

WEEK 2 TEACHING GUIDE

CATALYST

BIG IDEA

The faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.

BIBLE

Exodus 3:10-12; Hebrews 10:24, 11:29-40, 12:1-2

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | DIY Elephant Toothpaste

- Welcome back to *Catalyst*, where we're talking about the things that transform our faith, because transformation is exactly what catalysts do.
 - If you were here last week, you'll remember we said a catalyst is something that either creates a big change or speeds up a change that was already happening.
 - But first we have to make sure we all know what a catalyst is. And what better way to explain than with another science experiment?
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can do this experiment in person, or if you don't have the bravery to deal with the mess, try showing a video like this [one](#). Here's [a demonstration](#) of making Elephant Toothpaste – you'll need a [clear glass container](#), [hydrogen peroxide](#), [dish soap](#), [food coloring](#), and either [yeast](#) or [potassium iodide](#), depending on the level of reaction you'd like. Combine a little bit of hydrogen peroxide with a few drops of dish soap and food coloring in your container. If you're using yeast, combine it with hot water in another container. To create the final reaction, add the yeast-and-water mixture or potassium iodide into your hydrogen peroxide mixture and watch the magic happen! Oh, and wear gloves to be safe.*
- When you add that last ingredient, it becomes pretty clear what the catalyst was, right? The transformation happened in real-time, making the mixture suddenly explosive!
- So what's a catalyst? It's anything that causes a big change to happen or speed up. And it's not just something that happens in science class.

ACTIVITY | Copy-Catalysts

- You could say there are catalysts all around us . . . we just don't always see them. A lot of the time, catalysts can be people.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Ask everyone to stand and arrange the group into a circle, facing inwards. If you have a larger group, you can split into multiple groups for this game. Ask one person to leave the room – this person will be the Guesser for the round. While they are gone, the group decides who should be the Catalyst for that round. The Catalyst will be the person who sets the movements for that round (sneezing, jumping, scratching their nose, etc.) that everyone else will need to repeat. When the Catalyst performs a movement, everyone else*

must repeat their movement until they perform a new one. When the Catalyst is chosen, invite the Guesser to come back. The Guesser stands in the very center of the circle and is allowed to make up to three guesses about who the Catalyst is. If they guess incorrectly, the round continues. If they guess correctly, the Catalyst becomes the new Guesser for the next round.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What's a word or phrase you recently started saying? Where do you first hear it?**
 - **Name three people who influence you on a daily basis and tell us how.**

QUESTION | "Who has influenced you?"

- Have you ever found yourself picking up a new habit, quirk, or interest because someone you like or admire influenced you in some way? Maybe it was . . .
 - Finally watching that show your friend wouldn't stop talking about.
 - Trying a weird new fashion trend after someone at school tried it first.
 - Picking up a new phrase you learned from TikTok.
- **What about you? Who's someone who has influenced you and how?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond or have everyone share with a partner next to them.*
- Naturally, the people around us influence what we do — and even what we say. If that has ever happened to you, congratulations! You know what a catalyst is. It's the person who influenced you to make a change (even if it was a pretty small change).

SO WHAT? *Why does it matter to God and to us?*

STORY | Tell a story about a time someone influenced you in a big way.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story from your own life (or ask a student or volunteer to share a story) about a time someone influenced you in a big way. Maybe they influenced you to pursue a new interest, explore your current career, kick a bad habit, or change the course of your life in some way. Share why that person had such an impact on you and how your life changed as a result.*
- The people who end up being the biggest catalysts in our lives are usually the people we:
 - Look up to the most.
 - Spend the most time learning from.
 - Spend the most time with.
- These catalysts influence us in big ways, even when we aren't aware of it, which is why it's so important to pay close attention to who these people are in our lives.
- You can't avoid being influenced by other people, but you can be wiser about the people you allow to influence you — especially when it comes to the people who influence your faith.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ★ **Who are a few people you really respect? Why do you look up to them?**
 - Who is one person who was a significant catalyst for your faith, and how?

SCRIPTURE | A Brief Hebrews Recap

- Last week, we started talking about a book in the Bible called Hebrews. You could say the book of Hebrews is meant to be a catalyst for the faith of anyone who reads it.
 - Last time, we started reading a really long list of people who were known for their faith in God.
 - These were people who didn't just believe in God in theory – they proved they trusted God with their actions.
- We'll get back to the book of Hebrews in just a second, but first I want to give you a little background on someone who Hebrews talks about a lot. His name is Moses.

SCRIPTURE | Exodus 3:10-12

- The full story of Moses can be found in the book of Exodus, the second book of the Bible.
- If you want a fun animated version of the story I guess you could try watching *The Prince of Egypt*, but if you want the whole story, I definitely recommend reading it. Here's the summary.
 - Before Moses was ever born, God's people (the nation of Israel) was taken captive and enslaved by the nation of Egypt.
 - After a bunch of generations in Egypt, the enslaved Israelites had grown into such a large group of people that Pharaoh (the ruler of Egypt) feared they would rebel against him.
 - To protect his power and keep the Israelites oppressed, Pharaoh ordered all of the firstborn boys of Israel to be drowned in the Nile River. One of those firstborn boys was a baby named Moses.
 - To save her son, Moses' mother put Moses in a basket and placed him in the Nile River, trusting God to rescue him. From the river, Moses was picked up by none other than Pharaoh's own daughter, who raised him as her own.
 - But when Moses grew up, he wasn't okay with the way Pharaoh was enslaving Moses' people. Even though Moses had all the power and privileges that came with being a member of the royal family, he threw it all away to protect an enslaved man who was being beaten by one of Pharaoh's soldiers.
 - Moses fled Egypt to avoid being killed, and it's then he met God in a pretty incredible way. Have you ever heard the term "burning bush"? That's where it comes from. God showed up in the form of a bush that was literally on fire and spoke to Moses from the flames. Here's what God said . . .
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Exodus 3:10-12.*
- You might think, after God miraculously protected Moses as a baby, that Moses would be ready to trust God with anything, but it took Moses a minute to find his faith.
 - Moses struggled with a lot of doubt, thinking he wasn't good or talented enough for God to use.
 - To help Moses find the faith he needed, God promised to be with him through it all – but God also gave Moses some help by sending Moses' brother Aaron along with him.
- So in Moses' life, who were the catalysts for his faith? You might say:
 - His mother was a catalyst by showing Moses what it looked like to trust God, even when things seemed impossible.
 - The enslaved man Moses protected was a catalyst by showing him see other people are worth fighting for.
 - His brother Aaron was a catalyst by partnering with Moses to help him carry out God's mission.
 - Even Pharaoh and his soldiers were catalysts on Moses' journey by showing him there was evil and injustice in the world.
- As a result, Moses took God up on the invitation to help rescue Israel from Egypt. Under Moses' leadership, a whole nation of people saw God do something miraculous. To them, Moses became a catalyst for their faith too.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - ⊛ **Who are some more people who have been catalysts for your faith? How have they helped you grow in smaller (but still important) ways?**
 - ⊛ **Can you think of a time when a hurtful or negative experience with another person helped you grow in your faith? If so, tell us how.**

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:23-29

- Now that we know Moses' story, let's fast-forward to the book of Hebrews to see how his story is remembered.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Hebrews 11:23-29.*
- Moses' story of faith wasn't just a catalyst for the faith of the people he helped rescue from Egypt. Moses' faith was a catalyst for aith of the earliest followers of Jesus, and continues to be a catalyst for our faith today.

SCRIPTURE | Hebrews 11:30 –12:2

- Watch how this legacy of faith continues to spread from person to person (or catalyst to catalyst) throughout history.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read or summarize Hebrews 11:30–12:2.*
- The author of Hebrews says those of us reading this letter are surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses" — the people who went before us and showed us what faith can look like.
- Scripture is full of the stories like these, but Scripture isn't the only place we can find catalysts like these. They're around us even now, if we know where to look! Because **the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journeys.**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

IMAGES | Your Personal Catalysts

- So who are your catalysts? To get you thinking, let me share a few of mine.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, collect a handful of photos of people who have been catalysts on your faith journey. Show them on screen and talk about them one at a time, sharing how they impacted your faith in both big and small ways. Include examples of different kinds of people, like:*
 - *Friends.*
 - *Family.*
 - *Mentors.*
 - *Writers, musicians, artists, or other public figures.*
- These catalysts are part of my "great cloud of witnesses." Because they've helped me see what it looks like to follow Jesus, I hope to do the same for others.

OBJECT LESSON | Newton's Cradle

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As you talk, start a chain reaction with a [Newton's Cradle](#).*
- The author of Hebrews wrote that our faith journeys are like a race. We want to run our races with endurance, but in order to do that, we need other people to help keep us going.
 - It's similar to this Newton's Cradle. When you set off a ball on one end of the device, the transferred energy flows through every single ball, until it causes the ball on the opposite end to move.

- That's kind of how someone else's faith can impact ours. Sometimes a person's impact on our faith will be obvious and immediate. Sometimes it will be more subtle. But when we're in community with other people, we're all impacting each other somehow.

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups! If you have fewer than 15 students, the starred questions are designed for high schoolers, so you may want to skip them for middle schoolers.*
 - **Read Hebrews 10:24. What are some specific ways the catalysts in your life spur you on like this?**
 - ★ **When do you most need other people to step in and spur you on in your faith?**

REFLECTION | Find Your Catalysts

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your program, print and cut the handouts provided in your Week 2 folder. Place one under each seat, along with a pen. Encourage students to write down names of their "catalysts" as you teach, in their small groups, or on their own at home.*
- So as we're running this race we call our faith journeys, how can we make sure we're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help our faith grow?
 - **FIND YOUR CATALYSTS:** This week, what if you tried to find a few different kinds of people and asked them what they're learning?
 - Someone whose faith journey is new.
 - Someone whose faith journey is similar to yours.
 - Someone who's further ahead of you in their life or on their faith journey.
 - Someone who's faith journey you could be catalyst for.
 - **KEEP YOUR FOCUS:** Your faith journey is like a marathon. We all get tired, frustrated, and discouraged sometimes. But all good runners know that, if you want to finish strong, you have to stay focused — and we can help each other do that.
 - This week, what if you and a friend set a goal to learn and grow together somehow?
 - What if you picked a devotional or reading plan on the Bible App and decided to read it together?
 - What if you set reminders to encourage, pray for, and reach out to each other as you do?
 - **KEEP GOING:** Yes, your faith is like a marathon, but you're not competing with the people next to you. You're not behind. You're not losing. There's no one you need to beat. You can go at your own pace — just keep going.
- Maybe it's easy for you to identify people who are positive influences on your faith journey, or maybe not. If you're struggling to figure out who can be a catalyst to help you grow, reach out to one of the adults here today. We'd love to help you figure that out!
 - Moses' faith was catalyzed, in part, by the faith of his mother, the faith of his brother, and the faith of his people.
 - The people of Israel's faith was catalyzed, in part, by the faith of Moses.
 - And our faith today can be catalyzed by the people around us. They don't have to be perfect to have a faith that impacts ours. We're already surrounded by people who can become everyday catalysts for our faith.
- The race we're running can be tiring at times, but it can be pretty exciting when we realize we get to run it

with other people! Because it's true – **the faith of others can be a catalyst on our journey.**

DISCUSSION

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *If you have more than 15 students, skip this discussion time and save it for small groups!*
 - **What are some ways our faith can grow from people:**
 - **Whose faith journey is new?**
 - **Whose faith journey is like ours?**
 - **Who are further ahead of us on our faith journeys?**
 - **This week, what are you going to do to make sure you're surrounded by the kind of catalysts who can help your faith grow?**