

Middle School November 9 & 10



When we seek the Kingdom, we start to see the world through God's eyes.

Small Group

1. **Discussion.** This is time to process what the Kingdom of God looks like and how we can seek it.
2. **Activity.** This is designed to help the kids brainstorm ways that they see the Kingdom of God happening in their lives.
3. **Training.** Encourage the kids to seek the Kingdom in their heart and their spheres of influence. The SEEK cards will help with this!

1. Discussion

1. For those of you who were here last week and did the FIGHT experiment, how did it go?
 1. *Last week we talked about how we can be spiritual fighters by turning away from the kingdom of this world and turning towards God and his kingdom.*
2. Does anyone remember what the Baader Meinhof phenomenon is?
 1. *When one happens upon some obscure piece of information – often an unfamiliar word or name – and soon afterwards encounters the same subject again, often repeatedly*
 2. Has anyone experienced that recently? Tell us about it!
3. If you were looking through a kingdom lens, and that's your focus, what might shift in your daily life? What would you be looking for?
4. How would looking through a Kingdom lens influence this small group right now? What would you do, or do differently?
5. What are some of your spheres of influence? (Most simply, these are the places you spend the majority of your time. Home, school, dance studio, etc.)
6. Someone read John 5:17.
 1. According to Jesus, when is the Kingdom of God happening?
7. What might the Kingdom of God look like in those spheres of influence?

2. Activity

Everyone gets three plastic bags. Label one of them with your own name and the other two with the names of two of your spheres of influence. First, we're going to spend some time thinking about ways that we already see the Kingdom moving in each sphere of influence? When you think of something, rip a piece of

construction paper off and write it on there. Put it in the appropriate bag. Each week this morning, it would be awesome if you could pick out one of the pieces of paper and put it in your pocket or tape it somewhere you'll be able to see it throughout the day. That day, focus on seeking the Kingdom according to what you wrote down on your paper. You might be amazed at what God does!

3. Training

This week, let's focus on looking for the places that God is already moving and joining him there. Use what you wrote down and put into the bags as a tool for that, as well as the SEEK cards. Each SEEK card has a specific way for you to put on Kingdom goggles and seek the kingdom. I'm excited to hear about where you found the Kingdom next week when we meet again.

Large Group

Welcome & Activity

Welcome to middle school, everyone! We're really glad you're here! Before we get too far into our topic today, let's do a little activity together. Everyone has 3D glasses under their chairs. Put them on! We're going to put a secret message up on the screen that you'll be able to read with your glasses on. After you've read the message, do exactly what it tells you to do.

The messages will all tell the kids to complete some sort of obstacle. Name the first kid to complete the obstacle the "winner" of each round.

Great job, everyone!

Journey Recap

For the past four weeks, we've been on a church-wide journey of discovering what the Kingdom of God is and how we can be a part of it. We began by recognizing that there are two kingdoms: the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. The Kingdom of God is ruled by a loving, gracious king who wants us to receive his love to the point that it changes our hearts and actions. When we choose to receive this good King's love, we come under his authority. That's great news for us! He has better plans for us than we could even imagine. And we get to see those plans when we obey him.

On the other hand, there's the other kingdom: the kingdom of this world. The king of that kingdom wants to steal and destroy all the good things that God has for us. These two kingdoms are at war with each other. Last week, we talked about how we can be spiritual fighters for God's Kingdom by choosing to agree with him and follow him instead of agreeing with the kingdom of this world. We did a cool experiment called repentance last week. Simply put, it was a way to turn away from the kingdom of this world and turn towards God and ask for more of his kingdom.

This week, we're going to talk about what it's like to be looking out for the Kingdom of God.

Personal Story

Tell a story about a time when you experienced the Baader Meinhof phenomenon (when one happens upon some obscure piece of information –

often an unfamiliar word or name – and soon afterwards encounters the same subject again, often repeatedly).

Baader Meinhof

How many of you have ever experience something like that? Maybe someone you know bought a new car and then after that you saw that car everywhere. This happens to me all the time. This occurrence has a name... it's called the Baader Meinhof phenomenon. Lots of people experience this phenomenon!

Recognizing the Kingdom

That's kind of how recognizing the Kingdom of God works. At first, it might seem a little mysterious and hard to find, but once your eyes are adjusted and you know what it looks like, you start to realize that it's happening everywhere! Here's a great example of what recognizing the Kingdom of God feels like...

VIDEO: Clip from National Treasure. Ben uses glasses to see the invisible map on the back of the Declaration of Independence. (1:16:52-1:18:26 on DVD)

Kingdom Glasses

As followers of Jesus, we experience the same thing that Ben experienced in that clip. He wasn't able to see anything on the map, but after he used the special, glasses, he was able to read the map and everything started to make sense. That's a lot like what happens when we start to recognize what the Kingdom of God looks like.

Jesus' Insight

It seems that Jesus had some pretty good insight about this. Go figure. First, let's look at part Jesus' example of how he prays.

SLIDE: Matthew 6:9-10

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

Let's talk about what Jesus says about the Kingdom of God here. Just looking at his prayer tells us something about the Kingdom of God. Jesus tells is right in the first sentence what the Kingdom of God looks like. It looks like God's will being done. Simple enough, right? That's not mysterious or hard to define. We can read the Bible and talk to God through prayer to know what his will is. Right after he says that, Jesus says this to his disciples:

SLIDE: Matthew 6:25, 33

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Seek the Kingdom

How does Jesus tell us to interact with the Kingdom of God? It's in that last sentence. That's right! He says to SEEK the Kingdom! What do you think that really means? How do we seek the Kingdom of God?

Watch and Join

Even though the word seek isn't a word we use on a regular basis, it's actually pretty simple. If I want to seek the Kingdom of God, I need to watch to see where God is working and then join him. That means if I see that my little sister is starting to ask questions about God, I can seek the Kingdom by simply giving time to talk to her about it. The fact that God is already working takes all of the pressure off of us!

God Doesn't Need Us

I'm going to let you in a little secret... God actually doesn't need us to make the Kingdom happen. He can do it on his own because he's God! The key is, he loves us and wants us to experience his Kingdom, so he allows us to be a part of it. It's like he gives us special eyes to see what he's doing and then invites us to be partners with him. How awesome is that?

Where Is the Kingdom?

So where do we even look for the kingdom? The truth is, it's happening everywhere. I don't know about you, but that can feel a little bit overwhelming. So let's narrow that down and help give some ideas of where you can start looking. Here are two places that we can be looking for the Kingdom of God...

Yourself

First, start looking at yourself! Are there things that God is saying to you? If he's trying to say things to you and mold your heart to look more like Jesus, the best way to join him in that is to listen to him and obey. Maybe He's trying to remind you that you're his son or daughter. If you've felt a nudge about that, the best

way to seek the Kingdom is to lean into him and spend some time letting him talk to you about that or begin choosing to act like a son or daughter. He began that work in your heart, but you can definitely do something to partner with him! The Kingdom of God isn't confined to only happening outside of us. It can erupt in our hearts! In fact, that's usually where it begins.

Spheres of Influence

Second, we can look for the Kingdom of God in our spheres of influence. That's just a fancy way of saying the places that we go and the people we see in our normal routine. Is God's will being done in your school or home? Is there a group at your school that's interested in justice for people who are oppressed? Even if they don't talk about God, there's a good chance his will is still being done through them. We can recognize that as the Kingdom because we know it's God's will to free people from oppression! Or maybe the Kingdom is erupting in your neighborhood.

Jesus Had Kingdom Goggles

Jesus was always looking for the Kingdom of God. And he saw it in places that no one expected! One time, when Jesus was traveling, he looked up into a tree and saw the Kingdom erupting in the heart of a despised tax collector named Zacchaeus.

SLIDE: picture of Zacchaeus

This man had taken advantage of a lot of people by stealing their money, so he was probably the last place people would have expected to see the Kingdom of God. But Jesus was the King of wearing Kingdom goggles. He could see the Kingdom of God from a mile away and then acted on it by seeking the man out and talking to him. Guess what happened after Jesus talked to Zacchaeus? Zach's life changed! He started following Jesus wholeheartedly, which changed the way he treated the people around him. I want to be able to see the Kingdom from that far away.

Right In Front of Us

Most times, God doesn't need us to go way out of our way to see him move. He's already moving in the places where we are on a day-to-day basis. It just takes us making the effort to put on Kingdom goggles and always being on the lookout for God's will being done. Sometimes that is pretty hard! Here's a way that I've experienced that recently...

Personal Example

Give a personal example of when you've seen God working somewhere and joined him. This could be seeing God working in Middle School and choosing to volunteer or simply seeing God work in your family and choosing to engage with them. The possibilities are endless!

This week we're going to put on our kingdom goggles together and look for the work God is doing in our own hearts and our spheres of influence. I'm excited to hear about all the ways that you found God working and joined him!

Pray.

Dismiss to small groups.

Prep and AV Needs

Small Group:

- Three plastic snack bags per student
- Colored construction paper
- Permanent markers
- Pens
- SEEK cards

Large Group:

- LIVE Bible
- 3D Decoder glasses under each chair in large group ("Kingdom Goggles"
Printed on the sides of the glasses)
<http://www.rainbowsymphonystore.com/decoderglasses.html>

AV Needs:

1. Slide: Middle School Graphic
2. Slide: 3D obstacle #1 (on public drive)
3. Slide: 3D obstacle #2 (on public drive)
4. Slide: 3D obstacle #3 (on public drive)
5. Slide: 3D obstacle #4 (on public drive)
6. Slide: Middle school graphic
7. Video: Clip from National Treasure. Ben uses glasses to see the invisible map on the back of the Declaration of Independence. (1:16:52-1:18:26 on DVD)
8. Slide: Middle School Graphic
9. Verse: *'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'* Matthew 6:9-10
10. Verse: *"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."* Matthew 6:25. 33
11. Slide: Picture of Zacchaeus (on public drive)
12. Slide: Middle School Graphic