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**Series Big Idea:** Who is Jesus, and who are we because of Him?

**Today’s Big Idea:** Wrestling with Doubts Can Build Your Faith

**Leader Reminders:**

* Fast again this week, if you are able to. Consider fasting from food for an entire day this time. In the passage we are going to look at today, Jesus says that certain strongholds “only come out by prayer and fasting” (Mark 9:24, NIV). Fasting is not denying ourselves to get God to do what we want, but instead it’s about sowing seeds of faith into our circumstance and helping us realize our great need for God. If you’re not super familiar with fasting, Jesus even said, “*When* you fast …” (Matthew 6:16, NIV). He expected that we would.
* Keep encouraging students to bring their Bibles and a journal to take notes in. You are helping them to engage with God’s Word and understand how to study it when you aren’t just handing them verses.
* This week’s lesson is about doubt. If you want students to be honest about anything, you need to create a safe place where no one is judged and no one is surprised by the things that are said. Remind your students today that your group is a safe place and that everyone should listen with grace. Part of building faith is by wrestling with questions and doubts. Don’t condemn any question. Even the man in today’s account said, “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24, NIV). Many students walk away from their faith in Jesus because they don’t have someone to walk through their doubts with them.

**Ice Breakers:**

* Give any **announcements**
* **Soccer Ball/Hot Seat**
* **Happy, Crappy, God Moment**
* **The Other Six Devotional Follow Up:** In what ways did you focus on your relationship with Jesus this week instead of your regular “religious” activities?
* **Prayer Requests, Praises, and Prayer**

**Starter Activity:** Have each student make a list of questions or doubts they have about the Christian faith. Try to answer one or two today with a gospel-centered response. Consider bringing a little basket with you each week that students can put questions into, and calling it the “Ask it Basket.” If you need help answering the question, collaborate with your youth pastor later to arrive at a suitable response. [**Youth Pastor Note:** Provide paper and pens, and if your budget allows, “Ask it Baskets” from the Dollar Store for each group.]

**Start With This:**

* As you can tell, today we are going to be talking about doubt. Let’s take a little poll. How many of you think doubt and faith are opposites?
* What do you think God has to say about doubt?

**Digging into the Word:** *Have a student read* ***Mark 9:14–24.***

* How would you feel if you were this father whose son was a wreck?
* What situation in your life made you realize your desperate need for God?
* What is Jesus’ response to people who need healing in the Bible? What does this true story say about who Jesus is?
* What does faith have to do with being a Christian?
* Would you consider yourself a person to whom belief comes easy, or a skeptic?
* What does the father’s response tell us about faith and doubt? “I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24, NIV).
* What happens when Jesus doesn’t answer our prayers the way we asked? Do you have a story where this has been true? Did it shake your faith or strengthen it?
* What are your friends’ biggest objections to Christianity?
* At the end, when Jesus’ disciples ask why they couldn’t cast out the demon, how did Jesus respond?
* What is fasting? Why do you think Jesus wants us to pray and fast?

**Wrapping It Up:**

**Application Questions:**

* How desperate would you say you are for God to intervene in your life on a daily basis?
* What do you need Jesus to heal in your life?
* What unbelief do you still want to overcome?
* How are you still wrestling with God’s character based upon something tragic in your life where God didn’t seem to answer your prayers?
* How could you enter into your non-Christian friends’ doubts and help them see Jesus in their pain? What does a good and godly friend do when their friend is struggling?

**Challenge:** Encourage your students to keep pursuing Jesus this week through your “Other Six” Devotional. Also, tell them to check out [www.everystudent.com](http://www.everystudent.com). Have them browse through any questions they might have and see which ones might be beneficial to share with their friends.

Also, encourage your students to fast from sweets this week (have them try at least one day!) or in the very least, from social media. Encourage them to seek God in those moments when they are hungry in class or bored waiting in line.

If students seem particularly interested in the topic of why God allows pain and suffering, and other apologetics questions, direct them to these videos: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLjD_OVK-4TWPe18GWxiOaVCY200u7FC-q>

**Prayer Prompt:** Pray quickly to close, and use any extra time just to connect with your students and have fun.

**Stay Connected:** Text each student individually later in the week, saying something like this, “Hey man/chica, I just want you to know you are awesome! I’m thankful to be a small part of your life, and God is going to do amazing things through you. I’m so proud of you!” Also, post the follow-up social media graphic and devo for the week so your students see it!