



LESSON 1: IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO LEARN: Denying ourselves means our image is to be driven more by who God is and less by who we are.

WHAT WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO WITH WHAT THEY’VE LEARNED: To step back and evaluate the image they present to the world and whether it’s focused more on them or on Christ.

Scripture Focus: Mark 8:34-38

Supporting Scripture: John 3:27-30

OVERVIEW: Your teenagers are brand managers. And they are the brand. With every selfie, every Instagram post, every tweet, they shape how they are perceived. For better or worse, they are extremely image conscious. This isn’t necessarily a bad thing. But what does this idea of image control have to do with being a Christ-follower? Good thing Jesus had a ton to say about this. This first lesson will help define what exactly you mean by “image,” and how your students’ conception of image should be tied more to who God is and less of who they are.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO

The Jesus And Your Image Teacher Prep Videos are short videos designed to help you grasp the main points of the lessons as you prepare to teach.

To access your “Jesus And Your Image Lesson 1 Teacher Prep Video,” click on the URL below.

- <https://youthministry360.com/jesus-and-your-image-teacher-prep>

BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide some context for the Scripture you’ll be studying. The Details give you background info for each book, The Setting informs you what’s happening in and around the passage, and The Main Point gives you an overview of how the passage will be used in the lesson.

- **What do we mean by “context”?** In every ym360 Bible study lesson, you’ll notice we make a point to encourage you to provide the context for the passages you study. By “context” we mean at the very least helping students know who wrote the book, when it was written, and why it was written.
- **What’s The Big Deal?** When we teach the Bible without giving context, students don’t get a “big picture” understanding of the story of the Bible. But this view is vital to grasping the story of God’s plan of redemption for humankind. As you teach, use the Bible Background to help summarize the context.

THE DETAILS

- **Author:** The Gospel of Mark was written by its namesake. Mark, also known as John Mark, is believed to have received most of his information for his Gospel from Peter’s firsthand accounts.
- **Time frame:** Mark is thought to have written his Gospel in the mid 50’s AD.
- **Purpose:** Mark was writing primarily for a non-Jewish audience. His Gospel explains Jewish customs to non-Jews in an effort to get them to see the big picture of Jesus’ identity.

THE SETTING

In the chapters preceding Mark 8, Mark regales his audience with a fast-paced account of Jesus’ early ministry. We read about Jesus traveling in and around Galilee, preaching and healing. We read the story of John the Baptist’s death at the hands of Herod. We read about Jesus feeding the 5,000 and the 4,000. We see Jesus walk on water. We see him rebuking the Pharisees, among other things. These few chapters in Mark contain a wealth of rich stories of Jesus’ life and ministry.

Mark 8:34-38 comes immediately after Mark’s account of Peter’s profession of Christ as the Messiah. Jesus’ words in Mark 8:34-38 are connected to Jesus’ rebuke of Peter. Recall, Peter chastised Jesus for predicting His own death. Jesus’ pointed response was a way of reminding Peter that God’s plan took precedence over any human desire.

THE MAIN POINT

The world is image obsessed. From the star athlete, to the movie star, to the rock star, and even to the politician, we focus more on image and “brand” than we do talent or substance. This mindset has filtered down to our teenagers, who, often without thinking about it, spend a great deal of their days cultivating a brand that will get them ahead--however they define this. The medium, more often than not, is the vast array of social media-driven tools and apps.

The problem is that this image-based culture is at direct odds with a Christ-centered one, where we are supposed to reflect Christ, not project ourselves. Jesus words will challenge your students to think through what they are projecting to the world, and how this conflicts with Jesus’ call to “deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.”

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Lead-In; the Bible study section called The Main Event; an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

THE LEAD IN

- **Goal:** To get students thinking about image, and how to begin thinking about why and what we project to the world.
- **Set-Up:** You'll need to provide the following supplies for this activity: enough Styrofoam cups for every student in your group to have one; 1 big bag of marshmallows per team; two tables (or other flat surface to build a tower of cups on). Before the activity, you'll need to use a permanent marker to write inside of each cup. In each cup, you're going to write a word that has to do with either an image that a teen might project, or an element of an image. You can come up with your own list, but here are a few examples: Athletic ability, popularity, intelligence, possessions, looks, edgy behavior, fan of a team (or a band, etc.), sexuality, and so on. Set up the tables about 10 feet from each other in the room. Put half the cups and a bag of marshmallows on each table

FIRST, as students come in, divide them into two groups. Let them know you're going to be playing a game. Then, tell them they will have two minutes to build a wall out of the cups on the table. (They'll notice the writing on the cup, but don't explain what it is yet.)

THEN, once the two minutes are up, set up the ground rules. Explain that the goal is to knock down the other team's wall by throwing marshmallows at it. Each team must stay behind their table at all times. They can't do anything to prevent a marshmallow from hitting the wall, like blocking it with their hands. The first team to knock the other wall down wins. (If you want to make the game last a little longer, make teams knock all the cups off the other team's table.) Don't take too long to explain the rules, just run through them real quick and then say, "GO!" (The game should move rather quickly, but it will be wild and crazy. If you want, you can play a couple more times. Just be sure to find ALL the marshmallows!)

When you're done, have the students pick up all the cups and marshmallows. Before they sit down, they're to grab one cup and hold on to it.

NEXT, lead the students in a little debrief. **Ask something similar to the following questions:**

- **How strong was the "wall of cups"?**
Answer: Not very! The wall was made of weak material; wasn't strong enough to withstand marshmallows, etc.
- **Obviously, if something as strong as a marshmallow could knock it down, our wall wasn't strong at all. It's all in the material we use. What kind of material would you want to build a wall out of?**
Answers will vary, obviously something strong.

THEN, transition into the introduction of what you'll be studying for the next four weeks. **Say something like:**

- **For the next 4 weeks, we're going to be talking about image. Specifically, our own self-image and how it relates to our life as Christ-followers. When I talk about self-image, what comes to mind? (Answers will vary, but try to lead them towards something along the lines of "The picture of ourselves we portray to the world.") Image is not necessarily the same as identity. Identity is who we are at our core. Instead, we're going to be talking about image, that picture we show to the world. (Make sure your students understand this difference. We don't want them thinking that they should become mindless robots or brainwashed. Instead, this is about getting rid of an image, a projection, that doesn't take Christ into the equation.)**

NEXT, instruct everyone to take a look at the inside of their cups now, if they haven't already. Explain to your students that the words written inside each of the cups represent images that teens like to present to the world. Have students take a moment to think about and answer the following questions about that image:

- **What is the image in your cup?**
- **What would someone do who wanted to project this image to the world?**

Answers will vary, but you want to show them that these images, these things people hold onto as so important, won't last. Athletic ability is one injury away from nothingness. Possessions break or are replaced by something shinier six months down the road. Looks fade, and so on.

FINALLY, transition to the Main Event by explaining to your students that everyone projects an image, whether we are conscious of it or not. **Say something like:**

- **We have our “brand” that we show the world so that people view us a certain way, one that is beneficial to us. Think about what you choose to share on social media. Most of the time you only share things that put you in a certain well-controlled, positive light. Few people tweet about their failures, their shortcomings, how they hurt people, and so on. We all project an image to the world. One that puts a tremendous focus on us. But starting in this lesson, we're going to take a look at what Jesus has to say about what we're supposed to be projecting to the world.**

THE MAIN EVENT

- **Goal:** To help your students understand that “denying ourselves” means our image is to be driven more by who God is and less by who we are.
- **Set-Up:** None needed.

FIRST, begin by explaining to students that you're going to look at someone who could have been pretty image-driven in his own right. Explain that he was a super-popular guy. He was even called, by Jesus, the greatest human ever to be born! He had crowds following him. Explain that in some circles, he had a bad-boy image with crazy clothes. **Ask:**

- **Can anyone guess whom we're talking about?**

Answer: John the Baptist.

THEN, instruct students to go to John 3:27-30. While they're finding it, explain a little about the Gospel of John and who John the Baptist was. (He was Jesus' cousin. His birth was announced by angels. He preached repentance and baptized countless individuals, including Jesus.) Then, read or have a student read John 3:27-30. **Ask:**

- **What do you think John meant when he said, “A person can receive only what is given them from heaven”?**

Answer: His job was to prepare the way for Jesus. His whole image was about the mission God had given him to do.

- **In verse 30, John said about Jesus, “He must become greater; I must become less.” Why did John say that?**

Answer: If John held on to his position, his image, he would have both interfered with Jesus' ministry and damaged his own.

- **How hard do you think it was for John to give up his popularity and position to make way for Jesus? Would you be able to do the same thing in his shoes?**

Answers will vary.



THE JESUS STUDIES

You need to be reminded of the issues teenagers deal with as they try to live out their faith in a world that's often opposed to their core beliefs. Navigating these issues can be rough. Teenagers get so many mixed messages; the world says one thing, their friends may say another. And we hope they know enough about their faith to know how to make sense of it all. We hope...

THE JESUS STUDIES cut through the confusion, teaching your students a Christ-centered look at the major issues they deal with in their lives.

These are no watered-down, topical Bible Studies. This is Jesus weighing in on the very issues your students are confronted with on a daily basis. It's your students learning to see life through the person of Christ.

CHOOSE FROM ANY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STUDIES, OR, TEACH THEM ALL:

Jesus and Identity

Jesus and Your Faith

Jesus and Culture

Jesus and Loving Others

Jesus and Tough Times

Jesus and Your Image

Jesus and Stress

Jesus and Forgiveness

Jesus and Influence

Jesus and Relationships

Jesus and Your Future

Jesus and Mean People

Jesus and Stuff

Each title in The Jesus Studies includes the following awesome features:

- 4 Interactive Leader's Guides complete with Bible Background
- 12 out of class devotionals
- 4 Parent Pages for at-home discipleship
- PowerPoint backgrounds and Promo Art
- Teacher Prep Video to help you prepare

Teach THE JESUS STUDIES to help equip your students to see the relevant issues of their life through the words of Jesus.

For more information, please visit ym360.com/jesus-studies

YM360



THE JESUS STUDIES

This is just a sample of the Leader Guides that accompany each of The Jesus Studies line of Bible Study Curriculum.

If you're interested in learning more about any of the 13 individual studies in The Jesus Studies, or want more info on the line itself, please [CLICK HERE](#).

And if you have any questions about this study or any other study from YM360, we're here to help.

Call us (888.969.6360), email us (customer care@ym360.com), or Live Chat us through the link located at the top of any ym360.com page.