

Theme Class:

A Study of James

There are a variety of activities provided for each lesson. Pick and choose the ones best suited for your camp and campers.



Background for the Teacher

- James is one of seven letters called the “General Letters”: First and Second Peter; James; First, Second, and Third John; and Jude. It was written with a specific message for a wide group of people rather than a specific audience.
- James is not like a real letter but more like a sermon, sometimes called a homily. It begins with the standard Greek opening, but after the opening all traces of the letter form vanish. There are no personal greetings anywhere in this book. It does, however, address congregational situations facing the early Christians, such as social inequity and inward strife.
- It is believed to have been written between 70 and 90 AD—two or more generations after the time of Jesus.
- Traditionally, this book has been attributed to James the brother of Jesus, although many modern biblical scholars think it may have been a disciple of James and not Jesus’ brother who wrote it.
- James gives lots of advice about how to live a Christian life: He tells about the danger of double-mindedness and pride, enduring trials, equality of rich and poor, the importance of doing the word, and the danger of loose talk. The book of James is also about justice.
- James was written to Jewish Christians—Jews who followed the teachings of Jesus—under the rule of the Roman Empire.
- The distinction between faith and works in James has at times been pitted against Pauline theology of being “saved by grace.” It is important to remember that for Paul, justification is about how Gentiles are “saved” and “made right with God.” James is addressing Jews who were already “right with God”; therefore, his concern is not about “getting in” but is instead about how one “stays in” and lives as an effective Christian by the things they do. And for James that means doing works of justice and charity.
- The role of James in the canon is to keep Christian faith anchored in the faith of the Old Testament. James’s God is the God of the law, prophets and writings. It bridges between the Old Testament wisdom and prophetic traditions and the New Testament. It links to the Jesus tradition (both sayings and practices) and provides an intracanonical conversation with Paul. James is a New Testament peace and justice text.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

Look for more background information throughout the lessons in boxes that look like this!

Theme 1 Finding Joy

Class James 1:2–4; 17–27

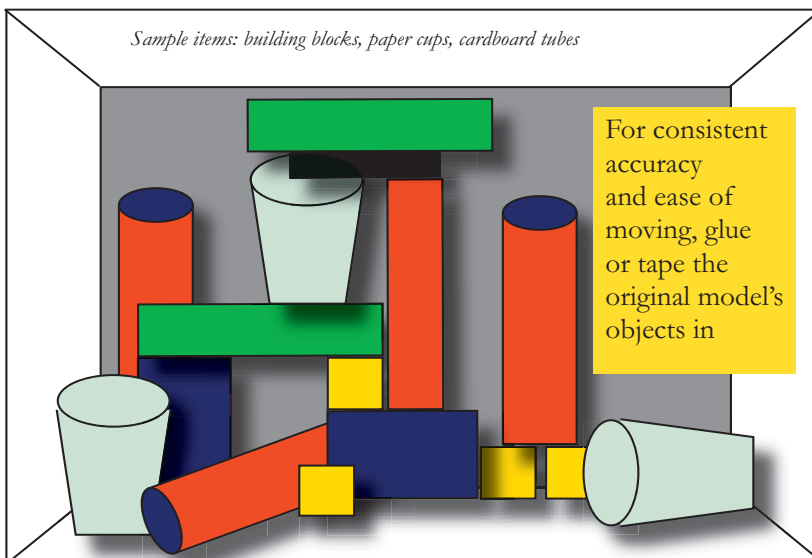
Looking at . . . James 1:2–4 NIV

My brothers and sisters, you will face all kinds of trouble. When you do, think of it as pure joy. Your faith will be put to the test. You know that when that happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. The strength to keep going must be allowed to finish its work then; you will be all you should be. You will have everything you need.

Finding-Joy Challenge

SET-UP

Set a large box on its side, the open side turned away from the class. Inside the box build a structure or arrangement using the exact same items each cabin group will collect. Spread out enough supplies on a table for each cabin to collect the required amount. Use signs next to items to identify the number they need to pick up.



INSTRUCTIONS

Have each cabin group choose a messenger. After necessary supplies are picked up, the messenger may check out the arrangement inside the box. They will then return to their cabin group and explain how to recreate an exact duplicate, one step at a time. The messenger may not place any items; they can only explain with words how it should be done. The messenger may return to look at the arrangement as many times as necessary. When a group believes they have recreated the exact arrangement they should shout, "We've got the joy!" If upon comparison with the original the group has created an exact duplicate, stop and compare all the other groups as well. If the group's arrangement is not the same, continue building.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How frustrating was it to try to follow a plan without being able to see the model?
- How important was the messenger in communicating the plan?
- Despite frustrations, what helped to bring joy to the activity?
- When have you been able to have or find joy when you were facing trouble?
- What or who brought you strength when you were facing the trouble?
- Who is the example or model that you try to follow?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

The writer of James reminded the people to follow the model of Jesus. Even though the people were away from Jerusalem, they still needed to remember and follow Jesus' guidelines. This would be difficult. The people needed to share together, learn through their frustrations, and support each other through difficulties. In summary, you do not need to see the model—Jesus—to be able to follow his example.

Scripture Clue

PREPARATION

Prepare for this activity ahead by asking counselors, CITs, and others to help. Divide an open area into “rooms” using fly tents or tarpaulins. Under each fly tent set a table, chairs, blankets, etc. Assign a leader to each area, and provide them with the information and resources they will need for their “room” activity. Except for the final room, the order in which campers move from room to room does not matter. Have plenty of Bibles available.

SETTING IT UP

Exegesis is a word used to describe the process of dissecting scripture for study and understanding in the context from which it was written. Much of the exegesis process is speculation and conclusions based on research and clues gathered together. The Bible is a mystery in that it is unfolded as we research, study, pray, and read. It is much like a game of Clue®—answers are discovered through a combination of investigation, listening, instinct (the Spirit at work), and a willingness to learn.

Explain that they are going to play a live game of “Clue®” to uncover new understandings about the message of James and how it relates to their lives today.

Give each camper a copy of the “room” map and questions to be researched and discovered.

“ROOM” OPTIONS

If class is held inside, mark off “rooms” with masking tape. If class is outside, designate “rooms” with identifiers like “under the big tree” and “at the blue bench.”

MIX ‘EM UP

A Simple Way to Break into Small Groups

As campers wander into class give each person a color card, sticker, or other simple identifier. (Match the number of colors to the number of camper groups needed for the Scripture Clue Game activity.) Do not explain, just hand the cards out. Mix cards ahead of time (red, yellow, blue, green, red yellow, blue, green, red...). This will help mix up friends and cabin groups without making an issue of it. When the time comes, ask the color groups to gather together. Assign an adult to each color to help keep activities on track.

SMALL CAMP?

- Move from room to room together.
- OR let individuals move from room to room at their own pace.

LARGER CAMP?

- Break into small groups and rotate through rooms.

Answers to Discover

- Who wrote the book of James?
- When was James written?
- Where is James located in the Bible?
 - Is James located in the Old Testament or New Testament?
 - What book comes before it?
 - What book comes after it?
 - How long is James?
 - Which is the longest chapter?
 - Which is the shortest chapter?
- What was life like for those who read the words of James?
- What are the messages of James?
- How are the Bible versions different for James 1:17–27?
- What does James 1:17–27 say to me?
- What do the “General Letters” have in common?

Room 1: Who wrote the book of James?

SET-UP: Post a large sign that says: *Will the real author please stand up!* Put “authors” in biblical costumes.

TEACHER INFO:

It is not certain who wrote the book of James. There are several people with the name of “James” that biblical scholars have considered. The two most likely candidates are 1) James the brother of Jesus, and 2) an unknown author who was also named James or wrote in the name of James (the brother of Jesus). James was a common name in that day and time. It is important to note that regardless of James’s identity, he was a conservative Jewish Christian. Whoever the author was, he was representing his Jewish heritage, his loyalty to the Law, in the light of his newer Christian faith.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Have the three possible authors stand, one at a time, and read their information. From that information, campers will deduct their own response to the question, “Who wrote the book of James and when?”

POSSIBLE AUTHOR 1:

I am the author of James, “. . . a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). You have heard of my brother—at least my famous brother. When I was young he was considered a rebel, and I was not always sure what I thought of him. Today my brother, Jesus, is known as Savior, a teacher, Son of God, and a friend. Eventually, I too came to believe and served as the leader of the Jerusalem church. Sometimes I am called “James the Just.” I was stoned to death in 62 AD for breaking Jewish Law established by the Torah.

POSSIBLE AUTHOR 2:

I am the author of James, “. . . a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). I did not personally know Jesus, but I have been taught by many about him—even some who knew him personally. When I was a young boy, I heard James, the brother of Jesus, speak. He was very old but I remember how special I thought he was since we both were named James! James the brother of Jesus, died many years ago, but the message of Jesus Christ has remained a part of my fiber and being. I did not write to convert Gentiles to Christianity. I wrote to remind other Jewish Christians what it meant to live out their discipleship as Christians.

POSSIBLE AUTHOR 3:

I am the author of James, “. . . a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (James 1:1). I did not personally know Jesus, but the message of the gospel was taught and shared with me by many true disciples of Christ—sometimes at great risk to their own life. Like Jesus, I too am of Jewish heritage. I believe in Christ as the promised Messiah. I wrote in the name of James, the brother of Jesus, even though he died long before I penned these words—thirty to fifty years before. I believe that my words carry on the message of James, the brother of Jesus, and in that message the authority of his name lives on.

Room 2: Where is James located in the Bible?

SET-UP: Place Bibles on a table.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS: Use the Bibles to find the answers to the following questions:

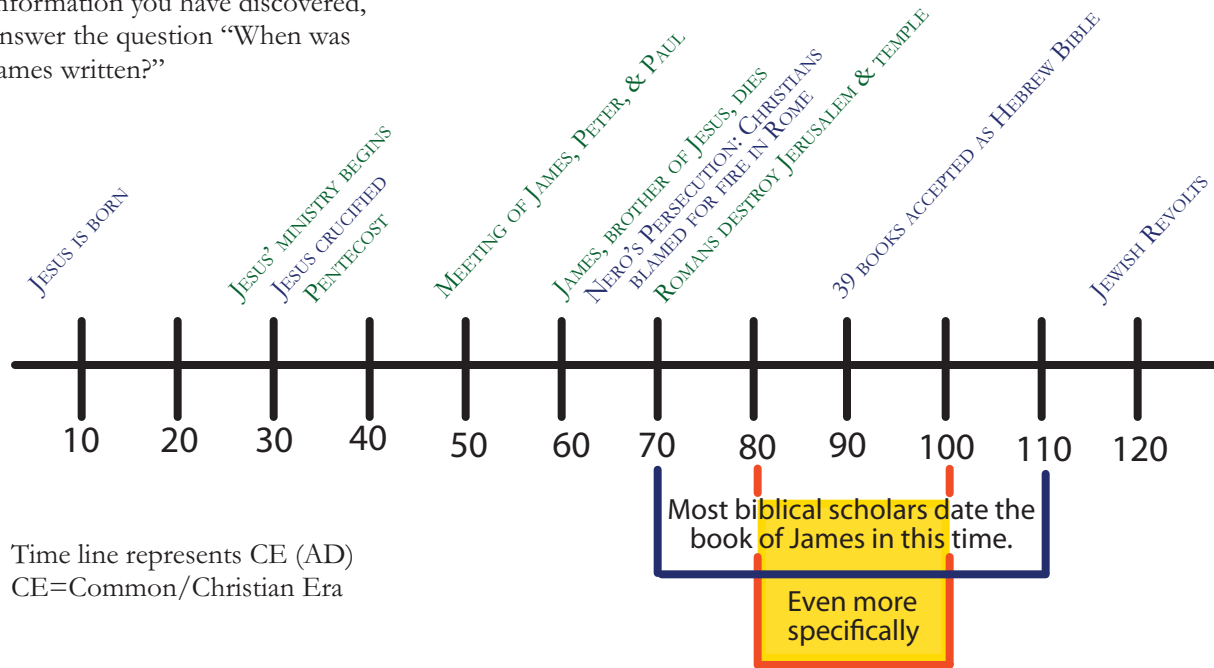
- Is James located in the Old Testament or New Testament?
- What book comes before it?
- What book comes after it?
- How long is James?
- Which is the longest chapter?
- Which is the shortest chapter?

Room 3: When was James written?

SET-UP: Create a large time-line chart. Place in a location where it can be easily read by all.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Using the time line and other information you have discovered, answer the question “When was James written?”



Room 4: Who was James written for?

SET-UP: Dress one person in biblical costume to share the following information.

TEACHER INFO:

The writer of James was probably speaking to Jewish Christians originally influenced by missionaries from the Jerusalem church rather than Gentiles converted through Paul's missionary efforts. We can tell by reading James that he was writing to people who were already Christians. It is clear that he was teaching people how to live out their faith and stand firm in the face of adversity. This is different than the writings of Paul, which teach people how to become a Christian. James teaches people how to stay a Christian. Because James talks about the Law, we know that he is talking to Jewish Christians. The people James was writing to were ruled by the Roman Empire, probably people living in Palestine, and people who may have often dealt with persecution because of their faith.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Use the information shared to answer the question “Who was James written for and why?”

NARRATION:

The people I wrote this for were like me. They were born and raised Jews and believed in the Law, but because of their faith they also believed in Jesus Christ and the message he taught and lived. My words were written to teach Jewish Christians how to live their life as Christians. To be a Jewish Christian in Palestine while ruled by the Roman Empire is not easy. To be Christian means facing persecution. I wrote these words to help other Jewish Christians grow in their understanding of Christian discipleship. I was not trying to convert anyone to Christianity, my words of counsel were meant to help Christians *stay* Christian.

Room 5: What are the messages of James?

SET-UP: Bibles on a table

TEACHER INFO:

James is a very practical book. It teaches about faith and what faith looks like in a Christian life. James gives lots of instructions about how to live a life in harmony with God and talks a lot about things that have to do with justice. James teaches many things that are very similar to things we read in the book of Matthew. James was very familiar with the story and teachings of Jesus.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Look up the following key verses to answer the question “What was James writing about?”

Key verses: James 1:2–8, 12, 22–25; 2:8; 3:17; 5:8, 9, 16.

Room 6: What do the “General Letters” have in Common?

SET-UP: Bibles on a table

TEACHER INFO:

The book of James, although appearing as a letter, is really a short sermon filled with moral urgings or ways to live out the Christian life. James is part of a group of writings referred to as the “General Letters.” Other letters in this group are: 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Look up each of these books and determine what they have in common.

Room 7: What do the words say to me?

SET-UP: Bibles on a table—NRSV, NIV, King James, IV, Youth Bible, etc.

TEACHER INFO:

Youth are often exposed to only one version of the Bible. Explain that reading from various versions can often bring to light new understandings.

ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Read James 1:17–27 from at least two different versions of the Bible. Answer the questions “How are they different?” and “What do these words say to me?”

Room 8: Share the Knowledge—FINAL ROOM

SET-UP: Flip charts, sticky notes

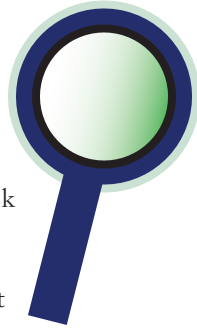
ROOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Gather into this room after completing all the other rooms. Use flip charts and sticky notes to combine all findings into one report. Note how people hear and recognize information in different ways. Finally, discuss how these findings affect the way the words of James speak to them today.

Faith Reflected, Joy Revealed

Putting your faith to work was exactly what the writer of the book of James had in mind.

- Ask a camper to read James 1:17–27.
- Distribute a small mirror to each student. Ask them to look at the image in the mirror for thirty seconds.
- Tell them to turn to the person on their right and describe what they see. (*This will probably get some laughs. Remind students to be considerate of one another's feelings during today's activities.*)
- Read James 1:23–24 again. Ask them to look in the mirrors for another thirty seconds, this time looking for the personal qualities behind the image in the mirror.
- Have another volunteer read James 1:25–27. Ask the group, “What does a Christian look like? What qualities can we identify?” On a flip chart record the students’ responses.
- Ask students to look in the mirror once more to see if they can detect any qualities from the list in the mirror.
- Faith and values are revealed in your family, at school, at athletic events, at work, with neighbors, with friends—whatever you do. Ask: “How does my life reflect that I’m a Christian?”



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do our lives advertise the fact that we say we are Christians?
2. How do we present false advertising with some of things we say and do?
3. What do our choices say about us as Christians?
4. How do our choices and actions affect the joy of our lives?

Do It

The act of doing helps us change. Advertisers depend on that happening. Advertisements encourage us to buy this and to try that. Their purpose is to get us to act, to do something. Our responsibility is to know and decide if the change will benefit us and others. If the change is not positive, do we want it? Ask the students to choose a marker and write advertising

slogans that invite us to change on sheets of flip chart or newspaper paper. Have magazine and newspaper advertisements on hand to explore. Let students cut the ads from the magazines and paste or tape them on the newspaper. As consensus is reached during discussion, mark the ads with a plus for ones that invite a positive change. Discuss the slogans written by the students, and determine if the advertising encourages positive life-changing values.

Small-Group Reflection

Read aloud James 1:17–27. Break into small groups and discuss the following questions.

- The first part of this verse tells us about the nature of God: perfect, generous, good. When have you experienced God’s generous goodness?
- The phrase “Father of lights” has to do with God being our Creator and the source of light. How does God bring a sense of light rather than darkness into your life?
- The last part of this verse talks about “no variation of shadow due to change” and refers to God’s steadfastness in the midst of all creation. How has God been steadfast, or a steady presence, in your life?

JOURNAL OPTION

Provide campers with paper and pencils, and ask them to journal their responses to the reflection questions.

- Verse 19 is giving advice. Who is this advice meant for? How would you put this advice into your own words?
- Can anyone share a time when this advice wasn’t put into practice? How would that situation have changed if this advice had been used?
- Read verses 22–25. There is a saying that goes like this: He can talk the talk but he doesn’t walk the walk. How is that saying like this scripture? How does it feel to be around people who are like that?

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.—James 1:27 NRSV

- Verse 27 somewhat summarizes the whole text we have considered. It is also a good example of hearing and obeying. What are some other examples of hearing and obeying?

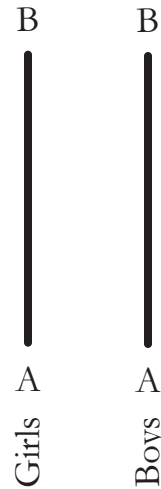
Theme **2** LOVE in MOTION

Class **2** James 2:1–13

Relay the Message

1. Establish two teams: boys versus girls. If there are more boys or girls, they must continue back through the line until the exact same number of persons have raced.
3. Before running, each person must take off their shoes and socks.
2. Race back and forth from point A to point B and back to point A again, tagging the next person in line before they can begin their run.
4. The next person in line cannot take off their shoes until the person in front of them has run from point A to point B and back AND put their shoes back on!
5. After the first two pairs run, stop game and explain that girls shoes are easier to take off than boys so the boys do not have to take off their shoes.

When the game is finished (*if you get that far without a rebellion*), discuss feelings and reactions. What did it feel like to be the victim of unfair, unjustified partiality? How did it feel to benefit from it? What was the result? Discuss. How is this game like real life?



Listen to the Text

Read the text from James 2:1–13 together.

James 2:1–13 NRSV

¹My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? ²For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, ³and if a person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, ⁴“Have a seat here, please,” while to the one who is poor you say, “Stand there,” or, “Sit at my feet,” have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? ⁷Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

⁸You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ⁹But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹For the one who said, “You shall not commit adultery,” also said, “You shall not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹²So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. ¹³For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

The first part (verses 1–13) of chapter 2 addresses the problem of discrimination based on social class. Partiality toward the wealthy and powerful is a common feature of any society. (*Have you ever wondered why there isn't a TV show called “Who Wants to Be a Ditch Digger?”*) James is addressing the problem of discrimination based on social class. Divisions between rich and poor were acceptable attitudes. Showing favoritism toward the rich and scornful or dismissive treatment of the poor was an acceptable attitude and practice in the larger society. But they were not in keeping with the teachings of Jesus. Apparently these divisions caused difficulties in the community, and James rejected this practice.

Role-Play Connections

The following scenarios are designed to be enacted by two key characters. These can be staff or campers who have had opportunity to gather props, costumes, and direction beforehand, or they can be done impromptu. The class will serve as the group reacting to each situation. Choose situations which work best for your teens.

Scenario 1

SETTING THE STAGE

Two young people wander into church on a warm Sunday morning. They are sweaty and dirty. The boy is wearing torn jeans and a muscle shirt that reveals intricate tattoos up and down both arms, on his back and neck. His ears, eyebrows, and lower lip are pierced. The girl is dressed in low-ride jeans and a tight-fitting crop top. She also has visible tattoos and quite a few body piercings. The smell of smoke and liquor penetrates their clothes and breath. They have not come for food or help; they have come to church because they live just down the street and are curious to see what a service of worship is like in this congregation.

THE CLASS AS CONGREGATION

How will these people be greeted? What will be the response of “Aunt Petunia” and old “Brother Joe”? Will they be welcomed? Will they be spoken to at all? How will the youth in the congregation respond to them? Will they even acknowledge their presence? When this couple leaves, will they ever wish to return?

SETTING THE STAGE

Two new girls start school in a small town on the same day. Already in session for several months, this school community has firmly established “cliques,” “rules,” and “expectations” in place. One of the students is obviously from a family of money. She is dressed in stylish new clothes with name-brand accessories. Her hair is perfectly cut and styled, her jewelry is obviously quality, she carries the newest cell phone/PDA combo, and she drives a bright new sports car. The second student is dressed clean and neat but her clothes are obviously outdated, probably even hand-me-downs. Her backpack and shoes are worn, and extra accessories like jewelry and cell phones are noticeably nonexistent. She rides the bus to and from school. These two girls are scheduled in several classes together including lunch hour.

THE CLASS AS CONGREGATION

How will the students react to the new girls at school?

Scenario 2

LOVE IN MOTION

1 Corinthians 13:4:8 NRSV
⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never ends.

What Is Love?

Ask campers to answer the following question, “What does Love in Motion look like?” by drawing pictures and/or writing words on a long newsprint mural. Provide time for campers to describe what they have drawn. Discuss how Love in Motion plays out in their lives each day.

Hang the mural in a location where it can continue to be viewed throughout camp.

LETTER OPTION

Cut large fat letters for the words LOVE IN MOTION. Draw pictures on letters.

“I Believe” by Third Day (*WOW Hits 2005*)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

Although they know what it is like to be subject to the power of the rich, Christians still fawn over wealthy patrons and neglect the poor. By exhibiting their wealth in clothing, jewelry, or feasting, the rich were able to elicit expressions of honor and privilege from others. Even if the early Christians were not wealthy, they were likely to adopt the social ideology of wealth and poverty. Despite the fact that God exalts the humble, they were willing to honor the rich and treat the poor with contempt. They may have thought that simply acknowledging the poor brother or sister with a greeting was sufficient evidence of their “righteous fellowship.”

James says we have misunderstood our status—as if it were our position to sit in judgment on others; and we have trusted our own judgment—as if, by ourselves, we could make a true and accurate assessment. James teaches by a clear implication that in both status and judgment Jesus Christ, who is himself the Glory, must reign supreme. As to how we accept others, we should ask how he accepts them. As to how to appraise others, we must ask how he would appraise them. As to how we act toward others, we should ask how he would act towards them.

James does not hide the fact that affluence can breed arrogance, can assume the right to special treatment, and can even be deceived into thinking that wisdom comes with wealth. James also doesn't hide the fact that the poor are special targets of the love of God and that the fruits of poverty in spiritual terms can be great.

To James the real problem facing the community refers to the dishonor shown to the poor. Love of the poor, downtrodden, and helpless is written into the divine nature. Verse five reminds us that God has chosen the poor to inherit the kingdom. Because of this, the poor are rich in faith as a result of God's choice. Since God's choice has overturned the favoritism that was typical of ancient society, no one who behaves differently can claim faith in Jesus.

The law is one indivisible whole. There is no way we can pick and choose between the commandments, because to break one is to break “the law.” Just like when we see the crescent moon we know it is the moon because the whole is there even though we can see only a part. In the same way, the whole law of God is represented in every individual precept. The thing that gives the law its indivisible nature is the character of the God who spoke it. There is nothing arbitrary about the commandments of the law: each one reflects some facet of the divine nature. If the law is to express the whole nature of God, then each single precept has its place. To say that one of the commands does not apply to me is to say that there is some aspect of the nature of God that does not matter, as far as I am concerned.

The law warns against showing partiality in judicial proceedings. The law provides the basis for God's judgment against those who dishonor the poor. The same law requires love of neighbors.

James uses extreme examples: adultery and murder. Why does James choose these two commandments as his examples? Probably because they are the ones which deal most closely with loving and hating one's neighbors.

If we want to know how we are to love our neighbors, then we must ask a prior question: how do we love ourselves? Scripturally, love is to be defined in caring terms; for the love that is owed to our neighbor is the love we expend on ourselves. The essence of the royal law is that wherever there is need there is an obligation to extend the sort of love we lavish on ourselves; the essence of partiality is to select the recipients of our care on some ground

Take a Letter

Provide pencil and paper for each camper to write their own “letter” to today's Christian youth. After teens have had time to write their thoughts, discuss as a group the types of things important for today's Christian youth to remember.

Explain the following before teens begin.

The book of James is perhaps the most socially conscious writing in the New Testament. It is commonly called a letter. However, it is less like the typical letters found in the New Testament and more like an example of the kind of preaching or exhortation that took place in early Christian gatherings. Exhortation means to urge or strongly encourage someone to do something. This letter helps readers understand what is required of Jesus' disciples as they seek to practice Jesus' teachings. These writings were not just for the readers of James's day; they are also for today's Christians.

Pair Share

Ask campers to break into groups of two or three. As the following questions are asked, take turns sharing answers. Switch partners with each question.

1. Describe a time when you made a decision based only on an outward appearance. What was the outcome of that decision? How were you impacted?
2. If in principle we are all one and members of the same body, why do we exalt some over others?
3. Imagine being on duty at the church door and being suddenly faced with both a well-dressed stranger and a homeless person in dirty, smelly clothes. This is an experience that tests our grasp of the Christian principles of behavior. If our faith rests in Jesus, who is the glory, then how should we behave?
4. Is the Lord unconditionally on the side of the poor? Are the rich by nature inevitably persecutors of the poor? Why or why not? Money still does the talking far too loudly in Christian circles, and where and when it does, the glory of Christ departs.
5. When have you witnessed someone have a voice in church affairs not because of their wisdom but because of their wealth or status?
6. James reminds us of our new position—that we have been enriched in faith and hope; it has been granted to us to believe in God and to love God; we are his heirs and have been called by his name. In what way, then, will the family likeness of God's family show itself in you?
7. When has our concern to meet another person's needs reached the point where nothing was held back?
8. Which of your neighbors needs your attention this week?
9. If meeting needs is not a sideline activity or optional, but central and obligatory to our faith, how will your life be different?

Candy-Coated World

Pass around a dish of M&Ms™, gummy worms, or other candy which looks different on the outside but tastes basically the same no matter what the color. Let individuals choose the candy they take. Quietly notice whether people are taking candy indiscriminately by the handful or choosing it by specific color.

Teacher Says:

Look at the candy in your hand. Varied in colors—or maybe not. Maybe you carefully chose the colors you have come to favor. As you eat your candy, let it serve as a reminder of the individual importance of each person—we may all look different on the outside but inside we are all God's children.

Bring It Home

Write the following questions on slips of paper. Let willing participants draw one paper slip and answer that question.

- Imagine that you are James. What would you tell people today?
- Imagine you were one of the people reading the words written by James. How would you respond?
- How is the conflict between “rich and poor” acted out in the world today?
- What is the value and purpose of laws?
- What are some of the laws we live by each day?
- How can laws bring freedom?
- Describe a time when a law has brought you or someone you know freedom.
- What factors bring a person high regard, admiration, and acceptance in the church today?
- What factors bring a person high regard, admiration, and acceptance in the world today?
- What factors bring a person high regard, admiration, and acceptance in the world of teens today?
- Is church a place where you feel safe and comfortable? why or why not?
- Who are the poor in your community?
- How do you define rich, and what makes you feel rich?

Theme 3 Listen & Do

Class 3 James 2:14–26

Listen to the Text

Read the text from James 2:14–26 together.

James 2:14–26 NRSV

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

¹⁹You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. ²⁰Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? ²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²²You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. ²³Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? ²⁶For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

The second part (verses 14–26) of chapter 2 deals with relationships among Christians. The author is challenging the Christian readers to unite their beliefs with their actions by actively dealing with the moral problems in their community. The duty to help a brother or sister in need is a critical obligation to everyone who claims to have faith. Both belief and action are central to faith.

Faith is God’s foundational gift (James 2:5; Ephesians 2:8). It is the common mark of all Christians (James 2:1; Galatians 3:26). It is the continuing reality, running like a story line through all the length and all the experiences of Christian life (James 2:22; 1 Timothy 6:12). It is the root from which good works grow (James 2:22; Titus 3:8).

The author of James uses a common style of debate called a diatribe. In this he is arguing with an imaginary opponent in order to stress his point. In this portion of the text James provides four different examples as a way to define faith correctly: the needy Christian, the demons, Abraham, and Rahab. Each of these illustrations ends with a summary statement of what the author wants us to learn. The first two illustrations are negative examples of what faith is not. The second two are positive examples—they tell us what faith is.

FAITH THAT LACKS WORKS IS DEAD.

Words alone do not help the hungry. It is foolish to presume to believe without acting. Christians must back up what they say with what they do. While faith provides the basis for works, the strength of faith comes out only in works. Works give life to faith, faith gives life to the soul, and the soul gives life to the body.

The issue of the poor Christian—to greet them with the standard wishes for good health while ignoring their physical needs—depicts a form of dishonor for the poor.

FAITH, SEPARATED FROM THE WORKS THAT VALIDATE IT, IS BARREN.

James gives us the example of the demons, saying that those who profess faith with their lips only are really no better than the demons are. For even the demons believe that Christ is the Son of God, that he is the Holy One of God and that he has authority over them.

WORKS OF OBEDIENCE PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT FAITH IS TRUE.

Both the apostle Paul and the author of James use Abraham as an example. Looking at one and the same sacrifice, James praised the magnificence of Abraham’s work, while Paul praised the constancy of his faith. But in reality the two are saying exactly the same thing, because they both knew that Abraham was perfect in his faith as well as in his works, and each one merely emphasized that aspect of the incident which his own audience was most in need of hearing. Abraham is at different times an example of both kinds of faith.

That Abraham believed God deep in his heart is a matter of faith alone, but that he took his son to sacrifice him, is not just a great act of faith but a great work as well.

IT IS THE ACTIVITY OF WORKS THAT REVEALS FAITH THAT IS ALIVE AND REAL.

While Abraham was a familiar example in Jewish and early Christian circles, the example of Rahab is less familiar. Rahab is an example of a work of hospitality. She is even more remarkable. As a Gentile and a harlot, she did not have either the right theology or a respectable lifestyle, but God spared her because when the test came, she did the right thing. Rahab was justified by her faith because she preformed works of mercy and showed hospitality to God’s people.

Faith without works is dead, and works without faith are dead also. For if we have sound doctrine but fail in living, the doctrine is of no use to us.

Take Time to Listen

Have the class sit in a circle. An object (small ball, stuffed animal, block) is passed from one person to another. Only the person holding the object may speak. They may pass if they wish, but encourage all to share.

LARGE CLASS?
Break into several smaller circles.

Teacher says:
Yesterday we talked about Love in Motion. Today we broaden that concept as we begin to understand what

the author of James meant when he spoke of faith and works. This morning in the Doctrine and Covenants scripture we were reminded to listen. (Read scripture.) If we, as Christians, are going to live out our discipleship through actions that help others, then we must learn to listen to the needs of others and to learn from their experiences and challenges. As the object is passed to you, share one thing that makes you a unique child of God.

DOCTRINE & COVENANTS 162:4A; 5A–C

4a. Listen carefully to the many testimonies of those around the world who have been led into the fellowship of the Community of Christ. The richness of cultures, the poetry of language, and the breadth of human experience permit the gospel to be seen with new eyes and grasped with freshness of spirit. That gift has been given to you. Do not fail to understand its power.

5a. Do not be defined by the things that separate you but by the things that unite you in Jesus Christ.

5b. . . . Again the Spirit counsels the church to not allow the forces of division to divert you from your witness.

5c. Listen together to one another, without judgment or predisposition. . . . There is much labor to be done. Reason together in love, and the Spirit of truth will prevail.

Energy in Motion

Divide the class into several small groups of two or three for this task. If the class is small, work as one. Each group is to create a machine that works by using only their bodies. The criteria includes: moving pieces, sound effects, and the purpose for their machine. (What product or service does it produce?) Let each group demonstrate their machine. Make the transition to today's scripture by asking "How do you put your faith in action?" Discuss.

The Big Puzzle: Works or Faith?

Make enough copies of the scripture puzzle (next page) for every person in class to have one puzzle piece. Give each person a puzzle piece and then ask them to find the six others pieces needed to complete their puzzle. When finished, the class will be divided into small groups of seven. When puzzles are completed, instruct each group to do the following.

- Put puzzle together.
- Raise hands upon completion.
- Read completed scripture to teacher. Following the reading each person in the group will receive a pencil and a copy of the word search puzzle.**
- Work the word search, helping each other in the small group.
- When finished raise hands and receive a candy "reward." While the groups enjoy their candy, discuss the activity.

Scripture Puzzle, Word Search, and Passionate Discussion activities are on following pages.

To even out groups include leaders or, if necessary partner two people to one

PUZZLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did you learn from this exercise?
- It took some effort, some doing, to put together the puzzles. If the puzzles had never been put together, what meaning would they have?
- How is faith without works like a puzzle not put together?
- Most youth are familiar with these questions: "Do you believe? Are you saved?" The Apostle Paul emphasized to the Gentiles he was trying to convert that we are saved by God's grace. Allow youth to comment.
- James is not dismissing God's saving grace. James is speaking to people who have already chosen to follow the teachings of Jesus, to live their life as a disciple of Christ. James is reminding them that to say you believe, to say you have faith, or to say you are saved means nothing if you do not live by the law you profess.

****OLDER CAMPERS?**
Consider substituting or combining the Word Search with the Passionate Discussion.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works?

1

5 Show me your faith apart from your works, and

I by my works will show you my faith.

6

Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

2

You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

3 So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

4 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works."

... For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

7

James 2:14–18; 24–26 NRSV

Word Search: James 2:14–26

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder. Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,” and he was called the friend of God. You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

B S C R I P T U R E R S Z W H
 T O P R O F I T A H W A N O Q
 O K D B F V F J N F T F H L P
 G U G Y N D Q O Z I F O I A O
 E A C T I V E G O L U A A S B
 T I A B R A H A M L T E I F K
 H L S C R G L V D E I H W T U
 E B F P K O Q A Q D Y S P P H
 R E F O I E T T R G O D H E S
 N L J C P R T E C B E G C A E
 K I W K Q Y I S P D N M P C B
 Y E O H J U S T I F I E D E F
 B V R I G H T E O U S N E S S
 T E K M F Y A L R W A R M E D
 B K S T S A V E D E O L E B S

ABRAHAM
 FOOLISH
 SCRIPTURE
 BELIEVE
 JUSTIFIED
 SPIRIT
 DEAD
 PROFIT
 TOGETHER
 FAITH
 RAHAB
 RIGHTEOUSNESS
 FILLED
 SAVE
 WORKS
 ACTIVE
 GOD
 BODY
 WARMED
 PEACE

B	S	C	R	I	P	T	U	R	E	R	S	Z	W	H
T	O	P	R	O	F	I	T	A	H	W	A	N	O	Q
O	K	D	B	F	V	F	J	N	F	T	F	H	L	P
G	U	G	Y	N	D	Q	O	Z	I	F	O	I	A	O
E	A	C	T	I	V	E	G	O	L	U	A	A	S	B
T	I	A	B	R	A	H	A	M	L	T	E	I	F	K
H	L	S	C	R	G	L	V	D	E	I	H	W	T	U
E	B	F	P	K	O	Q	A	Q	D	Y	S	P	P	H
R	E	F	O	I	E	T	T	R	G	O	D	H	E	S
N	L	J	C	P	R	T	E	C	B	E	G	C	A	E
K	I	W	K	Q	Y	I	S	P	D	N	M	P	C	B
Y	E	O	H	J	U	S	T	I	F	I	E	D	E	F
B	V	R	I	G	H	T	E	O	U	S	N	E	S	S
T	E	K	M	F	Y	A	L	R	W	A	R	M	E	D
B	K	S	T	S	A	V	E	D	E	O	L	E	B	S

Word Search Answers

- ABRAHAM
- FOOLISH
- SCRIPTURE
- BELIEVE
- JUSTIFIED
- SPIRIT
- DEAD
- PROFIT
- TOGETHER
- FAITH
- RAHAB
- RIGHTEOUSNESS
- FILLED
- SAVE
- WORKS
- ACTIVE
- GOD
- BODY
- WARMED
- PEACE

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What words would you use to describe someone who says they have faith, but their behavior doesn't really show it?
- What do you think the minimum standards of behavior are for someone who says they are Christian? What do you think God's minimum standards are?
- How can you tell if someone lives the way they say they believe?
- What makes it difficult for you to live out your faith?
- When have your "works" not reflected your "faith"?
- When have your "works" reflected your "faith"?
- Who in your life has modeled faith lived out in works?

Reflection

Ask each person to turn over their puzzle papers and write their personal responses to the questions for reflection.

Following time for personal reflection, divide and discuss answers in the small groups.

Allow time for each small group to share one point they feel strongly about.

OLDER CAMPERS?
Consider substituting or combining the Word Search with the Passionate Discussion.

Passionate Discussion

SET-UP

Write each question on separate pieces of poster board. Hang the posters in a circle around the room.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

Ask everyone to move from poster to poster reading all the statements or questions while the song, “Show You Love” by Jars of Clay (*WOW Hits 2005*) plays in the background.

At the end of the song, instruct everyone to go and stand next to a statement or question that speaks to them. Depending on the size of the class, some questions may have multiple people beside them; others may have none.

Starting with number one, have students share their thoughts on the statement or question they’re standing beside.

Continue in order through the others.

LARGE CLASS?

Let the small groups gathered at each question speak among themselves about the question first. Then have a representative of each group share with the whole group.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Recall a time when you had a need (small or large) that was ignored by someone who may have been able to help. Describe how you felt at that time.
2. Describe a time when your actions proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord.
3. When have you seen Jesus Christ through the actions of another person?
4. Who do you know (or have heard of) whose faith has been demonstrated through actions.
5. What would you need to be fully convinced that God was able to do what he promised?
6. What are you holding back from giving to God?
7. Rahab had a living faith. She shared her house, her resources, her ingenuity, and her personal safety. What other examples of this kind of faith have you encountered? (Rahab’s story is found in Joshua 2.)
8. To what extent is your faith willing to take personal risks to meet someone’s need?
9. What if that person with needs is a stranger? How will your response be different?
10. Who do you know now that needs you to live your faith courageously?
11. What is one step you can take this week to make your faith a living faith?
12. Today many Christians run the risk of thinking that faith means nothing more than private, individual views. Even the commitment to gather with others to worship God regularly seems unnecessary. James certainly would wonder if faith without community could survive.

In what way does your faith affect your community?

Theme 4 TRUST the SPIRIT

Class 4 James 3:13–18

Getting Started

Divide class into groups of four to six. Give each group a sheet of flip-chart paper and markers. Let each group choose one simple, ordinary object from a selection of many. Explain that their task will be to take that ordinary object and come up with as many creative uses for it—besides its normal purpose—as they can. Use the flip-chart paper to record ideas.

OBJECT SUGGESTIONS

rubber band	paper clip
toothbrush	twisty ties
trash bag	screwdriver
scarf	book

Allow seven minutes for brainstorming: let each group share their ideas with the rest of the class. After a few laughs, step back and look at what the creative ideas were built upon. Was it experience? knowledge? understanding? Would they categorize any of the responses as something built on wisdom? Why or why not? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

OBJECT: PAPER CLIP

- EAR CLEANER
- FINGERNAIL CLEANER
- LOCK PICK
- BOOKMARK
- TOOL FOR THREADING STRING THROUGH A WAISTBAND
- CHRISTMAS CHAIN
- ORNAMENT HANGER
- APPETIZER SKEWER
- FISHING HOOK

What Is Wisdom?

As a group create a definition for wisdom. Do not spend time wordsmithing! This definition should be adjusted as further understanding is gained throughout the lesson.

Earthly Wisdom Versus God’s Wisdom

Read James 3:13–18 NRSV together, then ask for a volunteer to paraphrase the passage.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

On a flip chart draw a “T” chart. On one side list characteristics that describe someone who is living their life pursuing “earthly wisdom” that might lead to arguing, fighting, and negative reactions. Then list characteristics that would

describe a reliance on “God’s wisdom” or “wisdom of the Spirit” for guidance. How do you experience these two kinds of “wisdom” in your activities at home, at school, in the community, and at church?

Earthly Wisdom	God’s Wisdom

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

James addressed the congregation of Jewish Christians and challenged them to act wisely: “If you think you are wise, prove it by your actions.” This congregation held tightly to the traditions of their previous Jewish faith. James reminded them earlier not to be boastful and to avoid selfish ambition. James told them to demonstrate their wisdom in their activity not just in their words. He then pointed out the difference between real wisdom and false wisdom.

The Source of Wisdom

Divide into small groups. Each group will need a dictionary and at least one Bible. Keep the discussion moving by directing all groups at once; read aloud the instructions for their next activity. After small groups have had time for discussion of a question, ask one or two representatives to share their group's response before moving on to the next question. Be sure all groups have at least one opportunity to share with the whole.

1. Look up the definition for "wisdom" in a dictionary.
2. According to James, what is the source of true wisdom (James 1:5, 3:17)?
3. A running theme throughout James is that the faith of a Christian is expressed in the works they do. How does wisdom fit into this expectation (James 1:17, 2:14–17)?
4. James divides wisdom into two kinds. What are they and what is their difference?
5. Share the following information from *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (1380) about wisdom and how it was understood by the recipients of James's letter. Discuss how this information helps in their understanding of James's reference to two kinds of wisdom.

"The sages of Israel lived in a time of much less scientific knowledge of the universe and its operations, and depended more heavily on traditional understanding and ways of acting than modern society does, so that they worked from a somewhat broader concept of wisdom. On the one hand, they saw wisdom as a serious intellectual pursuit of knowledge about the world and its rules of order and the dynamics behind its mysterious operations; on the other, they sought the proper human response to all dimensions of this world, especially in terms of understanding themselves in relation to their human nature and to God the Creator. To the ancient mind, the universe was profoundly interpersonal, and all things were the product of either the personal will of the deity or of human decisions."

6. When placed in the context of all of James, why might one assume the issues of envy among the people of the church might have had something to do with inequity of wealth?
7. What is the result of envy on a person's integrity and communal relationships?
8. James demands his readers make a choice. Choose wisdom from God or the wisdom of the world. A result of the world's wisdom is the vice of envy which James refers to several times (James 3:14, 16, 4:2, 5). What does this tell you about the people he expected would hear his words? What are the results of envy (James 3:16)?
9. In 3:17 James shares what is not a list of good deeds, but the result of a life infused with wisdom. What are these characteristics, and do you agree with the point?

Wisdom Role-play

Role-play ways where wisdom of the Spirit can help to prevent conflict. If time allows, let people act out two response choices: one that reflects earthly wisdom and one that reflects wisdom of the Spirit.

- Someone insults your mother.
- Someone you know steals your bike/car.
- You are accused of cheating at school—something you did not do.
- You are grounded for staying out past your curfew time, which you believe is too early.
- You want to participate in worship, even preach, but the pastor says that you are too young.
- In a basketball game you are called for a foul that should have been called on the opposing team.
- Another camper is using your things without asking permission.
- Two friends want to date the same person.

Trust the Spirit

Ask students to close their eyes and visualize a situation where they could have used God's wisdom. Tell them to open their eyes. Distribute sheets of construction paper and markers. Have students draw the situation they visualized before God's wisdom was at work. They can draw something similar if they don't feel comfortable sharing their exact situation. Next, have teens turn the paper over, and on the back draw the situation after the wisdom of the Spirit has been applied. Allow a few volunteers to share their examples.



A Letter from God

If wisdom comes from God, then sometimes one must stop long enough to listen. Give each person a pencil and tablet to write on. Explain that their assignment is to write themselves a letter from God. Encourage everyone to relax and just let the words come. Some may even find doodling or sketching a way to begin. Amazing results can happen when we open ourselves to hearing the wisdom God has to offer. As teens write, play “Right Here” by Jeremy Camp (*WOW Hits 2005*).

Camera! Action!

Point out to the students that God’s wisdom usually indicates specific types of behaviors. Ask, “What are some of the behaviors that accompany God’s wisdom?” Have students search James 3:13–18 for these behaviors and shout them out as you list them on the flip chart. Ask, “Why would God want these behaviors to be associated with wisdom?” Number teens off 1–5, beginning with one. They are now a movie crew. The ones are the movie directors, the twos are the script writers, threes head the production crew, fours are the music directors, and fives are in charge of publicity and marketing. The crew has several decisions to make before they can begin to make the movie. The movie is based on the scripture passage James 3:13–18 and on what they’ve discussed about wisdom in class. They are to answer the Movie-Crew Questions. (Write question on flip chart.)

- ### MOVIE-CREW QUESTIONS
- What famous actors would be hired to read verses 3:13–15 and 16–18?
 - Where would the filming take place?
 - What music would be used for background?
 - What song would be used as an introduction or a conclusion to the movie?
 - Would a vocal piece be selected? If so, who would be the vocal artist?
 - How would the movie be publicized?
 - What kind of marketing would be used?

LARGE CLASS?
Divide into groups of five then number off in each group.

Provide each group with a sheet of flip-chart paper to record their responses. Allow groups about ten minutes to complete their discussion, and post their ideas on the wall. Go around the room and let the groups tell why they made their choices.

Doctrine and Covenants 162:8a–b

8a. You are a good and faithful people, but sometimes you fail to see the power that is resident in your own story and fellowship. Look carefully, listen attentively, and sense the Spirit among you.

b. Do not be unduly concerned with numbers. Be fervent in witness, passionate in discipleship, and vigorous in your labor on behalf of peace and justice. Where two or three such disciples form community, there will the Spirit be.

Peacemakers

James places peacemaking as a by-product of wisdom from God. Discuss what it means to be a peacemaker in today’s world. Record thoughts on a flip chart.

Stand in a circle, holding hands. Ask each person to share one way they will try to be a peacemaker upon returning home to their communities of family, friends, school, work, and church. Those not wishing to share may pass by squeezing the hand of the person next to them. Read together Doctrine and Covenants 162:8a–b. Sing together the song, “Let

Theme 5 Spiritual Home

Class James 5:13–20

Getting Started

Begin class by singing along with the song “Pray” by Darlene Zschech (*WOW Hits 2005*). Follow with everyone saying the Lord’s Prayer.

Listen to the Text

Have class sit in a circle on the floor/ground or in chairs. Read together the words of James 5:13–20 NRSV. Following the reading, do a quick, once-around the circle, asking each person to share one word or phrase that reflects their reaction to the reading. These may be written on a flip chart or chalkboard for future reference in discussion.

Prayers of Faith

Distribute a copy of the scripture James 5:13–20 and a pencil to each participant. Read the scripture together. Have students circle every reference they see to prayer on their paper. Then ask them to look for the instructions James gave to his readers. As students find the instructions, have them shout out answers. List the major points on a flip chart.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHER

In today’s scripture, James seemed to be writing to a people who had experienced suffering. It seemed to be a Christian community that was familiar with the oral traditions of Jesus. They seemed to have lost some of their group. (See verse 19.) We don’t know why. Perhaps they returned to earlier beliefs, or perhaps the suffering or persecution they had to endure as Christians was too much. James didn’t give us many specifics, but he did tell them to forgive those who had left and to invite them back into the group. The community seemed to be in need of physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.

James encouraged the community to live in hope and provided imperatives or direct commands and instructions to help them carry on. He talked about the prayer of the righteous and how powerful and effective it could be. (Have someone define “righteous” and add to the definition if necessary.)

James 5:13–20 NRSV

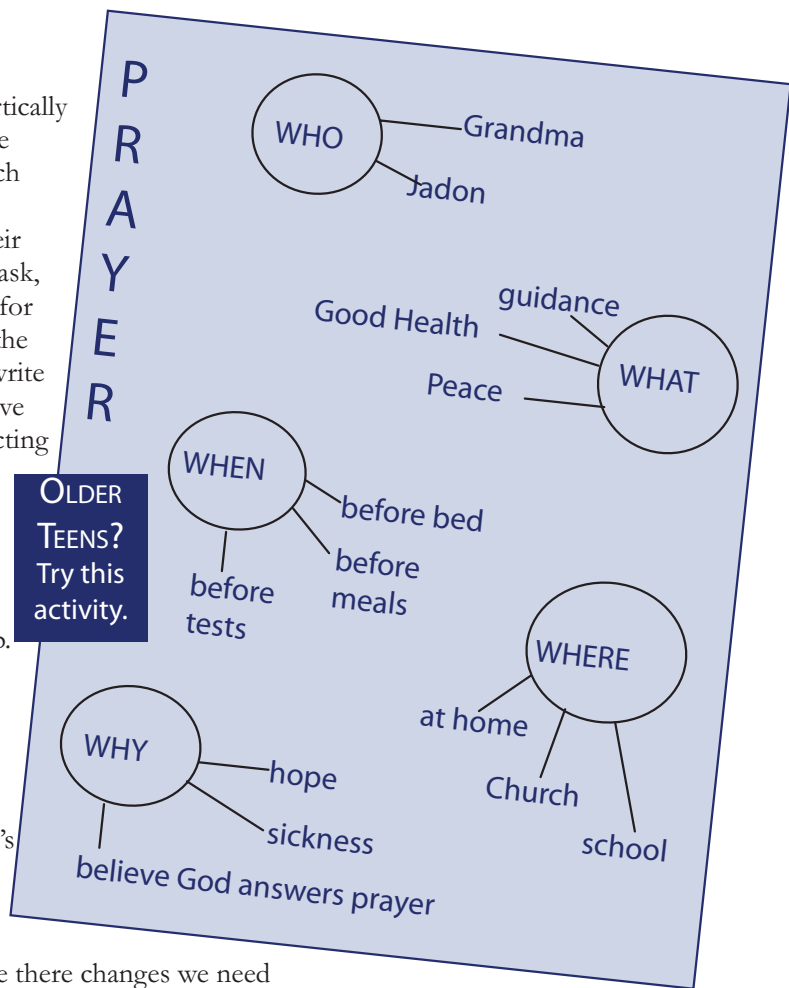
¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. ¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is this passage speaking to individuals or the church community?
2. James expresses the vital importance of prayer to the health of the community of faith. Look up the following scripture references to see how, once again, he brings a connection with his counsel to the Torah as well as the message of Jesus:
 - Matthew 5:33–37
 - Leviticus 19:12
3. If James was the brother of Jesus as some Bible scholars believe, what testimonies of prayer might he have to fall back on?
4. In James 5:13–15 the community is told to bring its sick to the elders to be anointed with oil and prayed over. For these early Christians, to what did the term elder refer (Acts 14:23, 15:2, 16:4, 1 Timothy 5:17–19)? What does the term elder mean for those in the Community of Christ faith community? How is the practice of anointing and praying for the sick used in the Community of Christ?
5. Reread James 5:17–18. Why would James have chosen to use the character of Elijah from the Torah (1 Kings 17:1; 18:42–46)?

Your Prayer Life: What's It Look Like?

On the flip chart, write the word PRAYER vertically down the left side of the paper. Then draw five circles, and write one of these words inside each circle: who, what, when, where, and why. Ask the students to do the same on the back of their scripture sheet. When they've completed this task, talk about who and what they pray for. Model for the students how you want them to complete the chart. Draw a line from the "who" circle and write a name. Do the same for the "what" circle. Have them continue for the remaining circles instructing them to list at least two things for each circle. Allow four to six minutes. Then have them turn to a partner and share their chart. After five minutes of sharing, draw them back into the larger group. Ask them to make general observations about the prayer life of the group. (Change the color of your marker and add the class's observations to the chart begun earlier.) How do these observations measure up to the instructions James gave? James used Elijah, an Old Testament prophet, as an example of effective prayer. (Briefly tell the story of Elijah's prayers found in 1 Kings 17:1; 18:1.) James said Elijah was human just like we are, and we should remember how powerful his prayers were. Looking at our prayer lives in general, are there changes we need to make? What would those changes look like? Add student's comments to a new page on the flip chart.



Power of Prayer

Give each person two colors of sticky note paper, several sheets each. On one color ask them to write words that are commonly used as a part of our prayers. On the second color ask them to write reasons we pray. As they finish, have individuals place their notes on the wall. Review the sticky note together. Ask teens to group similar ones together.

YOUNG TEENS? Try this activity.

forgive	share with God
bless	praise
Creator	thanksgiving
Jesus' name	invocation
help	benediction
be with	intercession
watch over	lament
guide	petition
love	blessing
worship	worship
adore	sacraments
hope	affirmation
grace	hope

What Is Prayer?

Give everyone a piece of paper and ask them to write their personal definition of prayer. Ask them to share this definition with a neighbor; then, ask a few people to share with the whole class. Share the definition as described in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, page 1077.

A primary means of communication that binds together God and humankind in intimate and reciprocal relationship. Its foundational assumption is the belief that the Creator of the world is both available for human address and committed to a divine human partnership that sustains, and when necessary restores, the world in accordance with God's relational design.

Discuss insights gained from any of the shared definitions. How important is prayer to establishing and holding on to the comfort of your own "spiritual home"?

Prayers for the 21st Century

Have each cabin counselor gather large sheets of paper, markers, crayons, and tape for their cabin (or individual sheets of construction paper if choosing to make this an individual activity).

Ask the students what they feel are some of the needs and concerns of youth in the twenty-first century. What are the circumstances which created them? Are there people you know who are like the people in today's scripture and have wandered away from an experience with the power of God? What can be done to invite them to return? List all responses on the flip chart without comment. Ask: *"What prayers do we need to pray to God right now regarding this list?"*

Tell the students that they will be drawing visual prayers as a cabin group. Their instructions are to look at and think about the information the class generated on the flip chart and to quietly and prayerfully create a visual prayer for youth in the twenty-first century. They will need some beginning conversation as they decide what they want to do, but ask them to work prayerfully, respecting the prayers others are forming. Play music as they draw. When they finish, ask them to tape their prayer to the wall and meditate quietly while others finish.

OPTION:
Visual prayers may be done individually instead of one prayer per cabin.

Calling the Elders

In James 5:14–15, the students read about calling for the elders to pray over the sick and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. In the ancient Near East, rubbing olive oil on a person who was ill was a common practice. The scripture also said that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. Faith can bring healing. Faith is believing in God's healing love, which has the potential to restore us physically, mentally, and spiritually.

In the Community of Christ, one of the sacraments is administration or laying on of hands for the sick. The elders are asked to come and offer this special prayer. The elders anoint the person's head with olive oil, just as it says in James, and pray for God's healing presence. If possible, invite the elders to class to explain the sacrament of the laying on of hands, the anointing of oil, and healing.

Have students think about people they know who need some form of healing—physical, emotional, or spiritual. Distribute sticky notes and ask students to write the initials of these people on the notes, one set of initials per note. When they've finished, have students make a prayer wall by sticking the notes on the wall. Ask them to return to their seats and pray silently for these people while they are waiting for others to finish.

"WE PRAYED, BUT THERE WAS NO HEALING."

Healing of the spirit occurs where the more obvious physical healing doesn't. The spirit of hope and love reveals that the true healing needed isn't always what we can see or understand.

Prayer Centers

PRAYER CENTERS DESCRIBED ON NEXT PAGE There are many types of prayer; prayer can also be expressed through a multitude of forms. In fact, there is absolutely no right or wrong way to pray! If driving alone in your car is the only place you feel comfortable talking to God, then it is there that you pray. However, there are many spiritual practices which can help guide us. For someone who struggles with—maybe even fears—prayer, practices which guide them through various types of prayer can be helpful. For those who find prayer a part of their daily life, prayer practices can help deepen their relationship with the Divine.

Invite campers to go from station to station where they will participate in various prayer activities. They can progress through the centers as individuals or in small groups. If centers are located in close proximity to one another, this activity will provide a powerful opportunity for self-reflection. If you wish this to be a cabin-unifying activity—if centers are scattered around the campground and an accompanying adult is available to keep youth on task—divide into cabin groups. If your camp is small, you may wish to move from area to area together. If necessary, create a map to mark locations of each center. Ideally, a staff member will be present at each center to quietly explain and guide the experience so each individual has opportunity for personal participation. If this is not possible, post directions.

Prayer-Calendar Center

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Dated calendar pages for the next year—optionally prebound together
- Markers, glitter pins, etc.
- Silly theme stickers (happy faces, Christmas, Easter, family, nature)

Instructions

- Mark calendars with people and things to pray for on specific days throughout the coming year.
 - family members
 - friends
 - school
 - future plans
 - camps
 - leaders of the church
 - your congregation
 - the church in the world
 - world issues and events
 - peace and justice
 - forgiveness
 - praise and thanksgiving
 - people who are sick

Prayers for Camp

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- List of camper names
- Hand list to individuals as they enter the area.

Instructions

- Get into pairs.
- Alternately pray until each person on the list has been upheld in prayer.

Praying Through Music

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Comfortable place to sit
- CD player, music, headphones

Instructions

- Listen to songs of prayer.

Prayer Centers

Community Prayers

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Copies of prayers and songs

Instructions

- Read the Communion prayers.
- Sing songs of prayer.
- Offer a circle prayer.
- Say Lord's Prayer together.
- Read Psalms 23, 92, and/or 139.
- Read responsive prayer.
- Follow leader in echo prayer.

Silent Meditation

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Choose a site that is separated from the noise of other centers.

Instructions:

As individuals enter, guide them into the meditative process.

- Sit in a chair or on the floor with legs crossed.
- Place hands on knees, palms facing upward ready to receive.
- Close eyes.
- Repeat "Creator God" over and over, focusing on words.
- Let go of all your thoughts, and let God fill your being.

Individual Blessings

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Several leaders to pray for youth

Instructions

- Place leaders around room.
- Youth come to a leader to be prayed for.
- Quietly a one-on-one prayer will be offered for this individual. The prayer should only be heard by God, the youth being prayed for, and the leader praying. Keep this as personal as possible.

Prayer Flags

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Thin ribbons of fabric
- Permanent markers
- Rope hung at eye level
- Table with tea-light candles
- Lit candle or lighter
- Space where people can spend time in prayer

Instructions

- As individuals enter the setting, invite them to write the name of someone they wish to pray for on a ribbon; then, tie it onto the rope, allowing the prayer to fly onward in the wind.
- Light a candle in remembrance of their person of concern
- Spend time praying for their person of concern.
- Cabin groups may feel comfortable praying aloud for the people they have come to uphold to God.

Prayer Journaling

Supplies and/or Set-Up

- Paper, pencil
- Comfortable place to reflect and write

Instructions

- Write prayer thoughts on paper.