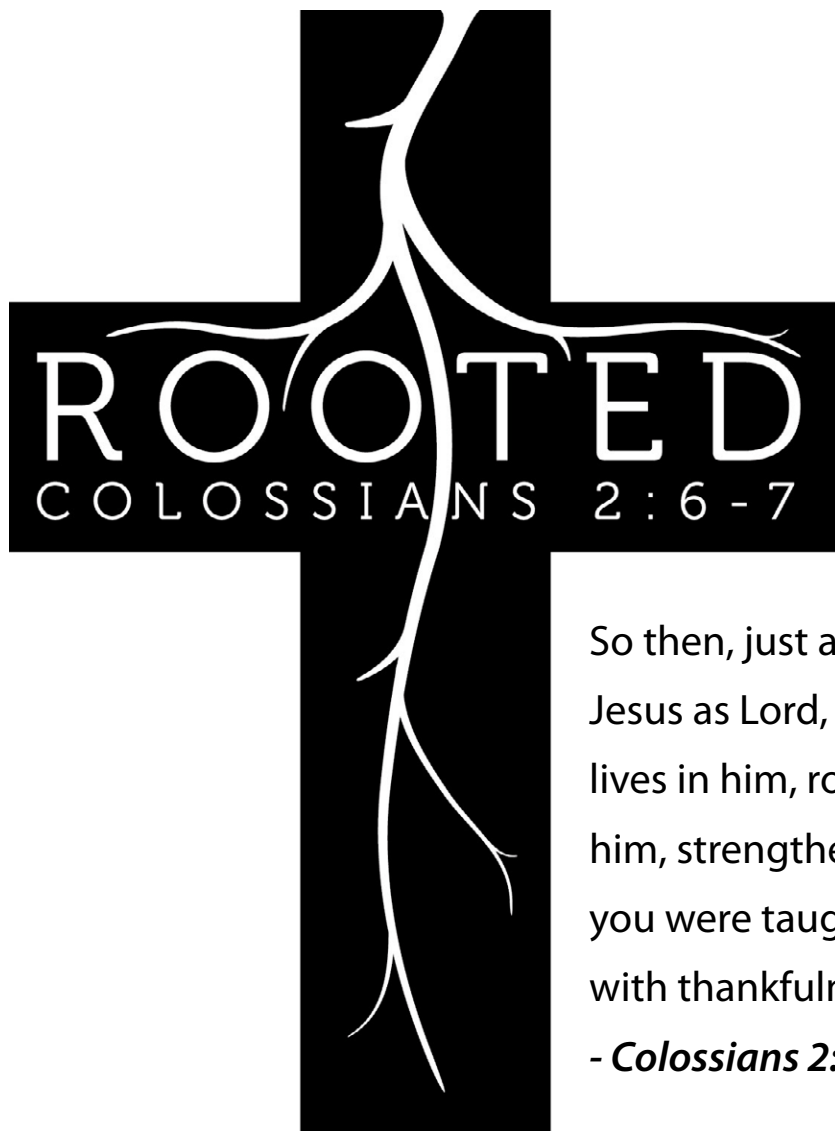


2011-2012

Pre-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

Leader Information

Welcome to this year's Pre-Event Bible Study for Youth Encounter's Quake participants! Thank you for all the time and energy you are putting in, have put in and will put in to make this event happen for your group. We are grateful to partner with you in ministry!

LOGISTICS

FORMAT

- **Text in bold** is text which you may wish to read aloud or summarize as you give instructions and explanations.
- *Text in italics* suggests possible responses to questions and discussion points.
- Text that is neither bold nor italicized need not be read aloud. These sections are more for your benefit as leader, as they suggest how to continue through the study, or give background information to inform your facilitation of the study.
- Discussion questions are designated both with **bold** font and with an arrowhead marker (»).

ACTIVITIES

This Bible study includes many and varied activities to provide a multi-media approach to the theme and theme verse. In the interest of time, you may choose to omit one or more of these activities. Or you may wish to change them or add your own. You know your group and what fits their "style." Feel free to modify the Bible Study as you see fit!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you wish to further prepare and explore our theme prior to leading the Pre-Event Bible Study, there is an additional download available for your use. This can be found on your Quake page under "General Pre-Event Packet" and is entitled "Pre-Quake Bible Study Additional Leader Information." Here you will find additional suggestions plus more background information on our theme. While not necessary for leading this study, the information may be helpful for those of you who wish to "dig in deeper."

ROOTED

“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 (NIV)

Welcome and Opening Prayer

(7-10 minutes)

INTRODUCTIONS:

Take a few moments for intros and welcomes, especially if there are newcomers, or if the group isn't well-acquainted. You may wish to use one or all of the following statements to get the ball rolling.

- The best part of my day today was....
- Something challenging about my day today was....
- One thing that I am known for in my family and with my friends is _____.

OPENING PRAYER:

Open in prayer, using your own words or the prayer below.

Holy God, We are Your grateful people! Thank You for being there for us in our time of greatest need! Thank You for Your grace, poured into our lives through Jesus Christ! Thank You for this time together, and for being here with us! Let Your Word take root in our hearts, so that we might grow in Your love! Amen.

Getting Started: Who Am I?

Objectives

- To encourage participants to think about the components which contribute to their individual identities.
- To introduce ideas about identity found in our theme and theme verse.

Supplies and Prep

- Journal sheet: “What Makes Me ME?” (master sheet included at the end of the study) (1 sheet per person)
- Writing utensils
- Film clip from The Nanny Diaries and the equipment to show it on (optional)
- Dry erase board, markers (optional)

Suggested time

- 15-20 minutes

OPENING DISCUSSION:

We just spent a little time getting to know each other, and sharing things about ourselves that help others get to know us. That theme of “identity” is one that we’re going to focus on tonight, and as we start thinking about our upcoming experience at the Quake.

» **To get started: How would you answer if someone asked you the question, “Who are you?”**

Allow a few moments for people to throw out some answers. Most participants probably will respond with their name.

This question – “Who are you?” – can be both simple and difficult to answer, can't it? On the surface, the answer that comes to mind immediately might point to the obvious things about us, or that are part of our public persona: our names, where we live, which school we attend. For adults, identities are often defined by what one does for a living.

» **If the conversation goes on, and if we go a little deeper, we might talk about other things that aren't readily apparent on the surface. For example, how would you answer the question "Who are you?" in these different situations:**

- **At a family reunion?**
- **With your cabinmates at summer camp?**
- **To a teacher who stopped you in the hallway?**
- **To an unsuspecting friend after you snuck up behind them and put your hands over their eyes?**
- **To an alien whose ship landed in your front yard?**

The point here is to show that identity is a composite of many aspects. In one situation, it may be important to talk about whose cousin or daughter you are. Another time, it might be more useful to say "I'm the art teacher's student assistant" than to say "I'm Gladys' granddaughter." And while the scenario of an alien landing might be far-fetched, the idea of learning about and becoming known to a stranger is not. And often, our identity with complete strangers (passers-by in mall or people sitting in the theater seat next to us, for example) might be shaped by what they observe, rather than what they hear us say!

Movie Moment: Who Am I?

To get started, we are going focus on the idea of "identity." To do this, we are going to watch a short movie clip from The Nanny Diaries, and then you are going to have a chance to share your thoughts. In this scene, the main character has trouble answering what should be a very simple question. As you watch, think about how you would answer the question.

Scene Set-Up:

Annie Braddock loves archeology, and dreams of going on digs and making great discoveries. However, her mother is less than enthusiastic about this idea, and pushes Annie to set more practical goals for her life. When she graduates from college, with a degree in finance, Annie is finally ready to get that "real" life her mother wants for her, and sets up an interview for a dream job at a prestigious firm. However, when she arrives at the interview, things don't go exactly as she had planned.

DVD Start Cue: (Scene 2, 05m 55s) The camera pans up from the street to a sky scraper with a red umbrella emblem at the top. The interviewer's voice says, "We have over 8,000 applicants for ten positions. So, why don't you tell me, in your own words: Who is Annie Braddock?"

DVD End Cue: (Scene 2, 06m 57s) Annie stops on the street corner. "I was suddenly terrified I'd never find the answer."

ACTIVITY: WHO AM I, ANYWAY?

Distribute copies of "What Makes Me ME?" (Do this after the movie scene, if you watch it.) Give participants 3-5 minutes to work on it, and tell them that, as they finish, they are invited to come forward and write at least one of their thoughts or responses (though more than one would be great!) on the board.

Be sure to write a few things about yourself, too. This exercise might make some participants feel vulnerable and it will help if you join them in writing about, and talking about, your own understanding of who you are.

When it appears that everyone is done, or nearly so, invite them to finish whatever they're writing, and to put something on the board. Then continue.

P.S. If you wish to save paper, copy the "What Makes Me ME?" handout on the back of "Looking Back" or simply write the questions on the board before the Bible Study and give participants time for silent reflection. Be sure to allow a few minutes – don't fear the silence, as it only means that they are thinking about how to answer! Tell them at the start that, after a minute or two, you will invite them to come to the board to jot some responses. Be sure to have enough writing utensils – markers, chalk, etc. – for several students to write at the same time.

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION:

Our theme this year for the Quake is ROOTED, which has to do with thinking about the question "Who Am I?" which is why I wanted to start out with a discussion of what it is that makes you "you." And what makes me "me." And what makes us..."us"!

- » **Who would like to share more about what you wrote on the board about yourself, or about any of the things you jotted down on your paper?**

It might be helpful for you to start, if no one is immediately forthcoming. However, silence often indicates thought rather than fear or discomfort, so it's okay to let the question hang for a bit while people think about what they want to say. And if it seems that students are comfortable with speaking up, reserve your comments until later, so that they can have the floor.

When you are ready to move on:

Thank you all for sharing. Talking about what's important to us, and what makes us tick, is a sacred thing. So thank you for sharing about yourself with the group, and for giving us this glimpse into who you are!

You may wish to go a little deeper with one or more of these follow-up questions.

- » **When you think of what's important to you in life, where do these values come from?**
- » **How did you become the person you are today?** (Or, "What influences have helped shape your identity today?")
- » **How much do you participate in forming your own identity? How much of it do you think is the result of other factors that are not in your control? To what extent do we have control over who we become?**
- » **Is it important to you to stand for some things and to not stand for others (or to be associated with/identified with some things and not others)? Why?**
For example, do people know you as someone who cares about the environment? Or who defends victims of bullying? Or who is a vegetarian? Or who loves fast food? Or who dresses a certain way? Or who treats people a certain way? Or who collects action figures? Are you glad to be known for these things?
- » **As you continue to grow and your identity continues to take shape, what do you hope to be known for in 10 years? What kinds of things do you hope your friends will identify as things that matter to you?**

Digging Into Our Quake Theme

Objectives

- To introduce ROOTED.
- To work with the metaphor having figurative "roots" in something – values, expectations, attitudes, tradition, etc.

Supplies and Prep

- Paper and writing utensils
- Dry erase board, markers (optional)

Suggested time

- 10-12 minutes

INTRODUCING ROOTED!

We are talking about what makes us "us" because this is what we'll be focusing on when we go to the Quake. Each year, Youth Encounter chooses a theme, taken from a Bible verse. That theme serves as the guide for all the planning for the event, and for the speakers' talks and the music that the musicians play. We get to focus on that theme too, in this Bible study before the Quake, as well as in our group time during and after the Event.

This year's theme is "ROOTED." It is based on a passage from the epistle to the Colossians, in the New Testament of the Bible. But before we look at that, let's see what we might already know about our theme!

ACTIVITY: A BRIEF VOCABULARY LESSON

Have the participants divide into small groups (2-3). Give each group a piece of paper, and something to write with. Give them 60 seconds to come up with a list of as many things they can think of that have roots. The person whose birthday is coming up next should record the group's ideas.

At the end of 60 seconds, go around the room and see how many different answers the groups came up with. If you have a dry erase board or other large writing surface, invite a participant to come forward to record the groups' responses.

Possible responses:

- *Trees, plants, shrubs, flowers, grass, etc. (This list could be endless!)*
- *hair;*
- *teeth*
- *equations (square roots);*
- *musical chords;*
- *wires and cables*
- *finger nails, toenails*
- *family trees (getting back to one's roots, discovering one's roots through study of genealogy);*
- *words ("Farm" is the root word of "farmer" and "farming." "Hippopotamus" originated from two Greek root words: "hippos" = "horse" and "potamus" = "river." So, literally, "hippopotamus" means "water horse"!)*

So what is a root, then? With all of these things (plants, hair, equations, family trees, words, etc.) in mind, how would you define "root"? In your small groups, you have one minute to come up with your own definition. Ready? Go!

At the end of a minute, invite them to share the definitions they came up with. Write key words on the dry erase board if you wish. If you chose to review the "Pre-Quake Bible Study Additional Leader Information," you may wish to refer to the dictionary definitions given there, especially this definition for the verb "root": *to implant or establish deeply (in the thing that is the object of the verb. For example, "to be rooted in tradition.")*.

Then move on:

If we think of ourselves as beings who "bloom where we are planted," then it's important to think about exactly what makes up the "soil" from which we draw our lives. What do we value and spend our time and energy on? What are our priorities, attitudes, traditions, societal norms, cultural mores? What we believe in, and what we get LIFE from, determines the direction our lives grow - if we grow at all. Whether our foundational source sustains and nurtures, or depletes and harms, all depends on the quality of the "soil."

Earlier, we talked about who we are, and the many, many factors that contribute to who we are. Our Quake theme, ROOTED, addresses these same questions. It was developed from a Bible passage in a letter written to people who were working out their new identity after they experienced the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They had some questions and were a little shaky about on what and for what they should be standing.

The Bible passage around which we gather our thoughts for the Quake, tells them to be ROOTED in that which will help them grow strong and live abundant lives of thanksgiving.

Let's take a look at that passage.

Digging Into Our Quake Theme Verse

Objectives

- To acquaint participants with the Colossian congregation, and to help them (the participants, not the Colossians!) identify points of similarity between themselves and these early believers.

Supplies and Prep

- Bibles for everyone
- Dry Erase Board, markers (optional)

Suggested time

- 12-15 minutes

Our theme verse for the upcoming Event is Colossians 2:6-7, which is part of a letter written to the Colossian church.

Invite participants to open their Bibles to Colossians 2:6-7 and read it silently to themselves. Then invite a few students to read it aloud, from different translations. The translation which you will see in the theme materials is from the New International Version (NIV)

but reading it from other versions, as well, will allow participants to hear a variety of interpretations, all drawn from the translator's interpretation of the original Greek.

Here are a few renderings of Colossians 2:6-7:

- **New International Version:** "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."
- **New Living Translation:** "And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness."
- **Amplified Bible:** "As you have therefore received Christ, [even] Jesus the Lord, [so] walk (regulate your lives and conduct yourselves) in union with and conformity to Him. Have the roots [of your being] firmly and deeply planted [in Him, fixed and founded in Him], being continually built up in Him, becoming increasingly more confirmed and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and abounding and overflowing in it with thanksgiving."
- **The Message:** "My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving."

A LITTLE BIT OF BACKGROUND ON OUR THEME VERSE:

Share some or all of the following information, to help participants understand the context out of which our theme verse comes.

This passage is from an epistle – that is, a letter – written to the Colossian congregation to answer their questions and help them grow stronger in their faith. They were a “young” congregation, as far as their experience as believers in Jesus went, and were new at this “follower of Christ thing.” Most of them were Gentiles, meaning that they weren’t part of the Jewish culture from which arose the “first generation” of congregations committed to Jesus. Because Jesus and his followers were Jewish, Judaism the culture from which the first congregations sprouted up. But the Gentiles were not at all like the Jews, and weren’t part of their religious practices.

The Colossians had been taught the Gospel by Epaphrus, one of Paul’s partners in the ministry of Jesus. Once Epaphrus left, the Colossian church continued to grow, and they were VERY enthusiastic about the Gospel. But...in their daily lives, they were no longer on the same page as many of their friends, neighbors and even family members. Imagine what that would be like, if you believed one thing, and people in your family, or your friends, believed something else.

With that in mind, look at our theme passage again, along with the verses around it, to see what else we might learn about this congregation, and about why they received this letter.

READING OUR THEME VERSE IN CONTEXT:

Many translations begin our theme passage, Colossians 2:6-7, with the word “Therefore,” which always signals that what follows is the point to which whatever comes before has been leading. You may wish to focus on Col. 2:1-5, especially vs. 2 (“My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ”) and vs. 4 (“I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments”). These verses, and especially 2 and 4, give meaning to the “therefore” that leads into the exhortation of our theme verse.

So: invite participants to put on their detective hats! First tell them what to be listening for:

- » **As we read our theme verse, and the verses around it, listen for what it tells you about the Colossian congregation.**

Ask someone to read aloud Colossians our theme verse in its larger context: Colossians 2:1-7. Then ask again:

- » **What clues about the Colossians and their congregation can you discover in this passage?**

Invite participants to respond, using specific passages to back up their claims. Again, if you want to write key words on the dry erase board, go for it. On the following page are some conclusions they might draw from the text.

- **They are new in their understanding of Jesus Christ, and have more to learn.** "...so that they may have the *full* riches of *complete* understanding..." (emphasis added)
- **They perhaps are confused by other teachings or other teachers who seem to be making a good case for something other than Epaphrus' teachings.** "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments."
- **They "received" Christ Jesus as Lord.** "Received" here comes from a Greek word the connotation of which is "to receive a teaching and adopt it as one's guiding principle; to not reject or withhold obedience; to receive and commit to a teacher's instruction."
- **They have already been living their lives in Christ Jesus.** "*continue* to live your lives in him." (emphasis added) (See also 1:1-8)

The Colossians faced the challenge of discerning what was true, and then sticking to it. Epaphrus had taught them about Jesus, and the seeds of faith were taking root. They had embraced this new way of life, and were living it with great enthusiasm. But not everyone in their community had the same ideas. Other folks – people who were their friends, co-workers, playmates, family - were just as convinced by other ideas about God. These others were not evil people, trying to make the Colossians fall. They, like people in the Colossian congregation, believed strongly in what they held as the truth. In fact, the people in the Colossian congregation had once believed something else too! So when the conversation got going, and they would discuss, debate and try to find common ground, naturally these differences would come up.

You may wish to ask:

- » **Have you ever had this happen to you? When have you gotten into a serious conversation with someone who believed something that you do not believe?**

P.S. Debate over religion, philosophy, etc. was a "given" in Jewish and other cultures at that time. Among the many sects of Judaism, it was common for people to sit down together to discuss, and thereby learn, discern, and even strengthen and deepen their convictions. Unlike today, where talk of "religion and politics" is often taboo, debate and discussion in public and private was encouraged and enjoyed. So the Colossians aren't being encouraged to withdraw from their community, or to avoid those who believed differently. Instead, they are to be "rooted in Christ" – educated and convicted, so that they know what they're talking about as they engage in conversation at home and around town.

ROOTED IN CHRIST

Objectives

- To connect the theme passage with our lives today.
- To encourage participants to reflect upon the soil in which they are currently rooted.
- To encourage participants to think about what it means for them to be rooted in Christ.

Supplies and Prep

- Paper and crayons/colored pencils.
- "Looking Ahead" journaling sheet (1 per person)

Suggested time

- 15-20 minutes

Distribute paper and crayons/colored pencils. You may wish to read the theme verse one more time as you do this activity.

In Colossians 2:6-7, we hear the instruction to be "rooted and built up in [Christ], strengthened in faith... and overflowing with thankfulness." What does being "rooted in Christ" mean? How does it relate to the other ideas in the verse: being "strengthened in faith" and "overflowing with thankfulness"?

Draw a picture of yourself as a tree. Here are some questions to think about as you work:

- » **In what values, attitudes, expectations, relationships, etc. are you rooted right now in your life? (Or, "Where do you go for meaning and purpose in life?")**
- » **What nutrients in the soil of your foundation give you life? Which ones challenge your growth?**
- » **What does it mean to be rooted in Christ?**

- » **If the soil is Christ, what kind of “nutrients” might be available for the growing plant?**
- » **What kind of “fruit” would grow on the branches of someone who is “rooted and built up” in the Gospel?**

You can represent these ideas with pictures, or with words, or whatever you choose!

Give participants 5 to 10 minutes to work on their masterpieces. Encourage them to be creative, and to have fun with it. Be sure to draw your own botanical self-portrait too!

When everyone is finished, invite participants to show their artwork, and to share at least three things about it. As time permits you may wish to discuss in depth some of the students’ ideas. If you don’t have time though, don’t worry -- you will revisit these pictures during the Post-Event Bible Study as you reflect on your experience at the Quake.

When you are finished with the “show and tell,” invite participants to turn in their drawings, so that you can save them. Be sure that everyone signs their work, so that you know whose is whose!

P.S. Before the event, if you have room, display the drawings in your meeting room or elsewhere so that the congregation can enjoy them too!

Distribute the “Looking Ahead” journaling sheets. Allow students 5-10 minutes to complete these sheets. Have the youth fold their papers and write their name on the outside. Then collect the sheets and keep them somewhere safe. These will be revisited in the Quake Post Event Bible Study. Be sure to let the participants know you will not be reading these but are simply keeping them until they will be redistributed again in the follow up Bible Study after the event.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close in prayer, using your own words or the prayer below.

Holy God, We are Your grateful people! Thank You for this time together, and for being here with us! We go out now in Your holy name to bear witness to Your love and grace! Let Your Word take root in our hearts, that we may live faithfully, so that our lives may bear good fruit to feed a hungry world! Amen!

What makes me ME?

Take a moment to think about what it is that makes you who you are. What distinguishes as you unique? What unites you with family and friends? What things about you stand out as defining of your personality?

1. Which 15 words or phrases describe you the best?

- | | | |
|----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 6. | 11. |
| 2. | 7. | 12. |
| 3. | 8. | 13. |
| 4. | 9. | 14. |
| 5. | 10. | 15. |

2. Of these 15, circle at least 5 or 6 that are things you really like a lot about yourself. (Not circling something doesn't mean that you don't like that aspect of yourself. Just that it's not one of the super duper, top, all-time favorites.)
3. Put a square around number (1., 2., 3., etc.) of the words/phrases that you think others would mention if they were asked to describe you.
4. Of those things you put a square around, mark with a check mark the ones for which you really like being known.
5. Which of the words or phrases from question #1 represent values that are important to you?

Why are these important?

Where did you learn these values?

6. Is there anything on the list that you think others might not know about you, but you wish that they did?

LOOKING AHEAD

Silently reread our theme verse (Colossians 2:6-7, below). Then take a few moments for silent reflection and prayer.

“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 (NIV)

1. One thing that we talked about tonight that really stuck with me was...

2. Right now, this is how I'd define our Quake theme, "ROOTED":

3. Here's what I hope to get out of the Quake weekend:

4. Here is one question that I have (about the Quake, or our Bible Study tonight, or life in general) which I will be bringing to the Quake:

(signature)

(date)