



SESSION TWENTY-EIGHT:
rising tension

SESSION OVERVIEW

SUPPLIES

- ▶ **Echo the Story DVD/video** for this session
- ▶ **Echo the Story Sketch Journals** for every participant
- ▶ Markers, pens, and colored pencils

1 **rewind** THE STORY [7 MINUTES]

The Story So Far video begins with a two-minute interaction for your group. Following this interaction, the video will show a fast-paced, animated review of the previous sessions' stories.

2 **prepare** FOR THE STORY [10 MINUTES]

Participants will draw their own version of this session's story symbol in their Sketch Journals. Then, a participant will read a section from the Sketch Journal that helps ready the group for imaginative listening.

3 **imagine** THE STORY [5 MINUTES]

The leader will now tell this session's Bible story. A carefully crafted narrative script of the story is provided in this Leader Guide.

4 **capture** WHAT YOU NOTICE [5 MINUTES]

The leader will ask someone of a different gender to do a second telling of the story. During this telling, participants will use their Sketch Journals to capture aspects of the story that stand out to them.

5 **remix** THE STORY *TIME PERMITTING [10 MINUTES]

Participants will be invited to choose from two REMIX activities (included in the Sketch Journal) that guide them to retell part of the Bible story in their own unique way.

6 **connect** TO YOUR STORY [20 MINUTES]

Finally, the leader will guide a group dialogue where participants are asked to share their observations and insights from the story. Dialogue questions are provided in this Leader Guide.

THE STORY SO FAR VIDEO

Leader Says:

Right now we're going to continue our journey through the Bible.

We're going to start with a short video. The first two minutes give you a chance to answer a question with a partner.

After the timer finishes, the next part of the video will start right away, reviewing the stories from our last few sessions. So find a partner and get ready, because this video moves really fast. You'll have to pay attention and listen carefully. *Are you ready?*

► CUE: Play The Story So Far video for this session.

Even though this is written like a script, please personalize the "Leader Says" parts. You'll be more effective if you're not just reading directly from the page!



prepare FOR THE STORY

DRAW THE STORY SYMBOL

- ▶ CUE: If you collected the Sketch Journals last session, pass them out to each participant. Remember to give Sketch Journals to any new people joining your group. Provide pens, markers, and colored pencils for participants to use.

Leader Says:

Our Sketch Journals are an important part of our Echo experience. They'll give us space to express our creativity, explore our questions, and capture the thoughts and ideas that these stories spark in us.

Each story will have its own **symbol** as a visual reminder of what happens in the story. Right now, turn to **page 56** and *draw your own version* of the symbol for the next story: RISING TENSION (palm branch) in your Sketch Journal.

You may be wondering why we are redrawing this symbol when it's printed on the next page. When we each create our *own* version of this story's symbol it helps embed this image in our minds and helps get our **creativity flowing** for the rest of the activities we'll do later.

The goal isn't to copy the symbol—*be creative and make it your own!*

- ▶ CUE: Don't spend a lot of time on this activity—*two minutes or less.*

THE BIBLE IS LIKE . . .

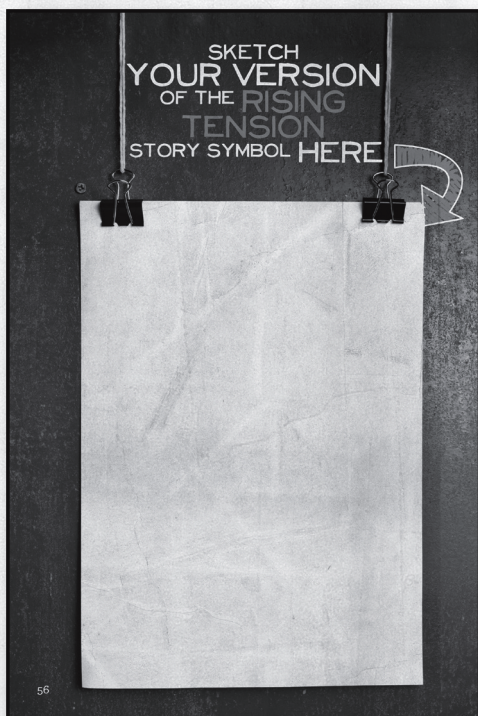
Leader Says:

Each session of Echo will invite us to experience a story from the Bible. But before we dive into each story, we'll slow down and take time to *prepare ourselves*. To help us do this, we'll compare the Bible to a different image or object.

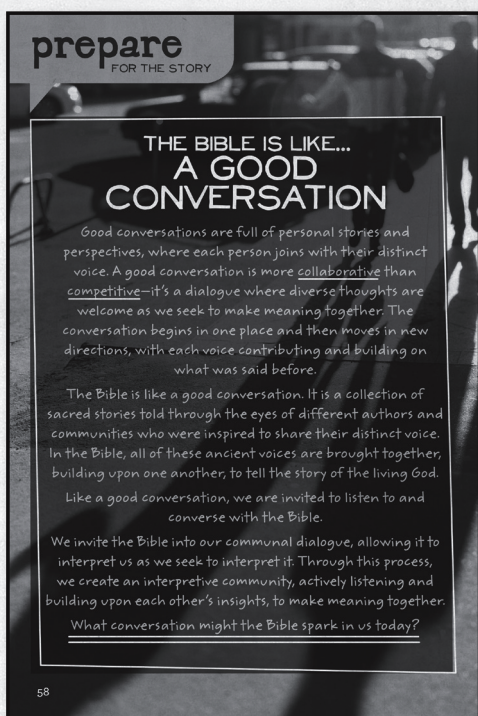
The image for this session is **a good conversation**.

Let's hear more about this from **page 58** of your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ CUE: Ask for a volunteer from your group to read page 58 of their Sketch Journal.



Encourage participants to draw their own version of the story symbol, regardless of their artistic ability. The goal is not to create an exact replica but to capture your own interpretation.



ABOUT THIS STORY [read silently]

Leader Says:

Take a moment **in silence** to look at the **ABOUT THIS STORY** section on **page 59** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty seconds of silent reading, move to the next section. (You don't need to discuss the "Think About" question.)

IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

Leader Says:

When we share stories with one another we naturally engage in imaginative listening, putting ourselves in the scene and experiencing it from different points of view. As we listen to the next story, use the same imaginative listening, asking yourself what this story would look, sound, and feel like. Use your imagination to unleash your senses as you listen to the story.

Let's slow down and prepare ourselves for the next story. Push out any distractions and use your imagination to enter the story, seeing it come to life in your mind.

You might want to close your eyes or focus on the image on **pages 60-61**. After we hear the story read once, you'll have a chance to capture what you noticed in your Sketch Journal.

Are you ready?

Take a moment of silence. Sit up straight in your chair. Take a deep breath, slow down, and clear your mind. Whisper a prayer asking God to show you something meaningful from this story.

- ▶ **CUE:** After about fifteen seconds of quiet, begin narrating the story.

ABOUT THIS STORY

[read silently]

Ancient Jews traveled to Jerusalem from far away lands to worship and fulfill their religious duties at the Temple. This involved sacrificing pure and healthy animals, which were difficult to bring from great distances. Travelers would exchange their foreign currency to buy animals needed for Temple sacrifices. These kinds of transactions were an accepted part of the Jewish sacrificial system during the time of Jesus.

In our next story, Jesus has a "temple tantrum," marching in to the Temple courtyard and turning over the tables to disrupt the moneychangers. Why did he do this?

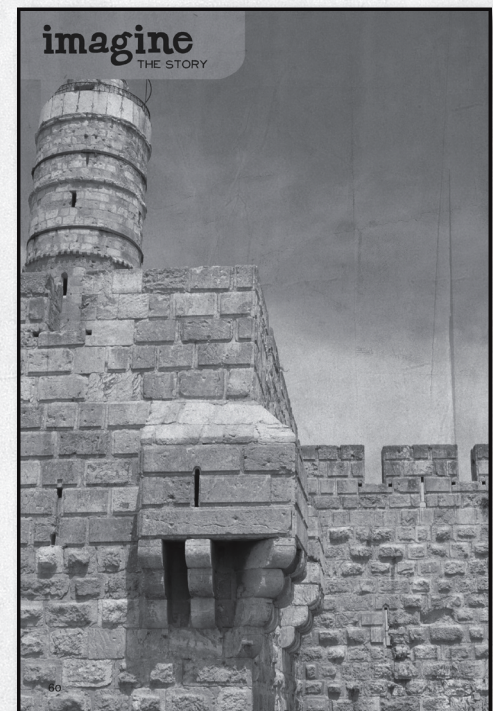
Some scholars believe that the exchange rates and costs for animals were intentionally marked up to take advantage of customers who had no other options. This also caused great hardship for the poor, who could not afford the high costs.

But many scholars believe that Jesus' actions were more about a disapproval of the entire approach of animal sacrifice and how it had become a lifeless ritual.

Whatever reason Jesus has for chasing merchants out of the Temple, it is clear that he is calling for a change in the way people understand and connect with God.

THINK ABOUT:
What injustices in our world today do you think make Jesus angry?

rising tension 59



imagine THE STORY

Don't just read this story;
bring it to life with
your voice!

Leader Narrates:

PROLOGUE: A GROWING THREAT

Jesus had been traveling throughout Israel for almost three years, healing people and teaching about God's kingdom.

Some of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders were angered by his actions. The Pharisees believed that Jesus was breaking God's laws and misleading people. Other Jewish leaders feared that Jesus was stirring a revolt that would cause the Romans to remove them from their positions of power. Because of this, a group of Jewish leaders gathered to try and stop Jesus.

SCENE ONE: DINNER WITH THE PHARISEES

Despite the rising tension, Jesus continued to meet with the Pharisees and even dined in their homes. At one of these meals, Jesus reclined at the table without performing the hand-washing ceremony required by Jewish custom before a meal.

The Pharisee hosting the dinner was shocked to see Jesus do this. So Jesus said to those around the table, *"You Pharisees are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but the inside is still filthy. Your lives are just like that—so clean when people are watching, but inside you're full of hate, greed, and pride. You love to sit in seats of honor and power. If you want to be clean, stop ignoring justice and the love of God. Give to the poor."*

The Pharisees and religious leaders were extremely offended by Jesus' words.

But Jesus continued, *"You're worse than your ancestors in Israel; you have great knowledge about the things of God, but you don't live in the ways of God's kingdom. In fact, you keep other people from living in them!"*

After he said this, Jesus got up to leave. As he walked out, the Pharisees and leaders became hostile, questioning Jesus and trying to get him to say something they could use against him.

SCENE TWO: TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

When it came time for the annual Passover festival, Jesus and his disciples, and Jews from all over the land, traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate.

As they journeyed, Jesus told two of his disciples, “Go into the village ahead. As you enter, you’ll find a young donkey tied up that no one’s ever ridden. Bring it to me.”

The two disciples found the donkey just as Jesus said and brought it back to him. They spread their clothes over the donkey’s back for Jesus to ride on.

As Jesus got closer to Jerusalem, crowds lined the streets to see him. People spread their coats on the ground in front of Jesus to honor him. They waved palm branches as a symbol of victory—many hoped that Jesus was their new king, who’d overthrow the Roman Empire and reestablish Israel’s kingdom.

But Jesus was riding on a donkey—a symbol of humility and peace. This was much different from the way Roman generals and kings entered Jerusalem. They rode in on mighty horses in a military procession.
[pause]

When Jesus’ followers began to sing and shout, *“Glory and blessings to God’s new king!”* some of the Pharisees in the crowd demanded that Jesus tell them to stop singing and praising him.

Jesus answered, *“If the people are quiet, then the stones along the road will start cheering!”* [pause]

When Jesus saw the city of Jerusalem up ahead, he started to weep.

As he looked toward to city, Jesus said, *“If only you had recognized the way to true peace. But now it’s too late. Peace is hidden from you. Before long, your enemies will crush you . . . all because you didn’t see God’s messenger right in front of you.”*



imagine THE STORY

SCENE THREE: JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

In Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple courts and saw merchants selling animals for sacrifice and dealers exchanging foreign money.

So Jesus made a whip with some rope and chased the merchants and their animals out of the Temple. Then, he flipped over the moneychangers' tables, scattering their coins all over the ground!

"Get these things out of here!" Jesus said. "Stop turning God's house into a marketplace!"

Seeing this, his disciples remembered how passionate Jesus was about the Temple being a place where people were consumed with a love of God, not just keeping rituals.

But some Jewish leaders who were watching demanded, *"What right do you have to do this? Prove that God has given you authority by showing us a miracle!"*

"All right," Jesus said to them. "Tear down this Temple. Then, I will raise it back up again in three days."

"What?" the leaders yelled. "It took forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?"

It was only later that disciples of Jesus realized that he wasn't talking about the Temple building, but about himself. [pause]

While in Jerusalem, Jesus taught outside the Temple each day. This made some of the religious leaders very upset, so they began to plan ways to stop him.

But the crowds continued to be captivated by Jesus' teaching.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Leader Says:

Take a moment to close your eyes and let the story replay in your mind. Pay attention to what stands out to you from the story.

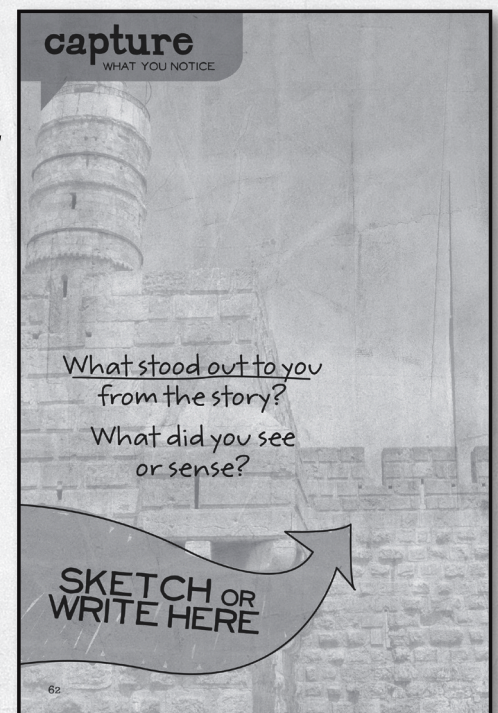
- ▶ CUE: After fifteen to twenty seconds, transition to the second reading.

SECOND TELLING & CAPTURING

We're going to listen to the story one more time, but this time with a **different voice telling it**. During this telling of the story turn to **pages 62-63** and write or draw the words or images that come to mind. Use these pages to capture anything that you notice—even if it seems like a small detail.

Use sketches or words—however you best express what stands out to you from this story.

- ▶ CUE: For this second telling, use a storyteller of a **different gender** from the person who read the first time. *Different voices help people to listen with fresh ears.*



REMIX ACTIVITIES

Leader Says:

Now that we've heard the story twice and begun to capture what we noticed, let's REMIX the story. There are two REMIX activities, designed to help you retell part of the story in your own unique way.

There is a **drawing activity** on pages 64-65 and a **creative writing activity** on pages 66-67.

These are not fill-in-the-blank activities! These activities are designed to help you express yourself and share what you see in the story.

Or if you'd prefer, you may instead **continue to develop** your thoughts and drawings from the CAPTURE pages you just worked on.

Whatever you choose, take the next ten minutes to **use your imagination** to create your REMIX and then we will share them with each other. Invest yourself honestly in this and you will be surprised at your insight and creativity.

► **CUE:** After ten minutes (or less if your group finishes sooner), go to the next section.

remix THE STORY

From the next few pages, choose a REMIX activity—either DRAWING or creative WRITING—and start REMIXING!

DRAWING: POINT OF VIEW

- 1 Draw Jesus' entry into Jerusalem from the following points of view: a Pharisee, a person in the crowd, one of Jesus' disciples, and the donkey.
- 2 Use your creativity to capture this event from each character's unique point of view. Add a short caption next to each picture.

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remix THE STORY

CREATIVE WRITING: WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

- 1 Read Luke 19:28-40.
- 2 Fill in the thought bubbles for the following characters: a Pharisee, a person in the crowd, one of the disciples, the donkey. Reflect on the story and use your creativity to capture what they were thinking. Add as much detail as you can fit!

LUKE 19:28-40

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this, "The Lord needs it." So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

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RAPID-SHARE

Leader Says:

In a moment you will quickly share what you've written and drawn on your CAPTURE and REMIX pages. Remember to encourage each other . . . and not make fun of anyone's art or ideas.

This is a special **rapid-share** where you will each have **twenty seconds to share what you've created**.

Who would like to go first?

- ▶ **CUE:** After everyone has shared his or her CAPTURE or REMIX, begin the dialogue.

GROUP DIALOGUE

Leader Says:

Now we'll share as a group. This time is about sharing observations and **seeing the story through one another's eyes**.

Remember to write down things that connect with you from this time on **page 68** of your Sketch Journal.

- + So what stood out to you from this story?
- + What did this story make you wonder about?
- + Who'd like to share something you've written or drawn from the CAPTURE or REMIX sections?

Leader Says:

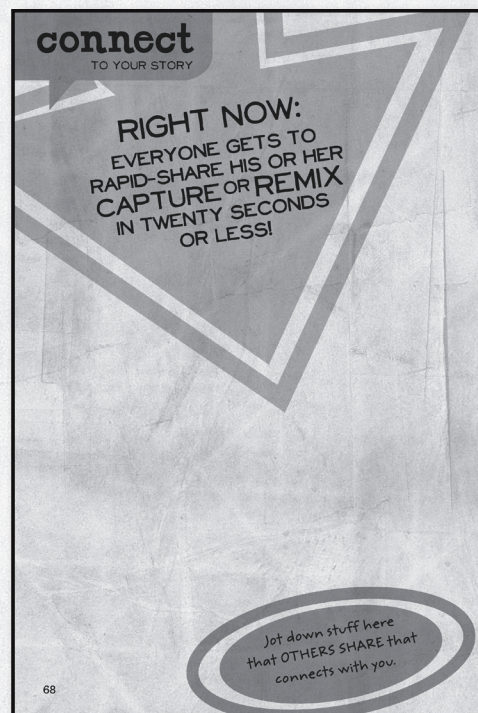
I have a few more questions for you about this story. I want us to see this story through each other's eyes, so it is important for you to share what you noticed, even if it is something small.

The first scene described Jesus confronting the Pharisees' hypocrisy at a dinner party.

- + What would it have been like to be a dinner guest at this meal?

DIALOGUE PREP

1. There are probably more questions here than you'll have time to ask. Pick a few questions ahead of time that you want to make sure to ask.
2. Questions in gray and marked with a dash are for follow-up. Ask them as time allows and as they are needed.



connect TO YOUR STORY

- + Why do you think Jesus was so confrontational with the Pharisees?
- + What do you think the disciples were thinking when they heard their teacher offend the religious leaders like this?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

Scene two describes Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey.

- + What do you think it would have been like to be in the crowd as Jesus entered Jerusalem?
 - Would you have stood and shouted? Found a place to take it all in? Or stayed away to avoid the crowd?
 - Why do you think people were so excited to see Jesus?
- + When Jesus saw Jerusalem he began to weep. Why do you think it brought him to tears?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?

The final scene describes Jesus confronting merchants and clearing the Temple.

- + Why did Jesus become so angry when he entered the Temple court?
- + How would you describe Jesus in this scene? Say the first thing that comes to mind.
- + What do you think this scene shows us about God?
- + In your own words, why do you think Jesus was at the center of so much rising tension among the Pharisees and religious leaders?

FINAL QUESTION

Take a quiet moment to think about this final question:

- + What does this story say about us? About you?

Write a quick response on **page 69** in your Sketch Journal.

- ▶ **CUE:** After twenty to thirty seconds of quiet, ask a few participants to share. Encourage participants to personalize their ideas using “I” and “me” instead of “you” and “we” to keep them from being overly general or preachy.

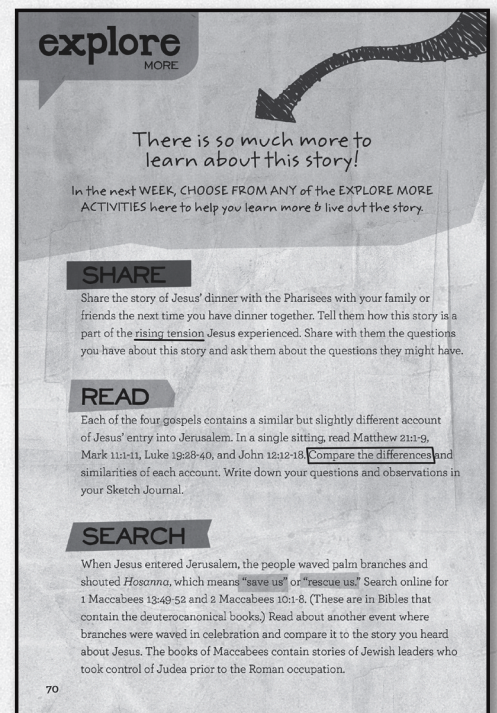
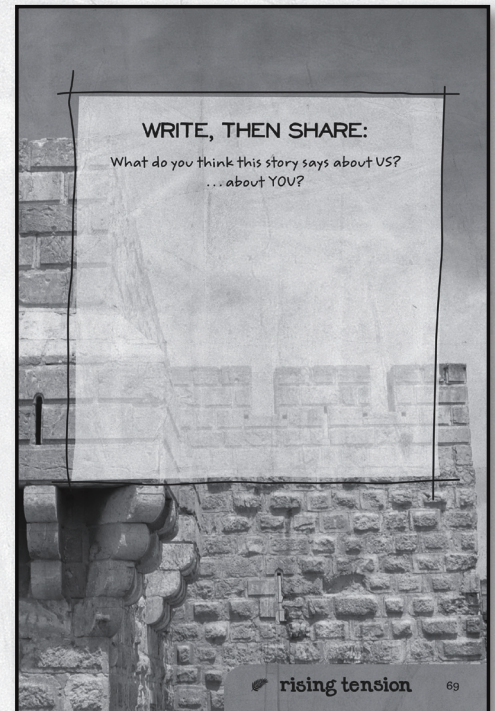
Leader Says:

This was a really meaningful time. *Thank you!* You did a great job. I’m looking forward to gathering together again so we can experience the next story.

If you’d like to learn more about this story, there’s a section called EXPLORE MORE on **pages 70-71** of your Sketch Journal.

You are welcome to take your Sketch Journal with you and try some of these activities, but be sure to bring it back for the next story. If you’re worried about forgetting it, you can leave your Sketch Journal with me.

- ▶ **CUE:** To close this session, ask someone to lead the group in prayer.



OPTIONAL QUESTIONS TO GO DEEPER:

- + Take a moment and close your eyes. (Pause, then continue slowly.) Imagine you have a camera and you are watching this story take place right in front of you. Pick a moment in the story to take a picture of. (Pause for ten seconds.) Do you have your picture? Who would like to share what you snapped a picture of?
- + Why do you think Jesus would choose to ride on a donkey, a symbol of peace, as he entered Jerusalem?
- + What does Jesus' anger show us? Is anger a good thing or a bad thing?
- + Why do you think some of the religious leaders were so determined to stop Jesus?