

# TEACHER PLANNING

## SUPPLIES:

- *Believe for Teens* Curriculum DVD
- Copies for every participant of the **Lesson 1 Handout: God** (on curriculum DVD). Make sure to hand these out to students as they arrive, or make them available for students to easily access at the beginning of your gathering. Always print a few extra copies in case you have a higher number of guests than expected.
- Copies of the **Practice & Imagine** section of this guide for Small Group Leaders
- **Art supplies** for the Practice & Imagine section of the curriculum: large sketch paper, pens, markers, paints, and clay for participants to create an imaginative response
- **Optional:** Teen Study Bible (Zondervan)—students may want to dig deeper into the stories they are learning each week. Having a number of copies of this allows for students to further explore the stories within the context of the scriptures from which they are taken.

## PREPARATION FOR THIS LESSON:

- **Old Testament Story teaching** — For the purposes of this curriculum, it's important to view your role first-and-foremost a storyteller, providing details and insights that will illuminate the story. Because students are invited to draw their own conclusions from the story towards the end of your gathering time, it's important to try your best to avoid providing any "personal application" for students during the teaching time.
- **Old Testament Story reading** — pre-assign a teen student or adult volunteer to read the story of Creation, using the provided Lesson 1 Old Testament Story (on curriculum DVD).

# LESSON OUTLINE

Outline for a session that is approximately 75 minutes long:

*[Whenever possible, use the timeframes listed below for the best experience using this curriculum. However, feel free to adjust the times to fit the specific needs of your group.]*

## LARGE GROUP

Welcome & Opening Prayer	10 min
Personal Stories	10 min
Old Testament Story - Creation (teach & discuss)	20 min
New Testament Story - Jesus' Baptism (video & reflection)	5 min

## SMALL GROUP

Practice & Imagine	28 min
Closing / Prayer	2 min

# WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER 10 MINUTES

**TEACHER SCRIPT** (please personalize this in your own words):

Hello! Welcome to the very first week of an experience called Believe. I'm so excited that you're here, and excited about what we are going to experience over the next few months.

Each week we gather, we'll do a few things that are similar to other weeks, and a few things that are unique to that week. We'll tell some stories to one another. We'll experience a few stories from the Bible, and consider what they mean for our own lives. And we'll also spend practicing new ways to believe and engage with God.

What we do each week of *Believe* may be a little different than what we've done here before, or what you're used to. One thing that might be different is that there isn't going to be only one person teaching each week. Instead, *Believe* is based on the idea that when we gather, WE ALL are the teachers. Seriously. I believe one of the best ways we can learn and grow is for all of us to share what we're learning, and trust that God will use what we share to help everyone else in the group learn.

Are you up for it? Are you with me?

We'll start each week by praying. We'll pray in different ways, and for different things each week. But generally, we'll be asking God to help us slow down, notice what we are learning, hear from God, and hear from one another.

For today, I'm wondering if one of you would simply pray in your own words that we will have a great time here today, and that God will use each one of us to help the entire group grow.

**[CUE:** *Ask for a student to pray a brief prayer.*]

Great, thank you!

# PERSONAL STORIES 10 MINUTES

*[CUE: Make sure that each student has a copy of the Lesson 1 Handout: God.]*

## TEACHER SCRIPT:

Let's start by telling some stories to one another!

What is your very first memory? Not something that you've heard from others about when you were young, but the first thing you can actually remember on your own?

Stop for a second and think about what it is. Then, in your handout, jot down what that memory was, and the main emotion you felt when that event happened.

Now, turn to one or two other people around you and tell your story. Keep it fairly short — maybe 2 or 3 minutes each — but be sure to include some good details. What is your first memory? What can you picture or hear in that memory? How did you feel?

*[CUE: Allow students to tell their stories to those around them for 6-8 minutes. Give students a 1-minute warning before ending this time of sharing.]*

Okay, who has a story you'd like to share with the rest of the group — something particularly funny or entertaining?

*[CUE: Invite one or two students to share their stories with the entire group.]*

Before we move on, take a minute to reflect on the stories we just told. In your handout, quickly answer these questions: Why do you think this is your first memory? What was so memorable about it that you remember it years later?

*[CUE: Allow students 60 seconds to write in their handouts.]*

# OLD TESTAMENT STORY 20 MINUTES

## TEACHER SCRIPT:

Each week, we are going to experience two stories from the Bible. I use the word “experience” because we aren’t going to only read or listen to the stories. Each week, one of the stories will be told using a video. We’ll also experience another story each week using different modes of storytelling. Sometimes we’ll read it out loud together. Sometimes we’ll read it silently. Sometimes we’ll even act it out.

Every week, our first story will be from the Old Testament, the collection of books in the Bible that were written before the life of Jesus. Our second story each week will be from the New Testament, the collection of books in the Bible that were written about the life of Jesus, or written shortly after he lived on the earth.

It’s been said that every story has three parts. What do you think they are?

*[CUE: Ask students to share what three components they think every story has.]*

A really smart philosopher named Aristotle once said that every story has these three parts — a beginning, a middle, and an end. Think about the stories you just told to one another about your first memories. Even if you didn’t tell it that way, your story had all three, right?

It’s helpful to think about stories — our own and others — this way. Stories are not just a list of events that took place. Usually, something significant happens or changes between the beginning and the end. Sometimes, it’s the *people* in the stories that change.

Well, our first story has a beginning, but it’s also about THE beginning. The very start of time...

## BACKSTORY 4 MINUTES

Share some of the following thoughts to help students better understand the context of the creation story. Some students may already know about these facts and ideas. Others may not. Be sure to share them in a spirit of helpfulness, rather than coming across as the expert in the room. The goal is to provide a great foundation for students to hear the creation story, either for the first time, or with a new perspective than they may have previously heard it.

- This story, found in the book of Genesis, is not only an account of the beginning of the world, but also the beginning of a story about a specific group of people – the people of Israel.
- A traditional view has been that Moses, someone who shows up in the Bible a little later, wrote this story, and the entire book of Genesis. This view suggest that God revealed to Moses many things that happened before his lifetime, and inspired him to write down all that was revealed.
- For thousands of years, two people groups – Christians and Jews – have viewed the creation aaccount as the beginning of the story of God’s relationship with humans. Keep all of this in mind as we experience this next story...

## THE STORY 2 MINUTES

Have a pre-assigned student or adult volunteer read the story of Creation, using the provided Lesson 1 OT Story (on curriculum DVD).

## DISCUSS THE STORY 10 MINUTES

### TEACHER SCRIPT:

In your handout, jot down a few things that popped out at you from the story. This could be a detail that seemed interesting to you, or a question that came to mind. Also, pay attention to what emotion you are feeling, having just heard this story.

*[CUE: Allow students to write in their handouts for about 2 minutes.]*

Let's talk about the story a bit more as a group for a few minutes. I'll ask a few questions to guide our discussion, but it's important to remember two things—

First, there's no right answer to any of these questions. They are all questions about what you noticed or think about the story. I'm not looking for the best answer, or a correct answer. I just want to hear what you think.

Second, this is one of the main ways we will learn during the Believe series — by sharing our thoughts and ideas with each another. But in order for that to best happen, it's important that you don't use this time to TRY to teach one another. Share things from your personal perspective, rather than telling everybody else what you think they should know. Make sense?

*[CUE: DISCUSS — Use the questions below as a general framework for a 10 minute discussion. Please refer to the "How to Lead BELIEVE Discussions" in your leader's guide.]*

- What details in the story were most interesting to you? What was most memorable?
- What emotions did you feel as you listened the story?
- What detail in the story did you find most interesting?
- What ways did the story talk about God that were familiar to you?
- What ways did the story talk about God that felt new or unfamiliar to you?
- Are there any thoughts or questions you have about God that you want to think more about, or explore further?

Thank you all so much for sharing!

**ILLUMINATE THE STORY** 4 MINUTES

Share a few of your own thoughts and reflections about how God is portrayed in the story. What is God like? What does God do that strikes you as unique or interesting? Was there anything you noticed about God for the first time? (If any of your prepared thoughts are shared by students during the discussion time, make sure to reflect that back to the group. For instance, "Brandon, you mentioned that God seems very creative. I was thinking something similar...")

The goal of this time is for you to share your own observations. Be mindful to share in a way that communicates to your students that your observations are not necessarily the "right" observations, but simply what you thought about as you experienced the story, like they did.

In the upcoming small group time, small group leaders will share the Key Observation for this lesson: God seems involved in ALL of life. God brings the whole universe into existence in the Creation story, but God is also personally involved in the story of Jesus' baptism.

Work to prepare and share observations that hint at this key observation. God is bringing the whole universe into being, but where in this story do you see God personally involved with creation?

# NEW TESTAMENT STORY 5 MINUTES

**TEACHER SCRIPT:**

Now, we're going to watch a video that tells our second story for the day, a story from the New Testament.

*[CUE: Play "God" video from the curriculum DVD (3 minutes).]*

Okay, before we move on, jot down in your handout again a few things that popped out at you from the story.

*[CUE: Allow students to write in their handouts for about 2 minutes.]*

We're going to divide into smaller groups now and have a similar discussion to the one we just had, then try some new experiences together. Your group leader will tell you all about that.

*[CUE: Gather students into small groups. Make sure the discussion leaders have copies of the "Practice & Imagine" section of the curriculum.]*



# SMALL GROUP TIME 30 MINUTES

## PRACTICE & IMAGINE

### SMALL GROUP LEADER SCRIPT:

So we just watched the second story for today, from the New Testament, about the Jesus' Baptism. Let's talk about it for a few minutes...

**[CUE: DISCUSS** — Use the questions below as a general framework for a 10 minute discussion.]

- Was there anything that happened in this story that reminded you of the first story?
- Was there anything John the Baptist or Jesus said or did that reminded you of the first story?
- Did this story make you feel similar to the first story in any way? How so?
- In what ways do the stories describe God in similar ways?

**[CUE: REFLECT AND SHARE** — Many times, students will share an observation that is very similar to the "Key Observation" written below. In this teaching and learning format it's best to allow students to discover and share this observation themselves, and for you to reflect that observation back to them, and use what they've said to transition to the Key Observation. For instance, if a student says, "It's like God is really involved — both in the world, and in Jesus' life," then you can reflect back to the student: "I love what you said about God being involved. I noticed something like that too..."]

### KEY OBSERVATION:

**One thing I noticed is that God seems involved in ALL of life. God brings the whole universe into existence in first story, but God is also personally involved in the story of Jesus' baptism.**

**[CUE:** Pause here for a moment, and give students a chance to process what you've just said.]

Which makes me wonder: Do we believe that God involved in each of our own stories? Do we believe that God is involved in the world around us?

One really exciting thing that we are going to do every time we get together is that we are going to take a few minutes and try to practice the belief we are talking about. And when I say practice, I mean practice. We are going to try to actually experience God in a new way over the next few minutes.

Here's what I want us to do...

In your handout, you'll see five icons. Each of the icons represents different areas of life: **Family, School, Relationships, Church, and The World.** For the next few minutes, I want you to answer the following question:

*In which of these areas do you need to see God more clearly working or active in your life? We saw in today's story that God is involved in all of creation, from the creation of the world to our personal lives. Where are you currently having trouble seeing or feeling that? Use the next 4-5 minutes to write or draw anything that comes to mind.*

*[CUE: Allow students to write in their handout. Let students know that you are available to help them as they process, but only if they want. Make sure to give students a 1-minute warning to finish writing before moving on.]*

Okay, now we're going to reflect on one more question. And this is where the practice part comes in...

In which of these 5 areas — your family, school, relationships, church or world — might you see God already involved or at work? Now, depending on what life is like for you right now, or whether you've thought about this question before, this might be a hard thing to do. That's why we call it practice!

I want you to spend another 4-5 minutes seeing if you notice any areas of life where you can sense God is already at work, or maybe even think that God might be at work, but aren't totally sure yet. Just like before, write or draw something that comes to mind.

*[CUE: Allow students to write in their handout. Let students know that you are available to help them as they process, but only if they want. Make sure to give students a 1-minute warning to finish writing before moving on.]*

At the bottom of the page (or on the back if you need it), I want you to write a short note to God. If you were able to think of an area of your life or the world around you where you've noticed God, maybe just say thanks to God for that. Then, spend a minute or so letting God know that you'd like to notice God in those other areas, the areas where right now it's hard to see or feel God.

I'll give you another 3 minutes or so to do that...

*[CUE: Allow students to write in their handout. Make sure to give students a 1-minute warning to finish writing before moving on.]*

Okay, quick question: Why do you think we could do what we just did "practice?"

Each of you spent time stretching yourselves, trying to see God at work in areas of your life where you might not have noticed God before. That's huge! If God really is at work around all the time and personally involved in our lives like we saw in both of the stories today, then it's a huge deal when we notice God around us.

Which makes me wonder, what might our lives look like if what we just practiced — noticing God in our lives — happened more often? What would your life look like? How would you feel? What new things might you do or become?

I want to give you the last 10 minutes of our time together to think about this, and do some dreaming. And I want you to be able to do this in the way that's best for you. So here are some creative options...

Journal, write a poem or short story, use the art supplies to create a piece of art— whatever way you express your thoughts best — to imagine how your life might be different if you grew in your belief that every part of God is involved in your life, and in our world.

**[CUE:** Give students time to respond in the way that feels best for them. Make sure each student has whatever supplies they need to create their response. Give students a 1-2 minute warning before you end this time.]

Okay, I'd love it if a few of you would be willing to share what you wrote or created with the rest of the group. As you share, it will encourage us to trust God in new ways, and we'll be able to encourage you to keep practicing this newfound trust as well.

**[CUE: SHARE** — invite students to share what they created. After 9 or 10 minutes of sharing, move to the closing section.]

## CLOSING PRAYER

Great! Thank you all so much for sharing! Let's pray now as we end our time:

God, thank you so much for story of Creation and of Jesus' baptism. Thanks for being involved in the world – and in our lives – since the very beginning of time. Help us to live every day knowing that you are with us, and playing an active role in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

# OLD TESTAMENT STORY SCRIPT

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>1</sup>

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the Lord God formed a man[c] from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>2</sup>

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found.<sup>3</sup>

So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 1:1

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 2:4-9

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2:15-20

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 2:21-24

# STUDENT HANDOUT

## PERSONAL STORIES

What is your very first memory?

What emotion did you feel when that event happened?

Why do you think that is your first memory?

## OLD TESTAMENT STORY

Jot down a few details or questions that popped out at you from the story, or any emotions you are feeling having just heard the story:

## NEW TESTAMENT STORY

Jot down a few details or questions that popped out at you from the story, or any emotions you are feeling having just heard the story:

# STUDENT HANDOUT

## PRACTICE & IMAGINE



Family



School



RELATIONSHIPS



THE WORLD