

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

### GOAL

The goal of this lesson is twofold:

1. *To help students develop gritty leadership* by digging into leadership principles found in the Bible and modern-day life, asking hard questions, experiential activities, and specific life application.
2. *To make it easy for you* to facilitate and teach students. That is why the Facilitator's Guide is packed with easy to use instructions, timeframes, and questions that promote thinking and draw out real responses.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- A copy of the Facilitator's Guide for you and any other facilitators
- A copy of the Student Guide for each participant
- Be sure to check out the Live It Out section ahead of time to prepare. You'll need:
  - *paper to draw on and colored pencils/markers for each student; scissors*

### BACKGROUND

This lesson is recommended to go first in the *Gritty Leadership* series

1. Underdogs
2. Blind Spots
3. Find a Way
4. No Excuses



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### HOW TO USE: Small Group or Large Group

The Facilitator's Guide contains everything in the Student Guide, plus some additional material. This table outlines the elements of each lesson and provides an approximate timeframe, which you can adapt to meet the needs of your group.

- ☐ For a **SMALL GROUP** setting, use the white boxes below.
- ☐ For a **LARGE GROUP** talk, refer to the grey boxes on the right

		FOR A SMALL GROUP SETTING		FOR A LARGE GROUP TALK
		FACILITATOR'S GUIDE	IN STUDENT GUIDE	<i>*include personal illustrations to make this a powerful talk</i>
LESSON ELEMENTS	OVERVIEW	Read before facilitating	X	Read before facilitating
	OPENING QUESTIONS	Get students thinking and begin conversation (2–3 minutes)	✓	Use these questions as an ice breaker
	WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT	A Bible Study with discussion questions (15–20 minutes)	✓	Main Scripture and teaching
	A SECOND LOOK	Another take on this study with discussion questions (10–15 minutes)	✓	Use as an illustration to bring the topic to life
	LIVE IT OUT	An experiential activity to help students reinforce and internalize the lesson (10–15 minutes)	X	Consider using this as an object lesson
	APPLY IT	A practical application for students to do this week (2–3 minutes)	✓	Use this as a springboard to present students with practical next steps
	THINK ABOUT IT	Challenging quote to consider	✓	Challenging quote to consider
	PRAY	A short focus for a prayer time	X	A short focus for a prayer time
	MEMORY VERSE	Verse to meditate on <i>*text or post the graphic included in your download</i>	✓	Verse to meditate on <i>*text or post the graphic included in your download</i>

## OVERVIEW

Sometimes, following God and standing up for what's right put us in underdog situations where we might have to rock the boat a little bit. Godly leaders recognize and take opportunities to stand up for their faith and for the Lord, no matter who they must stand up to or what it might cost them. In this lesson, students will study the example of the man born blind in John 9 to see how an encounter with Jesus and his power transformed a powerless man into a leader for Jesus. Then, they'll create a tangible reminder of their inspiration to stand with and for Jesus.

## OPENING QUESTIONS

**2–3 minutes**

- What is your favorite underdog story?
- Why do we love stories about underdogs and nobodies who take a stand?

**FACILITATOR'S NOTE:** If your group of students is small enough, you can have each person share their answer. Otherwise, for a larger group, have them pair and share to answer these questions.

## WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

**15–20 minutes**



### ***Read the following together:***

The Jewish religious leaders—the Pharisees—were a big deal in Jesus' day. Picture the Pharisees like your pastor, but with the power to control your education, job, and who your friends were. More importantly, they controlled who could access the temple, which was the hub of Jewish life. They were powerful people! Anyone who crossed the Pharisees, right or wrong, risked being thrown out of the temple. They would then be living as an exile in their own town.

On the other end of the spectrum, people born with a disability in the first century had no power. Disabilities were mistakenly believed to be the result of a person's sins, so these people were ostracized from the temple and typically became beggars for the rest of their lives. In the following passage, the blind man we will read about truly was a nobody—that is, until he encountered Jesus!

After encountering Jesus, this blind nobody transformed into a scrappy defender of Jesus—even to the Pharisees! To be scrappy is to be feisty and determined, to stand up to scary situations and stand up for what's true. This man's encounter with Jesus gave him something worth fighting for, so he stood up to powerful people and spoke the truth.

As you read, notice how the formerly blind man became a leader for the Kingdom of God in his interactions with his neighbors, his family, and the Pharisees. Sometimes, leaders don't lead from a place of authority but as underdogs with scrappy but confident faith! This man knew that his faith was worth defending even though the odds were stacked against him.

**Read John 9:1–41 and answer the following questions:**

**Discuss:**

- What do you think it was like for this man to go from a lowly beggar to standing up to the Pharisees?
- Where do you think he gets the boldness he exhibits throughout this passage?
- Have you ever felt this kind of boldness because of your relationship with Christ?
- Do you ever feel like an underdog when it comes to sharing your faith or taking a stand for what's right? When?

**FACILITATOR'S NOTE:** Another thing you might discuss with students is the difference between being a scrappy leader and being rude. The formerly blind man in this passage stood up for something, while we are often tempted to stand up to something/someone out of pride. This could be a valuable discussion. Consider asking your students: How do we discern between a situation that requires us to stand up for something and a situation where we just want to selfishly rebel?

## A SECOND LOOK

10–15 minutes

**Read the following together:**

At the age of 17, Hugh Herr lost both of his legs below the knee after a climbing accident. While for many this might signal the end of a beloved hobby, for Herr it was the beginning of a vision to help enable other amputees to live out their passions without limitation.

During his rescue from the accident on Mount Washington, NH, one of the rescuers died trying to save Herr's life. Herr says as he recovered from the accident, he was inspired to do something meaningful that would honor the memory of his rescuer.

This inspiration, plus a desire to return to the sport of climbing, led Herr to begin designing and building prosthetics. Not only did his work give him the tools he needed to climb again, but he also became a leader in the prosthetics-building industry. Herr now uses his experience and expertise to enable others to pursue their passions and gain more mobility.<sup>1</sup>

While his accident was a life-changing experience, his experience with tragedy and redemption pales in comparison to a Christ-follower's experience with Jesus! While Herr had to lose something before he was inspired to action, Christ gives us something—himself—and leads us toward life transformation. What a difference in power!

While both Herr and the blind man had a life-changing experience that caused them to overcome adversity and influence others, the man born blind didn't just have earthly influence. He became a leader with eternal impact. Jesus wants to do the same thing in your life.

**Discuss:**

- Where do you think Herr's inspiration to overcome came from?
- Where did the man born blind's inspiration come from?
- Where are you an underdog in your leadership for Jesus? (i.e. Where do you feel like you don't have power but you know that you need to stand up for your faith?)
- What would it look like to depend on Jesus and follow him in that area this week?

## LIVE IT OUT: SUPERHERO SYMBOLS

**10–15 minutes**

*What you will need: paper to draw on and colored pencils/markers for each student; scissors.*

SAY SOMETHING LIKE:

*Every good superhero has an iconic symbol; think of Superman's iconic "S" or Spiderman's suit. These symbols embody the scrappy strength of these superheroes. This kind of strength takes underdogs and nobodies, like Clark Kent or Peter Parker, and makes them determined individuals who rise up for a worthy cause.*

*In this exercise, you are going to draw your "symbol", something that will remind you of your scrappy leadership. Unlike superheroes, your power is not the result of luck or a fluky spider-bite, it's the result of who you are in Christ. Your "symbol" should include things that remind you of Christ's work in your life and your identity in him. His work in your life is the inspiration you need to also become a scrappy leader for the Kingdom of God.*

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Hand out the paper and writing utensils to your students.
2. Give your students ten minutes to create their superhero symbol.
3. Remind students that this symbol shouldn't just reflect their own personality, but Christ's work in their life as well.
4. After ten minutes, debrief the activity with the questions below.

**FACILITATOR'S NOTE:** Whenever students make applications, challenge them to be specific. It's one thing to say, "I'm going to trust God more." The truth is, our students won't really know if they did this, or if they grew in trust over the week. It's another thing to say, "Every morning this week before I eat breakfast, I'm going to tell God that today is His and that I trust Him, and I'm going to ask him to give me the strength to replace worries with trust." So challenge your students to answer the questions under the "Be Specific" section. You can even have them pair and share their applications and ask for accountability from their partner.

### **Debrief:**

- What's your favorite part of the symbol you created?
- What's the story behind your symbol? How does it reflect Christ's work?
- On a scale of 1–5 (1=terrified, 5=supremely confident) how do you feel about standing up for your faith and God's work in your life?
- What can you do to become more confident in that risk?

## APPLY IT

**2–3 minutes**

Pick one area where you are an underdog and may need to be scrappier in your leadership. Maybe that area is a leadership position you already have, or maybe it's a place where you need to stand up as a leader for the first time. Make a plan to take one step toward being bolder in your leadership in that area this week.

### ***Be specific:***

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?

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## THINK ABOUT IT

"Courage is not something that you already have that makes you brave when the tough times start. Courage is what you earn when you've been through the tough times and you discover they aren't so tough after all." – Malcolm Gladwell<sup>2</sup>

## PRAY

Spend a few minutes praying with students. Thank God for intervening in our lives with his healing power. Ask him to give you and your students boldness like the man born blind. Ask him to show you which situations in your life require you to take a stand with scrappy and determined faith.

## MEMORIZE/MEDITATE ON THIS VERSE

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.  
Joshua 1:9 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Terry Gross. "The Double Amputee Who Designs Better Limbs." *Fresh Air*, NPR, 10 Aug. 2011, [www.npr.org/2011/08/10/137552538/the-double-amputee-who-designs-better-limbs](http://www.npr.org/2011/08/10/137552538/the-double-amputee-who-designs-better-limbs).

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants* (New York, NY: Little Brown & Company, 2013), p.189.