

## Community of Faith Approach

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# Rock it Out in Every Walk of Life

## Summary

This lesson plan seeks to connect the various generations of the faith community in teamwork, dialogue, and prayer. Nurturing the faith, at any age, is not solely the responsibility of the pastor of a church nor the parents of a child, but rather it is the responsibility of the entire congregation.

## Introduction

We are ready to “Rock it Out” as a body of believers from every generation. After separating ages in Sunday school, small groups, and even sometimes in a worship service, we are calling every age, in all walks of life to come together and share in fellowship in a retreat type setting. There may be critics who say, “I don’t even understand kids these days” and there could be youth shouting, “You mean we have to hang out with OLD PEOPLE?” and the answer is YES! How are we supposed to understand or even the scary thought of “LEARN” from each other if we don’t ever interact in some way? Let’s take those skeptics, bring them together and help them learn from each other by strategically forming small groups with every age represented. These groups will interact together through sharing, team building, prayer, worship, and (dare I say) fun competition in a weekend forming bonds that they can take home with them and continue to develop in the church. Let the youth learn from the wisdom of our elders and let the minds of the children be a reminder that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

## Approach

It seems that church classes, retreats, and events are broken up into age-level peer groups. Though it is important for people to meet with others their age and learn from curriculum that is geared for their age group, it

is equally important to hear and learn from other generations within the congregation. The community of faith approach seeks to verticalize the relationships of the church family while emphasizing that learning happens wherever members of the community of faith may be gathered. This lesson focuses on building relationships by working together as a team and sharing faith stories with one another. People and stories are an integral part of the community of faith approach.

But most of all, this lesson is about the experience of being a valued member of the faith community. John Westerhoff claims, “The most significant and fundamental form of learning is experience.”<sup>1</sup> As the participants play, talk, and listen, they also learn from one another, old and young together.

## The Context

This lesson is geared toward a retreat style setting for a church family with five groups of eight to 10 people. There will need to be a central gathering place where everyone will meet and form their small groups also known as “rock groups.” All rock groups should be able to see and hear the facilitator who will refer to questions on screen. With more people, form more small groups; with some rock group assignments repeated, such as acting out the rock-themed Bible stories with the possibility of creating a new genre. Less than five groups would work fine, but stay with eight to 10 people in a group so that more ages are represented.

## Theological Exploration

Some of us our blessed with large families, some of us draw close to our small family, and

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<sup>1</sup> John H. Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?*(Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1976), 61.

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some of us might not have much of a family at all. Regardless of the size or number of blood relatives we have, we can all come together as one big church family. As a church family, we all have a commonality of our Father in heaven. Regardless of age we are all called to unite as a body of Christ, working side by side to learn and grow from each other. We may be taking everyone out of their comfort zones, but want each person to leave with an experience where all ages are welcome to share, learn, and worship as a body of one.

### Learning Goals

Upon completing this lesson, participants will be enriched<sup>2</sup> by:

- Engaging in conversation and fellowship with the community of the church family.
- Experiencing the benefits of knowing and learning from people of different generations.
- Observing what faith may look like in every stage of life.
- Spending time listening to and praying for other members of their faith community.

### Scripture References

- [Deuteronomy 6:6-7](#)
- [Isaiah 11:6](#)
- [1 Samuel 17](#)
- [Matthew 7:24-27](#)
- [Luke 8:1-15](#)
- [Psalm 18:2](#)
- [Deuteronomy 5:1-17](#)
- [Matthew 16:13-20](#)

### Exegetical Summary

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 is part of a larger passage that is speaking to the importance of the commandments. The required mindset needed to maintain the centrality of the

<sup>2</sup> Jolene L. Roehlkepartain, *Nurturing Faith in Families: 425 Creative Ideas for Family Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 12.

commandments' authority is explained to the leader of the household.<sup>3</sup> Verse 6 refers to the commandments again saying "these words," adding emphasis to the importance of the commandments and directing what is most likely the lay citizens upon how to carry out instruction in their homes.<sup>4</sup>

Isaiah 11:6 is in the middle of a passage referring to an ideal hope in kingship in Judah and a return to the conditions of Eden.<sup>5</sup> Verse 6 leads us in the ideal state of companionship where wild beasts, dangerous reptiles, domesticated animals, and children all live in harmony.<sup>6</sup> These seemingly unrelated creatures would be of one flock, of the same herd, and "friends." Lastly, we are informed that the herdsman or leader of this ideal flock will be a little child.

These two passages set forth the purpose of this lesson: Deuteronomy 6:6-7—younger persons need to learn and hear from older persons, and Isaiah 6:11—older persons need to learn and hear from younger persons. The activities in this lesson create shared space for all ages to play, create, share stories, pray, and learn together.

### Preparing for the Lesson

The facilitator should review the following items before implementing the lesson:

- The teacher should familiarize himself or herself with the lesson plan (activities, scripture, and exegesis, as well as evaluation points to check on throughout the lesson).
- Before the retreat, divide all registered participants into intergenerational small groups consisting of eight to 10 people per group. Be sure that each

<sup>3</sup> Leander E. Keck, *The New Interpreter's Bible Vol. II* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1998) p. 341-344.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Bible Vol. V* (New York, Abingdon Press, 1956) p. 248-250.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

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group is a mixture of ages and families so that individuals get to know more people.

- Make nametags for all participants with the participant's name and rock group name.
- Make rock group signs to be placed by group meeting location.
- Room set-up: eight to 10 chairs (based on number in each group) in a circle with a sign stating what group will be meeting there.
- Set up computer, projector, and screen if they are not already in your meeting room.
- Participants should bring their own Bibles.
- When people arrive, they should be given a nametag with their name and the name of their assigned group. They find their group by matching the group name on their nametag to the circle that has the sign of their group's name. Be sure to have a few extra "helpers" available to aid in any confusion.

### Supplies Needed

- Bibles (three per group in case participants forget to bring one or don't have one.)
- Nametags with name and group printed
- Screen and projector
- Laptop (extension cords, if needed)
- Table, if needed for laptop and/or projector

### Preparing for Activity 1

Prepare a PowerPoint/Keynote/Prezi slide with the following prayer:

*All: Who is my mother, who is my brother? All those who gather 'round Jesus*

*Parents: Spirit-blown people, born from the Gospel sit at the table 'round Jesus*

*Grandparents: Differently abled, differently labeled widen the circle 'round Jesus*

*College: Crutches and stigmas, cultures, enigmas all come together 'round Jesus*

*Children: Love will relate us—color or status can't segregate us, 'round Jesus*

*Youth: Family failings, human derailings are all accepted 'round Jesus*

*All: Bound by one vision, met for one mission we claim each other 'round Jesus. Here is my mother; here is my brother, kindred in Spirit through Jesus. Amen.<sup>7</sup>*

### Preparing for Activity 4

Determine locations where rock groups may prepare their Bible skit. These locations can be in the same room but far enough away where they can't be over heard.

Prepare six slips of paper with the following:

- Matthew 7:24-27 (Soap Opera)
- 1 Samuel 17 (Sci-fi Robot)
- Luke 8:1-15 (Old Western)
- Psalm 18:2 (Rap)
- Deuteronomy 5:1-17 (Teen Drama)
- Matthew 16:13-20 (Italian Mafia)

### Preparing for Activity 5

Prepare a PowerPoint/Keynote/Prezi slide with each question written separately.

### Preparing for Activity 6

Stones (one per participant): big enough to write on, small enough to fit in the palm of your hand.

Sharpies/permanent markers (five to six per group)

### Other helpful hints:

Make sure all the sharpies/markers will write on the stones before handing them out for people to use.

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from *The Faith We Sing*, "Who Is My Mother, Who Is My Brother." (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), #2225.

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When setting up the screen, projector, and laptop, make sure you place them where all students will be able to see.

### Lesson Activities

*Opening/Gathering (20 minutes):*

*Opening Prayer (2 minutes)*

Have the facilitator welcome everyone and ask the participants to join him/her in the opening prayer found on the screen. (See the Preparation Section, under multi-generational prayer.)

*Introductions (8 minutes)*

After the prayer, the facilitator should invite each group to introduce themselves to one another by sharing their name, the age they think they act, and by sharing their favorite “rock” song, or song that mentions the word “rock.”

*Rock ‘n Chant (10 minutes)*

Challenge the groups to create a group chant or cheer that includes their group name. Encourage them to be as creative as they can and include all members of their group. After eight minutes have each group share their chant with the rest of the groups.

**Engaging/Exploring (50 minutes):**

*Rocky HOLY Picture Show (20 minutes)*

Explain that each rock group will receive a slip of paper with a different Bible story that refers to a rock or uses a rock in one way or another that must remain a secret from all other groups. They are to act out this story using EVERY member of the group in some way. Encourage them that they can be creative in using every member and not every person has to portray a person.

Also explain that each slip of paper will also have an acting genre that they are to use for the inspiration and direction of their acting and scenes. For instance if the acting genre was a

musical then everyone would break out into song and dance simultaneously or if it was a romantic comedy it might take place in a fancy restaurant in Paris instead of next to the watering hole in Jerusalem.

Inform them that names of Bible characters are NOT to be disclosed to give the story away. Names may be used in another way or changed to help correlate the genre they must portray. When it is time for rock groups to act out their story in front of everyone, the audience will then guess what Bible story that rock group was assigned and hopefully the obvious genre that they portrayed. Remind groups that they WANT the audience to be able to guess.

Instruct the rock groups to go to the previously determined areas and that they will have 10 minutes to work on their story’s scene before presenting it to the group.

After the 10 minutes is up ask all groups to return. Then ask for the group with the youngest person in it to go first. Once they have finished their acting story, ask the audience to guess which Bible story was being portrayed and the genre in which they were acting. Proceed with the same pattern until all groups have shared.

*The Rocks of Our Lives (30 minutes)*

Share with the groups that different parts of our lives can be defined by “rocks.” Ask them to answer the following questions one at a time, starting with the first question with everyone taking a turn to answer it accordingly, then continue on to the second and so on. Encourage them to take time to explain “why” with each answer. Each question can be defined or interpreted in whatever direction the group wants to go.

Questions should be projected on screen visible for everyone to see. After instructions are given reveal the first question. Once you

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feel like groups are getting close to finishing question one reveal the second.

Do not leave time where groups are waiting on the next question; always have the next question ready. (Use Question 3 at your own discretion. Depending on time you may want groups to move on to Question 4.)

### Questions:

1. What has been a milestone in your life and why was it important to you?
2. What has been a boulder in your life that was hard to overcome and how did you overcome it?
3. What has been a stepping stone in your life?
4. When has God been a Rock in your life?

### Responding/Committing (8 minutes):

**The Rolling Stones:** Gather the groups back together after the allotted amount of time and invited them into a time of reflection. (Set the tone for this time by turning the lights down, lighting a few candles, and playing some soft, reflective music in the background.) Pose the questions: *What is a current boulder in your life? What is blocking your path? What is weighing you down?* Have some “helpers” pass out stones and markers. Ask the participants to write a few words about their “boulder” on their stone but be sure to share that they will be giving their stone to another member of the group.

After a few minutes, invite each person to pair up with another member of their group, preferably someone they didn’t know before this retreat (if a group has an odd number of people, they can form a group of three within their larger group). Invite the pairs to share what they wrote on their rock with each other and pray together. After a few minutes, ask them to hand their “boulder” stone to their partner and explain that each person’s partner will take home their stone and continue to remember them in prayer.

### Closing/Departing (2 minutes):

Close the group in the following prayer:  
*Heavenly Creator, we are thankful for the milestones and the stepping stones in our lives. We know there will be many boulders in our lives but we are so grateful that we don’t have to carry those boulders all by ourselves. We thank you for our friends, of all ages, who sit with us in our sorrows and rejoice with us in our happiness. And most of all, we thank you for being our solid rock and our firm foundation. Guide our hearts, minds, and actions as we live our lives to your glory. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.*

### Reflection and Evaluation

When the lesson is complete, the facilitator should reflect on the following questions in order to evaluate the success of the lesson:

- What was the level of participation by those who attended?
- Were there enough participants from each age group to have at least one in every group?
- How engaged were the participants during the discussion? Were there many people involved in the discussions or was one person (or a few people) dominating the dialogue? Did everyone get a chance to share?
- Did the participants seem interested in the lesson? Why or why not?
- Do you feel the goals of the program were reached? How do you know? If so, what helped reach the goals? If not, what hindered the reaching of them?
- How effective were the activities in helping to reach the goals?
- What worked in this lesson and what is its value?
- What could be improved?