Flutter. Flutter.

ZAP!!!!!!

Silence. The bug is dead.

Insect light traps—those glowing blue bulbs suspended over picnic tables on sticky summer evenings—are very good at catching their prey. A curious bug, attracted by the irresistible glow of the ultraviolet light, will find himself fluttering toward it, until—ZAP!—he comes to an unfortunate—and rather crispy—end. The attraction proves fatal.

Sin works in a similar way. As humans, we are attracted by sin. We move toward it, curious, just wanting to get a little taste, and — ZAP! — we are caught in a dangerous, if not deadly, trap. Pride, greed, gluttony, lust, sloth, wrath, envy... All of these are traps laid by the enemy, who waits for us to get just a little too close. And once we are caught, it can be very difficult to find our way to freedom.

King David, who spent a good part of his youth fleeing the traps of King Saul, wrote the following prayer to God: “Free me from the trap that is set for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O LORD, the God of truth” (Psalm 31:4-5). David knew that in order to survive, he needed to commit his body and soul to God. Only God could keep him safe from the forces of evil that pursued him, and ultimately set him free.

When we draw near to the God of truth, we move away from Satan’s traps and the lies he tells us. The closer we move toward God’s light, the less we are attracted by sin. Jesus has loosened the traps so that we can fly free — and live forever.
Lesson Objective: To teach students about the destructive nature of pride.

Bible Passage: Genesis 2-3, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Bible Truth: Pride is a deadly trap that feels good at the time but damages our souls. Pride distances us from God and others by causing us to be consumed with ourselves. It prevents us from seeing our need for God and the needs and contributions of others.

Optional Opener: (15 minutes)
“Bragging Rights” (also known as “Two Truths and a Lie”)

To play the game, everyone must come up with two truths about themselves and one lie. The others will have to guess which one is the lie. The more unique the truths are, the harder it will be for the group to identify which one is not true.

Example: Three things I could say about myself are:
1) I have a pet snake.
2) I won the spelling bee in second grade.
3) I have been to France.

The other students will guess which of the three is not true. Then, when everyone has made his choice, the person reveals the lie: “I do not have a pet snake.”

This provides a great opportunity for the students to get to know each other better and to introduce the week’s topic: pride. As you wrap up the icebreaker, ask the students:

• Have you ever stretched the truth to impress your friends?
• Why do you think it’s so tempting to brag about our achievements?
• How is this an example of pride?

Introduction: (10 minutes)
This series is called “Fatal Attraction.” It is about the 7 deadly sins. Can you name them? (One side of your poster board, write the title of this series and list the 7 deadly sins. On the other side, that is still blank, list the ones your students can name. Don’t let them see your list until they have tried to name them all.) The series is called Fatal Attraction because these behaviors are actually attractive to us, but in reality, they will destroy us.

As you may have picked up from your Bible lesson this week, pride is the deadly trap that we will be talking about tonight. I call it a trap because that’s how sin operates. From a distance, sin often looks good, sounds good—even tastes good. What we don’t realize is that the more we eat of it, the sicker we become.

Do you know how exterminators get rid of ants? Ants are one of the most difficult of all insects to truly exterminate because they follow each other and leave a trail. So exterminators sprinkle what they call “sweet dust” around the house. The ants are attracted to it. They carry it back to the nest, thinking it is food. But the same bait that tastes so good to them is really destroying their entire colony.

That’s how sin is. The Bible teaches us that we have a personal enemy who is out to destroy us. We have to take our stand against him in order to avoid his tricks (Ephesians 6:11). So the better we are able to recognize his poison, the better we will be able to resist the temptation.
Interactive Learning: (10 minutes)
Let’s see if we can identify the deadly trap in each of these situations. (Leave the poster where students can see it during this exercise.)

Distribute slips of paper with different sound bytes printed on each (see last page). Have each student draw one at random and read it aloud in turn. The group will have to identify which of the seven deadly traps fits that scenario.

Using the poster board from the previous exercise, cross off the seven deadly sins as they are identified.

“Hmmm… Mow the lawn or watch my 8th TV show of the day? Dad can do the mowing. I’m tired.” (Sloth)

“My teachers don’t know anything. I could teach them a thing or two!” (Pride)

“I can’t STAND that guy. If I had the chance, I would take him out.” (Wrath)

“If I don’t get that game system right now, I’ll die.” (Lust)

“I can eat a whole pizza by myself, followed by a combo meal, and then drive through Taco Bell!” (Gluttony)

“If I could afford clothes like him/her, I’d be popular too.” (Envy)

“Why should I care whether Steve can afford to go to the movies with us? So long as I get to go!” (Greed)

Ugly stuff, huh? If any of these “traps” sound unfamiliar, don’t worry—we’ll tackle them one at a time in the coming weeks.

Bible Application: (25 minutes)
Now let’s spend some time focusing specifically on pride. Turn to the book of Genesis.

Ask for volunteers to read the following passages aloud:

- Genesis 2:8-9
- Genesis 3:1-5
- Genesis 3:6-7
- Genesis 3:8-13
- Genesis 3:21-24

Talk through the following questions:

- How did the serpent tempt Eve to disobey God?
- What role did pride play in Eve’s disobedience?
- Share some things that might have been running through her mind at the time.
- In what way(s) did Adam show pride as well?
- Pride is dangerous because it separates us from each other and from God. What examples of separation do you find in these verses?

We are all born with a sin nature. We are still tempted to be like God. We constantly fall into the trap of wanting to be our own boss and decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. We start to rely on our abilities, rather than on the One who gave us those abilities.

- How is having low self-esteem—or constantly thinking about what you can’t do—also an example of pride? (Answer: You are still only thinking about yourself, looking inward rather than upward.)
- How do you struggle with pride in your relationships with your peers?
• What things in your life cause you to feel competitive?
• How can you release those things to God?

**Commitment: (3 minute)**
This week, I want you to think about how pride might be interfering in your relationship with God. Close your eyes and listen to this verse from The Message in Psalm 131:1-2, and see what pictures come to mind:

*God, I’m not trying to rule the roost, I don’t want to be king of the mountain. I haven’t meddled where I have no business or fantasized grandiose plans. I’ve kept my feet on the ground, I’ve cultivated a quiet heart. Like a baby content in its mother’s arms, my soul is a baby content.*

Now, with your eyes still closed, picture a baby in his mother’s arms. He isn’t trying to show off or impress people; he isn’t conscious of what he can or can’t do. He just wants to be close to his mom and rest.

God wants your relationship with Him to be like that. He doesn’t want anything—not pride, or gluttony, or envy, or anything else to get in the way of that relationship. Pray that He would help you to slow down and just spend time with Him.

**Closing: (5 minutes)**
Close the lesson by saying you will give the students one more opportunity to brag. This time, though, they will boast of what God has done in their lives. Consider offering those up as sentence prayers of thanks.

Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” *1 Corinthians 1:31*
“SOUND BYTE” SHEET
(Cut into strips and distribute for interactive learning section.)

“Hmmm… Mow the lawn or watch my 8th TV show of the day? Dad can do the mowing. I’m tired.”

(Sloth)

“My teachers don’t know anything. I could teach them a thing or two!”

(Pride)

“I can’t STAND that guy. If I had the chance, I would take him out.”

(Wrath)

“If I don’t get that game system right now, I’ll die.”

(Lust)

“I can eat a whole pizza by myself, followed by a combo meal, and then drive through Taco Bell!”

(Gluttony)

“If I could afford clothes like him/her, I’d be popular too.”

(Envy)

“Why should I care whether Steve can afford to go to the movies with us? So long as I get to go!”

(Greed)
Day 1

1. Name a character from a movie, TV show, book, or comic book that was brought down because of his pride (for example, Lex Luthor, Voldemort, Sauron). How did pride lead to his or her destruction?

2. Can you think of relationships in your life that have been hurt by your pride?

3. The dictionary defines pride as an “unduly high opinion of oneself.” Why is pride destructive? (Check all that apply)
   - [ ] We are not supposed to have positive self esteem.
   - [ ] It keeps us from loving others as we love ourselves.
   - [ ] It is wrong to take pride in our accomplishments.
   - [ ] It keeps us from recognizing our need for God.

4. Read Proverbs 16:18. Then write the verse in your own words:

5. Pride is dangerous because its nature is one of separation. It makes us think we are better than other people—that we are above them. Why is this so harmful to our relationships? (Check all that apply)
   - [ ] It can lead to competition and envy, which divides.
   - [ ] Others will be intimidated and not feel free to approach us in friendship.
   - [ ] It prevents us from seeing the strengths of others.
   - [ ] It makes us too popular for our own good.
   - [ ] It goes against God’s instructions to consider others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).
   - [ ] Other: ____________________________

6. Why is pride dangerous to your relationship with God?

7. Often, people that appear to be proud are really just unsure of themselves. How can you keep your relationships from being hurt by pride and the need to impress everyone?

Day 2

1. Do you ever feel like you know more than your teachers, parents, and other authority figures? What are some of the thoughts that go through your mind along these lines?
2. We are born with a tendency toward pride. It is a human trait. And our pride is often insulted when we have to take orders. Read Genesis 3:1-7. Eve was tempted in the Garden. Which of the following statements appealed to Eve’s pride?

[ ] You will live forever.
[ ] You will be the most beautiful creature on Earth.
[ ] You will be perfect.
[ ] You will be like God.
[ ] All of the above.

3. How was pride the sin that Eve committed? (Check all that apply)

[ ] She wanted to be like God so she could decide for herself what was best for her.
[ ] She wanted to be like God so she would be wise.
[ ] She wanted to tell Adam what to do.
[ ] She trusted her own desires more than she trusted God and His plan for her.
[ ] Other: _____________________________________________________

4. How does Proverbs 16:18 apply to Adam and Eve?

5. Pride is one of the chief obstacles in our relationship with God. Look at Genesis 3:8-9. How did their sin, which resulted from pride, change their relationship with God?

6. Pride prevents us from recognizing the sin in our lives and the areas where we need God desperately. How has pride affected your relationship with God?

[ ] It hasn’t affected it at all.
[ ] It has caused me to hide from Him so I can live the way I want.
[ ] Sometimes it makes me think I know what’s best for me—that I don’t need Him.
[ ] It causes me to question whether God’s Word really applies to me.
[ ] It makes me think I can do everything on my own.
[ ] Other: __________________________________________________

7. The tricky thing about pride is that it is something we have to fight our whole lives. Just when you think you don’t struggle with pride, you’re probably struggling with it the most. How can you become more aware of how pride operates in your life?

8. How can listening to God help you avoid pride?

Making It Personal

This week, think about the authority figures in your life. How can you show them respect (even if you don’t always agree with them)? What are some of the positive things they bring to your life — things you may have overlooked because of pride?

Pray that God will show you the areas of pride in your life that are separating you from others.
Lesson Objective: To show how a love of stuff can get in the way of the things that are really important in life, and to stress the importance of generosity and gratitude in combating greed.

Bible Passage: Matthew 6:19-34

Bible Truth: We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it, so it is foolish to waste our time and energy on things that don't last. Seek God's kingdom first.

Introduction: (10 minutes)
This week, we're going to talk about another one of the seven deadly sins: GREED.

Who can tell me what greed is?
What do you think makes greed sinful?
Where do you see examples of greed today?
Have you ever struggled with greed? Did you get what you wanted? How did you feel at that moment? A month later? A year later? Are you perfectly content, or is there something else you want now?

Interactive Learning: (15 minutes)
All of us have probably learned from experience that material things don't really satisfy us.

Greed tricks us into thinking that there is just one more thing that stands between us and true happiness! But when we put our focus on getting rather than giving, or on getting rather than living, we miss out on a lot. Our hands may be full, but our hearts are empty.

Let's take a look at greed in action in the following skit.

Perform the skit “Want-Mart,” either casting ABS students in the parts or performing it with your co-leader and one additional student. *Give the student(s) copies of the script prior to the intro discussion so that s/he will have a few minutes to look it over.

After the performance, ask the students what they learned.

Bible Application: (20 minutes)
Have the students complete the following matching exercise (see Handout #1).

Match the Scripture reference on the left with the corresponding description. (Answers below)

Psalm 73:25-26 — Knowing God is better than earthly riches.
Philippians 4:19 — God will meet all our needs through Christ.
Matthew 6:19-21 — Worldly treasures don’t last, but heavenly treasure lasts forever.
Ecclesiastes 5:10 — If your first love is money, you’ll never be satisfied.
Matthew 16:26 — What good are riches if they cost you your soul?

Look at Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:19-24. (Have a volunteer read the passage aloud.)

What reasons does Jesus give for why it is pointless to pursue wealth?

What is the connection between the heart and treasure (v. 21)?
Verse 22 says “the eye is the lamp of the body.” Do you think we can see God clearly when our eyes are focused on “stuff”? Why or why not?

What does verse 24 mean when it says: “You cannot serve both God and money”?

You don’t have to have a lot of money to be greedy. Whenever we become too focused on our own needs—even the most basic needs—we lose sight of God. Let’s read Matthew 6:25-34. (Again, have a volunteer read the passage aloud.)

In this passage Jesus says, “Don’t worry about your life.” What are some of the worries that go along with greed? (Examples: Worry that I won’t have enough; that people won’t like me if I don’t have such-and-such; that I’m going to lose what I have; etc.)

What does He mean when He says to “seek first His kingdom”?

How do these choices affect the person you are becoming?

Generosity and gratitude are your best defense against greed.

Do you think sharing is easy or hard? Why?

Think of a time when you were in need and someone shared with you. What happened? How did that affect you?

When we are grateful for what we already have, it is easier to let go of our desire for more. What are you grateful for today?

**Commitment**: (2 minutes)
Start looking for opportunities to be generous. Remember, you can be generous with more than just money. Sharing, helping someone by giving them your time, letting your brother sit in the front seat of the car, donating to the needy—all of these are great ways to put someone else’s needs before your own.

**Closing**: (2 minutes)
Thank God that He is all we need. Ask for His help to seek Him first, and to look more to the needs of people than the stuff we see in the mall.
In this skit, a student goes shopping at “Want-Mart” for back-to-school supplies. He is greeted by the salesman, GREED, who is wearing a large nametag (to emphasize the point). **Be sure to read this skit through in advance and have your props ready and close at hand.

**Student:** Phew! Looks like it’s already time to go school shopping again. Hmm… Let’s see what I need this year. *(Looks down at the list in his hand.)* School supplies… new pants… Okay—I’d better get started. *(Pretends as though he is walking through the door of a store)*

**Greed** *(posing as salesman):* Welcome to Want-Mart! Where you can buy more than you bargained for, for less satisfaction, at more than you can afford! My name is GREED. How may I help you today?

**Student:** I’m just looking for a few school supplies. A backpack, some paper, and maybe a new pair of jeans.

**Greed:** Wonderful! I just happened to get a new shipment of backpacks today. *(Hands one to the student, who puts it on.)*

**Student:** Great! Thanks.

**Greed:** May I also recommend our new and improved Backup Backpack — for those times when one just isn’t enough?

**Student:** Uh, I really don’t think I need—

**Greed:** Excellent! You’ll take two. *(Drapes two more bags over the student’s shoulders.)*

**Student:** Why would I possibly need three backpacks?

**Greed:** *(shocked)* WHY, you ask? You mean, you would seriously consider starting school with just one backpack?

**Student:** Uh…. yes?

**Greed:** Don’t be ridiculous! At Want-Mart, you want MORE. Because more is always better. You can quote me on that.

**Student:** Well, okay… And how about school supplies?

**Greed:** You’ve come to the right place! We’ve got pencils, pens, notepaper, copy paper, toilet paper… *(Have a stack of “supplies” on hand that Greed can offer to the student, placing them in his hands and in his backpacks. Use regular school supplies and silly random objects, like a stack of heavy books, pots and pans, a fake plant, a rubber chicken… Whatever you can find. The idea is to load the student up so that his arms and bags are full to overflowing.)*

**Student:** You mean I really need all this?

**Greed:** Of course! Why settle for less? And how about some new clothes? *(Now Greed pulls out random pieces of clothing and adds them to the student’s pile, even placing some of them on the student’s head or over his shoulders.)* You couldn’t possibly start school without a whole new wardrobe, could you? What would everyone think?

**Student:** *(looking uncertain)* Uh… okay… I guess you’re right…

**Greed:** Right?! Of course I’m right! Let’s see, what else do we have here… *(As he continues to load up the student, another employee, whose nametag reads “OPPORTUNITY,” approaches. By now, the student can hardly move because of all the stuff in his arms.)*
**Opportunity:** Excuse me, but are you a student, sir/ma’am?

**Student:** (groaning beneath the weight of his bags) Yes—who needs to know?

**Opportunity:** Allow me to introduce myself—my name is Opportunity. Perhaps you heard me knocking earlier? I’m here to inform you that, as our 100th customer of the day, you have won a backpack, a pack of paper, and a new pair of jeans. (She is holding a small shopping bag that supposedly contains these items.)

**Student:** What?! That’s what I came here for in the first place!

**Greed:** Well, why didn’t you just say so?

**Student:** I did say so!

**Opportunity:** Excuse me, but if you aren’t able to collect your prize, I’m afraid I’ll have to give it to someone else.

**Student:** Wait... I think I can... (Reaches for the bag, but has trouble grabbing it with his arms full. Ends up dropping EVERYTHING on the floor and falling down.)

**Greed:** Careful there! Remember, you break it—you bought it!

**Student:** (upset, hands on head) WHY did I ever listen to YOU?!

Opportunity and Greed look at each other and shrug their shoulders, as if to say, “What’s wrong with him?” The two go off and leave him there, saying “Welcome to Want-Mart!” to some other, imaginary customers. The student looks at the mess around him and lays down in despair.

THE END
Match the Scripture reference on the left with the corresponding description.

Psalm 73:25-26  
If your first love is money, you’ll never be satisfied.

Philippians 4:19  
What good are riches if they cost you your soul?

Matthew 6:19-21  
God will meet all our needs through Christ.

Ecclesiastes 5:10  
Knowing God is better than earthly riches.

Matthew 16:26  
Worldly treasures don’t last, but heavenly treasure lasts forever.
Day 1

1. How would you complete the following sentence?

If I only had ____________________________, I would be really happy.

Do you really believe that, or does it sound totally humorous to you? Why do you think we often want more than we have?

2. It’s easy to let material things become too important, and to fall into the trap of believing that just one more thing stands between us and true happiness. The truth is that material possessions can actually get in the way of the things that are really important in life. Think about it: How satisfied are you with your life right now?

[ ] Very satisfied—I have all I need.
[ ] Pretty satisfied—there are things I want, but I know I don’t really need them.
[ ] So-so—I struggle with a desire for more stuff.
[ ] Dissatisfied—I am not even sure why.

3. From time to time we all get sucked into the gimmee trap—“Gimmee this, gimmee that.” Another word for the “gimmees” is greed. God has a lot to say about the greed trap. Read the parable in Luke 12:13-21. Where did the rich man go wrong?

[ ] He built bigger barns when he should have expanded his old ones.
[ ] He failed to realize that his crops would spoil.
[ ] He assumed he would live forever.
[ ] He hoarded his crops for himself rather than using them to bless others.

4. What did Jesus mean when He said that “A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”?

5. If that is true, what does a person’s life consist of instead?

6. How would you rewrite this story to give it a happy ending?

7. If God told you that this was your last night on earth, what would you do?

8. How can you become “rich toward God” today?
Day 2

1. If you had a year’s salary to spend on one extravagant gift, what would you buy and for whom?

2. Believe it or not, the best cure for greed is its exact opposite: generosity. Like dumping water on a fire, becoming a generous person squelches those feelings of greed. As you learn to become a generous person, you will also become a more joyous person. Read Proverbs 11:24-25. What lesson(s) do you find there?

   - To give is to gain.
   - It is wise to hoard your resources.
   - When you bless others, you yourself are blessed.
   - Saving always leads to security.

3. Does one have to have a lot of money to live a generous life? Why or why not?

4. You don’t have to have much, or want much, to be greedy. In fact, you can be very poor and still be greedy. Just holding tightly to what you do have is a form of greed. What keeps you from sharing what you have with others?

   - Fear of not getting things back
   - Fear of things getting broken or damaged
   - Concern over not having enough for myself
   - Selfishness
   - Not wanting to embarrass others by exposing their need
   - Other: ________________________________

5. What are some benefits you have discovered from sharing? Do they outweigh the costs?

6. In Deuteronomy 14:22-29, Moses delivers God’s instructions regarding tithing, or setting aside a portion of your earnings to help provide for others. After reading over this passage, what responsibility do we have for the less fortunate in our society?

7. Another cure for the “gimmees” is gratitude. List the blessings God has given you—things that might be considered luxuries in other parts of the world:

Making It Personal

An early church father, St. Augustine, wrote: “God wants to give us something, but cannot, because our hands are full—there’s nowhere for him to put it.” What possession are you holding onto right now that you need to let go of and give to God?
Greed

If you did that, what could take its place in your heart? Ask God to help you find your treasure in Him, not in the things of this world.
Lesson Objective: To teach students how gluttony confuses our cravings so that even our good desires are distorted and we seek satisfaction in lesser things.


Bible Truth: Jesus is the Bread of Life. When we go to Him, we are delivered from our spiritual hunger and thirst, because He meets our every need. Our “cravings” should be directed toward Him.

Optional Opener: (10 minutes)
Distribute two paper plates to every person in the group. Have them set one plate aside for now. Using the markers you’ve brought, ask them to draw their favorite meal, complete with sides and dessert. (This exercise is just meant to get students talking.) When they’re finished, go around the room and have the students share what they drew.

Introduction: (1 minute)
This week we’ll be talking about the trap of gluttony.

In Luke 4, we see Jesus in the desert, where He has been fasting for forty days. He was very hungry! Can you imagine? But when Satan tempted Jesus to use His power to turn a stone into bread, Jesus replied, “Man does not live on bread alone.”

Jesus is telling us that we are nourished by more than just food and drink. His Word also gives us life, because it feeds our souls.

Interactive Learning: (10 minutes)
Instruct the students to pick up their second paper plate. On it, they should draw a different sort of meal. This is their spiritual diet. Using words and/or pictures, have them write down the things in their lives besides food that feed their souls. This may be prayer, Bible study, even things like love, beauty, truth, pursuing a gift or hobby, etc. When they are finished, ask for volunteers to share what they drew.

Bible Application: (20 minutes)
Let’s take our study a little further. Did you know that Wonder Bread actually made its first appearance in the Bible? Turn in your Bibles to Exodus 16.

Ask for volunteers to read the following passages aloud:
- Exodus 16:1-3
- Exodus 16:4-8
- Exodus 16:9-12
- Exodus 16:13-18

Discussion Questions:
Why were the Israelites grumbling?

What was their real problem, besides hunger?

How did God respond and meet their needs?

According to verse 16, how much manna did the LORD instruct them to gather?

What lesson was God teaching them by sending the manna?
Now ask for a volunteer to read Exodus 16:19-20. Ask:

How did some of the Israelites disobey God?

What was the result?

Why do you think they tried to store up more manna than they needed for the day?

Gluttony is the “too much” trap—too much food, too much Playstation, too much shopping… You get the picture. When we are gluttonous, we are basically relying on small things to meet our needs.

With this in mind, would you call the Israelites’ behavior gluttonous? Why or why not?

In the devo, you read about how, when our physical bodies experience cravings, it usually means we need something—like vitamins or rest—but we don’t always feed those needs properly. The same goes with spiritual cravings.

What are some common cravings of students your age?

What do you think are the real needs behind those cravings? Name some of them. (Examples: When we obsess over our appearance, it is often out of the need to feel accepted/loved/beautiful/desirable. When we get physically involved in relationships in inappropriate ways, it is often out of the need to know we are loved, etc.)

How do you think God would want you to handle those desires?

**Commitment:** (5 minutes)
Have you ever heard the expression, “You are what you eat”? I want you all to close your eyes and think for a minute about the things you consume—not just food, but the things you read, watch, listen to, or buy. (Give the students a minute to think quietly.)

Now, in your head—you don’t need to answer out loud—and with your eyes still closed, I want you to think over the following questions: (*Pause slightly between each question)

Would you say your spiritual diet is healthy or poor?

Are the things you’re taking in helping you to grow, or are they making you sick?

Is there something in your life that you’ve had too much of, and still it’s not really filling you up?

What would God want you to fill up on instead?

Now I want you to picture those things that you need to give over to God. Spend a moment in silent prayer confessing that to Him. Ask for His help in directing those cravings toward Him instead.

**Closing:** (2 minutes)
In John 6:35, Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Thank God for satisfying all our needs.
Day 1

1. Describe a time when you had too much of a good thing—too much sugar, too much TV, too much Playstation—OR too little, and you were really roughing it.

   Overall, was it a positive or a negative experience?

2. Gluttony is the sin of taking in more and more, until it isn’t good for us — whether it’s food, drink, the Internet, television, shopping, or anything else that we indulge in to excess. Why do you think we sometimes go overboard with the things we crave?

3. Do you think indulging in something usually brings satisfaction? Why or why not?

4. Read Proverbs 23:19-21. What lesson(s) do you find in this passage?

   - Gluttony is bad for your digestive system.
   - You can be a glutton, but only on major holidays.
   - Gluttony leads to failure.
   - Be careful with your friendships.

5. How might gluttony make you poor? (Check all that apply)

   - It can cost you your time, your money, your health, and even your friendships.
   - It can cost you your education and/or job by distracting you and affecting your performance.
   - You will become spiritually poor by focusing on yourself.
   - All of the above
   - Other: ________________________________

6. According to Jesus in Matthew 4:4, what do we need to fill us up, besides food?

7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your appetite for God?

   1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
   Not hungry  I could use a snack  I can’t get enough!

Day 2

1. Gluttony has been defined as “demanding more pleasure from something than it was made for.” What makes this destructive?

   - It wastes food.
   - It causes us to seek our ultimate satisfaction from lesser things than God.
   - We should not enjoy the things God created.
   - It shows bad manners.
2. When our physical bodies experience cravings, it usually means we need something—like vitamins, water, or rest. The problem is, we don’t always feed those needs properly. (Vitamin C does not stand for Chocolate, but nice try.) List a few of your common cravings in the left-hand column below (remember, it doesn’t have to be food). In the right-hand column, write down the need that’s most likely behind that craving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I want (crave):</th>
<th>What I need:</th>
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3. We also experience spiritual cravings for things like peace and joy, which come from our need for God. What are you craving in your relationship with God right now?

4. Sometimes, we get our physical and spiritual cravings confused. For example, we’ll crave a Snickers Bar when we’re feeling sad, or 10 hours of reality TV when we’re feeling lonely. When this happens, we tend to overindulge because those things won’t ever fill us up—not the way God can.

Take a look at Psalm 42. To what does the writer compare his longing for God?

[ ] A priest who wants to go to God’s temple
[ ] A thirsty deer looking for a stream
[ ] A poor man searching for treasure
[ ] A soldier fighting for victory

5. What key question does the writer of Psalm 42 ask that helps pinpoint the real problem (v. 5, 11)?

6. Do you usually pause to ask yourself what’s really going on inside before you indulge your cravings?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No  [ ] Sometimes

How might doing this help you avoid the trap of gluttony?

7. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:6, what should we crave?

**Making It Personal**

This week, pay more attention to how—and how often—you indulge your appetites. Are you seeking more pleasure out of something than it was meant for?

Ask God to redirect your hunger so that you will long for His truth and guidance more than anything else. Ask for His help in telling the difference between a physical and a spiritual craving, and in finding healthy ways to satisfy those needs.
Lust

Lesson Objective: To stress the importance of purity in heart and mind, since that is where sin takes root, and to encourage students to direct their desires toward God.

Bible Passage: 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Bible Truth: Our bodies are temples of God’s Holy Spirit, purchased with Jesus’ blood, and we are to treat them as such by pursuing lives of purity.

Optional Opener: (10 minutes)
Imagine your house was selected for an extreme home makeover and you were allowed to design your “dream room” yourself.

What features would it have? (Movie screen? Soda fountain? Climbing wall?)

How would you decorate it? What colors or themes would you use?

Who would you invite over to enjoy it with you?

Now, imagine how you would feel if vandals came in and tore the room apart — spray painted the walls, trashed the furniture, burned holes in the carpet. What a waste, right?

Transition:
Now, imagine that room is your heart. When God took over your life, He did an extreme makeover. He knocked down the old walls and gave your life a new foundation. He spared no expense in rebuilding; in fact, He crafted everything out of the absolute best materials. And He paid for all of it with the death of His own Son.

Lust, the sin we’re talking about today, is like the vandal who comes in to trash the place. Lust is the sin of letting your desires take over. Most often, when we talk about lust, we are referring to sexual desire. When you lust, you are being guided by what you want rather than what God wants for you. Lust is dangerous because, once it’s made itself at home, it invites over some of its closest friends. Here are just a couple of examples:

Immorality: If you lust for sex, you will be tempted to entertain thoughts that aren’t pure and to become sexually active before you’re married.

Greed, Envy, Pride: If you lust for “stuff” — like clothes or gadgets — you will be tempted to envy what other people have. You may become proud of what you already have. You might even be tempted to steal.

Disobedience: If you lust for popularity and power, you will be tempted to disobey God just to get ahead.

Bible Application: (20 minutes)
Ask for a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 aloud:

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; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

What does it mean to say that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?
Why should we honor God with our bodies?

God doesn’t just want our physical bodies to stay pure; He wants our whole selves to be dedicated to Him — our bodies, our minds, and our hearts.

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 5:27-28 aloud:

You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

For starters, what is adultery? (Having sex with someone who is not your husband or wife)

What is Jesus saying here? Is adultery just the physical actions you take, or is it more?

How does lust affect your heart?

Let’s read on. Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 5:29-30 aloud:

If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

In this passage, Jesus doesn’t literally mean for you to pluck out your eye. He’s talking about the state of our hearts — how it’s important to “gouge out” bad habits and idols before they take root and lead to sin.

What does this look like in everyday life? Let’s make a list of some of the things that students your age lust after, or desire to an extreme.

Together, make a list of the inner desires (objects of lust) among students. Consider listing these out in columns on a sheet of poster board, or on a white board. (Remember, you are talking generally here — this is not a time of confession.)

In a second column, list the outward sins that can result from those inner desires if left unchecked.

In a third column, list a practical way to “gouge out” that sin. (For example, don’t use the internet in a room without other people/adults so you won’t be tempted to visit inappropriate sites.)

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<tr>
<th>Inner Desires</th>
<th>Outward Sin (Results)</th>
<th>Gouge It Out!</th>
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Commitment: (5 minutes)

When you look at this list, you may see some of your own struggles here. You may be wondering if you can really take the steps that will help get rid of those bad habits. It’s so important that all of us remember that we are not in this alone. The fact is, we can’t do this on our own, and God knows that, which is why He sent His Holy Spirit to help us. The Bible says, “I do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).
The forgiveness we find in Jesus makes a clean sweep of our hearts when it is cluttered up with sin. If you ask Him to, He will clear out the temple and make it clean and new again. We can always start over with God.

Closing: (2 minutes)
In what areas of your life do you need to start over today? Take a few moments of silent prayer to confess those to God. Ask Him to sweep those sins away and give you a fresh start. Ask for His help in plucking out those bad habits and desires that are leading you away from Him.

Close by thanking God for being a God of new beginnings.
Day 1

1. Sometimes it seems impossible that anyone could stay pure in the world we live in. Temptation surrounds us at school, on TV, on the Internet, in music, and at the movies. Trying to remain pure is like trying to stay clean while wearing white gloves and eating a ketchup Popsicle. So why is purity so important?

2. What do you think it means to be pure? What would a pure middle school student look like?

3. Read Psalm 119:9. Because all sin starts in our hearts and minds, it is especially important that we guard them. One way to keep your mind pure is to fill it with things that are wholesome.

   Read Philippians 4:8 and fill in the blanks below:

   “Finally, brothers, whatever is ____________, whatever is ____________, whatever is ____________, whatever is ____________, whatever is ____________, whatever is ____________ — if anything is ____________ or ____________ — think about such things.”

4. How does this list compare with the things that bombard your mind daily, and the topics of conversation among your friends?

5. How could you change that intentionally, to think more about wholesome things?

6. How is your choice of friends critical to keeping your mind pure?

Day 2

1. What new gadget have you purchased or received recently that required you to read the owner’s manual? How did it help you?

2. God always wants what is best for us. More than that, He knows what is best for us. He made us. He gave us all the desires that we have — physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. The law that He set out for us in scripture is a kind of owner’s manual. God is saying, “If you want a fulfilling life, live this way. This is what you were made for.”

   God’s laws about sex are an important chapter in that owner’s manual. Read the Message version of 1 Corinthians 6:16-20 (printed on the next page). What does it mean to you that your body is a sacred place where God’s spirit lives, a place created for worship?
3. God is the one who designed these bodies of ours. Sex is not a dirty word — sex was God’s idea. God made us, male and female, to enjoy physical and emotional intimacy in the context of marriage. Read Genesis 2:24-25.

Why do you think Adam and Eve felt no shame?

4. How do you think your friends view sex and marriage?

5. “Lust” is defined as “an excessive desire for something” — anything. What are some of the things that people lust for other than sex? List a few of them here:

_________________________  _______________________
_________________________  _______________________
_________________________  _______________________

6. Lust clearly does not belong in the sacred space of your heart. Does knowing that your body is God’s temple affect the way you think and make decisions, or the standards that you set for your thought life and your relationships with the opposite sex? Why or why not?

7. Twice in His life, Jesus cleared the Temple in Jerusalem of things that prevented people from getting to the heart of worship (John 2:13-25, Matthew 21:12-17). What kinds of things would He need to clear out in order for your temple to glorify Him?

**Making It Personal**

Have you talked to God about your struggles with your thoughts, asking Him to help you?

When we allow bad thoughts to take the wheel, we set ourselves up for a head-on collision with sin, heartache, and stupid mistakes. As you pray, think about the direction your life is headed.

Ask God to steer your desires toward Him, and to help you honor your body as His temple. He knows every struggle you are facing — and He is there to help you (Hebrews 4:14-16).

“There’s more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much spiritual mystery as physical fact. As written in Scripture, “The two become one.” Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever—the kind of sex that can never “become one.” There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for “becoming one” with another. Or didn’t you realize that your body is a sacred place, the place of the Holy Spirit? Don’t you see that you can’t live however you please, squandering what God paid such a high price for? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body.”

— 1 Corinthians 6:16-20 (The Message)
Lesson Objective: To encourage students to take an active role in building God’s Kingdom by being ready and available to pursue the opportunities He puts in their path.

Bible Passage(s): John 10:10b; Genesis 37, 39, 41, 45

Bible Truth: Jesus came to give us abundant life. We are called to pursue that life, not sit on the sidelines. Laziness leads to poverty and brokenness.

Optional Opener: (15 minutes)

Conversation Starters:

Are you an early bird, a night owl, or something in-between? What’s the latest you’ve ever stayed up or slept in?

Does someone wake you up in the morning or do you set an alarm clock? How many times do you usually hit the snooze button?

Have you ever missed out on something fun or important because you overslept? What happened?

Game Idea: “Who Wants to Be a Sloth?”

Find and print a picture of a sloth off of the Internet (they are pretty funny-looking animals). Start your lesson by holding up the picture and asking if anyone can guess what it is. “This week we’re going to be talking about this guy right here — you guessed it — the SLOTH. To get us started, I’m going to quiz you with some sloth trivia. See how many of these you can guess correctly.” Consider dividing your group into teams. Follow up their guesses with the question: “Is that your final answer?”

(Answers highlighted in pink)

Sloths spend most of their lives:
   a. Hanging around in trees
   b. Grooming themselves
   c. Hunting
   d. Eating

The average sloth sleeps approximately:
   a. 6 hours a day
   b. 10 hours a day
   c. 13 hours a day
   d. 18 hours a day

Sloth move at a rate of:
   a. 1.5 feet per minute
   b. 5 feet per minute
   c. 20 feet per minute
   d. They never move.

Sloths usually come down from their trees to go to the bathroom:
   a. Twice a day
   b. Once a day
   c. Every other day
   d. Once a week
Almost two-thirds of a sloth’s body weight is found in:
- a. Its brain
- b. Its stomach
- c. Its fur
- d. Its tail

Sloths eat:
- a. Birds
- b. Fish
- c. Plants and insects
- d. Small rodents

True or False: Sloths live very exciting lives.

**Transition:** (1 minute)
If you answered “true” to that last question, you’re in trouble!!

Okay, so we’re not really talking about sloth the ANIMAL this week; we’re talking about sloth the TRAP. These facts might have given you some clues, though, to what “sloth” means. What is it? (Inactivity, laziness, dislike of work or physical activity)

Sloth in our physical bodies is one thing; sloth in our spiritual lives is just as bad, if not worse. Life isn’t just what happens to us; life is about what we do with the opportunities God gives us… Opportunities to love, serve, create, explore, discover, worship…

**Interactive Learning:** (10 minutes)
What are the things in life that make you feel most alive? (Examples: being with friends, exploring the outdoors, worship, creating things)

How often do you pursue those things?

What keeps you from pursuing them? Where do you see evidence of slothfulness in your life?

Does living a full life mean only doing fun things all the time, or is there more to it?

What role does serving others play in living the kind of abundant life Jesus calls us to?

**Bible Application:** (30 minutes)
The story of Joseph in the Old Testament is a good example of someone who didn’t let life pass him by, even when it looked like he had nothing to live for.

We’ll pick up the story in *Genesis 37*, where Jacob, Joseph’s father, has just sent him off to check on his older brothers who are grazing their flocks in the fields. Joseph is Jacob’s favorite son, and Joseph’s brothers are jealous. It doesn’t help that Joseph had told his brothers that, in a dream, he saw himself ruling over them one day.

Ask for volunteers to read the following passages aloud:
- *Genesis 37:17b-22*
- *Genesis 37:23-28*

Discussion Questions:
Imagine you are Joseph right now, naked and beat up by your own family, being carted off with a bunch of strangers to a foreign land where you will live as a slave. How tempted would you be to give up and think your life was over?

What things might have been going through Joseph’s mind at that time?
As the story goes on, we see that God was with Joseph through all of his ups and downs. For every tough situation Joseph faced, God had something better for him right around the corner. Joseph just had to be ready to seize those opportunities.

Divide your group into smaller groups of 3 or 4 (depending on the number of students). Assign each group one of the following passages:

- Genesis 39:1-23
- Genesis 41:14-40
- Genesis 45:1-20

Inform the students that each group member should take on one of the following roles:

- Reader – reads the passage out loud.
- Recorder – makes notes of key thoughts expressed by the group.
- Reporter – reports the group’s answers to the larger group.
- Encourager (optional, depending on size of group) – watches for those who are not participating and encourages them to share.

Have the students talk over the following questions and prepare to share their answers with the larger group:

Give a quick summary of the passage you read.

What circumstances were working against Joseph in this passage? How might he have been tempted to just give up?

What opportunity did God present to Joseph?

How did Joseph respond to that opportunity?

What was the result?

Re-group and talk over their answers.

**Commitment:** (2 minutes)

Maybe you feel like Joseph right now, where everything seems to be working against you. Or maybe you feel like his brothers, jealous of someone else’s place in the world. Maybe everything’s going great, and you wake up excited to see what each new day will bring! Whatever our situation, we need to watch out for the trap of sloth, which will tempt us to sit back and let life pass us by. The story of Joseph reminds us that God is always working out His plan for us, even when we can’t see it. Our job is to be ready and willing to follow Him wherever He leads.

**Closing:** (2 minutes)

Thank God for the plans He has for each one of you — plans He’s had in place since before the world began. Ask Him to open your eyes to the opportunities all around you to pursue a closer relationship with Him.
Day 1

1. Have you ever been on vacation and not been able to go to sleep because you didn’t want to miss out on anything? That’s how life should be for us! There’s no telling what exciting opportunities await us from one day to the next.

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10b). What are some of the dreams you have for your life?

2. Unfortunately, sloth — better known as laziness — is the sin that often gets in the way of those dreams. It’s an easy trap to fall into because all you have to do is, well… nothing. Where do you see evidence of slothfulness in your life?

- Major oversleeping
- Procrastination
- Lack of motivation
- Skipping homework
- Not using my gifts/talents
- Other: ________________

3. Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 and fill in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servant #1</th>
<th>What he received:</th>
<th>What he earned:</th>
<th>Master’s response:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servant #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Servant #3</td>
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4. Why was the master upset with the lazy servant? (Check all that apply)

- The servant didn’t even deposit the money in the bank, where it would’ve grown.
- The servant tried to make money but failed.
- The servant spent the money on himself.
- The servant wasted an opportunity by doing nothing.

5. How is sloth different from God’s character, as seen in Psalm 121:1-4?

6. Why do you think God dislikes sloth so much?
Day 2

1. God created us to have an active role in building His kingdom, not to be spectators on the sidelines. Look at the positive example He has given us in nature in Proverbs 6:6-11. What inspiration can we find in a little ant?

2. True or false? Resting = sloth
   Why or why not? (Hint: read Exodus 20:8-11.)

3. Share a time when you overcame being tired or lazy and really pulled through and completed something worthwhile.

4. Now share a time when you sensed God telling you to rest and refocus. How did He use that time to refresh you?

5. The Apostle Paul gives us an important pep talk in Hebrews 12:1-2, where he compares the Christian life to running a race. Read it and fill in the blanks below:

   “Therefore, since we are __________ by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us __________ __________ __________ everything that __________ and the sin that so easily __________, and let us __________ __________ __________ the race marked out for us.”

6. Who are the witnesses in your life that are cheering you on?

7. What does a runner do to keep going even when he/she’s tired?

8. How can you apply those practices to your life as a Christian?

Making It Personal

When we are suited up and ready to go, there’s no telling where the race will lead. Wouldn’t you rather be part of the adventure than sleep through it? Pray that God would give you the energy and endurance to chase down the good things He has planned for you.
Lesson Objective: To teach students healthy ways to handle their anger.

Bible Passage(s): Ephesians 4:26-27

Bible Truth: God instructs us not to sin out of anger. It is better to remain cool-headed and make peace than to stir up an argument.

Opener: (15 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

When was the last time you did something really clumsy? What happened? Did you break or spill something? Did you end up hurting yourself?

What do you think causes silly accidents like that? (Carelessness, not paying attention, trying to do something too fast, general klutziness)

Do you think it’s possible to be a klutz with your words? Meaning — do we ever speak words carelessly, or say something hurtful because we didn’t think it through first?

When are you more likely to say something you’ll regret: when you’re calm or when you’re raging mad? Why is that?

Introduction: (5 minutes)

This week we are talking about another one of Satan’s traps: WRATH.

Based on the devo you did this week, can anyone tell me what wrath is? (Strong anger, fury, resentment, a desire to punish someone out of anger)

We’ve all heard the rhyme, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” True or false?

We all know that words do hurt. All of us, at one time or another, have said hurtful things to someone else because we were mad. We also know what it’s like to be on the receiving end of someone else’s anger. The Bible, when it talks about our speech in James 3:5-6, says: “Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue is also a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.”

If the tongue is a fire, picture wrath as lighter fluid. Nothing heats up an argument faster than anger that is out of control.

Bible Application: (25 minutes)

Let’s examine this a little further. I’m going to call this exercise “Hot and Cold.” (On a piece of poster board or dry erase board, draw a line straight down the middle to create two columns. Label one side “Hot” and the other “Cold.” You may want to use a red marker for “Hot” and blue for “Cold” to emphasize the point.)

We’re going to look up some verses in the Bible that contrast a hot-tempered man with a cool-tempered man.

Ask for volunteers to read the following verses aloud. After each verse is read, pause to ask the group what it means and what it reveals about a hot or cool-tempered person. Write those characteristics/lessons in the corresponding column.
That last verse we read, from Ephesians, says: “In your anger do not sin.” This shows that anger, by itself, is not necessarily a sinful emotion. There were times when Jesus got angry, like when He saw that the people had turned God’s temple into a marketplace, and He turned over the tables of the moneychangers (John 2:13-17). Things like injustice — when someone is being treated unfairly — can and should make us angry. Sometimes people do need to be punished. But God is telling us, “In your anger do not sin.” It’s what we do with our anger that can get us into trouble. Moses is a good example of that in the Old Testament.

Ask for a volunteer to read Exodus 2:11-15 aloud and discuss the following questions as a group:

What happened that made Moses so angry?
Was he right in being angry in that situation?
How did he handle his anger? Did he sin?
What would have been a better response?
How did Moses’s sin catch up with him? (What was the penalty?)

Interactive Learning: (10 minutes)

Now let’s put what we’ve learned to work. I’m going to have each of you come up, two at a time, to do a little role play on how to handle your anger. One of you will read a sentence from a card that has the potential to cause an argument. I want the other person to show how a cool-tempered girl/guy might respond in a healthy way.

Distribute role play prompts from Handout #1.

Commitment: (5 minutes)
Ask the students to close their eyes and bow their heads.

Is anger taking up room in your heart? Take a quiet moment to search your heart and see if you are harboring resentment toward someone else. Is your anger causing you to sin? Is it keeping you from living the life of love God calls you to?

Revenge is not our job. Our job, according to Micah 6:8, is to “act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” As people who have been forgiven by God, we need to extend that same forgiveness to others. Sometimes that means confronting someone and talking through the problem in a healthy way. Sometimes it means turning the other cheek. Ask God to take your anger from you and to give you wisdom to deal with those types of situations without sinning.

Closing: (2 minutes)

Close in prayer, praising God for being slow to anger.
“Oh, you didn’t want that last piece of pizza, did you? I just assumed you weren’t hungry.”

“Why should I care whether you want me to drive you to the mall? GET OUT OF MY ROOM!”

(Laughing) “Ummm… nice hair cut!” (more laughter)

(In a very cheerful, loud voice) “Morning, Sunshine! Time to get up for school! Up and at 'em!! Let's go, let's go!”

“Oh, I can’t come to your party — I’m going to Jackie’s party instead. Sorry!” (In a voice that doesn’t sound very sorry at all)

“YOU want to try out for the football team? As what — the ball?”

“You know how you lent me your iPod? Well, it sort of fell in the pool.”

“I’m going to beat that kid up. You gonna try and stop me, tough guy?”
Wrath

Day 1

1. Have you ever destroyed something out of frustration or anger? Did it feel good at the time? How about later?

2. Which of the following statements is true? (Hint: Read Psalm 4:4.)

   [ ] It is wrong to become angry.
   [ ] Jesus never experienced anger, so neither should we.
   [ ] Anger itself is not sinful; what we do with that anger can be sinful.
   [ ] Anger never leads to sin.

3. How do you usually deal with your anger?

   [ ] Pray
   [ ] Go for a walk or run
   [ ] Break or punch something
   [ ] Shout
   [ ] Stomp
   [ ] Pout
   [ ] Other: _______________________

4. What is a healthy way to cool off?

5. When anger reaches super-hot temperatures, it can be described as wrath. Wrath, as you can imagine, is a dangerous emotion. Anyone who gets too close is likely to get burned! According to Proverbs 30:33, what results from this kind of anger?

6. What is the opposite of wrath? And what is an example of this emotion?

7. As sinners, we deserve God’s full wrath for our disobedience (Romans 1:18). According to 1 Thessalonians 5:9, what does God give us instead?

   [ ] Judgment
   [ ] Approval
   [ ] A lecture
   [ ] Salvation

8. If wrath is a fire, God’s grace is a giant fire extinguisher. The Bible instructs us to forgive one another as God forgave us, which doesn’t leave room for revenge. Read Psalm 4:4 and James 1:19-20. What do these verses show you about how could you deal with your anger in a more constructive way?
Day 2

1. Read the following verses and write down one thing that each verse teaches you about anger, patience, or self-control:

- Proverbs 15:1:

- Proverbs 29:11:

- Ecclesiastes 7:9:

2. What message do you think the Holy Spirit is trying to get through to you, personally, through these verses?

3. Oftentimes we hold onto anger as a way of punishing others. The sad thing is that, in the end, the only person we are really hurting is ourself. Take a look at one of the many examples of the Pharisees’ wrath for Jesus in Mark 3:1-6. Why were they watching Jesus so carefully?

4. What did their anger keep them from seeing? How did it hurt them in the end?

5. How did Jesus respond to their wrath in Luke 23:34?

6. Aristotle, a very wise man who lived long ago, once said, “Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose and in the right way—that is not within everyone’s power and that is not easy.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

7. As believers, how can we be examples to the world by the way we handle ourselves and our anger?

Making It Personal

Close your time with a prayer asking God to help you be slow to anger, like He is. Be bold! Dare to ask that sometime this week He would give you an opportunity to put what you’ve learned to use.

“Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of better confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back — in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.” — Frederick Buechner
Lesson Objective: To teach students about the freedom that comes when we are so excited about God’s goodness to us that we can rejoice with others when they experience His blessings too.

Bible Passages: Proverbs 14:30, 1 Peter 2:1-3

Bible Truth: Envy makes us sick from the inside out, because it poisons our ability to celebrate the blessings in each other’s lives. Part of our spiritual growth is to put envious ways behind us and pursue a life of love.

Optional Opener: “I want what s/he’s got!” (15 minutes)

The rules for this icebreaker game are similar to those for a white elephant gift exchange, if you’ve ever done one of those at Christmastime.

Set up the game by informing the students that, since they all got straight A’s on their last report card (hypothetically), they will each be receiving a prize. The “prizes,” in this case, will be pictures you have cut out in advance from magazines and sealed up in individual envelopes, enough for each student to choose one. This should be a mixture of great prizes (pictures of a new car, vacation spot, beauty products, sports gear) and not-so-great prizes (kitchen appliances, kitty litter, deodorant… have fun with these). Since the envelopes are sealed, the students will have no idea whether they are choosing a good or bad prize.

To start, have the students draw numbers from a hat or bowl, which will determine the order in which they will get to select their prizes.

The person who has picked #1 will go first and choose an envelope from the “prize pile.” He or she will open it and show its contents to the group, then keep it for the time being. Student #2 will go next. S/he can either choose to take an unopened envelope from the prize pile or steal the prize from Student #1 by saying, “I want what s/he’s got!”

Each person in turn is allowed to either open a new envelope or steal any of the prizes previously opened. If someone’s prize is stolen, that person can immediately open a new one or steal another prize. After all turns have been taken, the person who went first has the option of taking one more turn, giving him or her the opportunity to steal the prize s/he likes best.

Introduction: (2 minutes)

How many of you can relate to that feeling of “I want what s/he’s got!”? All of us, I’m sure! Envy is a common struggle, especially between siblings and friends. It’s the unhappy feeling that comes when something good is happening to someone else. Satan likes us to think that there aren’t enough good things to go around, as though we need to compete for God’s blessings. Wrong! God’s love does not have a limit. He wants us to be so convinced of His goodness to us that we are overjoyed with His goodness to others.

Interactive Learning: ABS Nightly News (30 minutes)

Divide your group into four smaller groups. Assign each group one of the following passages:

- Cain and Abel: Genesis 4:1-16
- Joseph and His Brothers: Genesis 37:4-11, 19-28
- Miriam, Aaron, and Moses: Numbers 12:1-15
- King Saul and David: 1 Samuel 18:5-16
Inform each group that they have been given the role of investigative reporters. Their job is to read over the passage and discuss their answers to the following questions:

What example(s) of envy do you find? What caused it?
What were the consequences of that envy?
What lesson can we learn from this story?

After a few minutes have passed, each group will be responsible for delivering a mini “newscast” to the larger group in which they report back on what they found. As the ABS leader, you have the role of anchorman. As you begin the “broadcast,” your introduction may go something like this:

“Welcome to ABS Nightly News, I’m ____________. Tonight we bring you a special report on a dangerous and potentially deadly trap: ENVY. Joining us live are several reporters in the field who will share with us their observations on this fatal attraction. We begin with (name) ____________ just outside Eden, where Little Bo Peep has lost more than her sheep...” (Group 1 reports on Cain and Abel)

The groups can “report back” in whatever format they choose, either sticking with one designated “reporter,” who will sum up their findings, or perhaps even interviewing some of the parties involved (for example, Saul and David, or witnesses to the scene).

As anchorman, you will prod them along with questions if needed, make the transitions between groups, and offer closing comments to wrap up the broadcast (below):

“And there you have it — an important lesson for all of us on the dangers of envy. It’s like they say in Proverbs 14:30: “A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.” That’s ABS Nightly News for this evening; I’m (name) ____________. Join us tomorrow night, when we discuss how gluttony rots the teeth. From all of us here at ABS, good night.”

Bible Application: (5 minutes)

Envy is obviously unhealthy for our spiritual lives. If we want to become spiritually mature, we need to fill up on the good things of God, like contentment and love. The more we taste of God’s goodness to us, the more we should be transformed into people who can rejoice with each other over God’s generous blessings.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-3 aloud:

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

What does this mean to you?

How have you tasted God’s goodness lately?

Commitment: (2 minutes)

When you feel yourself heading for the “envy trap,” take a moment to thank God for the blessings in your life. Remember, everything is a gift! God doesn’t owe us anything, and yet He loves us so much that He didn’t even withhold His Son from us. We never need to compete for His love or His blessings.

Closing: (5 minutes)

Since this is our last week in the “Fatal Attraction” series, I’d like to give you all an opportunity to share something you’ve learned over the last seven weeks. Does anyone want to share with the group?

After the students have had an opportunity to share, close in prayer. Thank God for delivering us from the traps that Satan lays for us. Ask Him to help all of you live out what you’ve learned so that you might bring glory to Him.
Day 1

When was your last sick day? Did it take much convincing for your parents to let you stay home? What makes you feel better when you’re under the weather?

Envy is its own kind of sickness. Have you ever heard the expression, “green with envy”? In ancient Greece, people believed that when you were jealous, your body produced too much of a greenish liquid called bile that would actually tint your skin green. Of course, this is more fiction than fact, but the Bible does tell us that envy is as destructive as a disease.

1. Read Proverbs 14:30 (NIV) and fill in the blanks below:

   “A heart at __________ gives __________ to the body, but envy __________ the __________.

2. Envy is the unhappy feeling that comes because something good is happening to someone else. What “good things” are usually the objects of your envy? (Be honest!)

3. Do you think it’s possible to love and envy someone at the same time? [ ] Yes [ ] No

   Why or why not?

4. When you think about it, envy is basically greed taken to a new level. Greed is wanting something for yourself; envy is not wanting someone else to have it. It is as old as the scriptures themselves. Look at Genesis 25:19-28. What was the brothers’ relationship like, even before they were born?

   [ ] Best friends forever  [ ] Competitive  [ ] Distant

5. Now read Genesis 25:29-34. As the oldest, Esau would have inherited the family fortune, which included the blessing God had given to Abraham and his descendants. What deal did the brothers make about the birthright? (Check all that apply)

   [ ] Jacob took advantage of his brother’s impulsive nature and made a quick trade.
   [ ] Jacob agreed to serve his older brother out of respect for him.
   [ ] Esau decided that Jacob deserved the birthright and graciously gave it to him.
   [ ] Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a hot meal.

6. You may know the rest of this story from Genesis 27. Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, tricked Isaac into giving Jacob his blessing by dressing him up as his older brother. How did Esau respond in Genesis 27:34-38?

7. How do you think you would have responded?

8. According to Genesis 27:41, how did Esau feel about his brother, and what made Esau’s attitude sinful?
Envy is a common struggle between siblings and friends. It often comes from the belief that there aren’t enough good things to go around. Remember that you never have to compete for God’s love. He wants us to be so convinced of His goodness to us that we are overjoyed with His goodness to others.

**Day 2**

An old Cherokee chief was teaching his grandson about life: “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil — he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, self-doubt, and ego. The other is good — he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. This same fight is going on inside you — and inside every other person, too.”

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?”

The old chief simply replied, “The one we feed.”

As we wrap up this series, think about the fight going on inside you. In the first column below, list your fatal attractions. In the middle column, list the positive qualities God can build in you to help overcome those struggles. In the far right-hand column, list one way you can feed each of those positive qualities so they will grow stronger in you. (See example.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Evil Wolf”</th>
<th>“Good Wolf”</th>
<th>Feeding Instructions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pride</td>
<td>humility</td>
<td>show respect to my parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Making It Personal**

Sometimes, it feels like Satan is laying a trap for us at every turn. Certain sins always seem to get us down, no matter how hard we try. Defeat is another trap Satan uses to convince us that we will never be free from our struggles.

The good news of Jesus is that He sets us free. **Romans 8:1-2** says:

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.* (NLT)

Remember that God’s life-giving Spirit is at work in you. You don’t have to be afraid to bring all of your struggles to God. He wants to set you free. Thank Him for that today.