

The Wheel Illustration

Topic: Basic Growth Principles

Purpose of this study:

To provide students with a basic understanding of spiritual growth principles.

Motivation for teaching this study:

After the last study your students should be motivated to draw from the new well and live in the power of the Holy Spirit. This lesson will get them moving on to the “to do’s” of how to actually grow in their faith. While none of us can cause our own spiritual growth, there are certain activities that we can engage to produce spiritual growth in our lives. This Navigator illustration (in simple form) communicates those basic growth principles of the Christian life. It shows how they interact in a balanced fashion to keep your students rolling along toward spiritual maturity.

Introducing the Lesson:

Ask them, “*Last week we talked about drawing from the new well. How is that going for you? Today we want to look at some ways we can make the path to the new well a little smoother. We want to look at some specific things we can do to help us grow spiritually.*”

Teaching the study:

Draw a wheel without filling in any of the words of verses. Draw the wheel so that it takes up about half of the paper, leaving room to write the verses above it and below it.

Hub Illustration: Then say, “*This wheel represents your life. A wheel gets its power or driving force from its hub. What would you say is the power source in your life, now that you’re a Christian?*” Let your students answer. Christ is the hub of the wheel (write Christ in the center) for the Christian. Next share two verses that illustrate the importance of Christ being at the center of our lives. Write the references and a two- or three-word summary for each verse on the side of the paper next to the wheel (as in diagram).

Ask: *What happens if Christ is not the center of your life?* Point out that just as in a car or bike wheel, if the hub is missing, the wheel will have no power, and the vehicle won’t go anywhere. For the Christian, if Christ is not at the center of his life, or if the Holy Spirit isn’t on the throne, the Christian will not experience God’s power in his life and won’t be going anywhere either!

Ask: *What are some things you can do to make sure that Christ is always at the center of your life?* (Good place to review the filling of the Holy Spirit).

Spokes Illustration: Continue by saying, “*Just as with a regular wheel, power is transferred from the hub to the rim through the spokes. There are four main activities in the spiritual realm through which power is transferred from Christ to our daily lives.*” One by one share what each of the four spokes are, supplying two verses for each spoke. The two vertical spokes represent our “vertical” relationship with God through the Word and Prayer. God speaks through His Word, and we speak to Him in prayer. The two horizontal spokes represent our “horizontal” relationships with other people through Fellowship and Witnessing. We fellowship with Christians and we witness to non-Christians. Share that as we engage in these four activities, Christ’s power becomes operative in our lives.

Outer Rim Illustration: The outer rim represents “The Obedient Christian in Action,” and you should now write that around the rim. These four spokes represent four ways that Christ’s power can be made available to the Christian but they count for nothing if the Christian does not choose to obey what God has told him to do through those spokes. Disobedience will give your wheel a flat tire every time. Notice it says here, “The Obedient Christian **in** Action.” In order to experience God’s power, you have got to be in action. There is no need for God to send His power your way if you are not going anywhere. God works in us and through us as we are **in** action.

Now comes the key to the whole illustration.

Ask: *What do you think would happen, if I knocked out one of these spokes? Or what if one of the spokes was about 2 inches shorter than all the rest?* **Answer:** It wouldn’t run as smoothly, a bumpy ride. If one of our spokes is missing or short or bent, our lives will not run as smoothly. **Reply:** *Let’s say that I read my Bible every day, I’m pretty faithful about sharing my faith with others, I go to church every Sunday, but I only pray about one minute a week. How do you think my life would be rolling along?* Emphasize that we need to keep our lives in balance on these four activities so that Christ’s power can flow through us and we can be going somewhere in our Christian life.

Ask: *What spoke is the most difficult for you to maintain? Which one is the easiest?*

Closing the Lesson:

Encourage your students to share this illustration with someone in the next week.

Evaluation:

Here are some questions to ask to see if your students have this information down pat!

1. If I were a brand new Christian, could you explain to me how I could grow in my relationship with God?
2. If Christ is not on the throne of your life, would it still be helpful to stay involved in prayer, Bible study, fellowship and witnessing?
3. Why is obedience so important in this illustration?

* This material is used by permission of THE NAVIGATORS. All rights reserved. Visit www.navigators.org or www.navpress.com.