



## 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 4: God's Love For His People—Hosea 11; Joel 2:18-27; 3:17-21*

### ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Hosea 11 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**

*What's your opinion about how God balances His forgiveness with His commands?*

- “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD” (Isaiah 55:8).
- If you had God's power for a day, you might change everything; if you had God's wisdom for a day, you probably wouldn't change a thing.

*How might it have felt to be someone like Hosea or Joel when everyone around you was turning away from the God you were committed to?*

- The Bible reveals what we need to know to return to God, but in that era the prophets served the role of clarifying and communicating on His behalf.

*Like the golden calves Jeroboam sent the people to, what some things that take people's attention away from God?*

- It's common to think of God as a higher power or impersonal force who reveals truth through everything from horoscopes to achieved goals.
- The Lord isn't a blind grandfather who spoils his grandkids without disciplining them. He is fully-aware of our sin and doesn't overlook it, but works through it to reach us.

#### **OUR STORY**

*What do you feel is necessary to give a full 100% of your life to God?*

- Your next step in your relationship with God begins right where you are standing. You don't have to meet a prerequisite or prequalify to go on a personal journey with him.

*In what ways has God spoken tenderly into your life?*

- Sometimes God removes things from our lives in order for us to focus on Him. This can hurt us in the process, but it's meant to heal us.
- Learning to listen to God is less about trying to be spiritual and more about being still and available to Him. It is not a program, but is part of your everyday life.
- By listening to what God says about us, we become more able to share what God needs to say to other people.

## OTHERS' STORY

*When people change the concept of God to suit their needs, how can your life be an example of something more accurate?*

- As you grow in your relationship with God, your testimony may contain a missing “puzzle piece” that someone else needs to find God. We each build a testimony through beliefs and experiences that are unique to us but complement others.

*What are some effective ways you've found to share God and His story with others?*

- There are different ways to share your faith, from a direct style to something more conversational.
- By listening to someone's story, you earn the right to share your story; by sharing your story, you create a pathway to share God's story.

*How would you describe the type of Christianity others see in your life?*

- People may need to know you're not perfect, but they also may need to know you're not common, either. Don't forget that others need to witness Christ working in you.
- There's a difference between people who do nothing but question you and those who have questions. The former seem interested in nothing but debate, whereas the latter seem interested in taking a step with God.

## THE WORLD'S STORY

*When have you seen Christianity gain momentum world-wide?*

*What do you think it will take for the world to truly take notice of who God is?*

- The world struggles with depending on a God it can't see when it's full of pleasures that can be seen.
- Different groups of people in the world find it difficult to care about other groups of people. Until we're willing to take notice of each other, it will be difficult to spot God.

## PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

*You, God, are my God,  
earnestly I seek you;  
I thirst for you,  
my whole being longs for you,  
in a dry and parched land  
where there is no water.*

*I have seen you in the sanctuary  
and beheld your power and your glory.*

*Because your love is better than life,  
my lips will glorify you.  
I will praise you as long as I live,  
and in your name I will lift up my hands.  
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;  
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*

*On my bed I remember you;  
I think of you through the watches of the night.  
Because you are my help,  
I sing in the shadow of your wings.  
I cling to you;  
your right hand upholds me.*

*Those who want to kill me will be destroyed;  
they will go down to the depths of the earth.  
They will be given over to the sword  
and become food for jackals.*

*But the king will rejoice in God;  
all who swear by God will glory in him,  
while the mouths of liars will be silence.*  
(Psalm 63)

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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

It can be difficult to do a lot of things without an agenda. Often we multi-task and end up giving less than our best to everything. Even with God, we can try to do so many things for Him or toward Him that we neglect to simply be with Him.

Go for a walk, simply to go for a walk. Don't plan on where you'll go, what path you'll take or what you're supposed to think about as you move. Make it destination-less from the start by blocking out enough time so you aren't rushed or constantly checking the clock. If the weather doesn't allow you to do this, try sitting somewhere indoors without doing anything else.

The point of this is to see what happens when there is specific task or agenda. Just like a relationship includes moments simply being together, your relationship with God needs to have moments where you enjoy being in His presence.

## BECOMING MY STORY

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

*Psalm 106*

*Luke 15*

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above Scriptures. In the context of Hosea 11 and Joel 2:18-27; 3:17-21, consider the following questions:

*Who do I know who needs to hear words of affection from God?*

*How comfortable am I sharing words of affection on God's behalf?*

Consider other passages you might know related to Hosea 11 and Joel 2:18-27; 3:17-21 and read them this week, journaling as you go.