

ENCOUNTERS

HOW GOD'S STORY CONNECTS WITH OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

WELCOME TO ENCOUNTERS

SAMPLE

WHAT IS ENCOUNTERS?

Students don't know how they fit into God's story!

God's story is getting lost in a sea of competing stories. Students don't see that they've been invited to join the truest, most life-changing adventure with God. *Encounters* is a year-long curriculum (52 lessons) based on the [8 Roots of Deep Discipleship](#) that will challenge your students to move past simply knowing the Word to living God's truth. Throughout *Encounters*, students will wrestle with cultural issues from the perspective of Scripture's big picture, draw connections between the Old and New Testaments, and grow to understand their calling as citizens of Heaven living on Earth. We each stand at the crossroads between God's invitation and the world—let's choose to find our place in God's story!

DESIGNED FOR MULTIPLE ENVIRONMENTS



Whether you meet once or multiple times a week, each flexible lesson can be used as a comprehensive *Large Group Talk* with separate *Small Group Discussion Guide*, an in-depth *Small Group Lesson*, or a stand-alone *Large Group Talk*. We've built in flexibility to meet your changing needs.

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

Encounters includes 52 Lessons, divided into smaller, 4-lesson sets (PDF and Word). We've included one lesson in this sample with corresponding Memory Verse and Mark of a Disciple graphics. *Encounters* was created to fit perfectly into the Deep Discipleship system (including the [8 Roots of Deep Discipleship](#) and *Marks of a Disciple*), designed to help your students grow deep faith. Each one of the 8 Roots is covered in-depth in its own set of lessons.

ENCOUNTERS ALSO INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING (NOT INCLUDED IN SAMPLE):

*For a full list, see [What's Included](#) on page 8.

- Community Engagement Guides
- Video Training for Adult Leaders
- Parent Guides
- Media and Graphics

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

It's simple. Included in this sample is one lesson (*Risk vs. Reward*) from the *ADVENTURE* set of lessons. Open the folder entitled *ADVENTURE* and you'll find a Facilitator Guide and Student Guide.

To learn more about *Encounters*, check out the *SCOPE AND SEQUENCE* that give you an entire overview of this resource.

Have Any Questions?
Give us a call!

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deep
DISCIPLESHIP

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MAKING DISCIPLES. DEVELOPING LEADERS.

THE 8 ROOTS OF DEEP DISCIPLESHIP

RESCUE

The Rescue Root helps students understand their need for a savior:

We are slaves, held captive by terrible enemies: sin and death. In this fallen, corrupt, and shattered world, we need a rescuer—Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer. In fact, he’s the only one who can free us. And once we’ve been freed, we have the opportunity to join in the rescue mission for others.

APOLOGETICS

The Apologetics Root, which prepares students to explain the hope they have in Christ:

The Bible encourages us to defend our faith: “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” (1 Pet. 3:15, ESV). That’s the point of apologetics—to explain our hope in Christ to others. In the Apologetics Root your students will find ways to do just that.

COMMUNITY

The Community Root, which helps students understand the meaning of biblical fellowship:

We weren’t created to be alone. Our emotional, physical, and spiritual well-beings depend on deep, loving relationships with other people. God has created a family for you. They are his people, and they will help you grow in another essential connection—with God.

IDENTITY

The Identity Root, which helps students discover their unique identity in Christ:

God created humans in his own image, unique in all creation. Then sin entered the picture, and all people developed a warped version of their original identity. Christ came and died on the cross and rose again to offer us a new identity, even better than the first. He took on our sin and shame so we could take on his righteousness. He identifies with us so we can find our identity in him—a redeemed identity.

KNOWLEDGE

The Knowledge Root, which helps students understand the basics about God:

God is enormous. He’s too big, too awesome, and too complicated to wrap our minds around. Yet he wants us to know him. He wants a relationship with us, so he has revealed himself in a number of ways. We will never know everything about God. But in order to become his disciples, we need to know some essential truths about the One we follow.

WORSHIP

The Worship Root, which helps students explore what it means to have a lifestyle of worship:

Worship is more than just singing. It is a lifestyle. It’s how you go about your day, and it happens when you get a vivid glimpse of God, his power, and his majesty. In the Bible, anyone who has a close encounter with God can’t help but marvel at his glory. The angels, his messengers, are in a constant state of worship. We, too, can express a life of worship by encountering God on a daily basis.

KINGDOM

The Kingdom Root, which helps students understand how to live in the Kingdom of God every day:

When students embrace the Kingdom life, they begin to look at the small things differently. They realize the weight that their decisions carry, and they can start to live by God’s value system instead of the world’s tainted values.

OUTREACH

The Outreach Root, which helps students understand their God-given mission:

Jesus gave his followers one last command: to spread the good news of his death and resurrection—the gospel—to the whole world. When we become members of Christ’s body of believers, the story doesn’t end. That’s just the beginning! Now we get to join in a remarkable mission to care for the least, to love other people, and to share Jesus as Lord wherever we go.

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SCOPE & SEQUENCE

SAMPLE

SCOPE

We recommend that you start with the four lessons included in *GOSPEL*, then base your sequence on the needs of your group. Below is a description for each set of lessons included in *Encounters*, as well as a suggested overall sequence.

*Note that the *SEASONAL* Lesson Set can be used throughout the year during holidays and major milestones in your group.

SUGGESTED SEQUENCE



1. GOSPEL (4 Lessons)

The Gospel is the starting point to knowing our place in God's story. Your students will see that sin separates us from God and we need to be rescued from our sin. The Good News is that God has provided a plan that more than meets our needs.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Sought and Found (Luke 15:1–10)
2. It Just Takes One (Romans 5:12–21)
3. The Comeback (John 11:17–44)
4. Reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:14–21)

Connected Roots:

Rescue, Outreach



2. TOGETHER (4 Lessons)

God has invited everyone to be part of his family. Your students will learn that God established the community of faith—the Church—to unify all believers and to help us follow Jesus together. We're part of a family that's meant to be shared!

Lessons/Passages:

1. God's People (Exodus 6:6–8 and Romans 9:23–26)
2. No More Hostility (Ephesians 2:11–22)
3. Forever Family (Romans 8:1–17)
4. Pretending (Matthew 7:1–5, 12)

Connected Roots:

Community



3. CULTURE (4 Lessons)

There's a big culture clash between the world we live in and God's kingdom values. Your students will explore what it means to be in the world but not of it and what to do when God's everlasting truth intersects with our always-changing culture.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Esther's Courage (Esther 4:6–5:3)
2. Daniel's Resolve (Daniel 1:8–21)
3. Peter Speaks Up (Acts 2:32–41)
4. Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16–26)

Connected Roots:

Apologetics, Outreach, Identity



4. SACRED (4 Lessons)

Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have access to God's holy presence all the time. These lessons will help students see that spiritual disciplines are more than a checklist of to-dos—they are ways of living in relationship with Jesus every single day.

Lessons/Passages:

1. The Vine (John 15:1–11)
2. #GPOAT (Matthew 6:1–13)
3. I Have a Confession (Psalm 51)
4. Give it Up (2 Corinthians 9:6–8)

Connected Roots:

Worship



5. BROKEN (4 Lessons)

Life is messy. From everyday struggles to global crises, our world is far from perfect. The worst part is we're often the ones making the mess! Your students will explore how God is merciful and his grace is more than enough for our weakness.

Lessons/Passages:

1. The Struggle is Real (Romans 7:15–25)
2. When it Rains, it Pours (1 Kings 19:1–18)
3. Consider What Joy? (James 1:1–12)
4. Help! (John 5:1–13)

Connected Roots:

Rescue, Kingdom



6. CALLING (4 Lessons)

There's a bigger purpose for our lives. Your students will learn that instead of wandering through life, God will guide their steps as they trust in and rely on him, because God has a unique calling for his children.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Bringing God your Burdens (Nehemiah 1:1–11)
2. First Things First (Haggai 1:1–15)
3. Trustworthy (Proverbs 3:1–12)
4. Trust the Map (James 1:22–27)

Connected Roots:

Kingdom, Knowledge



7. ADVENTURE (4 Lessons)

Life with God is the greatest adventure! Your students will see what it looks like to follow Jesus boldly—to be a disciple—and how much better that is than what the world offers. Living radically for Christ is risky, but God promises to empower and reward us when we join him.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Risk vs. Reward (Exodus 14:10–22)
2. Abundant Life (John 10:1–11)
3. Obedience Requires Risky (Daniel 3:8–30)
4. Holy Spirit-Powered (Luke 2:25–32 and Acts 1:6–11)

Connected Roots:

Kingdom, Identity



8. FULFILLED (4 Lessons)

Seeing the big picture of what God has been doing throughout history helps us find our place in God's story. Your students will better understand God's message of hope as they look at the Old and New Covenants, the law and Jesus' fulfillment of the law, and the inclusion of the people of Israel and the Gentiles in the promise.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Laying Down the Law (Exodus 20:1–21)
2. Promises, Promises (Hebrews 9:15–28)
3. Nobody's Perfect (Matthew 5:17–22)
4. Back to the Future (Revelation 21:1–8)

Connected Roots:

Knowledge



9. CREATION (4 Lessons)

The story of Creation is in scripture for a reason; God wants us to know how much he loves us and everything else he has created. Your students will learn about the purpose and value that God has given every part of creation.

Lessons/Passages:

1. In the Beginning (Genesis 1)
2. The Devil Made Me Do It (Genesis 3)
3. The Spread of Sin (Romans 1:16–32)
4. Getting to Know God (Acts 17:22–34)

Connected Roots:

Apologetics, Identity



10. WISE (4 Lessons)

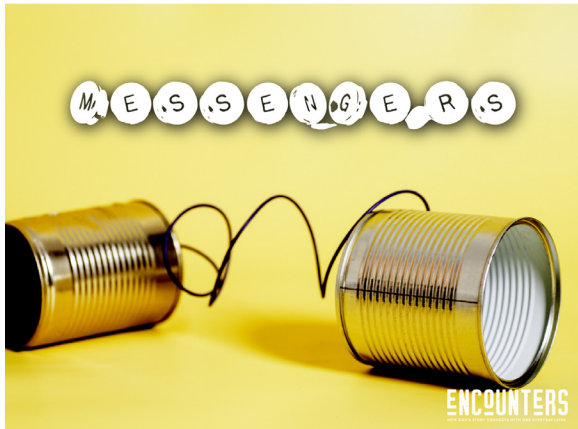
It's so easy to make decisions based on what we see and have been told, rather than turning to God for wisdom. Your students will see that with God's wisdom, they can discern with confidence how they should live and what is true.

Lessons/Passages:

1. God's X-ray Wisdom (1 Samuel 16:1–13)
2. Request Granted (James 1:5–8; 3:13–18)
3. True Value (Luke 18:18–30)
4. Don't Be Fooled! (Proverbs 9:1–18)

Connected Roots:

Kingdom, Knowledge



11. MESSENGERS (4 Lessons)

When we follow Jesus, God's story becomes our story. Your students will learn how they fit into God's epic story and that God wants us to follow Jesus' example and share our stories with the world.

Lessons/Passages:

1. Witnesses (Isaiah 43:10–13, 18–19)
2. Response Time (Acts 16:22–34)
3. Storytellers (Luke 14:15–24)
4. Along With... (2 Timothy 2:22–26)

Connected Roots:

Outreach, Worship

SEASONAL/HOLIDAY (8 Lessons)

These seasonal lessons are independent from each other yet tied together by one common thread—they're all snapshots of how God lovingly intervenes in our lives. We've been invited to be part of God's epic story and revisiting this truth throughout the ministry year will remind students to move past knowing God's story to truly living it out.

Lessons/Passages:

1. *New Year/Beginnings: Do-Over (John 8:1–12)*
 - God offers us second chances so we can be transformed.
2. *Easter 1: A Devotion that Lasts (John 12:1–8))*
 - Developing a Christ-focused faith.
3. *Easter 2: Prone to Wander (Isaiah 53:3–6)*
 - God's grace is sufficient for our doubts.
4. *Easter 3: Eyes Wide Open (Luke 24:13–35)*
 - God reveals the truth we need when we need it.
5. *Graduation: Adulting (Ephesians 5:1–16)*
 - Following Christ means imitating him.
6. *Thanksgiving: Cultivating Gratitude (Psalm 95)*
 - Gratitude to God requires soft hearts.
7. *Christmas 1: The Unexpected Messiah (Isaiah 11:1–5)*
 - God's gift of transforming grace is life-changing and unexpected.
8. *Christmas 2: There's More to the Story (Luke 2:1–20)*
 - Celebrating and sharing the incredible Christmas story.

Connected Roots:

Rescue, Worship, Apologetics, Identity





WHAT'S INCLUDED

52 LESSONS



- **FACILITATOR GUIDE** PDF and Word Versions
- **STUDENT GUIDE** PDF and Word Versions
- **WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT** Easy-to-use teaching points that unpack biblical themes
- **A SECOND LOOK** An additional illustration with discussion questions
- **APPLY IT** A practical application for the week
- **THINK ABOUT IT** Challenging quotes or verses
- **MARKS OF A DISCIPLE** Identify signs of growth in students
- **MEMORY VERSE** Promote Bible memorization
- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE** Two experiential activities to reinforce each series' lessons
- **HOLIDAY LESSONS** Seasonal teaching
- **ONLINE TEACHER MANAGEMENT*** Give your volunteers online access to digital curriculum

** Included with HERO Membership*

ANNUAL MINISTRY BLUEPRINT



- **GOSPEL THREAD** 8 roots of Deep Discipleship
- **SCOPE AND SEQUENCE** Suggested yearly teaching outline
- **DUAL ENVIRONMENT** Specific instructions for use in small group and large group

VOLUNTEERS



- **FACILITATOR GUIDE** PDF and Word Versions
- **VOLUNTEER TIPS AND TRAINING** Advice for Lesson Facilitators
- **VOLUNTEER TRAINING VIDEOS*** 18 Youth Ministry Training Videos for Volunteers
- **STUDENT DISCIPLESHIP TRACKER*** Equip Volunteers to Create an Individualized Discipleship Plan for Every Student
- **ONLINE TEACHER MANAGEMENT*** Online Access to Digital Curriculum
- **ONLINE MESSAGE CENTER*** Update Volunteers via the Message Center

** Included with HERO Membership*

MEDIA



- **POWERPOINT SLIDES** Background, Title, and Teaching Point Slides
- **PROPRESENTER SLIDES** Background, Title, and Teaching Point Slides
- **PROMO ART** Sized for Instagram, Posters, and Web Banners
- **MEMORY VERSE** Graphic of Weekly Verse
- **GOSPEL THREAD VIDEOS*** Animated Videos of the 8 Roots of Deep Discipleship
- **COUNTDOWN VIDEOS*** 20 Animated Countdown Videos
- **MOTION LOOPS*** 22 Animated Motion Loops
- **BUMPER VIDEOS** 44 Animated Bumper Videos

** Included with HERO Membership*

PARENTS



- **PARENT GUIDE** Lesson Overview and Scripture Covered for Every Series
- **QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK** Debrief Questions Designed for Parents
- **FAMILY ACTIVITY** Activity Designed for the Whole Family
- **HOW TO RUN A PARENT MEETING*** Video Training for Youth Workers
- **ONLINE DISCIPLESHIP TRACKER*** Partner with Parents to Create an Individualized Discipleship Plan for Every Student

** Included with HERO Membership*

TECHNOLOGY



- **ONLINE TEACHER MANAGEMENT*** Online Access to Digital Curriculum
- **ONLINE MESSAGE CENTER*** Update Volunteers via the Message Center

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DOWNLOAD A SAMPLE

leadertreks.org/encounters-sample-lesson