



ZETEO 2023

Storymakers

We are so excited for you to join us at Zeteo 2023! *Storymakers* is a theme that impacted students at Zeteo 2017, and will make a difference in the lives of students and leaders, too, this year! We believe at Salt 'n Light Youth Ministry that every story matters. We know that the author and perfecter of our faith is Jesus, the "Storymaker." On stage at Zeteo you will see a series of different stories unfold as characters interact with Jesus, their Storymaker. We are honored to hand YOU the opportunity to empower your students to treasure their story and their Storymaker.

In this resource you will find an explanation for the topics discussed and some helpful resources for addressing the topics students will see on stage. After that, you will find an activity and devotional you can lead your students in during the weeks leading up to Zeteo! We invite you to share in this discipleship moment as the Lord prepares your students' hearts for Zeteo. We know that the Holy Spirit is already at work in the lives of all who will attend Zeteo!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns do not hesitate to reach out to us! During Zeteo, you will receive small group discussion question guides, and a packet with helpful information about the drama. After Zeteo, a three-week "Storymaker" lesson curriculum will be available for purchase!

Topics and Themes on Stage in *Storymakers*

- **Teenage Dating**
 - Healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, toxic relationships, temptations in dating
- **Pornography**
 - Struggling with addictions to porn, handing pornography addictions over to Jesus
- **Hearing from God**
 - Feeling like God is silent, questioning the voice of God, listening for God's leading and voice
- **Depression**
 - Anxiety, sadness, hopelessness.
 - Self harm: cutting and drinking alcohol to numb emotional pain

Topics and Themes on Stage in *Storymakers*, continued

- **Trusting in God**
 - Learning to rely on God's word, choosing faith over fear
- **Counseling**
 - Seeking the wise counsel of a professional therapist
- **Foster Care and Family Structures**
 - Handling the highs and lows that come with foster care, learning to understand people with unique family structures, forgiving family members who have caused pain
- **Struggles with Leading Youth**
 - Learning how to lead young people in a Christ-like manner with patience and wisdom (this theme is expressed through one of our adult, Guidance Counselor characters!)
- **Friendship**
 - Experiencing the joys and hard times that happen in friendships
- **Identity**
 - Discovering one's identity in Christ, figuring out "who we are," and more importantly "who we are called to be"
- **Doubt**
 - Doubting God, self-doubt, doubting the promises of others
- **The Goodness of God**
 - The best theme in Zeteo is seeing the Storymaker in action! Two important things to point out to your students is that the Storymaker is actively present in each character's life...always ready and available to listen, talk, and extend understanding. Additionally, the Storymaker often meets characters exactly where they are at: the school cafeteria, outside of the guidance office, a bedroom or kitchen, the walk home from school, etc. Sometimes characters go to the Storymaker's office, but many times the Storymaker goes directly into the characters' situations.

We understand that these topics and themes cover a wide range of both joyful and difficult subject matter. We suggest that you use your discernment when deciding the age range of students you will bring to Zeteo. At Salt 'n Light, we value the creative arts: drama, dance, music, and fine art as powerful tools to tell the "old story" of Jesus in a "new way." While some of these topics are heavy, we believe that addressing them in

sensitive, creative ways at a safe space like Zeteo, allows us the opportunity to watch Jesus inspire, heal, teach, and grow us.

Below you will find each topic explained further with scripture and helpful resources for you as you prepare to address the themes from Storymakers with your students! We are praying for you in advance, that the Lord equips you with wisdom, grace, compassion, and boldness.

Addressing Storymaker Themes and Topics

Teenage Dating: healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, toxic relationships, temptations in dating

In *Storymakers*, two characters, “Alexa” and “Jaime” are dating. We see Alexa and Jaime struggle with temptations to cross sexual boundaries they’ve established. Alexa carries into her relationship emotional trauma from a past tainted by the pain of losing her father to divorce. Jaime carries into the relationship a desire to fix the problems that people in his life have, and be an “overachiever” in all he does. Together, their relationship becomes toxic. Alexa manipulates Jaime and Jaime allows Alexa to make changes to his life story that were not hers to make. This couple is an example to students of what not to pursue in dating. The Storymaker convicts Jaime and ultimately puts a stop to the toxic relationship, while healing both Jaime and Alexa separately.

Why include this topic? 14% of teens are in a committed, serious relationship (Pew Research Center). Of those teens, 30% of teens in a committed relationship have had sex. Approximately 1 in 3 teens will experience physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from who they are dating (CHOP).

What does scripture say? Galatians 5:14, 1 Corinthians 13:1-13, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Ephesians 4:32, 2 Corinthians 6:15

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Visit dosomething.org
2. An [interesting study](#) the state of Maryland made on Teen Dating Violence
3. A [brief devotional](#) on toxic dating relationships with helpful links.

Pornography: Struggling with addictions to porn, handing pornography addictions over to Jesus

One character, Johnny, talks with honesty about his struggles with an addiction to pornography. We see him talk about the shame and the struggle with porn, and see the grip it has on his mind, time, and attention. The Storymaker meets Johnny at his lowest moments with compassion, grace, and a challenge for moving forward out of the grips of addiction.

Why include this topic? 9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls are exposed to porn online before they are 18. 71% of teens have hid their online activity from parents (Covenant Eyes). According to Bevill and Associates, 70% of boys have spent at least 30 consecutive minutes looking at pornography online on at least one occasion and 35% of boys have done so on at least ten occasions.

What does scripture say? 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 John 2:16, Philippians 4:8

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Check out [Enough is Enough](#) and [Fight the New Drug](#)
2. Check out Gianfranco Martinez on Instagram or [online](#).
3. Read this [Child Mind Institute article](#) on how to talk to teens about porn and this [Youth Worker article](#) with helpful references.

Hearing from God: Feeling like God is silent, questioning the voice of God, listening for God's leading and voice

Sometimes hearing from God is a struggle. Other times, hearing from God feels as natural as talking to a friend. Often, hearing from God exists somewhere in between those two extremes. All of the characters in Zeteo hear from God in a variety of ways. Sometimes the Storymaker whispers to a character, other times characters and the Storymaker talk openly and candidly to one another, and sometimes the Storymaker is with a character but is silent in responding.

Why include this topic? 26% of Christians report feeling doubt about God. Of all the generational groups, Millennial Christians report facing the most doubt: 38% (Barna Group)

What does scripture say? Jeremiah 33:3, Hebrews 4:12, John 6:63, Hebrews 2:1, James 1:22

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. A helpful teaching on hearing from God: [Part One](#) and [Part Two](#)
2. An [encouraging article](#) reflecting on Gideon.

Depression: Anxiety, sadness, hopelessness, self harm: cutting and drinking alcohol to numb emotional pain

A couple of the characters in Zeteo face feelings of hopelessness, depression, and anxiety. We see characters speak honestly to one another and to the Storymaker about the moments where they feel “low.” The Storymaker listens well in the middle of dark times the characters face. One character, Rowan, struggles with self-harm which is depicted briefly on stage. In her lowest moment, the Storymaker is near and begins the healing process in her life. Another character, Johnny, uses alcohol to distract him from the emotional pain and traumas he carries. The Storymaker protects Johnny, even in his destructive decisions, and brings to surface the healing Johnny needs. When characters are vulnerable about their depression, anxiety, and hopelessness they find themselves met with the same empathy and compassion we can extend to students in these situations.

Why include this topic? Nationally, 1 in 3 teens ages 13-18 will be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and 32% of teens across the country report struggling with anxiety (CDC). 36.7% of 12-17 year old American teens reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019 (CDC). Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for people ages 15-24, and only 30% of teens with depression are being treated for it (Discover Mood).

What does scripture say? Psalm 34:17-18, Matthew 11:28, 1 Peter 5:7, Psalm 143:7-8

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. [Crisis Text Line](#) for Self-harm, [Trevor Project](#) Info/Helpline
2. [National Alliance on Mental Illness Helpline](#)
3. [Fuller Youth Institute's](#) guide on recognizing depression, and [guide on handling anxiety](#)

Trusting in God: Learning to rely on God's word, choosing faith over fear

When the characters in Zeteo meet the Storymaker, they are faced with the choice to trust the Storymaker. For some, this choice comes easy. For others, they feel a hesitancy and resistance to trusting in God. Some characters go on a journey throughout the drama from trusting in God, to questioning God, to leaning on the Lord wholeheartedly. Others don't trust the Storymaker until the very end of the drama, after a long journey of resistance. And for some, the choice to trust in the Storymaker doesn't happen on stage. Every person's journey to trusting in God comes with highs and lows and this is reflected on stage at Zeteo.

Why include this topic? Only 56% of U.S. adults claim they believe in God as described in the Bible (Pew Research Center).

What does scripture say? Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 8:28, Psalm 9:10, Hebrews 13:8

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Helpful [Cru article](#) about trust
2. [Inspiring article](#) with helpful steps towards trust.

Counseling: Seeking the wise counsel of a professional therapist

One character, Andi Rocket, works as the guidance counselor at the school where much of the drama takes place. Her role represents one that leaders can relate to! When some students in the drama face issues, we see them turn to a professional counselor, Andi, to help them untangle the troubling thoughts in their minds. The Storymaker prompts the students to be vulnerable with Andi, and also prompts Andi with how to lovingly respond to students. Our hope is that the teens watching Zeteo will be encouraged to

value professional counseling and, if ever necessary, seek the wisdom, guidance, and advice of people who can help them.

Why include this topic? Worldwide, 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health issue year to year (Talkspace). John Hopkins School of Public Health published a study claiming that even a few sessions with a therapist lowers the risk of suicide.

What does scripture say? Proverbs 15:22, Galatians 6:2, James 1:19, Proverbs 19:20

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Check out [The Youth Mental Health Project](#)
2. [Pennsylvania's Mental Health Resources](#)
3. [Benefits of Teens in Counseling](#) article by Verywell

Foster Care and Family Structures: Handling the highs and lows that come with foster care, learning to understand people with unique family structures, forgiving family members who have caused pain

One character in Zeteo, Sam, is a young girl in the foster care system. She faces a wide variety of struggles throughout the drama. It is hard for her to always articulate the pain, questions, and struggles she faces while in foster care. Sometimes she feels comfortable to vulnerably discuss her struggles with foster care, and at other times she is defensive about her feelings and experiences. In every hard moment Sam faces, the Storymaker is present and patient. Sam's relationship with the Storymaker is a new one that audiences watch begin and unfold.

Other characters in Zeteo have difficulties at home. One family unit suffers the loss of their father to prison after a drunk-driving incident. Another family unit walks through divorce. One character is single, but longs for a family. We see the Storymaker meet each family unit with kindness and with exactly the presence that they need, when they need it.

Why include this topic? There are over 407,000 children and youth in foster care (childwelfare.gov). 20,000 youth age out of foster care between the ages of 18-21 each year (iFoster blog).

What does scripture say? Luke 9:23, 2 Corinthians 9:8, Matthew 25:4, 2 Corinthians 12:9

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. [Salt 'n Light's Interview with a Social Worker](#)
2. [Insightful article](#) about foster care.
3. [Pennsylvania Foster Care Facts](#)
4. [Article](#) from a Foster Mom's perspective
5. [Practical Ideas](#) for Supporting Foster Care Families
 - a. Check Out [Our Father's Hope](#) Organization

Struggles with Leading Youth: Learning how to lead young people in a Christ-like manner with patience and wisdom (this theme is expressed through one of our adult, Guidance Counselor characters!)

The topic of leading young people with wisdom, grace, compassion, and Christ-like love...it is a topic we know is close to your hearts, as leaders! And that is why you will see it displayed on stage through the character of the Guidance Counselor, Andi! Andi relies on the Storymaker to equip her in her work with teens and guide her as she guides them. We hope that by including this theme, you will feel "seen," understood, and encouraged in your youth ministry journey that we love to cheer you on in!

Why include this topic? Christianity Today reports that 43% of senior pastors say they meet with their youth leaders occasionally as needed. Only 1/3 of church youth leaders say they've received sufficient training on difficult topics (like abuse awareness).

What does scripture say? Romans 12:6-8, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Peter 3:15

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. An encouragement to you! [Don't grow weary!](#)
2. Youth Ministry: [Practical Encouragements](#)

Friendship: Experiencing the joys and hard times that happen in friendships

Friendships are hard! There are highs and lows in friendships, and especially in high school friendships. The characters in Zeteo face a variety of challenges and joys in their friendships. Some struggle with jealousy, loneliness, or feeling outcast in relationships. Others face peer pressure, lies, regret, and inconsiderate choices in their friendships. Most characters, however, experience many moments of kindness, camaraderie, and happiness in their friendships depicted on stage. Zeteo 2023 shows students examples of both healthy and unhealthy friendships. In every friendship, the Storymaker plays an important role to one or both of the friends. Many times throughout the drama, the Storymaker himself is seen as the truest, best friend to certain characters who need Him most.

Why include this topic? A Florida Atlantic University study found that only 1% of friendships started in 7th grade last until the 12th grade. 98% of teens in 2018 reported having one or more close friends, 78% of teens reported having between one and five close friends (Pew Research).

What does scripture say? 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Colossians 3:13, Ecclesiastes 4:10

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Check out this [Australian Parenting website](#), might seem odd, but it has some great insights about teen friendships!
2. A [sample of a "Whole Person"](#) teen friendship workbook
3. Some [helpful tips](#) on managing teen friendships

Identity: Discovering one's identity in Christ, figuring out "who we are," and more importantly "who we are called to be"

Each character in Zeteo carries with them a storybook. The books are metaphors, representing the life stories we each live. Sometimes the characters struggle with their story, their identity. Some characters try to create new stories, plots, and chapters by writing in the margins of their stories. Others rip pages out of their stories. Some abandon their books in search for a "better" identity. Teenagers face some of the hardest years of life where they are in search for the answer to "who am I?" And the characters in Zeteo express that deep longing. As the characters try to figure out who they are, the Storymaker reminds them all of who they are supposed to be.

Why include this topic? A study conducted in 2015 reported that 37% of teens struggled with their identity and 95% of teens felt inferior at some point in their lives ("Choose Therapy").

What does scripture say? John 1:12, Ephesians 1:5, Romans 15:7

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Breakdown of [Teen Identity Development](#)
2. A [Parent and Teen guide](#) to teen identity development
3. [Adolescent Identity Development](#) outline

Doubt: Doubting God, self-doubt, doubting the promises of others

The Storymaker patiently interacts with a number of characters who doubt Him. One character questions if she even hears or knows the Lord. One doubts that maybe he misheard God. One doubts the existence of the Storymaker. Others doubt the promises of the Storymaker. Doubt is part of the faith experience and including it on stage will hopefully help students feel understood in their own doubts.

Why include this topic? 65% of Christians report doubting their faith. Almost half of those who report doubting were reported to eventually walk away from their faith, 45% (Barna Group).

What does scripture say? Matthew 21:21, James 1:5-8, Jude 1:22, Mark 9:24

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. Article about [John the Baptist's](#) doubt
2. [Salt 'n Light Podcast episode](#) about waiting on God
3. A [devotional](#) about doubt

The Goodness of God

The best theme in Zeteo is seeing the Storymaker in action! Two important things to point out to your students is that the Storymaker is actively present

in each character's life...always ready and available to listen, talk, and extend understanding. Additionally, the Storymaker often meets characters exactly where they are at: the school cafeteria, outside of the guidance office, a bedroom or kitchen, the walk home from school, etc. Sometimes characters go to the Storymaker's office, but many times the Storymaker goes directly into the characters' situations.

Why include this topic? At Salt 'n Light Youth Ministry, we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that God is good, faithful, and steady. We love and serve a Storymaker who loved and served us first. Out of an obedient desire to share the Storymaker's story, we have woven the topic of God's goodness throughout Zeteo!

What does scripture say? Psalm 46:1, Romans 5:8, Psalm 31:19

How can you be prepared to address this topic?

1. [Devotional](#) about God's goodness
2. [Five Truths](#) about God's goodness

Continued on Page 12 is an activity and a Storymakers devotional to lead your group in.

Storymakers Devotional

In this devotional we will take a look at our own stories. The time spent together reflecting on God's word and the stories God has created for each of us will hopefully inspire students to cherish God's presence in their lives. Our goal is that students walk away seeing Jesus as a "Storymaker," in their own lives.

Supplies needed for *Storymakers Devotional*

Pre-Set these supplies wherever you will teach the lesson portion!

- Loose Leaf paper, colored pencils or markers (for small group time)
- Whiteboard/chalkboard, or large piece of paper for the group to write on
- Copies of the Small Group Discussion Guide for both students and leaders (page 14)
- Bibles
- Background worship music (optional: string lights)

Opening Activity- *20 minutes. "Storyboard"*

1. Set the tone in the room with some background worship music, and, if you have some, string lights to make the space feel cozy and comfortable. Encourage students to find a spot in the room where they can relax for this opening activity and not be distracted.
2. Give each student some pieces of paper and something to write with. Have students section their papers into different headings: "Birth-Three Years Old," "Three to Six Years Old," "Six to Nine Years Old," "Nine to Twelve Years Old," etc. Essentially, they are going to look at their lives so far in three-year increments. Once they label the headings (with space under each heading)

encourage them to come up with a creative title for each set of three years. These are the “chapters” of their life story.

3. Allow time for students to fill in each “chapter” of their story. There is freedom for them to do this in a variety of ways! They can make bullet points of important things that happened in each life chapter (hard things, exciting things, good and bad things, etc.). They can draw pictures of major life events in each chapter. They can write out some moments like a narrative or diary entry. Whatever format allows for them to capture the highlights from each three-year increment of their life works!

Group Activity- 10 minutes *“What Makes a Story?”*

1. On your whiteboard, chalkboard, or large piece of paper write down the following words (or invite a student(s) to write them!)
 - a. **SETTING**
 - b. **CHARACTERS**
 - c. **CONFLICT**
 - d. **CLIMAX**
 - e. **RESOLUTION**
2. **Explain to the group:** These words represent some of the important parts of a story! Without setting, characters, conflict, a climax, and a resolution, a story lacks the crucial elements that make it a “good read.” Without sharing too many personal details, let’s fill in some of the things from our life chapters that fall under these categories.
 - a. You can have students call out some things from their first opening activity for you to write under each category. Or, you can invite students to come up (a few at a time) and fill in some things under each category. However it makes sense for your group! When finished, take a moment to step back and as a group reflect on some of the important settings, characters, conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions shared. **Explain to the group:** *not every conflict in our stories might have a resolution yet, and that is okay. The beautiful thing about our life stories and the chapters you all identified is that our stories are works in progress and not complete!*

Small Group Discussion Time

Print out the following page for small group leaders and students

Small Group Question Guide

Read together the following passages of scripture.

Proverbs 16:9

John 10:1-18

Hebrews 12:1-3

As a small group, share in discussion over the following questions:

1. What is one thing from Proverbs 16:9 that stuck out to you?
2. What is your favorite part of the John 10:1-18 passage? What is something new you learned while reading it?
3. How does the Hebrews 12:1-3 passage make you feel?
4. What were some “highs” (good moments, exciting moments) in the life chapters you wrote? What about some low moments?
5. What were some important settings? Important characters? Was there a conflict that’s been resolved?
6. What surprised you as you wrote out your life story?
7. In all of these passages, we see God as someone who takes care of us. In Proverbs, God orders our steps. In John, Jesus is the Good Shepherd watching over us and knowing us well. In Hebrews, Jesus is the author of our faith and the one who knows our struggles. When you look at the three-year life chapters you made...are there moments you can look back on and see God was taking care of you? Loving you? Providing for you? Helping you? Protecting you? Would anyone like to share?

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8. Similarly, are there moments you look back on where it's hard to see how God might have been present? Maybe in a disappointing time or a struggle? Would anyone like to share?

Let's take a moment as a small group and each pick out a marker or colored pencil. This color will represent Jesus. In the moments of your life chapters where you can see that God was close, add a symbol to those moments. Maybe just an asterisk, or the word "Jesus," or a cross...whatever you'd like!

Choose a different color to represent the moments that are harder to see God was present. Put a symbol at those moments, too. Maybe a question mark, or an underline.

Teaching, 10-15 minutes

Share the following devotional with the group, or a variation of it! Make sure students have their life chapters with them.

Each of you have taken some significant time tonight to think through your life stories. The life chapters you have before you are important, valuable, cherished, and matter more than you'll ever know. The settings, characters, conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions are all in your stories for a reason. Every moment of your story marked with pain has a purpose. Every moment of your story marked with joy has a purpose. The mundane, the exciting, the confusing, the glorious parts of your story help shape you into the incredible character you are. And even though it feels like you might have contributed to parts of your story, or others contributed or even control parts of your story...over every aspect of your life is an author. A Storymaker. His name is Jesus and He knows your story: inside and out, and has designed your story for great works.

When we go to Zeteo in February, we are going to see *Storymakers*, and watch different characters on stage bring their life stories to Jesus. Some of them will struggle with difficult parts of their stories that they dislike. Others will be overwhelmed with excitement about what could happen in their story. You'll see some characters distrust God and doubt God's goodness. You'll watch other characters lean on Jesus as their only hope in dark moments. There are a lot of themes that unfold at Zeteo. Here is just a short list of some of the themes and topics you'll see on stage...

- Teenage Dating
- Pornography
- Hearing from God
- Depression
- Trusting in God
- Counseling

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- Foster Care and Family Structures
 - Struggles with Leading Youth
 - Friendship
 - Identity
 - Doubt
 - The Goodness of God

Show of hands...who can relate to some of those themes and topics? When we read or hear or see a really wonderful story, we are usually able to draw from it some major themes or "takeaways" right? For instance, "The Wizard of Oz" has the theme of "no place being like home." Or, "Cinderella" has the theme of kindness being rewarded. The story of "Pinocchio" has the theme of telling the truth! If you had to come up with a theme in your life story so far...what do you think it might be? Perhaps the theme is: "waiting." Or maybe the theme is: "growing with family," or "discovering who I am," or "finding my passion," or "learning as I go." Take a moment and look through the chapters you wrote down and think about what a theme or takeaway from your life story might be.

In the scriptures we read in small groups, we saw some major themes about Jesus. We learned that while we might make plans for our lives, it is God who directs our steps. Sometimes God changes our life plans in ways and moments that we never could have imagined. Sometimes those changes hurt and other times those changes bring us to healing and hope. Has God ever changed plans in your life?

We spent some time hearing from Jesus Himself in John 10. Jesus explained to us that sheep only listen to the voice of their shepherd. If the Good Shepherd, the one who directs every step in your life, is calling out to you...do you listen? How many times in the chapters of your life story so far did you listen and follow the voice of The Good Shepherd? How many times did you listen to other voices calling out to you, voices of doubt, worry, bad decisions, or complacency? A shepherd's life is one that is totally sold out to their sheep. A shepherd spends every day with the sheep and learns each sheep's ways. The shepherd knows each sheep's favorite food and spots in the pasture. The shepherd knows each sheep's shortcomings, weaknesses, and hold-ups. The shepherd chooses to be with the sheep. Jesus called Himself a shepherd, because he knows each of us as closely as a shepherd knows sheep. He willingly spends every day with you, by your side, knowing you better than anyone. Not only did Jesus call Himself a shepherd, but He called Himself the gate for the sheep. He is the gate that protects and secures His sheep. He says that all who enter His gate live and that He offers us life abundantly. The life story you are living is one that your Good Shepherd treasures and knows. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."

You are a masterpiece worth protecting, knowing, and loving. Jesus' desire for your life story is that it is one filled with abundance. Jesus is a trustworthy Storymaker. In Hebrews 12 we read that Jesus is the author, the pioneer, the perfecter of our faith.

He considered the cross a joy, because dying on the cross meant that He was showing you once and for all how trustworthy and unconditional His love is for you. We are called to throw off all of the things that separate us from God and instead put on the perseverance to follow after what Jesus, the Storymaker, has in store for us.

When you are at Zeteo, you are going to notice two really important things about The Storymaker. First, you will see that many times He comes to the characters in the moments where they need Him. Sometimes characters go to the “Storymaker’s office,” but most times the Storymaker leaves His office and is found side by side characters in school hallways, cafeterias, Guidance Counselor offices, living room couches, sidewalks leading to home...the Storymaker is there. As you live out the chapter of life you are currently in, consider the fact that you are not alone. The one who directs your life steps, the one who is your Good Shepherd, the one who is the author and perfecter of your faith is next to you...in school hallways, cafeterias, Guidance Counselor offices, living room couches, sidewalks leading to home...your Storymaker is with you.

The second thing you’ll notice about The Storymaker is that He is steady and reliable. In the moments where the characters need their Storymaker...He is there, and He is steady and reliable. His steadiness stays with them even when they actively make poor decisions. His steadiness stays with them when they are hurting. His steadiness stays with them when they yell at Him and push Him away. His steadiness stays with them when they are scared, anxious, or depressed. In every moment where The Storymaker meets the characters, He meets them with exactly what they need: steady peace, steady hope, steady joy, steady empathy, steady kindness, steady conviction. The Storymaker knows what each character needs. At times you’ll see Him be silent to characters who are growing in their faith. Sometimes you’ll see Him talk very kindly to characters new to a faith journey. Other times the Storymaker will give characters challenges that He knows they are ready to handle. As you watch the Storymaker’s steadiness and reliability, consider the times where your Storymaker is steady and reliable in your story.

As you prepare to go into Zeteo...what are you hoping to gain from the weekend? What will you talk to your Storymaker about while you’re there? How do you hope to leave the weekend on Sunday morning?

Either you, or a volunteer(s) close out the session by reading Psalm 139:1-18 and Matthew 11:28-30.

Closing Prayer

Have students place their life chapters on the floor in the middle of the room. As a group, stand around them and share in a moment of

prayer. Pray for the Lord to help make us all aware of how God is directing our steps and is a present, loving Good Shepherd in our lives, and a trustworthy author. Pray for Zeteo and for an openness to what the Storymaker will do.