

Respond to the call to serve: *Broken relationships*

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Facilitator Notes:

The content for this lesson comes from the materials that are used for NAC USA charity workshops, titled *Helping without Hurting*.

This can be a complicated topic and while we don't want to overwhelm you, as the facilitator, we did want to provide additional resources to equip you for this discussion if you desire more background information. You can find supporting material in these two video clips:

Video 1: Reconsider the meaning of poverty

<https://www.chalmers.org/media/entry/small-group-experience-unit-1>

Video 2: Seeing God at work

<https://www.chalmers.org/media/entry/small-group-experience-unit-2>

I wonder...

- What is my relationship to the world around me?
- Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?
- Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

I believe...

- God created me with 4 relationships: my relationship to God, to myself, to others, and to creation.
- When Adam and Eve sinned, these 4 relationships were broken. And because we are all broken, the systems (economic, social, political, and religious) we've created are also broken.
- I believe that when I serve others, I'm walking alongside them as we both work to reconcile our broken relationships with God and the world around us.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensils
- IGNITE Bible

References:

- Bible: Genesis 1:27-29, Genesis 3:7-19, Matthew 22:37-40

PRE DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND STUDENT (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

No man is an island. To learn more, join us at _____ for small group.

POST DISCUSSION MESSAGE TO PARENTS (TO BE SENT VIA EMAIL OR TEXT)

Facilitator Notes:

- Please keep the main message intact, but feel free to add local information as necessary.

Dear Parents,
 This week the "I Wonder...." questions focus on how God created us with 4 relationships: a relationship with Him, with ourselves, with each other, and with the creation. But after the fall of Adam and Eve, those relationships were broken. Your student will be looking at how these four relationship are broken in their lives in their "Call to Action." Have a discussion with them about how you experience these broken relationships. As always, if you have questions about the topic, please feel free to contact us.

Your Youth Leaders

SUNDAY SERMON REFLECTIONS (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.

- What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?
- What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?
- So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?
- Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

HOOK (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

- Allow 2-3 students to share their reflections. For larger groups, vary who shares from week to week.
- This hook activity helps the students to begin to understand how they relate to the world around them and people in different circumstances.

- How are you and how are you feeling today?
- Who would like to share their point to ponder or call to action from last week?

Ask the students how they would define poverty. Give them a few minutes to write down their answers.

- Watch the following video: <https://chalmers.org/resources/videos/the-5-causes-of-poverty/>
 - Discuss how the video defined poverty.
 - How were their answers different from the students' answers? What words and differences did they find most surprising?

SET THE STAGE (1 minute)

Facilitator Notes:

- Preview the "I wonder" questions with the students.

I wonder...

- What is my relationship to the world around me?
- Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?
- Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

LESSON (up to 25 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

The relationships found in the verses:

- **Our relationship with God:** love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Student Question #1 What is my relationship to the world around me?

- Our God is a relational God. He has existed in relationship as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit since the beginning. And He created us to also be relational.
 - What did you think about the "no man is an island" quote? What does that mean to you?
- Read the following verses together: Genesis 1:27-29 and Matthew 22:37-40. What are the relationships that you find in these verses?
 - **Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in His own image...*
 - **Genesis 1:28-29** *God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our relationship with self: so God created man in His own image. • Our relationship with others: love your neighbor as yourself. • Our relationship with creation: fill the earth and subdue it, rule over... 	<p><i>sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Matthew 22:37-40 <i>Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When we experience these 4 relationships in the way that God intended them, we experience humanness in the way that God intended. By humanness, we mean that we truly experience humanity in the way that God desires – the 4 relationships are perfectly cohesive. ➤ Read the WHITE HOT TOPIC: Family Resemblance on page 4 of your IGNITE Bible. Talk about what it means to be made in the image of God.
<p>How the 4 relationships were broken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship with God: from intimacy to fear • Relationship with self: from dignity to shame • Relationship with others: from community to conflict • Relationship with creation: joyful work to toilsome labor • Broken systems: If you have older students, it might be interesting to have them dive into this idea of broken systems, but only if you are comfortable facilitating that discussion. Usually as we grow up, if we start to lean towards the conservative side, we believe that people find themselves in situations because of personal sin. If we start to lean more liberally, we say it's because of broken systems. But what we've talked about today is that it's both. We're broken and our systems are broken. 	<p>Student Question #2 <i>Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ When Adam and Eve sinned, these 4 relationships broke. ➤ Read this excerpt from Genesis 3:7-19. How are the relationships broken? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves...But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." ...The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." To Adam he said, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.</i> ➤ Because we are broken and our relationships are broken, then the systems that we've created are also broken – economic, social, political, and religious systems. ➤ Refer back to your discussion on poverty at the beginning of the lesson. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you think these broken relationships affect the definition of poverty given in the video?

Student Question #3 Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

- Read the **FLASHPOINT: Relationships** on page 8 of your IGNITE Bible. Discuss the questions together.

Student Question #4 In what ways could we reconcile the broken relationships in our lives? In the lives of others?

- So often we assume that those we serve, or those that are in need, are the ones that are broken, and we think we are there to “fix” them.
- But truthfully, we are all broken, and we need to walk humbly with the people we serve while Jesus is reconciling our relationships and healing each one of us.
 - Think about a time when you have needed help. How did you feel about the help you received? Did you feel looked down on or shameful? Or did you feel valued and looked at equally?
 - How could you help others without making them feel shameful?
- Since Jesus is the reconciler of our relationships, this gives us opportunities to talk about Him when we’re serving others.
 - We should never force our beliefs on others, but we can share with them our motivation for serving and loving those around us: because Jesus loves us! Even if they don’t believe it, we see them as made in the image of God, and He loves and wants all of us.
 - Brainstorm ways that you could share this message with someone who doesn’t believe in God, or maybe does, but doesn’t feel loved by Him.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME? (up to 10 minutes)

Facilitator Notes:

➤ For the Call to Action:

While we are all broken, the ways in which we are broken are different from those that are in poverty.

- **God:** those in poverty might live in fear of God or don't believe He exists, while our mainstream society denies God's existence and focuses on materialism.
- **Self:** those in poverty often have low self-esteem and feel shame, while those in mainstream society have god-complexes and think they have the answer to everything.
- **Others:** those in poverty might be exploited or abused by others, while mainstream society thrives on self-centeredness.
- **Creation:** those in poverty might feel a loss of purpose, or are unable to make use of the resources in their environment, while mainstream society rewards workaholics and materialism.

Wrap up the lesson with asking the students to think about these relationships in all their interactions.

Close with the "I Wonder..." questions

- Ask a student to read an "I Wonder...." question, and invite another student to answer with an "I Believe...." statement or an "I Believe....." statement in their own words.
- As you review each question and answer, stop and check in with the group to be sure there are no misunderstandings or misconceptions.
- Remind the students that on their Confirmation day, they will or have already promised and committed to surrendering themselves to God in belief and obedience.

I wonder...

- What is my relationship to the world around me?
- Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?
- Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

I believe...

- God created me with 4 relationships: my relationship to God, to myself, to others, and to creation.
- When Adam and Eve sinned, these 4 relationships were broken. And because we are all broken, the systems (economic, social, political, and religious) we've created are also broken.
- I believe that when I serve others, I'm walking alongside them as we both work to reconcile our broken relationships with God and the world around us.

Point to Ponder...

- Take a few minutes to think of the people closest to you (parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.). All of those people are also broken. Do you believe that?

A Call to Action...

- Whether we consider ourselves to be in poverty or not, we still experience the same 4 broken relationships: our relationship with God, with self, with others, and with creation. Write down how you think these relationships in your life are broken.

Weekly Reflections

What Bible verse was used for the basis of last Sunday's sermon?

What were some of the main takeaways? What did you learn?

So far this week, how have you applied what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Going forward, how will you apply what you learned from the sermon last Sunday?

Point to Ponder...

Call to Action...

Respond to the call to serve: *Broken relationships*

<p>I wonder...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What is my relationship to the world around me? ➤ Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends? ➤ Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others? 	<p>I believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ God created me with 4 relationships: my relationship to God, to myself, to others, and to creation. ➤ When Adam and Eve sinned, these 4 relationships were broken. And because we are all broken, the systems (economic, social, political, and religious) we've created are also broken. ➤ I believe that when I serve others, I'm walking alongside them as we both work to reconcile our broken relationships with God and the world around us.
<p>References: Genesis 1:27-29, Genesis 3:7-19, Matthew 22:37-40,</p>	

1. What is my relationship to the world around me?

2. Is my relationship to the world around me functioning the way that God intends?

3. Why is it important for me to understand broken relationships when I serve others?

4. In what ways could we reconcile the broken relationships in our lives? In the lives of others?

Point to Ponder: Take a few minutes to think of the people closest to you (parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.). All of those people are also broken. Do you believe that?

Call to Action: Whether we consider ourselves to be in poverty or not, we still experience the same 4 broken relationships: our relationship with God, with self, with others, and with creation. Write down how you think these relationships in your life are broken.