

Kindred

Discovering Christ-centered Friendship

Lesson 1

The Call To Be Christ-Centered

Title: The Call To Be Christ-Centered

Purpose: For students to understand that their friendships with other Believers should be Christ-centered.

Scripture Passage: John 15:5-17

Lesson Snapshot: This lesson uses *Kindred: Part 1* to introduce the concept of Christ-centeredness to your students. Using Jesus' words from John 15, students will be challenged to see the concept of "remaining in Christ" as the key to both living out their purpose in life, and to forging God-honoring friendships. In *Kindred: Part 1*, we are introduced to Mr. Bruce, the lovable, overly excited Quiz Bowl coach. We see four students selected for the Quiz Bowl team, almost by accident. The groundwork is laid for an eventful journey that will find these four students moving from relative strangers to good friends. The key scene you'll build off in this lesson is Mr. Bruce's speech in front of the trophy case.

Lesson Plan

The Lesson Plan contains three elements: An introductory activity called The Main Event where you'll watch one of the four *Kindred* videos; the Bible study/discussion section called Digging In; and an application-focused segment called The Last Word.

The Main Event

Note: Now is the time to make sure you have your video ready. If you haven't downloaded it yet, your video is located under your "MY DOWNLOADABLE PRODUCTS" dashboard in your ym360 online account. Login to your account at <https://youthministry360.com/customer/account/login>.

Set-up: You'll need the *Kindred* Media Disc and a way to show *Kindred: Part 1*, such as a DVD player or your laptop.

FIRST, give your students a little context for what you're about to do. Say something like:

- **Over the next four weeks, we're going to be watching a movie in four parts. The movie is a story about an unlikely group of teenagers who come together to become true friends. As we watch this movie each week, we'll use what we've watched as a starting point for a short Bible study. The goal of our time together is to dig deeply into the concept of friendship, specifically, the difference Christ-centered friendships make in our lives and in the world.**

THEN, if students don't have any questions, play *Kindred: Part 1*. When you have finished, transition into the Digging In section.

Digging In

Set-up: Make sure students have access to a Bible or a device with a Bible app on it, even if it means looking on with a friend.

FIRST, once you've finished watching the video clip, ask students for their responses. These may include questions similar to the following:

- **What do you think of Mr. Bruce?**
- **What character can you relate to the most at this point?**
- **What would you think about the various reasons the teenagers joined the Quiz Bowl team? Who do you think has the best motive? Who has the most questionable?**
- **Do you get the feeling that the characters see each other as a team yet? Why or why not?**

Make it a point to ask the following question as it is key to setting up the biblical parallel:

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- In front of the trophy case, Mr. Bruce gave the students two keys to success. Do you remember what they were?

- o Answer: He said "In order for us to win, we have to be a team . . . If you follow me, I can lead you to victory." Following Mr. Bruce's leadership and working together as a team were the two criteria for success.

THEN, once you've allowed students to respond, begin to transition into your time of Bible study. Say something similar to the following:

- As you may have guessed, the movie we're going to be watching is almost like a parable. (Optional: Ask who remembers what a parable is and how they are used.) It's a story that teaches a lesson. We're going to use this movie as a starting point for a time of Bible study and discussion. Let's get started.

NEXT, instruct your students to turn to John 15. While they're finding the passage, see if anyone remembers any details about John's life. Inform them that the John was a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. The youngest of Jesus' disciples, he was referred to as Jesus' "beloved disciple." He also wrote the book of Revelation as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name. Inform students that in John chapter 15, Jesus had just eaten His last supper with His disciples, and was teaching them as they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus would soon be arrested.

THEN, read or have a student read John 15:5-8. When the passage has been read, engage students in a discussion using questions similar to the following:

- Look at verse 5. What metaphor is Jesus using here?
 - o Answer: Jesus is comparing our relationship with Him to the relationship between a grape vine and its branches.
- This metaphor would have been very clear to Jesus' first century audience. But most of us don't have grape vines in our back yards. Can you guess what Jesus meant in verse 5? What does it mean that Jesus is the vine and we're the branches?
 - o Answer: A grape vine was the main source of nutrients and life. It grew up thick and strong out of the ground. The branches grew out of the vine. This grapes would bloom and blossom off of the branches that sprouted from the vine.
- Jesus said that for us to "bear fruit," we have to remain in Him. Jesus wasn't literally talking about us growing grapes. (Remember, it's a metaphor.) So, what did Jesus mean when He said for us to "bear fruit"?
 - o Answer: Jesus' metaphor of a branch bearing grapes is a parallel to our life's mission. We can't be used by God to impact the world around us unless we remain "attached" to Him. Cut off from Christ, we'll never see our lives reach their full potential.

Remind students of Mr. Bruce's words in front of the locker. Say something like:

- Earlier we said that Mr. Bruce gave his students two keys to success. One was that if they would follow him as their leader, they would win the Quiz Bowl. This is a pretty bold prediction, isn't it? (We'll have to see if it comes true.) Mr. Bruce's words function the same way Jesus' words function here in John 15. Jesus was saying to His disciples, "If you want to succeed, follow me." Jesus wasn't talking about winning a contest, obviously. He was talking about our very purpose as Christ-followers. Keeping Jesus as the center of our lives is the only way to fully live out our purpose.

NEXT, direct students' attention to verses 12-17. Read or have a student read these verses. When you are finished, lead students in another discussion. Ask questions similar to the following:

- Jesus told His disciples to love each other exactly like He had loved them. This is a pretty beautiful description of Christ-centered friendship, don't you think? Can you think of some words to describe how Jesus loved His disciples?
 - o Answers will vary but may include: selfless, sacrificial, patient, serving, committed, and so on.
- Jesus said that the best way we can show God's love to our friends is to lay down our lives for

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them. Again, Jesus was using a metaphor. While Jesus literally laid down His life for us, when He said that we should lay down our lives for others, what do you think He meant?

- o Answers may vary, but may include: putting other's needs before our own; going out of our way to be kind to others; making sure we're there for our friends when they need us, and so on.

Remind students that these were some of Jesus' last words to His disciples before He would be arrested, tried, and crucified. They represent some of the final commandments He would give them. Jesus was imparting valuable truth to the disciples. His words on the relationships we are to have with others are amazing. His commandment to love our friends as He loved us is extremely powerful.

FINALLY, begin to wrap up your Bible study time by connecting these two principles. Say something like:

- **If you recall, we said that Mr. Bruce gave the students two keys to success: following his leadership, and sticking together as a team. We see these same principles echoed in the verses you read today. To be fruitful, we have to remain in Christ. And, Jesus called us to deeply invest ourselves in one another's lives. In essence, Jesus was calling us to the ultimate definition of teamwork: giving ourselves up for the good of others. As we wrap up our time together, let's take a few minutes to think about how we can apply these in our lives.**

The Last Word

Set-up: While it's not essential, you may find that a dry-erase board will help you facilitate this activity.

FIRST, remind students that knowing about God and His commands from Scripture isn't enough. We have to be changed by this knowledge. We have to put it to work in our lives. Explain that you have two simple questions for them as you get ready to wrap up.

THEN, say something like:

- **We've learned some pretty clear truths today: Jesus expects us to remain "attached" to Him, and He expects us to have a unique aspect to our friendships, namely, that we are to love others as He loved us. As you leave this place, and get on with your life this week, it can be tempting to hear these truths but not do anything about them. We don't want to be that way. So, I have a challenge for you.**

Instruct students to consider the following questions (if you have a dry-erase board, it may be helpful to write them down):

- **What is one thing I can do this week that will help me stay "attached" to Christ?**
- **What is one thing I can do this week to help me show my friends a more Christ-like love?**

If any student feels confident enough, ask for volunteers to share any thoughts they have. Challenge them to come up with practical steps they'll actually be inclined to follow through on. Encourage them to consider writing these down on a note-taking app, or some other way of remembering them. And, if you're really on your game, follow up with the via text message to see how they're doing.

FINALLY, close by wrapping up what you've covered and setting the table for your next session. Say something like:

- **I want to leave you with a concept so that it is fresh in your minds when you walk out of here: Christ-centeredness. Being Christ-centered means orienting our lives on Jesus. It means Jesus and the Gospel are at the heart of who we are and all we do. The key to living out our purpose in life is to stay Christ-centered. The key to having friendships that honor God is to stay Christ-centered. This is what Jesus meant when He said to remain in Him. This week, strive for Christ-centeredness. Stay connected to Christ. Stay close to Him. Let Him speak and act through you as you go through your week.**

Make sure you don't miss any final questions or thoughts, and then close in prayer.

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- Don't forget to distribute the Student Devotions to your students this week. If you're printing them, have them available for students as you wrap up class. If you're posting them on Instagram, texting a link, or some other means of electronic distribution, make sure you inform students of when they will be receiving them.

We Want To Hear From You . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well you want to share?
- Something that didn't work you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns, at feedback@youthministry360.com.