

Lesson 1: What is COVID-19 and How to Protect Yourself

Introduction

1. Begin by spending a few minutes introducing yourself and getting to know each other. Tell the family that it is important not to panic but also to take appropriate actions to prepare ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually for the effects that COVID-19 will likely have on our lives this year. That is why it is important that we educate ourselves and others in our community. Encourage them to pay attention carefully, because they should try to share what they learn with others in their community. The more people are informed the better.
 2. **What have you heard about COVID-19 and how does that make you feel?**
 3. **Let's begin by sharing something you are thankful for. It's important for our mental health to maintain a positive outlook and not panic.**
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Lesson

1. **What is COVID-19?**
 - a. COVID-19 stands for Coronavirus Disease 2019. It is a new virus that is spreading around the globe and making a lot of people sick. Many people only have mild symptoms but a percentage of people who contract the disease may die.
 - b. Of the people who contract the disease the elderly are most at risk, as well as those who have other serious illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, cancer, or HIV/AIDs.
 - c. COVID-19 originated in China where it is thought to have come from contact with animals. It does not come from Chinese people and it is not because Chinese people are less clean or hygienic than anyone else.
 2. **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**
 - a. Many people will have a cough.
 - b. Many people will have a fever.
 - c. Many infections will be mild, like the common cold.
 - d. Some people may get very sick and develop pneumonia. Symptoms of pneumonia:
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Difficulty breathing.
 - Rapid breathing.
 3. **How is COVID-19 Spread?**
 - a. COVID-19 spreads mostly by coughing and sneezing. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, tiny droplets that may contain the virus are thrown into the air. When those particles land on an opening such as the mouth or nose, it is possible for the virus to enter the body.
 - b. It can spread between people who are in close contact with each other, within about 2 meters.
 - c. It is possible that a person might get infected by touching a doorknob or other object which has the coronavirus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes.
 - d. Currently, the coronavirus is not in Mauritius, but if you have travelled, or been in contact with anyone who has travelled in the last two weeks, you may be at risk for contracting the virus.¹
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Closing

1. **Knowing what we now know about how the virus is spread, how can we protect ourselves?**
 - e. Avoid close contact with those who are sick.
 - f. Cover your cough or sneeze in the fold of your elbow, or a tissue and then throw it in the trash.
 - g. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - h. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
 - i. Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - j. THOROUGHLY wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, when soap/water is not available. (demonstrate)

¹ Facilitator should adjust this accordingly as more news becomes available.

- 2. It is important not to panic. One way to do that is to practice good mental and spiritual health in addition to good physical health. (*Read Isaiah 41:10*) What are God's promises to us that we should all remember?**
- 3. One important way to protect ourselves is by making sure that as many people know this information as possible. Who in your community do you know that you can share this lesson with? Try to share it with them before our next meeting.**
- 4. May I pray for you and your family? Will you pray for me and my family as well?**

Lesson 2: How to slow the spread of COVID-19

Introduction

- 1. How are you and your family doing? How did it go sharing Lesson 1 with friends/family/neighbors?** Take a few minutes to coach the family on how to share the lessons effectively. Remind them to be calm and reassuring.
 - 2. Let's begin the same way we did last time; by sharing something we're thankful for.**
 - 3. I have a funny activity to begin today's lesson!** Find several common, everyday objects. Pens, pencils' ect. (Note: if you use objects in the family's home, be sure to ask their permission and only choose non-breakable things!) Explain that you are going to toss them to a member of the group and that they should catch them.
 - First, toss them one-by-one.
 - Next, toss them again, but this time all at once.
 - What happened when I threw all the objects at once? Was it easier to catch them all together or a little at a time?**
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Lesson

- 1. What happened with the game we just played is exactly what can happen with our doctors and hospitals if we don't all work together. They can only "catch" so many sick people at once before they run out of resources. However, if sick people come into the hospitals only a little at a time, the doctors will be able to help everyone who needs help.**
 - 2. So, what can we do to ensure that sick people come to the hospital only a little at a time, and not all at once?**
 - Only go to the hospital if you are really sick.
 - If you only have mild symptoms, stay home and do not leave your house, not even for work.
 - Do not go to large gatherings or crowded public places.
 - Avoid all unnecessary travel and people who may be sick, or may have travelled to an infected location.
 - If you think you may need to go to the hospital, call first.
 - Self-quarantine (stay home and do not leave) for at least 2 weeks if you think you may have been exposed to the virus.
 - Keep a 2-week stock of food and supplies in case you need to self-quarantine.²
 - 3. Why might it be important to follow these precautions, even if you yourself get sick? Read Eph.2:1-4. What can we learn from this passage?**
 - Because we are all in this together.
 - Because we should not be selfish.
 - We should care more about other people and their needs, instead of just our own.
 - In Mauritius, 20% of the population has diabetes, which puts them at a greater risk. The elderly also are more in need of hospitalization. Even though many of us are young and healthy enough to recover from COVID-19, we should think of those people.**
 - **Take it seriously:** Even if you do not feel very sick, you can still infect someone else for whom it might be fatal. So stay home if you think you might have been exposed.
 - **Don't panic:** If you contract the virus you have a good chance of recovering at home unless you are part of a vulnerable group. So do not go to the hospital unless you need to.
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Closing

- 1. How to know if you should go to the hospital (but call first)?**
 - If you have a previous chronic illness which may put you at greater risk (eg-diabetes)
 - If you have a very high fever that will not go away.
 - If you experience difficulty breathing.
- Offer to help the family increase their preparedness by planning out 2 weeks worth of meals and supplies for a potential quarantine. Make a list with them of all their essentials and staples and ask them when they will have time to go shopping.

² Note that many Mauritians often buy groceries to last for a month (4 weeks) at a time.

3. Remind them that this social distancing only works when everyone practices it, so it is important to spread this information around as much as possible. Encourage the family to continue sharing these lessons with other families in their community.
4. **May I pray for you and your family? Will you pray for me and my family as well?**

Lesson 3: Identifying and stopping misinformation

Introduction

- 1. How are you and your family doing? How did it go sharing Lesson 2 with friends/family/neighbors?** Take a few minutes to coach the family on how to share the lessons effectively. Remind them to offer help where it is needed.
 - 2. As is our habit, let's begin by sharing something we're thankful for.**
 - 3. We have another game to play today. It is called "telephone." Have you ever heard of it?**
 - Explain that you will whisper into the first person's ear and they will share what they have heard with the next person. The person on the end will announce what they heard
 - Was the message that you heard reliable? Why or why not?**
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Lesson

- 1. Much like our game, not every source of information is reliable. Whatsapp and Facebook, for example, are platforms that anyone can use to share whatever information they want, even if it is not accurate. For example, what are some things you have heard about coronavirus on Whatsapp and Facebook?** (Have the family list some examples)
 - 2. Information is often not reliable if it not shared from a reputable source. These are sources that have been subject to rules and procedures to ensure their accuracy. These include sources like...**
 - The World Health Organization (WHO)
 - The Center for Disease Control (CDC)
 - The Mauritian Ministry of Health and Wellbeing
 - Any reputable news outlets, such as Lexpress, BBC, Al Jazeera, or CNN
 - 3. Let's dispel some common pieces of misinformation currently circulating in Mauritius...³**
 - COVID-19 cannot be cured by any home-remedies, including hot water. While many home remedies (ginger tea, etc.) can ease symptoms, none can cure the virus.
 - There are no "secret cases" of COVID-19 currently being hidden by the government or any other group.
 - COVID-19 has not been shown to die out in hot or cold weather.
 - There is currently no evidence to support the notion that COVID-19 was engineered by a terrorist organization or government as a form of biological warfare.
 - 4. Why might it be important to share only information that is true?** (Read Prov. 14:25)
 - Because accurate information can save lives.
 - Inaccurate information can deceive us.
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Closing

- 1. In light of what we've learned today, what are some ways that we can respond to unreliable information when we encounter it in person or on Facebook and Whatsapp?**
 - Simply not share it.
 - In a kind way, tell whoever sent it to you that it is important to only share information from reliable sources .
 - Respond with truth: say something like, "I don't know about that, but the WHO has encouraged all of us to wash our hands for at least 20 seconds and stay home if we suspect we might be sick.
 - When in doubt, call the Mauritian Ministry of Health and Wellness's Coronavirus hotline for up to date, reliable information:
 - 201 2739
 - 201 2792
2. Remind the family you are sharing with that it is important that as many people as possible learn this information. If they have been sharing with another family who has been disinterested in the information, suggest to them that they consider trying to shar with another neighbor or friend. If the family has been interested, ask if they have encouraged that family to then share with another family.

³ Note: If anyone insists on these being true, do not engage in an argument with them. Instead, simply explain the difference between what we FEEL is LIKELY, and what has been PROVEN to be TRUE. Ask which kind of information they think should be shared and what should not.

3. Is it alright if we spend some time together praying for our friends and our country?

Lesson 4: Mental health and freedom from anxiety

Introduction

- 1. How are you and your family doing? How did it go sharing Lesson 3 with friends/family/neighbors?** Take a few minutes to coach the family on how to share the lessons effectively. Encourage them to pray with the family they are sharing with.
 - 2. As is our habit, let's begin by sharing something we're thankful for.**
 - 3. For our last meeting, I'd like to show you a little illustration.**
 - Turn off the lights and ask them to imagine a snake was in the room.
 - Would you prefer that the lights are turned on or remained off? Why?**
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Lesson

- 1. When some dark and mysterious is brought into the light and we can see it clearly—even if it is still dangerous, like a snake—it seems to make us less afraid. How is this like COVID-19?**
 - COVID-19 is dangerous like a snake.
 - Not knowing about the virus is like being in a dark room with a snake.
 - Learning about the virus is like having a light turned on.
 - It is still dangerous, but at least we have some idea of how it might behave and how we can respond to it.
 - Read and discuss Matthew 6:25-34.
 - If this is true what does it teach us about human nature?**
 - If this is true what does it teach us about God's nature?**
 - What can you do this week to put into practice what you have learned about being anxious?**
 - With whom can you share this story so that they can be encouraged too?**
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Closing

- 1. We have come to the end of our lessons about COVID-19.**
 - Remind them again of how important it is that as many people learn this information as possible. Ask them if they would be willing to help spread this information with more people throughout their village. Offer resources, such as lesson sheets, and ask if they would mind staying in touch with you via Whatsapp, phone, or Facebook messenger.
- 2. Did you find these lessons encouraging to you? Would you be interested in continuing to meet? We don't have any more lessons about COVID-19, but we do have many more Bible stories than can impart peace and blessing to your family as you continue to read them.**
 - Get their contact information in the space below and tear the bottom of the sheet off.
- 3. Thank you for learning this material with me. Let's finish by praying with one another.**

(tear here) ↓

Contact Information for a Follow-up Contact

Full Name: _____

Village: _____

Phone #: _____

Whatsapp # (if different): _____

Name on Facebook (if different): _____

Any other important information: _____
