



Welcome to **Spread the Word**.

Here are a few tips to help you as you teach these lessons:

- These lessons are designed for one hour each. In parenthesis you will see the estimated time each portion takes. (In Lessons 2 and 3 only, the optional Pit Stop will increase the total lesson time by 10 minutes or more.)
- The lessons are designed to be done consecutively in this order:
 1. The Importance of the Lost
 2. Things vs. Treasure
 3. Discovering the Joy of Giving
 4. Creating a Lifestyle of Giving
 5. How to Make a Difference
- Each lesson includes the following sections:
 - Starting the Journey
 - Gaining Speed
 - Pit Stop (only included in Lessons 2 and 3)
 - Down the Straightaway
 - Heading for the Checkered Flag
 - Crossing the Finish Line

The text in **bold** is to be spoken to the class. Of course, you should feel free to use your own words. Adapt and use these lessons in the way that best fits your group.

The Importance of the Lost
Lesson 1



Objectives

- To realize how blessed we are.
- To recognize the people of the world who need to hear about a loving Savior, Jesus Christ.
- To receive God's challenge to spread the word.
- To respond by providing for the gospel to be shared.

Materials/Preparation

- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- A globe (preferred), world map, or atlas to identify the 10/40 Window of evangelism
- Pictures of a mission trip to another country (This will work best if these are from a trip you have personally taken or from another trip that your students will be able to identify.)
- Bibles
- Note cards
- Spread the Word PowerPoint, and the equipment to show it
- Week 1 Student Devos

Starting the Journey (15 minutes)

Ask, **How many of you consider yourselves rich?** Take a minute to define with your group what it means to be rich. Where do we draw the line for being truly rich? Is it earning \$100,000 or \$1,000,000 a year? Who falls into the category of being rich? Here are some recent statistics to help inform your students:

- In the United States in 2006, a family of four earning under \$20,444 was considered to be living in poverty.¹
- In 2006, 36.5 million people in the United States were living in poverty.²
- It is estimated that about 600 million children in the world survive on less than \$1 a day.³

Distribute paper and pens or pencils to students. Then say, **Now I want you to take a virtual tour of your home. Imagine that you're walking in the front door of the place where you live. Take a count of the following articles as you travel through the different rooms:**

- How many refrigerators?
- How many televisions?
- How many DVD and MP3 players?
- How many telephones, cell phones, and pagers?
- How many computers?
- How many different modes of transportation (cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, bicycles, four wheelers, Wave Runners, and so forth)?
- How many different pairs of shoes?
- How many rooms in your home?
- How many bathrooms?
- How many Bibles?

Ask students to total up the number of "things" they have counted. Say, **If your grand total is more than 10, then by the world's standards you can consider yourself "rich" or at least "well off."** There will not likely be anyone in your group who is not "rich" by the world's standards. (If you want the most recent poverty statistics, do a Google search for *World Poverty Statistics*.)

Point out that in 2005, about 122,000 Iraqi children died before their fifth birthdays.⁴ In Bangladesh, half of the children under the age of 5 are malnourished.⁵ Anyone who has ever been to a Third World country on a missions trip knows that millions of people live without running water and electricity. Say, **Most of us are blessed more than we know!**

Gaining Speed (10 minutes)

Show your students the globe, world map, or atlas that you have brought. Ask, **How many of you know what the 10/40 Window is?** The 10/40 Window is the area that contains the largest population of non-Christians in the world. The area extends from 10 degrees to 40 degrees north of the equator, and stretches from North Africa across to China. Help students to locate the 10/40 Window. If you have time, work together to identify the different countries that are represented in this area, and discuss the different cultures and religions the area represents. Over 3 billion people live in this region, yet less than 5% of them know Christ. Eighty-five percent of the world's poorest people live there.⁶

The following countries are usually listed in the 10/40 Window:

Afghanistan	Lebanon
Algeria	Libya
Bahrain	Macau
Bangladesh	Mali
Benin	Malta
Bhutan	Mauritania
Burkina Faso	Morocco
Cambodia	Myanmar (Burma)
Chad	Nepal
China	Niger
Cyprus	Oman
Djibouti	Pakistan
Egypt	Philippines
Eritrea	Portugal
Ethiopia	Qatar
Gambia	Saudi Arabia
Gibraltar	Senegal
Greece	Sudan
Guinea	Syria
Guinea-Bissau	Taiwan
India	Tajikistan
Iran	Thailand
Iraq	Tunisia
Israel	Turkey
Japan	Turkmenistan
Jordan	United Arab Emirates
Korea, North	Vietnam
Korea, South	Western Sahara
Kuwait	Yemen
Laos	

Using the globe, map, or atlas that you have, determine the distance between where you live and some of the countries in the 10/40 Window. Ask, **Other than miles, what else may distance you from the people living in the 10/40 Window?** Take a few minutes to brainstorm with your students ways to “bridge the gap” between the people of these countries and yourselves.

Down the Straightaway (15 minutes)

Ask students to follow along as you or a volunteer reads Romans 10:13–15. Discuss the following questions:

- **For someone to be saved, what does this passage say must happen?** That person must call upon the name of the Lord. Point out that “nice thoughts” or doing “good things” does *not* appear in the passage.
- **Who can be saved?** *Everyone* who calls on the name of the Lord. Emphasize that this is more than uttering a certain word or words; in the context of Romans and the whole New Testament, it means calling on God to ask for forgiveness. Even a person who committed the worst act imaginable would be accepted into God’s kingdom if he or she called on the name of the Lord in this way—that’s the grace of God! Students may wrestle with this point. Be sure to stress again that many people have never heard of how to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ; the need is very great!

Ask students to get into groups of two or three and to read verses 14 and 15 again, summarizing the four questions found there. A summary might read as follows:

Question 1—How can people call on someone they don’t believe in?

Question 2—How can people believe in someone if they don’t hear about that person?

Question 3—How can people hear about someone if no one tells them about that person?

Question 4—How can people go tell the good news if no one sends them (makes it possible for them to go)?

Invite one or more groups to come up with four good reasons that could convince other Christians they should spread the gospel. Invite the rest of the groups to come up with four good reasons that could convince non-believers of the value and importance of the gospel. After a few minutes, invite the groups to share their work. The objective is for everyone to consider why we should spread the word of Jesus Christ, and why others would want to hear it. You might conclude the groups’ presentations by saying, **The bottom line is this: All people, everywhere, can be saved by calling on the name of the Lord. But they won’t call on him unless they believe in him, and they won’t believe in him unless they hear about him, and they won’t hear about him unless someone tells them the good news, and no one will go and share the good news unless someone has made it possible for them to go.**

Now ask students to look again at the four questions they identified from the passage. Challenge them to consider and discuss how they themselves might answer the call and be the “someone” who gets the word out. Say, **If we get the word out, others will hear—and respond—and call on the Lord to be saved.**

Heading for the Checkered Flag (10 minutes)

St. Francis of Assisi is quoted as saying, “Share the gospel at all times and if you have to, use words.” Clearly we are all called to share the *words* of the gospel. But as followers of Christ, we should also *act* to spread the news of Jesus Christ. That’s what St. Francis was referring to—it’s not just what we *say*, but what we *do*. Say, **It’s how we *act* that really proves what’s important to us.**

Share with your students Romans 10:15b: **“How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”** Point out that most people don’t consider their feet to be a thing of beauty. Ask, **What do you think the author (Paul) meant here by talking about “beautiful” feet?** In Paul’s day, your feet were your main mode of transportation; if you were going to “go” share the gospel, your feet are what would take you. Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others is a beautiful thing—

and it makes those who do the sharing, beautiful. Invite students to share about people they know whose feet they would consider beautiful because of this reason, and to share about those who would be happy to see someone with “beautiful feet” come into their lives right now.

Say, **Tell us about a time you shared the gospel with someone. Whom did you share with? What happened?** Invite students to respond. Point out that there is great rejoicing in heaven (Luke 15:17)—and we rejoice greatly as well—when someone accepts Christ as Lord and Savior. Some of your students may have never shared the gospel directly; others may have had a bad experience doing so. Point out that it’s our job to share; it’s the Holy Spirit’s job to convict. Be ready to talk about a time when *you* shared Jesus with someone else. Say, **Think about all the people you see in a day, and all the people who live on this planet. They are all created and loved by God. They are important in God’s eyes—and they should be in our eyes, as well.**

Ask, **What can we do, as individuals and as a group, to see that the gospel of Jesus Christ is shared?** Brainstorm together and see what your students come up with. Some ideas might be:

- Learning and being able to lead someone through the plan of salvation (see the Web site for a simple plan).
- Committing to pray every day for an opportunity to share the gospel with two or three people in the coming months.
- Making a conscious decision to give to provide funds and tools for evangelism around the world.
- As a group, seeking out a local mission, food bank, or homeless shelter in which to serve.
- Praying about what else God may be directing you to do as individuals or as a group.

Crossing the Finish Line (10 minutes)

Review what has come out of today’s discussion and study time. Acknowledge the fact that we are all called to be God’s witnesses and ambassadors to spread the word about the forgiveness, love, and grace available through Jesus Christ. Challenge your group to pray about working together to raise funds to help spread the gospel. Remind them that the Bible instructs us to be active in spreading the Word. Ask, **Who is going to commit to spread the Word? Will you?** If you have the Spread the Word PowerPoint, share it with your group at this time.

There are many different approaches your group could take to raise funds for Spread the Word. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Set a goal for students to give for a specific period of time, perhaps the 40 days of Lent.
- Have your students help you set a reachable but challenging monetary goal for the group. Be sure to celebrate how God is working during the process of meeting the goal.
- Challenge students to individual specific dollar amounts.
- Challenge students to give up something for Lent (or whatever period of time you choose) and to give the money that would have been spent on that thing to STW. This might be the money they would have spent on CDs for forty days, the money they would have spent on going to the movies during this time, or the money they would have spent to buy video games. They might give up sodas or fast food and give the money saved to STW. Be creative! You will find that when you give concrete ideas, it helps students to meet their goals.
- Challenge students to give above and beyond their regular tithes and offering. You could set a specific amount (for example, \$50) or a specific percentage of their weekly income.
- As a leader, set the stage by giving to STW. Challenge students to work together to match what you give. Lead out in faith!
- Remember, the goal is life change. This money will change lives. Focus on the life change rather than the money.

Close the session by praying specifically about what your students might do. Ask God to open students' eyes to opportunities to share the gospel. Pray that God will soften their hearts to share and will prepare the hearts of those who need to hear. Pray for God's direction in giving to Spread the Word. Pray also that God will reveal specifically to your students some ways and opportunities to get involved in spreading the good news of Jesus Christ around the world.

Distribute the Week 1 Student Devos and challenge students to complete this simple handout over the coming week.

References

- (1) See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh06.html>.
- (2) See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty06/pov06hi.html>.
- (3) See <http://www.unicef.org/mdg/poverty.html>.
- (4) See <http://www.savethechildren.org/newsroom/2007/new-york-times-reports-on.html>.
- (5) See <http://www.savethechildren.org/countries/asia/bangladesh.html>.
- (6) See <http://home.snu.edu/~HCULBERT/1040.htm#facts>.