

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS



SHARING THE GOOD NEWS - SAMPLE LESSON

Writer: Mike Sheley
Editor: Gabrielle Lewis

Sample Lesson



Stories



Bible: Acts 17:16-34; Colossians 4:5-6



Bottom Line:

Pay attention to the people and culture around you so you can make the most of opportunities to share the Good News by introducing Jesus to the conversation.

OPENING GAME

Supplies:

- Five copies of "Popular Pixar Quotes" document with sources (File: "MTY_Sharing_03game.docx")

OPENING GAME – I Know That One

GAME PREP

Pick four Leaders and give them each a copy of "Popular Pixar Quotes" document with sources. (File: "MTY_Sharing_03game.docx")

Divide your group into four teams.

Have everyone line up in single file lines with as much space as possible between the front of the line and one of the four Leaders.

Optional: If you have the budget, investing in a Wireless Eggspert can really help sort out who answered first in your games: <https://www.educationalinsights.com/wireless-eggspert-2-4ghz-2020>

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

Explain that you are about to play a modified relay race.

You will read a quote from a Pixar movie.

Once you have finished the quote, the first student in line is to run to the Leader, fist bump them, and tell them the movie's title.

The first team to do this correctly earns 100 points.

You can earn a bonus of 100 points if you correctly identify the character who spoke the quote after you give the movie title.

OPENING GAME

Once the student has gone, they move to the end of the line.

The next student now waits for you to share a quote.

The process repeats until you use all of the quotes or run out of time.

The team with the most points wins.

TEACH

Some people can watch a movie one time and can quote you any line from it.

Other people hear a quote, like in our game, and can tell you the movie title and the character who said it.

And then there are those, like most of us, who hear a quote, and we are sure that we know it, but we just can't think of the movie's title or the character, which is frustrating.

We will talk today about how recognizing something you see or hear can create opportunities to share the Good News about Jesus.

We are in a series called "Sharing the Good News."

We started two weeks ago focusing on Jesus and Matthew, where we were challenged to build friendships with people who don't know our friend Jesus and help them get to know him.

Then last week, we read a crazy story where the Apostle Peter had a dream while praying and then overcame his Jewish traditions and some of his beliefs to help share the Good News with the family of a Roman army officer.

From Peter's examples, we were warned that until we really listen to someone else's story, we won't have the opportunity to share the Good News.

Today we are talking about opportunities.

For example, when I was a teenager—hold your "old" jokes—I became friends with another student because I was wearing a t-shirt from a concert I had attended and we found out that we both liked the same band.

That simple shirt provided an opportunity for a conversation and a friendship.

Movies can do the same thing for you.

Think about it.

In today's world, a movie can be remembered for iconic scenes and great dialogue, or it can be the source of great laughter for how funny (or how bad) it was.

You don't usually share these on t-shirts.

But you do see them as memes and gifs on your device, which could easily start conversations.

Think about the following movie collections: Toy Story, Cars, Marvel, Star Wars, Harry Potter, and all of their spin-offs.

Knowing someone likes one of these movies or is talking about a scene or a quote opens up either a fun or heated conversation, depending on whether you agree or disagree with them.

What does that have to do with sharing the Good News about Jesus?

Let's see what happened with the Apostle Paul in Athens and then come back to this question.

Acts 17:22-34 (New Living Translation)

22 So Paul, standing before the council,* addressed them as follows: "Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, **23** for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: 'To an Unknown God.' This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I'm telling you about.

24 "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, **25** and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need.

26 From one man* he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.

27 "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us.

28 For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your* own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

29 And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone.

30 "God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him.

31 For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."

32 When they heard Paul speak about the resurrection of the dead, some laughed in contempt, but others said, "We want to hear more about this later."

33 That ended Paul's discussion with them, **34** but some joined him and became believers. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the council,* a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Paul sees all these religious statues, which include one "to an unknown God," and uses that as an opportunity to share the Good News about Jesus.

He even quoted one of their poets, showing he was knowledgeable of their culture.

In this short teaching opportunity, he covered the whole story of God, from Creation to Jesus' resurrection.

The result was mixed.

Some laughed at Paul talking about dead people coming back to life.

(Zombie comics and movies weren't popular at that time.)

However, some did want to hear more.

In fact, some people who listened to him became believers, including one prominent woman named Damaris and a council member named Dionysius.

That's great for Paul, but what about you today?

Let's return to our earlier conversation about movies.

The *Toy Story* movies from Pixar have strong themes of friendship.

Any conversation about Buzz, Woody, or anyone else in those animated movies could be a great conversation starter to talk about friends you have at church or the Son of God being known as a "friend of sinners."

Cars has similar themes but also points out the value of slowing down and spending time with people vs. being in a hurry to get to the next destination.

This speaks volumes to our culture of distraction and the idea of being fully present to other people so we can love our neighbor or take time to get away as Jesus did.

The Marvel movies feature battles between heroes and villains.

You could use this to talk about the spiritual warfare going on and Jesus, who was sent to be the ultimate rescuer.

Some of these examples may seem cheesy but think about your own example.

Maybe it's not a movie but a popular song.

As you talk with friends about what you like or don't like about the song, consider the lyrics and the

message the artist is trying to convey.

In the same way that Paul used words from a poem, you could connect lyrics from a song to truths from Scripture about Jesus.

And sometimes, the path for conversation is really obvious and straightforward.

One of the biggest, if not the biggest, television events of the year is the NFL's big game.

Companies pay crazy amounts of money to put up an ad or commercial during that game.

Two of the most popular commercials from the 2023 game were from "He Gets Us" <https://hegetsus.com/>

They creatively connected viewers to the real Jesus in a fresh way that made people think and start conversations all over social media and the web.

That one is a simple way to ask someone if they saw the commercials and to talk about their thoughts.

You could point out, "The video you saw was about Jesus. Let me tell you more about him."

Then, have a simple response ready to explain a little about him as Paul did with the group we just read about.

Some might laugh or dismiss you.

And some might want to hear more.

And some just might get to know and follow Jesus!

In a letter to the church in Colossae, Paul wrote these words, which seem to be a reflection on how he lived his life:

Colossians 4:5-6 (New Living Translation)

5 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

And here it is in a slightly different paraphrase:

Colossians 4:5-6 (The Message)

5 Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don't miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. 6 Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.

We are challenged to be wise in how we live and are instructed to make the most of opportunities that come our way - just like Paul did.

Paul wasn't saying in verse 6 to shy away from bold truths.

We can tell by how bold he was in his preaching and writing.

He is saying to have conversations that help people get to know Jesus.

It's not about us being "right" and someone else "wrong."

It's about us explaining a few simple truths about Jesus and then being open to continuing the conversation later.

So think about Paul's example and then think about your own life.

Who do you talk about movies, YouTube videos, songs, and other items of pop culture with?

Are there times when you think back that you could have used those topics as opportunities to share the Good News about Jesus in connected and "bite-sized" ways?

Pay attention this week to culture and conversations.

Then take advantage of the opportunities that come your way to bring Jesus into the conversation and see what happens!

Then tell us about it next week!

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite movie or movie series of all time? Why?
2. What sort of topics come up when you are just having relaxed conversations with your friends?
3. Using what we have learned in the previous two lessons—along with this one—who are some people you could become friends with by being genuinely curious about their interests and stepping out of your comfort zone to introduce Jesus to the conversation?
4. If Jesus doesn't normally come up in conversations with your friends, why is that so hard or awkward? How can you make it more "normal"?
5. What is one recent movie scene you know would be a great conversation starter about Jesus?
6. What is a recent song that isn't about Jesus but talks about topics or issues in the lyrics addressed by Jesus' life and teaching?
7. (Play one of the videos from <https://hegetsus.com/en> or just talk about it if everyone is familiar.) Are these videos helpful in having conversations with your friends? Would you share one of these with someone and ask their thoughts? Why or why not?
8. So often, people post things online or on social media as a way to shout their thoughts to the world without listening to what others have to say. What can you do differently to switch from a shouting match to creating conversations?
9. What opportunities do you have in school projects or assignments to add Jesus to the conversation?
10. This week, how can this group encourage each other and help hold each other accountable to making the most of opportunities to introduce Jesus to the conversation?