

POSTCARDS FROM FANTASY LAND:

Do You Live In The Real World?

TEACHER'S GUIDE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This session is designed to help students grasp the basic concept upon which this class is built: some times we do not live in the real world. We refuse to accept the realities that come with our choices until it is too late. We will also introduce Ecclesiastes as the book which can help us live in the real world.

PAGE-BY-PAGE TEACHING GUIDE

Page 2 Have the students complete each project on this sheet, one by one, and then discuss each one as a class before moving on to the next. Our key point is in the bottom right corner. Introduce the concept that people do not always live in the real world. Use the case studies on the next two pages to illustrate.

Pages 3-4 Give your students 5-10 minutes to read each story and answer the three questions. When they are done, discuss their answers. Emphasize that this is how people fail to live in the real world.

Page 5 Break your class into teams and challenge them to come up with some examples of their own. This can be a difficult part of the assignment, so you may have to give them a little help. At this point you will probably be out of time. Give each of your students an index card and ask them to list one area of their life where they are most likely to abandon the real world for fantasy land. Let them work on this before coming back to class. Have them submit their responses anonymously. At the beginning of the next class, take up the cards and read them to the class.

Page 6 Use this page to introduce your class to Ecclesiastes as the book which can help people live in the real world. Then, break your class into several teams and have them complete the first exercise. Ultimately what Solomon is searching for is the meaning of life. You work hard the few short years you are on this earth and what do you have to show for it that really matters?

Have the teams work on the question in the next box and discuss their answers. Make the point here that the writer's questions are fundamental, i.e. "Why do I exist?" "What is the meaning of life?"). Also emphasize that these are troubling questions. They make us think about things we don't like to think about. Finally, point out that these questions are serious; they make us take a serious look at life.

Wrap up by asking your students if they ever think about questions like these. Discuss how these questions force us to see life for what it really is - they make us live in the real world.

What profit has
a man from all
his labor in
which he toils
under the sun?

- Ecclesiastes 1:3
New King James Version

LIVING IN THE REAL WORLD



**Studies In
Ecclesiastes**

REAL VS. FAKE:

Can you tell the difference?

Sometimes in life we are faced with situations where we must decide whether something is real or fake. Consider the examples below. Under “**clue**” write down how you would decide what is real and fake. Under “**consequences**” briefly explain what might happen if you can’t tell the difference.

Category: Money - Is it real or counterfeit?
Clue: _____
Consequences: _____

Category: Diamond - Is it real or fake?
Clue: _____
Consequences: _____

Category: Telephone Sales Call - Is this guy trying to sell me a good product, or rip me off?
Clue: _____
Consequences: _____

You Give It A Try

See if you can come up with some examples of your own.

Category: _____
Clue: _____
Consequences: _____

Category: _____
Clue: _____
Consequences: _____

Choose one word that best describes how you feel when you miss the clues and someone takes advantage of you.

Explain why you chose this word.

When It Really Matters

Sometimes it’s hard to know the difference between what is real and what is fake. However, in the situations we’ve just described, the worst that can happen to us is that we can lose some money.

Consider this: some people do not live their lives in the REAL WORLD. Instead, they invent their own fake FANTASY LAND which allows them to ignore the realities all around them. When we do this, the consequences can be far more serious than just the loss of some money. It might cost us our most valuable possession - OUR SOUL!

Read
Matthew 16:24-26

POST CARDS FROM...

How People Can Create Their Own Little Fantasy Land

Read each story below and decide if each person is living in the real world, or sending us a postcard from fantasy land. You should also explain what "clue" from the story led you to this conclusion. Finally, explain what you think will happen if this person does not change.



RYAN

Real World Fantasy Land

What was your clue? _____

What will happen if things don't change?



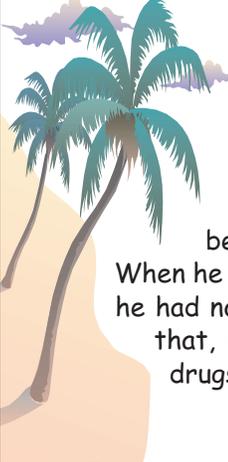
Ryan plays baseball for a small high school in East Tennessee. His team does pretty well; they finished in third place in their district. Ryan is one of the better players on the team. In fact, he was selected as an alternate for the all-district team during his senior year. After that, Ryan's grades began to fall. When confronted by his parents, Ryan explained that he was no longer worried about making good grades. "School just does not seem so important any more," he said. "I'm planning to play major league baseball. I don't need to worry about my grades."

KATIE

Real World Fantasy Land

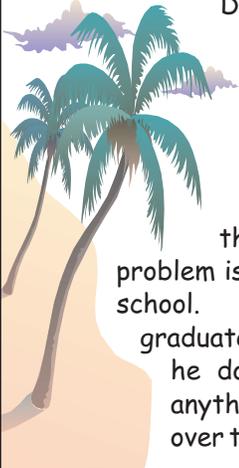
What was your clue? _____

What will happen if things don't change?



Katie's parents were very concerned about her relationship with Nick. They had been dating for almost a year and were starting to talk about marriage. But recently Katie's dad had learned that Nick had a drug problem. In fact, he'd been arrested once for selling marijuana. When he confronted Katie, she assured her dad that he had nothing to worry about. "Nick promised me that, as soon as we're married, he'll never use drugs again," she confidently told her father.

MORE POST CARDS FROM FANTASY LAND



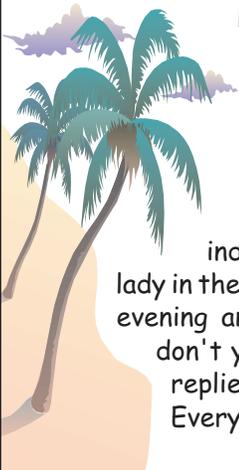
Darren has big plans for the future. He plans to have a great job where he makes loads of money. He'll need this money to pay for the SUV he wants to buy. He needs one to pull his boat (another item he plans to buy) when he goes water skiing with his friends. In fact, he wants to own a house right on the lake with his own boat dock. The only problem is that, right now, Darren is a senior in high school. He's failing three classes and may not graduate. He has no plans to go to college. In fact, he doesn't spend much time thinking about anything beyond his plans to hang out with friends over the weekend.

DARREN

Real World Fantasy Land

What was your clue? _____

What will happen if things don't change?



Kristen hates attending worship with her parents. She only goes because they make her. She is completely uninterested in the things discussed in her Bible class. She reads a book during the preacher's sermon. She never prays or studies the Bible. But recently her spiritual indifference caught the attention of an older lady in the congregation. She pulled Kristen aside one evening and asked her, "Don't you believe in God; don't you want to go to heaven?" Kristen tersely replied, "Of course I want to go to heaven. Everyone does!"

KRISTEN

Real World Fantasy Land

What was your clue? _____

What will happen if things don't change?

TEAM PROJECT

FANTASY LAND VACATIONS

Now that you have some idea of where we are going with all of this, work with your team to find some examples of your own. Come up with at least three ways people your age choose fantasy land over the real world.

EXAMPLE [1]

EXAMPLE [2]

EXAMPLE [3]

MAKE IT PERSONAL!

When are you most likely to abandon the real world for fantasy land?

Do you ever fail to live in the real world? Do you ever ignore reality and choose to live in your own little fantasy land? Think about the four stories we have just considered: do you ever make similar mistakes in your own life? Using the index card provided, write down that one area of your life where you are most likely to abandon the real world for fantasy land.

Fantasy land may be fun for an occasional visit, but we cannot afford to live there. We run the risk of messing up this life and the eternity that follows. WE MUST WAKE UP! WE MUST LEARN HOW TO LIVE OUR LIVES IN THE REAL WORLD!

ECCLESIASTES

Our Guide Back To The Real World!

The writers of Ecclesiastes had no interest in fantasy land. He wanted to live in the real world; he wanted to know the truth about life. He was not afraid to ask the hard questions to get at the truth. This records his quest to discover the answers to life's most important questions. By joining his quest, we can learn a lot about living in the real world.

Let's begin by taking a closer look at exactly what he was trying to find. Read each passage below and re-write his questions/statements in your own words. See if you can figure out what the writer of Ecclesiastes was trying to figure out about life.



Ecclesiastes 1:3



Ecclesiastes 2:3



Ecclesiastes 3:9



Ecclesiastes 5:15-16



Ecclesiastes 6:12



How can questions like these help us escape fantasy land and return to the real world?

Do you ever ask questions like these? If not, why?

As we have seen, living in fantasy land can really mess up our lives. We've got to get back to the real world. The book of Ecclesiastes can help us do that! This book poses life's toughest questions and looks at honest answers to those questions. For that reason, we will return to its wisdom again and again throughout these sessions as we strive to live in the real world.