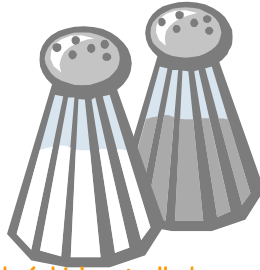


# SPICE RACK®

## 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](mailto:colyer@ymarchitects.com) with any questions!

# “GOD’S LITTLE INSTRUCTION BOOK”

## James 2

### I. Gathering (Announcements, Attendance, First Timers)

### II. Engaging the Brain

#### A. Set Up: God's Little Instruction Book

1. Bring to class today a pile of self-help books.
2. Have them sitting in the front of the room throughout the class.

**B. Just Pretend: “It’s College Application Time!”** (For the seniors, pretending is over)

1. Brainstorming: Ask the group to brainstorm all the things that will be important for them as they apply to college. In other words, what are the things colleges are looking at in the application? (grades, test scores, etc.).
2. After the group has come up with their list, explain the importance of recommendations, that many schools are just as interested in what significant adults have to say about applicants as they are about grades or other factors.
3. Distribute the journal sheets and pencils.
4. Read the following situation from the journal sheet.
  - a. Imagine: You’ve got the chance to win a \$100,000 scholarship. You’re grades are good enough to win, but you’ve got one piece that’s missing: a recommendation letter. The organization giving the scholarship has told you that they put as much weight your recommendation as they do your grades.
  - b. Pretend that you have the power right now to determine what goes into that recommendation. The beauty of this recommendation is that **not all of these things have to be true at this point in your life**. Take 5 minutes to write a letter of recommendation of all the things you’d like someone you respect to say about you.



5. Give the group 5 minutes to write a rough draft of what they would like for their recommendation letters to say.
6. Process Questions
  - **How many of you had a difficult time with this exercise?**
  - **What was hard about it?**
  - **How many of you know exactly whom you would ask to write your recommendation letters?**
  - **What things would you need to do differently if you are to become the kind of person who got this kind of recommendation?**
7. Mini-Lecture:
  - a. In this exercise, we asked you to “pretend” that you have the power to control what is written about you in your recommendation. One secret that effective people know is that they don’t have just to “pretend.” By the way you live, you are the one who can (and will) determine what kind of recommendation others give about you.
  - b. The book of James has the kind of practical, hard-hitting advice that help you make wise decisions now so that you become the kind of person God is calling you to be.

## C. Back to Training

### 1. Quickie Review Questions

- a. Last week we started working on a book that is loaded with instructions about how to live a full Christian life. Does anyone remember what book it was?
- b. What are some of the unique things we learned about the book of James last week? (more commands per chapter than any other book in the NT, maybe in the whole Bible; the Proverbs of the NT; the book for the MTV generation).
- c. We also talked some last week about training for a marathon. Does anyone remember what that was about?

### 2. Check-In: Last Week's Training Plan



- a. If you collected training plans from the group last week, remind the group that last week they were given an assignment of developing training plans for learning to rejoice even when things are hard.
- b. Read through at least a few of the training plans you collected last week.

### 3. Process Questions

- ➔ **Did any of you attempt to keep your training plan this week?**
- ➔ **What keeps most Christians from keeping up with any kind of training plan related to their faith?**

## D. Command Count

1. Divide the group into teams of 3-6 each.
2. Remind the group that the book of James contains more advice per square inch than any other book in the Bible.
3. Explain the rules of the competition.
  - a. All teams will be given 30 seconds to find as many commands in the book of James as they can.
  - b. The teams will have 30 seconds to develop their strategies before the competition begins.
  - c. Allow the group time to ask questions to clarify instructions.
4. Begin the game and call time after 30 seconds.
5. Determine which group found the most commands. Have that group list the commands that they found. When the first group is finished, ask the group with the next highest number of commands counted, and have them list the commands they found, without repeating any that the previous group listed.
6. Repeat this process until all the commands have been found.
7. Process Questions

- How does advice usually make you feel?
- Whose advice are you the least likely to take?
- Do you see the commands in the book of James as God's advice to you or James' advice to you?

### III. Igniting the Heart

#### A. Okay, Teach Yourself!

##### 1. Set Up

- a. Divide the Class into Teams of 3-5 people each.
- b. On four different 3x5 cards write the numbers 2 through 5.
- c. Using another set of cards, write one of the following assignments on each card:



- 1) All the World's a Stage (Act Something Out)
- 2) Just Call Me Picasso (Draw Something)
- 3) Introducing Dr. Einstein (Research Something)
- 4) Have I Got a Story for You (Story Telling)
- 5) Hey Coach! (Give a Specific Action Plan)
- 6) Sing to Me (Write a Song About Something)
- 7) How About a Something a Little Controversial? (Debate Something)

##### 2. Explain the Instructions

- a. Explain that because there are so many topics in the book of James, we'll be letting groups in the class pick what they want to talk about from the book.
- b. Each team will pick a representative to draw the team's assignment.
- c. The representatives will draw twice
  - 1) Once from the chapter pile (2-5) to tell the group which chapter to focus on.
  - 2) Once from the assignment pile to tell the group how they are to teach (here the representative will pick three cards and the group will quickly decide which assignment from the three that the group will complete).
- d. More than one group can do the same chapter with the same assignment. Each group will have the same chance to draw from the same sets of cards.
- e. After the first drawing (selecting the chapter), each group will have 3 minutes to read through their chapter and pick the part they would like to focus on.
- f. Once all groups have decided what part of the chapter they will focus on, you (the teacher) will ask a representative from each team to come to the front again to draw their assignment choices.

- g. List and explain each of the instructions the groups will find on the assignment cards.
3. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
  4. Ask each team to select its representative.
  5. Have all the representatives draw cards to determine what chapter their team will be working on.
  6. Give the give the groups 4 minutes to read through their assigned chapters and select the part(s) of that chapter that they plan to use.
  7. Once each team has picked their focus, invite the team reps select three cards from the assignment pile, to take those three possibilities back to their team and decide the method they will be using to teach.
  8. Give the groups 10 minutes to develop what they will be teaching the rest of the group.
  9. Once the groups are prepared, add a card with the number 1 to the chapter cards, and invite the team reps to pick again from the 1-5 cards to determine the order of the presentations (If you have more than 5 teams, add numbered cards until you have one for each team).
  10. Have the groups give their presentations.
  11. If you run out of time, ask the remaining groups if they would be willing to finish their presentations next week
  12. Process Questions

- Did you notice any common themes in our presentations?
- Some people think that Christianity can essentially be boiled down to simply following the advice of the Bible. What are they missing?

**B. A Look at the Temporal and the Eternal (in the unlikely event that you will need an additional activity)**

1. Have the group read James 1:10-11.
2. Process Questions
  - What does James say happens to busy rich people?
  - Do you think he is right?
3. Mini Lecture
  - a. James suggests that we have a choice in the way we invest our lives.
  - b. We can invest our lives in the things that will fade away (temporary things like beauty and success) or we can invest our lives in things that last forever.
4. Brainstorm: You Be the Investment Counselor
  - a. Have the group come up with ten investments that they could make that will not fade away (ideas: investing in the next generation, worshipping, giving, etc.).



- b. List the class's ideas on the board.
5. Give the group members blank sheets of paper (and pencils if they don't already have them).
6. Give the group members 3 minutes to record their schedule from the past week, highlighting how much of their time was spent on eternal things.
7. Process Questions

- If all a stranger knew about you was your schedule, what kind of person he or she assume that you are?
- How satisfied are you by your level of your investment in things that don't fade away?
- What are the biggest obstacles in making those kinds of investments?
- What would be the easiest change that you could make in your schedule this week that would allow you to invest less in the things that will fade away?

### C. Process Questions: Just Another Self-Help Book?



1. What do you notice about the books in the front of the room? What do they have in common?
2. Have any of you ever read any of these kinds of books?
3. Compare the advice that you've looked at today from the book of James to the advice you might find in this pile of self-help books on the front table. How are they alike? How are they different?

## IV. Taking It Home

### A. Our Little Instruction Book

1. If you have a copy of God's Little Instruction Book, show it to the group.
2. Explain to the group that they will be wrapping up the class today by creating their own "little instruction book."
3. Distribute 3x5 cards and pencils and ask each person to write one piece of advice on the card—it could be something inspired by the book of James or just a piece of random advice.
4. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
5. Give the group 2 minutes to write their "little instructions."
6. Ask the group to write their names on their cards.
7. Collect the cards.
8. Compile the pieces of advice into one collection of advice pieces to bring to the group next week.

### B. Ask one of the group members (pre-arranged) to close in prayer.

↓ JOURNAL SHEET BELOW ↓

**JOURNAL SHEET**  
James 2  
“God’s Little Instruction Book”

1) Imagine: You’ve got the chance to win a \$100,000 scholarship. You’re grades are good enough to win, but you’ve got one piece that’s missing: a recommendation letter. The organization giving the scholarship has told you that they put as much weight your recommendation as they do your grades.

Pretend that you have the power right now to determine what goes into that recommendation. The beauty of this recommendation is that **not all of these things have to be true at this point in your life**. Take 5 minutes to write a letter of recommendation of all the things you’d like someone you respect to say about you.

2) If you had to ask three people right now to write letters of recommendation for you, what three would you ask?

3) Today, could those people write the kind of recommendation you’ve written for yourself? If no, why not?

Include prayer requests or any message you would like to send to the youth leaders here: