CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Jesus Influencers

Lesson 2: Jesus Influencers Are Jesus Followers

About This Lesson

Each day, we make choices that show who we follow. Through social media, young people follow many influencers and might have many followers of their own accounts. It is one thing to say you follow someone, but in reality, you just observe them from afar. When it comes to Jesus, just observing isn't enough. Each person must make a choice to place Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Key Takeaway: Follow Jesus, and then influence others to follow Him.

Key Verse: Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."*

Teaching Outline:

I. FIRST, BE A JESUS FOLLOWER, THEN BE AN INFLUENCER/LEADER

Matthew 16:24-26 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. [25] For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. [26] For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

A. What does it mean to be a disciple? Someone who follows after Jesus!
   1. As a disciple, your primary aim is to be like Jesus and conform to Him—not to this world.

II. CONFORM TO JESUS! HIS MOLD NEVER CHANGES

A. What does it mean to conform? It means to bend and fit into a mold.
   1. Jesus doesn't fit into a mold. His Word can't be bent.

2. On a regular basis, you need to look at Jesus, look at the Word, and conform to it.

B. The world is constantly changing the mold to fit into. Culture is constantly changing. Technology is constantly changing. The majority of people's view of "normal" or "right/wrong" (ethics) is constantly changing.

C. Jesus doesn't change, and the Bible doesn't change. In order to be a disciple and to live for God, you have to conform to Him!
Romans 12:1–2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. [2]And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

1. If you are not being transformed or renewing your mind, you are probably conforming to things that you shouldn't be.

D. When you are following Jesus, you are going to prove and walk out the will of God that is good, acceptable, and perfect. There is only one way to be perfect in God's eyes—be a follower of Jesus!

III. JESUS BRINGS OUT YOUR TRUE UNIQUENESS

A. When you follow the world, you won't be unique. You'll just be a copy. When you follow Jesus, you will be truly unique.
Romans 12:3–8 *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. [4]For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, [5]so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. [6]Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; [7]or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; [8]he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

B. God is the best Creator! When you follow Jesus, you will discover your unique purpose and giftings.

Bottom Line:
Following the world sets me up for failure and disaster in life. Following Jesus sets me up for victory and to discover my God-given unique purpose and giftings.

Small Group Time:

1. There are scriptural examples of people who were open to Jesus, but did not take the crucial step to be Jesus' followers.
John 3:1–3 *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.* [2] *This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."* [3] *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
Nicodemus came to Jesus at night because he didn't want to be seen by other people as being open to Jesus. Peer pressure isn't anything new. Even Nicodemus, a religious leader, was worried about what the other religious leaders might think or say.

- Who seems open to Jesus but hasn't committed to follow Him? (maybe someone you know personally, maybe someone famous, or maybe someone in scripture)

2. Many people accept Jesus's teaching and may agree with important theological principles, but they do not make Jesus their personal Lord and follow Him.
Matthew 7:21–23 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.* [22] *Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'* [23] *And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

- What is the difference between acknowledging that Jesus is Lord versus making Him your personal Lord and Savior? (It's not just calling Him Lord, you have to know Him.)
- What does it mean for Jesus to be your personal Lord and Savior?

Declaration:
"When I follow Jesus, I can be a powerful Jesus influencer. I choose to follow Jesus and use my unique purpose and giftings to help people want to know Jesus and follow Him."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** How will you live this week so that people know you follow Jesus?
- **Pray:** Have you made Jesus your Lord and Savior? If not, why not do that today? If you have, pray for someone you know who needs to make Jesus their Lord and Savior.
- **Read:** Read Matthew 19:16–22 about the rich young ruler who called Jesus a Good Teacher but not Lord. Notice that he thought his own good works could earn eternal life, but ultimately left Jesus sad and chose not to follow Him. What similarities or differences do you see in his reaction to Jesus and your reaction?
- **Live It:** Choose something God has gifted you with or made you unique in an area and use that this week to share about Jesus to help someone make a commitment to make Jesus their Lord and Savior.
- **Create:** Write down who influenced you to make Jesus your Lord and Savior. Then check with that person to find out who influenced them. See how far back you can trace the chain of who influenced who.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: Fifty years from now, who do you expect to be influencing? What will you be influencing them about?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Engage the young people to ask "yes" and "no" questions to figure out who Mordecai Ham influenced. Mordecai Ham was a traveling evangelist who held tent rallies. One night, a young man who was planning on a life in baseball and was far away from God attended and gave his life to Jesus that night—Billy Graham. Mordecai was a Jesus influencer who dramatically impacted the world by following Jesus and using his gift of evangelism to influence Billy to dedicate His life to following Jesus.

Opening Affirmation: "The Bible is my guidebook. I follow what the Word says. I am a Jesus influencer. Others are watching, and I want them to see Jesus in me!"

Giving Time: Ephesians 3:20–21 *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,* [21] *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*

The challenge is to think multigenerational with your giving. When the youth begin a habit of giving back to God, they are influencing their future children and grandchildren to be blessed!

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: We may not always see the fruit of who we influence to follow Jesus. Encourage the young people to research other stories of Jesus influencers, like Mordecai Ham, who influenced Billy Graham. Invite your pastor or other leaders to share who influenced them.

Biblical Worldview: To have a biblical worldview, you must accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. When you become a true follower of Jesus—not just an observer—your life choices should reflect that you are a Christ follower who follows what the Bible says. Talk about some of the aspects of the Bible that most people agree with, such as the Ten Commandments. People often like the morality taught in the Bible, but don't want to make the lifestyle changes needed to call Jesus their Lord and Savior. Have the young people pair up and pray for their friends and family members who haven't yet accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Outreach/Missions: Muslims believe that Jesus was a good, moral teacher, not the Son of God who died to pay the price of all sin. Take time to pray for any Muslims you know in your community or who your church's missionaries work with.