



TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

OCTOBER 2011

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TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

TEENTEXT Grades 6-8

October 2, 2011

Can you allow God to set you free?

I. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible

Candle + matches

Paper

Pens, pencils, and/or markers

Computer or DVD player (for film clips)

Computer + web access (for YouTube videos)

Copies of “Daily Reflections” handouts

II. TODAY’S TEXT: Exodus 20:1-4 Worship God in all things.

¹God said to the people of Israel:

²I am the LORD your God, the one who brought you out of Egypt where you were slaves. ³Do not worship any god except me. ⁴Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth.

III. BACKGROUND

“I am” is a powerful statement. Before digging into today’s questions, ask your youth to complete this sentence: I am_____.

They can complete it as many times as they want. I am a girl. I am a daughter. I am a senior in high school. I am dating a guy named Clark. I am worried about my grades. I am flunking algebra. Note how many responses are nouns and how many are verbs or states of being. ***Go back to the text and read who God says God is.*** This is an action God. This is the God who brought us out of slavery. God is known by God's mighty acts. This is a God who commands that we remember what God has done and one who makes rules for us. A good tie-in for today's text would be to consider what "gods" our culture tries to sell us. Bring in a magazine or two and look at the ads. What do those ads promise us? What products/situations/people do we worship?

IV. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Remember, these are only suggestions. The most effective questions and activities—the ones that help participants connect their story with God's story each week—are often those that are based on your personal knowledge of the participants and where they are. Listen carefully to their responses; ask follow-up questions that help them reflect on the text and their lives, right now, right where they are.

GO DEEP

(What's happening in the story?)

1. What, if anything, jumped out at you as you heard the story read? What struck you as odd? What had you never heard before?
2. Who are the characters in the story?
3. What is happening? What takes place? What's the plot?
4. Give participants paper, colors/markers. Ask them to imagine being youth of the day. On one side of the paper ask them to create an image of how they might have felt as a slave in Egypt. On the other side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of how they might have felt after they escaped their slavery. Ask them to come back as a group, share and discuss.

5. Give participants clay/play dough. Ask them to create idols that people of the day might have worshipped other than God. Share and discuss.
6. What do you imagine people of the day felt they could gain or lose by worshipping gods other than God?
7. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them as people of the day to write:
 - a. Their understanding of God's request in the text
 - b. Their response to God's request in the form of a prayerCome back as a group, share and discuss.
8. How do you suppose people of the day felt hearing these words?

BE REAL

(What connections can you make between the story and the world around you?)

1. Where do you see this story of people who have been brought out of slavery (to drugs, alcohol, prejudice, popularity) happening in the world today? In your school? In your family? On a TV show? In a movie? In a video? A song?
2. Where in this world are people being freed from their slavery?
3. Who/what is keeping them in slavery? In what way?
4. What other gods do we worship other than God?
5. When do we refuse to listen to God's request? What would it cost us to listen? What do we gain in listening?
6. What are the idols we are making (iPhones, iPads, Facebook) that distract us, that we worship?

LET GO

(Be open to discovering how this story is happening in your own life.)

1. How is this your story? Where can you see this happening in your own life?
2. Where do you see yourself in the story? One who is a slave? One who enslaves others? One whom God has freed from slavery? One who resists being freed? One who worships all sorts of gods? One who creates idols? One who sees/worships God in all things.
3. Give participants paper, colors/markers. On one side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of anytime when they might have felt enslaved. On the other side of the paper, ask them to create an image(s) of what it was like when they felt set free. Share and discuss.
4. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to sit quietly and then write down all the things they might worship/that they spend time with/focus extensively on (TV shows, famous personalities, fashion, cell phones, Facebook, Twitter). Ask them to write a few key words to describe what they like about each thing. Ask them to pair off and discuss their lists and then come back as a group, share their lists and discuss.
5. Ask the group to pair off. Give them paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to sit quietly together, then to discuss a conversation/prayer they would share with God that gives thanks, that tells how important it is to them to worship God with their thoughts, words and actions and asks forgiveness for the times they feel they've put other gods before God. Share the prayers and discuss.
6. How might you feel passionate, enthusiastic about your favorite sports, friends, TV shows and yet not allow them to take the place of God? How might you find God in all of your favorite things?

V. SUGGESTED LINKS TO OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

1. What do people worship in America? This is a link to an interview with Pastor Marc Driscoll on idol worship. It was part of ABC network's *Nightline* series on the 10 commandments. This provides some interesting talk points for your group. The video is about 6 minutes long. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvfIU6gtGZs>
2. "StarStruck" - Sterling Knight Music Video - Disney Channel Official. This is a 3-minute video that might lead you into questions about the cost of stardom. What does this "star" kid get out of being the center of everyone's adoration? What does it cost him? <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufQW071pnxs>
3. The Robert Zemeckis film, *Cast Away*, stars Tom Hanks as Chuck Noland who is stranded for four years on a remote island, the lone survivor of a plane crash. Use Chapters 24 and 25. Begin at 1:40:35 and end at 1:47:14. Discuss how Chuck is rescued. Who/what rescues him? How? This is a very good example of an image of a God who saves.

Between Sundays

Ask participants to look ahead to their school, family, social lives in the coming week:

When might you feel like a slave to another, to a habit?

When might you feel you're becoming a slave to your favorite sport, food, Facebook?

When might being popular interfere with being who you feel you truly are?

TeenText
Daily Reflections
Week of 10/2

Find a quiet place, re-read the text, read these reflections, sit with your eyes closed and reflect on them and your responses; consider recording your thoughts in a journal.

Day One

- *When might you feel you are making choices like a slave?*

Day Two

- *When might you feel you treat others like slaves?*

Day Three

- *What do you feel you might gain or lose by being a slave?*

Day Four

- *How might it feel to know God can set you free?*

Day Five

- *What things in your daily life do you worship?*

Day Six

- *How might it feel to worship no god but God?*



TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

TEENTEXT Grades 6-8

October 9, 2011

What prevents you from being glad, causes you to worry?

I. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible

Candle + matches

Paper

Pens, pencils, and/or markers

Computer or DVD player (for film clips)

Computer + web access (for YouTube videos)

Copies of "Daily Reflections" handouts

II. TODAY'S TEXT: Philippians 4:4-9 Rest your worries in God's hands.

⁴Always be glad because of the Lord! I will say it again: Be glad. ⁵Always be gentle with others. The Lord will soon be here. ⁶Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts offer up your prayers and requests to God. ⁷Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace that no one can completely understand. And this peace will control the way you think and feel. ⁸Finally, my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly, and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. ⁹You know the teachings I gave you,

and you know what you heard me say and saw me do. So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.

III. BACKGROUND

A wise woman once said, “Worrying is praying for what you DON’T want”. Another wise saying is “Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows. It empties today of its strength”. But it’s hard not to worry. This Sunday would be a good time to let your youth take an inventory of what they worry about. Often we find ourselves worrying about things we can do absolutely nothing about. The serenity prayer speaks to this. In this prayer we ask God to give us the peace to accept that which we cannot change, the courage to change those things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. This Sunday is a good chance to talk about prayer as the “opposite energy” of worry.

IV. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Remember, these are only suggestions. The most effective questions and activities—the ones that help participants connect their story with God’s story each week—are often those that are based on your personal knowledge of the participants and where they are. Listen carefully to their responses; ask follow-up questions that help them reflect on the text and their lives, right now, right where they are.

GO DEEP

(What’s happening in the story?)

1. Who are the participants in the story?
2. What’s going on in the text?
3. What event/which individuals/groups jumped out at you? Why?
4. Imagine you were members of the church in Philippi who received this letter. Ask participants to pair off and create two conversations they might have had:
 - a. About their worries and concerns before Paul’s letter arrived
 - b. About how they felt after receiving Paul’s letterCome back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.

5. How do you imagine people of the day felt after hearing Paul's words?
6. What do you suppose their biggest worries might have been?
7. Ask participants to pair off. Ask one to be Paul and one to be one of his close friends. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had as Paul was thinking about writing this letter. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.
8. Divide the group in half. Ask them to create two role-plays; one that illustrates what the congregation's worship services might have been like before they received Paul's letter and then what it might have been like after they received his letter. Share the role-plays and discuss.
9. Give participants paper, colors/markers. As members of the congregation ask them to write a letter to Paul in response to his letter. Share and discuss.

BE REAL

(What connections can you make between the story and the world around you?)

1. Where and/or how do you see forgiveness happening in the news? Music? Television shows? Books you may be reading? A movie you have seen? At your school? Or in a family?
2. Who is someone who seems worried all the time? About what?
3. Who is someone you think should feel glad, but doesn't?
4. Who is someone who treats others gently?
5. Who is someone you think feels completely at peace? Why? (Do you think God gives peace to all people or just a few)?
6. Who is someone who rejects peaceful feelings?
7. Who keeps their mind on what is true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper?

LET GO

(Be open to discovering how this story is happening in your own life.)

1. Where do you see yourself in the text? Are you one who is glad always? The one who is gentle with others? The one refusing to be gentle? Are you the one who worries? Are you the one who offers up prayers and requests to God? One who never offers up prayers or requests
2. Give participants paper, colors/markers. On one side of the paper, ask them to create an image(s) of when they felt really worried about something. On the other side of the paper, ask them to create an image of when they felt really glad about something. Come back as a group, share and discuss.
3. What worries you the most?
4. Remember a time, if you can, when you were really worried and then felt glad? How did it feel as you looked back on it?
5. Ask participants to pair off. Give them paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to create a prayer of gladness to God. Come back as a group, share and discuss.
6. What do you feel is gained by worrying? What do you feel is lost by worrying?
7. When have you felt the peace that no one can completely understand? When have you felt the worry that you feel no one could completely understand?
8. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to be silent and ask them to create a prayer that shares their worries, asks for help in being glad for their blessings and the peace that will always be with them. Come back as a group, share and discuss.

V. SUGGESTED LINKS TO OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

1. The Dalai Lama speaks of money and happiness. This is a 2-minute video that might need a set up if you're not accustomed to talking about Buddhism!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QvVaZfFDKw&feature=related

2. Bobby McFerrin singing “Don’t Worry, Be Happy”. This video is about 4 minutes long. The lyrics might suggest a very nonchalant attitude toward a very real problem...not having the rent money! This could fire a good discussion about denial. The visuals here are not so good, but the music is.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oeoik1UsPb8>

3. Film Clip: The 2006 movie, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, stars Will Smith as Chris Gardner, a man down on his luck, out of a job and eventually homeless. It is about how Chris pulls himself and his young son out of their desperate situation with determination, focus, and sheer heroics. In this scene Chris must choose an unsavory place to spend the night, but in spite of his obvious worry and concern for his son, he carries on. Begin the scene at 1:24:30 and end at 1:25. Always, the challenge for Chris is in choosing what he can and cannot change.
4. The link below is a performance of *Leave It Like It Is* written and sung by David Wilcox, an artist from Asheville, NC. We’ve selected it because it illustrates how our mistakes--those things we did and now cannot change--can be transformed into works of art.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNfTmfv4LZM>

Between Sundays

Ask participants to look ahead to their school, family, social lives in the coming week:

When might you find yourself worrying?

When might you feel glad?

When might you be willing to ask God for help with your worries?

TeenText
Daily Reflections
Week of 10/9

Find a quiet place, re-read the text, read these reflections, sit with your eyes closed and reflect on them and your responses; consider recording your thoughts in a journal.

Day One

- *When might you feel overwhelmed with worry?*

Day Two

- *When might you feel overwhelmed with gladness?*

Day Three

- *How does it feel to know the peace of God is with you always?*

Day Four

- *When might you treat yourself gently?*

Day Five

- *What might it feel like to keep your mind on whatever you consider to be true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper ?*

Day Six

- *How might it feel to take five minutes a day and sit in peace?*



TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

TEENTEXT Grades 6-8

October 16, 2011

What is the right thing to do?

I. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible

Candle + matches

Paper

Pens, pencils, and/or markers

Computer or DVD player (for film clips)

Computer + web access (for YouTube videos)

Copies of "Daily Reflections" handouts

II. TODAY'S TEXT: Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ The Pharisees got together and planned how they could trick Jesus into saying something wrong. ¹⁶They sent some of their followers and some of Herod's followers to say to him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest. You teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. ¹⁷Tell us what you think! Should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?" ¹⁸Jesus knew their evil thoughts and said, "Why are you trying to test me? You show-offs! ¹⁹Let me see one of the coins used for paying taxes." They brought him a silver coin, ²⁰and he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?" ²¹"The Emperor's," they answered. Then Jesus told them,

"Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God."²²
His answer surprised them so much that they walked away.

III. BACKGROUND

Many times in Jesus' ministry he is challenged by "the people in power"—the Roman government, the Jewish leaders, those with authority. Jesus questions authority, always. He points to a higher authority, if you will. In this story Jesus refuses to participate in the game orchestrated to trip him up. Instead, he suggests they give the government exactly what they should give the government and give to God what belongs to God. There is defiance in the answer, but Jesus does nothing to break the law. Included in today's lesson is a clip from *Cool Hand Luke*, the 1967 film directed by Stuart Rosenberg. When it was released it was thought by many to be an allegory of Jesus' life and death. The clip is about this type of defiance.

IV. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Remember, these are only suggestions. The most effective questions and activities—the ones that help participants connect their story with God's story each week—are often those that are based on your personal knowledge of the participants and where they are. Listen carefully to their responses; ask follow-up questions that help them reflect on the text and their lives, right now, right where they are.

GO DEEP

(What's happening in the story?)

1. Who are the participants in the story?
2. What's going on in the text?
3. What event/which individuals/groups jumped out at you? Why?
4. Ask participants to pair off and be the Pharisees. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had before they sent their followers to try to trick Jesus into saying something wrong. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.

5. Now ask the participants to pair off again. One will be a Pharisee and one will be a follower. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had when the followers returned and reported to the Pharisees what Jesus had to say. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.
6. Why do you suppose the Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus into saying something wrong? How might the followers have felt being asked to try to trick Jesus?
7. Imagine one of the followers stayed behind as the others returned to report to the Pharisees. What do you suppose s/he and Jesus might have talked about?
8. How might bystanders who heard the exchange have felt about Jesus? About the Pharisees?
9. Give participants paper, colors/markers. On one side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of what people of the day might consider belongs to “the Emperors.” On the other side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of what they feel might belong to God. Share and discuss.

BE REAL

(What connections can you make between the story and the world around you?)

1. Where and/or how do you see people trying to trick others in the news? Music? Television shows? Books you may be reading? A movie you have seen? At your school? Or in a family?
2. Who is someone in the world who is trying to trick another, trying to get her/him to be wrong? Why?
3. Who is someone you think is jealous or fearful of love?
4. Who is someone you think is honest, teaches the truth?

5. Who is someone you think is testing love?
6. Who is someone who feels they should be worshipped before God?
7. Who is surprised by love's answer?

LET GO

(Be open to discovering how this story is happening in your own life.)

1. Where do you see yourself in the text? Are you the one afraid of love? The one wanting to trick love, to make it wrong? The one who treats everyone with respect? Are you the one searching for the right answer? Are you the one who has evil thoughts?
2. When have you felt jealous/fearful of love's teachings like the Pharisees?
3. Give participants paper, colors/markers. On one side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of their feelings when they had to make a decision and felt they made the wrong choice. On the other side of the paper, ask them to create an image(s) of their feelings when they felt they made the right choice. Ask them to pair off, share and discuss. Then ask them to come back as a group, share and discuss.
4. When faced with a difficult decision, how do you figure out the right answer?
5. Ask youth to pair off. Ask each of them to create two role-plays, one around facing a difficult decision and arriving at the wrong choice and another arriving at the right choice. Share and discuss.
6. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to go off in parts of the room to be alone. Ask them to be silent and then to create a prayer asking God for guidance in making the right choice and a prayer requesting forgiveness if you make the wrong choice. Come back as a group, share and discuss.

V. SUGGESTED LINKS TO OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

1. This is a clip of a man trying to pay his \$6500 credit card bill with pennies. An act of defiance, but nothing illegal. Discuss what this man might be “saying” with his gesture.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-TJtaTpcBQ>
2. This is a scene from *Cool Hand Luke* in which Luke (the Jesus character) defies the authority by over-cooperating! A great example of not giving Caesar what belongs to God (in this case, one’s soul, dignity and personal power).
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQEmyQwRdUo&feature=related>
3. *You Never Give Me Your Money* by The Beatles.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX5gG5AKbR4>

Between Sundays

Ask participants to look ahead to their school, family, social lives in the coming week:

When might you have difficulty making the right choice?

When might you ask God for help in making the right choice?

When might you try to trick/test love?

TeenText
Daily Reflections
Week of 10/16

Find a quiet place, re-read the text, read these reflections, sit with your eyes closed and reflect on them and your responses; consider recording your thoughts in a journal.

Day One

- *When might you feel it's impossible to choose between what you feel God wants and what you want?*

Day Two

- *When might you feel God is testing you?*

Day Three

- *When has God answer surprised you?*

Day Four

- *How might it feel to ask God for guidance in making your decision?*

Day Five

- *In what ways do you feel your life shows the truth about what God wants people to do?*

Day Six

- *When do you feel you choose earthly things over Godly things?*



TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

TEENTEXT Grades 6-8

October 23, 2011

What law of love you live by?

I. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible

Candle + matches

Paper

Pens, pencils, and/or markers

Computer or DVD player (for film clips)

Computer + web access (for YouTube videos)

Copies of "Daily Reflections" handouts

II. TODAY'S TEXT: Matthew 22:34-40— How does your life show love?

³⁴After Jesus had made the Sadducees look foolish, the Pharisees heard about it and got together. ³⁵One of them was an expert in the Jewish Law. So he tried to test Jesus by asking, ³⁶"Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?" ³⁷Jesus answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul,

and mind. ³⁸ This is the first and most important commandment. ³⁹The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, "Love others as much as you love yourself." ⁴⁰All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments

III. BACKGROUND

What does it look like to love God with all our heart, soul and mind? How does that concept play out in our culture? Where is there evidence of our loving God with all of our being? This would be a great Sunday to collect evidence that people DO or DO NOT love God. Also, loving one's neighbor is often easier than loving one's self, especially during the teenage years. This first and greatest commandment is huge! But at the end of the day, Jesus was right—it's all we need to know in order to do the right thing.

IV. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Remember, these are only suggestions. The most effective questions and activities—the ones that help participants connect their story with God's story each week—are often those that are based on your personal knowledge of the participants and where they are. Listen carefully to their responses; ask follow-up questions that help them reflect on the text and their lives, right now, right where they are.

GO DEEP **(What's happening in the story?)**

1. Who are the participants in the story?
2. What's going on in the text?
3. What event/which individuals/groups jumped out at you? Why?
4. Once again, (like last week's text) the Pharisees are trying test/trick Jesus. Ask participants to pair off and be the Pharisees. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had before they decided on the question of Jewish Law to ask Jesus. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.
5. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to write Jesus' response as people of the day might have understood it. Come back as a group, share the writings and discuss.

6. How might a bystander who heard the question and Jesus' answer have felt about the Pharisees? About Jesus?
7. What do you imagine the Pharisees felt they could gain or lose by asking Jesus this question?
8. Ask participants to pair off. As Pharisees, create a conversation they might have had on the way home after hearing Jesus' answer. Create another conversation disciples might have had on the way home after hearing Jesus' answer. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.

BE REAL

(What connections can you make between the story and the world around you?)

1. Where and/or how do you see people trying to trick others in the news? Music? Television shows? Books you may be reading? A movie you have seen? At your school? Or in a family?
2. Who is someone in the world who is afraid of another's beliefs Why?
3. What is the "law" someone follows?
4. Who is someone you think feels everyone must think/believe/feel the same way?
5. Who is someone you think follows these commandments?
6. Who is someone you feel loves others as much as they love themselves?

LET GO

(Be open to discovering how this story is happening in your own life.)

1. Where do you see yourself in the text? Are you the one wanting to trick love? The one wanting everyone to follow the “law” exactly as you understand it? The one who loves the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind? Are you the one who loves others as much as you love yourself? Are you the one who respects others’ beliefs, feelings, and spiritual paths?
2. Give participants paper, colors/markers. On one side of the paper ask them to create an image(s) of their feelings when by their actions/thoughts they felt they demonstrated that they loved the Lord their God with all their heart, soul and mind. On the other side of the paper, ask them to create an image(s) of their feelings when they felt their actions/thoughts demonstrated that they loved others as much as they loved themselves. Ask them to pair off, share and discuss. Then ask them to come back as a group, share and discuss.
3. What do you feel is the most difficult for you – showing you love God with all your heart? Or with all your soul? Or with all your mind?
4. What do you feel you might gain or lose by loving another as much as you love yourself?
5. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to go off in parts of the room to be alone. Ask them to be silent and then to create a prayer that expresses in their own words what these words mean to them, “I will love the Lord my God with all my heart, soul and mind and love others as much as I love myself.” Come back as a group, share and discuss.
6. When have you found it more difficult to show love to others than to show love to yourself?
7. In your life as others observe your words and actions, what do you imagine they would see as the most important spiritual law?

V. SUGGESTED LINKS TO OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

1. Film Clip: *The Blind Side* (2009)

Big Mike is homeless, family-less, discarded by society as just another poor, black kid going nowhere. When he is given a seat at the Wingate Christian School, almost everyone expects him to fail. But no one counted on the Tuohy's. Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy take an interest in Big Mike. A family committed to doing the right thing, they bring Mike into their home, give him a bed, a meal, and a family. The transformation that follows is breathtaking. The Blind Side shows how acts of love change both the giver and the receiver. It is the true story of how Big Mike became Michael Oher -- first round draft pick at left tackle for the Baltimore Ravens. Begin the clip at 19:00 and run until the end of the Thanksgiving meal. This is an excellent illustration of seeing the face of God in another and loving one's neighbor.

2. This 5-minute music video is about loving yourself. There are some great quotations and lovely music. **A suggestion:** bring in the bubbles and let your youth blow bubbles as they watch the video!!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tagY9ce5CAQ>

Between Sundays

Ask participants to look ahead to their school, family, social lives in the coming week:

When might you have difficulty loving yourself?

When might you ask God for help in loving others as much as you love yourself?

When might you feel you need God to love you with all of God's heart, soul and mind?

TeenText

Daily Reflections

Week of 10/23

Find a quiet place, re-read the text, read these reflections, sit with your eyes closed and reflect on them and your responses; consider recording your thoughts in a journal.

Day One

- *What might it feel like to accept you are loved with all of God's heart, soul and mind?*

Day Two

- *When might you feel threatened if others don't feel, believe, think just like you?*

Day Three

- *When have you resisted loving yourself as much as you love others?*

Day Four

- *What is your biggest obstacle to loving others as much as you love yourself?*

Day Five

- *What is your biggest challenge in loving God – with all your heart? All your soul? All your mind?*

Day Six

- *How might it feel to know that others love you as much as they love themselves?*



TEENTEXT GRADES 6-8

Go Deep. Be Real. Let Go.

TEENTEXT Grades 6-8

October 30, 2011

How might you try to be a spiritual show off?

I. WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Bible

Candle + matches

Paper

Pens, pencils, and/or markers

Computer or DVD player (for film clips)

Computer + web access (for YouTube videos)

Copies of “Daily Reflections” handouts

II. TODAY’S TEXT: Matthew 23:1-12— Why is it important for your words to match your actions?

¹Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: ²The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law are experts in the Law of Moses. ³So obey everything they teach you, but don't do as they do. After all, they say one thing and do something else.

⁴They pile heavy burdens on people's shoulders and won't lift a finger to help.

⁵Everything they do is just to show off in front of others. They even make a big show of wearing Scripture verses on their foreheads and arms, and they wear

big tassels for everyone to see. ⁶They love the best seats at banquets and the front seats in the meeting places. ⁷And when they are in the market, they like to have people greet them as their teachers. ⁸But none of you should be called a teacher. You have only one teacher, and all of you are like brothers and sisters. ⁹Don't call anyone on earth your father. All of you have the same Father in heaven. ¹⁰None of you should be called the leader. The Messiah is your only leader. ¹¹Whoever is the greatest should be the servant of the others. ¹²If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored.

III. BACKGROUND

There are certainly glaring and egregious misuses of what we call the Christian Ministry. According to today's text, there always has been! It is tempting to equate success in the world with being in God's favor. In the video clips we reviewed for today's text, we ran across several televangelists who pronounced, with great fervor and certainty, that *God wants you to be successful. God wants you to enjoy wealth and riches. God loves you and wants you to have the things that make you comfortable and make you happy.* This seems to fly against the message of Matthew 23 where we are called to be humble and act as servants. People want leaders; they want someone to tell them what to do, to give them the secret formula. And some folks, undoubtedly, love to be in the spotlight, love the perks of authority. Who is doing the will of God, we might ask.

IV. SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Remember, these are only suggestions. The most effective questions and activities—the ones that help participants connect their story with God's story each week—are often those that are based on your personal knowledge of the participants and where they are. Listen carefully to their responses; ask follow-up questions that help them reflect on the text and their lives, right now, right where they are.

GO DEEP **(What's happening in the story?)**

1. Who are the participants in the story?
2. What's going on in the text?
3. What event/which individuals/groups jumped out at you? Why?

4. Ask participants to pair off and be people of the day. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had after hearing this text. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.
5. Now ask the participants to pair off again and be Pharisees. Ask them to create a conversation they might have had after hearing this text. Come back as a group, share the conversations and discuss.
6. Why do you suppose Jesus felt he needed to say these things about the Pharisees? How might people of the day have felt about Jesus, about the Pharisees after hearing these words?
7. What might Jesus have felt he could gain or lose by saying these words?
8. How might people of the day have felt these words applied to their lives?
9. Give participants paper, colors/markers. Ask them to create an image(s) of how people of the day might have felt hearing “Whoever is the greatest should be the servant of the others. If you humble yourself, you will be honored.” Share and discuss.

BE REAL

(What connections can you make between the story and the world around you?)

1. Where and/or how do you see people trying to trick others in the news? Music? Television shows? Books you may be reading? A movie you have seen? At your school? Or in a family?
2. Who is someone in the world who is trying to show off, to be considered better than others? Why?
3. Who is someone you think their words do not match their deeds?
4. Who is someone you think is humble?
5. Who is someone you think piles burdens on others?

6. Who is someone who feels they should be honored?
7. Who is someone whose words do match their deeds?

LET GO

(Be open to discovering how this story is happening in your own life.)

1. Where do you see yourself in the text? Are you the one who is a spiritual show off? The one wanting to be thought of as better than others? The one whose words do not match her/his deeds? Are you the one wanting to be called teacher? Are you the one who piles burdens on others?
2. When have you felt you wanted to be thought of as better than others?
3. When have you experienced someone who thinks they are more important than others?
4. When have you wanted to be considered the teacher, the leader, the greatest?
5. Ask youth to pair off. Ask each of them to create two role-plays, one that shows two people both trying to be considered the most important; a second one that shows them being humble, being the servant of the other. Share and discuss.
6. What do you feel you gain or lose by being the servant of others? By being considered the leaders of others?
7. Give participants paper, pens/pencils. Ask them to create a prayer asking God for help in being a servant, being humble. Come back as a group, share the prayers and discuss.

V. SUGGESTED LINKS TO OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

1. These YouTube clips are about “prosperity ministries”. Both could open some lively conversation about buying the good life by donating to a televangelist’s ministry. You pay = you get gifts from God.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGjVH3XHTgw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TldBbhH5pco&feature=related>

2. **Film Clip:** *Coach Carter* (2005). Begin the clip at 46:09 and run until 47:45. This is a brief clip with a broad message—it is not okay to trash your opponents. Another’s bad behavior does not justify bad behavior on my part. It’s not all about me.

Between Sundays

Ask participants to look ahead to their school, family, social lives in the coming week:

When might you have difficulty serving others?

When might you ask God for help in serving others?

When might you try to be the leader?

TeenText

Daily Reflections

Week of 10/30

Find a quiet place, re-read the text, read these reflections, sit with your eyes closed and reflect on them and your responses; consider recording your thoughts in a journal.

Day One

- *When might you feel you have to be the leader, be considered better than others?*

Day Two

- *When might you feel God is calling you to lead?*

Day Three

- *How might you be both a leader and a servant?*

Day Four

- *How does it feel when your actions don't match your words?*

Day Five

- *When might you give up the "best seat" to someone else?*

Day Six

- *How difficult is it to be humble?*