



Experiencing God's Closeness

13



Before you start:

1. Prayerfully read through the whole lesson at least twice.
2. Gather all the materials you need for each section (see below).
3. Work with another team member and plan who will manage each section of the session.

You will need:

- Biro, marker pens and pencils

Icebreaker:

- Blue card or paper
- Yellow card or paper
- Activity card copy master
- Copy and cut the activity cards.
- Carefully pile up the cards in two piles – a yellow pile and a blue pile - so that they are stacked in the same order.
- When you know how many people are in the group, take an equal amount of cards from each pile so that there is one card per person. If there is an odd number of people include one of the group leaders so that you have an even number.

In other words you should be giving out two cards per named activity – one yellow card and one blue card.

Then shuffle the cards and keep them in a stack ready to share out for the icebreaker. If extra people turn up later, add any extra cards as necessary before sharing them out.

Mission Possible:

- Paper

Word Search:

- One complete set of Word Search studies for each person to take home.
- Sufficient copies of the Word Search sheets to give one sheet per group as formed in the Word Search directions.
- Large sticky notes – up to ten sticky notes per small group of four people.

Family Focus Time:

- One 'Family Discussion' card per family.
- Cups and drinks.

Family Prayer Time:

- Sheets or table cloths - one per family.

Jesus and Me (JAM) Session:

- One set of journal pages for each person.

Take-away Menu (optional):

- Small plastic key-rings with write-on labels
- Buy cheap key-ring labels and write the name 'Immanuel' on them, or purchase special key-rings from a Christian store that would remind people that God is with them all the time.

By the end of the session, the group members will:

- Know that God is with them all the time, wherever they are.
- Feel his presence, even when they are busy and active.
- Respond by increasing their awareness of God's presence all through the day and noticing the difference it makes to their lives.



KID for Teens: Leaders Guide: Experiencing God's Closeness



Leadership Personal Preparation:

Think about a time when you experienced God in a powerful way whilst doing something active. What difference did it make to your life? Or think about a time when you tried to practise the presence of God and it made a profound difference to your life. If the Holy Spirit invites you to do so, be ready to tell the story of your experience during the welcome or the conclusion. Otherwise use the inspiration of the story to fill you with enthusiasm for today's session.

Welcome and Prayer – 5 mins

Say:



The best time to spend with God is the time when we are still and quiet and we can focus on God and our relationship with him. But he is with us all the time, and being aware of his continual closeness can change the way we live our lives...in amazing ways.

Brother Lawrence was a monk who lived in the 17th century. He found that the routine of the monastery, with its fixed times for prayer, worship and quietness, made it difficult for him to worship God. He decided to practice the presence of God all through the day. In other words he kept reminding himself that God was as close to him when he washed up in the kitchen as when he stood in the cold chapel at 4.00 am. Soon he discovered that he felt closest to God, and could pray and listen to him better, when he was doing his everyday work.

Because we are made differently, some worship God best in quietness, while some also need to worship God in action, because God sometimes uses the activities we are doing to teach us more about him.

It is good to have a special quiet time with God each day. But God is all around us all the time and we can find ways to experience his presence through everything we do.





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Icebreaker - 7 mins

You will need:

1. Activity cards in blue and yellow – prepared as indicated in 'Advance Preparation'.
- Give each person one of the activity cards.
 - Half the people in the group should have blue cards and half should have yellow cards.
 - Tell them to keep their activity secret and not to show or tell anyone what is written on their card.
 - Ask the people with the blue cards to mime the actions for their activity.
 - Ask the people with the yellow cards to find someone who looks as if they are miming the activity written on their card. This person will be their partner for the next activity.

Mission Possible - 15 mins

You will need:

1. Paper
 2. Pencils
- Working in twos, think about the activity that was written on your cards.
 - Make a list of five different ways you could experience God's presence whilst doing this activity.
 - Make a list of five things you could learn about developing a God-like character whilst doing this activity. 'I could learn patience/humility/courage etc, by...'
 - Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the group during feedback time.

Feedback Questions

- Ask each group to tell the others which activity they were given. Then ask them to read out some of the ideas they had for experiencing God through their activity.
- When each group has shared their thoughts ask: 'What fresh insights did you have into the ways God speaks to us, and grows our character, when we are being active?'

Word-Search - 25/35 mins

You will need:

1. Copies of the Word Search studies enough for one sheet per group
 2. One complete set of Word Search studies (ABC) for each person to take home
 4. Pens
 5. Large sticky notes – up to ten sticky notes per small group of four people.
- Ask each pair of people from the Icebreaker activity to form a group with another pair of people.
 - Give each new group a Word Search sheet (A, B or C) to study and discuss.
 - Ask them to think and talk about the Bible passages in their Word Search.
 - Then ask them to write each thought they have about experiencing God's closeness on separate, large sticky notes.

Coming Together

- Call people back to the larger group.
- Invite each group to share a special insight that emerged from their study.
- Then invite each group to place their large sticky notes around the walls of the room for others to read.
- Give out a complete set of Word Searches to each person to take home.

Family Focus Time - 10/15 mins

You will need:

1. One 'Family Discussion' card per family
 2. Drinks and cups.
- Let the everyone re-assemble into their family groups, collecting a drink on the way.
 - Give each family a discussion card to pass around their circle. Each person can discuss a topic or answer one of the questions from the card. They can also pass it to the next person if they would prefer not to speak.





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Family Prayer Time - 10 mins

You will need:

1. Sheets or table cloths - one per family
 - Give each family a clean, flat, bed sheet or cotton table cloth.
 - Let them choose one person at a time to sit on a chair and be covered with the cloth. If anyone is uncomfortable about being covered by the cloth they can just close their eyes.
 - The other family members can take it in turns to place a hand on the person's back or arm as they read a verse about God being very close, or speak the words God might speak if he were talking to them.

Jam Session (Jesus and Me) - 10 mins

You will need:

1. One set of Journal Pages per participant
 - Ask each person to read Psalm 139 and then reflect on it as suggested in the Journal Pages.
 - Allow 10 minutes for this activity, so that the group members have a chance to soak in God's closeness. During this time, play some very quiet, reflective, peaceful, Christian music.

Take-Away Menu (optional)

You will need:

1. Small plastic key-rings
 - Give each person a small plastic key ring with the name 'Immanuel' on it, to remind them that God is always with them.

Closing Prayer





13 KID for Teens: Handout: Activity Cards: Experiencing God's Closeness



Copy onto blue card and yellow card (or two other colours) and cut apart.

<i>Washing a car</i>	<i>COOKING THE DINNER</i>
<i>Feeding a baby</i>	<i>DOING HOMEWORK</i>
<i>GROCERY SHOPPING</i>	<i>GARDENING</i>
<i>Painting a picture</i>	<i>PLAYING GOLF</i>
<i>TIDYING a BEDROOM</i>	<i>HAVING a SHOWER</i>
<i>WRAPPING up a PRESENT</i>	<i>SORTING THE RECYCLING</i>
<i>Reading a newspaper</i>	<i>WATCHING TELEVISION</i>





13 KID for Teens: Experiencing God's Closeness

Word Search: A



God is always with us. He is as close to us as ever, even when we can't see him, and even when we feel like we are a very long way from him. We may get hurt, or be very frightened, but he is still right there beside us, hurting when we hurt, crying tears with us when we are sad and laughing with us when things go well.

Read Joshua 1:5-9

List the promises that God makes to Joshua as he is about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

Read Isaiah 43:1-4

These promises are also for you. What difference could they make to your life?

Imagine you are Joshua. Suddenly you find yourself in charge of thousands of people and you are about to cross a large river into enemy territory. What effect do you think these promises would have had on your ability to manage a difficult situation?

God is always with us. He has probably protected us from hundreds of dangers throughout our lives, and we will never know how many times he has rescued us, until we have the chance to ask him. But God has an eternal view of our ultimate protection, and until he comes we know that there will always be sickness, suffering and death.

As Christians how do we make sense of the promises of God's protection and the promise that he will always be with us, versus the realities of human pain and inevitable death?





13 KID for Teens: Experiencing God's Closeness

Word Search: B



God is always with us. He is as close to us as ever, even when we can't see him, and even when we feel like we are a very long way from him. We may get hurt, or be very frightened, but he is still right there beside us, hurting when we hurt, crying tears with us when we are sad and laughing with us when things go well.

When the angel visits Mary to tell her that she is going to give birth to the Messiah, the angel tells Mary that people will give her son a special name.

Read Matthew 1:23

What is the name the angel told Mary to give her son?

Why do you think it was given to Jesus?

List at least 3 ways that Jesus lived up to this special name when he was on this earth.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can he still be 'with us' today?

Read Matthew 28:20

What does Jesus say to his disciples as he is about to leave them?

Imagine that you are one of the disciples and it was only a few weeks ago that you saw Jesus die on the cross. Now he is going away and you won't be able to see him any more. What will these words mean to you as you witness for him in a dangerous world?

What difference does your awareness of God's closeness make to your life?

What could you say to someone who feels as if God has abandoned them?





13 KID for Teens: Experiencing God's Closeness

Word Search: C



God is always with us. He is as close to us as ever, even when we can't see him, and even when we feel like we are a very long way from him. We may get hurt, or be very frightened, but he is still right there beside us, hurting when we hurt, crying tears with us when we are sad and laughing with us when things go well.

In Hebrews 13:5 we are told an interesting secret for experiencing closeness with God.

Write it here:

Read Matthew 6:25-34 and Matthew 7:7-11

How might trusting God to provide everything you need, help you to experience his closeness to you in a deeper way?

List five ways in which the love of money can be a danger to our close relationship with God.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List five ways you could counteract the love of money in your life:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.





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KID for Teens: Jesus and Me Journal: Experiencing God's Closeness



Read Psalm 139:1-18



Then sit quietly and imagine God is very close to you. Sometimes it helps to wrap yourself in a blanket and imagine that it represents God's warm and comforting love, all around you. Sit for at least five minutes and let God's loving closeness soak into your body, as if you are 'sunbathing' in his love.

Write down some of the thoughts and feelings that were in your mind and body as you experienced God's closeness.

Other ideas:

Try writing Psalm 139 in your own words

Draw a picture, or make a model or sculpture to illustrate the message of Psalm 139.





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KID for Teens: Jesus and Me Journal: Experiencing God's Closeness



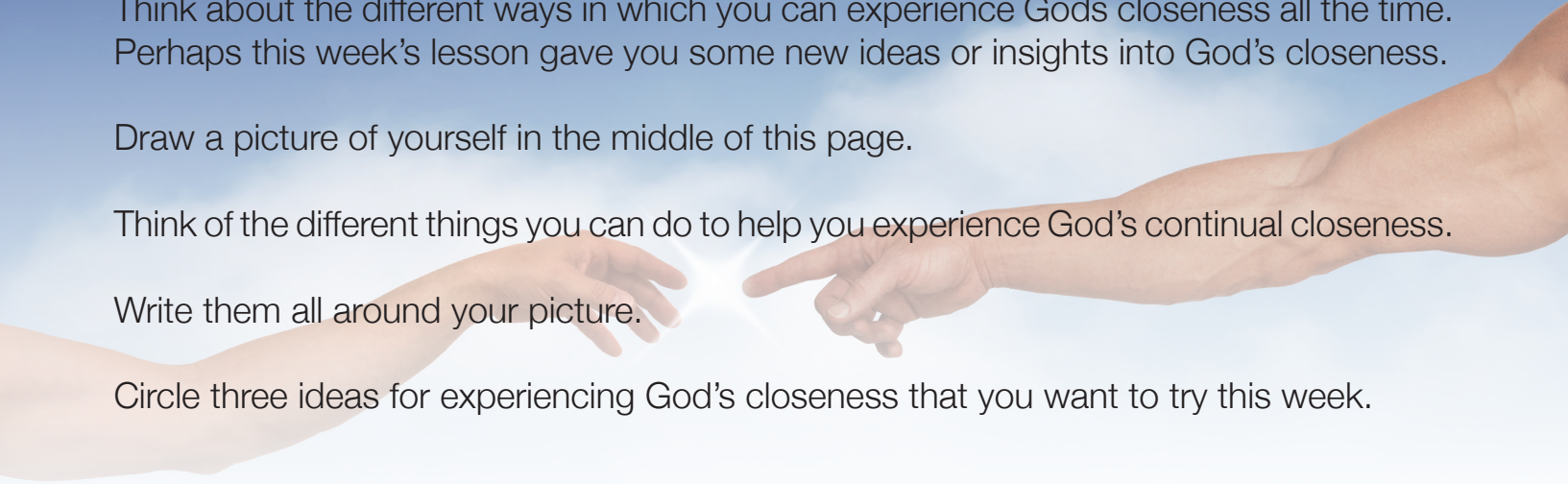
Think about the different ways in which you can experience God's closeness all the time. Perhaps this week's lesson gave you some new ideas or insights into God's closeness.

Draw a picture of yourself in the middle of this page.

Think of the different things you can do to help you experience God's continual closeness.

Write them all around your picture.

Circle three ideas for experiencing God's closeness that you want to try this week.





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KID for Teens: Jesus and Me Journal: Journalling God's Closeness



							Date/Place/time OF EXPERIENCE
							How I experienced God's CLOSENESS
							THE EFFECT GOD'S CLOSENESS HAD ON ME
							HOW GOD'S CLOSENESS HELPED ME TO SHARE HIS LOVE WITH THOSE AROUND ME





13 KID for Teens: Jesus and Me Journal: Sandy Footprints



Read the famous story below and then map your life as if it were also footprints in the sand.

Footprints in the Sand

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with my Lord. Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.

In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, at other times there was only one set.

This bothered me because I noticed that during the low periods of my life, when I was suffering from anguish, sorrow, or defeat, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said to the Lord.

'You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?'

The Lord replied, 'The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you.'

- *Author unknown*

Sometimes, when we think God isn't there for us, he may be so close that we don't notice him.

Draw a simple map of your life. During which times was God carrying you?

