

Going through the Motions

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 3**Focus:**

Hold on to God's ways.

Lesson 3**Bible Basis:**

Isaiah 1:1-5, 11-20

Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

Take your evil deeds out of my sight!
Stop doing wrong, learn to do right!
—Isaiah 1:16b-17a

As they explore holding on to God's ways, students will watch a video and think about activities they do often and how "going through the motions" affects what they do.

Materials:

- Index cards
- Pens/pencils
- Internet access
- Whiteboard and markers (or screenshared document)

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class. As students are entering and getting settled, ask your students to share something that they do so well that they could practically do it in their sleep. Answers could include simple things like brushing their teeth or things like shooting a layup or playing a scale on their musical instrument. Once everyone is settled and has had a chance to share, ask:

- **How did you learn to do those things so well?** (Answers may include: I've done it so many times, practice, I'm just naturally good at it, etc.)

In his book *Outliers*, author Malcomb Gladwell discusses an idea that's become increasingly popular in recent years: the theory that it takes 10,000 hours to completely master a skill to the highest level. Gladwell's rule doesn't apply to mastering every skill. For example, you can learn to drive a car proficiently in far less time. Instead, it applies to having "world-class expertise" in a particular skill. This could be something like mastering the cello to the level of playing in an elite orchestra or mastering swimming to the level of being able to compete worldwide.

Although it doesn't take 10,000 hours to master just anything, developing new skills still requires time. Let's take a look.

Play the following video [0:51]:

Forget 10,000 hours, focus on the first 20

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/KHI0k-3rmsQ>

Mastering a skill or hobby requires time, discipline, and dedication. It doesn't happen overnight! This time and determination is also true of our spiritual practices, such as reading scripture and attending worship.

➤ **Think about the worship service at our church. Let's see if we can "map it out." What happens first?** (As your students respond, write or diagram their responses on the whiteboard or screenshared document. Ask your students to detail as much as they can about your congregation's normal worship service. Continue until you have a good outline of the service. This could be fairly short or long, depending on your congregation's worship style.)

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home.)

➤ **Now, think about your relationship with God. What things are part of your regular relationship? Take a minute to "map it out" on your index card.** (Tell students if they don't have a relationship with God, they can map out what they think a relationship might look like. Students will likely include items such as reading the Bible, praying, attending worship, helping others, etc.)

Going to church services is something many of us do over and over again. Our relationships with God might also be the same way. While it's good to practice spiritual rhythms, sometimes, we can start to feel like they get repetitive. It can be easy for us to just "go through the motions," like we would when we brush our teeth. God wants more from us than just mindless worship though. Today, we'll look at what God had to say to the Israelites when they were just going through the motions.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher's guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

Going through the Motions

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STEP 4 

Lesson 3**Focus:**

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Lesson 3**Memory Verse:**

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Materials:

- Index cards (1 per student)
- Pens/pencils (1 per student)

If your class is meeting online, invite your students to bring supplies with them to class.

Today we learned that God wants us to stop doing evil and start doing good—not just going through the motions, but ACTUALLY doing good. At church, going through the motions doesn't fool God.

It can be easy to convince those around you—your teachers, ministers, parents, and friends—that your good deeds and worship are genuine, but God's not fooled. God knows what is going on in our hearts, and that's what concerns Him the most.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home.) Have students fold index cards in half (long edges together) and then unfold them. Students may want to spread out during this activity for a private moment with God. Ask them to create two columns. In one column, have them write a list of the good things they do. This could include things like doing well in school, babysitting their siblings, going to church, volunteering, etc. Ask your students to look over the list and think about whether they are genuinely doing those things for the glory of God, or if they're just going through the motions. In the second column, have them write a way that they can focus more on doing that activity for God's glory.

Have a volunteer read Isaiah 1:16-18 to the group. Have your students turn their paper over to the blank side. Ask them to prayerfully consider some of the wrong things they have been doing that God is calling them away from. Ask them to write those things in the first column. In the second column, they should write something they can do God's way instead of that wrong action. Challenge them to follow through with God's way this week.

When everyone has had enough time to think through their lists, come back together as a whole group. Invite students to share one or more of the things they wrote down, but don't force anyone to share; be prepared to share your own list as well.

End by praying as a large group, thanking God that when we repent of our sins, He forgives us and makes us white as snow again. Ask God to help each person with a fresh start this week of doing things God's way.

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