christ and working hard to bring balance to every area of S.P.I.E.S. (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual) in your life?

INTRO QUESTIONS:

1. What keeps you from receiving redemption, peace and working for balance?
2. Is there a particular story or movie that speaks to your deep longing for purpose and balance?
3. Do you believe that you will find those things through Jesus Christ?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Go from tallest to shortest.

1. When you feel overwhelmed by life, what area of S.P.I.E.S. usually gets neglected first? Why? (use Student response sheet)
2. Do you think that having balance in your life will impact your ability to handle overwhelming situations? Why or why not? (use Student response sheet)
4. Take a minute and write down one way you think you need to work on each area of S.P.I.E.S. (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual). Make sure to come up with things you have never tried, or haven't done in a long time. (use Student response sheet)
5. How do you think having God involved in balancing out your life will change things (or not change things)? (use Student response sheet)

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

While you might know this story, read it today with eyes looking specifically for things related to balance. Don't forget to keep an eye out for attitudes too. As you read, consider how having balance impacts your ability to serve the Lord.

Luke 10:25-37**The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

A teacher of the Law came up and tried to trap Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to receive eternal life?”

Jesus answered him, “What do the Scriptures say? How do you interpret them?”

The man answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind’; and ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’”

“You are right,” Jesus replied; “do this and you will live.”

But the teacher of the Law wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?”

Jesus answered, “There was once a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when robbers attacked him, stripped him, and beat him up, leaving him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road; but when he saw the man, he walked on by on the other side. In the same way a Levite also came there, went over and looked at the man, and then walked on by on the other side. But a Samaritan who was traveling that way came upon the man, and when he saw him, his heart was filled with pity. He went over to him, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them; then he put the man on his own animal and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Take care of him,’ he told the innkeeper, ‘and when I come back this way, I will pay you whatever else you spend on him.’”

And Jesus concluded, “In your opinion, which one of these three acted like a neighbor toward the man attacked by the robbers?”

The teacher of the Law answered, “The one who was kind to him.”

Jesus replied, “You go, then, and do the same.”

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. What do you think were the reasons the 2 other men did not stop and help? How does that relate to S.P.I.E.S.? (use Student response sheet)

2. Spend some time discussing as a group why you think Jesus told this story (as it relates to S.P.I.E.S.) If everyone is comfortable, take this time to share what areas you struggle to keep balanced. Look through Scripture for guidance on those specific challenges.

3. Actively pray together after group members have an opportunity to talk about overwhelming situations they may be facing. Make a commitment to pray for each other every day this week! (use Student response sheet)

4. Weekly Challenge: Before you leave today, decide as a group on one thing to do for each area of S.P.I.E.S. (Spiritual, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual) Commit to doing them this week and set up accountability among group members. Check back in next week to encourage and pray for each other!

4. HOW DO YOU THINK HAVING GOD INVOLVED IN BALANCING OUT YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE THINGS (OR NOT CHANGE THINGS)?

5. WHAT DO YOU THINK WERE THE REASONS THE 2 OTHER MEN DID NOT STOP AND HELP? HOW DOES THAT RELATE TO S.P.I.E.S.?

6. WRITE DOWN GROUP MEMBERS' PRAYER REQUESTS: