



## FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

*Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People*

*Module 5: The Message of the Prophets*

*Lesson 1: God's Compassion For And Call To Israel—Isaiah 40; 52*

### ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Isaiah 40 and 52 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

*How is this God's story?*

*How is this others' story?*

*How is this my story?*

*How is this the world's story?*

### ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

#### **GOD'S STORY**

*Do you tend to focus on God's grace or God's holiness? How does this affect how you live your life?*

- The Lord's righteous authority and power does not trump His grace and gentleness, nor does His grace and gentleness trump His righteous authority and power.

#### **OUR STORY**

*What's the difference between a lukewarm relationship with God and one that is fully-alive?*

- Revelation 3:16 describes a church who were described as "lukewarm," although God wished they would either be "cold" or "hot."
- When we're caught up in distractions, we may completely miss out on realizing what we're missing out on.

*If Jesus were to physically join you and your Christian friends for a conversation, what things do you think He would tell all of you?*

- Beyond what God has made clear is our choice to follow His wisdom or reject it.
- Jesus provides the only real remedy for spiritual sickness.

## **OTHERS' STORY**

***Among those in your life who reject God or Christianity, what would they need to see in your life to reconsider?***

- God doesn't want you to be someone you're not to show others who He is. While there may be a "hook" or "angle" you could use to try to relate with someone, it has to be genuine.

***What are some of the things that distract you from living as a prophet to others around you?***

- Our daily, weekly and monthly routines often consume us. We need to make the most of Sabbath to unplug from what's familiar and reengage what matters most.
- We can diminish our ability to speak up if others have shut us down in the past. Let such moments refine you instead of define you.

***When was a time that you confronted someone in a way that was awkward for you but helpful for them (or vice-versa)?***

- "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29).
- Christians have the God-given privilege to challenge the common things people struggle with, raise them up out of letting failure or success define them, and reaching out to redemptively love all people into a deeper relationship with God.

## **THE WORLD'S STORY**

***What are some of the ways you feel you've helped Christianity regain a more positive reputation?***

- The world tends to gauge the authenticity of God and his message based on how we live. Ironically, it was how Jesus Christ lived and died that gave that message credibility to begin with.

***What are some hurdles you face in letting your life reach more people?***

- You may feel like you've said everything you know in every way you know how to say it. Look for inspiration from others to gain new points of view that you can offer in your own words. Sometimes honoring another perspective will deepen your own and spark new insights.

***What ideas do you have to actually become fully-committed to a group of other Christians?***

- There is a greater purpose to regular church attendance or participation than feeling good or satisfying a checklist. Realize that every moment you spend focusing on growing your relationship with God ends up in itself growing your relationship with God.

***Which words would best describe how people you know think about God?***

- Find a way or place to serve that will redefine the perceptions others have of Christians. It can be in your church, but it may likely need to be in a more common place.

## PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

*Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;  
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.  
Everyone lies to their neighbor;  
they flatter with their lips  
but harbor deception in their hearts.*

*May the LORD silence all flattering lips  
and every boastful tongue—  
those who say,  
“By our tongues we will prevail;  
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?”*

*“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,  
I will now arise,” says the LORD.*

*“I will protect them from those who malign them.”  
And the words of the LORD are flawless,  
like silver purified in a crucible,  
like gold refined seven times.*

*You, LORD, will keep the needy safe  
and will protect us forever from the wicked,  
who freely strut about  
when what is vile is honored by the human race.*  
(Psalm 12)

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

We all have relationships with people that tend to steal energy from us. You can often minimize their influence over you so you feel refreshed and able to make a greater impact in the world. Make this next week a time of adding and subtracting by eliminating the things that don't belong and reclaiming the things that do. For example:

- Add a new conversation to your day with someone you encounter often but have never taken the time to know better.
- Subtract any email and/or texting that you can't keep up with.
- Add some down-time to your day where you can enjoy God without words, even if it means turning off the radio in your vehicle or taking a little longer in the shower.
- Subtract any television shows, movies or music you let be a part of your life that has values you would kick someone out of your house for if they did it in person.

By simplifying your commitments in this way you will be more likely to remember what's essential and live your life with a greater prophetic purpose.

## BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

***Isaiah 53***

***1 Peter 2***

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above Scriptures. In the context of Isaiah 40 and 52, consider the following questions:

***What are the little things I let build up and distract me from my relationship with God?***

***In what ways is God asking me to be someone who guides others around me into a deeper relationship with him?***

Consider other passages you might know related to Isaiah 40 and 52 and read them this week, journaling as you go.