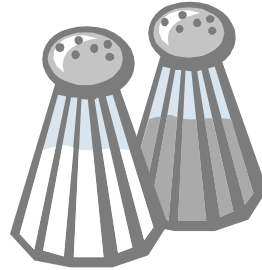


SPICE RACK®

E-Curriculum



by Mark DeVries

Note to the Teachers: The easiest thing to do (which actually becomes the most difficult before the end of the class!) is to use the same teaching method for the entire class period. What most of us are used to is simply lecturing or asking questions. And hey, if your kids are walking out each week saying, "Man, that connected with me. The hour just flew by!," then those two methods are fine. What this curriculum seeks to do is to give you active exercises that take the kids' attention off of you and their own discomfort enough that they CAN naturally answer the questions you want them to get at. Remember the rule: *1 minute of attention for each year of life lived*. That means that even in our older classes, we should be shooting for changing our teaching methods 3 times in the class period. The reason there are seven different exercises is that I'm guessing that 4 of them won't work for your group. If an exercise doesn't work, try the next one. But please try to engage the kids with something besides the standard lecture and Q&A. Thanks for all your work in loving God's kids! Also, to aid you in your preparation, any special supplies recommended for this lesson are outlined in a box. Contact colyer@ymarchitects.com with any questions!

“GOOD ADVICE”

James 1

I. Gathering (Attendance, Announcements, First Timers)

II. Engaging the Brain

A. “Win, Lose, or Draw”



1. You'll need a chalkboard or flip chart for this exercise.
2. Divide the class into two teams.
3. Before class write down these words on separate sheets of paper (these will be the words that people will have to draw):

joy, plant, crown, shadow, mirror, tongue, rich,
man, sea, gavel, wind.

4. Explain the rules of "Win, Lose or Draw" (or picture charades).
 - a. Team one sends a person to the drawing board.
 - b. That person picks a word to draw for his or her team.
 - c. Each round has a one-minute time limit.
 - d. After team one has finished, team two sends a drawer to the front and the process is repeated for three rounds.
 - e. The team with the lowest time for each round gets 3 points per round.
5. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
6. Bonus Question (for five points and the win)
 - a. Explain that all of these words have something to do with the book of the Bible we'll be working on during for the next three Sundays.
 - b. Have each team write an answer and present it to you.
7. At the end of the game, the team with the most points wins a set of Burger King crowns.



B. Fred Says

1. Explain to the group that you'll be giving them one more clue to what book we'll be studying.
2. Have everyone stand.
3. Explain that you will be playing a game called "Fred Says" and that you are Fred. The rule of the game is that the group can only do what Fred says.
4. Ask if the group understands the rules. If anyone says "yes," they are out because Fred didn't say "Do you understand the rules?" (If you're nice you can give them another chance).
5. Play a fast-paced round of Fred Says (a variation of Simon Says).
6. Some Suggestions:
 - a. Go quickly ("put your right hand up, put your left hand down...")
 - b. Once you're down to only a few, ask them to come to the front (whoever does come to the front is out, because Fred didn't tell them to come to the front). Then say, "Fred says come..."
 - c. Once the finalists are at the front, ask them each to give their names (once you've gone down the line, anyone who has given their name is out...)
 - d. If anyone is still in, have that group do the speed round against you.
 - e. If someone is still in, have them inhale (Fred says) while you give a long talk about how you hate to lose.
7. Process Questions

→ This game is another clue about what book we'll be studying. Any ideas?

→ This book of the New Testament has more commands per chapter than any other book in the Bible. Any ideas yet?

C. Visual Exercise: “When It’s In Your Face, You Can’t See So Well.”



1. Bring several pictures from magazines or newspapers to class.
2. Ask for three volunteers to help you illustrate the principle for today.
3. Ask the first volunteer to close his or her eyes.
4. Explain that you will be placing pictures in front of all the volunteers and that the volunteers are to shout out what they see as quickly as they see it.
5. Using three separate pictures for each contestant, present those pictures in the following three ways.

- a. Place the picture a foot in front of him or her.
- b. Place the picture less than an inch in front of his or her eyes.
- c. Place the picture as far away as possible.

6. Process Questions

- Which distance gave the clearest picture?
- Which distance gave the most distorted picture?
- What principles about life do you see in this exercise? (for example: People who focus only on the things that are right in front of them tend to be people who have a limited and distorted picture of their life. In order to get the clearest picture, we have to step back enough to see past the immediate pressures we’re facing).
- The book we’ll be studying this week and next week is a book that gives that kind of perspective. Any final guesses of what the book is?

III. Igniting the Heart



A. The Text: Digging for Topics

1. Give every person in the class a copy of James chapter one (You can copy it out of the Bible or type it up yourself).
2. Have the group get into pairs.
3. Give the pairs 1 minute to find as many different topics as possible in this one chapter.
4. List on the board as many topics as the group can come up with (ask for one idea from each pair, until the pairs are out of ideas)
5. Process Questions
 - How does James do keeping “on the subject”?
 - Someone has said that James is the book for the “MTV Generation.” Any idea why? (He changes images every few seconds).

- Others have called James “The Proverbs of the New Testament.” Any idea why? (If no one has a clue, read five or six verses from Proverbs 22, and ask if they see any similarity in style—e.g., moving from topic to topic without much transition).

B. A Look at Joy

1. Have the group members fold their journal sheet in half vertically to create two blank columns.
2. Have each class member title one column “Joy” and the other column “Pain.”
3. Give the group members 1 minute to list under “joy,” as many things as they can think of that bring them joy. Then, give one minute for them to do the same for the other column: “Things that bring me pain.”
4. Have someone read James 1:2 aloud.
5. Process Questions

- Look again at your lists. Is there is anything that is in the pain column that you could move to the joy column?
- If not, what do you think James is talking about?
- If yes, what did you move and why?
- Do you think there is a difference between joy and happiness?
- Do you think God wants Christians to be happy all the time?
- Do you think God wants Christians to be joyful all the time? (check out I Thess. 5:16)
- Have you ever seen anyone enjoy who could rejoice when things were tough?
- How motivated would you be to know how to experience joy even in the middle of pain?

C. Marathon Training Plan



1. Intro. Process Questions

- How many of you know someone who has run a marathon?
- How many of you would like to run a marathon before you die?
- What would happen to a person who tried to run a marathon without any training?
- Have any of you done significant endurance training? What did you do?
- Some people have said that the Christian life is more of a marathon than a sprint. Do you agree?
- Should a Christian who doesn't train expect anything different than a marathon runner who doesn't train?

2. Training Plan

- a. Have the group members complete journal question 4.
- b. Read the case study from Question 4 to the group:

Suppose you have a friend (“Earl”) who desperately wants to learn how to enjoy life, even when bad stuff happens. He asks you to be his trainer. He sets the goal of being “in shape” for this kind of endurance by next year. He asks you to write a training plan for him.



- c. Before the group begins writing Earl’s training plan, invite them to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
- d. Give the group three minutes to write their training plans individually.
- e. Once the training plans are written, ask each person to put a yes or no answer after their plan. Here’s the question: “Would you be willing to follow your own plan?”
- f. Explain to the group that you will be collecting the sheets and that next week, you’ll be summarizing the training plans that the group developed.

3. Process Questions

- How close were your training plans to James’ advice?
- Do you have friends who are able to handle challenges well without freaking out? How do they do it?
- What keeps most people from being joyful when their circumstances are lousy?
- Can a Christian go overboard with the whole joy thing—looking through rose-colored glasses and pretending there are no problems?
- Do you think God intends for you to have joy in suffering or do you think that kind of joy is only reserved for a select group of Christians who are more committed?

IV. Taking It Home

A. Just for Me

1. Have the group return again to their copies of James 1.
2. Ask the group to look again through that chapter and each find the single verse that he or she would say is the closest thing to God’s specific instruction to him or her today.
3. Go around the group having each person check out by telling the verse that he or she has chosen.

B. Have the group members complete the questions on the journal sheet.

C. Pray for the group to grow increasingly sensitive to God’s voice.

↓ JOURNAL SHEET BELOW ↓

JOURNAL SHEET
James 1
“Good Advice”

1. On a scale of one to ten, how ready are you for significant pain (1=I'm toast; 10=I'm ready for the marathon)
2. Suppose you have a friend (“Earl”) who desperately wants to learn how to enjoy life, even when bad stuff happens. He asks you to be his trainer. He sets the goal of being “in shape” for this kind of endurance by next year. Write a training plan for your friend.
3. Is this class...
 too challenging
 not challenging enough
 just right
4. If you were asked to make a specific commitment, would you be willing to follow a training plan to help you grow in your faith?
 Yes No
5. As far as your own Christian training plan goes, which best describes you?
 I've got a good training plan and it's working.
 I don't have a plan and I don't want a plan.
 I'd like to have a plan, but I don't I guess I'm just waiting for someone to challenge me to step up to the plate and do it.
6. Will you read the five chapters of the book of James over the next two weeks and try to determine at least one bit of advice that God may have for you from that book?