



## Under Pressure

This lesson helps youth explore whether or not the way we act changes the way God feels about us.

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## ENHANCER OF JOY

Testimony

## DURATION

60 minutes

## LESSON DEVELOPED BY

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## GOAL

Navigating Performance Expectations

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## TIPS TO PREPARE

This lesson refers to God's immutability. Teens should have either recently learned about God's immutability, or leaders should do the lesson "The Solid Rock" to teach on immutability before teaching this lesson. When preparing, be creative with the materials for this lesson. While first activity requires a color-by-numbers type drawing, the second can be any form of abstract visual art – painting, watercolors, crayons, collage, or even paint balloons and darts! Think about your space and budget when choosing your medium. Consider giving teens options between mediums.

## MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- Color-by-numbers printout
- Crayons, pencils, or markers for color-by-

- numbers
- Abstract art materials (crayons, paint, watercolors, etc.)
- Bible
- Candle/cross/other prayer materials

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## SETTING THE ATMOSPHERE

Begin and end in a circular prayer space. Use a candle, cross, or other religious object to signify that space is sacred. The main activity will require an artistic space, so you will need table space for every teen. Consider where teens can clean their hands if using paint. During the art activities, especially the abstract portion, play music that is fun and upbeat.

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## SCRIPTURE FOCUS

Jeremiah 31: 3, 33

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## Purpose

Give teens the chance to talk about the pressures to perform that they face in many areas of their lives. The goal is to help teens identify that God is not another person on the list of people they might let down, but God is immutable and forever loving.

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## Objectives

In this session, youth will question if the way we act changes the way God feels about us.

Leaders can guide these discussions to the truth that while God does hurt for our pain, he loves us much more than we can fathom.

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## Further Study

Refresher: Immutability is defined as the fact that God's essential nature does not change. God's character is that of constant, unchanging love. Knowing that God is immutable and completely reliable allows us to have faith. While humans are fickle and our emotions are easily swayed, God's love for us is steadfast.

Color by number websites to find free printouts:

<http://coloring-pages.info/colorbynumberforadultscoloringpages>

<http://www.doverpublications.com/zb/samples/814610/sample7a.html>

<https://www.allkidsnetwork.com/color-by-numbers/>

<http://www.coloring.ws/cbn.htm>

<http://activities.raisingourkids.com/color-by-number/007-by-number-coloring-page.html>

Instructions for balloon painting:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Splatter-Paint-with-Balloons>

<http://www.hellowonderful.co/post/BALLOON-DART-PAINTING-WITH-KIDS>

Instructions on splatter painting:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Splatter-Paint>

<https://artfulparent.com/2017/07/splatter-painting-with-kids-crazy-fun-for-all-ages.html>

Instructions on abstract painting:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Create-an-Abstract-Painting> (method 5 only)

## Gather

### **Gather (5 minutes)**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

Begin with a circular, fill-in-the-blank prayer. The leader will pray a prompt, and teens will go around the circle answering the prompt. There will be a few prompts and then the leader or a willing teen will close the prayer.

Leader: Dear God, thank you for bringing us here together today. To begin, we thank you for one person in our lives. God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.

Teens: *Go around saying one person they are thankful for.*

Leader: God, we thank you for who you are. I am thankful that you are \_\_\_\_\_.

Teens: *Mention one attribute of God, i.e. loving, caring, compassionate, powerful, etc.*

Leader: God, I know that you care for our loved ones.

Today I ask special protection and care for \_\_\_\_\_.

Teens: *Mention one person they want to pray for.*

Leader: We also ask that you help us in our lives and our walk with you. Lord, I ask for \_\_\_\_\_.

Teens: *Present their petitions to God, i.e. strength, energy, help in a sporting event or game, etc.*

Leader: Close.

#### **Greeting One Another:**

Go around the circle and say the best and worst parts of the week. If the teens are not familiar with one another, use this time to repeat names and/or ages.

#### **Introduction of Session:**

There are a lot of people who have expectations of teens, including their parents, friends,

teachers, and coaches. Trying to be perfect and fulfill everyone's expectations can be exhausting and create anxiety and stress. In this lesson we will look at the difference between our relationship with other humans and our relationship with God, who is immutable and whose love is not dependent on us.

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## Engage

### ***Engage (30 minutes)***

#### **Activity 1: Color-by-Numbers Drawing**

- Move now to the artistic space.
- Give teens 10-15 minutes to complete a color-by-numbers drawing. Emphasize that the goal here is to do it *right* and to keep the coloring within the lines. The goal is to have the best, most correct product.

#### **Activity 2: Free Drawing**

- Now collect the color-by-numbers pages and pass out materials for the abstract artwork.
  - Give teens 10-15 minutes to do art in any way that makes them happy. Emphasize that the goal here is to have fun, not to draw something recognizable, create something that others will think is beautiful, or create something that they will want to keep.
  - If you're using crayons, encourage teens to hold them in a fist and scribble – this is a therapeutic technique that releases energy and stress.
  - Play music during this time to create a happy atmosphere.
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## Reflect

### ***Reflect (20 minutes)***

#### **Activity 3: Expectations**

- Discuss who has expectations for us – parents, friends, teachers, coaches, and romantic partners.
- Ask participants to share the expectations that they feel from each group of people.
- Are there other people besides those who have expectations for teens?
- What does it feel like to juggle these expectations?
- What would it be like to disappoint some or all of these people?
- How did these expectations feel like the color-by-numbers activity?

## Activity 4: God’s Expectations for Us

- Now think about God. Of course God has hopes and dreams for us – he wants us to be happy, holy, and to love him. But a relationship with God is not about being successful, but about participating in what He is doing. There is no way to fail if we are participating. God is immutable, and does not change his love for us based on our actions.
- Do your teens often feel like God has expectations for them? Do they worry about letting God down or disappointing him?
- What might it look like to focus on loving God instead of focusing on avoiding his disappointment?
- How is a relationship with God like that similar to the abstract artwork?

Tip: You might find that some teens enjoyed the color by number artwork better than the abstract work. When we get really good at fulfilling expectations and managing them, we start to enjoy those expectation-based relationships better than relationships where we are only expected to love and be loved in return. What is the disadvantage to having that relationship with God? With others?

## Send Forth

### **Send Forth (5 minutes)**

- Sum-It-Up: How do we move past a rules-and-expectations-based relationship with God to find a deeper relationship based on love? If you haven’t yet, look at the Bible verses and talk about what it means to be in a relationship with God like that.
- Closing Prayer: Ask a teen to lead the closing prayer. Ask them to pray that we will be able to understand God’s stability and constant love. Ask them to close with this passage from Ephesians: “I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power,

together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” - Ephesians 3:17-19