

SUBTOPIC THEME:

Connecting Up

LESSON OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand the wisdom in seeking others when making big decisions and when doing everyday life. As students continue to grow into young men and women they will face many different challenges. Having a mentor or someone they can ask questions to is important as they face new challenges or want to handle similar challenges in a better way.

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

1. No equipment necessary.
2. Make sure to print off enough Student Response Sheets ahead of time.
3. Bring Bibles to meeting and encourage students to bring their own

Instructive Prep:

We all have to make choices everyday. We do it all the time without even thinking about it, but when something new happens in our life, we pause. Will we do this or that, try something old or something new. When students PCS again to a new place, who will they be? Who will they make friends with? What will they do? When Mom or Dad is shipped out again how will they deal with it? When they PCS to a base in another country, how will they handle it?

These choices are hard! And military teens have to make them all the time! The good news is that they don't have to do it alone. Often times we think we have to figure things out on our own. Find our own way, blaze a new trail, but the truth is we actually don't. There are people who have walked these roads before us and want to help us out. Not only that but God does not want us to walk alone. That is why he is always there for us and why he uses other people in our lives to help us along the way.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: learn, feel, do and what next. The goal is for students to learn something new, connect at an appropriate emotional level and participate in doing something during the study. Finally, the "What Next" section focuses on a change in attitude, and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember that we are

moving towards spiritual and emotional transformation in students' lives, so the application section based on God's truth is really the crux of the time together!

INTRO:

We all have different choices that we make daily. Some of them are bigger than others. Then sometimes we get hit with a bunch of big ones at the same time, sometimes it's smooth sailing for months. You just never know! Think about the last time you PCS'd...that was a lot wasn't it. Maybe you know this, maybe you don't, but in case you don't, know that when times of uncertainty come, you don't have to walk alone. When one of your parents get's shipped out or you get reassigned again, you don't have to put on a brave face and pretend everything is okay, you should have someone you can talk to. Sometimes we like to do things on our own, but I want you to know that not only do you not have to do things on your own, but God doesn't want you to face life alone.

INTRO STORY:

I recently had to relocate half way across the country for an internship over the summer. What this translates to is me trying to take care of myself for the first time. You may be thinking, 'no problem,' but, let me tell you something, until you do it, you really have no idea. I still don't know how I fed myself all summer. I'm pretty sure I lived on beans and rice all the entire time with some chicken and tortillas if I was lucky. In case you're wondering, that gets pretty boring and doesn't seem that healthy either.

So Denver. It was pretty strange at first. I mean Denver was beautiful! I loved it. The city was amazing, the mountains were not too far away, and I got to try a bunch of new things like public transportation, the light rail, walking everywhere, new ice cream places and bookstores; but it was still hard being in a new place away from my family, friends and all familiarity.

I thought I was doing okay as I struggled through the first couple of weeks out there. I was a faithful daughter and called my parents every five days or so, harassed my sisters via phone when I could and talked to my boyfriend almost every night. You all know that talking on the phone is not the same as being there with the people you love. I was lonely.

After a little bit I got to know the people I worked with better, and we hung out a little. The other girls I lived with were all right. I was starting to get a rhythm and then it happened...I was assigned a mentor couple for the summer with three of the other girls I was living with.

Let me just say, I was not feeling this mentor couple thing. I mean, I was doing pretty well on my own. Never mind that I was eating the same thing everyday, feeling lonely and defensive of myself. I was doing great, and I was certain I didn't need a mentor couple to help me through the summer! I could handle it. Whatever it was, whatever was thrown my way, I would make it.

Well, unfortunately I was not given a choice in the matter, so like an obedient intern, I went...showing up at least fifteen minutes late. Oops!

As I drove over to their house to meet up with the other girls and the mentor couple I thought about all the reasons this was a terrible idea.

1. They don't know me
2. They will try to fix me
3. They are probably weird
4. They probably have better things they could be doing
5. I have better things I could be doing
6. They probably got tricked into this
7. They don't actually want us here in their home
8. This is a far drive
9. ...This is just silly

When I had finally run out of excuses, I reached their house, late. I slowly trudge up to their front door and rang the doorbell. Let me tell you something. The SECOND I rang the doorbell, a HUGE dog I couldn't see started barking like a crazy dog ready to tear me apart, and nobody came to the door.

10. They have an insane dog and
11. They didn't show up. So I rang it again. Nothing.
12. Rude.

I had just turned to leave the crazy dog behind thinking this was perfect, I mean, I tried to do what they told me, nobody was there - then the door opened. Great.

It was then that I realized two things: A. The dog was tiny, def would not have eaten me and actually looked excited to see me, and, B. The woman actually looked pretty excited I had made it too. Weird.

I met up with the other girls in the back yard and the woman introduced me to her husband who was just starting to serve everyone DELICIOUS smelling food! Homemade.

13. They were trying to bribe me with food.
14. They had a little dog, no fun.

But I sat down anyway, and, despite my reserved and skeptical attitude I had walked in with, I actually had a *little* bit of fun...

Over the course of the summer, that mentor couple turned out to be an amazing blessing. They always cooked something amazing for us; something I greatly looked forward to.

They took us to fun festivals that happened around the city, took us to small mom and pop restaurants I never would have even noticed, even gave us concert tickets at Red Rocks! Most importantly though, they became people I could count on; new friends in a new place, people who understood being somewhere new and asked me how I was doing at work, relationally, spiritually and emotionally. I had thought nobody would want to spend time with me and get to know me for the short period of time I was going to be there (three and a half months), but they actually wanted to! Not only that, they felt like God had asked them to invest in us!

Maybe, if you're like me, sometimes you underestimate God. God, creator of the universe and creator of you and me, *knows* us. He knows what we need even when we don't, and he wants to help us by giving us what we need. Jesus walked this earth like we do now, so he knows what it's like to be in new places, to be uncomfortable, to be in need of God's wisdom. Trust it, God will take care of you...if you let him.

INTRO QUESTIONS:

1. The author had a lot of excuses for why this mentor couple thing was a bad idea, can you relate? (See Student Response Sheet)
2. Have you ever been in an uncomfortable/new place where someone wanted to help you out, but you were hesitant? Why?

PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

As a group, take time to go over the answers for each of these questions. Encourage each student to participate in sharing. Remember that sometimes it can take a little bit to get the memories flowing. Give the students enough time to reflect so that they can share the things that they want to. Healing and growth happen when we have time to reflect and share with each other.

1. Have you ever felt alone? Scared? Have you ever faced a new place or situation and felt like you were just stuck, didn't know what to do? Share a little bit about it.
2. How do you think having a mentor or support person you could lean on would have helped you in that situation? (See Student Response Sheet)
3. Sometimes it can be hard to believe that God is there and he does care. How does it make you feel to realize that he is there for you? (See Student Response Sheet)

4. Has someone ever reached out to you when you needed help similar to the author? What did you do when they reached out? How did the situation turn out? Is there someone you need to apologize to?
5. Write your own questions:

CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES:

In this passage we get to see one of the best-known people in the Bible, Moses, in a lesser-known story. Many of you may know that Moses was saved by his mother by being put in a basket, raised by a king, ran away and saved the people from slavery in Egypt, the promised land and the Ten Commandments what some may not know is that while he was dealing with all these new things and trying to follow God he was also settling every dispute between the people of the nation. That is a lot of disputes! Think about how often you hear about fights between friends at school, at home or anywhere else, big or small. Moses was settling all of these disputes for a whole NATION! This is when his father-in-law comes to the rescue with some solid advice.

Now I wasn't there, but I wonder how this conversation went down. I wonder what feelings Moses may have felt when his father-in-law basically says, "Sure, you're a capable person, but give other people some power!" Lets check it out.

Exodus 18:13-27 (GNT)

The Appointment of Judges

13 The next day Moses was settling disputes among the people, and he was kept busy from morning till night. 14 When Jethro saw everything that Moses had to do, he asked, "What is all this that you are doing for the people? Why are you doing this all alone, with people standing here from morning till night to consult you?"

15 Moses answered, "I must do this because the people come to me to learn God's will. 16 When two people have a dispute, they come to me, and I decide which one of them is right, and I tell them God's commands and laws."

17 Then Jethro said, "You are not doing this right. 18 You will wear yourself out and these people as well. This is too much for you to do alone. 19 Now let me give you some good advice, and God will be with you. It is right for you to represent the people before

God and bring their disputes to him. 20 You should teach them God's commands and explain to them how they should live and what they should do. 21 But in addition, you should choose some capable men and appoint them as leaders of the people: leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. They must be God-fearing men who can be trusted and who cannot be bribed. 22 Let them serve as judges for the people on a permanent basis. They can bring all the difficult cases to you, but they themselves can decide all the smaller disputes. That will make it easier for you, as they share your burden. 23 If you do this, as God commands, you will not wear yourself out, and all these people can go home with their disputes settled.”

24 Moses took Jethro's advice 25 and chose capable men from among all the Israelites. He appointed them as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. 26 They served as judges for the people on a permanent basis, bringing the difficult cases to Moses but deciding the smaller disputes themselves.

27 Then Moses said good-bye to Jethro, and Jethro went back home.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. It looks like Moses actually really benefited from the advice his father-in-law gave him! Is there good advice a person in your life has given you that you may be ignoring right now? Think it over again. What is it and is there a way you can start applying it to you life?
2. Sometimes there are people in our lives who want to help us out that we just sort of glance over without realizing it. Take some time to think back. Who has been trying to do life with you, give you wise council? Would you be willing to take that relationship to the next level? A more intentional level where you are asking questions and then listen to what they have to say! (See Student Response Sheet)
3. Maybe you can't think of a person like that in your life. Who do you look up to? Write out the names of five people you look up to for various reasons. Are they people you would be willing to ask to mentor you? Be bold, make the ask. Maybe like the authors story and like Moses they actually do want to help you out or they know someone who has more time to.
4. Talk to God. Maybe you're not ready to make that kind of ask. Share with him where you are. Write out your prayer to God, confess to him your feelings about trust, power, control, pride, fear, worth and belonging. Know that you are of value. Put this honest prayer somewhere you will see it daily. Ask God to help you move forward, to see the people he has put in your life and to take the next step. (See Student Response Sheet)

5. Share what you have learned with a friend. Sometimes trying new things can be tough, but it is easier when you try new things with a friend. My first mentor didn't mentor me alone; she mentored my best friend and me together. Maybe this is something you can do as well. Write out the reasons you want to find a mentor, how you think it will benefit you and your friend, people you have already thought of and pray that God would guide you in the conversation as you share these things with your friend. Maybe they will want to join you as well! (See Student Response Sheet)

6. Write your own challenge:

STUDENT RESPONSES:

1. The author had a lot of excuses for why this mentor couple thing was a bad idea, can you relate?
2. How do you think having a mentor or support person you could lean on would have helped you in that situation?
3. Sometimes it can be hard to believe that God is there and he does care. How does it make you feel to realize that he is there for you?
4. Sometimes there are people in our lives who want to help us out that we just sort of glance over without realizing it. Take some time to think back. Who has been trying to do life with you, give you wise council? Would you be willing to take that relationship to the next level? A more intentional level where you are asking questions and then listen to what they have to say!

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7. Write down Group Members Prayer Requests: