

# Hang'n Tight with Jesus

## SMALL GROUP LESSON



### Lesson Objective:

*Making a decision to align oneself with Jesus entails a life-long commitment. Sadly, many young Christ followers end up bagging their faith within their first semester of college. Fewer still will finish the race with the same gusto they had when they began. This lesson is designed so that students can overcome these statistical realities. Proper perspective and togetherness are two attributes needed in order to honor our commitment to Jesus.*

### Set Up Info:

#### **Supplies Needed:**

1. Computer or internet connection to watch the YouTube video. External speakers would be an added bonus as parts of the clips are hard to hear.
2. A ball
3. A white erase board or a large flip chart and appropriate writing utensils.
4. Bibles so you can look up the scripture story (or copy the ones below)
5. A passion to see students commit themselves to unwavering identification with Jesus for their whole lives.

#### **Instructive Prep:**

It is sad to see, but many of the young people that will pass through our youth programs may never hear the words, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:23). It is unfair to blame the youth minister for their falling away. Family problems, secular education, materialism, consumerism, and a host of other negative worldly influences are all competing for their

attention. But that does not mean youth ministers should not try to help kids overcome the hurdles they are and will be facing.

This session is designed to challenge teens from the get-go that identification with Jesus requires a life-long commitment. We need to help them understand that Jesus is not someone we ‘put on’ for a season of our lives; it’s a daily decision. He is our only means of salvation. We are desperate for him. We must cling to him as we would a life raft in stormy seas. It is this sort of perspective, along with a sense of togetherness. that will increase the odds of them finishing their race well.

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 study that brings them to a point of decision. Finally, the *what next* focuses on a change of attitude and/or behavior, which you will find in the challenge of the Life Application section. Remember, the goal is a complete transformation in kids’ lives (i.e. spiritual, emotional, mental, and behavioral), so the application section based on God’s truth is really the crux of the time together! Have fun and lead well.

## INTRO:

*“Remember the Titans” is an inspirational movie at many levels. Coach Boone enters the season with the deck stacked against him – much like the challenges facing young Christians today. Yet he overcame adversities. Visionary leadership and a commitment to togetherness are what propelled his team to at AAA Virginia State Championship in 1971. There is much we can learn for our spiritual journey.*

## INTRO STORY:

The setting is 1971 at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. It is the first school year for the newly desegregated high school. Herman Boone replaces Bill Yoast as the head football coach. Faced with what would seem to be insurmountable challenges of racism and prejudice that deeply divided both the community and the team, Coach Boone must find a way to unify his troops. This he accomplishes through rigorous practice sessions and intentional integration of all players, black and white. Their gut-wrenching workouts and early morning runs serve to bond them one to another. Through thick and thin, trial and hardship, the players grow to become one unit. That internal harmony gives way to success on the field. Not even

All-American Gerry Bertier's career ending accident soils the team's perfect season. In the end, the self-dedication of all the coaches and players serves as a small snapshot of heaven, where diversity and unity join together for a common cause.

There are two video clips for this session. The first is Coach Boone's address to the team at Gettysburg. This scene captures well his visionary leadership. He saw clearly what others had yet to bring into focus. The imagery of the gravestones and hazy morning fog combined with his poignant words create a memory for his fellow coaches and players they would never forget. The main idea application point for our spiritual journey is perspective. We need to maintain an eternal perspective throughout our lives. And we need to focus our eyes, hearts, and minds upon Jesus.

The second video clip is a compilation of some of the more inspirational moments of the movie. Together they capture the team's journey toward unity and success. This point is more easily made when viewing the movie in its entirety. The snippets will at least convey the idea, though. The main application point for our spiritual journey is the idea of togetherness. If we are to run the Christian race well, we need each other. We can't do it alone. Unity within the body is key to our long-term success. That unity ought to be protected at all costs from within.

Perspective: <http://www.youtube.com/watch#!v=58IljPxiSxk&feature=related> -

Togetherness: <http://www.youtube.com/watch#!v=mWJs2Gof538&feature=related>

(Note: if you experience technical difficulties with these URL addresses, hit the "refresh" button on your internet browser.)

Intro Questions:

1. Who is your favorite sports team? Why do you like them?
2. What does it mean to make a commitment to something?

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS:**

*Take a ball and give it to one student. They can pass or toss it to another student to begin the discussion on question one. After answering, each person gets to pass it to someone who hasn't answered. Do the same randomness through all the questions.*

1. What do you believe are the contributing factors to the Titan's success? What parallels do you see between these clips and our commitment to journey with Jesus?
2. What were some of the challenges they faced? How did they overcome them? What are some of the challenges we face in our journey with Jesus? How can we overcome them?
3. What sacrifices did the Titan players make? By season's end, do you think their sacrifices were worth it? What about us? What sort of sacrifices will a decision to follow Jesus involve? Will those sacrifices be worth it to hear the words, "Well done, you good and faithful servant?"
4. Is there anyone in your life that you can look to as an example of someone who is running their Christian race well?

#### CENTRAL BIBLE PASSAGES:

*The following selected verses designed to show that proper perspective and fellowship, or "togetherness," are two essential elements in staying tight with Jesus over the course of a lifetime. If we can successfully pass along these two values, then we, as youth ministers, will greatly help our young brothers and sisters in Christ finish the race well.*

#### **Hebrews 10:24-25**

<sup>24</sup>Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. <sup>25</sup>Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer.

#### **Acts 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup>They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers.

#### *Life among the Believers*

<sup>43</sup>Many miracles and wonders were being done through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. <sup>44</sup>All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. <sup>45</sup>They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed. <sup>46</sup>Day after day they met as a group in the Temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts, <sup>47</sup>praising God, and

enjoying the good will of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved.

### **John 15:7**

*Jesus said:* <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it.

### **Colossians 3:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. <sup>2</sup>Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth.

### **Matthew 6:33**

<sup>33</sup>Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things.

### **Psalms 73:25**

<sup>25</sup>What else do I have in heaven but you? Since I have you, what else could I want on earth?

### **Psalms 27:4**

<sup>4</sup>I have asked the LORD for one thing; one thing only do I want: to live in the LORD's house all my life, to marvel there at his goodness, and to ask for his guidance.

### **I Corinthians 9:24**

<sup>24</sup>Surely you know that many runners take part in a race, but only one of them wins the prize. Run, then, in such a way as to win the prize.

### **Philippians 3:12-14**

<sup>12</sup>I do not claim that I have already succeeded or have already become perfect. I keep striving to win the prize for which Christ Jesus has already won me to himself. <sup>13</sup>Of course, my friends, I really do not think that I have already won it; the one thing I do, however, is to forget what is behind me and do my best to reach what is ahead. <sup>14</sup>So I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize, which is God's call through Christ Jesus to the life above.

**LIFE APPLICATION:**

1. Our friends are some of the biggest influences in our lives. Write down the names of people you most typically hang out with on a weekly basis. Do you believe them to be a good or bad influence in your journey with Jesus? How so? If you determine them to be a bad influence, how do you think God might want you to respond to them? (also check out the *Influence of Friends* under the Friends/Friendship Topic)
2. Make a commitment that from this day forward you will seek out a Christian community to fellowship with regularly (chapel, church, small group, etc.). Begin now by making weekly Mass or church services a non-negotiable priority in your life. (Try going together as a small group if some of you are not used to going at all. I know a group of guys who used to go together to Catholic Mass, then the Protestant service followed by the Gospel service, all in the same Sunday!)
3. As a group, think through how you each one can be both a Jesus freak and relevant to your their culture at the same time. Record students' responses on a white board or flip chart. Discuss why it is important to resolve the tension both extremes present.
4. Write your own challenge: