

Defending Your Faith

Bible Passages: 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 3:15-16; Mark 13:9-11

Central Bible Truth: You can prepare yourself to face challenges to your faith.

Teaching Aim: To lead youth to recognize ways they can prepare to face challenges to their faith and to list ways to practice their faith in the face of challenges.

M1

Choosing Your favorite and Defending Your Choice

(10 min.) As youth arrive, direct them to four posters, labeled as follows, on the focal wall: (1) *Your Favorite Movie*; (2) *Your Favorite Restaurant*; (3) *Your Favorite Book*; (4) *Your Favorite Musician*. Ask them to list their choices on each poster. Direct teenagers to discuss why they made the choices they did. Challenge them to defend their choices. Take careful note of how they defend them - emphasis should be on how they defend their choices rather than what their choices are.

M2

Power Words

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| • persecution | <i>persecution - to harass; to suffer because of belief</i> |
| • defense | <i>defense - an argument in support</i> |
| • set apart | <i>set apart - separate, independent</i> |
| • answer | <i>answer - to respond or reply</i> |
| • reason | <i>reason - statement offered in explanation; logical defense</i> |
| • hope | <i>hope - to desire with expectation; confidence of fulfillment</i> |
| • gentleness | <i>gentleness - soft and kind; not harsh, stern, or violent</i> |
| • respect | <i>respect - to show consideration, regard, esteem</i> |
| • conscience | <i>conscience - a sense of moral goodness of one's conduct, intentions</i> |
| • slander | <i>slander - to defame; false charges, misrepresentation</i> |
| • guard | <i>guard - a posture of defense, precaution; watch over</i> |
| • witness | <i>witness - testimony, one that gives evidence of personal knowledge</i> |
| • gospel | <i>gospel - good news concerning Christ</i> |

M3

Defining Persecution

(5 min.) Call on a volunteer to read aloud 2 Timothy 3: 12. Ask youth to define *persecution*. Give youth the opportunity to share what *persecution* means to them. Lead youth to call out examples of *persecution* from the Bible as you list them on a chalkboard. (Examples: *Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Paul; and Peter.*) Share a specific time when you were persecuted for your faith or relate contemporary examples. (Example: *students in Texas who were arrested for praying around the flagpole in 1991.*) Ask youth to share any personal experiences of *persecution*.



M4

Responding to Challenges to Your Faith

- ***be ready to respond to every person who asks you for an explanation***
- ***don't worry about what to say, but say what you are given at the time***

Reread 2 Timothy 3: 12. Point out that Christians encounter opposition to their beliefs. Explain that as we seek to live godly lives in Jesus Christ, we will face challenges or opposition from an ungodly world.

(15 min.) Ask: How have you responded to challenges to your faith? Read aloud 1 Peter 3:15-16. Explain that all Christians should be prepared to give a defense of their faith. Ask youth to select key words from verse 15 and circle them on handout 1. Lead youth to discuss each word they circled, its definition, and its significance to verse 15. Display the following paraphrase of verse 15b using definitions in place of the words: *You should on every occasion make ready to respond to every person who asks you to give the statement of explanation for the confidence of fulfillment that you have. But do this with kindness and consideration.* Point out that defending our faith is important because it gives us unique opportunities to be witnesses for Christ. Refer to biblical examples of persecution from step 3 and ask youth to explain how each responded to challenges. (*Paul, Acts 26:24-29; Peter, Acts 4:8-12; Daniel, Dan. 6:21, 22; Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego, Dan. 3:16-18*)

Call on a volunteer to read aloud Mark 13:9-11. Then share the following: *God provides what you are to say in defense of your faith. You are instructed not to worry about what you will say, but to say what you are given at the time. You are to prepare your defense, but not to worry about what you are to say. Then as you speak, you should rely on the Holy Spirit to guide your thinking and speaking.*

M5

Tools In Defending Your Choices

- ***knowledge***
- ***experience***

(15 min.) Remind youth of the opening assignment. Ask a volunteer to defend one of his choices and another volunteer to challenge that choice. After their debate, share your thoughts concerning how they defended their choices. Point out the importance of experience and knowledge as tools in defending your choices. Explain that the best preparation teenagers can have for defending their faith is firsthand experience and personal knowledge. Remind them that there is no substitute for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask: What would it take for you to have the same passion for your faith that you have for the things of this world? Ask previously enlisted youth to enact a witnessing encounter that starts off in heavy defense and leads to deep questions and responses.

M6

Fellowship & Worship

(5 min.) Ask youth to form a prayer circle. Encourage each youth to pray a prayer of commitment to Christ, asking Him to help his or her faith and ability to defend that faith to increase. Call on several volunteers to pray aloud. When prayers are finished, make these comments: *Often we judge commitment by what happens on the outside. God looks on the heart, not the outward appearance. God heard both the spoken prayers and the silent prayers. What does God see when He looks in your heart? Hopefully, He sees Jesus.*

Conclude by playing "If I Fall" (*Shoulder to the Wind*, Reunion Records). After the song, pray asking God to help individuals defend their faith in the face of persecution.

Jimmy Stewart, minister of students at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, wrote this lesson.

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