

SUB TOPIC THEME:
DISTINCTIONS: HELPFUL VS. HARMFUL
ANGER

Lesson Objective:

To show students that the question shouldn't be about when it is ok to be angry, but, rather, that we should be focused on pursuing a life centered around Jesus Christ. By studying his teachings and life, students will begin to understand that there is another way to live life that doesn't include acting in anger toward those around us. Dialoguing about anger triggers coping mechanisms, what God instructs, and the bigger picture of how we are called to further communicate God's love and forgiveness to those around us will equip teens to handle the influence of anger on their hearts and actions. This will happen through loving accountability, true confession, devotion to growth, and the hope and acceptance of the Lord's complete and all-loving transformation.



Set Up Info:

Supplies Needed:

1. Access to internet for showing videos and playing music
2. A copy of *Les Miserable* with Hugh Jackman would be useful but not necessary
3. Copies of the Student Response sheet (printed below)
4. Bibles so you can look up the Scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students' hearts transformed!

Instructive Prep:

We will all feel angry throughout our lives. The emotion itself is not sinful; but, as we all know, it can quickly lead us down paths of destruction. So what's most important when we find ourselves good and steamed is to focus on the guidance Scripture gives us about how to live a God-centered life. We often get distracted with justifying our anger. We like to explain and get validation from others that we have every right to get back at the the person who wronged us. I'm not saying that anger is never good or justified. What is important to focus on here, though, is that we are given a different way to resolve situations through the love of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness he demonstrated for us.

Military teens' lives contain more stress than the average American teenager. The constant transition, threat of family brokenness, and perpetual loss that they face can easily encourage a life operated from a point of anger, and so the concept of

stepping out in faith to follow God's guidance may seem ludicrous. Use this time to talk honestly about the emotions behind the anger as well as the life we are called to live for God's purpose. Spanning the whole topic might seem daunting, but it's by identifying the origins of anger (feelings, triggers, experiences) and not only talking about practical everyday techniques you can use to manage anger, and by taking it past that to the healing and transformation we can have through our loving Lord, that we will help students begin to understand the power of choosing to follow Jesus Christ. It's through making that choice daily and consistently seeking after the Lord's will that these kids will not only experience peace instead of anger, but they will begin to understand that living for God extends beyond them to others who also need to know and receive the forgiveness and mercy of God.

The progression of these studies is four-fold: learn, feel, do and what next. The goals are for students to (1) learn something new, (2) connect at an emotional level to some degree, and (3) participate in doing something during the study (like writing a resolution or making a list of goals). Finally, (4) 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:

Getting angry will happen to everyone; you can't help it. Getting even, though, that's a choice. That's what God says pay attention to when we feel that very natural emotion of anger -- He tells us to watch out and make sure our feeling doesn't lead us into sin. But we love to dance on that line, don't we? Rather than turn away, we get in the last word. Rather than look stupid, we get revenge. Anger can consume us and make us completely lose sight of everything else! What Jesus showed us is that there is another choice that we can make. By following his example and choosing to act out of love and forgiveness, we become part of the bigger story. We become able to pass on that grace and mercy to those around us, including the ones who have made us angry and maybe even wronged us. It's amazing to experience for yourself the loving transformation the God offers, and then to be a part of that in someone else's life as well.

Intro Story:

The story of *Les Miserable* has captured people's imaginations and hearts for years. Even before the stirring music was composed, the story of Jean Valjean and his redemption and transformation has shone out from the pages of Victor Hugo's work to speak to hundreds of thousands of people. Perhaps you are one of them. Whether you are familiar with the story or not, consider the emotions the characters are experiencing during the clip and pay close attention to when a choice is made and the impact it has on others.

Valjean brought to the Monseigneur:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNsHRUVwKwg>

Jean Valjean faced with forgiveness and is experiencing the transformation it brings into his heart: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JP31L6AhB3M>

A short clip from *Who am I* where we see how Jean Valjean has taken this redemption he has experienced and used it to help others. We also see how it continues to be a struggle to choose the right path:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx7K42uyrts>

To hear the whole song listen:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iytpgb52cgA>

Now here see the continuation of mercy and love being extended to others when Valjean finds Fantine and sees her hopelessness and has compassion. Notice the similarities of Fantine to who Jean Valjean was at the beginning:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdNf1vDGpNg>

Intro Questions:

1. What impact did you see forgiveness and love have on people?
2. Which character do you most identify with? Why?

Personal Reflection Questions:

To determine in what order you should answer, snag a piece of each person's hair and go from shortest to longest.

1. Which of the verses stood out to you the most? Why?
2. Make 3 columns and 3 rows and list 3 times when you made a choice to either act in anger or with forgiveness and love, then name the feelings and consequences surrounding that choice. In the last column identify what (if anything) you would do differently when faced with a similar situation. Take some time to do this and share with the group the one that you struggle with the most. (use Student response sheet)
3. When did you experience someone else extending mercy and forgiveness to you instead of anger? What impact did that have on you?

4. What do you think of the possibility of communicating God's love to others? Write down 5+ thoughts/opinions on this (ex: .that makes me nervous, excited; I think it's lame God makes us do his work, etc.) (use Student response sheet)
5. What are some ways you already communicate who Jesus is through how you act? What else do you think gets communicated most often through your actions? (use Student response sheet)

Central Bible Passages:

The fact is, when we feel anger surge through us, we have a choice to make. We have to choose how we are going to handle this very tricky emotion. Jesus had some pretty important things to say about our choice to follow him and in turn help others come to know him. You see, it's not only possible for you to receive the Lord's grace and mercy, but for others to experience it through you! It's pretty amazing when you think about how much ability God gives us to speak his love into the lives of those around us. So even when Jesus asks you to turn the other cheek and not seek vengeance that the world would say you deserve, stand firm and strive to live a life dedicated to God's purpose. It will be life that is fulfilled in the power and peace of God's love for you. Use these passages from Scripture to help you understand what Jesus asks us to do.

Matthew 18:21-35 [emphasis added]

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"

"No, not seven times," answered Jesus, "but seventy times seven, because the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before the king. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay you everything!' **The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.**

"Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and started choking him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he said. His fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!' **But he refused;** instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. So he called the servant in. 'You worthless slave!' he said. 'I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. **You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.**' The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount."

And Jesus concluded, “That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

John 8:2-12 [emphasis added]

Early the next morning he went back to the Temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and began to teach them. The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought in a woman who had been caught committing adultery, and they made her stand before them all. “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. In our Law Moses commanded that such a woman must be stoned to death. Now, what do you say?” **They said this to trap Jesus**, so that they could accuse him. But he bent over and wrote on the ground with his finger. As they stood there asking him questions, he straightened up and said to them, “Whichever one of you has committed no sin may throw the first stone at her.” Then he bent over again and wrote on the ground. When they heard this, they all left, one by one, the older ones first. Jesus was left alone, with the woman still standing there. He straightened up and said to her, “Where are they? Is there no one left to condemn you?”

“No one, sir,” she answered.

“Well, then,” Jesus said, “**I do not condemn you either. Go, but do not sin again.**”

Jesus spoke to the Pharisees again. “I am the light of the world,” he said. “Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness.”

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 4:17-26

In the Lord's name, then, I warn you: do not continue to live like the heathen, whose thoughts are worthless and whose minds are in the dark. They have no part in the life that God gives, for they are completely ignorant and stubborn. They have lost all feeling of shame; they give themselves over to vice and do all sorts of indecent things without restraint.

That was not what you learned about Christ! You certainly heard about him, and as his followers you were taught the truth that is in Jesus. So get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to—the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new, and you must put on the new self, which is created in God's likeness and reveals itself in the true life that is upright and holy.

No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day.

John 3:16&17

For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its savior.

Proverbs 16:32

It is better to be patient than powerful. It is better to win control over yourself than over whole cities.

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or anything that belongs to the world. If you love the world, you do not love the Father. Everything that belongs to the world—what the sinful self desires, what people see and want, and everything in this world that people are so proud of—none of this comes from the Father; it all comes from the world. The world and everything in it that people desire is passing away; but those who do the will of God live forever.

Luke 6:27&28

But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you.

1 Peter 3:8-9

To conclude: you must all have the same attitude and the same feelings; love one another, and be kind and humble with one another. Do not pay back evil with evil or cursing with cursing; instead, pay back with a blessing, because a blessing is what God promised to give you when he called you.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us have confidence, then, and approach God's throne, where there is grace. There we will receive mercy and find grace to help us just when we need it.

Life Application:

1. Make a list of at least 5 things you have done or would like to try to handle moments of anger. (use student response sheet)
2. Think about this coming week and the people you will be interacting with and the situations you will be in. Now identify 2 or 3 that will probably evoke anger in you and outline a plan of action that will be God-centered. Make a pact to help and support each other to follow through with these at school and your home. (use Student response sheet)

