



YouthBytes.org - A Powerful Tool for Youth Workers

YouthBytes is a simple, yet effective tool in the hands of those who have a passion to reach and teach this generation. The Episode Guide is designed to help you implement YouthBytes into your particular setting at whatever level you choose: from a full meeting schedule to just a small video to enhance your meeting. We encourage each worker to add his or her own stories, experiences and illustrations to make your particular scenario work. The discussion questions are also just a starting point and we encourage each group to go further and deal with local issues and topics that might be relevant.

Each YouthByte Episode will include :

- Video summary
- Icebreaker
- Primary Lesson
- Facts, figures and illustrations used in the episode
- Key Scriptures
- Discussion Questions
- Complimentary story

We look forward to getting your feedback and comments for these Episode Guides. Also let us know what subjects you would want new YouthBytes to cover. As always, testimonies are welcome. Comments, ideas, and testimonies can be sent to feedback@youthbytes.org.

Disc 13 ~ All Roads Lead to Rome Dressed to Kill



Video Summary

This is one of the most significant 10-minute YouthByte episodes. It was shot on the streets of Rome in Italy. The theme of the piece is persecution and how Christians should react to the attacks of others against their faith. Chad dresses up like Caesar and alternates back and forth between being the protagonist and then being the objective commentator. Another character, Lance, is introduced in this piece and his interactions with Chad are hilarious. The episode culminates with a scene filmed in the Coliseum where tens of thousands of Christians were martyred. This particular part is extremely moving and very powerful in its imagery and content. Chad closes by challenging every believer to stand up with courage in the face of persecution.



Icebreaker ~ A Funeral for a Poor Dog

A farmer named Muldoon lived alone in the Irish countryside except for a pet dog, which he had for a long time. The dog finally died and Muldoon went to the parish priest, saying "Father, the dog is dead. Could you possibly be saying a Mass for the poor creature?"

Father Patrick told the farmer "No, we can't have services for an animal in the church, but I'll tell you what, there's a new denomination down the road a piece, and no telling what they believe in, but maybe they'll do something for the animal." Muldoon said "I'll go right now. By the way, do you think \$50,000 is enough to donate for the service?" Father Patrick replied "Well that changes things, of course I'll do the service, why didn't you tell me the dog was Catholic?"



Primary Lesson

This lesson is a challenging one for people young and old. Nobody likes to be made fun of and nobody likes to be persecuted for what they believe and for what they stand for. Chad looks at this matter from a wide perspective and shows people the price that millions of Christians have been willing to pay over the centuries for their faith. In comparison to believers being mauled and eaten by wild beasts, most persecution of our day in the West is relatively minor. Chad asks Christians to consider who they are being persecuted for and he also points out the reward that awaits those who endure persecution for the sake of Christ. This is an episode every Christian needs to watch.



Facts, Figures & Illustrations

- The Coliseum was built during the reign of Emperor Vespasiano c. 72 AD and dedicated in 80 AD by his son Titus.
- The popular name of “Coliseum” came about because the immense oval stadium was situated next to a colossal 120 ft high statue of Nero.
- The Coliseum stands over 160 ft high with eighty entrances, the Coliseum could hold upwards of 50,000 spectators.
- Public events such as gladiator fights, mock naval battles and wild animal hunts were held at the Coliseum.
- During the staged fights as many as 10,000 people were killed in one day. Fighters were slaves, prisoners or volunteers.
- Spectators saw persecuted Christians killed by lions. After 404 AD gladiatorial battles were no longer held, but animals such as lions, elephants, snakes and panthers continued to be massacred in the name of sport until the 6th century.
- At the beginning of the second century, there was a contest in which, 4,941 pairs of gladiators fought each other.
- Men who fought as gladiators in the Coliseum were trained. At times unarmed criminals and slaves were slaughtered in the Coliseum by gladiators as a form of punishment.
- Exotic animals were imported from all over the world to be slaughtered in the Coliseum “hunts”. As many as 5000 animals were killed in a single day in the Coliseum.

Source: <http://www.history.ilstu.edu/historicalfacts/>



Key Scriptures (From New King James Version, unless otherwise noted)

Matthew 5:10-12 ~ *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Romans 5:3-5 ~ *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

Revelation 2:10 ~ *Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*



Discussion Questions

1. Discuss why you believe God allows persecution to happen to Christians.
2. Jesus faced great persecution and so did his followers. 10 out of his 11 disciples were martyred for their faith in Christ. Discuss what persecution does to a person's faith. Does it strengthen their faith or weaken it? Is there also a greater reward for those who endure persecution?
3. The devil's aim with persecution is to get people to deny Christ. In the New Testament, Peter denies Jesus three times right before Jesus dies on the cross. After he rose from the grave, Jesus forgave Peter but only after he deeply repented. In the end, Peter died for his faith by being crucified upside down. Using Peter as an example, discuss what a Christian ought to do if they know they have somehow failed in standing up for Christ. Also discuss ways in which Christians today hide their faith and deny Christ in more subtle ways.
4. Pray for each other that God will give you boldness to withstand persecution in every area of your life.



Complimentary Story ~ The Last Gladiator Fight in the Coliseum: The story of Saint Telemachus

The reliability of this story has been brought into question by mainstream historians, as several parts do not line up with other known historical events. This is the story presented by Catholic tradition, and even though parts conflict with some historical records, Saint Telemachus is still credited with ending the gladiatorial games. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Telemachus.

In the 4th century there lived an Asian monk who spent most of his life in a remote community of prayer, raising vegetables for the cloister kitchen. When he was not tending his garden spot, he was fulfilling his vocation of study and prayer. One day this monk named Telemachus felt that the Lord wanted him to go to Rome, the capital of the then-known world. Telemachus had no idea why he should go to Rome and he was terrified at the thought. But as he prayed, God's directive became clear. How bewildered the little monk must have been as he set out on the long journey on foot over the dusty roads westward, with everything he owned on his back. Why was he going? He didn't know. What was he to do when he got there? He had no idea. But obediently he went.

Telemachus arrived in Rome during the festival. You may know that Roman rulers kept the ghettos quiet in those days by providing free bread and special entertainment called circuses. At the time Telemachus arrived, the city was bustling with excitement about the recent Roman victory over the Goths. In the midst of this jubilant commotion, the monk looked for clues as to why God had brought him there, for he had no other guidance, not even a superior in the religious order to contact.

Perhaps, he thought, it is not sheer coincidence that I have arrived at the festival time. Perhaps God has some special role for me to play. So Telemachus let the crowds guide him, and they soon led him to the Coliseum where the gladiator contests were to be staged. He could hear the cries of the animals in their cages beneath the floor of the great arena and the clamor of the contestants preparing to do battle. The gladiators marched into the arena, saluted the emperor and shouted, "We who are about to die salute you." Telemachus shuddered. He had never heard of the gladiator games before, but he had a premonition of awful violence.

The crowd had come to cheer men who, for no reason other than amusement, would murder each other. Human lives were offered for entertainment. As the monk realized what was going to happen, he realized that he could not sit still and watch such savagery. Neither could he leave and forget. He jumped to the top of the perimeter wall and cried, "In the Name of Jesus, stop!"

The fighting began and no one paid the slightest attention to the little voice. So Telemachus climbed down the stone steps and leaped onto the sandy floor of the arena. He made a comic figure, being a scrawny man in a monk's uniform dashing back and forth between the muscular armed athletes. One of the gladiators sent him sprawling with a blow from his shield, directing him back to his seat. It was a rough gesture, though almost a kind one. The crowd roared.

But Telemachus refused to stop. He rushed again into the way of those trying to fight, shouting again, "In the name of Jesus, stop!" The crowd began to laugh and cheer him on, perhaps thinking he was part of the entertainment.

Then his movement blocked the vision of one of the gladiators and the gladiator saw the blow coming just in time. Furious now, the crowd began to cry out for the monk's blood.

"Run him through!," they screamed.

The gladiator he had blocked raised his sword and with a flash of steel struck Telemachus, slashing down across his chest and into his stomach. The little monk gasped once more, "In the name of Jesus, stop this."

Then a strange thing happened. As the gladiators focused on the still form on the suddenly crimson sand, the arena grew deadly quiet. In the silence, someone on the top tier got up and walked out. Another followed. All over the arena, spectators began to leave, until the huge stadium was emptied.

That innocent figure lying in a pool of blood crystallized the opposition, and that was the last gladiator fight to the death ever fought in the Roman Coliseum. Never again did men kill each other for the crowd's entertainment in this Roman arena.