

LESSON

DOES GOD CARE ABOUT HOW I USE MY TIME?

TODAY'S

BIBLE BASE

Bold Bible Truth **JESUS LOVES YOU.**

(John 3:16)

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”

(Philippians 4:8)

- **Your heart is with what you value most.**
Matthew 6:21
- **Don't let anything take God's place in your heart.**
1 John 5:21
- **Live wisely, making the most of every opportunity.**
Ephesians 5:15-17

Create a Bold Classroom Environment

The BE BOLD Values you read aloud each week remind preteens how to treat one another—and you—during your time together.

Pray for Your Preteens

Ask God to give your preteens the courage to say no to something that might *not* be the best way for them to spend time. Write some time fillers below, and then write “NO” over them in big letters as you pray.

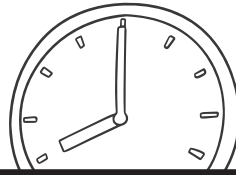


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Just for Teachers

Your preteens may not think much about how they fill their time. Most days are scheduled full with school, piano lessons, soccer practice...a zillion activities. It's easy to squeeze God off the agenda—and that's a mistake. Today you'll empower your kids to hit the pause button on their crowded schedules so they can make room for what matters most: becoming better friends of God.

THIS LESSON AT A GLANCE



Section	What Preteens Do	Supplies	Easy Prep
Begin Boldly (about 10 minutes)	Enjoy a snack, review BE BOLD Values, report on Mystery Missions, and add questions to the whiteboard/poster paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BE BOLD Values poster • board games • snacks • whiteboard or poster paper and marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On whiteboard or poster paper write: Time.
Game (about 5 minutes)	Play Would You Rather? and then discuss how they choose what to do with their time.		
Question of the Week (about 20 minutes)	Dig into Scripture to discover God's guidelines for how we spend time. Invite God to help them cross off or add things to how they use their time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles • Bold Action Student Books • washable markers • select-a-size paper towels • spray bottle of water, set to mist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tear out pages 11-13 from Bold Action Student Books • Tear paper towels so each child has three perforated towels in one long panel.
Bold Action (about 20 minutes)	Make thought bubbles to remind people at church to fill their minds with things that please God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibles • Bold Action Student Books • scissors • colorful pens • pencils • painter's tape or reusable adhesive putty (like Plasti-Tak) 	Tear out page 15 from Bold Action Student Books.
Bold Blessing (about 5 minutes)	Receive a prayer blessing and a Mystery Mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystery Mission Cards • Mystery Mission Stickers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold a Mystery Mission Card for each preteen, and use three Mystery Mission Stickers to seal each card.



PRETEEN POINTER

As kids arrive, ask what TV shows, movies, or online videos they've enjoyed the past week. Your genuine interest in their world is an easy way to get kids talking, and it signals you care about both them and what they've been doing.



BEGIN BOLDLY (ABOUT 10 MINUTES)

Arrival Activity

Greet preteens warmly as they arrive. Enjoy a snack together.

Provide simple board games (think Candyland, tic-tac-toe, or trivia-based card games) that are easy to join, as kids get settled in. Join in a game yourself so you can talk with kids and get to know them.

When you're ready to move on, eliminate distractions by putting away the snacks and board games.

Welcome Kids

Say: **I'm so glad you're here! A couple of things you should know about the way we do things while we're together...**

Point out the BE BOLD Values poster and read it aloud to kids.

You're accepted just as you are.

We respect each other's thoughts and struggles.

We're all in this together.

God is here, ready to be your friend because you matter!

Mystery Mission Reports

Say: **One way we respect one another is listening to each other's stories.**

And the stories I'd love to hear right now are about how things went when you did your last Mystery Mission.

My last Mystery Mission was...

Share a brief story of how *you* followed through with your bold mission, and then ask kids to partner up and share with one another.

Question Collection

Say: **Thanks for sharing your stories!**

Today we're talking about time—and how we use it. In a minute I'll ask you what questions you might have about how you use your time.

One of my questions is this: Why is there never enough time to do all the stuff I want to do?

Write that question on the whiteboard.

Say: **What about you? What are your questions? Maybe you wonder if it's okay to play video games for four hours a day or who should be in charge of your time—you or your parents.**

Whatever your question, call it out and I'll write it down. Or you can jot your question on the board yourself—your choice.

Jot kids' questions on the board, or have enough markers so they can write their own questions.

Say: **Thanks for your questions. I'm so glad you shared! Your thoughts matter!**

Looking at our questions, I'm seeing that we have to make choices about how we use our time. And since it's always good to ask what God might have to say about our choices, let's tackle this question today:

Write on the board: Does God care how I use my time?

Say: **We'll talk about that, but first, a quick game of Would You Rather?**



PRETEEN POINTER

Not every preteen comes each week, so let kids talk about their last **Mystery Mission**—no matter how long ago it was. Giving them a chance to share about their successful missions generates excitement for everyone to follow through with their missions, too.



PRETEEN POINTER

If one of your kids has suggested a question much like “What’s God say about how I use my time?” circle it and go from there. It’ll be hugely affirming for whoever suggested that question!



GAME (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Would You Rather?

Ask preteens to gather in the center of the room, facing you. Tell them they'll go to the wall on either their left or right, depending on how they answer your questions. The left side will be for the first option in each question; the right side will be for the second option. Between questions, they'll return to the center of the room.

Explain kids *must* go to one wall or the other; they can't remain in the middle. And keep this game fast-paced—preteens should be jogging from one spot to the next.

Following are 12 Would You Rather choices. Feel free to add your own!

- **Would you rather hang out at the beach or in the mountains?**
- **Would you rather play guitar or play drums?**
- **Would you rather run from a tiger or a bear?**
- **Would you rather go see your doctor or your dentist?**
- **Would you rather skip rope or skip class at school?**
- **Would you rather ski on the water or snow?**
- **Would you rather go to a water park or ride roller coasters?**
- **Would you rather eat a pizza covered with live spiders or dead worms?**
- **Would you rather clean up after a pet dragon or a pet gorilla?**
- **Would you rather be smart or popular?**
- **Would you rather sail a boat or fly a plane?**
- **Would you rather be a super-good singer or dancer?**

When kids have run (literally!) through a dozen “would you rather,” have them sit down and talk as a whole group about this:

- ❓ **When you get to choose between things to do, how do you decide what to pick? What helps you decide what to do?**

Allow several kids to respond. Thank kids for sharing their insights.



DOES GOD CARE
ABOUT HOW I
USE MY TIME?



QUESTION OF THE WEEK (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Distribute pages 11-13 from Bold Action Student Books to each preteen. Set out the select-a-size paper towel panels you prepared earlier, and washable markers.

Hold up a paper towel panel, and have each preteen hold one, too.

Say: **Imagine the paper towel panel you're holding is one day of your life—24 hours. You spend about seven hours at school.**

Lead kids in removing one towel from of their paper towel panels.

Say: **You sleep about eight hours—or *should*, anyway.**

Lead kids in tearing off a second towel from their panels.

Say: **School and sleep are required. But that leaves you about nine hours to fill with other stuff, usually things that matter to you. Let's see what that looks like.**

Guide kids in using washable markers to write on the remaining paper towel the rest of what fills their day. If they spend lots of time doing something, have them write that thing in larger letters. For instance, “video games” might be large and “cleaning my room” tiny.

Have kids set their paper towels in front of them, and speak to your preteens as a whole group.

❓ **Looking at your towel and what you wrote, how does it reflect what's most important to you?**

Allow several answers from preteens.

Say: **Thanks for those insights.**

We spend more time doing what's most important to us; that's just how we're wired. But our time isn't just our own—it's a gift from God, and God is always with us. God cares about how we use our time. That's because **JESUS LOVES YOU and wants to spend time with you! He also wants you to spend your time in the way that's best for your heart.**

That means that if you're spending six hours a day online playing *Zombie Death March of Apocalyptic Doom*, God cares about how you used those hours.

God has some thoughts about how you choose to use your time—and you'll find them in the Bible.

Time Passage #1

Point out to kids the Bible passages on page 11 of the Bold Action Student Book.

Say: **Jesus said this...**

Have a preteen volunteer read aloud Matthew 6:21. Then have kids each lay their marked-up towel on top of the heart on page 11.

Hold up a spray bottle.

Say: **What fills your time fills your heart, because what you choose to do with your time is a reflection of what you think is most important.**

Mist kids' papers, avoiding spraying the Bible passages. When you thoroughly dampen the towels, the washable marker will bleed through from the towels to the hearts. Ask kids to not touch their papers.

❓ **In what ways do you think things you do change you as a person? Or do you think it doesn't matter what you do?**

Allow several answers from preteens; during this discussion, words written on towels will be transferring to hearts. After the discussion, have kids lift the damp towels. Collect towels quickly; they might stain anything they're dropped on!





Say: **How we use our time is written on our hearts. How we use our time changes us. No wonder God cares about how you use your time; JESUS LOVES YOU.**

Let's dig a little deeper and see what else the Bible says about how we use our time.

Time Passages #2 & 3

Have a willing preteen read aloud 1 John 5:21 and Ephesians 5:15-17.

❓ **What do you think these passages say about how we use our time?**

Allow several answers from preteens.



Time Passage #4

Have a willing preteen read aloud Philippians 4:8.

Say: **True. Honorable. Right. Pure. Lovely. Admirable.**

That's what we're to think about, and it describes what we're to do. If you're wondering how God wants you to spend your time, there it is.

Spend time thinking about and doing what's true. Honorable. Right. Pure. Lovely. Admirable.

The Bible doesn't list exactly what all those things are. The Bible isn't a rule book with a long list of the right ways and the wrong ways to use your time. It doesn't say whether playing video games, taking tap dancing lessons, or staying after school to practice the piccolo is right or wrong.

The Bible is about becoming a friend of God. JESUS LOVES YOU, and the Bible is about responding to that love with your own love.

When God is your friend, you start wanting to do the things that please him. To do things that are true...that honor him...that are right...that are pure...that are lovely...and that are admirable.

It's time to be bold.

Ask preteens to each pick up a marker and to look at the hearts on their pages.

Say: **Look at your heart and think about this: Is there anything on your heart that flunks the test of being true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, or admirable? That maybe shouldn't be there at all, or should be smaller? Here are some questions to help you think about what might fit or not fit:**

❓ **Is it possible for something like playing football or soccer to be good, lovely, or pure? What do you think?**

❓ **What's something that may not be on your heart that you think you should add? Something true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable that you should start doing?**

Say: **For me, that's...**

Briefly share one thing that you want to either start doing or see be bigger in your life: Bible reading, prayer, or being with other Christians are possibilities.

? **What else could people start doing that would help them become better friends of God?**

Allow several answers from kids.

Say: **Okay, with all that in mind, let's make new hearts. Write on one of your extra paper towels from before how you'd like to reprioritize your time after today's lesson. Nobody's going to judge you on what you change. This is between you and God.**

Maybe there's nothing you want to change or add. That's okay, too. But ask God: Is there something here you want me to change?

We'll have two minutes for you to work, and then I'll ask you to spray the paper towel with water, covering it over the clean heart on page 13. Please work silently. If you finish before two minutes is up, just sit quietly.

After 90 seconds, announce that there are 30 seconds left to work.

Say: **God doesn't give us a long list of rules about how to use our time, but the best use of our time is always doing things that will help us grow in our friendship with God.**

That's the best thing we can all do—anytime!



BOLD ACTION (ABOUT 20 MINUTES)

Kids will create thought bubbles that encourage church members to live out Philippians 4:8. They'll use page 15 of their Bold Action Student Books for this project.

You'll guide kids in writing out Philippians 4:8 and brainstorming the most important places to post the thought bubbles around your building.

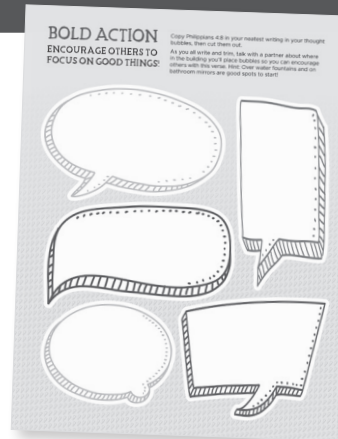
Don't meet in a church building? Then perhaps placed under car windshields in the parking lot will be better—but be sure to supervise the effort well!

Your preteens will work in pairs to create thought bubbles, talking about where they intend to place their bubble reminders as they work together. This sort of conversation helps preteens become better friends and discover they're in this together!

Decide if you and any adult volunteers you recruit will accompany kids around the building as they put up bubbles. Check with your ministry leader to determine how to best distribute bubbles; be sure you're working within your ministry's safety guidelines.

After bubbles have been distributed and your kids are all together, discuss this question.

? **What did you take away from today's lesson?**



PRETEEN POINTER

Bold Action doesn't always have to be collecting money or doing "work." Today's activity lets preteens discover the joy that comes from encouraging others. Plus, you're allowing them to practice what it means to gently guide other Christians to think of things that honor God.



PRETEEN POINTER

This is a great time to remind preteens that *encouraging* Jesus-centered behavior is great... but it's not our role to be bossy or judgmental. Point out that these thought bubbles can be gentle, encouraging reminders that help people "reframe" their thinking and the way they spend their time.



Say: **God cares about how we use our time, and he's eager for us to spend time on things that honor him. When we do that we become even closer friends with God! JESUS LOVES YOU, and you'll love growing closer in a friendship with him!**



BOLD BLESSING (ABOUT 5 MINUTES)

Pray

Have kids remove the paper towel and check out their new hearts. Then have them fold their papers so no one else can see.

Have kids close their eyes and place their hands over their hearts (their *real* hearts, not the paper ones!) as you pray.

Pray: **God, we're thankful for every day you give us. Each day is a gift. Help us use that gift wisely, filling our days and our hearts with things *you* value, and making *you* our ultimate treasure.**

Have kids touch their heads.

And Jesus, help us live wisely, filling our minds and hearts with what's true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Send-Off Cheer

Have kids stand in a circle with their hands in the center, like a sports team. Let kids know that when you finish the Bold Blessing, they'll raise their hands and shout "Let's be bold!"

Say the Bold Blessing: **Receive this Bold Blessing: May God bless you and be with you as you make bold choices about how to spend your time this week. Let's be bold!**

Mystery Mission

Say: **We learned that JESUS LOVES YOU, God cares how we use our time, and he wants us to spend our time on things that are honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.**

That can be hard, because some things we *like* doing don't measure up. And we're so busy that it's hard to fit in the things that are good for our friendship with God.

But we're bold! It's up to *us* to make *sure* we use our time the right way. And the older you get, the more you're in charge of how you spend your time. So this week, practice using your time in ways that honor God.

And take home a Mystery Mission Card, too. Don't open it until Monday morning, and when you do, remember to complete your mission!

We'll talk about what happened next time you come.

Distribute a Mystery Mission Card to each preteen. Take your own card home and complete the challenge, too!