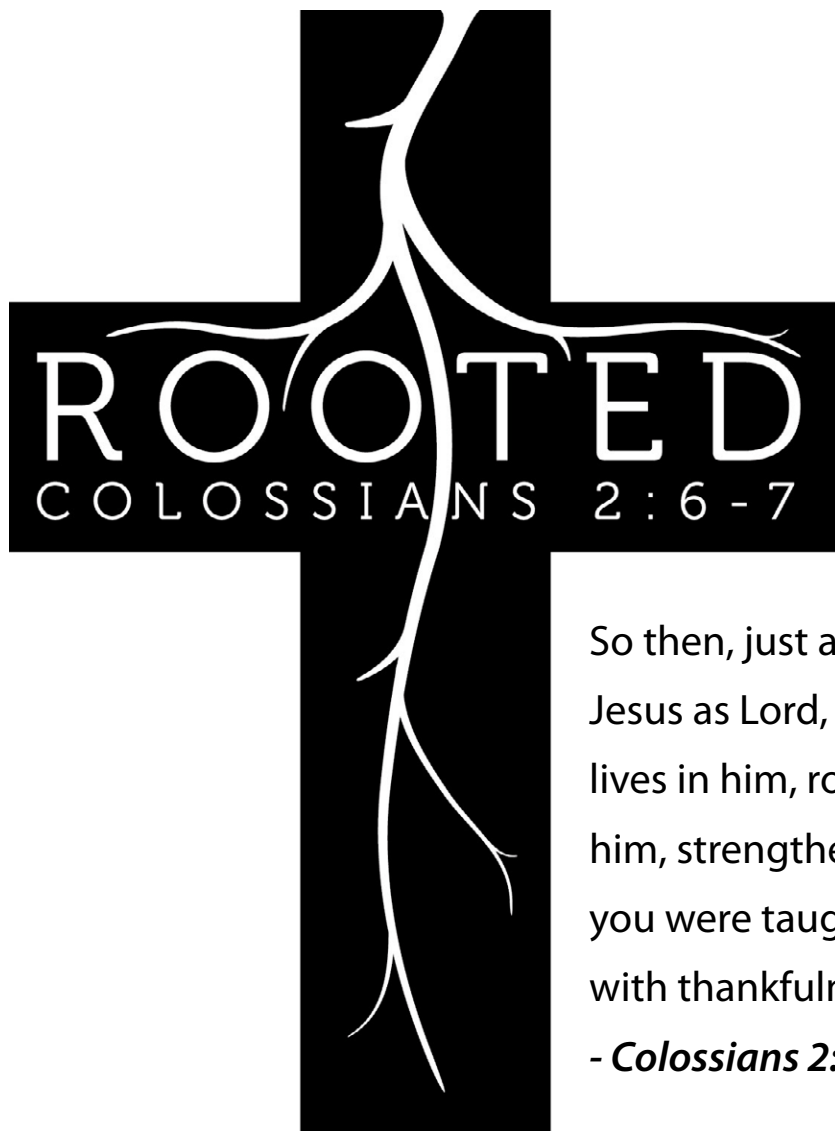


ZONE

2011-2012

Post-Event Bible Study



So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

- Colossians 2:6-7

Notes to the Leader

Introduction to Bible Study

So God is doing tremendous things now in the hearts, minds, souls and lives of you, your leaders and the students who attended the ZONE. The ZONE hopefully connected (reconnected?) God to His people. This study will strive to keep the fun and growing going. The study is primarily designed for those who attended the Zone, however any friends and visitors along for the study that didn't attend the Zone can benefit also. Blessings!

Goals for this study:

- To have the community of leaders and students reflect and remember this year's Youth Encounter event.
- To be refreshed with God's Word and fellowship of one another solidifying things learned and felt at the ZONE.
- To offer opportunities for further thoughts and growth in faith and in group.

Text Designations:

- Plain text (text not in bold type nor italicized) indicates instruction for you as the Leader. These instructions will include transitional ideas to help you facilitate discussion or provide background information. These sections using plain text are mostly for your benefit as the leader and do not necessarily need to be shared with the group at large, unless you deem it appropriate.
- **Bold text** indicates Scripture passages and information that should be shared with the group. When explaining background information or making transitions from one section to the next, feel free either to use your own words or to read the text as it is written.
- **Italicized & Bold** text indicates where a prayer, a verse or a litany may be read by the leader or another participant.

Preparation:

Supplies: Bibles, a piece of paper, pen/pencil

Opening Time For The Study

Have a student or adult leader open with a prayer or they can read the following:

Heavenly Father, we come tonight thanking You for a great weekend away at the Zone. Help us to reflect on and remember all the things we received from You and the things You want to continue to teach us in Your Word. Also, help us to continue to grow close as we strengthen our friendships and fellowship. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Ask everyone to think back to the Zone weekend. Then have them describe their weekend by using a punctuation mark. [For those who didn't attend the Zone have them consider their past weekend.] For instance, if it was full of unanswered questions they'd give it a "?". If they felt the weekend was left unfinished they'd give it a "...". If all they heard was blah, blah, blah, they might just offer quotation marks! Below is a list of punctuation marks and what they might mean. After everyone chooses a punctuation mark, ask them why they chose that particular one.

After everyone has commented on their weekend, ask what mark they would give in hope for the rest of the scholastic year and why they'd use this mark. Have adults do this, too, but relating to the calendar year or having to do with work.

- . = completion, but no enthusiasm
- ? = lots of unanswered questions
- ! = really great week
- "" = too much talking to or talking at
- : = once it was explained I got it figured out but not a completed week
- () = too many inside stories or jokes and I feel left out
- * = everything has to be explained, I'm not figuring things out
- & = there is always something more and I can't get caught up
- @ = my life consists of more online time than real time relationships
- \$ = money is too dominant in what's going on in my life

Examining

Our theme this year was "ROOTED" based on Colossians 2:6-7.

Have volunteer read the theme verse aloud. Then ask the following questions, allowing time for discussion.

Did you discover any personal root systems that need to be strengthened?

In what ways were you strengthened over the weekend? In what ways was your faith challenged?

Have you come to any conclusions about what you can do stop damaging your roots and to find ways to strengthen them? What are they?

If people could look below the ground and see how your faith life is growing, what would they see? Is this what you would want them to see?

Exploring

Jesus loves telling stories about plants and seeds and roots and how they are symbols in the Kingdom of God. See, He wants us to grow and be strong in our lives here on earth and not just think Jesus is only about heaven (Although heaven is a certainty because of His death and resurrection for us!) The root system is so very important, but so is preparing the soil and keeping it free from obstructions and hindrances to growth.

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 then read the following questions, allowing time for discussion:

- **Jesus tells us a parable about a farmer (God) who sowed seed (His Word) and the seed landed on four different kinds of soil. What are the four kinds of soil? (This is the only time Jesus immediately explains a parable after telling it!)**
- **Which soil is your heart most often like? What can plow your soil & keep it free from rocks, birds and thorns?**
- **What are you most hoping to harvest from the good soil of your heart? Is it ready to be harvested now?**

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 13:24-30 (This parable is explained, but only later) then ask the following discussion questions, allowing time for discussion:

- **Who is the enemy in this parable? What are the weeds?** (ref. Matthew 13:36-43)
- **What weeds are most easily sown in people of your age? Do you personally struggle with these? How are they best handled?** (see Mark 14:38)

Have a volunteer read Matthew 13:31-32. Pose the following questions, allowing time for discussion:

- **Why does faith start out small. What does it mean to plant this mustard seed?**
- **What kind of growth can be expected? What does this mean in real terms?**

Expressing

Make sure everyone has a pen/pencil and a piece of paper.

Have a volunteer read II Peter 3:18.

Now I would like each of you to take some time to write a letter to God. The letter should include where your faith and root system was; where it is now; what weeds, thorns, birds, or rocks need to be removed for good growth; what you want your field of good soil to look like (practical things in your lives); and finally, how can you help other people prepare and preserve their own root systems and fields of soil. Ultimately, this letter should reflect how we are growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Closing Time

Ask everyone (students and adults) sit comfortably in as much of a circle as possible. Have everyone join hands (or link arms, touch elbows, hold pinkies, etc.) and ask for a volunteer to start the prayer or he/she can read the opening found below.

After the opening, go around the circle and have each participant say one word that describes the hope they have for strengthening their faith and the friendships formed. (Take a moment and let everyone first think of a word and then go around the circle.) Encourage everyone to think of a different - though accurate - word. Then ask for a volunteer to close the prayer or he/she can read the closing found below.

Opening of prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving us Your Word this evening. Your Word is truth. Thank You for allowing us to attend the Zone. May our hearts be guided by Your hand and love for us. Rooted in You, may we always recognize that we will never be abandoned by You and are always loved by You. Hear us now as we ask You to hear our hopes and make them a reality...

Closing of prayer:

Lord Jesus, we rejoice in knowing of Your unconditional love proved at the cross and the empty tomb. May we rest soundly in You and may we be energized by Your Holy Spirit to strive to grow and deepen in Grace and knowledge of our Savior. All this we pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.