

A banner with a blue, textured background. On the left, the text "iGod at the beach" is written in white. The "i" is lowercase and inside a circle. "God" is in a large, bold, sans-serif font. "at the beach" is in a smaller, lowercase sans-serif font. On the right side of the banner, there is a small, faint "hs" logo.

iGod at the beach

OBJECTIVES

Main Objective

The world that we live in will try to package Jesus as one of the many ways that leads to God. This series will expose the true characteristics of God and help us understand that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation.

Lesson Objective

In this lesson we want to convey that life is full of struggles and trials, but in the midst of them God will be there with you. Our question should not be “Why did this happen?” but “Who will you trust in the middle of life’s trials?”

VIDEO IDEA

At the Beach video — 4 minutes, 50 seconds.

PROMOTIONS FOR THIS LESSON

The iGod video provided is a great promotion and transition piece. You can choose to use either the full clip or the shortened piece to raise awareness of this series and it’s upcoming lessons.

ROOM DECORATION IDEAS

- iGod banners
 - Pictures are provided to create banners for stage or for the front of the room.
- Continue your collage

GAMES

Dancing A-go-go Contest- Hang a white sheet in your room that is back lit by a bright light or strobe light. Give two students the opportunity to dance behind the screen and allow the others to vote on the winner. This is a simple game with very little set up, but the teens love to watch and participate. (Note-a great song to use is “Gonna make you Sweat” by C + C Music Factory or “Crazy” by Gnarl Barkley)

LESSON OUTLINE

Overview

Our culture is confused about who God is. It continues to pump out mixed philosophies about God. In this lesson we want students to know that when life gets hard, they shouldn’t ask why

did this happen, but who will I trust in the middle of life's trials. They should know God will never leave or abandon them. God is here and God cares.

- **As a transition from worship to the message show the iGod video provided**

Opening Thoughts

We are continuing our series called iGod. We are basing this series off the iPod theme that says, "which iPod are you?" The thought behind this is that there are a lot of views out there about who God is. Our culture continues to be fascinated with Jesus and pumps out their own philosophies on who God is. One view people have is that God is at the beach on vacation and is distant from our lives.

- **Check out this video (Show At the Beach video)**

Message Body

The question in this lesson is not "Is there a God?," but for most of us the question is "God are you there?" I have this pain in my life and you seem so silent. I lost a loved one or I lost a friend and how could you allow this to happen? I'm a good person, why did this happen to me? God do you care? Where are you in the midst of my pain and suffering?

Have you ever asked those questions?

In his book *Disappointment with God*, Phillip Yancey tells this story. "Once a friend of mine went swimming in a large lake at dusk. As he was paddling at a leisurely pace about a hundred yards offshore, a freak evening fog rolled in across the water. Suddenly he could see nothing: no horizon, no landmarks, no objects or lights on shore. Because the fog diffused all light, he could not even make out the direction of the setting sun. For thirty minutes he splashed around in panic. He would start off in one direction, lose confidence, and turn ninety degrees to the right. Or left—it made no difference which way he turned. He could feel his heart racing uncontrollably. He would stop and float, trying to conserve energy, and force himself to breathe slower. Then he would blindly strike out again. At last he heard a faint voice calling from shore. He pointed his body toward the sounds and followed them to safety."

Phillip Yancey, 1988. *Disappointment with God*, Zondervan.

Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever wondered "when am I ever going to get out of this mess?" "Will I ever make it through?" Someone else felt this way too. His name was Job.

- **Read Job 1:6 - 2:10**

When all these troubles and terrible things started to happen to Job, the fog rolled into his life. He must have been wondering why these trials were happening to him, but his response through it all was to praise God. Job had a faith like Hebrews 11:1 describes. It says, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." You see, Job believed in the midst of the fog.

God is not going to warn us about when the trials of life are going to happen. However, He is looking at what our response to them will be. His desire is that we reach out to him, yet through

our trials we focus on “Why” they are happening and we miss opportunities to cling to God. So did the disciples.

- **Read John 9:1-5**

It was believed that in back in Bible times those born with diseases or handicaps were the result of sin in that person’s life or the parents’ lives. The disciples want to know “Why” this guy was blind, so they asked Jesus. However, Jesus tells them that neither the parents nor the blind man sinned, but he was born blind so that the work of God would be displayed.

Maybe the question should not be “Why” but “Who” when you go through trials and hurts of life. Jesus said that you will have trouble in this life. In the midst of the fog, who will you trust?

Let me say that again: Maybe the question should not be “Why” but “Who?” Who will you trust in the middle of life’s storms?

I believe when we trust our God, he will be with us. He will comfort us. He will never leave us or abandon us. In the midst of the fog He is there.

I want you to imagine two little old ladies, both in their early eighties. They were old spinsters living in North Dakota. They were not only living in North Dakota, they were living on a farm in North Dakota. It was not only a farm in North Dakota, it was a dumpy farm in North Dakota. It was the dumpiest farm you have ever seen in North Dakota. The chicken coop was falling down. The barn was falling down. The rusted machinery was falling apart, and the old rusted spinsters were falling apart. These were two old spinsters and they were as tough as nails. They had weathered every storm for the past sixty years and they were tough. Well, it so happened that a nephew came to visit them one fall day from the city, and he took out his camera to take a picture of his weather worn aunts, with the barn and the chicken coop and the rusted machinery in the background. The aunts just stood there, straight and stiff for the picture. The nephew took a picture and later sent them a copy. The old aunts just loved the photograph, and they decided to use it for a Christmas card. And at the bottom of the picture, in big bold letters were the words: God is with us in our mess.

May you know of Christ’s love, His forgiveness, and His desire that you know how much He cares for you. You might be hurting, struggling with life, and stressed out to the max. You might feel like your life is a mess.

You might feel betrayed, guilty, trying to handle the loss of a friend or loved one, but you need to know God is with you. He is calling in that still faint voice to come to the shore and out of the fog.

- **Read Deuteronomy 3:1-6**

Don’t ask the question of Why—ask yourself the question Who. Who will you trust in the middle of life’s storms?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What is your favorite place you have been on vacation?
- 2) If you could choose to stay there on vacation for eternity, why would you stay?
- 3) Have you ever asked the questions like: “God are you there?” “I have this pain in my life and you seem so silent.” “I lost a loved one or a friend and how could you allow this to happen?” “Where are you in the midst of my pain?” What was the circumstance?
- 4) What is amazing to you about the life of Job?
- 5) What does that phrase mean to you: “Maybe the question should not be “Why” but “Who?” Who will you trust in the middle of life’s storms?
- 6) Do you feel God is with you in the middle of your life’s messiness? Why or why not?
- 7) Read and discuss Deuteronomy 31:6

PROMOTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK

We have included a picture of an old grandfather on a postcard with the title, “Older than my grandpa” on it. On the back put your youth group name and meeting time. Encourage your students to hand these out to invite their friends.