PAGE THREE – WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

NOTE TO LEADERS: This portion of the lesson is shorter and you may want to combine some of the material presented on the previous section PAGE TWO – THE TWO SIDES to allow for the variance in lesson length.

SUPPLIES FOR SESSION THREE

- **Computer and access to Internet**

Note: If you are starting with a new session, remind the group of the agreement to honor one another's opinions and to keep shared ideas in the group. Check in with group members regarding any conversations they might have had with family or friends regarding their understanding of both the scientific and theological side of good and evil.

Prior to gathering the group to review this third page, preview the slide show at the top of the page and become familiar with the following information:

The slideshow displayed at the top of this page contains a number of images that represent the subject of good and evil. These are images that are among the many available in the media and on the Internet and are only a small representation of what youth might encounter. The group will view these images during this portion of the lesson. From the start of the slide show they appear as follows:

A yin yang symbol

A picture of the character Gollum from the "Lord of the Rings"

A picture of the superhero "Superman"

A picture of Mother Teresa

A picture of the brain showing the functions of each area

To begin this portion of the lesson, have page three visible to the group and ask:

Who do you consider to be an example of someone who is good or who has done much good in the world?

Who do you consider to be an example of someone who is evil or who has done much evil in the world?

Who do you consider to have acted in ways you consider to be both good and evil? ***An example might be of someone who has worked to help others but has lied or committed a crime such as drunk driving and injuring another person.***

Next, click on the link about the case of a young teen and read the article aloud to the group or have members of the group take turns reading the article. You may also click on the link to read or review the full article.

Discuss with the group the article and any reactions they might want to share with the group. Ask: If you were a friend of Christopher Tiegreen, how would you feel about his actions? Should he be sent to prison for his actions, or given another chance at receiving help for his condition? ***Help the group members stay focused on the issue of the brain injury and resulting actions of Christopher instead of moving into a debate about the justice system.***

Continue discussion as time allows.

Next, return to page three of the lesson and share the remaining information with the group.

Ask: How might a person of faith view the case of Christopher Tiegreen?

Allow all answers and encourage the group to return to PAGE TWO – THE TWO SIDES and review the religious viewpoints presented. Alternately you may want to look at lesson three "I Believe in the Holy Spirit" to also consider ways that Christians view how God acts in the world and is involved in human behavior.

Discuss the ways that both sides of biology and theology might agree or disagree with the decision that Tiegreen is mentally competent and accountable for his actions. ***Help the group understand that both the biological and theological sides might have opposing views. Biologically, he was considered to be impaired by a neurobiologist and competent by a psychologist. Theologically, he might be viewed as having committed a serious sin and therefore evil, or as the Dalai Lama states: "We cannot view that individual as 'an evil***

person,' intrinsically and permanently evil, because there is always the potential or possibility that a new set of conditions will come into play and that very same person may no longer engage in the evil behavior."

Next, have the group look at the slideshow at the top of the page, and ask that everyone wait until all pictures are viewed before making comments.

Invite the group to respond to the images and allow time for each member to add to the conversation.

Using the information provided at the beginning of this session, talk about each of the images. (Remind the group to be respectful of each other's response.) The white dots that appear at the lower right of the slideshow can be used to select and navigate through the ten images.

Ask the group to share what each image might mean to them, or how the image might cause them to respond to the understandings of good and evil. Use the following as prompts for discussion:

A yin yang symbol is often associated with positive vs. negative, good vs. evil, darkness vs. light in life. Use the link below to read a history of the symbol:

http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/653297/yinyang

The picture of Gollum might represent the struggle of good and evil within each person. Gollum was obsessed with taking possession of the evil and powerful ring that Frodo was trying to return to the fires of Mordor.

While Frodo was considered to be good in his quest to destroy the evil power of the ring, he also became overwhelmed by its evil power. Was Frodo good or evil?

The picture of Superman might represent the power of good to overcome evil in the world. It might also be an example of altruism as Superman often places his life at risk in order to save others. Does the power of good always win?

Mother Teresa is an icon of being a good person who has given their life to help others. For some this might be an example of the good that exists within each person. Do all people have the potential to do the same?

The picture of the brain might represent the side of science that claims only a biological explanation for behavior. Are we a product of the workings of the brain, or are there religious influences for how we choose to behave?

To close the session, talk about what these images might promote that is challenging or helpful to the conversation about scientific and religious views of good and evil. Ask that they spend time at home looking at the website and researching other information about ideas covered in the lesson. Ask each member to bring a copy of any images that represent their understanding of the material.