

Cross My Heart

receiving and sharing the heart of Jesus...



GenMin camps
2007 teaching curriculum

Teachers Guidebook

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Introduction

This *Teachers Guidebook* presents the standard Generations Ministries (GenMin) camp teaching curriculum for 2007. This Guidebook is used by camp directors, chapel message presenters, chapel worship leaders, camp counselors (who lead debriefs), and Christian living class instructors. Directors should distribute copies to these individuals well before camp begins. A *Campers Handbook* accompanies this guidebook; copies should be given to all campers and staffers for their use during camp and reference back home.

Theme

The 2007 camp curriculum theme is expressed in the curriculum title:

Cross My Heart, receiving and sharing the heart of Jesus.

This theme is a powerful metaphor, expressed visually in the GenMin logo:



The message contained in the theme is that in union with Christ we share in his sacrificial death (cross) and in his eternal life (heart). This is the message of salvation by grace alone through faith in Christ alone. Jesus' cross; Jesus' heart – *cross my heart*.

Use of this curriculum

This teaching curriculum includes outlines/manuscripts for chapel messages and Christian living classes. The chapel messages in particular are tied directly to the 'Cross My Heart' theme. It's important to maintain the continuity of the theme so that the five messages are not five separate messages but five parts to one message. In that way the impact of the messages is enhanced. You can add to the impact of the Cross My Heart theme and message by repeating it in multiple ways throughout camp: in posters, on T-shirts, in casual comments from counselors and activity directors. Let's do everything we can to lift up Jesus cross and his heart and our calling to share in that through faith in him.

One other tip on using the curriculum: Each camper and staffer will have a *Campers Handbook* that includes outlines of the chapel messages and Christian Living classes. Be sure your presentations follow that outline so they don't get lost during your presentation. If you are going to alter the outline of the standard message, be sure that the *Campers Handbook* is altered accordingly. Any significant alterations should be reviewed in advance with curriculum editor Ted Johnston.

Chapel Messages

This curriculum provides manuscripts for five chapel messages. The messages immerse campers and staffers in Jesus' love and life – the message of the gospel. The messages invite listeners on a journey straight to the heart of Christ. That journey begins where we all begin – living with a heart separated from God. But then, by God's grace, we put our trust in Jesus and receive a spiritual 'heart transplant' – by grace we are given to share in Jesus' heart of love, joy and service. It's the heart of a champion – the heart of the one who loves us, who died on the cross to save us, and who now lives and loves for us and in us. These messages are about Jesus; his cross and his heart. And it invites an important response: *Lord, Cross My Heart.*

Each chapel message manuscript includes suggested illustrations and/or dramas. Feel free to add your own instead – personalize it so it flows out of your own experience and encounter with God. But be careful to stick to the main message of that particular chapel lesson and to the overall theme of the curriculum.

Following each chapel message is a list of suggested 'debrief' questions to be used by counselors, dorm parents and others as they lead campers in short discussions to 'unpack' and apply the message they heard in chapel that day. We want to underscore the importance of these debriefs – this is where much of the transformation that flows from the chapel messages will be realized. Please prepare prayerfully for these debriefs.

Christian Living Classes

The camp curriculum also includes two sets of Christian living classes (two lessons per set); one set for a male audience and another for a female audience. The purpose of these classes is to 'get real' concerning living the messages of the chapels. What does it 'look like' in the life of a teenage girl to share in Jesus' heart of love, service and joy? What challenges are faced – what sorrows, triumphs, frustrations and fears? In these interactive classes, caring teachers will help participants think deeply and pray specifically about these real issues.

Lord, we pray that you will guide and richly bless the efforts of each camp as we endeavor to win young people to Christ, to build them up in Christ, and to equip them to be disciplemaking followers of Christ!

Heart Failure

Background: Though the image of God is found in every person, the overall state of the human heart in this fallen world is desperate – it’s in spiritual *cardiac arrest* – and in need of a heart transplant. And that is precisely what God provides. By trusting Jesus we are united to him; given his heart; his love; his life. That is the miraculous good news of the gospel. But in this message we begin with the bad news of the condition of the human heart apart from Christ.

Introduction

The imagery of the heart is everywhere in our culture: music, literature, movies, television, advertising [illustrate with pictures].

Game: *Fill-in-the-blank*

Bring up two campers for a friendly competition of “Fill-in-the-Blank.”

1. When the supply of blood and oxygen gets cut off from this vital organ a person is experiencing - A Heart Attack
2. When a young man and young woman in love go through a break up, they have one of these - A Broken Heart
3. The #1 killer of women in the United States - Heart Disease
4. If there is a person of the opposite sex that you are attracted to you call them a Heart Throb.
5. Nelly’s anthem used by the NBA is called - Heart of a Champion
6. A popular cut of diamonds advertised on the radio is called - Hearts on Fire
7. We sing about being deep in the heart of this U.S. state - Texas
8. When you want to prove to someone that you are telling the truth you do this - Cross Your Heart

Tiebreaker: The eighth album recorded by the Beatles was called Sergeant Pepper’s – what? Lonely Hearts Club Band

Explanation of game

We just heard that crossing one's heart indicates that a person is telling the truth. This week we're all about truth: truth in the messages; truth in the way we interact; and truth in the way we look at ourselves and at God.

Our theme is 'Cross My Heart' and it's all about Jesus: his cross; his heart and what those mean for us. It's about a journey of discovery. Let's get going.

Diagnosing the human heart

To the ancients the 'heart' was a symbol of our inner being – character, personality, will, and mind. It's pretty much the same today. Jeremiah, one of the ancient prophets of the Bible, gave God's diagnosis of the condition of the human heart:

*The human heart is **most deceitful and desperately wicked**. Who really knows how bad it is? (Jeremiah 17:9, NLT)*

Background: Jeremiah lived in an important transitional period in Near Eastern history with the fall of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He saw his own country lose its political independence and become a Babylonian province. Jeremiah is famous as the 'broken-hearted prophet' whose heart-rending life and true prophecies of dire warning went largely-unheeded by the people of Judah. God told Jeremiah, "You will go to them; but for their part, they will not listen to you". He prophesied for 40 years.

Jeremiah's diagnosis of the human heart is confirmed elsewhere in the Bible:

- Genesis 8:21 *The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though **every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood**.*
- Mark 7:21-23 *For from within, **out of men's hearts, come** evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. **All these evils come from inside**...*

Though our culture tends to exalt the 'goodness' of the human heart, Scripture tells us that the human heart tends not toward good but toward evil. That doesn't mean that people don't do good things – indeed they often do. But deep down inside, the overall picture, the overall motivation reflects more about evil than about good. And that evil erupts all over the place – we see that by studying human history and in looking at our world today.

Jeremiah with God's help saw deep into the human heart separated from God. And God's no-holds-barred diagnosis is this: The human heart is *deceitful and wicked*.

1. The heart is *deceitful*

Of course, we all tend to think of ourselves as exceptions to this diagnosis [examples based on breaking of camp rules]:

- Everybody else needs to wear their camp shirt, but I want to style in my own clothes.
- It is okay for me to defy my counselor because I know better than her anyway.
- I think it is great to try new things, but there is no way I am getting in the water.
- Some of the cafeteria food is okay (chocolate chip cookies and such), but since mom is not here I'll skip out on the vegetables.
- That solo time thing is good for the "spiritual" kids, but I'll just catch some extra Z's.
- Lights are out at 11:00, but that is such a cool time to whip out my flashlight and entertain the dorm with a light show.

Who has a heart that leads down these paths? ALL of us if we are honest.

2. The heart is *wicked*

This goes beyond breaking rules and gets down to motivation and attitude. The Bible lists what is called "the works of the flesh" – it's a list of the wickedness in our hearts that begins to be expressed at a very young age.

Galatians 5:19-21 It is obvious what kind of life develops out of trying to get your own way all the time: repetitive, loveless, cheap sex; a stinking accumulation of mental and emotional garbage; frenzied and joyless grabs for happiness; trinket gods; magic-show religion; paranoid loneliness; cutthroat competition; all-consuming-yet-never-satisfied wants; a brutal temper; an impotence to love or be loved; divided homes and divided lives; small-minded and lopsided pursuits; the vicious habit of depersonalizing everyone into a rival; uncontrolled and uncontrollable addictions; ugly parodies of community. I could go on. (The Message Bible)

Conclusion

Do we hear these words and think, "That's not me!"? Be careful – remember the deceptive nature of your heart. Every one of us wrestles with this bloodline of sin every day. Indeed, apart from God, we're all in a spiritual state of 'cardiac arrest'. Our human heart is failing – it's infected with deceit and wicked intent. As a result, we have all strayed from God. That's the truth and its bad news that is very real.

But what we want you to know here at camp is that God, who knows your heart – who knows your great need – has an answer to the condition of your failed heart. And he is anxious to share that answer with you. It's all about a spiritual 'heart transplant.' Here at camp we're going on a journey of exploration to find that answer. We call that journey, "Cross My Heart." It is a serious journey, but also exciting and joy-filled; in fact it is the most important journey you could ever choose to take.

I'll tell you up front that it is a journey that leads to the cross and heart of Jesus. Would you like to travel there with me?

Straight to the Heart

Background: In this message we pick up on the theme of the desperate condition of the human heart apart from Christ and point the audience toward the good news; the hope of the solution that God offers in Christ.

Introductory skit: *Peter and the Drowned Man*

Setting: Two characters on stage; St. Peter appearing angelic with a roll book in his hands.

Man: [stumbling on stage] Saint Peter?

Peter: Yes, yes I am. And welcome to heaven.

Man: I wasn't expecting to get here so soon.

Peter: Oh really, tell me what happened

Man: I was sitting at home on my day off when the sky turned dark and the rain pounded down. It rained for several hours and then I heard sirens going off. I looked out my window to see the river coming out of the banks and the water very rapidly creeping over my porch.

Peter: I'm guessing you were terrified - I've got a little experience with storms myself.

Man: Actually I was quite calm. I'm a faithful Christian, so I proceeded to go to the second story balcony well above the flood waters and spent some quality time in prayer asking the Lord to save me.

Peter: Yep, I've been there too. What happened next?

Man: You remember the sirens - well they were coming from a fire truck that drove right up to my house. The firemen called up to me and asked me if I wanted to be rescued. And I told them I would be okay I was praying for God to save me.

Peter: Okay - what next?

Man: The flood waters climbed higher and higher. In fact it was beginning to slosh over onto the balcony floor. And then I heard the sputter of my neighbor's boat. He was motoring around in the flood waters and he invited me to climb in with him. Again I declined because I was praying to God to save me and the noise of the boat motor was interrupting my prayers.

Peter: Yeah I get distracted when I pray too – sometimes I even fall asleep.

Man: Well now it was really getting interesting because the water was rising over the balcony. I was praying extremely hard at this point. All of a sudden there was a roar above me and there were waves in the water. Turns out there were these crazy guys in a helicopter directly above me throwing down a rope. I don't know why they thought that I would want to dangle in the air beneath their helicopter – you know how dangerous that is?

Peter: And I bet it interrupted your prayers again?

Man: You got that right. Well this is where it all gets fuzzy for me.

Peter: What do you mean?

Man: Well there I am praying my heart out and the next thing I know is that I take in a lung full of water and then “peace out” I'm here. I thought for sure that God was going to save me.

[Peter receives a note from off stage]

Peter: Just a moment [as he reads]. This is a note from God. He says that he was listening to your prayers and answered by sending you a fire truck, a boat, and helicopter, but you turned away the help he sent. Oh, and he also says welcome-He's glad you're here.

[End of skit.]

God to your rescue

How often do we ignore the help God sends us? Yesterday we saw that the human heart is in cardiac arrest. But God sends help. That help comes in his invitation to receive a new heart by trusting his Son Jesus Christ.

Do we listen? Do we respond? Or do we look for other sources of help to solve the problem of a diseased heart?

God is not sitting back doing nothing; watching his creation destroy itself. He is reaching out to you – in love. He's saying to all humanity, 'Why will you perish? I want to help; I want to have a personal relationship with you – a relationship where you'll experience a new heart that will replace your heart of deceit and wickedness.'

Israel's experience

Let's rejoin the Prophet Jeremiah that we met yesterday. God called and sent him as his spokesperson to the defiant ancient nation of Israel. His responsibility was to point out their sins and plead with them to turn to God for help.

But why didn't the Israelites listen to Jeremiah?

- They were *distracted* (by other cultures and thinking there were other paths to God)
- They were *self-sufficient* (a "I know what is best for me" attitude)
- They were *rebellious* (their sins separated them from God)

But their chief problem was ***spiritual unfaithfulness***. You see, Israel was a "Covenant People." They were bound to God by a covenant – a legal agreement far more binding than a contract. It was like Israel was married to God. But Israel was unfaithful in that marriage. This hurt them – it brought them suffering and heartache. But it also hurt God.

In "Searching for God Knows What", Donald Miller tells of a betrayed husband:

"A man overheard his wife on the phone with another man. She didn't realize he was in the house, and he was near enough to hear her confess her love and enjoyment of the other man's touch. The betrayed husband drove around the city in a daze; he sat in a coffee shop with his head in his hands. He went to the bus station and purchased a ticket to leave town. He missed his bus, sick from smoking a pack of cigarettes. He spent an hour in the bathroom vomiting into a filthy toilet."

This sense of betrayal and hurt is how our unfaithfulness affects God. God looks at us with pity and longing more than anger or a desire for revenge. God loves us – yes he deeply loves the very ones who have been unfaithful to him.

You see, God is relational. For all eternity he has been Father, Son and Holy Spirit – the Trinity – a community of love. And he wants to share that with you. Forever.

Conclusion

Today I am asking you to turn down the noise, put the distractions aside and hear the simple and profound truth that the God who created this universe wants to be in relationship with you. God is speaking now straight to your heart – sending you fire trucks, life boats, and rescue helicopters. Will you take his help, or will you turn away looking for something else? Someone else?

God not only wants your attention, he wants your heart – your trust, your love, and your devotion. God is calling you to be one of his "Covenant People"; people who live in faithful union with him. This is where we will pick up the journey tomorrow.

Chapel 2 debrief questions

1. How do you see the people of the United States being similar to the ancient nation of Israel? What do distractions, self-sufficient attitudes, and sin issues look like in America?
2. What distractions or sin issues keep you from being close to God?
3. Have you ever considered the possibility of being in a covenant relationship with the great Creator God?
4. What would a trusting relationship with God look like?

A New Heart

Background: In this message we recap the desperate condition of the human heart and then speak clearly about God's invitation to receive a new heart by turning from our own efforts to save ourselves (repentance) and placing our trust in Jesus to save us (faith). The message ends appropriately with an invitation to campers and staffers to give their lives to Christ.

Introduction (based on a story by Scott Rathburn)

The human heart is a fist-sized mass of muscle connected to the rest of the body by a network of blood vessels more than 60,000 miles long. Running non-stop from birth until death, it will beat on average some 2.5 billion times and pump more than 1 million barrels of blood. Unless it stops.

Heart disease claims nearly one million lives per year in the U.S. Since the 1950s, researchers have worked tirelessly to develop artificial hearts for those who are not candidates for heart transplants.

Dr. Robert Jarvik is credited with inventing the artificial heart. He first successfully implanted one in 1982 in Seattle dentist Barney Clark. Clark lived for 112 days with his 'Jarvik 7' artificial heart. Since that time great progress has been made in the design of artificial hearts. But they are still far from the real thing.

God offers us a new heart

As we learned yesterday, our spiritual hearts are terribly diseased. As Jeremiah said, they are 'deceitful and wicked.' But God has the solution – not a medicine to make our diseased hearts a little stronger – but an entirely new heart. A *perfect* heart that is not subject to human frailty; never grows weak; never succumbs to evil.

What kind of heart is that? The kind King David prayed for after committing a series of terrible sins: *Create in me a pure heart, O God...* (Psa. 51:10). The Hebrew word for "create" here is *bara*; the same word used in Genesis for God's creation of the universe. It takes the awesome, intentional power of God to recreate the human heart. And that is what he has done.

Jeremiah looked into the future and predicted the time when it would happen:

*"This is the **covenant** I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and **write it on their hearts**. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33).*

What we learn later in the Bible, is that Jeremiah's prediction of a new heart through a new covenant came through God's gift to humankind of Jesus:

- Jesus is the only one whose heart is perfect. He is perfectly obedient to God. In his heart is no deceit; no wickedness. He is pure and holy.
- Through the new covenant we are brought into a relationship with God where through the Holy Spirit we share Jesus' perfect heart. When we give our lives to God, he places Jesus' heart within us. A miraculous *re-creation* happens:

*2 Cor 5:17-21 If anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ...not counting men's sins against them...God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in him** we might become the righteousness of God.*

- This new heart does not come because of my effort to think better thoughts, or to try harder to stop sinning. It's a miracle – a gift – a re-creation. It's about Jesus now living in and through me. It's about me being reconciled – brought back – to God through Jesus. A new relationship. A new heart: Cross my Heart!

Skit: *Playing with Dad*

[Setting: adult male and two campers / living room setting on stage.]

[Opening: Dad sitting on the couch reading paper / knock at the door.]

Dad: Come in, it's open.

Friend: (Shy kid) Hi Mr. Krump. Is Tommy here?

Dad: Yeah. Let me call him down. Hey Tommy your buddy is here.

Tommy: Give me a minute, I'm getting dressed.

Dad: So, what's your name?

Friend: Josh

Dad: Josh, that's a good name. So what you guys gonna do?

Friend: I don't know [looking down].

Dad: Okay. What do you like to do?

Friend: Just stuff [still looking down].

Dad: You certainly are a man of few words.

[Tommy comes running in.]

Tommy: Hi Josh. I see you met my dad.

Friend: Yeah.

Tommy: Dad, Josh and I are going to go downstairs and watch some UFC, but can you show him how you and I work on our moves?

Dad: Okay - Here's how I take Tommy down and grapple for position [down on the stage and wrestling].

Tommy: And here's how I reverse dad and get the "rear naked choke."

Dad: Here's how I throw some sharp elbows and break the choke hold.

[Josh comes alive and jumps in]

Dad: Oh, now you want some.

Friend: Yeah, here's how I tap you out with my patented arm bar.

[the tree continue to wrestle]

Tommy: Hey dad, come on downstairs with me and Josh - the fights are about to start.
[Exit stage with both boys holding dads arms]

[End of skit.]

Observations and invitation

What was Josh's relationship to the Dad before Tommy showed up? What caused Josh to become comfortable and join in?

Jesus is our Tommy. We come to the Father – not on our own – but with Jesus – through his relationship with the Father. And here's the good news: that relationship can be yours. And with it comes a new covenant – a new relationship for you with God. And with that relationship comes the gift of a new heart – Jesus' heart which we share now and for eternity.

Where do you stand with God now? Do you have that relationship with him through Jesus? If not, do you want one?

If so, all you need to do is to admit your need – admit that your heart is full of deceit and wickedness – believe God and receive his answer – the free gift of Jesus.

If you'd like to ask for and receive that gift now, why don't you pray along with me?

[Lead in prayer, touching on the following issues:

- a. admission of sinfulness (a 'broken heart')
- b. desire to change (get a new heart – the heart of Jesus)
- c. trust in Jesus to deliver (save)
- d. request for that deliverance
- e. acceptance of it as a free gift from God by grace through faith (trust in Jesus)
- f. acknowledging the gift of a new heart through the Spirit
- g. desire to share Jesus' heart – his love and his life from this point forward]

[Celebrate the new believers]

Chapel 3 debrief questions

1. What happened with and to the people who prayed at the conclusion of chapel?
2. What does it mean to be a new creation in Christ and to have a new heart?
3. How are these new believers joined with others who have gone before?

Perhaps review the Pentecost Story – Acts 2:37-38:

*When the people heard this, they were **cut to the heart** and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

The Heart of a Champion

Background: This message explores the heart of Jesus – the heart believers share by grace through faith in Jesus. And so the emphasis is on Jesus, but also on what we experience as we share Jesus’ love and life. The message is a bit longer than the others. You’ll probably want to give the presenter some extra time.

Introduction

[As you begin play the chorus of Nelly’s rap song “Heart of a Champion”]

As we saw last time, through the miracle of *re-creation*, when we trust Jesus to be our Savior, God, through the Holy Spirit gives us a new heart – Jesus’ heart. This is the heart that now beats within. Through this heart we share God’s love and life.

But what is that heart of Jesus like? That’s what we want to discuss today.

The night before Jesus died on the cross, he prepared his disciples for his departure. The Apostle John records a lot of what Jesus said that night, including some of his prayers. In those words we learn a lot about Jesus’ heart – a heart of love for you and me and the whole world. Let’s go to John 17 and learn about the heart of Jesus.

1. Jesus’ heart is to die for us.

John 17:1-5 (1) *These things Jesus spoke; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your son, that the Son may glorify you, (2) even as you gave him authority over all mankind, that to all whom you have given him, he may give eternal life. (3) And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. (4) I glorified you on the earth, having accomplished the work that you have given me to do. (5) And now, glorify me together with yourself, Father, with the glory that I had with you before the world was."*

Here on the last evening of Jesus' life he knew that the end was near – the time for him to return to the Father. And the journey of his return would lead him first to the cross and an excruciatingly painful death.

The supreme love of God is clearly demonstrated in the willingness of Jesus to be sacrificed on the cross. The great Creator set aside his glory and became part of the created order with the purpose of paying for our sins. It is Jesus' heart to die for us. *Cross My Heart.*

2. Jesus' heart is to share truth with us

John 17:6-8 (6) *"I manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. (7) Now they have come to know that everything you have given me is from you; (8) for the words that you gave me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from you, and they believed that you sent me."*

The disciples "kept" God's word by receiving Jesus' teaching and believing what he said to be true – including his claim of being God in the flesh. What Scripture tells us about Jesus is true – it is the gospel – the good news about what God has done for us in Jesus. And that is truth. *Cross my heart!*

In these three verses, we see Jesus' heart to share the truth of the gospel with us. He "manifested" the name of God to his disciples and now to us (verse 6) and he gave the words of God to us (verse 7) so that we might believe the gospel and know God.

Earlier, Jesus told his disciples that "I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). Because Jesus considers us his friends, it is his heart to share with us the truth of the gospel. *Cross My Heart.*

3. Jesus' heart is to pray for us

John 17:9-11a (9) *"I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom you have given me; for they are yours. (10) And all things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. (11a) And I am no more in the world, and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to you."*

Jesus prays for the disciples, but not for the world, because he's sending the disciples into the world to reach it (17:20). Just as God chose Israel to be a kingdom of priests to mediate between God and the world (Exodus 19:6), Jesus chooses the disciples - and us - to do the same. God's choice is exclusive only for the sake of being inclusive. Jesus' heart is a heart of love for all people everywhere. *Cross My Heart.*

4. Jesus' heart is to protect us

John 17:11b-16 (11b) *Holy Father, keep them in your name, the name that you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are. (12) While I was with them, I was keeping them in your name, which you have given me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled. (13) But now I come to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. (14) I have given them your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (15) I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. (16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."*

A key word in these verses is *keep* or *guard*. Jesus wants the Father to protect the disciples' relationship with God. The goal of this protection is that the disciples *may be one, even as we are one*.

God never intended for our relationship with him to exist in isolation. We share Jesus' heart in community – a family of believers who nurture one another in relationship with God. We experience such a community here at camp; but it's vital that we do so back home too.

Jesus wants us to experience his joy and so he prayed, *that they may have my joy made full in themselves*. This is relational joy – the joy of knowing God together (15:11, 16:24). This joy has a protective influence. If we find true joy in knowing God, we're less likely to look elsewhere for false joy.

It is Jesus' heart to protect us in community. *Cross My Heart*.

5. Jesus' heart is to set us apart

John 17:17-19 (17) *"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. (18) As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. (19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."*

"Sanctify" means "set apart for a special purpose." Instruments involved in the service of the temple were "sanctified." And Jesus prays that his disciples be sanctified. The special purpose we are set apart for is to know God, for we belong to him (17:6, 9).

We are sanctified by *the truth* (in John's gospel this truth is a person – Jesus). John goes on to say that the Holy Spirit leads the disciples into this truth about Jesus (John 16:13-15). In John's mind, the entire word of God concerns Jesus (John 5:39).

So when Jesus is asking the Father to set apart the disciples in the truth he's asking that they be set apart in himself.

We are set apart in Jesus to know God so that Jesus might send us into the world, just as the Father sent him into the world. Jesus carried his relationship with the Father into the world, which he loved. Likewise, we carry our relationship with the Father into the world, which we love. We are set apart first of all to know God and second of all to be sent into the world. Jesus heart is to set us apart. *Cross My Heart.*

Conclusion: the answer is 'yes'

We don't have to do much guessing to know how the Father has and will answer the heart felt prayer of his beloved Son Jesus. The answer in each case is 'yes'. All the things Jesus asked for have come to pass and will continue to in your life and mine.

As we listen to Jesus' prayer, we 'hear' his heart beating. It's his heart for us - his heart that we know God deeply and fully. His heart to die for us, to share truth with us, to pray for us, to protect us, and to set us apart to serve the world.

Jesus heart is the heart of a champion: our champion! *Cross My Heart.*

[**Suggestion:** End with communion].

Chapel 4 debrief questions

1. Discussion around the heart of Jesus and a general list of the things God loves: cheerful giver, expressions of faith, people who demonstrate love to their neighbor...
2. How are these things accomplished and lived out? Read Romans 7-8
3. II Corinthians 5:14 tells us that the love of Christ compels us, drives us to share the good news with others. How does this make you feel?

Heart to Heart

Background: In this message an appeal is made to the campers and staffers to actively share in Jesus' heart (his love and life) – turning away from those things that are contrary to that heart and toward those things that are consistent with it. This message is not about 'self-improvement' or some strategy for behavior modification in the flesh. It's about embracing and expressing the love and life of Jesus. It's about believers participating in Jesus' resurrection life. *Cross My Heart*. This message also bears the background for the Christian Living classes that take a similar approach to sanctification by grace (rather than by human effort).

Introduction

Our hearts are the seat of our lives – and so that's where we find our struggles. And it's in our sharing of Jesus' heart that we find the solution to these struggles.

Note: the following introduction utilizes the last scene from the movie *The Sure Thing* a movie directed by Rob Reiner contrasting the 'sure thing' of casual sex with the 'real thing' of committed love. The following discussion would follow showing a video of the last scene of that movie.

In *The Sure Thing* college freshman John Gibson (Gib – played by John Cusack) decided to take a cross country trip to visit a friend in California during winter break. Awaiting there is a bikini-clad babe whom his friend assures him is a "sure thing". Meanwhile, Allison (played by Daphne Zuniga), a cute (but somewhat uptight) girl at Gib's college decides to head out with Gib to California to see her boyfriend Jason.

Gib and Allison's trip turns out to be the road trip from hell, but they do learn some important lessons about life and love. Gib learns that hooking up with the 'sure thing' is empty and pointless because he is not in love with her. Alison learns that Jason is not her type and she doesn't truly love him. They both learn the value of 'real thing' – true love in a committed relationship. For Christ followers that committed relationship is marriage where two human hearts are knit together with the heart of God.

Guard your heart

Proverbs 4:23 tells us, *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*

There are many ways of guarding things – by care, by strength, by calling in the help of others, or by entrusting your valuable possession to a capable party.

God says guard your heart. He gives us that warning for a number of reasons – he wants to protect us from doing harm to others and getting hurt ourselves; from being defiled by sin and disturbed by trouble; keeping out bad thoughts; keeping up good thoughts; keeping our affections upon right objects and within safe bounds.

What we’ve been learning this week is that we guard our heart by giving our diseased heart to Jesus and embracing his pure heart. It’s like a heart transplant.

So allow me once again to recommend that you embrace and share the heart of Jesus. Sharing the heart of Jesus is the safest place there is in all the universe. Scripture tells us that Jesus is the ‘lover of our souls’ – the one who always has your best interests in mind; the one who will never betray us.

And as we share his heart, we will follow where he leads: away from what destroys and toward what gives life – true life; true joy; true satisfaction. Forever.

Jesus made an observation about some religious people of his day and he issued to them a warning that is relevant in our day:

Mark 7:1-8 *1The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and 2 saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" 6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: **'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.** 7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' 8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."*

Jesus says he wants more than people who go to church or Christian camps; he wants more than “good” people who keep a set of rules. What he wants are authentic people who share his heart. *Cross My Heart.*

Here's a huge key to remember the rest of your life: *When the heart of Jesus is pumping his life's blood through you, his way of living will flow out from you.*

What will that way of living look like? Something like this:

Counselors appear on stage wearing heart shaped signs on their chests and backs reading as follows:

- FRONT - A New Heart. BACK - no longer stony and resistant to God.
- FRONT - A True Heart. BACK - not deceived and living in the darkness of wickedness.
- FRONT - An Open Heart. BACK - one that is looking to God and expectant.
- FRONT - The Heart of Jesus. BACK - connected to the Father and reaching out in love to the unsaved world

Conclusion

[Following is a recommendation for concluding this message which concludes the whole camp:

Give each camper a cross necklace as a keepsake. Have each camper stand and hold onto the necklace until everybody has received theirs. Instruct all campers to put the chain around their neck.]

May this cross cover your heart symbolizing the fact that you have embraced the heart of Jesus, and as you leave here you are dedicated to expressing his heart to the world into which you are now returning.

May your lives express the purity of Jesus' heart, and may you experience more and more his eternal relationship of love and joy with the Father.

Go in his peace and under the care and power of the Holy Spirit.

Additional suggestions for chapels

Suggested songs (featuring the heart theme)

- Open the Eyes of My Heart
- The Heart of Worship
- Come Now is the Time to Worship
- I Want to be a Christian in My Heart
- Change My Heart O God
- Come Thou Fount
- Cry of My Heart
- God of Wonders
- Blessed Be Your Name
- Wholly Yours

Suggested additional class: *H“Art” Class*

(A creative class that unpacks the heart theme)

Give campers an option of writing a poem, sculpting a figure, or painting a picture that speaks to the condition of their heart, and a counter activity to describe their view of the heart of Jesus. Provide space for the counselors to observe each camper’s creation and to engage in dialogue.

Girl's Christian Living Class 1: Understanding My Heart

Background: This class for girls should be taught by a female counselor or other camp leader who is experienced in teaching and counseling teenage girls. The class notes provided here are not meant to be read verbatim – rather it is a guide that needs to be personalized and used in order to facilitate an *interactive* discussion. Please do not turn this into a lecture!

The basic goal of this discussion is to help teenage girls learn to live out of Christ's heart (his love and life) in their 'real world' context. What does that look like? What challenges do they face? How does Christ in and through them meet those challenges? What happens when they fail?

Theologically speaking this discussion is about sanctification by grace. Our participation in Jesus' life - not some self-help, behavioral modification approach which is nothing more than 'sanctified' legalism.

We are seeking to get kids (teen girls in this case) connected to and joyfully living out of Christ's abundant heart of love, purity, and grace.

This class has two parts: day 1 and day 2. The first day focuses on helping the girls focus solely on their deep need for God and on his abundant affirmation and love. On day two we'll get into a discussion of the delicate issue of sexual purity – but it will only be addressed in the context of God's love and grace and the powerful work of the Spirit in their lives.

Caution: Discussing such issues with teen (girls in particular) can lead to all sorts of unintended consequences and even crises that we are not equipped to deal with in the camp. So great discretion is in order.

Introduction: guard your heart

Proverbs 4:23 *Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.*

From a girls perspective...what does it mean to “give your heart” to something or someone or really “put your heart” into something?

- Do you do it often or give it to many things or just a few?
- How selective are you?
- Does it make you vulnerable?
- What if you want to take it back? Do you ever get it back completely?

What happens if your heart is broken?

- Describe a broken heart.
- How does it feel? What does the voice in your head tell you? Do these phrases sound familiar?
 - You’re a disappointment
 - There is something seriously wrong with you
 - You are worthless
 - No one wants to care about you or what you’ve been through
 - No one will ever want you or really love you
 - You are alone

What are the natural responses to a broken heart or rejection?

- Do you pull back? Become less willing to “put it out there” and risk your heart again?
- Do you want to hurt who or what hurt you? Reject who rejected you?
- Or do you do whatever it takes to feel like someone loves you...even if just for a few moments?
 - Society tells us to “trust your heart.” But the Bible says we should protect our hearts as the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jer. 17:9).

Who can we trust with our heart?

Facilitator: share here your testimony with a heartfelt invitation to the girls who haven't yet done so to turn to God to receive the heart of Jesus. Share a bit about who God is and how he has proven himself faithful to you. Why is it that you trust him so much...that he has put in on your heart to be at camp and share him with others? Tell what it's like to share Jesus' heart – how that fills your life and gives you his love, his thoughts, even though you are in yourself far from perfect.

God's love for you

Play the video "Fathers Love Letter" <http://www.fathersloveletter.com/fllvideos.html> (5 minutes 40 seconds long). At this website you can download the video or order a better quality version on DVD.

Discuss the video:

- How many of you see yourself the way God sees you?
- How many of you want to be the person God already knows you are in Christ?

Let's dream for a few minutes!

- Describe the perfect guy
 - What does he look like?
 - How does he treat you?
 - What motivates him? Is he selfish and into what is best for him?
- Now...let's think about the kind of girl that Mr. Wonderful is looking for.
 - What does she look like? (It's inevitable that the girls will mention something about physical beauty, but stress the importance of inner beauty).
 - How does she act? (gentle, kind, selfless)
 - What motivates her?
 - Does she sound like the kind of girl God described in His love letter?
 - Is this the kind of woman you're becoming?

Stay connected to the heart of Jesus

If we want to "act" like the women God already knows we are...we need to constantly remind ourselves of the way he sees us in Christ. What are some ways we can do that? (Prayer, Bible Study, meditation, finding time of solitude to connect with God – to stay connected to Christ's heart.)

Concerning staying connected to the heart of Jesus, read John 15:5-8, 9-12:

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.

Optional demonstration: Bring a pretty potted flower or plant...maybe even a rosebush that has some roses blossomed and some buds. Cut one of the buds off...and ask the girls if it will ever blossom now that it is disconnected from the branch. Compare this to our connection to Jesus and his heart and how in that connection we share in his love and life and become fully who God created us to be.

We need to remind ourselves daily who God says we are and the perspective that we gain on life by believing that HE IS. Sometimes life is hard...but that doesn't mean God isn't there or he doesn't care. Sometimes a closed door or not getting what we want is the biggest blessing He could give.

Facilitator: There is always something that we can learn from trials – share a personal story so the girls will understand this concept.

A couple things that have really helped me connect to the heart of Christ daily:
(Facilitator: add to this list to personalize it)

- Writing in my bible – I underline and circle things that jump out to me...I write special quotes or encouraging things I hear in the blank pages at the end of my bible or make note of where a special scripture was so I can easily go back and find it when I'm thinking of it again. (Explain how to use the bible index in case they don't know.)
- Writing scriptures on index cards and keeping them in my purse or backpack so I can look over them when I'm waiting for class or stuck in traffic
- Praying the scriptures to God and inserting my name or the name of someone I'm praying for to personalize it. Sometimes you know you need to pray and connect with God but the words are not there...praying scripture is a great way to get the conversation with God started!

Conclusion

Hand each girl a copy of the Father's Love Letter (see next page). Tell them this will remind them of how precious they are to God. Encourage them to read it over...search through the listed scriptures in their Bibles...and seek God, staying connected daily to the heart of Christ – becoming over time who God created them to be and says they are already is in his sight because of Jesus. Pray over them in closing:

Sample prayer: Father – thank you for Your undeniable love for us. We don't understand how You can love us the way You do...or why...but we're so thankful that you do. God, we look around us and see a culture that is living so opposite to what Your word says is best for us. It's hard to go against the grain...but the world is not happy...or at peace. God we want to do things your way...we don't want to be just like everybody else. Give us the strength to dare to be different. Empower us through Your Word to become women who make a difference, who are confident in ourselves based on who You say we are...not who society says we are. We love You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Father's Love Letter

My Child:

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1

I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2

I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3

Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31

For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27

In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28

For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28

I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5

I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12

You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16

I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26

You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14

I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13

And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6

I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44

I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16

And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1

Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1

I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11

For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48

Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17

For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33

My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11

Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3

My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalms 139:17-18

And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17

I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40

For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5

I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41

And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3

If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29

Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4

For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13

I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20

For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18

As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11

One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4

And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4

I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23

For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26

He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3

He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31

And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10

I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32

If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23

And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39

Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7

I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15

My question is...Will you be my child? John 1:12-13

I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

Love, Your Dad. Almighty God

Girl's Christian Living Class 2: Cross My Heart

Introduction

Review last breakout session...ask them what they remember.

Why is it so important to be connected to God and to Jesus' heart? We do have an enemy – the Bible says so and we see the evidence all around us (*sex, drugs, abuse, violence* – try to get them to come up with these things on their own and discuss them a bit).

There are a lot of traps that Satan has set for us; 1Peter 5:8 *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Today let's talk about one trap in particular. Let's read I Corinthians 6:18-20

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

According to this scripture why are sexual sins more destructive than others?

Is society treating sex outside of marriage like its destructive? Is that what we see on TV shows and commercials, hear on the radio, watch in movies, see at school?

Consider the following statistics:

- By the time the average teen graduates from high school, he/she will have watched 19,000 hours of TV including about 200,000 sexual acts, and one million acts of violence.
- 48% of high school seniors are sexually active (had sexual intercourse in past 3 months)

We live in sex-saturated culture where a high percentage of teens are sexually active. And we've all heard about sexually transmitted diseases (STD's)...let's talk about some of the details. (*Try to get them to guess the following answers*):

- How many people in the US have an STD? (Over 68 million)
- How many new cases of STD's occur each year in America? (Over 15 million)
- How much money do you think our country spends on STD's each year? (8 billion dollars)
- More Americans are infected with herpes than any other STD...how many do you think have it? (45 million)
- How many of you have heard of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus)?
- How many of you have heard of HPV (human papilloma virus)?
- HPV is the virus present in over 99 percent of all cases of cervical cancer
- Each year in the US, more women die from cervical cancer than from AIDS
- Most Americans are unaware of how common HPV is
- Studies estimate that 70-80 percent of the time, an STD carrier will have absolutely no symptoms. Without proper medical testing there is no way to know if a person has the disease.
- At least 80% of sexually active people will get HPV at some point...about 6.2 million people each year
- Studies show that 10,000 teens are infected with an STD each day...that is one teen every 8 seconds.
- 1 in 4 sexually active teens has an STD
- 4 out of 10 girls will become pregnant at least once before age 20
- Each year nearly 1 million teen girls in the US will become pregnant
- One out of 4 babies will be killed before birth due to abortion
- There are approximately 350,000 teen abortions every year
- 80 percent of unmarried teen mothers end up on welfare

(Statistics taken from Josh McDowell at www.josh.org and *Every Young Woman's Battle* by Shannon Etheridge.)

Facilitator: Be careful here. It's likely that some of the girls in your class have an STD or have had an abortion. The goal is not to shame anyone or to hold them up to ridicule. Rather the goal is to express Jesus' heart of both compassion and outrage over what the enemy is doing to destroy our young ladies.

The goal here is to help them face the reality of what is 'out there' and arm them with the only thing that really helps and lasts: the love and power of Christ – the heart of Jesus which they can share by faith.

Even if mistakes have been made, there is always a new beginning with Christ. There is always forgiveness. Always help to live a life that truly shares the heart of Christ.

Society tells us that casual sex – 'hooking up' is OK...expected. They tell us we have to look a certain way and be willing to give guys what we think they want in order to be loved and accepted. Deep down we long to feel beautiful. We desperately want someone to affirm us. We think if we look differently they will.

But what does the perfect girl look like? (See what they say, common answers are blond, thin, popular, athletic, big breasts, has a boyfriend, straight teeth, and no zits)

Ask someone to read Psalm 139:13-14 *13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.*

If we agree that God created each of us...fashioned us perfectly...let's go back to His word and see what He says is beautiful.

(Ask the girls to break these scriptures down and explain what they mean)

Proverbs 31:30

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

1 Peter 3:3-5.

3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. 4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.

Hollywood is consumed with image...the more air-brush and surgeries they have...the happier they will be, right? What about Brad-Gelina? Tom-Kat?...if these people are so rich and beautiful...they must be happy right?

The media is selling us smoke and mirrors. God's definition of beauty is attainable for all of us through Christ...Hollywood's definition is a rat race and a dead end.

Common myths about sex

Let's discuss some common myths girls often believe about sex.

Facilitator: be prepared to talk about each myth you use. More info can be found on pages 32-40 of *Every Young Woman's Battle*. By Shannon Ethridge)

1. How I dress is my business. It shouldn't be a concern for God or guys.
2. All flirting is OK.
3. I need to have a boyfriend to feel as if I am "somebody".
4. Guys want basically the same thing from a dating relationship as girls do.
5. My love will save him...I can change him.
6. What I watch on TV or listen to on the radio doesn't really matter...it's just entertainment. (*Optional - read headlines from popular teen magazine compared to headlines from "Revolve" such as "Are you dating a Godly Guy?", "Beauty Secrets You've Never Heard Before", and "Guys Speak Out on Tons of Issues". Talk about the importance of what you what we take in to our minds).
7. As long as I haven't "gone all the way" I'm still technically a virgin.
 - Is oral sex really sex?
 - How far is too far? Do you have a line that you won't cross? You can bet that if you don't have one you'll go a lot further than you want to.
 - What goes on in my mind is my business and doesn't really matter. (Talk about how easy it is for girls to get carried away into la la land and how we need to control our fantasies. Here's a scenario - your best friends' boyfriend is really cute and you have a secret crush on him...so even through your not doing anything physically about it...in your mind you dream about what it would be like if you were his girlfriend...how you might act if he told you that he secretly had feelings for you too. Maybe you start dressing nicer so he might notice you...or your flirty around him? How would your friend feel if she found out you were day dreaming about him and wishing he liked you instead of her? Would you like your friends to treat you that way? As a friend we should want what is best for each other...not what is best for us.)

Read Matt. 5:27-28 from the Message Bible: *"You know the next commandment pretty well, too: 'Don't go to bed with another's spouse.' But don't think you've preserved your virtue simply by staying out of bed. Your heart can be corrupted by lust even quicker than your body. Those leering looks you think nobody notices - they also corrupt."*

Conclusion

We've talked about many things, and you might be thinking "how do I keep all of this straight? There are so many do's and don'ts to being a Christian...there is no way I can ever remember it all."

But here's what I want you to know. Christianity is not about rules. It's about a relationship – with God.

Even when God worked with the nation Israel, all the laws he gave them in the Old Testament came down to two principles about relationships:

Matt. 22:35-40 35 *An expert in religious law tried to trap him [Jesus] with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" 37 Jesus replied, "You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.*

Jesus said that the Old Covenant law he gave to the Jews could be summed up in these two relationship principles: *love God* and *love people*. But as we learned in chapel, through Jesus and his cross, we have a New Covenant relationship in which God gives us Jesus' heart to share through the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Jesus' heart is a heart of love: Loving God with him. Loving people (including yourself) with him.

What do you think that heart thinks about expressing love sexually? It's all about motive isn't it. Wanting what's best for me and for you – today and tomorrow. Wanting what's best for my future mate.

If I've made a mistake, God tells me I can be forgiven and start all over. As I seek to share Jesus' heart I won't be perfect. I'll make mistakes. But Jesus will help me through.

So I choose Jesus. I choose to be connected to him and to his heart. In that choice I choose to turn away from certain things that would take me in the opposite direction of Jesus and his love.

Listen to the words of the Apostle Paul who shared Jesus heart:

1 Cor. 10:23-24 23 *"Everything is permissible" – but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible" – but not everything is constructive. 24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.*

Conclusion

Facilitator: in your own words give the girls a glimpse of what a relationship God's way looks like. We're not telling them 'you can't have any fun'. Rather we're telling them YOU CAN live a wonderful life as God wants for you as you share Jesus heart. Tell them about that life from your own experience and then conclude in prayer asking God to bless each of them.

Boy's Christian Living Class 1: Who Are You?

Background: The two boy's Christian Living classes are intended to facilitate a discussion with teenage boys about God's design for the male heart. Though broken by the fall, battered by experience and misinformed by spiritual enemies, God seeks to restore that heart in us – he does so by giving us the heart of Jesus as it is to be experienced by a man. Indeed Jesus' ministry is to 'bind up the broken hearted' (Isaiah 61:1), helping them become all he created them to be as they share his heart in ways appropriate for how God created men to be.

By affirming their innate male qualities (endowed by God) we will help our young men see that their hearts are important to God. We will encourage them to 'guard their hearts' treating them with the utmost respect, for they are indeed 'the wellspring of life.'

Hopefully, through these discussions, we can inspire them to:

- Aspire to genuine, godly man-hood
- Seek out godly mentors
- Find healing for damage done
- Resist the waves of societal misinformation and bad examples

If you the facilitator wish to find out more about the inspiration for this presentation and the source material, check out John Eldredge's books *Wild at Heart*, *Waking the Dead* and *Journey of Desire*. While the WCG does not endorse all of Eldredge's conclusions, we find his ability to write concerning the male heart to be commendable.

Introduction to boy's class 1: Who are You?

Do you know who you are? That may seem like a silly question, but it really isn't. We are all born with a need for *identity*. Babies don't have a sense of personal identity yet. For the first couple of years their identity is found in their mothers or caretakers. But once we left toddler-hood behind we each began a quest to find out who we are in this great big world.

Our world is full of famous people we can easily identify. We also can list a couple of things that 'identify' them as 'famous.' (Have the group list some).

Some of these people took years to establish that identity. Some have had to carefully craft a *persona* - an outer personality or façade presented to others by an individual. It is easy to confuse this outward appearance with what is truly on the inside - in the heart-of the person.

Movie Clip: *Gladiator*

Show movie clip from the DVD, Chapter XVI - *My Name is Gladiator*. This movie is rated 'R' but this clip will not be showing anything that would be construed as unsuitable for 11 years and older.

End the clip after the Emperor has given the 'thumbs-up' sign and Maximus Decimus Meridius has raised his helmet to the cheering crowds.

It is suggested that the presenter be familiar with the clip to answer any contextual questions that may arise, like, who are the main characters, why are the gladiators fighting, words that may be unclear, who is the 'Emperor, etc...

The scene begins with 'Gladiator' dismounting a horse at the end of a staged battle, in which the gladiators were all supposed to be defeated. They were not, and the crowd is obviously pleased with the result. The Emperor wishes to meet the main gladiator to find out his identity. We find out that he is a man who knows who he is and what his mission is - "*in this life or the next.*"

Feedback

"What did we see in this clip? What happened? Did we make any observations about 'being a real man?'"

The Heart of the Matter

Not everyone is really who they appear to be on the outside. The Bible uses the heart to describe who we really are: Proverb 27:19 *As water reflects a face, so a man's heart reflects the man.*

Have a mirror handy. Look in it and describe to the boys what you think you see as your physical description. This becomes an analogy of how our hearts are like a mirror; what we think and feel about ourselves 'in our hearts' is more important than what we look like, or think we look like.

Exercise

Have the boys write down a few lines expressing 'who they are.' What do they believe is their identity?

We're trying here to help them through a process of finding out where their true identity should come from. The hope is that we can arrive at the Biblical and theological truth that our real identity is found in Christ Jesus, the 'God-man.'

There are many forces, people and agendas attempting (with success) to shape our identity; entertainers, music, movies, peers, teachers, Hollywood, clubs and associations, sports figures, political movements, etc... and sometimes even parents. We too should be included in this list.

Exercise

Stimulate discussion at this point about who has been influential in shaping the identity of the boys.

"Who (or what) has been influential in shaping 'who you are?'
Some of these influences may have been positive and others negative."

Be careful to not let this turn into a negative rant time exposing or alleging abuses in a public forum. Hopefully at least one boy will mention that a godly father figure or Jesus himself has been most influential in shaping the boy's identity, however it is very probable this won't be the case. If not, ask....

"Does anyone think that God could have anything valuable to contribute to shaping your personal identity?"

Read together

Genesis 1:26-27 *God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

These verses reveal a God who is interested in variety and who is concerned with his creation, giving humans unique position in the created order. Then, among humans he makes distinction between male and female, yet confirms that both are created 'in his image.'

The male heart

You have a distinctly male heart. Your heart is 'hard wired' differently in many respects to a girl's. *God wants your heart to reflect the true man he created you to be.*

And for that to happen, we need to listen to God's advice in Proverbs 4:20-23:

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body. Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

How many of us would love to have 'life and health?' What we're talking about here, as we've been discussing in the chapels, is getting connected to the heart of Jesus – the "God-man" – the true man we were created to be.

Now Jesus is Savior of both women and men. His heart is big enough for us all. But Jesus came in human flesh – the flesh of a human male. And in his maleness we men have a perfect model of what his heart looks like beating in the life of a man.

And so God offers to you men, the heart of Jesus, the perfect man. The Bible says that King David, despite many faults was "a man after God's heart." That's because he did what you can do – share the heart of Jesus by putting your trust in him.

To trust Jesus, to follow him; to share his heart is the most profoundly male thing you can do. It grants you a male identity available no other way. *Cross My Heart.*

God wants his best for each of you. He wants you to know how pleased he is that you were born, that you are alive; and he wants for you to have the absolutely best life. He wants you to be able to know:

- Who you are:
- Whose you are:
- Why you are:
- Where you're going:

Two BIG questions

There are two huge and related questions that come to each young man and eventually to every grown man:

1. *What is a real man?*
2. *Do I have what it takes to be a real man?*

Where do we go for the answers? Well, there are plenty of bad examples in the world, and a wise person learns that you can learn from bad examples. But the best place to go is to a positive answer given by the one who created men – and that would be God, and specifically to God who became man, Jesus Christ. He is more than a mere ‘role-model’ or teacher; he is the *man maker*.

There are many ways we might *try* to achieve manhood, but many of them make us no more than posers – imposters – pretenders.

- Beating someone up doesn’t make us a man.
- Getting a girl pregnant doesn’t make us a man.
- Living a rich or flashy lifestyle doesn’t make us a man.

So, since God made you and knows all about you, and since he knows all about real man-hood, and since he wants you to be the man he made you to be, the next time we get together, we are going to talk about war, adventure and girls.

Boy's Christian Living Class 2: Your Wild Heart

Introduction

We were created to have a relationship with God. The Apostle Paul says we were created by Jesus and for Jesus (Colossians 1:16). An ancient confession of the church says: "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever."

How true! And contained in this truth is another: we were created by and for God as male or female. Today we want to talk about what it is to be created a male in God's image for eternal fellowship with him.

John Eldredge describes men created in and for God using the imagery of a lion. In this fallen world, we're not what God created us to be. We're like lions caged in a zoo—contained and un-lion-like. Eldredge writes about that condition:

This wonderful, terrible creature should have been out roaming the savanna, ruling with pride, striking fear into the heart of every wildebeest, bringing down zebras and gazelles whenever the urge seized him. Instead, he spent every hour of the every day and every night of every year alone, in a cage smaller than your bedroom, his food served to him through a little metal door.

Sometimes late at night, after the city had gone to sleep, I would hear his roar come down from the hills. It sounded not so much fierce, but rather mournful. During all my visits, he never looked me in the eye. I desperately wanted him to, wanted for his sake the chance to stare me down, would have loved it if he took a swipe at me. But he just lay there, weary with that deep weariness that comes from boredom, taking shallow breaths, rolling now and then from side to side. For after years of living in a cage, a lion no longer even believes he is a lion... and a man no longer believes he is a man" (Wild at Heart, p. 40-41).

Exercise/Discussion:

Thinking about Eldredge's words let me ask a question: What makes a man a man? Let's list some qualities, attributes or actions of a man as God designed him to be.

Help the boys formulate a list, suggesting male qualities/characteristics. Steer them away from anatomical distinctions, but let them go their own way and see what comes out. It will make good points for discussion about what are 'godly' male attributes.

Sample list:

Physically strong
Wise
Leadership
Intelligent
Protector

Courageous/brave
Talented
Sporty
Nice
Well mannered

Warrior
Honest
Trustworthy
Dependable
Self-made

Let's ask a couple of questions and you can make some noise if these things are of great interest to you. [If you'd prefer more order in your class-room, have them raise their hands].

- Who likes it when the good-guys beat the bad-guys in a movie?
- Who enjoys being on the losing team in any sport or game?
- Who likes sitting at home all summer long with nothing to do?
- Who enjoys paintball? [Pick your camp's popular activities]
- Who has ever felt their heart go a little bit funny when a pretty girl passes by?
- Who likes it when a bully puts fear in you?
- Who would like to explore a country overseas?
- Who likes swords, guns and bows and arrows?
- Who likes it when a hero puts the bully in his place?

Alright. Did we feel embarrassed admitting any of these? Probably not; but if so, it may be because someone told us we men shouldn't be wild. Sometimes we are taught that it is impolite or un-Christian to do certain things or feel certain ways? Sometimes that is VERY true. But sometimes maybe not.

Would you be surprised to find out that God has wired as a man to...

- Be a warrior - a defender of the weak
- Be attracted to girls - and their beauty
- Be an adventurer - to pursue dreams and goals

Movie Clip: *Secondhand Lions*

Let's watch another movie clip. In this one we have a fatherless boy who has been dropped off by his single mother to live with his two uncles. They are reported to be rich, they have had an adventurous life and they have loved and lost love.

Now they are faced with having to raise a boy and the boy knows deep inside that he needs help to become a man.

Play the clip where the boy is asking his uncles to help him to learn to be a man. He wants them to give him the “what every boy needs to know to be a man” speech. If you can’t find this clip on the DVD, email James.Newby@wcg.org for help.

Let’s ask some questions about being a male who is also a follower of Jesus – who shares Jesus heart.

1. Should a male Jesus-follower fight? Jesus said “turn the other cheek.” But is that the end of the matter? Does that mean we should never fight?

Ephesians 6:10-18 – The Apostle Paul used warfare terminology when talking about the spiritual battles that Christians face.

Romans 7:21-25 – He also describes the internal battle we have in our heart over the sinful nature.

These passages tell us there needs to be some sort of warrior spirit within in us.

Jesus violently overthrew the tables of the money changers who were defiling his Father’s house, the temple in Jerusalem. But he also allowed himself to be arrested, tortured and crucified and did not fight back. But we’re also told in Scripture that by allowing himself to be killed he was winning the ultimate victory over Satan and Sin.

So we learn that a Christ-follower is willing to stand up and fight for what is right, what is holy – for the weak and oppressed. A Christian male is fully masculine; fully expressive of Jesus’ warrior spirit as well as Jesus’ tender love.

2. Should a male Jesus-follower be sexually attracted to women? Doesn’t the Bible say to avoid sex? And some say that sex was the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

In our first class we read that God made us male and female and instructed us to have children. God created this thing called ‘the family.’ It’s not just natural, it’s God’s supernatural creation and will. And sex is a fundamental part of producing families and the love that is so important within the bond of marriage between a man and woman.

Let me ask, does having a girlfriend make you a man? Does it make you manly? No. But it is normal to be attracted to the opposite sex. God made it that way. And, he made it natural for women to also be attracted to men.

But that natural, God-given attraction can be distorted and misused. Sometimes brokenhearted people seek 'healing' in a relationship with someone of the opposite sex. But if a young man has a wounded male heart that has been injured by a dad, or the lack of a dad, or abuse or neglect, it will not be healed by acquiring a girlfriend. [The same is true for girls.]

Listen: *A woman doesn't make a man a man; Christ in him does.*

The Bible is full of instruction (and warning) about having right relationships with members of the opposite sex. Some of those instructions will help us reach joys that we could never hope to reach on our own. The warnings are there to help keep us from harming ourselves and others by wrecking our relationships emotionally, physically and spiritually.

3. Is it OK for a male Jesus-follower to seek adventure? Some say Christians don't have time for adventurous lives, or ambition and stuff like that. They should lead simple and boring and safe lives. Is that true? No. The Bible does warn against "selfish ambition" but God is not against success and goals. Rather as Creator, he is the author of goals, plans, dreams and adventure. He even says he has plans for us!

If we put our plans into his hands he will give us more purpose and adventure and fulfillment in our lives than we could ever dream of, let alone achieve, on our own.

The heart of a God-follower

In Acts 13:22 King David is called "a man after the heart of God." This means that David shared God's heart – he had a close relationship with God and in that relationship 'breathed in' God's love and life.

Now David was not (like us), but it's interesting to learn what of God 'rubbed off' on David. We learn a lot from David's prayers – many are recorded in Psalms. Here is the mind of God expressed through David's prayers. What do these tell you about being a male follower of Jesus?

Psalm 8:9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Psalm 9:1 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders.

Psalm 9:9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

Psalm 9:10 Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, **LORD**, have never forsaken those who seek you.

Psalm 10:12 Arise, **LORD**! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless.

Psalm 10:17 You hear, O **LORD**, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry...

Psalm 11:7 For the **LORD** is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.

Psalm 13:6 I will sing to the **LORD**, for he has been good to me.

Psalm 16:2 "You are my **Lord**; apart from you I have no good thing."

Psalm 16:8 I have set the **LORD** always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Psalm 18:1 I love you, O **LORD**, my strength.

Psalm 18:2 The **LORD** is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge.

Psalm 18:46 The **LORD** lives! Praise be to my Rock!

Psalm 19:14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O **LORD**, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 20:7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the **LORD** our God.

Psalm 22:19 But you, O **LORD**, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me.

Psalm 23:1 The **LORD** is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

Psalm 26:2 Test me, O **LORD**, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;

Psalm 27:1 The **LORD** is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear?

Psalm 28:7 The **LORD** is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.

Psalm 30:4 Sing to the **LORD**, you saints of his; **praise** his holy name.