

Note from the Authors

We are SO grateful for you! Small group leaders are truly the backbone of a great camp. Without great leaders, we could never do this. Thank you.

Hearing is a precious gift of human life. Music can entertain or heal. A word of encouragement heard at the right moment can change the trajectory of a person's life. However, there is more to sound than hearing. Listening is a much more crucial task. How can we hear God in a world full of sound? This week we will learn how to rise above the noise and ***Listen Up!***

Some of the teenagers in your small group will have been in a church their entire lives. They will know all the "right" answers and know all the stories. Others may be hearing these things for the first time. Just because they have *heard* the message does not mean they have *listened*. We will explore the truth of God's Word, explain how these truths affect everyday life, and equip teenagers to apply them during the week of camp and throughout their lives.

Use your Bible.

You will notice that very few of the passages in this study are printed. That was intentional. We want you to use your Bible, guide teenagers to use their own Bibles, and model for them how important it is to encounter God's Word for themselves. The method is the message.

Less Lecture, More Discussion

These small group sessions have been designed to draw teenagers into God's Word and into discussion with each other. We hope that you'll spend more time in Bible reading and discussion than in a lecture-style teaching.

The Main Idea

There are three essential truths that we want to repeat until our teenagers have them memorized. Once memorized, they will be able to understand them more deeply. You will have *multiple* opportunities to recount these points. If our teenagers leave knowing only these things, we will have succeeded.

1. We can hear God's voice through Scripture.

God reveals Himself through the living Word. It contains everything we need for faith and life. When we responsibly interpret God's Word, we can know who God is and what He wants for our lives.

2. We can hear God's voice through others.

God uses others to speak into our lives. Whether our pastor, parent, or friend, God has used His followers to speak truth into the lives of those around them. *However*, the message we receive from others **MUST** be confirmed by Scripture. God will not speak to us through others and contradict His Word. If what someone says is contrary to God's Word, it was not God speaking.

3. We can hear God's voice ourselves.

God still communicates to humans. We may not hear him out loud, but He still speaks to us personally. *However*, the message we hear from God **MUST** be confirmed by Scripture. God will not speak to us through others and contradict His Word. If what we hear is contrary to God's Word, it was not God speaking.

Meeting for the First Time

The first time you meet:

1. Play one or two Getting-to-Know-You Games.
2. Decide on a name for your small group.
3. Brainstorm on a cheer for your small group that includes everyone.

Getting-to-Know-You Games

Option #1 - This or That?

Instruct your group to sit in a circle. You will start by saying two similar items like burgers and cake (both are foods). The person to your right must say the thing they like better out of the two - in 3 seconds or less. If they choose within the time limit it is their turn to name two similar things for the next person. If the person exceeds the time limit, they are out.

Option #2 - True or False

Divide the room in two. Make one side the "True" side and the other the "False" side. Have all the teenagers stand in the middle. Come up with a few True/False statements about yourself. As you say those statements, everyone is to go to the "True" side of the room if they think the statement is true or go the "False" side of the room if they think the statement is false. Those who guess wrong lose a point. Each player has 5 points represented by holding up 5 fingers (you can make it more if you'd like). After they lose all their points, they have to sit out. Have your whole group take a turn making True/False statements about themselves. (Teenagers who are "out" can still take their turn making True/False statements.)

Option #3 - Story of your Name

Share the story of where your name comes from and what it means. Where does your name come from? How did you get your name? Have each teenager in the small group share the story of their name.

Session 1 - When God Speaks, Things Happen. - Genesis. 1.1-2.1

Objectives:

- Teenagers will discuss the creation text and see how reality was changed by God's voice.
- Teenagers will inspect Scripture and compile a list of how it describes itself.
- Teenagers will formulate a personalized plan to spend time with God's Word this week and onward.

Focal Verse: 2 Timothy 3.16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Study It: Lesson Preparation Study

Overview:

God created all of reality by speaking it into existence. Even *reality* listens to and obeys God. This session will focus on the first of the three points we will instill in our teenagers this week: **We can hear God's voice through Scripture.**

Sometimes we skim over the creation account and fail to grasp the power of God's spoken word. We will focus on how God spoke and reality was affected. In the same way, God speaks to us today and, when we truly listen, we are affected. We are changed by God's presence.

In the next session we will address how humanity's rebellion altered our ability to hear Him, but this session will focus on the power, potency, and precious nature of God's Word. Ultimately, we will seek to equip our teenagers to explore God's Word for themselves on a regular basis.

Make these points:

I. When God speaks, things happen. - Isaiah 55.10-11

Just like how God created all things with the sound of His voice, His Word continues speak and affect us today. He is Truth and cannot speak anything but Truth. Anything He says can be counted on to be Truth. Therefore, His promises are true and His commands are *not* suggestions.

II. God still speaks to humans today. - Hebrews 4.12

While the paper, ink, and glue that holds a Bible together is simply a mode that delivers God's Word, the *message* of God's Word is alive and active. When we read God's Word, the Spirit of God speaks to us to help us understand. It is not always pleasant, but His Word speaks truth into our lives and we can be changed by it.

III. When we spend time with God and His Word, we can know Him better. - Psalm 19.7-10

God created us to have a relationship with Him. When we were in proper relationship with Him, there was nothing separating us from Him. Now that we are separated (as we will read in the next session), God's Word provides us with a way to know who He is, what He is like, and how He works. God's Word is the primary way He speaks to us and we relate to Him.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read out loud and together through Genesis 1.1-2.1 and explore how all of reality was formed through God speaking.
2. Share the three points and examine how God's Word describes itself.
3. Help teenagers develop a personalized plan to spend time in God's Word starting this week with their Quiet Time and continuing when they get home.

Experience It: Opening Activity

• **Option #1 - Life Story Theatre**

- Tell your small group that you are going to share a funny life story about yourself. Keep it light today. Use this story for your small group to get to know you a little and to break the awkwardness that might come from the first day together.
- Ask for a volunteer to help illustrate a personal life story. Tell your volunteer that every time you say a verb (an action) they have to act it out. For example, your story might be about a time you were a teenager and did something silly. If you say, "One day I was riding my bike to school . . ." your volunteer needs to pretend like she is riding a bike. The more active the story, the better.
- Discuss:
 - What did the volunteer have to do in order to do a good job?
 - How did they do?
 - When I said a verb, they had to hear it, understand it, and put it into action. Was this hard? Why or why not?
 - How long do you think it took for the word spoke to be understood and then acted out?
 - Why do you think it took so long?
- Say: Today we're going to explore how God's voice is powerful and changes everything.

• **Option #2 - Red Light, Green Light**

- Ask your group if they have ever played Red Light, Green Light. Take a minute to explain the rules and then play a few rounds.
- Discuss:
 - Why can this game be a little tricky?
 - How can we be sure to stay in the game?
 - What does it feel like when you accidentally move when you are supposed to stop or accidentally stop when you are supposed to move?
 - What kinds of things can this game teach us?
- Say: When God speaks, things happen. We will read in Scripture today about how His Word is powerful.

Teach It: Lesson

Have everyone open their Bibles to Genesis. 1.1-2.1. Once you've set up the situation by sharing a little of what you know from your study of this lesson, read the story. Allow for breaks in the story for you to explain some of the key terms and ideas.

Searching God's Word about God's Word

- A. Have your small group divide up into four groups. Be sure to have at least three in each group. If you don't have enough to make four groups, make three and have you and your small group helper take one of the passages.
- B. Assign one of the following passages of Scripture to each group: 2 Timothy 3.16-17, Isaiah 55.10-11, Hebrews 4.12, Psalm 19.7-10.
- C. After you assign each group their passage, tell them to do the following:
 1. Read the passage.
 2. List the ways, the Bible describes God's Word.
 3. Discuss why God would want to be sure these descriptions were in the Bible.
- D. Once each group has done this, gather back up and have each group share their findings. As they share, have someone write these down on a large piece of paper.

Likely your conversation will cover much of the topics below. So to summarize what you all have learned, share each of the three points below and have someone read each of the passages as you discuss them.

I. When God speaks, things happen. - Isaiah 55.10-11

Ask these questions:

- What are some requests that teenagers ask God?
- How do we know if God has changed anything?
- Why do YOU think God chooses to change some circumstances and not others?

II. God still speaks to humans today. - Hebrews 4.12

Ask these questions:

- Why are we sometimes scared to say "God spoke to me and He said . . ."?
- How can someone abuse the "God told me to tell you . . ." saying?
- Have you ever felt God speaking to you? Would you be willing to share about what He said, and why you needed to hear from Him?

III. When we spend time with God and His Word, we can know Him better. - Psalm 19.7-10

Ask these questions:

- What is the hardest FOR YOU about spending time reading the Bible?
- How might your life be different if you spent more time reading and understanding the Bible?
- Why do you think we struggle with making it a priority to spend time in God's Word?

Live It: Application

Instruct your small group to help give some advice.

Say: What if a friend of yours decided they wanted to make spending time in God's Word a priority for their lives? What advice would you give them?

Be sure to have someone write down the suggestions.

Ask these questions:

- Is there a SINGLE way for everyone to spend time in God's Word?
- How can it be different for different people?

Say: We are going to help you this week to make a personalized plan for you to spend quality time in God's Word.

Start Now

- A. Break up into triads (groups of three).
- B. Write down ON PAPER why it is important for each of you to spend time in God's Word.
- C. Write down ONE STEP you will take this week to start.

Pray to close your session.

Session 2 - When God Speaks, Do We Listen? - Genesis. 2.15-3.15

Objectives:

- Teenagers will discuss how humans disobeyed God's clear commands.
- Teenagers will analyze the passage for a pattern of how humans deal with opportunities to sin.
- Teenagers will propose strategies to overcome temptation using God's Word and relationships.

Focal Verse: James 1.22

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Study It: Lesson Preparation Study

Overview:

God created us for community. Just as He is in community as the Father, Son, and Spirit, we were created to have a relationship with Him and others. The brokenness in our world all began when humans failed to trust God and one another. This session will focus on the second of the three points we will instill in our teenagers this week: **We can hear God's voice through other people.** While we are able to hear God's Word through other people, we MUST measure that word through Scripture.

This passage recounts how the God created humans, gave them responsibility to care for all that He created (including each other), and then humans failed to keep the command to stay away from the ONE tree in the garden that was off limits. We will focus on how that mistrust of God's Word led to the broken world we live in today.

We still have an adversary whispering into our ear to mistrust God. That enemy is called Satan or the devil. In this passage, that enemy is portrayed as a serpent. The message of the serpent was to question, twist, and undermine God's command. Similarly, today we may hear God's Word, but we do not truly LISTEN.

The next session will cover how God used Jesus to repair this relationship with God and each other, but this session will focus on how we can use God's Word to obey Him and how we can help each other obey Him.

Make these points:

I. God's command was clear. - Psalm 119.137-138

When God spoke to Adam, there was no confusion. Adam knew the tree. Adam knew the consequences. Eve knew the tree. Eve knew the consequences. God is clear about His commands today. God's Word, interpreted responsibly, allows us to know for certain what pleases Him and what is sin.

II. The Enemy tries to make it unclear. - John 8.44

The enemy's tactic is subtle but powerful. Instead of outright denying the command, Satan will twist or distort the command and the consequences. Today, we question God's commands because we believe a twisted or distorted message of His Word.

III. We can either help each other obey or disobey God. - Hebrews 10.24-25

Adam and Eve (BOTH) were at the tree and chose to disobey God. They had every opportunity to speak up and encourage each other to obey God. Instead, they encouraged each other to disobey. We have the task of using our relationships with one another to inspire each other to obey God's Word.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read out loud together Genesis 2.15-3.15 and explore the account of human disobedience.
2. Share the three points and discuss the process of disobedience and how we still act that way.
3. Guide teenagers choose someone who can speak into their lives and equip them with tools to overcome temptation.

Experience It: Opening Activity

• **Option #1 - Follow THESE Instructions**

- Ask for a volunteer who is REALLY good at following directions and knows the books of the Bible pretty well. Once you have your volunteer tell them that you will be giving them instructions but you will ONLY SAY IT ONCE. They must listen to the entire instructions first and only by memory follow them as best they can.
- Give all of the following instructions:
 1. Open your Bible to Genesis 1.1 read the verse.
 2. Go to the 13th book and read the last verse of that book.
 3. Go back 2 books and read the first verse of that book.
 4. Go forward 14 books and read the last verse of that book.
 5. Go back 3 books and read the last verse
 6. Finally, go forward 1 book and read Chapter 4 verse 1.
- Your volunteer SHOULD end on Song of Songs 4.1. *“How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats descending from the hills of Gilead.”*
- If your volunteer couldn't do it, give another person a try.

- Discuss:
 - Was this difficult? Why or why not?
 - At which step did the instructions begin to be unclear?
 - What are some things that would have made it easier to accomplish?

- Say: God's instructions to us are clear. Sometimes we find them unclear because we either are not focused on Him or we make them more complicated than we need to.

• **Option #2 - Tongue Tied**

- Ask your group to split into two teams. Each team will choose a person to be their representative.
- Each representative will have 60 seconds to get their team to guess the phrase they are saying. Here is the catch: the representative will have to hold their tongue outside their mouths with their own hands. The first team to 3 (or 5) points wins.
- Here are some phrases:

Blueberry muffins	My brain hurts	Truck throttle	Clumsy mother
Puppy booger	Boat barnacles	Prison problems	Pretty buttons
Probably measles	Fearful Bambi	Whimpy wrist	Principal breath
Crisp bricks	Ape parade	Listen up	Symphony music

- Discuss:
 - Why was this difficult?
 - What would have made it easier to understand the person up front?

- Say: God speaks clearly, but sometimes we do not pay attention enough to fully understand Him.

Teach It: Lesson

Have everyone open their Bibles to Genesis. 2.15-3.15. Once you've set up the situation by sharing a little of what you know from your study of this lesson, read the story. Allow for breaks in the story for you to explain some of the key terms and ideas.

Find the Pattern

- A. After you have read the passage together, split your group up between boys and girls.
- B. Have each group read the passage from a different perspective: the boys from Adam's perspective and the girls from Eve's perspective.
- C. As they read, ask them to make a step by step outline of how Adam and Eve got from Point A to Point B. Point A: believing God and His command to stay away from the tree. Point B: taking the fruit and eating it.
- D. Come back together and compare and contrast each group's steps.

Once you have fully explored each group's steps, take some time to share and discuss the three points below having someone read each passage as you go.

I. God's command was clear. - Psalm 119.137-138

Ask these questions:

- What reason did Adam and Eve have to mistrust God?
- Do you think you would have acted in a different way if it were you? Why or why not?
- Do people today mistrust God's commands? How?

II. The Enemy tries to make it unclear. - John 8.44

Ask these questions:

- Is it easy to believe the lies of the Enemy? Why or why not?
- How can we be sure it is the Enemy speaking and not God?
- What are some of God's commands that people have believed to be unclear?

III. We can either help each other obey or disobey God. - Hebrews 10.24-25

Ask these questions:

- What should Adam have done in that situation?
- How might things be different if he had spoken up instead of remained silent?
- Why do we remain silent when we see our Christian friends make mistakes?

Live It: Application

Instruct your small group to get comfortable. They can lay down or sit. Whatever will help them be comfortable and focus.

Instruct them to do the following:

1. Close your eyes and take a deep breath.
2. Think of someone you trust and imagine their face.
3. Think of why you trust them. Maybe there was a situation that happened that proved they could be trusted.
4. If they had to speak up about a mistake you are making, imagine what would they say?
5. Imagine how you would respond to them in that moment. Maybe you would be angry. Maybe you would be relieved. Maybe you would be sad.
6. Imagine that person sticking by your side and showing you love no matter what you do or say.
7. Now imagine what God would feel about that person. He would be proud of their love and courage.
8. Imagine being that person for someone else in your life. Think about who that would be.

Say: We all need people in our lives who can step up and help us do the right thing when we begin to mistrust God's Word. Do you have someone like that? Are YOU someone like that? If not, find someone who can be that for you.

Pray to close your session.

Session 3 - New Phone. Who Dis? - Luke 24.1-8

Objectives:

- Teenagers will discuss how Jesus' disciples failed to listen to Jesus' words.
- Teenagers will compare their listening to the disciple's listening.
- Teenagers will practice listening to God in a practical way.

Focal Verse: Romans 5.1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

Study It: Lesson Preparation Study

Overview:

Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God. He was God in human flesh. Jesus' actions, words, and attitudes are the very actions, words, and attitudes of the Father. We have all this recorded in Scripture for us to understand who God is and what He is like. When we listen, we can hear Him confirm the Scripture. This session will focus on the final of the three points we will instill in our teenagers this week: **We can hear God's voice for ourselves.** While we are able to hear God's Word for ourselves, we MUST measure that word through Scripture.

Even those who were physically with Him either did not pay attention, forgot, or did not fully believe Jesus when He said that He would be crucified and raised from the dead. That gives us hope! If the disciples who walked and talked with Him failed to fully listen and still succeeded in faith, we can be assured there is grace for us as well.

Our final session will culminate in the small group sharing with one another what God has said to them this week. Further, we will compare those messages to Scripture and make plans to obey those messages from God.

Make these points:

I. Jesus' life was God's ultimate representation of Himself. - John 14.8-11

Jesus, who was fully God and fully human, came to give us an example of what God would be like on Earth. We can know what God is like by reading about how Jesus interacted with humans and the commands He gave His disciples.

II. God's message to us through Jesus was a restored relationship with Him. - Romans 5.8-9

Jesus' life showed what God is like. Jesus' death showed WHY He came to Earth. The Father sent Jesus to redeem humans and restore the relationship we read about in Genesis 1 & 2. His resurrection showed that Jesus has authority over sin, Hell, and death. Therefore, He is the ONLY way to the Father.

III. Our job now is to share that message with all others. - 2 Corinthians 5.17-21

All who have a relationship with God now have the terrific task of telling others about the great news! We are God's representatives. We have the Spirit in us. We are now a picture (even though it often is a poor picture) of who God is and who He loves. When we listen to Jesus, we are able to speak to others and guide them to hear His voice.

Teaching Plan:

1. Read out loud together Luke 24.1-8 and experience the confusion and joy the disciples felt.
2. Share the three points and explore the truths of the passages.
3. List the ways God has spoken to each of you this week and how you will listen and obey.

Experience It: Opening Activity

- **Option #1 - The Telephone Game**

- Ask your small group to sit in a circle.
 - Instruct your small group that you will whisper something into the ear of the person next to you only once and they must repeat what they have heard to the person next to them and so on until it gets to the end.
 - The person at the end of the circle must tell the entire group what they have heard.
- Discuss:
 - Why does the message change?
 - How do you know you have heard the right thing the first time?
 - Did anyone purposefully change what they heard? Why?
- Say: When we take time to listen to God for ourselves, we can be sure we understand Him. If we are always relying on other people to tell us what He has said, things can get lost in between.

- **Option #2 - Simon Says**

- Ask your group to play a quick game of Simon Says.
- Discuss:
 - Why was this difficult?
 - What would have made it easier?
- Say: Sometimes when God speaks, we pay attention. Sometimes we do not. Sometimes when God speaks, we forget what He says. Today, we will discuss what it would be like to truly listen to Him.

Teach It: Lesson

Have everyone open their Bibles to Luke 24.1-8. Once you've set up the situation by sharing a little of what you know from your study of this lesson, read the story. Allow for breaks in the story for you to explain some of the key terms and ideas.

As you read the passage, stop at each verse and ask your small group what the women were feeling.

Ask:

- What various emotions did the women feel in this passage? List them.
- What do you think the two men meant when they said "*Why do you look for the living among the dead?*"
- "*Then they remembered his words.*" Why do you think they forgot?

I. Jesus' life was God's ultimate representation of Himself. - John 14.8-11

Ask these questions:

- What are some things Jesus did or said that points us to what God is like?
- How did Jesus surprise some people of His time with the way He acted?
- Why do you think God sent Jesus to represent Himself?

II. God's message to us through Jesus was a restored relationship with Him. - Romans 5.8-9

Ask these questions:

- Before God sent Jesus, in what ways had He shown humans that He wanted a relationship with them?
- According to Romans 5.8-9 did we deserve this relationship? Why or why not?
- Why did God go to such great lengths to restore His relationship with us?

III. Our job now is to share that message with all others. - 2 Corinthians 5.17-21

Ask these questions:

- The last thing Jesus ever said to His disciples was to go make more disciples. Why do you think Jesus said this last?
- What would have happened if the disciples did not make more disciples?
- Whose job is it to make disciples? Why do more Christians not make disciples?
- What are some reasons we have for not sharing our faith with our friends and family?
- How can we overcome those obstacles?

Live It: Application

Instruct your small group to break up into triads.

Say: Share with your triad some of the things God has spoken to you this week through His Word, His people, and to you personally. What are you going to do with what you have heard?

Pray to close your session.

Day 2 Quiet Time

Tips for a great time with God:

- Get alone in a place where you can focus on God.
- Start with prayer. Take some time to quiet your mind and listen to God.
- Don't rush. You've got plenty of time.
- Write down your thoughts and read them later.

1. Read it: Open your Bible to **Psalm 119.1-8** and read it slowly and carefully.
2. Explore it: Ask these questions as you read the passage. Write your answers below.
 - What does this passage say about God?

 - What does this passage say about you?
3. Apply it: Take a moment to listen to God's instruction to you through this passage.
 - What is God telling you to do or change because of this passage?
4. Pray it: Write out a prayer to God based on what you've read today. Then pray it to Him.

Day 3 Quiet Time

Tips for a great time with God:

- Get alone in a place where you can focus on God.
- Start with prayer. Take some time to quiet your mind and listen to God.
- Don't rush. You've got plenty of time.
- Write down your thoughts and read them later.

1. Read it: Open your Bible to **John 16.12-15** and read it slowly and carefully.
2. Explore it: Ask these questions as you read the passage. Write your answers below.
 - What does this passage say about God?

 - What does this passage say about you?
3. Apply it: Take a moment to listen to God's instruction to you through this passage.
 - What is God telling you to do or change because of this passage?
4. Pray it: Write out a prayer to God based on what you've read today. Then pray it to Him.

Day 4 Quiet Time

Tips for a great time with God:

- Get alone in a place where you can focus on God.
- Start with prayer. Take some time to quiet your mind and listen to God.
- Don't rush. You've got plenty of time.
- Write down your thoughts and read them later.

1. Read it: Open your Bible to **Psalm 119.9-16** and read it slowly and carefully.
2. Explore it: Ask these questions as you read the passage. Write your answers below.
 - What does this passage say about God?

 - What does this passage say about you?
3. Apply it: Take a moment to listen to God's instruction to you through this passage.
 - What is God telling you to do or change because of this passage?
4. Pray it: Write out a prayer to God based on what you've read today. Then pray it to Him.