

RELENTLESS: Pursuing Christ At All Costs

Too often, we communicate a version of Christianity without trials, persecution, or problems. Teenagers are told that following Christ is the most important decision in their lives. And in faith, they trust Christ. Instead of being told “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12), many assume that everything in their world will be fixed. Except that doesn’t happen. And so many of our students question the love of Jesus and His plan for their lives. Why? Because what loving God would allow His children to face trials and persecution?

Does this cycle sound familiar? If so, it’s because it plays out in the lives of teenagers every day. The challenge, therefore, is to redefine the cost of following Christ in a world that is opposed to Him and His followers.

God’s love for His people can’t be viewed through what happens to us, but instead of what happened to Him. The measurement of God’s love for us starts on the cross, not in the trying circumstances we find ourselves in.

Relentless uses four key phrases to help your students boldly face the world: Praise, Personal-Evangelism, Prayer, and Persecution.

Teach *Relentless* to help your students grasp what it means to have a faith firmly rooted in the reality that Christ is better than what this world has to offer.

Small Group Outlines

The small group times in *Relentless* work in perfect concert with the Large Group outlines. The Small Group sessions look at four snap-shots from the life or writings of Peter. Each Small Group session builds on the corresponding theme of the Large Group Outline.

Session 1: Praising God

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That no matter what today holds, students would know that Jesus holds tomorrow. Because of this, He is uniquely worthy of praise.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Peter 1:3-9
- **Session Snapshot:** 1 Peter 1:3-9 is a collection of verses chocked full of theological truth! It’s a powerhouse of a passage, one from which you can draw a ton of different teachings. But one thing is unmistakable: Peter’s tone. This passage is an exuberant message of praise in response to what God has done for us through Christ. Through studying this passage, your students will see that praising God, even in the midst of tough times, is the only right response once we truly comprehend the salvation He has purchased for us.

Session 2: Personal Evangelism

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That they would passionately embrace the call to share with others the message of Jesus’ redemptive, saving work.
- **Main Scripture:** Acts 2:22-41
- **Session Snapshot:** Peter’s message at Pentecost has been called the first Christian sermon. Whether or not this is entirely accurate, the truth remains: Peter’s evangelical presentation at Pentecost put the world on notice. This movement, these Christ-followers, weren’t going away. Peter’s sharing of the

Gospel message resulted in thousands coming to faith in Christ. Your students can learn from Peter's example. This lesson will challenge them to embrace Peter's passion for sharing the Gospel, leading others to Christ as a result.

Session 3: Bold In Prayer

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That prayer is more than a "wish list" for wants, but instead is a "want list" of God's will for our lives.
- **Main Scripture:** Acts 4:23-31
- **Session Snapshot:** In the face of persecution, Peter, John, and their community of Christian friends prayed bold prayers. They didn't shrink away from the people who were persecuting them. They didn't talk about how unfair it was, or proclaim their innocence. They rejoiced in prayer, asking God to give them continued boldness in the face of those who were opposed to God and His ways. They prayed that God's plan would be accomplished in their city, and that they would be a part of it. And God honored their prayers! This lesson will help remind your students that prayer is the key to staying motivated to be on mission with God, especially in the midst of persecution.

Session 4: Braving Persecution

- **What We Want Students to Learn:** That students would see persecution not as something to complain about, but would instead see it as a compliment that they are living a godly life.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Peter 4:12-19
- **Session Snapshot:** There is a tendency to recoil from persecution. When we face any kind of ridicule because of our faith, we can want to shrink and withdraw. This is human nature. But it doesn't make it the right response. In this passage, Peter writes that our response should be the exact opposite. We should rejoice when we're persecuted. Why? Because when we experience persecution for our faith, we identify with Jesus. We experience what He experienced. Peter calls this a blessing, and urges us to glorify God as a result. This lesson will help challenge your students to embrace a bold, and joyous attitude in the face of persecution.

Large Group Outlines

Large Group, Session 1: PRAISE: More Than A Song

- Main Scripture: Acts 16:16-34

Large Group, Session 2: PERSONAL EVANGELISM: Give A Defense

- Main Scripture: 1 Peter 3:15

Large Group, Session 3: PRAYER: More Than A Wish List

- Main Scripture: Matthew 6:5-15

Large Group, Session 4: PERSECUTION: Their Criticism, Your Compliment

- Main Scripture: Acts 4:12-20