



## *Small Group*

### *Fall Activity for a Prayer Lesson*

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Okay, the focus of this activity is to see how giving our burdens over to the Lord can free us up and make us more healthy as individuals. We need to see the importance of not taking and carrying the burdens we talk to Jesus about with us after we meet Him in prayer. We have to truly leave them at His feet.

#### **What you will need:**

- Copy paper or construction paper leaf cut-outs for everyone in the group. (Lighter weight paper works best, so don't use cardstock) Just an FYI, I usually make mine with a large leaf cookie cutter as a pattern.
- Pens or Markers
- Spray bottle with water. If you have a large group, you could have a few spray bottles.
- Small Wastebasket
- Handwipes

#### **Introduction:**

Today we will be talking about bringing our burdens and heavy hearts to the Lord. He is the One that can sustain us. He is the One that lifts us up. He is the One that revives the weary.

Here are some Bible verses to keep in mind.

*“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:28-30*

*“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7*

*“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” Psalm 55:22*

The problem is, we don't always want to turn those burdens and our worries over and leave them with Jesus.

### Step One:

Talk about some of the reasons we are hesitant to give our burdens over to the Lord or why we fail to just leave things in the hands of God.

Here are some reasons, but ask your group what they think.

- We are comfortable with our worrying.
- We want to second-guess God.
- We don't think things or situations can really change.
- We want to have control over our own issues.
- We want the prayer answered or burden relieved, but we want it done our way.
- We don't allow the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- We hold on to fear so we hold on to other things as well.

### Step Two:

Pass out a paper “leaf” to each person in your group and have pens/markers ready. Have everyone in the group write down something on their “leaf” that they are either praying for or a burden that they want to give over to the Lord.

Make sure everyone has done this before moving on to the next step.

### Step Three:

Now have everyone crumple up their “leaf” as tight as they can in their hands. (You can tell them to pretend it's an old love letter that they don't want anyone to read if you want!)

Next, have them unfold it and press it out with their hands. Have them do this process (crumple tight, unfold, and press out) again three more times.

When everyone is finished, have them hold up their “leaves” so everyone can see how different they look from before.

### Step Four:

Discuss what just happened. (The “leaves” went through the fall season. They cracked and withered.)

Talk about how different the “leaves” look from how they did a few minutes ago. Discuss what happens to us when we carry our burdens with us continually.

**Here are a few things to mention, but get input from your group. How do trials and burdens affect them as individuals? How do burdens make them feel? How do burdens slow them down?**

- Just like the fiber breaks down in the paper to give it that withered look, something similar happens to us.
- Worrying and the weight of burdens is hard on us.
- It breaks our spirits.
- It keeps us from doing the will of God.
- It keeps us from living the Christian life to its fullest.
- See how the wrinkles have taken over the paper and made an impression on it?
- We can get those worry creases in our brow!
- Our attitudes can get some wrinkles in them.
- All that crumpling and pressure on us can make us grumpy too!

### Step Five:

Have those in your group now spray their leaves with the spray bottles. Have the setting on mist or the finest spray possible. Have your group spray their leaves on the front and the back, making sure they spray the entire leaf.

Then have them crumple the “leaves” up again, unfold, and press out four times as before.

Have everyone hold up their “leaves” for everyone to see them.

### Step Six:

Discuss what just happened. (The “leaves” went through some inclement weather. They got further damaged.)

Explain that the spray represents the pressure of daily living. We are hit with highs and lows from the time we wake up in the morning till we go to sleep at night. The impact of life, turmoil, relationships, and just daily schedules can sometimes be difficult and hit us with force.

The point is that we have to realize that life is hard enough and busy enough without carrying extra burdens and worries around with us!

**Here are some things to discuss, but allow for some interaction and insight from your group members of their own.**

- Was it easy to crumple, unfold, and then press out the damp “leaves”?
- That’s a picture of how we get after bearing our burdens alone. We basically get weak and fall apart because we are trying to go it alone.
- Have you ever felt like you were falling apart?
- Have you ever had a burden that you felt like was crushing you?
- Here are some things that happen when we are carrying unnecessary burdens and when life comes spraying hard at us.
  - We get depressed
  - Our anxieties take over
  - Our stress increases
  - We get angry with God and other people
  - We stop reading the Bible
  - We stop fellowshipping with other Christians
  - *Ask for any more input on what happens to us when we don’t leave our burdens with Jesus.*
- Some of you may have cracks or holes in your “leaf”. When we try bearing our own burdens and living under that added pressure, we find we are wearing ourselves thin.
  - We may find we can’t get everything accomplished we need to.
  - We may find that important things fall through the cracks.
  - We may find that we lose our tempers.
- Some of you may have blurry, messy, or distorted writing on your “leaf”.
  - Our views can get distorted when we are pressed with burdens.
  - When we are hurting or carrying burdens, our outlook changes.
  - We may find ourselves with damaged emotions.
  - We may find our attitudes mangled.
  - We may find our faith isn’t so strong.
  - We may find that others don’t see Christ in us as clearly.

Stress to your group the need to give everything over to Jesus.

*“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” 1 Peter 5:7*

We also need other Christians to help bear our burdens with us.

*“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2*

Those two verses are great reminders for us. Encourage your group to memorize them if they don't know them already.

### Step Seven:

Have everyone in the group tear up their "leaves" as a symbolic gesture of turning their specific burden over to the Lord. Pass the wastebasket around for them to throw their leaves in.

Allow time for those who want to make a brief statement about their burden to do so at this time before they throw their "leaves" away.

### Prayer:

*Dear Lord,*

*Please help us grow in faith so that we can be better equipped to leave our burdens in Your hands. Help us to realize that Your hands are sufficient and strong. Help us to see that it is You who gives us our strength and sustains us. Please help us to depend on You more. Give us willing hearts to lay our burdens, worries, and all our earthly plans at Your feet.*

*In Jesus name.*

*Amen*

Give anyone a handwipe that has any inked hands. Depending on the type of pen or ink you have, it might not be a problem, but it's always good to be ready for that.