

Merge Kids Camp Small Group

For Leaders:

Each lesson is a good amount of material. The best way to get the most out of it and serve the kids in your group is to read through all of the material, highlight things you know you want to cover, and make specific notes for your group.

Day 2 Overview: The Dampened Echo

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:23, Colossians 1:13-14

Supplies: Bible, paper, markers, a sheet of flat foil

Main Point: Sin keeps us from echoing God, but Jesus removes our sin and restores us so we can live for Him.

Challenge: What is keeping you from echoing God? Have you trusted Jesus to forgive your sin and restore your relationship with God?

Day 3 Overview: What Are You Echoing?

Scripture: Exodus 34:29-35, Acts 2:1-4, 14, 36-41

Supplies: Bible, Mirror or reflective object

Main Point: Jesus changes people so their lives echo Him to the world.

Challenge: What is your life echoing? Does your life point others toward Jesus?

If you have kids who love to read aloud, have them look up the passages and read them.



Day 2 Small Group Lesson

Title: The Dampened Echo

Bible Passage: Genesis 1:26-27, Romans 3:23, Colossians 1:13-14

Main Idea: Sin keeps us from reflecting and echoing God, but Jesus removes our sin and restores us so we can live for Him.

Icebreaker: Echo Challenge (About 10 minutes)

Supplies: Empty room, hallway, or space where an echo may happen.

(Optional: play a clip on a phone or tablet of Jim Carrey's Grinch echo scene)

Say: Have you ever shouted into a canyon, gym, tunnel, or empty room and heard your voice come back to you? (Allow kids to answer.)

Does anyone know what that is? (Echo)

Do you know how an echo happens? (Allow them to respond.)

An echo happens when sound waves bounce off a surface and come back to you.

(Attempt to create an echo in your space by having the kids shout short phrases like "Hello," "God is good," and/or "Merge Camp rocks!" If an actual echo is not possible, have the group repeat the phrase together as an "echo.")

Ask: What makes it hard to hear an echo clearly? (Allow responses)

Say: Noise, furniture, carpet, people talking, and other things can stop or weaken the echo. The more stuff in the way, the harder it is for the sound to bounce back clearly.

Today, we're going to talk about how God created people to echo and reflect Him to the world. But sin gets in the way and keeps us from doing that clearly. The good news is that Jesus removes sin, restores us, and empowers us to echo God.

We Were Made to Reflect God: (About 20-25 minutes)

Have everyone turn to Genesis 1 in their Bibles. Read Genesis 1:26-27.

Ask: What does it mean that humans were created in God's image?

Say: Being created in God's image does not mean we physically look like God. It means that humans were specially created to reflect God's character and represent Him in the world. God made people to love, create, care for others, tell the truth, show kindness, and worship Him.

You can think about it like a mirror reflecting light or an echo repeating a sound. God designed us to reflect His goodness and echo His truth.

Ask: Do people always reflect God perfectly? Why or why not? (Allow responses)

Say: People don't always reflect God perfectly. Something happened that damaged God's good and perfect creation. Sin entered the world when people distrusted and disobeyed God.

Read Romans 3:23.

Ask: According to this verse, who has sinned? (Everyone)

Ask: What does sin do to our relationship with God?

Object Lesson:

Supplies: Sheet of foil, Marker

Hold up the smooth, shiny sheet of foil.

Say: This shiny flat sheet of foil represents us. We are created in God's image to reflect Him. Like the smooth foil catches the light and reflects a pretty clear image, we are meant to reflect the glory and light of Jesus to the world.

Have a kid look into the foil and describe what they see.

Take the marker and write the word SIN across the shiny foil.

Ball the foil up, then gently open it back. It should be wrinkled and bumpy.

Have the kid look into the foil again and describe what they see.

Say: Sin breaks our relationship with God and dampens our echo of Him. Sin is when we disobey God, reject His ways, or choose ourselves instead of Him. And that separates us from God and damages the way we reflect Him. We still bear His image, but it's crushed and crumpled like this foil because of sin.

Also, this: Imagine trying to hear an echo in a room full of pillows, blankets, loud music, and people shouting. The echo would be weak and hard to hear. Sin works like that. It fills our lives with things that block us from clearly reflecting and echoing God.

Ask: What are some sins or distractions that keep people from reflecting God clearly? (Selfishness, lying, pride, anger, jealousy, greed, fear, and disobedience)

Say: Sin doesn't just make us "mess up" sometimes. Sin breaks our relationship with God, and we cannot fix it ourselves. That's the bad news.

The good news is that God loves us so much and wants a right and good relationship with us.

Read Colossians 1:13-14.

Ask: What has Jesus done for us according to these verses? (Allow responses)

Say: Jesus rescues us from darkness and brings us into God's kingdom. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus forgives sin and restores our relationship with God.

Read Romans 3:23-24.

When someone trusts in Jesus as Savior and King, God forgives their sin and begins changing them from the inside out. The Holy Spirit helps them become more like Jesus.

Jesus restores what sin damaged. That means Christians are now able to reflect God more clearly and echo His love, truth, goodness, and grace to the world.

Today at Merge, you have the opportunity to think seriously about your relationship with God. Have you trusted Jesus to forgive your sin and make you new? Are you reflecting and echoing God with your life?

To help us think about damaged or dampened echoes, we're going to do an activity called Echo Draw.

Activity: Echo Draw

Supplies: Paper and Markers

Have kids pair up. One person will quietly draw a simple shape or picture on a piece of paper without showing their partner. The first person will describe what they drew, and the partner must try to "echo" the drawing by copying only what they hear described.

After a minute or two, compare the drawings.

Ask: Was the copied drawing exactly the same? What made it difficult? What helped you reflect the drawing more clearly?

Say: Sometimes our lives do not reflect God clearly because sin dampens our echo. But when we trust in Jesus and spend time with Him, obey Him, and listen to the Holy Spirit, we echo God more clearly, and our lives reflect Him.

Discuss It:

What does it mean to be made in God's image?

How does sin damage or break our relationship with God?

Why can't we remove sin on our own?

What did Jesus do to rescue us from sin?

Challenge: Think About It

1. Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from clearly reflecting God?
2. Have you trusted Jesus to forgive your sin and make you new?
3. If you follow Jesus, what is one way your life can better echo Him?

Close in Prayer:

Thank God for creating us in His image and loving us even when we sinned against Him. Thank Him for sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and fix our relationship with Him. Ask God to help us reflect His love, truth, and goodness everywhere we go.

****Note About Salvation:**

There is no magical prayer that saves. We do not need to emphasize any action that kids could misunderstand and think they have saved themselves by doing something. Salvation is an act of grace. Kids who appear ready should be encouraged to talk to God themselves to tell Him that they are sorry for their sins and that they trust in Jesus as the King of their lives. Repeat-after-me prayers are

discouraged. If a child cannot talk to God on their own, they may not be ready. We do not want to give kids a false salvation experience.

Also, the phrase “invite Jesus into your heart” is not a great phrase. Kids take things literally, so telling them that a man is going to live in their hearts can scare them, even if they don’t tell you it scared them. Salvation is not about believing a list of facts or inviting/asking Jesus into your heart but about trusting Jesus as Savior, repenting of sin, receiving grace and forgiveness, and following Christ as King (Lord).

Day 3 Small Group Lesson

Title: What Are You Echoing?

Bible Passage: Exodus 34:29-35, Acts 2:1-4, 14, 36-41

Main Idea: Jesus changes people so their lives echo Him to the world.

Icebreaker: Copycat Challenge (About 15 minutes)

Choose one kid to stand at the front and silently do motions while everyone else copies them like a mirror.

They should use motions like: Waving, Jumping, Clapping, Smiling, Folding arms.

Ask: Was it easy or difficult to copy the leader? What happened if you stopped paying attention?

Say: Mirrors reflect whatever is in front of them. Today, we're going to ask an important question: What is your life reflecting or echoing?

Everyone's life points people toward something. Some people echo anger, selfishness, fear, popularity, or pride. Followers of Jesus are called to echo Jesus.

There are many examples in the Bible of people whose lives echoed God after encountering Him. One of them is Moses.

Moses Reflected God's Glory (About 20 minutes)

Have everyone turn to Exodus 34. Read Exodus 34:29-35.

Ask: What happened to Moses after spending time with God on Mount Sinai?

Say: Moses had gone up Mount Sinai to meet with God. He spent time in God's presence receiving the Law and speaking with Him. When Moses came down the

mountain, something amazing had happened. The Bible says that his face was shining because he had been speaking with God.

Ask: Did Moses make his face shine? (No)

Why was his face glowing? (Because he had spent time with God)

Say: Moses didn't create the light. He reflected it and echoed God. Think about the moon. It doesn't make its own light. The moon reflects the light of the sun.

In a similar way, Moses reflected God's glory because he had been with God. The more time Moses spent with God, the more obvious it became to everyone around him.

Ask: What are some ways people today spend time with God? (Reading the Bible, prayer, worship, church gatherings, serving others, talking about God with other believers, listening to worship music, etc.)

Say: Followers of Jesus are called to reflect God's character to the world. The more time we spend with Him, the more our lives echo God's love, kindness, truth, joy, and goodness. And the louder the echo is!

Peter Reflected God's Power

Say: Peter's story shows us that we can echo God's power because of the Holy Spirit inside of all those who follow Jesus.

Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples. When Jesus was arrested, Peter ran in fear and even denied knowing Jesus. (Briefly summarize Luke 22:54-62)

Ask: Why do you think Peter was afraid?

Say: Peter feared what people might do to him for knowing Jesus. But after Jesus rose from the dead and the Holy Spirit came, Peter became a completely different person.

Read Acts 2:1-4, 14, 36-41

Ask: What was Peter doing in these verses?

Say: Peter stood before a huge crowd and boldly proclaimed the good news of Jesus. Thousands of people believed. The same Peter who once hid in fear now courageously told people about Jesus. What changed?

Peter had spent time with Jesus, seen the risen Jesus, and received the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter's life now echoed Jesus.

What is Your Life Echoing?

What did Moses reflect after spending time with God? (God's glory)

What did Peter's life echo before receiving the Holy Spirit? (Fear)

What did Peter reflect after receiving the Holy Spirit? (God's power)

What are some things people your age often reflect or echo?

Say: Everyone's life echoes something. Your words, attitudes, actions, friendships, and choices all point people toward something. If Jesus has saved you, your life should increasingly echo Him.

This doesn't mean Christians are perfect. Jesus changes us over time.

Followers of Jesus should increasingly echo love instead of hate, truth instead of lies, courage instead of fear, kindness instead of selfishness, and worship instead of pride.

The Holy Spirit helps Christians become more like Jesus every day.

Ask: What do you think your life is currently echoing?

Say: Maybe some of you know that your life is not echoing Jesus right now. Maybe you have never trusted Him. Maybe you know Him but have been following the crowd instead of following Jesus. The good news is that Jesus can change you today.

Echoing Jesus takes intentionality. That means you have to decide to do it on purpose and with effort. The Holy Spirit helps you, but it's still something you decide to do. The more time you spend with Jesus, the easier it becomes to reflect Him.

Activity: Whose Reflection?

Supplies: Mirror or reflective object

Hold up a mirror. **Ask:** What does a mirror do? (It reflects)

Have each kid briefly look in the mirror.

Say: A mirror reflects whatever is in front of it. It doesn't create the image itself. Your life is like a mirror. You reflect something every day. The question is: Are you reflecting Jesus?

Point to one side of the room and say, "This side represents Jesus." Point to the other side of the room and say, "This side represents Self."

Give scenarios and have the kids decide whether it reflects Jesus or Self:

Forgiving someone who hurt you

Including someone left out

Lying to avoid trouble

Being selfish with toys or snacks

Helping a lonely kid

Making fun of someone

Telling the truth

After each scenario, ask why it does or doesn't reflect Jesus.

Say: Much like a mirror reflects what's in front of it and does not create the image itself, an echo is a bouncing back of a sound that was created from another source. Jesus is the source for our reflection and our echo. It is His light we shine, His character we echo.

Think About It:

What is your life echoing right now?

Have you trusted Jesus to forgive and change you?

If you follow Jesus, are you spending time with God as Moses did?

What is one area of your life where you need God's help to reflect Jesus more clearly?

What is one way you can echo Jesus this summer, and when you go back to school?

Close in Prayer:

Thank God for changing people through Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to help us reflect Jesus clearly in our words, attitudes, and actions. Pray that our lives would point ourselves and others toward God's love and truth.