



## **ALL IN: SAMPLE LESSON**

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## **ALL IN**

### **SAMPLE LESSON: HEART**

Bible: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 6:32; Luke 12:34

Bottom Line: Going “all in” means giving God all your heart—holding nothing back.

### **OPENING GAME: WHO’S ALL IN? (IN-PERSON VERSION)**

*Note: If your junior high ministry is meeting in-person, then use this game.*

#### **SUPPLIES:**

- Two small dry-erase boards
- Markers and erasers (one per team)

#### **GAME PREP**

Divide up your group into two teams: boys vs. girls

The teams do not have to be even.

#### **HOW TO PLAY THE GAME**

**Say:** The phrase “all in” means you are fully committed. You give everything you have, and nobody can talk you out of doing it or finishing whatever you are committed to doing.

We want to find out today which group has more people who are “all in”: the boys or the girls.

I’m going to read through a series of statements.

If the statement is true for at least one person on your team, add a tally mark to your board.

These statements only apply to the people present in your team today and only if they have done these things in the last 12 months.

The team with the most points at the end wins.

Who has, in the last 12 months...

1. Read an entire book (reading the actual book, not just listening to an audio book.) No skimming or shortcut resources. This means starting and reading all the way through one entire book.

2. Ran or walked a 5K.
3. Eaten all your fruit and vegetables at every meal - no exceptions.
4. Played a game of Monopoly and finished the game with no quitting or shortcuts.
5. Tried a new sport and stuck with it the entire season, even if you didn't like it or weren't good at it.
6. Watched an entire season of a TV show or YouTube.
7. Started a Bible reading plan of 30 days or more and completed it.
8. Spent an entire gift card, down to the last cent, on one transaction.
9. Gone 24 hours without using your phone, tablet, game system or any type of similar technology.
10. Started and completed a DIY project you saw online.
11. Completed every single homework assignment and project by the due date - no extensions, late work or missing assignments.

It doesn't matter what grade you received.

12. Watched every single game - home and away - of a professional sports team.
13. Conquered a fear (ex. being afraid of heights but zip-lining at camp anyway.)
14. Not only told someone about church or youth group and invited them, but even brought him or her with you (or made sure the person made it there even though he or she doesn't usually go to church anywhere.)
15. Completed a coding project to make a game, app, etc.

\*Bonus tip: To make this more difficult, make it a contest to see who can get the most, but each only counts if *everyone* on the team meets the criteria.

\*\*Tiebreaker: If you end up with a tie, the first team that can find something *not already listed* that everyone on that team has completed in the last twelve months is the winner.

## OPENING GAME: WHO'S ALL IN? (ONLINE VERSION)

*Note: If your junior high ministry is still meeting online, then use this game.*

The phrase "all in" means you are fully committed; you give everything you have; and nobody can talk you out of doing it or finishing it.

We are looking for which person is the most "all in" in our group. I'm going to read through a series of statements. If the statement is true for you, you'll let us know.

Zoom: Use the chat feature to type your points, (1...2...3...) Just add one each time the statement applies to you to keep a running total that we can see in the chat. If the chat is too difficult, or if you have 25 or less so that you can see everyone on the screen at the same time, then they can show on camera with their fingers how many points they have. (first to ten would win)

These statements only apply if you have done these things in the last 12 months.

The person with the most points at the end wins.

(Questions are in original lesson.)

\*Bonus tip: To make this more difficult, make it a contest to see who can get the most, but each only counts if they been "all in" in the last 6 months, 3 months or week.

\*\*Tie-breaker: If you end up with a tie, congratulate those students as being the "all in" all-star team!

## TEACH

**Say:** That game was definitely easier for some of you than others.

I imagine it would be even easier for older students, like those in high school.

That's because you are at a time in your life where you are trying out new things: a new instrument in band, a new school sport, a new look, a new hobby, or maybe even new friends.

So to talk about being "all in" and giving yourself completely to any one thing is a bit of a challenge for preteens and junior high students.

*(Insert your own story here from your days as a junior high student or tell this one as "Someone I know...".)*

When I was a preteen, I started playing the saxophone.

Even though I wasn't good at it at the beginning, I improved and ended up getting good enough to play tenor saxophone in a district band festival for junior high.

I stayed committed to practicing and working with my classmates and teacher and really enjoyed all the hard work when I was able to play at that level.

I also tried out basketball in junior high.

Let's just say that if the bench had a backup team, that would have been where I was placed.

I still enjoy playing for fun and watching others play, but I quickly learned that I wasn't going to be a star on the court.

*(I did, however, finish the season, which wasn't true for everyone who started the season with us.)*

We could make two lists.

One could be all the things we've tried or started but not stuck with.

The other could be the things we have started **and** finished.

My guess would be that most, if not all, of us could write our names and activities on each list.

I'm sure there are things you found out about, got invited to try, or just decided to move from being interested to being involved this year.

And whether it was a new type of food or a new hobby, probably not everything was as awesome as you imagined.

Then you had to decide if you stuck with it or dropped it.

I'm hoping you know this already, but your faith in Jesus should not just be something you "try out."

However, you are at an age where much of your faith has just been about what your parents believed.

They just took you along for the ride.

But now you are at an age where, like so many other things in life, you are going to have to decide if you are "all in" or if this was just part of your childhood and parent's faith.

Throughout this series, we're going to unpack that some more.

But let's get started today by going to a passage of scripture that is one of the most important verses to Jews and has significant implications for us today, especially if you have been "trying out" Christianity.

**Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5.**

*Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*

*And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.*

When we hear those words, if you are like me, you start to make a mental checklist:

- How well do I do at loving God with my heart?
- How well do I do with loving Him with my soul?
- And how well with my strength?

However, that's not how that command was given.

We aren't meant to check off one item and not the others.

All these terms were used together to emphasize a person's total commitment in trusting and obeying God.

The point being made here is that it is not enough for God's people to just go through the motions when it comes to worship - or life in general.

We are expected to truly love God and devote our whole lives to Him.

Moses is describing the whole person here by using "heart" **and** "soul" **and** "strength" together.

We are to use all our abilities and all that we possess to honor God.

So, take what we just learned about loving God and mix that with our game of being "all in," and you get where we are going with this series.

We are supposed to be "all in" with Jesus if we are Christians.

Does that describe your faith right now?

Are you fully committed?

Are you giving everything you have?

Can anyone talk you out of “sticking with it” when it comes to following Jesus?

You could just as easily answer "yes" or "no" to such a big question and no one would really know if you were right.

So, even though we are talking about total commitment of all that you are to Jesus, we are going to break this idea down into four parts for this series to show how this should look and to challenge you to honestly and accurately evaluate how you are doing.

Think about this: What could it look like if you were to start being "all in" with Jesus?

Today, we start with the heart.

Let's look at a something Jesus said to help us figure out how we can start the process of being "all in" when it comes to our hearts.

**Read Matthew 6:21 & Luke 12:34.**

*Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*

I'm not sure if you've heard this before, but Jesus is making a big point that is easier to understand than it is to live out.

The word *heart* here is not literally that major blood-pumping organ in your body.

Jesus is talking about the center of your personality, which includes your mind, emotions and will.

He's talking about what controls all of you, who you are, what you value and the choices you make.

You can call that your mind or anything else you want.

For today's purposes, we're focusing on that being the "heart."

Jesus' point here is that what we treasure most controls us, whether we admit it or not.

Whatever you give your most time, attention and even money to is what you treasure and, therefore, what directs a lot of your life.

So, without comparing yourself to anyone else, good or bad, evaluate your own life.

Many of you have software on your digital device that can tell you how much screen time you had and how you spent it.

You might say you don't play games much, but your device might tell us you play them for five hours a day.

Or, you might say you don't spend much time on social media, but the daily hours reported by this software might tell us differently.

Imagine we had the same kind of way to evaluate how you spend every hour of your day.

I believe everyone here would say God and Jesus are important to them.

But would we see that on how you spend your day?

When do you spend time with Jesus?

Do you give him the beginning of your day to get focused on him or do you check social media or watch a YouTube video first thing in the morning?

Do you have a habit of reading your Bible and praying or are you better at being consistent with checking out sports statistics and entertainment like your favorite YouTube or Netflix or Disney+ series?

Do you think about Jesus and what he said throughout your day or are your thoughts more on how to get to the next level in that game or how to pull off that DIY craft you saw online?

These may sound harsh.

And although they are not meant to, sometimes it hurts when you realize how you spend your time vs. how you think you spend your time.

That's even true for us adults when we face the reality of our screen time.

To really move forward, we'll need to go from talking about "us" to talking about "you" with each other.

So we'll finish this conversation in discussions in our small groups where we can be really honest with each other.

But listen closely.

Our goal here is not that you leave here feeling guilty today.

That wouldn't change anything.



Our goal is that, just like with that screen time feature, that you'll be able to honestly and accurately evaluate what you are giving your heart to - what is getting your focus, attention, time and money - and make moves to give more to Jesus and to increase that to the point that you are truly "all in" with Him.

Before we head into our small groups, use your imagination with me for a moment.

We look around and see people all around us in person and online who say they are Christians, which should mean they are all in with Jesus, but we don't see much evidence of that.

What if we started by looking in the mirror and making changes to our lives so that people can actually see that we are "all in" with Jesus just as much as those early disciples were?

Imagine how we would worship differently.

Imagine how we might treat other people differently.

Imagine how different our schools, church and homes would be if we were each working on this!

Disney Imagineers are famous for being people who not only dream, but put into action those dreams so that millions of people around the world can experience them in their theme parks.

What if we as Christians became known as people who not only dream about following Jesus, but do so in such a way that everyone around us doesn't have to come to church to experience God's love?

What if they experienced it whenever they are with us, the people who are "all in" with Jesus?

As you head to small group, think about this question:

What is one area where I could honestly say my heart is focused on something else more than Jesus in my everyday life?

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What's something you tried or started, but didn't stick with or finish?

Explain.

1. What's something you've tried or started in the last year and stuck with and finished?

Explain.

2. If we asked your friends and family, what would they say are the things that you love to do most, the things that you give a lot of time, attention, and maybe even money (even if it's your parents' money!) to doing?

3. Have you ever looked at your screen time on one of your devices?

If so, were you surprised by how much time or how little time you spent on anything?

How can you and a few friends hold each other accountable with a screen time challenge?

What goal could you set related to screen time? (hint: Bible app)

4. What is hard about having a daily habit of reading your Bible? (or, if it's easy for you, do you have any thoughts on why that is?)

How could using a daily reading plan on a Bible app help you develop this habit?

5. If you've ever seen a pirate's treasure map, there's usually a big "X" where the treasure is buried.

If we drew a map and put symbols all over it for where you are focused throughout your week, if you're honest, what would be the biggest section where we would put an "X" for the treasure in your life?

6. As a middle schooler, what doubts or questions have you had to work through in developing a faith that is your own instead of just an imitation of your parents?

7. It takes discipline and commitment to be "all in", especially when you are first starting something.

What's a lesson you have learned from something you tried and stuck with that can help you and others when it comes to sticking with following Jesus?

How did you overcome the obstacles and push through instead of quitting?

8. When it comes to your faith or following Jesus, what about it is easiest or strongest in your life that you could use to help someone else?

What lessons have you learned with commitment to Jesus that could encourage a peer?

9. People talk about having "fomo" (fear of missing out).

Often this is described as seeing something on social media that your friends did and feeling like you were missing out on something.

How could a healthy "fomo" with Jesus help us to be more devoted to him in our everyday lives instead of just when we come to church?

10. It's easy to go online and order almost anything, especially with resources like Amazon and eBay.

How does this make it harder to trust that God is the ultimate Provider of everything in our lives?

11. What is one area of your life where you can give more "treasure" - more attention, commitment and even money - to Jesus this week to help you on becoming "all in" with Him?