

The Ishbane Conspiracy

Dealing with Depression

Ice Breaker/Game:

Book Study:

There Is Hope!

Time: about 60-90 minutes

Students will learn about the themes of “The Ishbane Conspiracy” by Randy Alcorn, more specifically identifying and dealing with situational depression and the hope that Christ gives to us.

Supplies: Bibles, *The Ishbane Conspiracy* by Randy Alcorn, “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” Video Clip, Candles, and matches.

Start the study out in a big group and discuss the students’ reactions and insights of chapters 35-38. Allow time for discussions and questions. **(25min)**

Ask: **What did you identify with this week?**

Was anybody surprised to find out who was having the suicidal thoughts?

Say: **There is a difference between clinical depression and depression that is caused by dismal circumstances and life in general. There are very real cases of clinical depression where doctors and medical intervention are needed. This is not what we will be talking about tonight.**

Ask: **What was your reaction to Robbie’s confession?**

Was Robbie dealing with his depression in a healthy way? What did he do right/wrong?

Say: **Robbie was clinically depressed and tried to isolate himself and deal with it alone. This will never get us far with any sort of spiritual struggle. If we need help, we should ask for it.**

Read *Acts 2:46-47* and reference the camp scripture (*Acts 4:32-35*)

⁴⁶They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity^[a]—⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. ³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

Ask: How did the church members in these Bible passages relate to one another?

What can you learn from the early church about your need for real-life relationships?

Say: Sometimes when we are feeling depressed we want to be alone, and that's fine for a short while-but when it becomes a lifestyle, that's when it becomes an issue. God calls us to be part of His church, and isolation itself can cause depression. We are going to watch a comical clip about someone who became a hermit and thought he didn't need anyone in his life.

Watch the clip from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas". It can be found at: **(10min)**

<http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/how-the-grinch-stole-christmas/everything-i-need>

(Illustration based on Innovative Tools by Group Publishing)

Say: Now I'm not saying that if you don't go church and stop being with Christians who can help you, you are going to become the Grinch. But when we isolate ourselves, we think we don't need anyone or anything.

Ask: At the end of this clip, do you think the Grinch was happy with his life of isolation?

Was there a time in your life when you isolated yourself because of depression? How did that make you feel?

Break into 4 different groups and assign each group one of the following scriptures: **(20min)**

Psalms 46:1, Proverbs 18:10, Psalms 91:2 and Hebrews 13:5

¹ God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.

¹⁰ The name of the Lord is a strong fortress; the godly run to him and are safe.

² This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I trust him.

⁵ Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."^[a]

Ask: **What if we are dealing with depression because of circumstances (not clinical depression)? What can we do other than not isolating ourselves?**

Say: **We should always go to God first for strength and healing – Jesus is our source for dealing with everything in life.**

Read the assigned scripture here.

Ask: **According to this verse, how is God our strength?**

Why is God a safe place to go to for help?

Say: **God also created the church to be a support system for those who are need, so another resource he has given you is your mentor or Pastor. These people care about you and want you to live a Godly and healthy life. They are excellent sources for advice and help.**

Come back together in large group.

(20min)

Pass out one candle to each student. Make sure that the students understand that this is a serious activity and they need to be careful and respectful of those around them.

Say: **Hope is the ultimate cure for depression. Hope always exists, as long as we look to God.**

Have the students sit in a tight circle in a darkened room. Give everyone a candle, and as you light each teenager's candle, explain that God gives each of us light. Have a student share a tough situation in his or her life he or she can't control or envision a positive outcome for. Then have that student blow out his or her candle. Then ask someone else to pray for that person and their situation, and light the first person's candle with their own flame. Repeat this as many times as necessary, giving the teenagers a chance to share a tough situation as well as offer hope to another student.

End in prayer