



Student TEACHING PLAN

2016
DIXIE JACKSON
ARKANSAS
MISSIONS
OFFERING

A NOTE TO THE LEADERS

Hello! Thank you for taking the time to teach the teenagers in your church about missions. Your influence is a huge game-changer in their lives, and you could very likely be teaching future missionaries what it looks like to live missionally, by any means necessary. It's not often that youth workers (paid or unpaid) get thanked, and we want you to know how much we appreciate you and the commitment you have made to your students.

If you've done a Dixie Jackson study in the past, you'll notice that this year's curriculum is a little different. Instead of focusing on one or two missionaries in Arkansas and limiting you to those stories, we want to broaden your scope a little bit. What you'll be teaching your students this time is a bigger picture of all that goes on in Arkansas missions. We'll focus on certain aspects here and there, but you'll get to see more of what is being done so that your group can grasp on to something they care about, and get involved. The goal is to have something for everyone, show your students that missions doesn't fit in the tiny box we sometimes try to shove it into, and get students involved in Arkansas missions!

We want to be available to you for any needs or questions you have, so please feel free to call us at 501-376-4791; ask for Charity or Travis.

We've prayed for every one of you as this curriculum has been written, and we continue to pray that you will effectively reach your students, no matter how challenging the days ahead are. Blessings on you and your ministry!

Theme: Living the Gospel

Theme verse: 1 Thessalonians 2:8

LESSON OBJECTIVE

The objective echoes the message of the theme verse—that students would be sharing the Gospel message because of the love in their hearts, happily sharing not only God's love, but their own lives. This year's Dixie Jackson curriculum will be unique in that there isn't one specific missionary focus. We want students to learn what living missionally means, and we need your help! For a student to understand the depth of this kind of sacrifice, they need to see it in action. Our prayer is that you will come to a deeper level of missional living as you teach this study.

BEFORE THE SESSION

- ◆ Watch the 2016 Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering videos. There are multiple short videos included this year, but you aren't expected to show all of them to your students. Prayerfully watch the videos; determine which would most appeal to your group and best show how varied missions can be.
- ◆ Set up TV/screen with DVD prepared to show the selected video(s) to students.
- ◆ Read Dixie Jackson's biography (visit: absc.org/dixiejacksonbio)
- ◆ Prepare music to play during prayer time. We have created a "Dixie Jackson Missions" playlist that you can access on Spotify (tiny.cc/dixiejacksonplaylist) if you would like to share it with your students. Consider playing music in any down time you have—as students are coming in or leaving, as they are praying, or even during games/activities.

SESSION

Presentation: Play music and welcome students as they come in.

Ask students the following questions, and allow time for answers:

- ◆ Think about your very best friend. How often do y'all talk?
- ◆ How do you communicate with them? Multiple ways?
- ◆ What would your relationship look like if you didn't communicate with them regularly? Would you be as close as you are? Or would you begin to feel disconnected?
- ◆ The source of your friendship is your connection to one another! If you lose that, do you have your friendship?"

Share this story:

I was driving to my home out in the middle of a bunch of cotton fields late at night recently. If you don't live near any fields, you may not know how incredibly dark it is out in the country, but it *is* dark. It's one of my favorite things about living outside of the city limits. As I reached the edge of town, a lightning bug flew into my windshield (or I ran into it—depends on your outlook, I guess) and splattered his little glow-in-the-dark self onto the glass. I was so intrigued! A little spot on my windshield was glowing in the dark for a good 20 seconds. But slowly, it lost its glow completely and just became a dead bug on my car. That got me to thinking, "Why did it stop shining so quickly? What is it about the lightning bug that gives it the glow?" After some pretty intense Googling, I have found that scientists don't really agree about the purpose of the glow, but they know the source is a combination of the air and a chemical inside the bug. The conclusion I came to was that the bug stopped glowing because it lost its source of life.

Take a second to consider how we are like those bugs.

(Discuss possibilities here before moving on. Encourage discussion about the answers you're receiving.)

The lightning bug stopped glowing because it lost its source of light. When we aren't connected to God, we do the same. Our lights grow dimmer and dimmer as we become less like Him. To share God's Good News with people, we have to be in communication with Him. We can certainly coast through life without ever tapping into His power completely, and we'll never know just how brightly we could be shining. But if you stay connected to the source, you'll shine in places even darker than my little country neighborhood!

Show this video on connecting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6cTUZ-UoCc> . If you have spotty or no Internet at your meeting place, you can download the YouTube video to your computer prior to the meeting.

To shine in a dark world, we have to be connected to God. Before you go any further in this study, take some time to share about things that are acting as disconnects between you and God. (Leaders, this time can look however you want it to. Your group may respond better to talking as partners, writing down their answers or talking in one large group. Any of these options are perfectly fine! This could be a good opportunity to have some music playing in the background so that students don't feel distracted by silence.)

In the same way that we are called to stay connected to God as Christians, we are called to connect with other people. That's why we're here on earth—to spread the Gospel to everyone so that God can be glorified! A lot of people focus on missions only when they're on a mission trip, but when they get home, they don't keep up that same motivation for telling people about Jesus. Why do you think that is? (Discuss) You probably gave some answers like, "You don't ever have to see those people again!" or "They don't know you, so you're not as afraid of looking stupid or offending them." These things can be true, and they are crippling to our witness.

God has placed you exactly where you are for a very specific reason. As you begin to consider what that reason may be and who you are supposed to be sharing the love of God with, watch some of the Dixie Jackson Arkansas Missions Offering videos. You'll get to see things that are happening *right here* in Arkansas! (Choose a few videos to show here. How many is up to you, but the more they see, the more students will see the work being done through the Dixie Jackson offering!)

There are internationals—people from all over the world—right here in Arkansas. Depending on where you live, you may not have realized that. There are some very specific needs for this type of ministry. What makes this ministry different from others? If you are among the thousands of people who feel called to spreading God's word in other countries, this is a great place to start. The world is coming to Arkansas, and they need Jesus. And sharing God's love with someone in your own town doesn't cost you an airplane ticket!

We are really focusing on church planters this year in Arkansas because they are so great at meeting people where they are. There is something for everyone—even outdoor cowboy churches! One thing that church plants have in common is their need for supplies and help. What could our group do to partner with a church plant right here in Arkansas?" (Go to <http://www.absc.org/promotional-campaigns/church-plants> and click on the church names to learn about their individual needs and what they are doing to spread the Gospel. You can show your group all of the prayer requests, supply needs, and volunteer needs that each church has.) As a group, let's pray about what our involvement can be with these churches. (Leaders, take this as far as you can! This can take shape in a whole church partnership, a week-long missions trip, or even a prayer partnership. Nothing is out of the question when you are within God's will!)

Did you know that the woman this offering is named after lived here in Arkansas? Dixie Jackson fought for missions in Arkansas. She had a passion for the people of Arkansas and for building up our home state in the Kingdom of God. Because she did so much for missions in the state through WMU and church missions, they wanted to name the offering after her. It was her legacy. The first Dixie Jackson offering goal was \$1,000, and now we have a goal of more than \$1 million! We've certainly come a long way since that first offering, but the mission is still the same. The theme for the offering this year is, "Living the Gospel." Dixie Jackson certainly lived the Gospel message out in her life. So what message are you living out? If you died today, what legacy would you be leaving behind? How would you be remembered? Share one thing with the group or write down some things that you think you'll be remembered by and things you *want* to be remembered by." (Leaders, it's preferable to have this time be a discussion, but some groups won't be as comfortable as others. Feel free to have students write their answers down if that works better for your group.)

Are you living in a way that encourages or hinders the Gospel? Do you like how you would be remembered? If not, what can you do to change that? How can you grow in your walk with Christ and become an even brighter light shining for Him?

(Leaders, hopefully throughout this lesson, students have developed a greater understanding of how they can reach the world for Christ without ever leaving Arkansas. This is the perfect time to capture their passion for changing the world with a fun challenge.)

This year, all students across Arkansas are challenged to give something up for a week and then give the money they save to the Dixie Jackson Offering. (Ask students to discuss what that "something" could be for each of them, or what they could do as an entire group. Some

students may wonder how they could do without a Starbucks Frappuccino every day, while others spend more time/money at a skating rink each week. The idea is that some sort of sacrifice is being made on behalf of missions work being done. As you are praying and deciding, read Acts 2:43–47 together.) This Scripture is incredible when you are looking for wisdom about how a church should look! They were together and shared everything. They sold their possessions so that they could give *more*! They praise God *and* people liked them. That's a big deal. And because of that, EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. God added to their numbers! There were some incredible world changers in the early church. You can be those same people now! Once we decide what we're going to do, let's share about it! You can post pictures or messages to your social media account using the hashtag **#DJ2016** to show what you're doing. This is a great way to encourage others by showing how you're spreading the Gospel and connecting with Arkansas missions.

Close your lesson with a time of prayer for all of the missions work being done in Arkansas.

Pray for:

- ◆ Church planters—that God would give them a vision for His plan in their community.

- ◆ Internationals—that God would begin to soften their hearts towards salvation and belief in Him.
- ◆ Block parties—that children would come and be receptive to the Gospel.
- ◆ Volunteers (that could be you!)—that they would be open to the trips God is leading them toward.
- ◆ Church planters—that they would be able to receive funds and supplies that they need to build their church further.
- ◆ Disaster relief workers—that they would have the words to say to victims of disasters, many of whom have lost everything.
- ◆ Medical clinics—that they would be able to share God's love by meeting physical needs.
- ◆ All missions workers—that God would bring help to meet their needs—donations, construction work, volunteers to lead, and strength to bring His Gospel to Arkansas.
- ◆ Arkansans—that they would feel the Holy Spirit moving and sense God's presence.

This is the time for Arkansas! God is here, and He is working. Let's be a part of that work and get involved by **Living the Gospel!**