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***WEEK 2  
TEACHING GUIDE***

BIBLE

John 14:15-21; Mark 10:17-22;

Galatians 5:22-23

BIG IDEA

When you doubt following Jesus is worth it,

look to the Holy Spirit.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY **| Intergalactic Dodgeball**

* Welcome back to *Reasonable Doubt* and to outer space! This is your intergalactic dodgeball league and it's time to see if you've gotten any better at ducking, diving, and dodging your way out of uncertainty.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Use a room that can be completely dark to set up an intergalactic dodgeball universe. Buy or borrow* [*black lights*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/) *that can be used around the perimeter or above the playing area. Buy or borrow* [*neon soft foam dodgeballs*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/)*. Make a playing area with* [*neon blacklight reactive tape*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/)*. Use whatever dodgeball rules you want and have fun! We suggest playing a* [*dramatic song*](https://growcurriculum.org/ELOTimePrologueHDVinylRecording) *like "Time: Prologue" (ELO) or another like it to introduce your teams or team captains.*

QUESTION **|** **Name some people or things you love "to the moon and back."**

* While we're here in outer space, let's talk about the moon. You've heard the phrase, "I love you to the moon and back." Maybe someone read you a book and you heard it there. Or maybe someone in your family says it every time they say goodbye to you.
* When someone says this, what they're saying (besides they love you so much) is there isn't a doubt in their mind when it comes to you.
* **So what about you? Name some people or things you love "to the moon and back."**
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give a few students a chance to respond.*

ACTIVITY **| Impossible Comet Shot**

* So is it pretty safe to say the people or things you love "to the moon and back" are worth a lot to you? Worth your time? Worth your attention? Worth rescuing if, say, a comet were on its way to destroy earth and you just so happened to have a spaceship that could get you safely out of here?
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Before your teaching time, set up an impossible shot contest by placing an Earth-shaped target (like* [*an inflatable Earth*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/)*) somewhere in your space and providing students with comets (like a* [*Nerf Tennis Ball Blaster*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/)*) they'll launch at Earth. Place Earth and your comets far enough apart that it's nearly impossible to hit the target. Offer a big prize (like $20 in cash or a king-sized 100 Grand bar) to anyone who hits the target.*
* That was a pretty impossible challenge, but what do you think — considering the prize that was at stake, **was it worth it?**

DISCUSSION

* + **Unpopular opinion: what's something that's really trendy but totally not worth the time or money?**
  + **Have you ever given up on something because you decided it wasn't worth it? Tell us about it!**

STORY **| Talk about a time you decided something wasn't worth it.**

* Have you ever given up on something because you came to believe it wasn't worth it?
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell a story from your own life (or ask a volunteer or student to tell a story) about something you spent a lot of time or energy doing, but it became clear your investment wasn't worth it. Maybe you saved up your money for something you really wanted but then realized it wasn't what you thought it would be, or you practiced a skill or tried something new, but doubted it was going to help you so you gave up too soon. Share why you came to believe it wasn't worth it and if you still agree that it wasn't.*
* When we decide something isn't worth our time, effort, or energy, there's usually a reason.
  + Sometimes it only takes a moment to realize it.
  + Sometimes it takes days, weeks, months, or years to realize it.
  + Either way, there's usually a sudden conflict or a slow build-up that convinces us something isn't right.
* It's not so bad when the thing you decide isn't "worth it" is learning to play the piccolo or saving up for that new video game. But what about when the thing we fear isn't "worth it" is a lot more personal?
  + What if it's a relationship that has been important to you?
  + What if it's something that has been part of your identity for as long as you can remember?
  + What if it's something you've always believed?
  + What if following Jesus is the thing you're worried isn't worth it?

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

OBJECT LESSON **| Space Alarm Clock**

* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Hold up a* [*space alarm clock*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/) *(or whatever alarm you have available) and make it ring.*
* Who thinks alarm clocks are actually worth it? Do you wake up when you hear them? Does your brain turn alarm sounds into soothing ambient noise that mysteriously keeps you sleeping longer?
  + Who has alarm clock immunity? (Can't hear it, see it, or sense it at all?
  + Who needs a couple of "snooze" attempts to drag you out of bed?
  + Who needs an actual human on earth to turn off your alarm and wake you up?
* Okay, so pretty much all of us doubt our wake-up habits. But just because you're struggling to figure this out doesn't mean you won't figure it out eventually. It's kind of the same when it comes to our relationship with Jesus.
* If we're being super honest with each other (and I hope we are) we'd all probably confess that there heen times when we've wondered if following Jesus is worth it.
  + When you're getting to know who Jesus is, you may have had some doubts about him or your ability to follow him.
  + But just like this situation with alarm clocks, it's reasonable to doubt, but not-so-reasonable to stop there.
* Instead of giving up, we can look for help instead.

SCRIPTURE **| Mark 10:17-22**

* If you've ever had a doubt or question about God, you're not alone. Since the beginning of creation, people have doubted.
  + Adam and Eve wished they understood God's guidelines.
  + Moses questioned if God could really use him to lead the people of Israel out of slavery.
  + Even Jesus' disciples asked repetitive questions and voiced their confusion. Jesus’ friends began to doubt him not because of what they knew about him, but because of what they *didn’t* know about him.
* In the Bible, we read a lot of stories about people who decided following Jesus really was worth it. These people dedicated their whole lives (and some even gave their lives) to following him. But we also have to acknowledge that not everyone who encountered Jesus decided following him was worth it.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read Mark 10:17-22.*
* The rich man in the story wanted to know what he needed to do to experience eternal life. If there was a list of correct ways to live, this man wanted to check off everything.
  + Why? Well, the Jewish people of his day were committed to following a lot of laws. There were laws found in the Old Testament Scriptures, plus tons of rules humans made up too.
  + These weren't like our governments' laws, but were rules about things like how to eat, when to work, or who not to talk to. There were so many laws that it was really difficult for people to keep them all of the time.
  + But when Jesus interacted with the man, he didn’t offer a checklist of tasks to complete, like the man wanted. Instead, Jesus noticed the man's motives and gave him the answer he actually needed.
* Jesus' response can be summed up like this: "God doesn't want you to give only the things that are easy for you to give. You're being asked to give everything to love God and others."
  + See, Jesus didn't want the man's money. Jesus wanted his commitment. Jesus could see that the young ruler trusted his money more than he trusted in God.
  + But the man wasn't willing to go that far. He was looking to follow God in a way that was convenient for him — not in a way that would require his whole heart.
  + So he walked away sad. Jesus' invitation to let go and put others first simply wasn't worth it.
* This story has a strange ending, doesn't it? We expect Jesus to run after this rich kid! But Jesus doesn't force us to follow him — he simply invites us.
  + Did this man ever change his mind? Did he ever decide following Jesus really was worth it, even if it cost him the things he valued most? We don't know.
  + But here's what we do know: some time after this moment happened, Jesus was killed, rose from the dead, and proved he was exactly who he always said he was. Because Jesus conquered sin and death forever, he is absolutely worth following.

DISCUSSION

* + **What do you think people might say are the most challenging parts of following Jesus? Which of those challenges do you think are reasonable and why?**
  + **\* Think about the story of the rich man who walked away from Jesus. What stood out to you, surprised you, or confused you about that story and why?**
  + **\* Now think about the disciples who didn't walk away. What challenges did they face and why do you think they decided following Jesus was worth it?**

SCRIPTURE **| John 14:15-21**

* So what about the people who decided Jesus really was worth following, even when it was difficult or frightening? Let's take a look at Jesus' disciples and see what led them to make a different decision.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:***Read John 14:15-21.*
* The disciples found out Jesus was going away and didn't know what to make of it. They couldn't figure out what was going to happen next and what their lives would look like without Jesus. The doubt began to grow and the questions got scary.
  + But Jesus knew how they were feeling. When a bunch of them were wondering if following him was worth it, Jesus said, "Don't give up!"
  + Jesus was promising to send his disciples help through his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. And the same spirit Jesus promised his disciples is available to every one of us.
* The way Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit is interesting.
  + Jesus called the Holy Spirit a "Counselor," someone always ready to guide and help.
  + Jesus called the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of truth," someone who guides us away from things that could hurt us or aren't right.
  + Jesus described the Holy Spirit as a "Comforter," or someone who walks closely with you.
* So when you start feeling doubt and wondering if following Jesus is worth all the effort, don't get upset at yourself for asking a reasonable question. Like Jesus' disciples, or even that rich man who turned away from Jesus, you too may sometimes wonder if following Jesus is worth it.
  + Is it worth your discomfort?
  + Your commitment?
  + Your sacrifices?
  + Your whole heart?
* Jesus knew we'd struggle with doubt sometimes, but that's why he send his Spirit to provide comfort, wisdom, and help. So **when you doubt following Jesus is worth it,** don't give up. **Look to the Holy Spirit.**

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

IMAGE **| Astronaut Memorial Plaque**

* Space travel isn't exactly the safest profession out there, but lots of people would tell you it's still worth it.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Show an image of an Astronauts Memorial Plaque* [*like this one*](https://growcurriculum.org/FKSpaceCenterNASAAstronautsMemorialPlaque)*. This image is free for you to use under the Creative Commons license.*
* As of 2021, 31 astronauts worldwide have tragically died either during a mission or training for a mission. With statistics like that, it would be easy for astronauts everywhere to decide that space missions simply aren't worth it.
* So why are people still becoming astronauts? Why did a total of 574 people (so far) decide to put their lives on the line and go to outer space?

VIDEO **| Lagoon Nebula**

* Maybe it's because those astronauts decided it was worth the risk to . . .
  + Learn things that challenged them.
  + Experience things that helped them grow.
  + Help others — maybe even all of humanity.
  + See things no one has ever seen before, like this nebula that's 4,000 lightyears away from Earth.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video* [*like this one*](https://growcurriculum.org/LagoonNebulaPanAcrossAnAwesomeHubbleView) *of the Lagoon Nebula, captured by the Hubble Telescope.*
* It could be good to get lost in outer space. Especially if you're simply standing on earth looking up, or watching a video like this. Seeing things that are bigger than us inspire wonder and questions.
  + This is the Lagoon Nebula, a 55 light-years-wide and 20 light-years-tall situation. It's three times larger than the Moon.
  + Check out this cloud of glowing interstellar gas. Inside the nebula is a whole outer space party with winds from hot stars, swirling chimneys of gas, and star formations all winding around in an outer space maze that none of us can figure out.
* As you observe this gorgeous impossible-yet-possible place, think about Jesus' invitation to look to him when we doubt God.

DISCUSSION

* + **Who is someone who helps you believe following Jesus really is worth it, and why?**
  + **\* On a scale of 1-5, how much do you believe (on a typical day) that following Jesus is worth it? Why do you say that?**
  + **\* What is your biggest obstacle or hesitation in believing following Jesus is worth it? What's something that might help you believe it more strongly?**

VIDEO **| Space Triangle Stars**

* Jesus wasn't afraid of the disciples' doubts, even when they seemed massive and difficult to understand. Instead he welcomed their doubts and gave them his Spirit to guide them through their questions.
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As a teaching tool, play a short clip from a video like* [*like this one*](https://growcurriculum.org/GalacticMashupGeneratesTriangularShapedStarBirthingFrenzySeeHubbleImagery) *explaining how space triangle stars are formed.*
* Sometimes in space, gravity creates an epic tug-of-war between galaxies. These "space triangles" create a rich space where new stars can form.
  + In a similar way, our questions about God can feel like a tense tug-of-war between doubt and faith. Sometimes that tension will feel like it's not worth it.
  + But that place of tension doesn't have to be a place of destruction. It can actually be a place where new things can be born.

DISCUSSION

* + **Read Galatians 5:22-23. When following Jesus gets challenging, what are some ways the Holy Spirit could help us grow?**
  + **This week, what's one way you need the Holy Spirit's help? How can we pray for you?**

**﻿**REFLECTION **| Gravity Prayers**

* If you're currently wondering if Jesus is worth it, I wonder new thing you think could be born (with the Holy Spirit's help) in this place of tension you're currently in?
* And if you're already convinced following Jesus is worth it, I wonder why you'd say that's true?
* **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Give everyone a piece of black construction paper and colorful chalk, chalk pens, or* [*gel pens*](https://growcurriculum.org/growstudents-reasonabledoubt-amazon/). *Invite students to draw stars on the paper as they either respond to that question or write one reason why following Jesus is worth it.*
* When following Jesus got difficult for his disciples, Jesus promised to send his Spirit. And today, Jesus promises the same thing to you. If you have questions, don't give up. Help is available. **When you doubt following Jesus is worth it, look to the Holy Spirit.**