CHARIS YOUTH

Series: Be Real

Lesson 1: Stand for Truth in a Deceptive World

About This Lesson

This series will help young people become aware that God's truth is being attacked, subtly and directly. This lesson establishes the importance of knowing Jesus through a relationship with Him and reading the Bible to know the truth so they can shine the light on deception.

Key Takeaway: We can know truth because God gave us His Word, and we need to shine our light of truth to expose deception.

Key Verse: Colossians 2:6–7 *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [7]rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.*

Teaching Outline:

I. DON'T BE CATFISHED

Colossians 2:6–10 *As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [7]rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. [8] Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. [9] For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; [10] and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.*

A. Verse 6: "Walk in Him" means you need to have a personal relationship with Him!

B. Verse 7: "Established in the faith" means your faith is built upon Jesus! Be rooted and consistent!

1. "As you have been taught," you need to be taught the Word!
2. "With thanksgiving" means look at everything God has blessed and given you!
    a. The enemy tries to deceive people by making them focus on lack, which leads to unthankfulness, confusion, and ultimately, to sin.

C. Verse 8: "Don't be cheated!" means don't be catfished! You're being cheated out of the truth through "philosophy and empty deceit through traditions of man"—what people think versus what God thinks. God determines truth!
    1. "Basic principles of this world" means the world believes truth is relative. Don't fall for the lies: It's your truth. If you think it's right, it's right. If the majority are okay with it, it's okay. If you think it feels right, go for it.

D. Verses 9–10: Remember, "you are complete in Jesus!" Thanks to Jesus, you have more than enough! He will take care of you! Keep living for Him!
    1. Jesus is all-sufficient, all-powerful, and has all authority!
    2. Because He is enough, and He loves you—you are enough! You are not lacking!

II. THREE WAYS THE ENEMY DISTORTS THE TRUTH

A. BREAKING: taking a piece of truth and presenting it out of context. A half-truth is not the truth. It's a lie and it is deceptive.
    1. Someone can take a scripture out of context and present it as truth, doing so deceptively.
    2. Satan tried to tempt Jesus this way.

        Luke 4:3–4 *And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."*

        4 But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' "
        a. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3: *"man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD."*
    3. The entirety of the Bible is essential!

B. BLENDING: saying that everything is true. Truth is not absolute; it is relative.

1. Universalism believes everyone has their truth and their way, and as long as they live a good life, they will go to Heaven. You can take bits and pieces of various religions and philosophies to make your own beliefs. For example, in an Icelandic Church, they pray "to the queer God…"
2. Coexist philosophy doesn't work with Jesus! Everything He said was ABSOLUTE!

   John 14:6 Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

C. BENDING: compromise.

1. The truth can't bend. Jesus can't fit into the world's way of thinking. You have to fit into Jesus's way! You have to fit into His way of thinking and His Word!
2. Jesus to the church at Ephesus in Revelation 2:6, "But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."
   a. Nicolaitan doctrine was a doctrine of compromise! They encouraged Christians to keep going to a pagan temple. Just bend a little, you can worship idols and worship Jesus.

III. THREE WAYS NOT TO BE DECEIVED AND KEEP STANDING IN TRUTH!

A. Believe the entirety of the Word!
Psalm 119:9–11 *BETH. How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. [10] With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! [11] Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

1. You cannot just pick bits and pieces of God's Word you like. You can't form your own doctrine or truth based on your feelings. Your feelings, attitude, and way of life must conform to the Word of God.

B. Build relationships with people of faith.
Hebrews 6:11-12 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

1. When you hang around mature believers, you will grow faster and stronger by imitating and listening to them.

C. Know Jesus personally, not just 2nd hand.

1. When you know Jesus for yourself, you won't fall for a "catfished" version of God.
   a. Common "catfish" versions of God: He doesn't really care about you, and Bad things, such as sickness, broken-heartedness, and depression, come from God because He's trying to teach you something.
   b. The only way to know God is to know Jesus. He is the exact image of the Father!

      Colossians 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

IV. KEEP SHINING LIGHT IS STRONGER THAN THE DARKNESS AND DECEPTION

Colossians 1:13 *He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.*

A. If you want to know if something is real, hold it up to the light!

B. There are many lies out there; sometimes they can seem overwhelming. But the truth is always stronger than a lie.
   1. Remember that you have been delivered from the power of darkness. You have been redeemed! You are forgiven!
   2. Jesus is the image of the invisible God! If you want to know what God looks like—look at Jesus. If you want to know what God thinks—look at what Jesus said. If you want to know God's heart—look at what Jesus did.

C. God's Word is the light.

Psalm 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*

1. Hold things up to the Word of God to see if it is true.
2. The Word of God never changes! It's eternal! It's spirit and it's life!
3. God has given us His Word because we need direction! We need to see where we are going! You don't have to stumble and struggle through life constantly. You don't have to feel lost and have no sense of direction constantly.

4. The Bible will point you in the right direction for major decisions, such as career, relationships, or how to live your life.

D. Jesus always shines in the darkness.

John 8:12 *Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

1. When you choose to follow Jesus and choose to believe the Bible, the Holy Spirit will lead you. You won't walk in darkness or deception. He will keep leading you to the truth, freedom, and life!

CONCLUSION: John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. God wants you to know Him. He wants to be a part of your life. It starts with saying "yes" to Jesus. "Yes, I will follow you! Yes, I believe and want to live for you." (Lead the group in a salvation prayer.)

Bottom Line:
When you know Jesus for yourself, you will know the truth and won't fall for a "catfished" version of God.

Small Group Time:

1. Consider the three ways not to be deceived and keep standing in truth: believe the entirety of the Word, build relationships with people of faith, and know Jesus personally, not just 2nd hand.

- What is one promise from the Bible or a favorite verse you have chosen to believe in no matter what?
- Who do you look up to and consider a role model for your faith? (maybe a parent, a favorite preacher, a favorite Christian athlete/musician/influencer)
- On a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate your relationship with Jesus? Do you know about Him or have a real, personal relationship with Him? (Take this opportunity to pray for them to keep growing in the abundant, life-giving relationship that comes from knowing Jesus!)

2. Catfishing is creating a fake identity to deceive someone online. Young people are vulnerable when they feel lonely, like they don't fit in with their peers, when depressed, have poor self-image, or crave attention. Ask the group to share any experiences they, or someone they know, have had with catfishing online.
    - What red flags alert you to catfishing online?
    - What red flags alert you to a catfished version of God?

3. As we follow Jesus, we carry His light wherever we go!

Matthew 5:14–16 *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.* [15] *Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.* [16] *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

- Is there a place where you feel you are especially supposed to shine the light of Jesus? (maybe school, home, work, or something you will do in the future?)
- Who shines the light of Jesus in your life? Is there someone that God brought into your life to shine a light, be an encouragement, and help you?

Declaration:

"I know Jesus and will stand for the truth. I will carry His light wherever I go."

Youth Weekly Journal:

Handout, Email, or Download

- **Question:** What deceptions are trying to influence you, and what truth will you stand on?
- **Pray:** Ask God to give you opportunities to stand for truth this week.
- **Read:** Each day this week, read Colossians 2:6–10 as a reminder of the truth you carry and the deception that tries to influence you away from the truth.
- **Live It:** This week, set a goal to speak God's truth into your conversations at home and school. The more you practice, the better you'll become!
- **Create:** Write an online profile for God. Include truths from the Bible about Him and His true nature. You won't fall for a fake when you know the truth and the True God.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

Icebreaker Question: What new holiday would you like to see created, and why?

Opening Activity Suggestion: Divide into small groups and give 5 minutes for each group to create a "perfect youth leader" online profile. Share the profiles and talk about how when something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Remind the young people that the Holy Spirit can help them discern real and fake things.

Opening Affirmation: "I choose to stand firm in a world of deception. I will grow as a believer who sees things the way God sees them."

Giving Time: Philippians 4:15 *Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.*

The Philippian church partnered with Paul. They believed what he said and gave to help him do God's work. Their partnership meant that people received the Gospel message through Paul and their funding, so they shared in the harvest and got blessings from that partnership. When you give to a ministry, you share in the blessings and harvest of that ministry.

BEYOND – ADDITIONAL APPLICATION FOR CHURCH OR HOME

Challenge: This week, watch for an example of breaking, blending, or bending God's truth. Pay attention to the news, social media, conversations at school, television, or movies that distort God's Word or create "new" truth. Share the examples with the group next week.

Biblical Worldview: When the youth say they have a biblical worldview, they need to know what the Bible says to recognize a catfished version of God. Knowing who God is and the significance of His names and characteristics will help young people correct false views about God. The truth they know will set them free (John 8:32). The Holy Spirit will also help them discern truth and share it.

Outreach/Missions: Many missionaries work with people who have a catfished version of God. The people might have heard something about God, but it gets mixed with culture or other religions. When people have God's Word in their language, they can read about the true nature of God and know His truth. Spend time praying for your church's missionaries and people translating the Bible.