

☐ *Before the Session*

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Review and summarize one or more of the suggested Ebola articles.
- Listen to the podcast for this session
- Use the social media prompts on this session's webpage to help youth begin engaging the session them ahead of their gathering.

☐ *Intro*

More Active Option

Place two lines on the floor at opposite sites of your meeting area. Gather your group behind one line and tell them that they have five minutes to cross from behind the first line to beyond the second, according to the following rules:

Then, ask questions like:

- Everyone must move across the space at the same time;
- At no time may the entire group be in contact with the floor at more than a number of points equal to half the group (rounded down). This would mean that a group of 0–3 people only get one point of contact, while a group of 10–11 gets five;
- Once someone crosses the original line, he or she cannot re-cross it; and
- “Point of contact” can be a body part, wheel, crutch, or anything else that will have to contact the floor in order to facilitate movement.

After making sure that the group understands the rules, give them their five minutes to work out how to accomplish this. After they have, regather the group and ask the questions from the “Context” section (below).

Less Active Option

Watch together the video for “Stuck In A Moment”, then ask:

- How do all of you, as a group, come together when you need to do something hard?
- In what ways is that different from the way you face difficult times and decisions on your own?
- How do you think that the admission that you may need to ask for help with something might affect the way you view it?
- They always say that “misery loves company.” Why might you agree or disagree with that statement?

Context

If you chose the more active option above, watch together the “Stuck in a Moment” video. Otherwise, continue by asking:

- How often do you find yourself in a situation that looks hopeless and what makes it seem that way?
- What is your immediate reaction to the situations represented by the video and why?
- Some people seem to always keep a happy thought, and others seem to never cheer up. Which kind of people do you think you might identify with most often and why?
- When things are tough, what might you tell yourself to create some motivation?

Content

Read together Ezekiel 17:22–24 and watch the Bible background video.

Then ask questions like these:

- In what ways have you experienced a situation that felt as hopeless as the one being experienced by the people who first heard this scripture?
- If you got through times like that, what did you learn from it? What might it have taught you that could help someone else?
- How is your relationship with or understanding of God affected by the various struggles you go through and why?
- Why is it more or less easy to work through problems on the basis of a promise that things will get better and why?
- How do you know when bad times are over and better times are starting to happen?

Closure

Continue by asking the group to pretend that they are a focus group for a new agency that is seeking to help young people deal with their problems. Because you want to get off on the right track, you need to know how people like them typically respond to the following questions:

- What is the worst large scale (global or regional) and small scale (interpersonal) problem that their peers face today and why?
- What do people want and expect to happen regarding these issues?
- What role can faith-based groups play in addressing issues like these?
- What do they think their typical peers would be willing to do in order to address these issues, given a chance?

Ask the group what they learn from discussing such issues, then encourage volunteers to state one thing that discourages them and one hope that they have for the future.

Close with a prayer that you will be able to see to the other side of life's difficulties and that you might become a light to others by doing so.

By David Adams