

SUB TOPIC THEME:

I'm Responsible for What?

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

Understanding that some of the responsibilities the students are asked to assume are truly beyond them, yet they still must face them. By walking through this material together, we will help them understand that initial failure is not a sentence to total failure. We will also seek to help them understand that God is truly the only one who can give them wisdom and resilience in all circumstances and that they need to ask him for it. We will also look at the ways God gives guidance to us - through his Word, his Spirit and his people.

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

1. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
2. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story and central Bible passages (or, since there are so many, you may want to copy the ones below)
3. A passion to see students transformed in their understanding of God's love and presence in their lives!

Instructive Prep

Military kids are often asked to take on responsibilities greater and sooner than their non-military peers. This can often be confusing and overwhelming, causing them to shut down, give up, or feel like a failure in every area of their lives. This session is designed to look at ways teens can openly admit their fears and uncertainties about these situations while giving them tools to help them deal with the inevitable responsibilities that come their way. The goal is that they can live their life with joy and faith rather than fear and trepidation.

Leading kids toward a strategy of seeking wisdom and resilience from Christ through his Word, his Spirit and his People, is the goal. Helping kids understand that even though they may sometimes fail in their responsibilities, they are still loved and valued by God and a failure does not condemn them to a life-long pattern of failures.

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 all have responsibilities that often seem out of our ability to handle. For military kids, adult responsibilities often come prematurely. At times you are asked to be the "other adult" in your home when your parent is on deployment. It may be that your parent's rank puts requirements on you that seem above what is expected from others your age. It probably does not seem fair, but worse than that, it can become overwhelming! The nagging fear of failure and worrying about not being able to live up to the expectations can really amp up the stress in your life. So how can you get wisdom for handling these situations? What happens if you do fail?

INTRO STORY:

Do you ever feel completely overwhelmed by your life? Maybe your mom is deployed or your dad moved out or is sick or depressed or abusing drugs. Maybe you have a sibling with special needs or you are the oldest of 6 and your parents both work. Whatever your personal story, there are probably days when you want to run away screaming and the chance of life ever getting easier to handle is slim to none. Sound familiar? So what do you do when things are tough and you just want to give up? How do you know where to turn for help?

If you have ever seen the movie or read any of the books, then you know that Violet Baudelaire from *Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events* has to deal with a lot of responsibilities way ahead of her age. The oldest of three abruptly orphaned children, she and her brother and sister are pushed out of their home and into the care of a distant (and strange) relative. Count Olaf, their new caretaker, isn't much interested in taking care of anything other than their family fortune and Violet is constantly looked to for help and provision by her younger brother and baby sister.

It would be easy and totally understandable for Violet to just freak out! She can't deal with all of this stuff! She's just a kid for goodness sake! But that is not how Violet decides to handle things. Instead, she takes a deep breath, ties her hair back with a ribbon, and sets out to work with diligence and determination. Even that didn't mean she always succeeded. Sometimes, what Violet thought was a solution was actually just getting them into deeper trouble. Still, she keeps trying and learning from her miscalculations. Failure isn't the end; it's just a correction for your current course.

No one is going to try and tell you that the things you have to take responsibility for in life are easy or even fair. Chances are, things weren't supposed to be this way for you and there's a lot of pain and anger and other emotions that accompany all those extra chores and tasks. What God does ask of us though is dedication to working hard for the furthering of his kingdom – even if that just means household work and cooking.

Just like Violet had her brother's help and eventually the encouragement and guidance of her parents (through lost letters), God gives us different tools to equip us in times we feel overwhelmed by life's responsibilities. We have the Church – the global community of Christ followers to help and support us. God also left us his words of instruction – Scripture – and the Holy Spirit to guide us. These three things working in tandem will enable you to act with wisdom and have resilience in all sorts of circumstances.

INTRO QUESTIONS:

1. What emotions do you imagine Violet experienced when faced with caring for her younger siblings after their parent's deaths?
2. Do you ever feel the same way?
3. What do you tend to do first when life overwhelms you?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Find out who has their birthday closest to the end of the year and have them answer first, then work backwards through the year.

1. Have you been in a situation that you felt was overwhelming or when you couldn't handle the responsibilities? Identify one that you would be willing to share with the group. (use Student response sheet)
2. How do you think Violet felt when she failed to take care of her siblings? Have you ever felt that way?
4. Take a minute and write or draw a situation that you most fear you would fail at if you had to face it. (use Student response sheet)
5. How do you think God might guide you? Write down three ways you have experienced or want to experience God's guidance in your life. (use Student response sheet)

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES

To get an idea of the many many ways God makes his will and wisdom accessible to us, take a look at this collection of Scriptures below. Be sure to share some favorites of your own with the rest of your group!

Wisdom through God's Word:**Joshua 1:9**

"Remember that I have commanded you to be determined and confident! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, am with you wherever you go."

Psalms 119:105

Your word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path.

Wisdom through God and his Spirit:**James 1:2-5**

My friends, consider yourselves fortunate when all kinds of trials come your way, for you know that when your faith succeeds in facing such trials, the result is the ability to endure. Make sure that your endurance carries you all the way without failing, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. But if any of you lack wisdom, you should pray to God, who will give it to you; because God gives generously and graciously to all.

Job 32:8

But it is the spirit of Almighty God that comes to us and gives us wisdom.

Colossians 1:9

For this reason we have always prayed for you, ever since we heard about you. We ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will, with all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives.

Proverbs 2:6

It is the LORD who gives wisdom; from him come knowledge and understanding.

Wisdom through God's people:**Proverbs 4:1**

My children, listen to what your father teaches you. Pay attention, and you will have understanding.

Proverbs 11:9

You can be ruined by the talk of godless people, but the wisdom of the righteous can save you.

Proverbs 19:20

If you listen to advice and are willing to learn, one day you will be wise.

LIFE APPLICATION:

1. Of the three ways to attain wisdom, which seems “easiest” to you and why? (use Student response sheet)

2. Identify 2-3 people you feel that you could go to for wise advice. (use Student response sheet)

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. Write your own challenge for this week. Make sure it pushes you to work on a weak point for you so that you keep growing and moving forward:

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. HAVE YOU BEEN IN A SITUATION THAT YOU FELT WAS OVERWHELMING OR WHEN YOU COULDN'T HANDLE THE RESPONSIBILITIES? IDENTIFY ONE THAT YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP.

2. TAKE A MINUTE AND WRITE OR DRAW A SITUATION THAT YOU MOST FEAR YOU WOULD FAIL AT IF YOU HAD TO FACE IT.

3. HOW DO YOU THINK GOD MIGHT GUIDE YOU? WRITE DOWN THREE WAYS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED OR WANT TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S GUIDANCE IN YOUR LIFE.

4. OF THE THREE WAYS TO ATTAIN WISDOM, WHICH SEEMS "EASIEST" TO YOU AND WHY?

5. IDENTIFY OF 2-3 PEOPLE YOU FEEL THAT YOU COULD GO TO FOR WISE ADVICE.

6. WRITE DOWN GROUP MEMBERS' PRAYER REQUESTS: