



**Help Your Students  
Connect  
God's World and Word**

Part 1 of a 4-Part Series

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#### What can you do to get started using this kit?

- Look at the session guide, noting the title and goal of each session.
- Read “Session 1: What do you want your students to learn?” (page 6) and “Reading 1: Help your students learn 3 things” (page 13).
- Read through the facilitator guides, especially “Let’s help each of our students connect God’s world and Word in each subject” (page 2) and “Frequently asked questions” (page 4).

## **Help your students connect God's world and Word**

**You want your students to connect the part of God's world they study and biblical principles.** This is a significant challenge. Want some help?

**These 7 sessions will help you address this challenge.** As a result of working through the 7 discussion-based sessions, you will...

1. Evaluate and improve how you help your students connect God's world and Word.
2. Analyze and explain the importance of helping students connect God's world and Word.
3. Identify and explain what connecting what God's world and Word looks like.
4. Document biblical principles you want your students to connect to the part of God's world they are studying.
5. Get your students even more engaged in connecting God's world and Word by having your students learn new biblical principles and/or helping your students make new connections between biblical principles they already know and the part of God's world they study.
6. Prepare for and teach a lesson designed to help your students connect God's world and Word.
7. Increase your commitment to helping your students connect God's world and Word.

**I would enjoy learning about how you are helping your students connect God's world and Word.** Please email me at [learnmore@closethegapnow.org](mailto:learnmore@closethegapnow.org).

—**Michael B. Essenburg**



**Michael**

I'm passionate about helping students connect God's world and Word.

Key ways to do this include targeting connections, using assessments, using questions, and meeting student learning needs.

## Session 1: What do you want your students to learn?

### Connect with a colleague

1. In your classes, what is one thing that's going well?
2. What is one character trait you want your students to have?
3. What is one thing you want your students to learn?

### Focus on this session's goal

To evaluate and improve how you help your students connect God's world and Word.

### Read

As a result of Christian education, we want students to be people who love God and live for Him. To explore what students need to learn in order to be that type of people, read "Reading 1: Help your students learn 3 things."

### Discuss the reading

1. What is one thing that interested you? Tell me about that.
2. What is satisfying/unsatisfying about helping your students learn about God's world and how people are using it? learn about God's Word? learn about the connections between God's world and Word?

### Find ways you can help your students make connections

To find ways to help your students connect God's world and Word, take this selfassessment. Rate each item, using the following scale:

4: *Strongly agree* • 3: *Agree* • 2: *Disagree* • 1: *Strongly disagree*

- \_\_\_ 1. I can readily explain the importance of helping students connect God's world and Word.
- \_\_\_ 2. I can readily explain what connecting God's world and Word looks like.
- \_\_\_ 3. I have documented the biblical principles I want my students to connect to the part of God's world they study in my class(es).
- \_\_\_ 4. I regularly have my students learn new biblical principles and/or help my students make new connections between biblical principles they already know and the part of God's world they study.
- \_\_\_ 5. I regularly teach lessons designed to help my students connect God's world and Word.

### Reflect on your self-assessment data with a colleague

1. How many 4s, 3s, 2s, and 1s do you have?
2. What excites/concerns you about your data?
3. To help your students make better connections, what is one self-assessment item on which you want to make progress? What are your reasons for selecting that item?
4. What 3 or more things could you do to make progress on that item?

### Commit to action

1. What 2 or more action steps are you going to take before our next session to improve how you help your students connect God's world and Word?
2. What are your highlights/insights from this session?
3. How can I pray for you? (Pray together.)

## Reading 1: Help your students learn 3 things

Interview with Michael Essenburg, school improvement coordinator at Christian Academy in Japan

### What kind of people do you want your students to be?

*Michael:* I want students to be people who love God and live for Him. I want students to be people who live out a Christian worldview as they love their neighbors, care for God's creation, share the Gospel, and participate in the Church. I want students to be people of God, to be people of love, truth, peace, justice, and mercy.

### To be that kind of people, what do your students need to learn?

*Michael:* I want students to learn 3 things. I want them to learn about God's world and how people are using it, about God's Word, and about the connections between God's world and Word.

### Let me ask you about those 3 things: (1) What do you want your students to learn about God's world and how people use it?

*Michael:* I want them to learn about science, music, language, history, and literature. I want them to learn to read and write, to play basketball and badminton, to add and subtract, to draw and paint. I want them to learn about child abuse, media manipulation, nihilism, pollution, discrimination, wealth, and poverty.

### (2) What do you want your students to learn about God's Word?

*Michael:* I want them to learn that God created a good world, that we sinned, that sin messed up everything, that Jesus died to save us, and that as redeemed people, we can join God in restoring His world.

I want them to learn that they should care for God's creation, love God and others, make disciples, and participate in the body of Christ. I want them to learn that we are to be content with what God provides and that God's Word is true.

### (3) What do you want your students to learn about the connections between God's world and Word?

*Michael:* First, I want them to learn that God's world and Word *are* connected. Then, I want them to learn about the connections between the part of God's world they study and God's Word. Here's an example of what a 10<sup>th</sup> grader learned about the connections between existentialism as presented in Camus's "The Guest" and biblical teaching about truth:

"In contrast to what Camus and Daru experienced, there is inherent meaning and moral guidelines in life given by God.... Truth, which is God's teaching, is apparent everywhere...(Rom. 1.20). In fact, the truth of the only God is accessible...(Acts 17.20). We must learn what God's truth is and apply it to our lives because as Daru understood, human wisdom is faulty.... Humans must establish God's truth as their anchor and base their decisions on His truth, which may not yield the obviously 'good' consequences in this life, but are right because they are part of God's perfect will."

### Now what?

*Michael:* I want you to find ways to help your students connect God's world and Word. You can do this by discussing this reading, by taking a self-assessment on how you help students make connections, and by using your self-assessment data to identify 2 or more action steps you will take to help your students make connections.



Kim, English 10

I want my students to love Jesus. I want them to be joyful, inquisitive, thoughtful people who connect what they learn with their lives.

Through their study of English, I want my students to learn that God created a good world so that we could enjoy it and participate in developing its potential. I want my students to learn that in this fallen world, God calls us to join Him in working to restore peace and justice. Language helps us understand God's truth and share it with others.