

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS

IMPACT

TRAINING AND EQUIPPING BELIEVERS
TO STAND BOLDLY ON
THE WORD OF GOD



Presented by

DeBunked

BECAUSE LIES ENSLAVE BUT THE TRUTH SETS YOU FREE

LEADER

*Impact: Training and Equipping Believers
to Stand Boldly on the Word of God*

Unit 1: Foundations, Leader's Guide

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Reasons for Hope is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) launched in 2011, dedicated to presenting, proclaiming, and defending the biblical worldview through bold public speaking, educational and entertaining videos, and online education.

Based on Reasons for Hope's mission statement and the DeBunked video series (written and produced by Bub Kuns).

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Mission Statement

The mission of DeBunked IMPACT curriculum is to train and equip Christians with the tools, knowledge, and practice necessary to be bold in sharing their faith.

To accomplish this goal, each of the DeBunked videos will be unpacked, expanding upon the teaching and reinforcing the message through deliberate practice and application. The ultimate goal is to equip believers to enthusiastically fulfill Paul's imperative in 1 Peter 3:15:

*"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;** yet do it with gentleness and respect" (emphasis added).*

Introduction

In 2011, Carl Kerby, founder and president of Reasons for Hope ministry, partnered with Bub Kuns to launch the first DeBunked video—*All Those Animals Couldn't Fit (on the Boat)*. Little did they realize that this video would lead to an entirely new branch of the Reasons for Hope ministry, which now includes curricular resources for our DeBunked viewers and users.

Our Goal

Our goal is to equip and train Christians with critical thinking skills so they can see the world around them from a biblical perspective and be able to defend their faith boldly in a culture that has become more and more hostile to the truths of God's Word.

The Influence of Christian Parents and Adults

While statistics show that two-thirds or more of Christian young people are leaving the church once they're out on their own, the percentage who are staying are sending a clear message about the spiritual needs of Christian teens and young adults. What will it take to keep them in the church, growing in their faith, and standing boldly on the Word of God?

Research shows that the top reasons why this new generation is staying connected with Christ include that they

- ate dinner 5 of 7 nights a week as a family.
- served with their families in a ministry.
- had one spiritual experience in the home during the week (devotions, prayer, conversations).
- were entrusted with responsibility in ministry at an early age.
- had at least one faith-focused adult in their lives other than their parents.

Parents and adult Christian leaders can use this information to rejuvenate the faith of this rising generation. One of the first steps is to take the younger generation from "what" to "why"—namely, not just knowing what they believe but knowing why they believe it.

Belonging, Purpose, and Identity

Young people (tweens, teens, and twenty-somethings) are growing up in a society where God is seen as unnecessary and evolution is taught as fact. Many of our youth are depressed, aimless, and disengaged. Teen suicide rates are

at an all-time high. There's an obvious correlation. Believing there is no God and that people are a product of random processes, this generation believes life has no purpose.

In a recent Barna poll, 56% of Gen Z (those born between 1997 and 2012) said that they expected the worst from the future. How disheartening! But instead of being discouraged by this statistic, we should see their despair as an opportunity to bring hope to this generation. They are ready to hear a message of hope conveyed with grace, love, and truth. Are we ready to share it?

Here's the good news from a research team at Fuller Youth Institute, which conducted numerous surveys and focus groups with over 2,200 teenagers, as well as in-depth multisession interviews with diverse high school groups nationwide. Based on that data, the team believes that "leaders may be one surprising pivot away from offering lonely teenagers and young adults the help they need to move from isolation to impact" (Barna, July 26, 2021).

Results from another study showed that only one in four U.S. teens (25%) feels empowered. Those who are categorized

as "empowered" express several sentiments, including that they feel able to accomplish their goals and think someone believes in them. That means the other 75% of U.S. young people don't share those feelings (Barna, July 26, 2021).

In this data about loneliness and empowerment, Barna Group has highlighted how young people are hungry for "belonging" and "purpose." Interestingly, belonging and purpose (as well as a third pursuit about identity) are the big questions that drive much of people's attitudes and actions. When interviewed about expressing their purpose through social activism, many shared that they enjoyed doing so *with others*.

This research sends the clear message that building a connected team (creating a sense of belonging), which has a united purpose (becoming effective defenders of their faith) and an identity (believers in Christ), empowers young people to make an impact on their culture. We believe that you will see this message woven throughout the pages of the DeBunked IMPACT study; and by God's grace, in time you will see the results within your group and the community you serve.

How to Use This Curriculum

Do you want to get the most out of this curriculum? First and foremost, commit to bringing your best self to each gathering. Whether it's in college, Christian school, Sunday school, youth group, Bible study, or homeschool, the passion and preparation you bring will determine the buy-in and commitment of your participants each week. Be organized for each lesson, making sure all materials are in place and you are mentally and spiritually ready.

You will notice from the very first lesson that trust-building activities and team building are a priority. Multiple studies confirm that feeling a sense of belonging is an important prerequisite to discovering purpose.

How to Read Special Fonts

The relevant material from the student workbook appears within this leader's guide in serif text like the text in this sentence.

To make this guide as user friendly as possible, what you are to do during the lesson appears in sans serif bold print like the text in this sentence.

Suggestions for what you can say is presented in sans serif regular print like the text here.

The answers to discussion questions are also included underlined and italicized.

Suggestions for Getting the Most out of This Curriculum

- Be flexible as you facilitate the group discussions. We have provided suggested responses but allow participants to discuss their views—within reason—while guiding them to understand what the Bible teaches.
- Take your time as you go through the questions. Feel free to spend more time on some sections and questions than others. Allow the participants' interest level to guide the discussion.
- Do not allow any one person to monopolize the discussion. Be careful to include all participants. (You will notice within each lesson are whole group, small group, and partner activities to facilitate inclusion of all your members.)
- Consider spending two sessions on some lessons to allow adequate time on critical content. Though each unit is written with ten lessons, it could easily be expanded to thirteen to fifteen lessons if your group engages in deep discussions or needs to talk through certain issues or concerns triggered by

a given topic. Gauging your time based on student interest and engagement cannot be overemphasized.

Leader's Materials

Note: The following material is provided in the Leader's Kit when you place your order:

- Leader's guide
- One student workbook
- *Did Jesus Commit Suicide?* book
- Poster set (5)
- Handout print pack
- Resource USB drive

All items on the USB drive are downloadable onto your computer for easy access. Each time you need to access a resource on the USB drive, you will see a USB icon in the margin next to that part of the lesson.

Additionally, all resources are available through the QR code provided at the beginning of lesson 1.

Each student should have a copy of the student workbook, which may be purchased individually or in packs of five workbooks.

For each lesson, the leader will need:

- One of the following, depending on your technology and group size:

You could rely on a cell phone, an iPad, or a computer with Apple TV or

Air Play. Alternatively, use a computer, projector, and screen.

- Bible
- Leader's guide
- The appropriate number of student workbooks (one per student)
- Resource posters on display
- Thumb drive, cell phone or iPad to read QR codes, or DVD (by request only)
- Extra writing utensils for students who forget them

Other recommended materials:

- The *Did Jesus Commit Suicide?* book from the Leader's Kit to support you in answering questions that may come up within your lessons
- A print copy of this Reasons for Hope's PDF: *7 Things That Will Help You Share Your Faith (Without Feeling like a Goof)*, available free at rforh.com/collections/downloads

Student Materials

For each lesson, the participant will need:

- Student workbook
- Bible
- A pocket folder and writing utensil
- Cell phone, iPad, or computer (for research purposes only)

Lesson Components

Each lesson has a similar format, and all the lesson components use athletic metaphors. Throughout Scripture, analogies are made to running a race, striving for a prize, or beating the air, etc. (1 Corinthians 9:26–27; 2 Timothy 4:7–8; Hebrews 12:1, 11–13).

The same commitment and training required to produce a winning athlete is also what it takes to develop a prepared apologist, a believer who is ready to give a defense for what he believes.

Know It! Live It! Share It!

This motto is Reasons for Hope's call to action, driving the content that we've taught since our ministry's inception. At the beginning of each lesson, a special section labeled *Prepare for It!* will list preparation items for the leader to have ready. The lesson objectives are displayed under the *Know It!* heading, while lesson outcomes are listed under the *Live It! Share It!* heading.



OPENING BELL

Used in boxing (and in DeBunked), the opening bell indicates the beginning of a match, requires the full engagement of the players, and presupposes that all came ready to win.

After you do your preliminary welcome and opening prayer with the group, you should begin with the Opening Bell

section. Sometimes this will involve an intriguing story or video, but it should definitely engage the interest of those in attendance. *Curiosity activates both critical thinking and discernment*—the goals of this part of the lesson.



TEAM HUDDLE

Creating connections, camaraderie, and commitment to learning about and trusting each other are the aims of this part of the lesson. A byproduct of these activities is a level of comfort and confidence for the participants as they learn that their “classmates” are there for them. This camaraderie is key to the success of this

curriculum. You are training and equipping young adults for the purpose of leading a life of being bold in the defense of “the hope that is in them.” Developing this kind of undaunted courage is built upon absolute trust in God and is supported by a community of faith and trust.



TRAINING CAMP

For full- and part-time athletes alike, training camps are where you eat, sleep, and breathe your sport. It’s also where friendships are forged, and teams and crews are made. To attend a training camp, a team typically leaves their usual environment and goes to a foreign venue for concentrated training over 10 days or more.

Once their curiosity and connectedness have been set in motion, the students are ready for the deeper teaching component of the lesson. To ignite learning most effectively and efficiently, there must

be practice, discussion, and interaction to immediately *do something* with this new information—sparking new neural pathways which lead to retention of new knowledge.

We have incorporated many of our video resources within the first five lessons of this introductory unit before we even get into the content of the DeBunked videos. Why? So that the students understand and begin practicing how to approach their world biblically, critically, and like an apologist.



REFLECTION

Self-reflection is the key to processing new information, making sense of it in relation to existing knowledge, and gaining a better understanding. Reflection allows team members to clarify their thoughts, gain insights, and deepen their understanding of decision-making skills and tactical frameworks. With that in mind, reflection could represent the most

important modern innovation in team development.

Recent research suggests that team members with a greater understanding of competitive experiences are more likely to be able to adopt a positive mindset during competition. This mindset gives them a high level of control and

confidence and allows them to positively work through any anxiety.

According to Sean Douglas in his blog entitled, “The Importance of Self Reflection,” reflective practice may also encourage team members to engage in

problem-based learning, and a period of reflection helps them overcome negative experiences by encouraging them to address what went wrong and how they might overcome it (Player Development Project, 2022).



ACT NOW

(Note to leader: This section will not be introduced until lesson 6 of unit 1.)

In sports, every decision you make will play a key role in the outcome of the game or match. It is critical that you learn the right questions and the right tactics to maximize your performance.

As a believer, asking the right questions and anticipating the next move are pivotal to engaging unbelievers in conversations. The lessons will teach how to think critically throughout each unit so that your team members develop their minds to be “wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16).



FAMILY SUPPORT

Rarely will an athlete make progress or become a champion without the support of a family unit. Whether the family is paying for training, sports equipment, or club fees, or it is driving the athlete to and from practices or providing moral support during their attendance at games and matches, parents are a critical component of an athlete's motivation and commitment.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Since many individuals do not have a solid, Christian family, this study group may be their only trusted “tribe.” If that is the case, as the leader, you must be prepared to modify the Family Support assignments to accommodate the realities of the participants in your group. Such individuals could have the option of choosing you or someone else from the group to work with, as they go through the weekly Family Support assignments. Be flexible, but please still prod all participants to do this part of each lesson.



PASS COMPLETION

In football, a pass is said to be completed when an offensive player successfully receives the ball and moves forward with it.

At the conclusion of each lesson, weekly “homework” will be assigned to enlist each participant in moving forward with apologetics “practice” in their day-to-day experiences.

Change doesn’t happen in a vacuum, and biblical confidence is not achieved without facing some resistance and testing your training a little. This part of each lesson raises the bar for learning and

application of knowledge and separates this curriculum from many others as it strives to be focused on the purpose and results of effectively engaging the culture.

Note: The culminating Pass Completion activity for this unit is for the students to participate in a community outreach activity in which they go to a local park, mall, parking lot, or similar area where they will encounter people to pose selected questions with the goal of generating a spiritual conversation. Start planning early for this event. See lesson 10 for additional ideas and considerations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Optional Activities

Participants in your family or group may desire to dig deeper into the content of this curriculum. For some of the lessons, optional activities have been included. All Optional Activities will be referenced in the Leader’s Guide and are included within the resources (via QR code or thumb drive) if they include handouts. Otherwise, QR codes or links will be provided within the lesson content.

For students who take the time to do optional activities, you may want to have them come to the meeting 15–20 minutes early to discuss what they are learning. Having a separate time with them will encourage their faith and may spur others to want to put forth the effort.

Youth groups can also use the optional activities as a means for students to earn scholarships for Bible camp or a mission’s trip.

Scripture Memorization

As the psalmist writes in Psalm 119:10–11, “With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” We encourage you to begin each lesson with the group reading or reciting 1 Peter 3:15 to stay focused on the goal of this curriculum.

For believers to truly know and live God’s Word, they need to commit it to memory and make it a part of their thinking. In each lesson, the students will be reading and studying multiple verses, giving them exposure to many passages that will equip them for conversations. So, during their Reflection time, each will be asked to choose which verse or verses from the lesson they want to memorize over the next week and to write the reference(s) on the line provided in their workbook. Taking this approach empowers them

in their own spiritual growth and will be more meaningful in the long term.

As the leader, you have an opportunity to provide a level of accountability for their commitment. When a follow-up time is provided for students to report on their Family Support and Pass Completion experiences, include time for reciting the verse(s) to their sharing partner or small group.

Note: The last page of the student workbook contains a chart for documenting and tracking this memory work.

Posters

Among the resources included within the Leader's Kit are five posters, noted with the lesson number in which each is first introduced:

1. The ABCs for the Hope That Is in Us (Lesson 1)
2. Accidental Belief vs. Evidential Trust (Lesson 2)
3. What Is Critical Thinking? (Lesson 4)
4. 6 Principles of Critical Thinking (Lesson 6)
5. 7 Things That Will Help You Share Your Faith (Without Feeling like a Goof) (Lesson 8)

As the leader, decide if you want to have all five posters displayed from the start of the unit or introduce and post them at the beginning of the lesson where these concepts are first addressed. Be sure to take the time to review and refer to them throughout the unit for additional reinforcement of the ideas they present.

More Resources

Many excellent resources are available to train and equip young people to build their knowledge and to be able to give the reason for the hope that lies within them. In unit 1, students will be instructed to download our free app, which will give them access to hundreds of digital resources. Reasons for Hope is also pleased to offer the following print materials for free download (PDFs) or sale (trade books) through our website (www.rforh.com):

PDFs

7 Things That Will Help You Share Your Faith (Without Feeling like a Goof)

Noah's Ark: Is the Record Valid?

Lucy: Unlinked

Is the God of the Old Testament a Moral Monster?

March of Progress . . . DeBunked!

BOOKS

Did Jesus Commit Suicide? And 27 Other Questions Teens Are Asking About the Bible (That Adults Want to Know, Too)—edited by Carl Kerby and Juan Valdes (and written by friends and employees of Reasons for Hope). Note: This book is included as part of the Leader's Kit for this curriculum.

Lucy Unlinked by Carl Kerby

How to Think: A Crash Course in Critical Thinking by Juan Valdes

Reasons for Hope in the Mosaic of Your Life by Carl Kerby

Remote Control by Carl Kerby

The ABCs of Reasons for Hope

Reasons for Hope and the DeBunked brand have a unique three-pronged approach to ministry. Just as learning the ABCs of reading opens doors to a world of knowledge and opportunity, learning the ABCs of Reasons for Hope opens doors to making a strong and effective impact on the culture.

A = Apologetics

Taken directly from the Greek word *apologia* for “defense” in 1 Peter 3:15, apologetics is the art of providing a defense or reasons for the hope that we have in Christ. All that you and your students will be learning in this curriculum should serve to take you through the ministry’s “Know it! Live it! Share it!” cycle to train and equip believers to be prepared apologists.

B = Biblical Worldview

How you see life through the past, present, and future is your worldview. Your worldview drives how you *understand* the past, *make decisions* in the present, and *prepare* for the future. A worldview based on the Bible touches every aspect of your life and uses God’s Word to filter how you interpret the world around you. This curriculum strives to show users a biblical worldview as well as make them aware of areas of their lives that may be tainted by antibiblical worldviews.

C = Critical Thinking

Scriptures such as Acts 17:11 reinforce that God wants us to be active participants in seeking out and learning the truth. We should not just accept what we are taught (whether it’s within our family unit, our church, our school, the news, online, and so on). Instead, we should be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16) by researching, studying, and collecting evidence for ourselves. Then we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free (John 8:32) to live and share that truth.

“To seek truth requires one to ask the right questions” (Suzy Kassem, philosopher, poet, and author). Thinking critically involves knowing what questions to ask to have biblical discernment. Some of the questions taught within this curriculum include these used by Bill Jack, cofounder of Worldview Academy:

- What do you mean by what you’re saying?
- How do you know that what you’re saying is true?
- What difference does what you’re saying make in your life?
- What if you are wrong? (Or what if you’re wrong and you die?)