

# Seven Keys to SUCCESS

## Lesson 5—Encourage Others to Know Christ

**Series:** “Seven Keys to Success: Habits for Christian Living”

Surrender it all to God  
Unite with God Every Day  
Confess Your Sins  
Continually Study God’s Word  
Encourage Others to Know Christ  
Stay the Course  
Share Your Resources

### OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Jonah 2:10-3:10

Key Verse: Romans 1:16—“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Consider how you encourage others to come to Christ.
- Consider the similarities and differences between you and Jonah?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed Sunday School.
- Pray for each student by name.

### CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

*CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.*

*CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.*

*CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.*

*THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.*

## OPENING ACTIVITY

### Discussion

● *If you were given the wish to become a hero and you could choose any story-line for becoming that hero, what story would you choose?* (For example, would you choose to be the hero who single-handedly stopped bank robbers, the knight in shining armor who rescued the princess, the person who pulls a drowning man out of a river or who saves the life of the President, etc.)

● *Have you ever been in a situation where you saved someone's life or someone saved your life?*

● *Do you think there will be heroes in heaven? If so, who do you think these people will be?*

● *Spiritually, can you save others?* (No, you cannot save anyone spiritually—only God can do that but you can be a witness that might lead to their salvation. You can't save them but you can lead them to Christ.)

● *Would anyone like to share a story about someone they have led to Christ?*

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at a story of a man who didn't want to tell others about God. *Can anyone guess who this might be?* (Jonah)

## BIBLE LESSON

### Turn to Jonah.

● *Who can summarize for me the story of Jonah?* (Jonah was a prophet whom God had instructed to go to Ninevah, his worst enemies, and tell them that if they didn't repent of their sins, God was going to destroy them. Jonah resisted, "ran away" from God by getting on a boat and going the opposite direction. God sent a storm to stop him and the only way the storm would stop was for the sailors to throw Jonah overboard. When they did, God appointed a big fish to swallow him. He spent three days and three nights in the fish where he repented and prayed.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 2:10-3:4

● *How would you have felt if God would have given you the command to go throughout a city proclaiming that it would be destroyed in forty days if they didn't repent of their sins?*

● *Would you have obeyed or would you have resisted the way Jonah did?*

● *Would you have been embarrassed or afraid of what people might think or say?*

● *Why do you think it's hard for some people to witness to others?* (Fear, a feeling or unworthiness, selfishness, etc.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 3:5-9

- *How did the Ninevites respond to God's word?*
- *Why do you think they called a "fast"? (Fasting is a way of totally humbling yourself before God, a way of physically picturing that all you really need in life is Him.)*
- *Why do you think they put on sackcloth and sat in ashes? (In their culture this was a way of showing sorrow, a sign that they were mourning over the wrong things they had done.)*
- *What else did they do? (The men called on God to forgive them and they turned from their wickedness.)*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 3:10

- *How did God show mercy? (He did not destroy them for their sins because they had repented and turned from them.)*
- *Will God always show mercy to someone who repents of their sin and turns to Him? (Yes—regardless of the bad, even terrible things they've done.)*

**KEY VERSE**

Choose a volunteer to read—Romans 1:16

- *What do you think this verse means "first for the Jews, then for the Gentile"? (The Gospel came to God's people, the Jews, first but it wasn't just for them. It was meant to be shared with everyone else. Gentiles refer to anyone who isn't a Jew. The Gospel is for all.)*
- *Do you think Jonah was ashamed of God's message? (Probably not. He just didn't want God to show his enemies mercy.)*
- *Is there anyone you would be ashamed to tell about Jesus? (Perhaps you would be ashamed to tell them because of the ways you've treated them in the past—ashamed for them to know that you're a Christian.)*
- *Who do you think are the hardest people to witness to? (Friends, acquaintances, teachers, enemies, family, adults, children, strangers, etc.)*
- *Many people say that family members are the hardest to tell about Jesus—why do you think they feel this way? Would it be hard for you to tell your parents about Jesus?*

**Story #1: Don't Cramp My Style**

(True Story) A student told her mom that she didn't want her coming to her church because church was where she could go to "get away" from everything and if her mom was there she felt like it would "cramp her style."

- *What would you say to this young lady?*

### Story #2: Not One Word

A man who was a member of a church asked his pastor to visit his son, who was near death. He met his pastor at the door and said, “Preacher, I am afraid that my son is dying. I wish you would talk to him about his salvation.” The preacher went into the bedroom and started talking to the boy but found him totally indifferent. Finally the preacher said, “Oh, son, your father is so interested in your being saved.” The boy looked up and said, “What did you say?” And the preacher repeated, “Son, your father is deeply interested in your salvation.” The boy said, “That is strange. I am twenty-one years of age. I have lived at home all my life. My father is a member of the church, but he never said one word to me about God and salvation.” <sup>1</sup>

- *What would you say to the dad in this story? What would you say to the son? Do you think this son will want Jesus? Why or why not?*

*SAY: In both of these stories it might be easy to judge the people involved because their mistakes are so obvious, but what about you—Are there people God has put in your life that you have struggled or resisted telling about Him?*

- *Answer the following questions:*

*On a scale of 1 to 10 how effective are you in witnessing to family members?*

*On a scale of 1 to 10 how effective are you in witnessing to friends*

*On a scale of 1 to 10 how effective are you in witnessing to strangers?*

*On a scale of 1 to 10 how quickly are you obedient when you know God has put someone in your path to tell about Him?*

- *What obstacles do you face when witnessing? What do you think is the greatest obstacle that might stop you from talking with someone?*

### WRAP IT UP

*SAY: There is no greater joy outside your own salvation experience as the joy you experience when you led someone else to Christ.*

### Prayer Time

*Pray specifically today that your students will have a boldness and willingness to continually share Jesus with others.*

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

## Prayer Requests

<sup>1</sup>*One Thousand Illustrations: Stories for Life*, (Texas: Student Discipleship Ministries, 2000) CD-Rom.