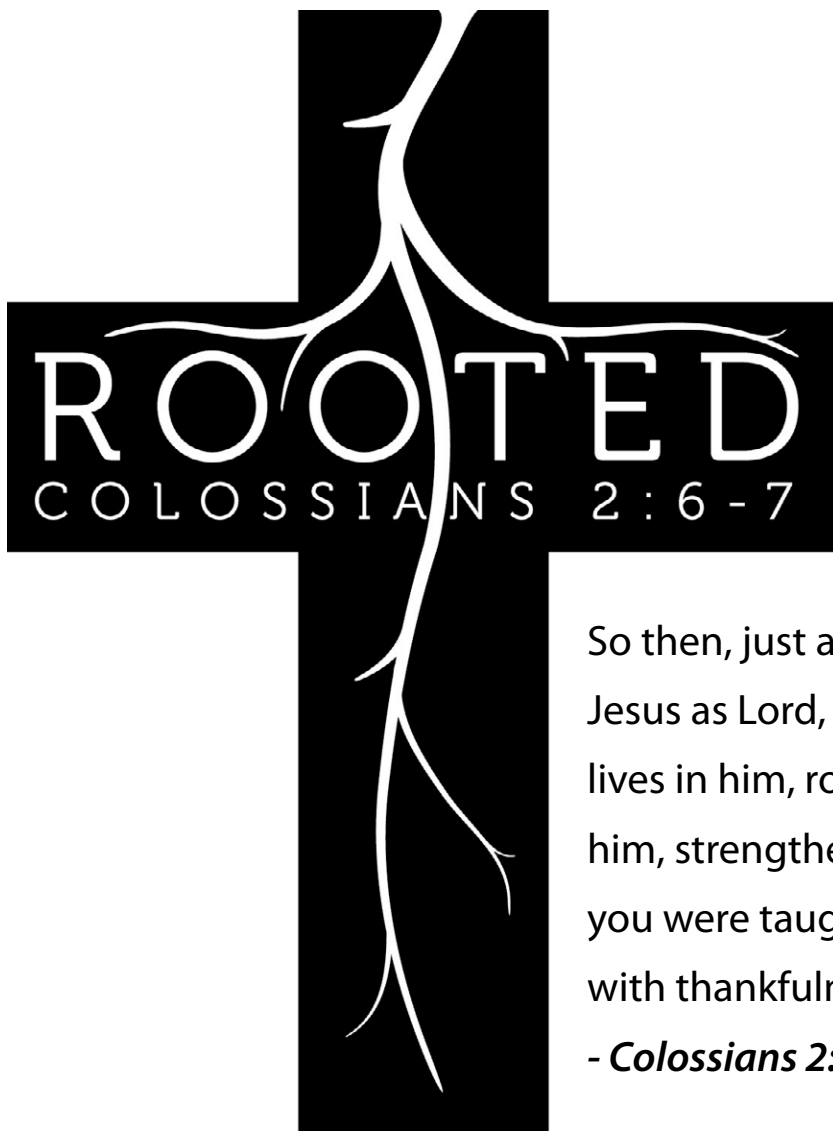




ZONE

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

Notes to the Leader

Introduction to Bible Study

Of course studying the Bible is a way for God to speak directly to our hearts but, sometimes “the ground” of our hearts needs to be “plowed” before the seed of Scripture can enter. Additionally, our hearts need to be “watered” after the seed is sown. Because of these truths, we hope to accomplish several things in this study. First, we want to help the leader feel comfortable in handling God’s Word, as well as leading the study. Second, we want students’ hearts and minds to be at a “place” where they are most receptive to God speaking to them. Third, we want God’s Word to be read and studied carefully. Finally, we want to offer some watering of the Scripture seeds after they’ve been cast.

This is the first study that will be offered in connection with the Youth Encounter event you’re planning on attending. The other studies will be during the event and after you return home from the event. May these studies draw you, as the leader, closer to our Lord Jesus as you assist the students and fellow leaders in these studies to be drawn closer to Him, as well.

Goals for this study:

- To build and strengthen the community of leaders and students attending this year’s Youth Encounter event around God’s Word.
- To introduce the theme to the students and leaders attending this year’s Youth Encounter event.
- To give an overview of the weekend: schedule, expectations and covenant.
- To build anticipation and to calm fears about what the weekend will be like.

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 for everyone, pen/pencil for everyone, large writing surface like a white board or flip chart and markers

Before you begin, ask for volunteers to read these verses at the appropriate time during the Bible Study:

- Isaiah 11:1-10
- Revelation 5:5
- Revelation 22:16
- I Corinthians 3:10-11
- Hebrews 12:2-3
- Romans 12:1-2

Opening Time For The Study (suggested time: 5-10 minutes)

Have a student or adult leader open with a prayer of their own or read the following:

Heavenly Father, we come tonight anticipating a fun weekend away at the Zone. Help us to prepare our hearts and minds to receive, from You, the things You want to teach us in Your Word as we plan and prepare. Also, help us to grow close as we strengthen our friendships and fellowship. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Ask everyone to consider this past week. Then have them describe the week by using a punctuation mark. For instance, if it was full of unanswered questions they'd give it a "?". If they felt the week 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. You may wish to create this list on the white board prior to the Bible Study. After each person gives a punctuation mark, ask them why they chose that particular one.

After everyone has commented on their week, ask what punctuation mark they would give their year since school started and why they'd use this mark. Have adult leaders do this, too.

. = 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 (suggested time: 10 minutes): allow time for discussion and answer after each question or group of questions.

Our theme this year is "ROOTED" based on Colossians 2:6-7. (Read the theme again.) The image is that of a tree that is alive and growing which has a strong root system established. The text also talks about being "built up" thus giving the idea of not only going deep but growing big and tall. Of course the roots bring nutrients to the tree but what else might we say the roots do for a tree especially if there is chaos above the surface, whether it be drought or high winds or even an axe at the trunk?

What are the "roots" of the Christian faith? How is it best to stay "rooted"? What tends to "uproot" a Christian?

Where are you right now in your faith life? Would you say your roots are healthy and going deep? Are they not very deep and maybe decaying? Are they cramped by too many other things under the surface and thus don't really have a chance to grow? Are you comfortable with what is happening with your faith's root system?

Would you agree the tree's root system is most important to the tree's overall health? If that is true for a tree, what does that mean for your life?

Exploring (suggested time: 20-25 minutes)

Interestingly, one of the prophetic names of Jesus is "The Root of Jesse." (Read Isaiah 11:1-10) Jesse is the father of ancient King David. Jesus was a descendent of the house and line of David and was referred to in His day by believers as "Son of David." As David is of Jesse, so Jesus ultimately is of Jesse thus "the root of Jesse."

(Read Revelation 5:5) Jesus is referred to as the "Root of David."

(Read Revelation 22:16) Here, Jesus refers to Himself as the "Root and the descendant of David".

When we read Jesus as "the Root" we get a whole new sense of what it means to be "Rooted". In this sense, "rooted" means to be founded and focused on Jesus alone.

(Read I Corinthians 3:10-11)

- Why is Jesus the only foundation St. Paul will build on? Shouldn't he have been a little more "tolerant" of other belief systems? Will other foundations of belief systems hold up until the end of time? What does that mean for building on the foundation of Jesus?

- **What other foundations (not just religious things) are people building on?**
- **What tempts you most to build your life on? Is this healthy or not? Explain.**

(Read Hebrews 12:1-2)

- **What does it mean that Jesus is the author (founder) and finisher (perfecter) of our faith? How much of our attention should we give Him? What does this really mean in regards to our day-to-day lives?**
- **How can we “take custody” of our eyes and not allow them to be drawn to the glitz, glimmer and glamour of this world? When in need of forgiveness, what do our eyes long to see?**

Expressing *(suggested time: 10-15 minutes)*

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

(Read Romans 12:1-2)

Have everyone draw a vertical line down the center of their piece of paper, thus making two columns. In the left column, have them write down some of the things that are getting in their way of living a life in Jesus.

In the right column, have them write down names of a few people who seem to be very close to God, why they think they are and what they can do to be like them.

Discuss how this compares with what St. Paul is talking about regarding our being faithfully devoted to Jesus. **How can we stop conforming? What brings the transforming of our minds?** (Remind both students and adults that this is a life long process!)

Covenanting

To assure healthy relationships and a healthy community, it is important for all participants to pledge their desire and hope for a safe and fun weekend in a covenant with one another.

Ask the students what they believe is important for the group to commit to in order for the event to go well (i.e. be on time, attend all sessions, respect one another's property, no pranks, listen to one another, no gossiping, pray for one another and for the event, etc.) Write these items on a large sheet of paper. Tell students this covenant is binding and that anyone who feels he or she cannot uphold some part of this covenant should speak up now. Discuss what the students feel should be consequences if someone should break the covenant. Incorporate Youth Encounter's Mandatory Event Covenant found in the Leader's Guide. Other suggestions to include in the covenant can be found in the Leader's Guide, as well. At the end, have the students and adults each sign the covenant and commit this promise to the group. Save this paper and bring it with you to the event to be posted in a prominent place in one of the leaders' rooms.

Closing Time

Have everyone (students and adults) sit comfortably in as much of a circle as possible and either join hands, link arms, touch elbows, hold pinkies, etc. 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 the upcoming weekend. 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 below.

Opening of prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for giving us Your Word this evening, Your Word is truth. Thank You for the opportunity to plan for our upcoming weekend with Youth Encounter. May all our plans be guided by Your hand and go smoothly. Rooted in You, may we realize that we are never 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 enjoy a new day tomorrow. All this we pray in the name of Jesus.
AMEN**