



# FOCUS

## LEADER GUIDE

**Unit 11:** Focus

**Lesson 1:** Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

# OVERVIEW

## UNIT OVERVIEW

### Lesson 1: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus

**DISCIPLINE:** Focus on Jesus

**KEY VERSES:** Hebrews 12:1-3

### Lesson 3: Everything That Hinders

**DISCIPLINE:** Throw Off Everything That Hinders

**KEY VERSES:** Heb. 12:1b-2a, Col. 3:1-3, Matt. 6:31-33

### Lesson 2: Throwing Off Sin

**DISCIPLINE:** Learn to Fight Sin

**KEY VERSES:** Heb. 12:1b-2a, 1 Cor.10:12-13, Rom. 6:1-2,

### Lesson 4: Running with Perseverance

**DISCIPLINE:** Daily Faithfulness

**KEY VERSES:** Heb. 12:1b-2a, James 1:2-4, Matt. 21:28-31

## LESSON 1 OVERVIEW

**Preteens live in a world full of distractions competing for their attention.**

This lesson kicks off the Focus series, where preteens explore what it means to fix their eyes on Jesus and how that focus transforms their lives. Holiness—being set apart for God—begins by focusing on the perfect example of Jesus. Through engaging activities and reflection, preteens will see how distractions can pull their attention away from what truly matters but also how staying focused on Jesus leads to real change.

This lesson introduces preteens to the idea that focusing on Jesus is not about perfection but about direction. Jesus is the one who changes and transforms us as we draw closer to him. This focus helps them develop habits and a mindset that aligns their hearts with God's will. By creating visual and tangible reminders like a bracelet, preteens can carry the lesson with them throughout their week, reinforcing the call to focus on Jesus despite interruptions.

## LESSON 1 LEADER DEVO

**Read:** Hebrews 12:1-3

This passage in Hebrews reminds us that the Christian life is a race—a long journey that requires perseverance. It's easy to get entangled in distractions, whether it's our own worries, responsibilities, or even the pressures of ministry.

Fixing your eyes on Jesus means making him the center of everything you do. It's not about running the race perfectly; it's about running with perseverance, knowing that Jesus has already run before you. He is your example and the source of your strength.

Take 10 minutes to go on a walk (indoors or outdoors) without your phone or any distractions. As you walk, reflect on the distractions in your life that might be pulling your focus away from Jesus.

- What are those distractions?
- How can you intentionally redirect your focus back to him this week?



# SCHEDULE

## Lesson 1: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus



### 01 WARM-UP

10 min

*Preteens will play an Opening Game and get a brief overview of today's lesson topic.*

**Today's Opening Game:** Focus Challenge



### 02 M.A.P.

10 min

*Preteens will read through a passage of Scripture on their own. They'll consider what stands out to them from the passage and why it stands out to them. They'll also be given time to talk with God about the passage.*

**Today's Passage:** Hebrews 12:1-3



### 03 DISCOVER

20 min

*Preteens will learn about spiritual disciplines that will help them draw closer to God. They'll discover the Biblical basis for these disciplines, the purpose and benefit of these disciplines, and the reasons why Christians have practiced these discipline throughout history.*

**Today's Discovery:** How does focusing on Jesus lead to holiness?



### 04 QUEST

10 min

*Preteens will move into action as they practice different ways that they can grow in their own personal relationship with Jesus.*

**Today's Quest:** Focus on Jesus



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**NOTE:** Highlighted words indicate supplies to prepare. These are also listed in the ADMIN GUIDE.

[Slide 01 Focus]

[Slide 02 Focus Challenge]

[AUDIO 01 Opening Game]

1. Explain that today's Warm-Up game is called Focus Challenge, and it's designed to help us understand the importance of staying focused, even when there are distractions.
2. Call forward two or three players and give each a stack of 20 plastic cups.

[VIDEO 01 Interruptions Timer]

3. When the timer starts, each preteen will try to build the tallest cup tower possible within 2 minutes.
4. Every so often during the video, a beeping noise will play from a 2-minute timer video on the screen. When they hear the noise, they have to stop building and follow quick instructions that you say (for example, "Spin 3 times," "Run to the door and back," or "Clap three times") before continuing their tower.
5. The goal is to keep their focus on building the tower, even with the interruptions.

**LEADER NOTE:** Make sure the instructions you give as interruptions are fun and simple. The goal is for them to be a little silly but not too complicated, so the focus remains on building.

[Slide 03 Focus]

Awesome job, everyone! My constant interruptions made that challenging, didn't they? Sometimes it's difficult to stay focused on what we're doing when someone or something else keeps grabbing our attention.

In life, focus can be tricky, too. There are a lot of things that can distract us, just like those interruptions did in the game. When we really want to accomplish something, it can take a lot of effort to stay focused. Focus is important.

[Slide 04 Focus in Important]







Let's think for a moment about areas in life where focus is important. Can you think of examples? It could be anything from school to sports to even video games.

*(Wait for responses and encourage preteens to share examples. Follow up with "Why is focus important in that area?")*

Those are great examples! Focus is important because it helps us achieve our goals, stay on track, and even enjoy what we're doing more. Without focus, we might miss out on something important or fail to do our best. This month, our StepUp series is called Focus.

### [Slide 05 Focus]

We're going to explore what it means to stay focused on something – or, more specifically, on someone – who is extremely important in every part of our lives. Who do you think I'm talking about? (JESUS). Yes! Today we'll be talking about focusing on Jesus.

Let's get started with M.A.P. time and read a passage that has to do with focusing on Jesus.



**[Slide 06 MAP]**

For M.A.P. time today, we'll be looking at Hebrews 12:1-3. There is so much in this passage of Scripture. In fact, there's so much here that we'll be talking about these verses every week for the next few weeks.

As you're going through M.A.P. time today, pay attention to how the writer of Hebrews describes our faith journey and what it means to keep Jesus at the center of it.

For anybody who's new, we want to make sure you understand what to do during this time. Check out this video which will help you understand what each letter stands for.

**[VIDEO 02 MAP 1]****[Slide 07 MAP Hebrews 12:1-3]****[AUDIO 02 MAP Time]**

*(After the video/instructions, hand out MAP Cards to preteens who didn't bring a Bible. Also, give each preteen a pen/pencil and a highlighter.)*

*Give preteens time to complete M.A.P. as explained in the video. When it looks like most preteens are done, you can have preteens describe what they highlighted and wrote in their Bibles – or on the M.A.P. Cards– either in Small Groups or with the whole group.)*



**[Slide 08 Focus]**

Let's talk about a word we hear a lot but might not completely understand: holy.

**[Slide 09 Holy]**

Who's heard the word holy before? Raise your hand if you've ever thought, "What does that actually mean?"  
*(Pause for responses.)*

The word holy means "set apart from sin." We learned about this idea way back when we did the Set Apart series many months ago.

God is holy because he's perfect, pure, and completely different from anything or anyone else. Think about it: there's nothing else in the world like God—he's in a class of his own.

Now, here's something amazing: God invites you and me to be holy, too! In the Bible, he says, "Be holy, because I am holy." Let's do a quick "holy echo." When I say, "Be holy," you say, "because I am holy." Ready?

**[Slide 10 Chant Part 1]**

*(Call and response with the group a couple of times: "Be holy!" "Because I am holy!")*

Awesome! But what does it mean for us to be holy? Does it mean we have to be perfect?

*(Wait for responses, then continue.)*

Being holy means choosing to live differently than most people in the world because we're focused on God. When we focus on Jesus, we start to become more like him. And Jesus is the perfect example of what it means to be holy.

**[Slide 11 Christ Is Our Example]**

Think about that for a minute: Jesus is our example and we're told to follow his example. We all know what it's like to follow somebody else's example. Have any of you ever dressed like, talked like, or acted like someone you admire? Who are some people you look up to and follow their examples?

*(Take a few responses, letting preteens share who they admire and why.)*

Great examples!





Next [Sunday], just for fun, we're going to have a special "Dress Like a Leader Day."

### [Slide 12 Dress Like a Leader]

You can pick any leader you'd like. You could pick your Small Group leader, or [senior pastor's name], or even the President. Next week, when you come to StepUp, follow the example of that leader in the way you dress.

We all have people we look up to, and sometimes we even start to pick up their "vibe" or style. We might start talking like them, dressing like them, or picking up their hobbies. Maybe you have a friend who loves a sports team and wears their gear all the time, or you find yourself using the same phrases or gestures as someone you spend a lot of time with. It's natural to pick up the habits and behaviors of the people we're focused on.

It's the same with Jesus. When we keep our eyes on him, we start to pick up his "accent," his kindness, and his love for people. We begin to act more like him because he's the one we're focused on.

Let's do something together to help us picture this. Stand up, everyone!

### [Slide 13 Picture of the Sun]

Imagine you're a superhero who can fly, and you're flying straight toward the sun! Everybody, hold your hands out in front of you like you're zooming through the air straight toward this sun.

*(Demonstrate for a moment, then continue.)*

Now, as we fly toward the sun, imagine what happens. Does anyone know what would happen if you got really close to the sun?

*(Pause for responses—if someone mentions heat or burning, affirm them!)* Yes! The closer you get, the hotter you'd feel. Eventually, you'd start to feel so much heat, it would change you completely. You'd probably burn up. Basically, you'd become more and more like the sun as you flew toward it!

Think about this, though? What's changing you? Is it your own strength? Or is it the sun? *(Let them answer: the sun.)*

Exactly! The sun is the one doing the work of changing you as you get closer. All you're doing is flying toward it. And in the same way, when we focus on Jesus - the "Son" - and "fly" toward him *(hold up hands superhero-style)*, Jesus is the one who changes us.

We don't have to do it on our own. As we focus on Jesus and move toward him, and he changes us.





Let's all say together, "Focus on the Son, be changed by the Son." Ready?

**[Slide 14 Chant b]**

*(Lead the group in saying, "Focus on the Son, be changed by the Son.")* Now, let's bring our chant all together.

**[Slide 15 Full Chant]**

Let's all stand up and say our whole chant together. I'll say the words in black. You say the words in red. Ready.

**"Be holy," "because I am holy."  
"Focus on the Son," "be changed by the Son!"**

*(Repeat the chant before continuing.)* Great job. You can have a seat.

Our lives as Christians will look different from the world around us—not because we're better than anyone, but because we're focused on something different. The world might chase after things that don't last, but we Christians are focused on Jesus, who is forever. When we do that, he changes us to become more like him...holy.

Who can think of an example of somebody you know who's followed Jesus' example and demonstrated holiness? Maybe it's somebody at home, at school, or here at church. Think about it for a moment and raise your hand when you have an example in mind. Who have you seen act like Jesus. *(Give preteens a moment to think about this. Then call on a few preteens to share their answers.)*

Being a Christian is all about focusing on Jesus, and we can think of great examples of people who've done that and been changed by Jesus to become more like him. However, there's a problem that we all encounter. It's the reason why we don't focus on Jesus at all times, even if we know it's the best way to live. Who can tell me what that problem is? *(Take responses. They'll probably say, "sin," so press them for more by asking, "Yes, and how does that make it difficult to focus on Jesus?")*

We live in a world that's full of other things that can become a distraction from our focus on Jesus. Let me ask you this: What are some things, besides sin, that distract people from focusing on Jesus? *(Allow preteens to share distractions they experience, like social media, video games, or other interests.)*

There are real distractions all around that can pull our focus off of Jesus. When we choose to focus on Jesus, though, those distractions start to lose their power over us. We start to experience real change because *(hold up arms like you're flying superhero style toward the sun)* we're letting Jesus work in our lives and change us to become like him; to become holy.



**[Slide 16 Focus]**

This month during our Focus Series, we're going to look at different parts of the Hebrews 12:1-2, that passage you read during M.A.P. time. We'll see how this passage can help us pursue a life of holiness; a life where we're focused on the one whose changing us to become more and more like him: Jesus. We'll also practice letting go of sins and other distractions that take our focus off of Jesus.

Today's lesson was focused on just 5 words from Hebrews 12. Here they are:

**[Slide 17 Fixing our eyes on Jesus]**

*(Read the slide.)* Say that with me. (FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS.)

Jesus is our perfect example, and by keeping our eyes on him, we're taking the first steps toward a life of holiness. We're going to practice doing that right now for today's Quest time.



**[Slide 18 Quest | Focus on Jesus]**

Earlier today, we played a game where we tried to stack cups as high as possible while dealing with all sorts of distractions. The main goal was to build a tall tower, but it was tough to focus with all the interruptions!

The same thing happens in life. Growing closer to Jesus is the main thing, but distractions come up all the time—school, friends, sports, worries, social media, video games, and so much more. All of these things can be good, but when they pull our focus away from Jesus, they can keep us from really growing close to him.

Today, we're going to make something simple that will help remind us to refocus on Jesus whenever we get distracted. You're each going to create a bracelet that you can wear this week. Every time you see it or feel it on your wrist, let it remind you to keep your eyes on Jesus.

**LEADER NOTE:** Hand out string and beads (or another **bracelet-making material**). If you can, provide beads or charms with symbols, crosses, or initials that can represent Jesus to reinforce the message.

**Here's what to do:**

1. Take a piece of string and choose some beads that remind you of Jesus—maybe a bead that has a special meaning or a color that reminds you of forgiveness, peace, love, or strength.
2. As you add each bead, think of a way you can focus on Jesus, even when life feels busy or distracting. It could be through praying, reading a verse, or even just saying a quick “thank you” to Jesus.
3. When you're done, tie the bracelet on your wrist.

As you finish your bracelet, show a leader and explain what beads you chose and why. As you go through this week, keep your bracelet on as a reminder that Jesus is the main thing.

*(After everybody has had a chance to complete the activity, bring everybody together to wrap up today's service.)*

**[Slide 19 Focus]**

Every time you look at it or feel it, let it remind you to refocus on him. And if you find yourself getting distracted, take a moment to pause, remember what's most important, and turn your focus back to Jesus. This week, let's commit to keeping Jesus in focus. Remember, the more we fix our eyes on Jesus, the more he shapes us into who we're meant to be!

*(Pray and dismiss.)*





# FOCUS

## ADMIN GUIDE

**Unit 11:** Focus

**Lesson 1:** Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus



# SUPPLIES

## Lesson 1: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus



### 01 WARM-UP

10 min

- 60 plastic cups



### 02 M.A.P.

10 min

- Highlighters for each preteen
- Pens for each preteen
- **MAP Card** for each preteen (*copy on cardstock*)



### 03 DISCOVER

20 min

- Bible



### 04 QUEST

10 min

- Bracelet-making supplies (*string, scissors, beads or charms with symbols, crosses, or initials that can represent Jesus to reinforce the message.*)

**NOTE:** Supplies on this page that are written in a **bold font** can be found in the *Printables* Section.

**NOTE:** Within the leader guide, supplies are **highlighted** so you can understand how they'll be used and prepare accordingly.



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## Lesson 1: Fixing Our Eyes on Jesus



## MAP Card (Hebrews 12:1-3)

**1** **imagine** *what could be*

A huge flood of waterfalls is an amazing sight, but let us imagine that you are standing on the edge of one. You can see the water rushing down the face of the rock, but you cannot see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom.

**M.A.P.**

## Hebrews 12:1-3

**2** **How** *does this happen?*

There are two ways that this can happen. The first way is that the water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The second way is that the water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom.

**1** **imagine** *what could be*

A huge flood of waterfalls is an amazing sight, but let us imagine that you are standing on the edge of one. You can see the water rushing down the face of the rock, but you cannot see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom.

**M.A.P.**

## Hebrews 12:1-3

**2** **How** *does this happen?*

There are two ways that this can happen. The first way is that the water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The second way is that the water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom. The water is so turbulent that it is impossible to see the bottom.

**1** Highlight what stands out for **Me.**

## Hebrews 12:1-3

**2** How does what I highlighted **Affect** me?

A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. And let us keep on running the race marked out for us. Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the one who started this journey of faith. And he is the one who completes the journey of faith. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He made it through these attacks by sinners. So think about him. Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope.

**M.A.P.**

**3** **Pray** about what you highlighted.

**1** Highlight what stands out for **Me.**

## Hebrews 12:1-3

**2** How does what I highlighted **Affect** me?

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**M.A.P.**

**3** **Pray** about what you highlighted.