



Sunday School **LESSONS**

FOR ADULTS

VOLUME 24
NUMBER 23



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Contents

TEACHING ADULTS.....	5
How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson.....	5
How to Present a Sunday School Lesson.....	5
HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING ADULTS	6
HOW TO PRAY WITH THOSE SEEKING GOD’S FACE	7
TRUST GOD IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES	8
WINING BATTLES THROUGH WORSHIP	10
SEEKING THE HEART PURITY	12
THE CONSEQUENCES FOR SIN	14
PRIDE BRINGS DESTRUCTION	16
BE CONFIDENT, GOD IS FAITHFUL TO US.....	18
GOD HIMSELF WILL PROVIDE THE LAMB.....	20
GOD CAN USE THE PAIN AND HARDSHIPS TO BLESS OTHERS	22
BE COURAGEOUS IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS	24
GOD’S PROVISION OF SALVATION	26
THE LIFE THAT GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO LIVE BEFORE HIM AND WITH EACH OTHER	28
JESUS PREDICTING HIS IMPENDING DEATH	30
GOD’S ACTS OF MERCY	32
JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM AS KING	34
JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE.....	36
BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS	38
JESUS’ CLOSEST DISCIPLE DISOWNED HIM.....	40
GOD’S PROVISION OF SALVATION	42
JESUS BREAKS THE POWER OF DOUBTS.....	44
JESUS’ FORGIVENESS CHANGES A PERSON’S LIFE.....	46
ASCENSION & WAIT FOR HOLY SPIRIT.....	48
THE CHURCH IS JESUS’ REPRESENTATIVE ON EARTH	50
LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT	52
CHRISTIANITY CAN LEAD TO PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING	54
GOD CAN CHANGE ANYONE’S HEART	56
THE TRIUNE GOD	58
JESUS CHRIST	60
HOLY SPIRIT	62

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE.....	64
SIN, ORIGINAL AND PERSONAL	66
ATONEMENT	68
PREVENIENT GRACE.....	70
REPENTANCE.....	72
JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, ADOPTION	74
DAY OF PENTECOST.....	76
THE CHURCH	78
BAPTISM	80
THE LORD'S SUPPER	82
JESUS KNOWS YOUR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS	84
JESUS IS COMING TO RESCUE CHRISTIANS AND DEFEAT THE BEAST	86
RESURRECTION, JUDGMENT, AND DESTINY	88
GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES	90
EXPRESSING KINDNESS IN HARDSHIP MOMENTS TO OTHERS	92
GOD CALLS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES INTO REDEMPTIVE SERVICE.....	94
GOD WILL SOMETIMES ANSWER SELFISH PRAYERS	96
OPPORTUNITIES AND DANGERS OF LIVING AS EXILES.....	98
GOD'S PERFECT HOLINESS AND HUMAN WEAKNESS	100
CHRISTIANS FACE PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH.....	102
GOD WILL RESTORE THE HUMBLE PERSON	104
PROPHETS SPEAK OF JESUS AS A REDEEMER	106
THE BIRTH OF JESUS	108
GOD COMES TO EARTH IN JESUS TO MAKE A WAY FOR SALVATION	110

TEACHING ADULTS

There are two qualities necessary to be a Sunday school teacher: You must love God and love people. The most important thing you need to do is to help those in your class experience the love of God. You can do this by living out your relationship with Jesus in front of them and by teaching them to have their relationship with God.

Follow the instructions given on *How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson*. Then follow the guidelines on *How to Present a Sunday School Lesson*:

How to Prepare a Sunday School Lesson The Start of the Year

At the start of this year of teaching, take about two hours to put all of the things that you would normally use at Sunday school in one packet or box. This will cut down on time each week that might otherwise be spent looking for the various items since you will know where they are.

Keep a record of addresses, birthdays, and contact details of all regular attendees and visitors in your class.

Briefly read through the whole book of lessons to get an idea of the various monthly emphases. This will give you an overview and a sense of direction. You will know how many lessons there are on each topic and not get ahead of yourself in the teaching.

The Two Hours Each Week

30 minutes **Read through the lesson and get introduced to it.** On Sunday afternoon, a full week before you teach the lesson, spend time getting acquainted with it. Pray for God to give you wisdom and insights into the best way of presenting the material to your class.

10 minutes **Record your thoughts and ideas throughout the week.** Keep a small Sunday school notebook or paper with you. As an idea comes to you, write it onto this paper so you will remember it later.

20 minutes **Read the Bible passage 3 or 4 times during the week.** Allow God's Word to change you as you read and meditate on it. This reading will allow the truth that you want to teach your class to impact *your* life first.

50 minutes **Bring your lesson together.** Get everything that you will need from your resource packet. Read through your notes and organise the lesson into a format that suits you and that you will be able to follow and understand best.

10 minutes **The last- minute check-up.** This is the last thing that you do before you go to class on Sunday morning. Make sure that you have your Bible, your lesson, and any other materials you need. Review your outline or notes in your leader's guide one last time. Finally, take a minute or two to commit this lesson to the Lord and ask Him to use you. You have probably already prayed this several times during your devotions, but acknowledge your dependence upon Him once more.

How to Present a Sunday School Lesson

Learning needs to take place on all levels: emotional, spiritual, social, and mental. Christian Education intends to provide an interaction with the Truth of the gospel in such a way as to change the lives of the students. It is not enough to know and understand a concept mentally, the truth must affect

every aspect of a person's life, from the way they think or feel about a subject to the way they respond and treat other people.

Your lesson time should be carefully planned and organised to put into practice your preparation and thought. We would like to suggest the following basic outline for your Sunday school class time. Times given are based on an hour class. Numbers in parentheses are for 45 minutes classes.

Arrive at least ten minutes before class to prepare your teaching area and set out any lesson materials that you may need.

Use the first **10 minutes** to greet your students as they arrive. Allow a time of informal fellowship and discussion of events of the past week. Have the class offer various prayer requests. Start the lesson with prayer, allowing class members to pray for the different requests. Take attendance and receive the offering. Follow-up on any assignment from last week and review last week's lesson.

Do the **INTRODUCTION** section during the next **15 (10) minutes**. Allow time for thinking and reflection; do not expect immediate responses to every question or activity. Feel free to make adjustments so the activities will be more relevant to your students' lives.

The next **15 (10) minutes** should be spent on the **CONTENT** section. Remember not to PREACH or READ to them. Present the lesson in your own words.

The next **15 (10) minutes** should focus on **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**. Emphasize the importance of allowing the truth to penetrate the lives and behaviours of each one in their everyday life.

During the last **5 minutes**, close with prayer and clean up the class area.

Review the success of the lesson as soon as you can. Spend a few minutes making a note of what worked and what didn't for future reference. Remember Sunday school teaching is all about building strong relationships with God, fellow Christians, and other people.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING ADULTS

The Fellowship Factor

Friends are the main reason that most people choose a church. From 75 to 90% of the people who become church members already have friends within the congregation. Despite the importance of good teaching in growing a Bible Fellowship group, good relationships are even more important! Fellowship is *not* something we do just to have a good time. A Christian fellowship is an act of ministry because it helps people to have a sense of belonging.

To be an effective leader of an Adult Bible Fellowship group (Sunday school class) you should make it a high priority to develop and utilise the leadership skills of others in your class: * *Involve them*: You can't do it all! The involvement of your group members can deepen their commitment and develop their leadership skills; * *Affirm them*: Show your appreciation for your officers and leaders, and give them positive feedback; * *Empower them*: Don't just give them a title, allow them to do the job; * *Recognise them*: Don't let work done behind the scenes go unnoticed. Say 'thank you' often.

Spiritual Formation Foundations

The three steps of spiritual transformation:

- *Believing*: Faith in Christ cannot be separated from the Word. The proclamation of the Good News requires a response (see Romans 10:17).
- *Belonging*: We need each other! We need the example and support that come from the community. It is important to know that we belong.
- *Becoming*: God isn't through with any of us. We are all in a process. When we are serving Him and living out our faith, we are in a place where He can work in us.

The goal of every class session is an obedient response to the truth of God's Word. Simply sharing information cannot satisfy our purpose. It is not enough for the truth to be discussed or examined or even acknowledged. We have the privilege of dealing with realities so significant that they demand a

response. That which begins as an exercise of reason should end with an exercise of faith. Our aim is for the truth of the Word to be internalised as belief and externalised as action.

The purpose of your class group is life transformation. As a leader, you will have the joy of seeing your investment in others produce remarkable changes in their living . . . sometimes. But you will also experience the pain of serving some who appear to be unchanged. How should you respond to those who seem unresponsive? Continue to be a faithful teacher and a true friend. Continue to look for opportunities to get close to them. Continue to trust God to do His good thing in the lives of those you serve!

Memory Verse

Putting God's Word to memory is one of the best defenses we have against temptation. The Psalmist understood this, centuries ago when he said: 'I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you' (Psalm 119:11). It is true for God's people in every age. Encourage your class to memorize the *Memory Verse* regularly.

Reaching Beyond Ourselves

Service to others is not an extra to be tagged on to what we do now and then. It is an expression of who we are. Paul tells us to *serve one another in love* (Galatians 5:13). Your group is a perfect arena for participation in Christian service. Thriving groups will always offer some kind of opportunity for meaningful involvement in ministry. Those areas of activity are often a key source of vitality within the group.

HOW TO PRAY WITH THOSE SEEKING GOD'S FACE

Be prepared to pray with those who want to pray as the class responds to the lesson in faith. Make arrangements for the pastor and/or other mature believers to help you particularly when many responses are expected.

- a. Realize the importance of the moment and give it full attention
- b. Kneel, sit or stand next to the person you intend to help.
- c. Silently pray for God's guidance and, without interrupting his/her prayer, pray for them too. He or she is the one who must pray and you are only there to assist as the Holy Spirit leads.
- d. Listen to the seeker's prayer to determine if they need help.
- e. When the seeker has finished praying, find out if he has the assurance that his prayer was answered. You do not have to know what the prayer was about.
- f. If the seeker continues to pray without coming to an end, or without being specific:
 - i. Carefully ask if you can help. Once permission has been granted,
 - ii. Find out why he/she came to pray.
 - iii. Briefly guide them with the relevant Scriptures.
 - iv. Together pray for the specific need and trust God with the request.
 - v. When you have finished praying, find out if he has the assurance that his prayer was answered. If not, briefly encourage them to continue trusting God and walking in the light as God leads them. Remind them that it is only by faith in God that they can have victory and, once the work is done in them, the Holy Spirit will testify with their spirit. There may be no physical manifestations but the assurance of the Holy Spirit will always be there.
- g. Remember to give the pastor the names of all the seekers and the outcomes of their prayers.

TRUST GOD IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

Lesson Text: **Joshua 3-4**New Testament Text: **Matthew 3**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. Believe God's promises are true.
- b. Celebrate that God is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.
- c. To bear witness to the world that God is still at work in this world, bringing joy and salvation

Memory Verse:

*Joshua told the people,
"Consecrate yourselves, for
tomorrow the LORD will do
amazing things among you."*
(Joshua 3:5)

INTRODUCTION

After Moses died, God made Joshua the new leader of the Israelites. A new generation has arisen within Israel, and they were ready to trust God and follow their new leader, Joshua, into the Promised Land. The Israelites were glad that God had chosen Joshua to lead them. After wandering in the desert for many years, it was finally time for the Israelites to get another chance to enter the Promised Land. There was *one problem: the Israelites had to cross the Jordan River. The river had flooded, so they could not cross it easily.* God told Joshua to have the priests carry the Ark of the Covenant and walk in front of the Israelites. When the priests reached the river, they were to step into it. When their feet touched the water, the water stopped flowing and started piling up on both sides. The Israelites were able to cross the Jordan River on dry ground. After everyone had crossed, the water started flowing again. The Israelites had finally entered the Promised Land.

I. God's Promises are True

Just as God parted the Red Sea for Israel's escape from Egypt and God parted the Jordan for Israel's safe entry into the Promised Land, so you can believe God will fulfill His promises to you. The Israelites stood at the border of the Promised Land almost 40 years before this event. Because they did not have faith in God's power then, they had to wander in the wilderness 40 years. So also, when we refuse to trust God, when we live in rebellion, we receive setbacks and consequences. Therefore, to walk into the future with God takes faith and courage; however, Christians do not walk into the future alone, but with the power of the Holy Spirit at work in and around them. The stories of the Bible and the testimonies of others aid Christians as

"memorials," to give them courage that the God calling them to walk into the future in faith is the same God who walked with the Israelites through the Jordan River.

Question

What are some ways Christians can help each other develop trust and faith in God?

What does it tell you about the love Jesus had, that he was willing to be baptized and crucified in order to bring you salvation?

II. God is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.

Christians can trust God because history shows that God keeps His promises.

Trusting God is at the heart of having a growing faith in God. Because we are not the first to trust God, we can study the Bible and see how others failed and succeeded at trusting God. Ultimately, we can trust God because God never changes. God is always Holy, Good, and Loving.

Questions

- a. Why is there always a temptation for people to fall away from God, just as the Israelites continually did, even in the days of Jesus?
- b. Why do you think some people who hear the call to repentance are so open to receiving God's forgiveness, while others refuse God's forgiveness?

III. Bearing Witness to the World

Share your testimony with others; in so doing, you are bearing witness to the world that God is still at work in this world, bringing joy and salvation. Therefore, baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments, two outward signs of the inward work of God's grace in a Christian's life. Christians are to have a very practical faith, a faith that lives out in practical ways every day by modelling the life of Jesus. When we share God's love through our actions and words, the Kingdom of God grows.

Questions

- a. Besides these two sacraments, what are some other ways Christians can bear witness to the work of God in their lives?
- b. Who in your life needs to hear your Christian testimony this week?

CONCLUSION

God raised up John the Baptist to prepare the Israelites for the coming Messiah. One of the ways John did this was by baptizing people in the Jordan River. Israelites who recognized their sin and their need for God came and John baptized them. God sent Jesus to John at the Jordan to be baptized so Jesus could fully identify with humanity. Jesus was not sinful, he did not need to repent and be baptized. However, in order to take all our sorrows upon Himself, Jesus submitted to the baptism that God calls all Christians to receive. As Christians it's very important to understand that we should continue to trust God in any circumstance we may face in life, should remember to apply our faith.

WINING BATTLES THROUGH WORSHIP

Lesson Text: **Joshua 6**New Testament Text: **Ephesians 2:1-10**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Celebrate God for keeping promises.
- Rejoice knowing it is by God's power and grace Christians find salvation's victory over sin.
- Worshipping and praising God must be regular habits for Christians.

Memory Verse:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

INTRODUCTION

God promised the Israelites that the land of Canaan was theirs. But the Canaanite people were already living there. That meant the Israelites had to fight for their land. God was on the Israelites' side, so they knew they would win. The first city the Israelites had to conquer was Jericho. This city had very large walls surrounding it. They were nearly twenty feet thick. God told Joshua to have all of the Israelites march around the city. Every day, for six days, the Israelites marched around the city one time. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times. Then, the priests blew their trumpets, and the Israelites shouted a loud war cry. As they shouted, God made the walls of the city start to shake and crack. All at once, the walls came crashing to the ground.

I. God Keeps Promises.

Now that the Israelites have faith in God to fulfill the promises God made, they experience the mighty power of God. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant when they made their marches around the city walls. The Ark of the Covenant represented the presence of God. It is essential for Christians to trust God's words. God gives Christians directions through many ways, including the Bible, prayer, and other Christians. At times Christians may not understand why God is calling them to certain actions, but Christians need to trust God has the wisdom power to accomplish great things through them if they will be obedient.

Questions

- What are some of the reasons the Priests could have given for why they should not walk

around the city walls with the Ark of the Covenant?

- What are some of the reasons why Joshua believed and obeyed God's commands, even though they did not seem to make a lot of sense?

II. God's Power and Grace

It is important for Christians to remember that it is the grace and power of God at work in them, and not their own goodness that brings glory to God. It is important for Christians to not become proud, but remain humble when God works through them in powerful ways.

Therefore, rejoice knowing it is by God's power and grace that Christians find salvation and victory over sin. Obedience to God is an essential quality for Christians. There are many

times in which God will call Christians out of what is comfortable, and ask them to take a risk in order to demonstrate God's love or compassion. This is why Christians need to have a love and trust of God in their hearts, and not just their minds. For it is out of the heart that Christians act.

Questions

- a. What do you think this second generation of Israelites had learned from the first generation about obedience to God's commands?
- b. How can Christians discern God's call in their lives, how can they know when it is God's voice calling them to a certain action?

III. Worshipping and Praising God.

Without regular worship, Christians will experience significant spiritual setbacks.

Therefore, following God is not just a spiritual decision we make, but also has physical implications. As part of the people of God, God calls Christians to be the hands and feet of Jesus. However, we can know God's calling through the means of saying a quiet prayer, other times it means taking a public stand on behalf of God. Worshipping God with other Christians is one of the most important physical actions Christians can take. Therefore, worshipping and praising God must be regular habits for Christians.

Questions

- a. What are some of the small steps of faith Christians can take as they grow in their faith and learn the trust and obedience which will allow them to take large steps of faith?
- b. How can mature Christians help younger Christians understand or discern the work of God in this world?

CONCLUSION

God wants us to know that He has the power to fight and win our battles. Sometimes God will give the Christians very strange instructions for them to go for the battle. Instead of attacking their enemies with their weapons, He will want Christians to worshipping and praising Him.

SEEKING THE HEART PURITY

Lesson Text: **Genesis 4:1-16**New Testament Text: **Ephesians 2:1-10**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Understand that outward sin are manifestations of inward sins.
- Seek heart purity and full surrender to God.
- Pursue reconciliation with anyone with whom you are in conflict.

Memory Verse:

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it." (Genesis 4:7)

INTRODUCTION

Adam and Eve's first two sons were named Cain and Abel. Like many brothers, they were very different. Cain was the oldest and farmed the land. Abel was a shepherd who took care of sheep. Cain and Abel had been working in their fields for a long time, and they decided that they would give an offering to God. They wanted to thank God for His blessings. Cain offered a few of the things he had grown in his field. Abel, on the other hand, offered one of the best sheep from his flock. God was pleased with Abel's offering, but He did not accept Cain's offering. Cain was so jealous of his brother that he took Abel out into a field and killed him. God punished Cain for killing his brother. Cain could no longer live in his home and he would no longer be able to grow good crops.

I. Outward Sin are Manifestations of Inward Sins.

Jealousy and hatred find their ultimate expression in Cain's murder of his brother Abel. Sometimes people mistakenly believe Christianity is simply about living by a set of rules, like the 10 Commandments. However, Christianity is about the Christian giving their heart, soul, and mind to God. Allowing God to bring healing and salvation to all parts of their life results in a life of joy and peace for the Christian. Rather than leaving behind a path of hurt and destruction, the Christian can leave behind a legacy of love and compassion.

Questions

- Besides murder, what are some other ways in which inner hatred and jealousy are manifest in a person's actions?

- What do you think God means when he tells Cain he must "rule over" sin? See (Genesis 4:7)

II. Seek Heart Purity and Full Surrender to God.

When a Christian's heart is full of light, their actions will be pure. When their heart is full of darkness, their actions will be destructive. All people are created and loved by God, whether they are Christians or not. Therefore, God calls Christians to love all people. This is not easy, for there are many differences between people's values, actions, and behaviours. However, when Christians allow God to bring light into their hearts, they are able to love others as God loves them. If Christians do not allow God to bring light into their lives, then their hearts return to being full of darkness. To love all does not mean Christians must

condone how others live. However, Christians must keep their hearts open to the healing work of God so that they are able to find ways to love people who are very different from them. Christians are to be known by their love.

Questions

- a. What is required for a Christian to do in order to refuse to allow bitterness and anger to fester in their hearts?
- b. Why does Jesus teach that hating another person is just as sinful as actually killing them?

III. Pursue Reconciliation.

Christians must ensure to pursue reconciliation with anyone with whom you are in conflict. Look at the situation from their perspective and from God's perspective. Seek to understand how reconciliation can occur. Sometimes

Christians must act in love towards others before they feel love toward them. So also, Christians are called to forgive and be reconciled to others before the other party asks for forgiveness or seeks reconciliation. As these examples show, love is not simply a feeling, love is an action. An action that begins in a person's heart when God forgives them, and then is lived out in the Christian's life.

Questions

- a. What happens if a Christian seeks reconciliation with someone, but that person does not want to be reconciled? (Reconciliation takes two people, asking forgiveness only takes one).
- b. How does putting yourself in the other person's position help the Christian see the conflict more fully?

CONCLUSION

God is calling every Christian to love, forgive and reconcile with every human being. When man sinned against God, He initiated a reconciliation with man. Christian should always act with the love of God. Cain failed to act in love because Jealousy and hatred a result he murdered Abel. Therefore, since we know that outward sin are manifestations of inward sins, we should seek heart purity and full surrender to God. When a Christian's heart is full of light, their actions will be pure. However, Jesus makes it clear that, sin is not just manifested in outward actions, but can also consume the heart. If Christians want to live a God-honouring holy life, they must go beyond simply living by Christian rules, and instead surrender their whole heart to God. In surrendering their heart to God, God can bring purity and joy into their life that will result in the healing of fractured relationships, both human and divine.

THE CONSEQUENCES FOR SIN

Lesson Text: **GENESIS 6**New Testament Text: **1 PETER 3:8-22**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Understand sin spreads quickly, causing great pain and destruction.
- Recognize we are tempted to think we can control sin.
- We must always live lives of righteousness

Memory Verse:

"The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time" (Genesis 6:5)

INTRODUCTION

Noah was a good man. He had a wife and three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. God was very pleased with Noah, but He was angry with the other people on earth because they were very wicked. God told Noah that He was going to destroy all of the human beings and animals that He had made. God was sorry that He had made them. God then told Noah to build a gigantic boat called an ark. The people just laughed at Noah as they watched him build the ark. Soon, they would stop laughing. When Noah finished, God told him to take his family and two of every living creature with him onto the ark. It rained very hard for forty long days and nights. The entire earth was flooded, but Noah and his family were safe in the ark. After the rain, God put a beautiful rainbow in the sky. This is to remind us that He will never flood the earth again.

I. Understand Sin Spreads Quickly

As Christians should understand sin spreads quickly, causing great pain and destruction. With Noah, God decides to begin humanity over again, establishing a covenant relationship with one family, hoping from this one family to create a people who will reject sin and serve God. In order to free man from the punishment of sin, God enters into covenant relationships in which God pledges to bless and protect those who are faithful to him. The first of these covenants God makes is to Noah and his offspring. This time though, instead of simply telling human beings not to sin, God entered into a new kind of relationship with man – a covenant relationship. God told Noah that He was going to destroy all of the human beings and animals that He had made.

God was sorry that He had made them. God then told Noah to build a boat called an ark. Throughout the years to follow, the human race grew and became so sinful that God destroyed the earth and its inhabitants with a great flood, except for God-fearing Noah and his family. God created this covenant in order to make a way for humans to find salvation from their sins. While normally a covenant is a formal relationship between two people, or groups of humans, God choose to establish a covenant with those God created. In this divine/human covenant, God made promises to people, and called on those people to be faithful to the covenant. The ultimate covenant God will make is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. Why did God choose to save Noah's family, and not just completely start over with an all-new humanity?
- b. Why is sin so destructive, why can it not be controlled by human strength and good intentions?

II. Salvation and Victory over Sin.

No human can control sin. Great pain and destruction will grow wherever we allow sin to remain in our hearts. God was long suffering. He warned the people of the coming disaster through the Prophet Noah for 120 years. He showed them the way of salvation. If they would just believe His word and repent, they would enter the ark and be saved. But they would not believe. In their pride, they rejected their only hope of salvation. Only those who believed God's Word and entered the ark were saved. Every other human being died in the devastation.

All of us are born with the stain of sin in our lives. None of us can rid that stain with our good works or attempts at holiness. Our only hope for a life of peace with God and with others is to allow God's forgiveness through Christ to wash us clean and bring us new life. Once saved, we can live lives of joy and peace in the power of the Holy Spirit, even in the midst of a sinful world, because we know our hearts are safe and secure with God.

Questions

- a. What are some examples of the consequences of sin you see in the world around you?
- b. What happen when God's forgiveness of sins takes place in our lives?
- c. Who have been some people in your life who have shown you, by their lives, that a life of joy and peace is possible in this world?

III. Live lives of righteousness.

Believers must always live lives of righteousness, even among those who wish us harm. The Apostle Peter calls on us to "always be prepared to given an answer to everyone who asks to give the reason for the hope that you have." One of the reasons Christians have for hope is we know in Christ God saves us from the punishment for our sins. This gives us strength and hope as we live among people living in sin.

Questions

- a. What are some ways in which you can live with "gentleness and respect," (1 Peter 3:15) and thus show others the love of God?
- b. How can being baptized give testimony to the work God is doing in a Christian's life?

CONCLUSION

While God promised Noah and his offspring God will never destroy humanity again, that does not mean there are no longer consequences for sin. The people of God must still flee from sin, and live lives of righteousness. This kind of righteous life is only possible because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who broke the power of sin.

Lesson	PRIDE BRINGS DESTRUCTION	
05		
	Lesson Text: Genesis 11:1-9	New Testament Text: Acts 2:1-21

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. At Babel, man created a society in which he thought could be their own gods. b. Understand that pride is destructive and therefore sinful. c. Working together to do great things or do terrible things.	: "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." (Proverbs 11:2)

INTRODUCTION
In very early Bible times, all of the people spoke the same language. The people could talk to anyone in the world and they could understand each other. One day, a group of men got together. They decided that they would build a city with a tower that would reach to the sky. If the men did this, people would notice and tell them how great they were. God watched the men as they built the city and the tower. They worked very hard. Everything was going so well that the men thought they didn't need God anymore. They were very proud, and ignored God. God decided to mix up their language. This made it impossible for the men to continue building. God made all the men speak different languages so they couldn't understand each other. This is why the city was called Babel.

I. At Babel, Man Created Name for Himself.

Recognize at Babel, man was trying to create a society in which they thought they could be their own gods. There is a difference between people coming together to do something to bring glory to God, and people coming together do to something to bring glory to themselves. Human beings are supposed to be living in a relationship with God where God blesses them and they honour Him. Instead, these people are attempting to build a great building to declare their own glory, and are therefore breaking covenant with God. Instead of destroying this group of people though, God scatters them across the world, thereby fulfilling the covenant he made with Noah. It is often good for men and women to work together. However, it is not good when they

work together, not to glorify God, but are pridefully, trying to make a name for themselves.

- What are the dangers of bringing glory to ourselves by showing others what we can do under our own power?
- Sin is when we put ourselves before God, what are some modern ways people seek to bring glory to themselves instead of to God?

II. Pride is destructive and sinful.

When we live our lives in right relationship with God, we live our lives with humility, not pride. Man decided they did not need God's protection, but thought if they built a huge Tower, then they would be a great people. God is the Creator and Saviour, we are not gods ourselves. While we can take great joy in the abilities and talents God gives to us, we must

never forget who the giver of the gifts is. He made a great name with Noah and Noah's sons, they decided to stay in one area and create a city where they could create a great name for themselves. The great symbol of their pride was the Tower of Babel. God frustrated the plans of man by making them speak in different languages. Now that they could not all come together to build this tower of pride, they did what God had originally ordered Noah and his sons to do, they scattered across the world. However, it is not good when they work together, not to glorify God, but are pridefully, trying to make a name for themselves.

Questions

- Why is pride such a strong temptation for so many people?
- What is it about fear and insecurity that makes people so vulnerable to the temptation to sin?

III. Working together.

Human beings can work together to do great things (for example, develop vaccines), or they can work together to do terrible things (for example, wars). Find ways you use your gifts and talents to make this world a better place. There are many things that divide people: languages, cultures, politics, finances (the list could go on and on). However, in Christ we can all be one. No matter what our differences are on a human level, we can all be part of the People of God. However, this takes a deep level of humility, and a conscious decision to live our life glorifying God, not ourselves. It is often good for men and women to work together.

Questions

- What are three ways this week you can show compassion and respect to people who are different from you?
- Peter defended the disciples who were being mocked for being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- How can you defend a brother or sister in Christ this week who is being teased or persecuted because of their faith?

CONCLUSION

God's desire for man is not for us to be confused and alienated from God or others. Instead, God wants all people to come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. In the second chapter of Acts, we hear of a reversal of the confusion God brought at the Tower of Babel. On the day of Pentecost people from many different lands heard Jesus' disciples declaring the wonders of God in their own language through the gift of the Holy Spirit. God frustrated the plans of man by making them speak in different languages. Now that they could not all come together to build this tower of pride, they did what God had originally ordered Noah and his sons to do, they scattered across the world.

BE CONFIDENT, GOD IS FAITHFUL TO USLesson Text: **Genesis 12:1-9**New Testament Text: **Hebrews 11:8-16****Lesson Aims:**

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To celebrate Abraham's great faith and trust in God
- Be courageous when God calls you to step out in faith.
- Hear God's Word and help others to obediently fulfill that call.

Memory Verse:

"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going." (Hebrews 11:8)

INTRODUCTION

One day God spoke to Abraham and called on him to step out in faith and travel to a new land that God would reveal to him. God's call to Abraham was not just to step out in faith, but also included promises God would fulfill if Abraham was obedient. God promised Abraham that would be the father of a great nation, that Abraham would be a great blessing to others, and that all people on earth would be blessed through Abraham. So, at age 75, even though he had no children, and he and his wife were past the age of producing children, Abraham believed God could give him a son to begin this new family.

I. Abraham's great faith.

Abraham trusted in God who enabled him to step out in faith to follow God's call upon his life. The Creator of Heaven and Earth has not created all that is, and then retreated away from this creation. Neither, when sin entered the world did God retreat away from sinful humanity. Instead, God proves God's great love, compassion, and desire to be reconciled to man by creating relationships with sinful man. We should celebrate that the heart of our Creator is to love, forgive, and show compassion to us.

Questions

- How are you a beneficiary of Abraham's faithful response to God's promises to him?
- What would be some of your questions for God if you were in Abraham's situation, with God making these bold promises?

II. Be courageous.

God who was faithful to Abraham will be faithful to you as well. Following God is not for the fainthearted or the cowards. Following God calls us to not only believe God will fulfill the promises made, but to step out in faith and live our lives as if those promises have already been fulfilled. Thankfully God understands our fears and doubts, and will not turn away from us because of those fears. Instead, God is full of patience and compassion, and will take those fears and doubts and, if we are willing, replace them with trust and confidence.

Questions

- What are some of the reasons people give for not wanting to live out God's call upon their lives?
- Why does it require great courage to, while waiting for God to fulfill the promises made to

us, step out in faith to obediently follow God's call upon our lives?

III. Hear God's Word and help others

To be faithful takes steps to obediently fulfill God's call. The most important step on a new journey is the first step. You may have already taken that first step – great! Now what is the next step that God is calling you to take? You may have not taken that first step, what is holding you back? The only path to having true joy and peace in this world is to surrender our

lives fully to God and accept the salvation Jesus won for us on the cross.

Questions

- a. What is the next step God wants you to take in your spiritual journey?
- b. Who are those around you who are struggling to take the next step toward God, and how can you minister to them and encourage them to take that next step?

CONCLUSION

Abraham was not just a great man of faith for the Jews to respect; he was also a great man of faith for Christians to respect. Just as Abraham believed in God's promises, so all people are called to believe in God's promises fulfilled in Jesus and believe in God for salvation. And just as God was faithful to Abraham, we can be confident God will be faithful to us as well.

GOD HIMSELF WILL PROVIDE THE LAMB

Lesson Text: **Genesis 22:1-19**

New Testament Text: **Hebrews 11:17-19**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To understand that faith in God is not just an intellectual decision.
- Believe what we love most will determine our values and actions.
- Be prepared, the love of God will call us to live out our faith in very practical ways.

Memory Verse:

"By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice" (Hebrews 11:17)

INTRODUCTION

One day, God spoke to Abraham and told him to do a very difficult thing. God told Abraham to take his son, Isaac, and sacrifice him on an altar. He was testing Abraham. God wanted to see if Abraham would do anything He asked. Abraham told Isaac that they needed to travel to Mount Moriah and offer a sacrifice to God. As they traveled, Isaac asked his father where the lamb was that they would burn as a sacrifice. Abraham told him that God would provide the lamb. When they reached the mountain, Abraham tied up his son and placed him on the altar he had built. Abraham pulled out his knife. And just as he was about to kill Isaac, an angel stopped Abraham and said, "Don't kill your son." Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in a bush. God had sent the ram for Abraham to sacrifice instead of his son.

I. Having Faith in God.

Therefore, faith in God should affect our heart and actions as well. Faith in God is not just an intellectual decision, but is to affect our heart and actions as well. God had made some wonderful promises to Abraham in the covenants God established. One day God decided to test Abraham, and see if Abraham loved the blessings more than he loved the God who gave the blessings. To have faith in God is more than simply believing God exists or that God loves you. Having faith in God means being willing to obey God, no matter what God asks. Because Christians believe God is perfectly good, they know God will never ask them to do something that will ultimately do harm to others.

- Why are people sometimes tempted to love God's blessings more than they love God?
- According to the Book of Hebrews, Abraham believed even if he sacrificed Isaac, God would raise Isaac from the dead.
- At what point during the journey to the mountain do you think Abraham came to this conclusion: early on the journey or late on the journey?

II. Nurture the love of God.

Believers should know that what they love most will determine our values and actions. We must foster the love of God in our hearts first, and then seek to live out that love. We must nurture the love of God in our hearts first, and then seek to live out that love. We often do not realize how much we love or desire something until we are faced with the prospect of that person, dream, or possession being taken

Questions

away from us. As much as Abraham loved the blessing God gave to him, and was thankful for God's miraculous gift, God wanted to make sure Abraham's heart was not directed more toward the blessing than the One who had given the blessing. As human beings, God created us to love. The stain of sin causes us to love what is not worthy of our love, it causes us to desire what is not worthy of our desires.

Questions

- a. What are the types of things people today are investing their love into, that are not worthy of their love?
- b. What are some examples of ways in which inward sins, such as loving and desiring sinful things, can lead people to commit outward sins?

III. Love for God into action.

Sometimes God call us to great generosity and humility. It is heartbreaking to lose a loved one to a premature death. Such a tragedy can lead to many tough questions, significant doubts, and anger. One of the ways in which we can minister God's grace to people at these times is not to offer quick and easy answers to their pain. Instead, we can faithfully and quietly sit with them and grieve with them. This is just one example of a way in which Christians can put their love for God into action for the benefit of others.

Questions

- a. Whom do you know who is going through a time of loss, with whom you can mourn?
- b. What is a practical help you can give to someone who is struggling with his or her faith?

CONCLUSION

While God will never tempt us to sin, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, God will sometimes test our faith. Abraham is a great man of faith because he had faith in the goodness of God. In this passage the writer of Hebrews states that Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac because Abraham had so much faith in God's goodness, he knew God would raise Isaac from the dead if he went through with the burnt offering.

GOD CAN USE THE PAIN AND HARDSHIPS TO BLESS OTHERS

Lesson Text: **Genesis 41**

New Testament Text: **Romans 8:26-39**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To recognize that, God used the jealousy of Joseph's brothers to send Joseph to Egypt.
- Understand God can use the pain and hardships we endure to bless others.
- In tough times refuse to be discouraged, for God often places us in situations we would have never expected to be in.

Memory Verse:

"God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance"
(Genesis 45:7)

INTRODUCTION

One night, the Pharaoh of Egypt had a strange dream. It was about seven thin cows eating seven fat cows. Pharaoh wanted to know what his dream meant. Then his cupbearer remembered a man in prison who could interpret dreams. His name was Joseph. Pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him about the dream. Joseph said that for seven years, Egypt would grow wonderful crops. For the next seven years, there would be a terrible famine. Pharaoh believed Joseph and made him a ruler in Egypt. Joseph's job was to make sure the Egyptians stored a lot of food during the seven good years. They needed to have enough food to eat during the seven year famine. During the famine, Joseph's family went to Egypt to buy some food. Joseph was glad to see his family because he had not seen them for many years. God was faithful to Joseph.

I. God Used The Jealousy Of Joseph's Brothers.

God used the jealousy of Joseph's brothers to send Joseph to Egypt, to provide a means through which God would save his family from a coming famine. However, the covenant God made with Abraham continues now into the fourth generation in a most surprising way. God worked through the blessings he gave Joseph, and he worked through the sinful choices of others, to bring protection to Abraham's offspring and to the Egyptians. It took over ten years for Joseph to be released from slavery and jail and recognize the way in which God was able to take bad things and turn them into good.

Questions

- What are some of the parallels between Joseph's life and the life of Jesus, as God worked through them to save others?
- Why do you think Joseph kept living a life of integrity, even when others kept betraying him?

II. God Can Use The Pain and Hardships.

God can use the pain and hardships we endure to bless others, but only if we keep our heart open to the healing work of Jesus. It is one thing to know in our head that God can bring good from sufferings. However, it is another thing to wait faithfully for those good things to come. In between the time of when the

sufferings begin and when we see the good that God brings from them, we must work to keep our hearts pure and open to the healing work of God.

Questions

- a. What are some resources God has given Christians to help protect our hearts from becoming hardened when we face sufferings?
- b. What are ways in which God can use the sufferings we experience to help us minister to others who are suffering?

III. God Often Places Us In Situations.

In tough times refuse to be discouraged, for God often places us in situations we would have never expected to be in, in order to bring grace to people who are not expecting grace. A life of significance is usually never an easy life. Instead, through the crucible of suffering, a strong character is formed in a person.

Joseph shows through his life a devotion to God, even when he could not see or understand how God was going to rescue him from so many of his troubles. While Joseph waited for God to bring good from his hardships, he still lived a life that blessed others.

Questions

- a. What are some practical habits we can develop that will help protect us from becoming bitter or fall away from God when sufferings come?
- b. What is a way in which we can share with others some of the wisdom and insights we have learned as God has brought us up out of sufferings to see the good that has come from the sufferings?

CONCLUSION

It was not God's will that Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, nor that Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him. However, God was able to work through those sinful behaviors and used the gift of interpreting dreams to place Joseph in a situation in which he could be a great blessing to others. No one imagined what a great salvation could come through the death of the Messiah. However, God worked through the sinful choices of others to bring about this great salvation. For when God is at work, nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate Christians from God's love.

BE COURAGEOUS IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS

Lesson Text: **Exodus 7:1-13**New Testament Text: **Luke 12:4-12**

Lesson Aims:

- : At the end of the lesson learners should:
- To understand that God's presence and power will empower your courage.
 - Believe God will never leave you or forsake you, so when fear grips your heart, do not lose hope.
 - Be courageous this week, even in the midst of trials and temptations.

Memory Verse:

"I tell you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will also confess him before the angels of God." (Luke 12:8)

INTRODUCTION

The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work for them as slaves. The Israelites cried out to God and asked Him to free them from slavery. God heard their cry and sent Moses and Aaron to Egypt. They were to tell Pharaoh to free the Israelites. If he refused, God would send a plague to Egypt. Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh many times and told him to free the Israelites. Each time they went, Pharaoh would refuse and say, "No!" God was true to His word. Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites nine different times, so God sent these nine plagues to Egypt: the waters turned to blood; frogs; gnats; flies; the death of livestock; boils; deadly hail; locusts; and complete darkness in Egypt, all day and night. After all this, Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go free.

I. God's Presence And Power

Courage is required for Christians to carry out God's will. God's presence and power will empower your courage. God hears the cries of the enslaved Israelites and sends Moses to rescue them from Egypt with great signs and wonders. Pharaoh would not honor God's word spoken through Moses, and the Egyptians suffered because of that disobedience. They suffered through the 10 plagues that God sent on Egypt. God's answer to the Israelite's cries though did not come without a cost to Moses. Moses must have the courage that God will protect him and deliver on the promises made to Moses.

Questions

- What are some consequences of sin that affect more than just the individual who sinned?
- How does pride cause a person to either doubt God's word to them, or doubt that God's will is better than their own will?

II. God Will Never Leave You or Forsake You.

Falling away from God is rarely ever a simple one-time decision. Instead, people often make many small disobedient decisions over time that result in an eventual inability to hear God's voice at all. God will never leave you nor forsake you, so when fear grips your heart, do not lose hope. We must guard our hearts. These disobedient decisions are when we rely

on our own wisdom and strength more than on God's wisdom and strength for direction. The key to guarding our hearts is believing God will never leave us or forsake us.

Questions

- a. How can a Christian protect their heart from believing the lies Satan makes, that God does not want us to be happy? (See Genesis 3:1-7)
- b. How does a Christian gain the courage to speak up for God's concerns when the result might be persecution?

III. Be Courageous In The Midst of Trials and Temptations.

With much courage, Moses stands before the ruler of Egypt and warns if Pharaoh does not let the

Israelites go free, then God will send plagues upon Egypt. Be courageous this week, even in the midst of trials and temptations. There are times in which Jesus calls us to be courageous and speak up for God's concerns or to provide for those who are in need. Like the Israelites in Egypt, God still hears the cries of those who are suffering, and still sends Christians to set them free from their oppression.

Questions

- a. What types of people in your town are living under physical or spiritual oppression?
- b. What gifts, talents, and/or abilities has God given you that you can use to help others who are in need?

CONCLUSION

Courage is required for Christians to carry out God's will. God's presence and power will empower your courage. Believe God will never leave you or forsake you, so when fear grips your heart, do not lose hope. Be courageous this week, even in the midst of trials and temptations. Jesus warned his followers they must be willing to speak for God in front of others. Being a follower of Jesus may result in persecution and sufferings, but it is better to suffer for Jesus' sake than to reject Jesus' commands, and thus be rejected by Jesus.

Lesson	GOD'S PROVISION OF SALVATION	
10		
	Lesson Text: Exodus 11:1-12:13	New Testament Text: Luke 22:1-23

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
: At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Celebrate God's provision of salvation to all those who faithfully follow God's instructions. b. Commit to having a soft heart open to God's instructions, not a hardened one like Pharaoh's. c. Celebrate the Lord's Supper with honor and joy, for it is the Christian's Passover meal to celebrate our salvation through Jesus Christ.	: "This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover." (Exodus 12:11)

INTRODUCTION
God had sent nine plagues upon Egypt because Pharaoh had refused to free the Israelites from slavery. God decided to send one more plague upon Egypt. God had Moses tell Pharaoh and the Israelites that around midnight He would go through the country. The firstborn son of every family living in Egypt would die. God gave instructions to the Israelites living in Egypt. Each Israelite family was to sacrifice a lamb or a goat. They were to take the blood and put it on the top and sides of their doorframe. When God passed by each house, He would look for the blood. If He saw the blood, He would pass over the house and the firstborn son would be saved. If He didn't see the blood, the firstborn son would die. When Pharaoh realize that his son had been killed, he was finally willing to free the Israelites.

I. God's provision of salvation

In the Passover God continued to be faithful to the covenants made to the Patriarchs of Israel. God provided salvation to the Israelites from Egypt so they could journey to the Promised Land, build a Temple, and worship God freely. God's provision of salvation is to all those who faithfully follow God's instructions. God provides Moses with instructions for both life and death. The instructions for Pharaoh will announce the last Plague, and result in the deaths of the firstborn males in Egypt because of Pharaoh's refusal to obey God's commands. However, God also provides instructions for life, for salvation from slavery. People today who follow God's instructions for life find freedom from sin.

Questions

- a. People often know the right things to do, but do not do them. What causes people to rebel against God's commands?
- b. Why are there are consequences for the sins we have committed, even after we have asked forgiveness for the sins?

II. Having a soft heart open to God.

Commit to having a soft heart open to God's instructions, not a hardened one like Pharaoh's. All Egypt suffered the consequences of Pharaoh's pride that caused Pharaoh's heart to harden and refuse to do what was best for the Egyptians. So also, people today have hearts that have been hardened by sin and the

consequences of sin. Even Christians, if they are not careful to keep their hearts open to God, can fall into temptations that will result in hardened hearts.

Questions

- a. How can people with hardened hearts receive healing?
- b. In what ways can even Christians experience hardening of their hearts?

III. Celebrating the Lord's Supper.

God also gave Moses instructions to pass onto the Israelites to protect them from the Plague of the Firstborn and be ready to leave Egypt. For protection from the final plague, the Israelites must sacrifice a sheep or goat, prepare it for a meal, and put marks of its blood on the door frames of their homes. This Passover has to be a recurring festival the Israelites will celebrate annually. Celebrate the Lord's Supper with honor and joy, for it is the

Christian's Passover meal to celebrate our salvation through Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is not only about beliefs; it is a faith made alive in the actions of Christians. Celebrating the Lord's Supper is one of the actions God calls Christians to practice. In the Last Supper, Christians celebrate the freedom God has brought to them through the sacrifice of the perfect Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is a time for honest reflection on the quality of our Christian faith, and a time of joyful celebration for the salvation Jesus has provided for Christians.

Questions

- a. What can you do to prepare your heart for taking The Lord's Supper?
- b. How can regularly celebrating the Lord's Supper be a source of strength and inspiration for Christians?

CONCLUSION

Jesus instituted a new Passover meal for his disciples on the night of his betrayal. In the first Passover God provided freedom from slavery to Egypt, in the second Passover God provided freedom from slavery to sin. The Lord's Supper, The Eucharist, and Communion are some of the names used to refer to this new Passover meal.

THE LIFE THAT GOD CALLS HIS PEOPLE TO LIVE BEFORE HIM AND WITH EACH OTHER

Lesson Text: **Exodus 20:1-20**New Testament Text: **Luke 10:25-28**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To understand that our responsibility as Christians is to honor our Creator.
- Ask God to search your heart
- Love and honor God by serving others.

Memory Verse:

He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" (Luke 10:27)

INTRODUCTION

The Israelites had been traveling in the desert for three long months. They finally came to a place called Sinai. The Israelites were very tired and set up their camp at the edge of a mountain called Mount Sinai. This mountain is also known as God's holy mountain. God told Moses to climb to the very top of Mount Sinai. He had some rules for the Israelites that would help them to know what was right and wrong. They are called the Ten Commandments. God wrote these rules on two tablets that were made of stone. Moses took the tablets with him back down the mountain so he could show them to the Israelites. These were some of the rules: Have no other gods before me; Do not take God's name in vain; Honour your father and mother; Do not murder; Do not steal; Do not lie.

I. Honor our Creator.

After their deliverance from Egypt and crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites have camped at the base of Mount Sinai. Along the way, God provided food, water for them, and experienced victory in battle over the Amalekites. Now God provided the foundational 10 Commandments upon which the People of God were to live their lives before God and with each other. Our responsibility as Christians is to honour our Creator and Saviour with how we live our daily lives. We can understand commands negatively: as burdens imposed on someone. Alternatively, we can understand commands positively: as gracious guidelines on how to enjoy life the most. When God gives the 10 Commandments to Israel, they are a gracious gift, showing Israel how they can have the best relationship with God and with one another.

Questions

- Why do people often react negatively when someone tries to make them live by certain rules?
- What steps can you take to help people understand why the 10 Commandments are rules that will bless them if followed?

II. Ask God to search your heart

Moses then went down the mountain and taught the commandments to Israel. The 10 Commandments are: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God. Ask God to search your heart and discern if there is anything you are worshipping or serving other than God. Trust

is a major factor in whether or not someone will follow rules. Do they trust the rules are good? Do they trust the rule makers are good? God did not give the 10 Commandments in a vacuum; God gave them after rescuing Israel from bondage. Israel can trust God and the commands because of the love God has shown in the Exodus. Additionally, we can trust God and God's commands, not just because of the Exodus, but because Jesus' life, death, and resurrection demonstrate God's love to us.

Questions

- What are some ways in which people show their love and respect for you?
- Is there anything that is holding you back from trusting God's commands are the best way for you to live your life?

III. Love and honor God.

The 10 Commandments are: "You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God..." These

foundational commands were not miscellaneous rules that must be followed simply because God commanded them to be followed. Instead, they were an expression of God's love for Israel in that, if they were followed, would result in great blessings for the Israelites in their relationship with God and with one another. God made a covenant with Israel and would be faithful to the covenant. Not only is living life according to God's commands the best way for us to enjoy this life, it is also an act of worship to God. When we trust God enough to order our life according to God's commands, then we are even closer to fulfilling the greatest commandment, loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

Questions

- How can reading the Bible on a regular basis help you know God's commands and find the strength to live by God's commands?
- What are examples of ways you can, this week, fulfill the second part of the greatest command – loving your neighbor as yourself?

CONCLUSION

When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus said loving God with your whole life and your neighbour as yourself. The 10 Commandments are the foundation of these two greatest commandments. It is significant that God frames this commandment in terms of love. Again, the commandments God gives Israel are not miscellaneous burdens to be followed just to be followed. Instead, they are the means through which Israel could respond in love to God in the way they live before God and with one another.

JESUS PREDICTING HIS IMPENDING DEATH

Lesson Text: **Luke 18:31-34**Secondary Text: **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

Lesson Aims:

- : At the end of the lesson learners should:
- To understand that, Jesus' suffering and death were not a surprise to him.
 - Reflect on the depths of love and compassion Jesus lead Him to suffer.
 - Find specific ways to deny yourself, take up your cross.

Memory Verse:

"Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled." Luke 18:31

INTRODUCTION

that God's Messiah would not be like King David, but would be like the Suffering Servant of whom Isaiah prophesied. It was hard for Jesus' disciples to accept these predictions, and in fact, it was only after Jesus' resurrection that they began to believe this part of Jesus' teachings. However, it is important to understand that their lack of belief did not hinder Jesus' ministry, that Jesus fully lived out God's call upon his life, even when Jesus knew it meant he would experience suffering and pain.

I. Jesus knew His suffering and death (Luke 18:32-34).

Jesus taught his disciples on several occasions that he would die in Jerusalem at the hands of the authorities. Jesus' death was not a surprise to Him, he resolutely set out for Jerusalem so he would arrive there at the Passover, and be God's perfect lamb who would take on himself the sins of the world. Jesus' suffering and death were not a surprise to him, but he knew they were part of God's plan to bring salvation to the world. God's plan to provide a means of salvation to sinful man required sacrifice. And, in Jesus' mind, this sacrifice was not too high a price to pay. While Jesus knew of His impending death, His disciples did not understand His multiple teachings on this fact. Yet, Jesus continued to teach them knowing that after his resurrection they would begin to understand not just that Jesus had to die for

them, but that long before His death, Jesus knew and choose this path.

Questions

- In what ways was a Messiah of the type of Isaiah's Suffering Servant far superior to that of a Messiah of the type of King David?
- What are some other instances in the Gospels in which Jesus demonstrated his knowledge of the future? (Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal)

II. Jesus' Love and compassion.

Jesus fully knew His mission was to die and rise again in Jerusalem. Rather than avoid this painful mission and avoid Jerusalem, Jesus purposefully made His way to Jerusalem in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for the world. Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life, housing the Temple, and being where the most

important religious and political leaders of Israel lived.

Reflecting on the depths of love and compassion within Jesus that would lead Him to willingly suffer and die for your Salvation. Christians are to not just receive the love and compassion of God, but are to share that love and compassion with others. Christians must recognize, in order to do this, there are times in which the Christians will also have to experience suffering in order to show the depths of God's love. It is important for Christians to not just know this fact in their head, but to prepare their hearts to summon the courage needed to actually live out this fact.

Questions

a. Why do some people assume that when they become Christians, God will take away all their problems and struggles?

b. How does experiencing suffering for Jesus help a Christian better minister to others who need Jesus?

III. Deny yourself, take up your cross

Find specific ways to deny yourself, take up your cross, and live out the love and compassion of Jesus this week. Christians are not called to seek out sufferings and troubles. Enough sufferings and troubles will naturally come their way because they live in a sinful world. However, Christians are called to seek out those who are suffering and in trouble and be Jesus' hands and feet to them.

Questions

a. What are some ways in which you demonstrated the love and compassion of Jesus to others this last week?

b. What are some of the resources you have, and experiences you have had that Christ might call on your to use this week to minister love and grace to others?

CONCLUSION

It was only on the other side of the resurrection that the disciples began to understand the teachings of Isaiah about the Suffering Servant were in fact teachings about the coming Messiah. It would not be enough for the Messiah to simply break the power of Rome and free Israel from her political bondage to Rome. No, God's Messiah would break the power of sin, and offer a salvation that would free all peoples from their bondage to sin. It is important to understand Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament.

Lesson	GOD'S ACTS OF MERCY	
13		
	Lesson Text: John 11:1-44	Secondary Text: Isaiah 53:1-6

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To Identify the Source of Divine healing. b. Rejoice! Jesus is Lord over both sin and death. c. Take comfort, Jesus knows your pain and grief. d. Share the burdens of others	Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;" (John 11:25)

INTRODUCTION
Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, lived in Bethany. Jesus loved this family and stayed at their home many times. One day, Mary and Martha sent a message to Jesus telling Him that Lazarus was very sick. Jesus left for Bethany two days after He received the message from Mary and Martha. When Jesus got to Bethany, Lazarus was already dead and had been buried for four days! When Mary and Martha saw Jesus, they ran to Him and fell at His feet. They cried and said, "Jesus if you had been here sooner, you could have healed our brother." Jesus cried when He heard the news about Lazarus. He knew how much Mary and Martha loved their brother. Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried and said, "Lazarus, come out!" After Jesus said this, Lazarus walked out of the tomb! He was alive!

I. Divine healing

We believe in the biblical doctrine of divine healing. We also believe that God heals through the means of medical science. While Jesus did not heal all the sick or raise all the dead in His time, Jesus did use physical healings to demonstrate the power behind His teachings. The ministry of Jesus' continued through the early church as many of Jesus' followers taught and healed in the power of the Holy Spirit. God continues to heal people today as well. Sometimes those healings are instantaneous miracles through prayer. Sometimes times God heals through the means of medical science. Finally, sometimes God offers the ultimate healing to his Children, the reward of seeing him face to face in glory (Philippians 1:20-24).

Question

a. What would happen if God granted every request for healing and deliverance?

b. What practical ways can you minister God's grace to those who are sick or homebound this week?

II. Jesus is Lord over both sin and death.

Because of Jesus, nothing can separate us from God! Jesus' ministry was not easy. The crowds often misunderstood Jesus' teachings. His disciples thought he would become a political leader over Israel. His opponents should have embraced His ministry but instead plotted his death. Yet, Jesus did not abandon God's mission for His life. Jesus did not consider death too high of a price to pay for our lives. Instead, Jesus ministered to those who misunderstood Him and to His closest followers who lacked faith in him. Because of Jesus' obedience, none of this could separate us from the love of God in Christ. Rejoice! Jesus is Lord over both sin and death.

Questions

- Why do you think Jesus' words in this passage confused the disciples and the sisters?
- In what ways is Jesus the resurrection and life of your life?

III. Jesus knows your pain and grief

Jesus is not just Lord over sin and death, but is intimately acquainted with pain and grief because of his crucifixion. Jesus, as Messiah, entered fully into our humanity. Jesus knew pain, rejection, opposition, and hunger. Because Jesus entered fully into our humanity, no sorrow or grief, pain or doubt, is too tough for Jesus to handle. We can lay on Jesus all our doubts and pain, knowing Jesus will comfort and heal us. Take comfort, Jesus knows your pain and grief.

Questions

- What are some of the emotions you experience, which need Jesus' comfort and healing?
- What can you do when you feel disappointed by Jesus' answers to your prayers or his timing?

IV. Share the burdens of others

Jesus' disciples kept following him, even when they did not understand why He was going back to Judah. Lazarus' sisters kept faith in Jesus, even when he initially did not answer their prayers, as they wanted them answered. Christians can take comfort in knowing, we do not need to know all the answers or have the right amount of faith in order to follow Jesus. Jesus accepts our lack of faith and our doubts, and invites us to grow and mature as He proves Himself loving and faithful. Along the way, Jesus calls Christians to take whatever faith and comfort they have, and use them to express Jesus' love for others who are also lacking in faith and comfort. Be ready to "mourn with those who mourn," to share the burdens of others, as an extension of Jesus' ministry in this world. By becoming ambassadors of Jesus' love and comfort, Christians show forth the glory of God.

Questions

- Why is it important for Christians to minister to others, even before they have their own lives and their own faith perfectly figured out?
- How does God use our own experiences with grief and disappointment to help others?

CONCLUSION

This is one of the Suffering Servant Songs from Isaiah Christians recognize as foretelling Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus did not just walk on earth as a great teacher and miracle worker, he also suffered as the lamb for our sacrifice. Jesus knew pain, knew sorrow, and knew rejection. Jesus is our great High Priest, who can join us in our pain and sorrow, because he knows the pain we feel.

JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM AS KING

Lesson Text: **Luke 19:28-44**Secondary Text: **Zechariah 9:9-13**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Recognize Jesus' entry into Jerusalem fulfill the prophecies of the victorious Messiah.
- Reflect on both the victory and tragedy of this event.
- Live a worshipful life and be continually aware of God's presence.

Memory Verse:

When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen. (Luke 19:37)

INTRODUCTION

One day, Jesus and His disciples were traveling to Jerusalem. Before they reached the city, they stopped at the Mount of Olives. Jesus told two of his disciples to go into the village there. They would find a donkey and a colt tied to a post. They were to tell the owner that Jesus needed the animals and that He would bring them back when He was finished with them. The disciples went into town and found the donkey and the colt just as Jesus had said. They took the animals back to Jesus and put their robes on the animals' backs. Jesus sat on them and rode into town. The crowd followed Jesus into Jerusalem. They were waving palm branches in the air and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (NIV). The people were treating Jesus like a King. But Jesus knew that these people would become angry and turn away from Him.

I. Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Recognize Jesus' entry into Jerusalem fulfills the prophecies of the victorious Messiah as told in the Old Testament. Whether it was forbidding his disciples from telling others about the Transfiguration, or sneaking away when the crowds wanted to make Him king by force, Jesus shied away from allowing people to recognize His identity as Messiah. His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, however, changed this. Now, in order to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, Jesus allows the crowds to sing His praises as Messiah. The crowds still do not understand the kind of Messiah Jesus was, however, after his resurrection, they will.

Questions

- What are some ways people today misunderstand, the kind of king Jesus is?
- Why did the religious authorities become so upset with the crowd's praises of Jesus?

II. Celebrate Jesus

Everyone misunderstood the nature of Jesus' ministry: the crowds, the religious authorities, even his disciples. They all viewed Jesus in terms of human power and authority, but Jesus came to bring spiritual power and authority. Christians need to be careful they keep their hearts and minds open to Jesus' teachings so they do not fall into the trap of misunderstanding the ministry of Jesus in their lives and this world. The crowd celebrates Jesus, however, Jesus weeps over Jerusalem

because he knows the religious authorities will continue to reject him.

Questions

- a. Who are the people Jesus weeps over today, those who have the wrong understanding of Jesus?
- b. What are some of the wrong ideas you had about God that Jesus has corrected?

III. Live a worshipful life.

Jesus entered Jerusalem at the Passover feast as a King. His entry is marked with many Old Testament allusions to a victorious king entering into the city. However, while some in the crowds celebrated Jesus as king, the

religious authorities did not. They were scandalized at the worship the crowds gave to Jesus, and ordered Him to stop them. Live a worshipful life. Be continually aware of God's presence and work around you. Worship is a lifestyle. While there are special days on which Christian's worship with others, each Christian should shape their days by giving thanks and praise to God.

Questions

- a. What are some ways you can worship Jesus every day of the week?
- b. What reasons do you have to give God thanks and praise?

CONCLUSION

Those hoping for a military Messiah read this passage as promising exactly what they wanted. However, after Jesus' resurrection, those who experienced Jesus' salvation and freedom from sin recognized this passage meant the Messiah would conquer, not Rome, but sin and death. However, Jesus knows this is God's path for Him, and while there will be great pain and suffering over the next few days, Jesus' obedience to God's plan will lead to salvation for all who embrace Jesus as the real Messiah. The disciples will look back on these events after the resurrection and recognize, while they and so many misunderstood Jesus' ministry, this did not stop Jesus from being the kind of Messiah God promised.

Lesson	JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE	
15		
	Lesson Text: Luke 19:45-48	Secondary Text: Jeremiah 7:1-11

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - Recognize Jesus came not just to bring salvation to sinners, but also to correct abuses. - Reflect on your relationship with the call of God upon your life? - Be wise with how you use and share your money.	: "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'" (Luke 19:46)

INTRODUCTION
After Jesus rode the donkey and colt into Jerusalem, He stopped at the Temple to worship. When He went into the courtyard of the Temple, He saw some men selling animals to people for their sacrifices. He also saw them exchanging money. As Jesus watched the men, He noticed that they were cheating the people and making a lot of money. Jesus was very angry with these men because they were lying and cheating the people while they were in the Temple, God's house. Jesus ran to the tables and turned them upside down. Birds went flying into the air, and boxes of money went crashing to the floor. Jesus was so angry that He started yelling at the men He said, "'My house will be called a house of prayer, 'but you are making it a 'den of robbers'" (NIV). After Jesus had said this, the men who were cheating the people were so afraid that they ran out of the Temple.

I. Jesus corrects those abusing the temple

Jesus entered the Temple Courts one day and was angry that the sellers were conducting business in an area where Gentiles were supposed to come and worship God. Jesus was also upset that the sellers' prices were so high it hurt the religious pilgrims who came to Jerusalem to worship God. Recognize Jesus came not just to bring salvation to sinners, but also to correct abuses some had brought into the worship of God. While it often takes money to operate churches and pay for pastors, money can sometimes become a hindrance to the mission of God in the world. It is wrong for people take advantage of others financially. Jesus was very upset that people claiming to be following God were taking advantage of religious pilgrims. He was also upset that it was

in the Temple Courts that they carried out this abuse.

Questions

- Why is greed such a powerful temptation for so many people?
- Why do some Christian leaders give into the sin of taking advantage of others?

II. Relationship with God

Many people were very angry with Jesus when He turned the tables upside down. The sellers were upset, as were the religious authorities. They were scared Jesus and His followers would take away all their money and power. Does your wealth, or lack of wealth, interfere with the call of God upon your life? In order to protect themselves from greed, Christians should regularly practice generosity. Our

relationship with God should be priority number one in life.

When Christians are generous with others, they not only remind themselves of the generosity of God, but also put the love of God in action.

Questions

- a. The greed of the sellers made Jesus angry. Is there anything about money that makes you angry?
- b. How can we correctly discern what we should do with our money?

III. Using and sharing your money

Find ways to break any power that money has in your life by being generous with your

resources with others. Jesus wants Christians to make sure money does not control our actions and values. Christians should always keep money in its place, as a resource Christians use to help our families, churches, and others. Money should not become an idol for Christians. Be wise with how you use and share your money.

Questions

- a. How can you be generous with others this week, either by sharing your time, treasure, or talents?
- b. How can you take things that make you angry, and bring good from that anger?

CONCLUSION

God sent Jeremiah to preach against the abuses in Israel. God called the Israelites to care for one another as an expression of their love for God. However, instead of lovingly caring for one another, many Israelites were instead taking advantage of one another. Taking advantage of religious pilgrims was not new for Jesus' day. His actions here are fulfilling prophecies from Isaiah and Jeremiah who both warned the Israelites about not taking advantage of one another. Jesus was upset that the sellers' prices were so high it hurt the religious pilgrims who came to Jerusalem to worship God.

BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUSLesson Text: **Matthew 26:47-56**Secondary Text: **Genesis 37****Lesson Aims:**

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. Lament Jesus' betrayal by one of His disciples, and arrest by the Jewish authorities.
- b. Be aware, the power of sin can so infect a person's heart.
- c. Be alert to the ways in which Satan tempts you.

Memory Verse:

In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. (Matthew 26:55)

INTRODUCTION

The priests and teachers from Jerusalem thought it was sinful for Jesus to say He was the Son of God. Judas knew that the priests hated Jesus, so he went to talk to them. Judas asked them what they would give to him if he would tell them where they could find Jesus. The priests offered Judas 30 silver coins, so he agreed to betray Jesus. When the disciples had finished eating the Last Supper with Jesus, Judas left the room to find the priests. A crowd of people carrying swords followed Judas to the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas knew that Jesus would be there. Judas told the men that the man he kissed would be Jesus. When Judas kissed Jesus, the men grabbed Jesus and arrested Him. Peter was so angry that he took his sword and cut off the ear of one of the men. Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him. Jesus knew that this was all part of God's plan, so He didn't fight against the men.

I. The betrayal of Jesus.

The Bible records no greater sin than Judas' betrayal of Jesus. Though God uses this betrayal in the plan of salvation, God does not direct Judas' actions. It is hard to imagine why one of Jesus' disciples, who spent three years under His teachings and witnessing His miracles, would betray Him. Maybe this is why none of the Gospel writers give a reason for Judas' betrayal, they just report it. Jesus, knowing God is using this betrayal for good, surrenders Himself to the authorities. Lament Jesus' betrayal by one of His disciples, and arrest by the Jewish authorities who plotted Jesus' death.

Questions

- a. What are some ways God has worked good out of the sinful actions of others?
- b. Why do people, like the religious authorities and Judas, believe something good can come out of their treachery?

II. The power of sin can infect a person's heart.

Satan deceives people. He deceived Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to believe eating the forbidden fruit would make them more like God. He deceived the religious authorities and Judas to believe betraying Jesus would benefit their lives. Still today, Satan deceives people to believe committing sins will actually make them

feel better and not hurt others. However, as all Christians know, sins do not benefit people, but harm them, and others. Be aware, the power of sin can so infect a person's heart that what they think to be good actions are actually a betrayal of God.

Questions

- a. What sins do people commit today they do not think will harm them or others?
- b. Why do you think Judas betrayed Jesus?

III. Satan tempts you

No Christian is immune from the temptations of Satan. While the salvation of Jesus breaks the power of sin in the lives of Christians, Christians can still fall back into sin if they give into the

temptations of Satan. Therefore, it is essential for Christians to put up barriers in their life to protect them from Satan's temptations. These barriers include studying the Bible, worshipping with others, and learning from spiritual mentors. Be alert to the ways in which Satan tempts you, so you can put up barriers of protection and know how to pray for God's protection and guidance in those areas.

Questions

- a. What can you do to protect yourself from falling into temptation?
- b. What should you do if you do fall into temptation?

CONCLUSION

While nothing compares to Judas' betrayal of Jesus, Joseph also suffered at the hands of his brothers who should have protected him instead of selling him. The brothers, consumed with jealousy and anger toward Joseph conspired to get rid of him.

JESUS' CLOSEST DISCIPLE DISOWNED HIM

Lesson Text: **Luke 22:54-62**Secondary Text: **Hebrews 4:14-16**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Recognize Jesus' closest disciple disowned Him in His greatest hour of need.
- Understand hardships reveal a person's true character.
- Be willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse:

: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus. Peter stood up and said that he would die before he would deny Jesus. Jesus turned to Peter and said that before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times. That night, when the men took Jesus away, Peter sat in the courtyard and waited to hear about Jesus. A young girl asked Peter if he had been with Jesus. Peter told her that he didn't know what she was talking about. Then another girl told Peter that she had seen him with Jesus. Peter said that he didn't know the man. A little later, a group of people said that Peter had to be a disciple because he talked like them. Peter denied Jesus by saying, "I don't know the man!" Just then, a rooster crowed.

I. Peter denies Jesus.

No one wants to fail someone he or she loves. Additionally, no one wants that failure revealed publicly. This very painful episode in Peter's life serves as one of the most important episodes in Peter's life. Peter, who always believed himself to be the most devoted, most loving disciple of Jesus, is not yet the devoted disciple he thinks he is. The good news is, now that this crisis reveals Peter's weakness, Jesus can build up Peter to be the actual devoted disciple He wanted to be in the first place. Oftentimes Jesus will use situations in the lives of Christians to do the same thing: reveal our weaknesses so Jesus can fill us with His strength. Recognize Jesus' closest disciple disowned Him in His greatest hour of need. Despite all Peter's claims he would never abandon Jesus, when the crisis arose, Peter did abandon Jesus.

Questions

- What thoughts and feelings do you think flooded Peter's life in the time between Jesus' death and resurrection?
- Why would Satan want Christians to believe their failures are so big Jesus will never forgive them?
- How can Christians fight against this lie with the truth?

II. Hardships reveal a person's true character

Peter show that, while it is easy to make bold claims, it is hard to back up those claims when facing danger. However, rather than understanding failure as fatal, remember, Jesus always wants to forgive, heal, and redeem. Hardships reveal character. However,

hardships can also form our character. Just because Peter failed Jesus in His time of trial does not mean Jesus abandoned Peter. Instead, Peter's denials became a vital turning point in His life as he painfully realized how weak he was. After the resurrection, and Jesus' forgiveness, Peter will be able to live in the power of Jesus instead of trying to live out of his own power. While many Christians, like Peter, want to make bold declarations of their devotion to God, it is wiser to remain humble and allow the power of Jesus to work through them. Hardships reveal a person's true character.

Questions

- a. Why do you think it was important for Jesus to predict Peter would deny Him three times by the end of the night?
- b. Why do you think Peter's actual character was so much weaker than he claimed it would be?

III. Sacrificing for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

No one wants to suffer. However, Christians need to be ready to accept not just the blessings of God, but also the sacrifices of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. For when Christians endure sufferings and persecutions for Jesus, they reflect the character of Jesus in their lives. Additionally, when Christians endure sufferings for Jesus, they are witnesses to others of the love of Jesus. Be willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. How does a Christian prepare for times of suffering and persecution?
- b. What sources of strength and encouragement should a Christian use when enduring times of suffering or persecution?

CONCLUSION

Contrary to the corrupt high priest in Jerusalem who arrested Jesus and turned Him over to the Roman authorities, Jesus is our true High Priest. He is a high priest able to sympathize with our weaknesses because he faced temptations just as we do. Because of this, we can trust Jesus and know when we call out to Him, He will answer us with mercy and grace.

GOD'S PROVISION OF SALVATION

Lesson Text: Exodus **11:1-12:13**New Testament Text: **Luke 22:1-23**

Lesson Aims:

: At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Celebrate God's provision of salvation to all those who faithfully follow God's instructions.
- Commit to having a soft heart open to God's instructions, not a hardened one like Pharaoh's.
- Celebrate the Lord's Supper with honor and joy, for it is the Christian's Passover meal to celebrate our salvation through Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse:

: "This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover." (Exodus 12:11)

INTRODUCTION

After Jesus died, a man named Joseph buried Him in a tomb. Three days later, Mary Magdalene and some other women went to Jesus' tomb. When they got there, they noticed that the stone that was supposed to cover the entrance to the tomb had been rolled away. The women went inside and saw that Jesus' body was missing! When they turned around, two angels were standing beside them. One angel spoke and told the women that Jesus wasn't there. He was alive! Mary ran to Jesus' disciples and told them what the angel had said. Peter and John ran to the tomb as fast as they could. They wanted to see the tomb for themselves. When they got there, Peter ran inside. He looked down and saw the strips of linen and burial cloth that had been put on Jesus' head. Before Jesus died, He told the disciples that He would rise from the dead. It was true. He was alive!

I. Christ's resurrection breaks the power of sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:17, 26, 54-56)

Jesus fulfilled all the promises he made to the disciples. The world radically changed with Jesus' resurrection. Before Jesus' resurrection, the power of sin reigned in the world. After Jesus' resurrection, the power of sin is broken, and the blood of Jesus creates a path of salvation. Sin no longer has dominion; instead, Christians can live a life of love, grace, and mercy under the power of God. The disciples, though Jesus revealed all this to them before His death, were still caught by surprise. To believe a person they watched die on a cross could live once again is to believe in something incredible. However, Jesus' appearance to them after his resurrection proved to the

disciples God's incredible power at work in Jesus. Rejoice! Christ's resurrection breaks the power of sin!

Questions

- If you were one of Jesus' first disciples, would you have struggled to believe in the resurrection, when you had witnessed Jesus' death?
- How does faith in Jesus' resurrection bring hope into the lives of his followers?

II. Jesus loved us, died and rose for us

Rather than condemn his disciples for failing to believe in the resurrection, even after seeing the empty tomb, in grace Jesus appeared to the disciples. Jesus also did not condemn Peter

for his denials or the other disciples for abandoning him. Part of the Good News of the Gospel is the fact that Jesus understands our doubts and questions. Christians can believe in Jesus' resurrection because of the ministry Jesus continues in their lives. While Christians may not physically see the resurrected Jesus, they can experience Him in their hearts.

Take comfort! While all Jesus' disciples doubted Him and abandoned Him in his time of need, Jesus still loved us, died for us, and rose from the dead for us.

Questions

- How has Jesus brought new life into your life when you became a Christian?
- How does Jesus' ministry to his doubtful disciples give you comfort when you have doubts?

III. God's desire to help people.

God's plan, and Jesus' obedience to that plan, was to have Jesus die as a perfect sacrifice, fully fulfilling God's demands of perfection and righteousness, and apply that atonement to His creatures who will believe His way of providing righteousness. Reach out to those in need of the love of Jesus. Jesus' resurrection shows God's desire to help people caught up in the power of sin and free them from their bondage. In Jesus, God took the initiative in providing a path to salvation. Before Christians loved God, God loved them. Therefore, before others can understand the love of God, often times they will have to first see it lived out in the lives of Christians.

Questions

- What are some ways in which people in your community needs to see the love of God lived out in Christians' lives?
- How can you show gratitude to God for the great salvation you enjoy?

CONCLUSION

Jesus' eleven disciples struggled to believe His resurrection before He showed Himself to them. Decades later, false teachers in Roman city of Corinth are tempting the Christians to deny Jesus' resurrection. The false teachers tell the Christians Jesus was just a good teacher, but never rose from the dead. The Apostle Paul recognizes the dangers of this teaching. In this passage, Paul makes clear Christianity rises or falls on the resurrection of Jesus. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then the Christians are fools to follow him.

Lesson	JESUS BREAKS THE POWER OF DOUBTS	
19		
Lesson Text: John 20:19-29		Secondary Text: 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Celebrate the resurrected Jesus! b. Christians to know not to minister to others out of their own power. c. God calls Christians to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities.	"Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (John 20:27)

INTRODUCTION
When Peter and John discovered that Jesus had risen from the dead, they went back to tell the other disciples. That night, all of the disciples, except Thomas, were at the same house. The disciples locked the door because they were afraid the Jews may try to capture them. While the disciples were there, Jesus went to the house. He showed them the nail marks in His hands and feet. He even ate a piece of broiled fish to prove that He really was alive! When Thomas went back to the house, Jesus already had gone away. The others couldn't wait to tell Thomas what they had seen. When they did, Thomas didn't believe them. He said, "When I see for myself the nail marks in Jesus' hands, then I will believe that He is alive." The next week, Jesus went back. He walked up to Thomas and showed him His hands and His side. When Thomas saw the nail marks in Jesus hands, He believed!

I. The resurrected Jesus

Jesus did not simply return to heaven after his resurrection. Instead, Jesus stayed on earth for some time, appearing to and teaching His disciples. However, before He could teach His disciples, Jesus first had to remove their doubts and fears. On the two Sundays after Jesus' crucifixion, he appeared to his disciples to strengthen their faith and resolve. Believing now in Jesus as the Son of God, Jesus commissions the disciples to share the Good News with the world. Celebrate the resurrected Jesus! Jesus commissioned the Church to carry out his ministry to the entire world throughout all the ages.

Questions

a. Do you blame the disciples for not believing at first? Why or why not?

b. Are there any promises of Jesus you continue to struggle to believe?

II. Minister through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Be courageous! Christians are not to minister to others out of their own power, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit within in them. Being a Christian is not simply a decision we make in our head, but a decision we make in our hearts. Jesus was not just a historical figure; He was not just a great teacher. Jesus is the Son of God. When we believe in Jesus, we believe in God's great power and love, and we become new creations. Like the disciples, we may still have many doubts, but God will minister to us and bring peace to our doubts through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christians are then to use that power of the Holy Spirit to

minister to others. Be courageous! Christians are not to minister to others out of your own power, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit within in you.

Questions

- a. You have never seen Jesus' resurrected body, so how do you know Jesus is risen from the dead?
- b. How has the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life enabled you to minister to others?

III. Be the hands and feet of Jesus

A week later, the disciples once again met together in a locked room. Jesus once again appeared among them. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his wounds. Thomas declared, "My Lord and my God!" Thomas believed! Jesus

commended him for his belief, but said even greater is the belief of those who did not see Jesus in the flesh, but still believe. God calls Christians to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities. Many today doubt God's existence and love for them. God calls Christians to minister to all these doubters in the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Christians are able to do greater acts of love and compassion through the grace of Jesus, than if they only lived out of their own power.

Questions

- a. What are some reasons why people today doubt God's existence or love?
- b. How can you show the grace of Jesus to people this week?

CONCLUSION

Believing in Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead does not make Christians better people. It makes Christians new creations. In Christ's salvation, a new creation begins. Christians are the new Adams, who are reconciled to God. As these new creations, Christians are to share the Good News of Jesus' salvation with others.

Lesson	JESUS' FORGIVENESS CHANGES A PERSON'S LIFE	
20	Lesson Text: John 21	Secondary Text: 1 John 3:19-24

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - Reflect on the great love Peter had for Jesus and His restoration. - Understand what great encouragement it is to know in your heart that God forgives you. - Be willing to leave everything behind in order to fulfill Gods' call upon your life.	Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. (John 21:7)

INTRODUCTION
After Jesus' resurrection, some of the disciples went back to their home territory. Not yet completely clear on how Jesus wanted them to minister, they went back to their old jobs as they waited for more direction from Jesus. It may have been all these similarities that made the "Beloved Disciple" recognize it was Jesus who had called out to them. Regardless of how he recognized Jesus, when Jesus reported this to Peter, Peter got so excited he jumped out of the boat and swam to shore. When the other disciples arrived at the shore, they all shared a meal together. Like the Lord's Supper, Jesus passed out the food to the disciples who were there. Jesus then takes Peter through a process whereby Jesus restores Peter as a disciple of Jesus. He also warned Peter of the cost of being a disciple.

I. The great love Peter had for Jesus.

Jesus restored Peter as an authentic disciple. Sometimes it can be hard to believe God forgives all your sins. Hearing the Bible teaches God forgives all who honestly seek forgiveness is great. However, sometimes a deeper work needs to happen, when God takes that knowledge in your head and applies it to your heart. Surely, Peter, who denied Jesus three times in Jesus' time of greatest need, carried with him deep shame for his actions. Jesus makes clear in this passage though, that forgiveness should heal shame, and that the

Children of God are not to live in shame. Jesus fully restores Peter, because it is God's power at work in forgiveness, not Peter's work. Reflect on the great love Peter had for Jesus. Jesus restored Peter as an authentic disciple.

Questions

- Why do some Christians still feel shame, even after Jesus forgives them?
- Why does it need to be God's power, not our willpower that makes forgiveness and healing complete?

II. Jesus restored Peter.

Jesus wants to fill his disciples with joy, power, and love. When Christians carry shame with them though, they cannot accept all of Jesus' joy, power, and love. It is essential for Christians to surrender their hearts fully to God, so God can bring full healing and peace into their lives. If Jesus does not condemn his children, his children should not condemn themselves. This is very encouraging. What a great encouragement it is to know in your heart that God forgives you.

Questions

- a. What should a person do if they believe their sins are too great for God to forgive?
- b. What happens if someone does not feel guilty about their sins, but just keeps on sinning and asking God to forgive them?

III. Leave everything behind.

Jesus' forgiveness changes a person's life. Sometimes that change looks like moving to another town and becoming a teacher or preacher of the Gospel. Other times it looks like staying in your town and with your job, and ministering to people in your community. It is important for Christians to seek out God's will for their lives. Be willing, whether you need to leave everything behind in order to fulfill God's call upon your life, or stay right where you are, to share the Gospel with others.

Questions

- a. How can you encourage someone this week who may be feeling discouraged in his or her faith?
- b. What would you say to a Christian who feels God's call on their life to be a teacher or pastor, but is afraid?

CONCLUSION

Jesus then takes Peter through a process whereby Jesus restores Peter as a disciple of Jesus. He also warned Peter of the cost of being a disciple. No matter how great the sins of Christians, Jesus is ready to forgive and restore them. Christians can experience this complete forgiveness and restoration in their lives through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Lesson	ASCENSION & WAIT FOR HOLY SPIRIT	
21		
	Lesson Text: Acts 1:1-14	Secondary Text: Jonah 3

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To know that Jesus Christ is coming for the Second time. b. Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples c. Christians to wait upon the Holy Spirit.	"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

INTRODUCTION
Jesus had spent many days with the disciples after He had risen from the dead. But the time came when He had to leave the earth. He needed to be with His Heavenly Father. Jesus and the disciples traveled to a place called Bethany. Jesus blessed the disciples and told them that they needed to go out and tell others about Him. Many people still didn't know that He had died for them and could forgive them of their sins. Since Jesus was going to heaven, He told the disciples that He would send them a helper. That helper was the Holy Spirit. After Jesus told them this, He lifted up His hands toward heaven. As He did, His feet left the ground and He started to ascend, or rise into the sky. As Jesus was taken up, He was hidden behind a cloud. Then two angels appeared and told the disciples that one day Jesus would come back to earth just as He had gone into heaven.

I. The Second Coming of Christ.

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He returned to Heaven and the Holy Spirit came to dwell within Christians. One day, at the end of time, Christ will return for a second time. At that time Christians, both living and dead, will meet Jesus and be taken to Heaven. There are many who try to interpret exactly when and how all this will happen. However, the Church of the Nazarene recognizes the Bible does not give clear and exact details on the "when" and "how," and so chooses to focus on the "who."

(2 Peter 3:3-15) Christ will return in glory! The Lord Jesus Christ will come to earth again.

Questions

- a. What are you looking forward to experiencing when you see Jesus face to face?
- b. How does the promise of Jesus' return give you strength to live in this fallen and broken world?
- c. What can you do to prepare yourself for Christ's return?

II. The gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8)

Because God created all people and loves all people, God wants all people to experience salvation. While Jesus' earthly ministry focused primarily on the land of Israel, the power of his resurrection and the Good News of salvation are for all peoples. Therefore, Jesus' ministry did not end with his resurrection. Instead, when the Holy Spirit came upon the Christians, Jesus' ministry continued. Moreover, because the Gospel is for the whole world, Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit would send them to the ends of the world, preaching Jesus' love and salvation. Just before returning to Heaven, Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, who would empower the disciples to be Jesus' witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Questions

- Why do you think the disciples still thought Jesus' ministry was only for Israel?
- What questions do you think the disciples had about Jesus' teaching that they would go to the ends of the earth as Jesus' witnesses?

III. Wait upon the Holy Spirit

Spend times of prayer with other Christians and wait patiently for a word from the Holy Spirit. One of the most powerful actions Christians can take is gathering with other Christians in prayer. While there are great benefits in private prayer, there is great encouragement and power when Christians gather in prayer. It is also important for Christians to learn patience with God's will and messages to them. He taught them this power of the Holy Spirit would enable them to go to the ends of the earth to be witnesses of Jesus. Because God's plans are always bigger than Christians can understand, oftentimes God's timing will be very different from human timing and plans. Learning to wait obediently in prayer is essential for Christians. Christians should wait upon the Holy Spirit.

Questions

- Why are Christians tempted to become impatient when waiting for God's direction or answers to prayers?
- How can gathering in prayer with other Christians help them receive God's power and learn patience?

CONCLUSION

The disciples were not unique in assuming God's blessings and salvation were primarily for Israel. God called Jonah to leave Israel and preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. The Ninevites were historical enemies of Israel. Therefore, Jonah did not want to obey God, for he wanted God's blessings only for Israel, and God's punishment to consume Nineveh. However, with both Jonah and the disciples, God makes clear to them the message of God's love and salvation is for all people. Jesus taught the disciples that a greater power than he would come upon them, the Holy Spirit. He taught them this power of the Holy Spirit would enable them to go to the ends of the earth to be witnesses of Jesus.

Lesson	THE CHURCH IS JESUS' REPRESENTATIVE ON EARTH	
22	Lesson Text: Acts 2:41-47	Secondary Text: Ephesians 1:15-23

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Understand the universal Church is Jesus Christ's representative on earth. b. Appreciate the gift of Christ's Church and blessings of God. c. Find specific ways this week to be compassionate, merciful and loving.	"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." Acts 2:41

INTRODUCTION
On the day of Pentecost, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter preached the Gospel to thousands of Jews who had gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world for the Jewish festival. The Holy Spirit, who worked powerfully in the disciples who had been filled with the Holy Spirit, so also works in the crowd who heard Peter's preaching. Thousands were saved. These newly saved followers of Jesus began gathering together for worship, encouragement, teaching, and fellowship. The joy of Jesus' salvation so filled the new believers that they shared in common all their possessions, and gave to anyone who had need.

I. The Church is Jesus Christ's representative on earth.

The earthly manifestation of the grace, power, and mercy of Jesus Christ is the universal Church. When it is at its best, the Church faithfully represents the love of Jesus Christ to one another and to outsiders. The joy and concern they have for each other is testimony to the change Jesus Christ has brought into their lives. The universal Church is Jesus Christ's representative on earth.

Questions

a. What are some specific ways in which you have seen the Church show the love and grace of Jesus to others?

b. What would be some reasons why the Church might fail to fully live up to its identity as the Body of Christ? Does this mean it is not really part of the Body of Christ?

II. The gift of Christ's Church.

The first Christians gathered together on a regular basis to share in the teaching about Jesus, in fellowship, in miracles, and in generosity. These first Christians experienced the joy of their sins forgiven and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and it transformed not just their individual lives, but their lives together. So also, our lives should show signs of transformation as we seek to live out the love and joy Jesus has shown to us in our relationships with others. Appreciate the gift of

Christ's Church, and the blessings God wants to give to you through your fellow Christians.

Questions

- a. How has the love and joy of Jesus changed your heart?
- b. Do think just because Jesus changes a Christian's heart instantly, that they Christian is then completely mature in their knowledge of Jesus and love for others? Why or why not?

III. As the Body of Christ be compassionate.

One of the strongest witnesses to the power of Jesus Christ to transform lives in the early church was the love, fellowship, and generosity these first Christians demonstrated. While

many people may have struggled to understand Jesus was the Messiah, they could not ignore the great love and joy that had transformed these followers of Jesus. Sometimes the greatest testimony Christians have is not in the testimony they speak in words, but in the testimony, they demonstrate by their acts of love and joy. As part of the Body of Christ, find specific ways this week to be compassionate, merciful, and loving to those both inside and outside the Church.

Questions

- a. What have been some of the most meaningful acts of love and joy other Christians have demonstrated to you?
- b. What gifts and graces has Jesus given to you that you can share with others this week?

CONCLUSION

In the Ephesians text, the Apostle Paul is writing about the power and authority of Jesus Christ. This power and authority extends to the church, the gathered people of God who recognize Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Savior of the world. With the infilling of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples of Jesus finally began to fully understand his life, mission, and teachings. They began to understand how Jesus was a Suffering Servant Messiah, rather than a military rule type of Messiah. In order to learn more about Jesus and to share the joy these first Christians had, they would meet together on a regular basis.

Lesson	LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT	
23		
	Lesson Text: Acts 5:1-11	Secondary Text: Joshua 7

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - Understand, greed is a very destructive vice, both to your own life and those you love. - Be careful, sin is not content with being limited to your heart. - Commit to living a life of integrity.	"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." (Matthew 6:24)

INTRODUCTION
There were many poor people who lived in the city of Jerusalem. Because of this, Christians would sell pieces of land or even homes so they could give money to the apostles. The apostles would then take the money and give it to the poor people. One day a man, named Ananias, and his wife, Sapphira, sold a piece of their property for a lot of money. They must have become very selfish when they saw all of the money. Instead of giving all of it to the apostles, they decided to keep some of the money for themselves. They took the rest of the money and gave it to the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the apostles to believe that they were giving all of the money they had received for their property. The apostles could tell that they were lying. Because they had lied to God, Ananias and Sapphira died instantly. The other people learned that they should never lie to God.

I. Greed is very destructive.

Though the resurrection of Jesus breaks the power of sin, Christians can still choose to allow sin to reign in their lives. In particular, Ananias and Sapphira believed they could serve both God and remain greedy and deceptive. God demonstrated for the first Christians the incredible danger of believing they could manage sin. While God does not expect Christians to live perfectly, there is a great danger when Christians choose to claim to be following God while also choosing to let sin dominate their lives.

Questions

- What is it about the nature of sin that caused this couple to lie about their donation, when God never commanded them to give all the proceeds of the sale in the first place?
- Why can greed be such a destructive vice for Christians and those around them?

II. Sin is not content.

A Christian cannot manage sin in their life. If the Christian allows sin to remain in their heart, that sin will infect other parts of the Christian's

life as well. Inward sins like greed also do not remain inward, but become manifest in the Christian's actions as well. Christians need to remember that, sin is not content with only having part of a person's heart. A little bit of sin can cause great problems. Because of this, God decided to punish Ananias and Sapphira immediately, so their greed and deception would not spread throughout the entire church. This event caused great fear to seize the church, as the early Christians realized the great power of the resurrection could bring, not only salvation from sin, but also judgement on sin.

Questions

- a. Why does Satan want Christians to believe inward sins are harmless?
- b. What are some ways inwards sins become manifest in a Christian's actions and attitudes?

IV. Living a life of integrity

A little bit of sin can cause great problems. Because of this, God decided to punish Ananias and Sapphira immediately, so their greed and deception would not spread throughout the entire church. This event caused great fear to seize the church, as the early Christians realized the great power of the resurrection could bring, not only salvation from sin, but also judgement on sin. A life of integrity is when a Christian's beliefs and actions are aligned. It is very important for Christians to not simply accept Jesus as their Savior, but also strive to allow Christ to reign in their hearts and actions as well.

Questions

- a. Why would a life of integrity be hard to live out in your community?
- b. What are some of the consequences for sin you see demonstrated in your community?

CONCLUSION

A similar episode to Ananias and Sapphiras' greed occurred shortly after the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Achan, rather than obey God's commands for the Israelites to bring all their plunder for God's use, stole some valuables. Like Ananias and Sapphira, Achan and his family paid the ultimate price for Achan's sin and deception.

Lesson	CHRISTIANITY CAN LEAD TO PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING	
24	Lesson Text: Acts 6:8-7:50	Secondary Text: Jeremiah 38:1-14
Lesson Aims:		Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To understand that being a witness for Jesus Christ can lead to persecution and suffering. b. Forgiveness is a very hard Christian virtue to put into practice. c. Speak the truth of Jesus with love.		"Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8)

INTRODUCTION
Stephen was a very wise man and wasn't afraid to tell people about Jesus. Like Peter and John, God was able to do miracles through Stephen. Stephen knew that the reason he could do these miracles was because the Holy Spirit was helping him. Some Jewish men didn't like what Stephen was doing. They accused Stephen of saying terrible things about Moses and God, and they took Stephen to court. While they were in court, Stephen looked up toward heaven. He told the Jewish men that he could see Jesus standing beside God. The men were furious and dragged Stephen out of the city. They picked up stones from the ground and started throwing them at Stephen. Stephen looked up into heaven and asked Jesus to forgive the men for doing this. Then Stephen died. Stephen was the first man to be killed just because he told people about Jesus.

I. Being a witness for Jesus Christ.

If so, though, it just gives the Christian an opportunity to be more like Jesus. It is sad that ministering for Jesus, who taught so much about love and forgiveness, can lead to such terrible persecution. The early Christians helped the poor, performed miracles, and taught the truth about God. However, this not only did not protect them from harm, it caused the religious authorities to punish them. No one likes to suffer, however, it is more important to be faithful to Jesus than to try to avoid suffering. In addition, while Jesus does not call Christians to seek out persecution, it is important to listen faithfully to Jesus and be obedient whenever Jesus calls you to act or speak on his behalf. Understand being a witness for Jesus Christ can lead to persecution and suffering.

Questions

- Why do some people get very upset when other people act in very loving and generous ways?
- In what ways can persecution result in Christians being more like Jesus?

II. Forgiveness is very hard

Forgive others. Stephen, as Jesus did on the cross, forgave those who were killing him. It is hard to love people who persecute you. It is also hard to forgive people who harm you. However, Jesus and Stephen model for Christians lives in which hatred and bitterness do not have a place on a person's heart. Neither does hatred nor bitterness have a place in heaven. If the Christian facing persecution allows bitterness and hatred to build in their

lives, then Satan wins, because God is not the full Lord of their hearts. Forgiveness, which is vitally important for Christians to practice, can take a long time to grow. Forgiveness is a very hard Christian virtue to put into practice, but it frees the Christian from allowing bitterness and hatred to fester in their hearts.

Questions

- a. What can a Christian do to make forgiving others easier?
- b. What should a Christian do who is struggling to forgive someone?

IV. Speak the truth of Jesus.

While Stephen knew his preaching of Jesus could bring opposition, he loved Jesus too much to keep Jesus a secret. God does not

want Christians to make other people angry, just to make them angry. God does recognize, however, that some people will become very angry when they see us loving others or hear us talking about Jesus. While others may become angry, Christians are to serve God first, and act and speak when God leads them to act and speak. Speak the truth of Jesus with love.

Questions

- a. When have you faced persecution for being a Christian?
- b. What would you say to a Christian who is struggling because of the persecution they are facing?

CONCLUSION

Stephen was the first Christian martyr, which means he was the first Christian killed because of his faith in Jesus Christ. Like Jesus, Stephen loved God and others so much he forgave those who were killing him. Like Stephen, the authorities persecuted Jeremiah for speaking the truth about God. While the authorities should have listened to Jeremiah's message from God and repented of their sins, they instead chose to silence Jeremiah. Jeremiah knew the authorities would persecute him for telling the truth about God, but Jeremiah also knew it was more important to be faithful to God than to be afraid of people who are teaching the wrong things about God.

GOD CAN CHANGE ANYONE'S HEART

Lesson Text: Acts 9:1-19

Secondary Text: Numbers 22:21-41

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Recognize God called Saul to change his life.
- Celebrate the change God can make in a person's life.
- Be willing to take risks for Jesus calls you to action.

Memory Verse:

But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. (Acts 9:15)

INTRODUCTION

Saul was a Jew who didn't like hearing Christians tell others about Jesus. Saul asked the high priest for permission to gather up all of the Christians in Damascus. He wanted to take them back to Jerusalem and have them thrown into jail. Saul and some other men started traveling to the city of Damascus. Suddenly, a bright light from heaven came down, and Saul fell to the ground. Then Saul heard the voice of Jesus ask him why he wanted to hurt the Christians. By hurting the Christians, he was hurting Jesus. When Saul got up off the ground, he couldn't see. The light had blinded him. The other men had to lead Saul into town. God told a man named Ananias to go to Saul and pray with him. After Ananias prayed, Jesus healed Saul so that he could see again. The Holy Spirit was with Saul and he wanted to be baptized. Saul had become a Christian. People also called Saul by another name—Paul.

I. God called Saul.

God had a very specific job in mind for Saul. Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ was for all peoples, not just the Jews, God needed someone who could champion the message of Jesus to both Jews and non-Jews. Because of Saul's upbringing in a Gentile city, his both Roman and Jewish education and citizenship, and his ability to be very persuasive, God identified Saul as an excellent person to share God's message to non-Jewish people. One big problem though, Saul not only did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, Saul was persecuting the followers of Jesus. Therefore, God confronted Saul in a radical way that would change his life forever. After this encounter, Saul spent several years learning about Jesus and the Christian life before he began his missionary work for Jesus. Recognize God

called Saul to change his life, from being the persecutor of Jesus' followers, to being one of the greatest preachers about Jesus the world has ever known.

Questions

- How did God confront you with your need to become a Christian?
- What kinds of changes has God made to your life?

II. Being changed by God.

If God can transform the heart of someone like Saul, God can change anyone's heart. Saul thought he was living a good life. God made him realize though, his life needed a radical change. The change did not come all at once,

it took years before Saul was ready to start his missionary ministry. That time of preparing for ministry was very important. Saul had been acting out of anger and passion when persecuting the followers of Jesus, God needed to redirect that anger and passion toward something good, the Gospel. So also, God does not change Christians all at once. Though Christians make a significant change in conversion, God continues to change them, to make them more like Jesus, the rest of their lives. Celebrate the change God can make in a person's life, and has made in your life.

Questions

- Why might people be surprised that you became a Christian?
- What kinds of changes do you think God wants to do in your life over the next five years?

III. Taking risks for Jesus.

Both Ananias and Saul had to step out in faith for Jesus when called to take dangerous steps of faith. After Jesus confronted Saul, Saul spent three days in prayer and fasting waiting for God to reveal to him the next steps he should take. It is very important for Christians to have regular times of prayer and fasting so they can better hear and understand God's message to them. These times of prayer and fasting enable Christians to become stronger and more committed to their faith in Jesus. They can also be times of preparing Christians to take great risks and tackle big challenges for Jesus, just as Saul and Ananias did. Be willing to take risks for Jesus when Jesus calls you to action.

Questions

- What has been your experience in spending times in prayer and fasting?
- Why do you think prayer and fasting makes Christians stronger?

CONCLUSION

God confronted Balaam in a very strange way, by making his donkey talk to him! God had a very important message for Balaam, and chose to confront Balaam in a very shocking way in order to make sure Balaam listened and obeyed God's message. Much like God's confrontation of Saul on the Damascus Road, Balaam could not doubt God's message to him, and did exactly what God told him to do.

Lesson	THE TRIUNE GOD	
26		
	Lesson Text: Genesis 1-2	New Testament Text: John 1:1-14

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To understand what is the Triune God. b. Believe that God created the heavens and the earth. c. We must celebrate that God creates good things.	"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:14)

INTRODUCTION
Long, long ago, God created everything. In just six days He created the sky, the water, and the land. He also made all of the trees, plants, animals and flowers. Then, God took the dust from the ground and created a man. He called this man Adam. God put Adam in a beautiful garden that He had made, the Garden of Eden. Adam was to take care of everything that God had created. God noticed that Adam was lonely. He decided to create someone who could help Adam and keep him company. God made Adam fall into a very deep sleep. While Adam slept, God took one of his ribs and made a woman. God gave the woman to Adam, and Adam named her Eve. God was very pleased with everything He had made. And on the seventh day, He rested.

I. The Triune God.

The Triune God is one God who is eternal and without limits. The Lord our God is one but reveals Himself in three Persons as God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28: 19; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14). This does not mean we have three gods who act as one, but we three persons who are on One God. In Genesis 1:26, 27 we read: "let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness" Here God speaks to Himself implying that there are several persons who are One God's shown by the use of a of a singular pronoun in verse 27. We are made in the image of God and not of angels. The three Persons of the Godhead were all involved at creation (Genesis 1:26). Christianity is a monotheistic (God is One) religion, meaning it believes in one God. This one God created this world as outlined in Genesis 1 and 2. He is the creator

and ruler of the universe. He sustains all things. The ultimate expression of God's creation is man, which was created in God's image. However, God is more than Creator, God is also Redeemer (in Jesus Christ) and Sustainer (in the Holy Spirit). Because of God's love, when man fell into sin, God reached out to offer a path to forgiveness, salvation, and fellowship. The perfect and ultimate expression of God's offer of salvation is through Jesus Christ, when God became flesh. Jesus ministered, died, and arose from the dead.

After Jesus' return to Heaven, God came to earth as the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's very presence in the lives of Christians, making the life of Jesus Christ real and alive in Christians. The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to live in the power, love, and holiness of God. Thus, God is one, but expressed in three ways,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All these expressions are evidences of God's loving desire to be in relationship with man.

Question

- a. What would life be like if God was only the Creator of the world, and not Redeemer and Sustainer as well?
- b. How can you share the love of God with others this week through the power of the Holy Spirit?
- c. In what practical ways can we teach our children worship God alone?

II. God created the heavens and the earth

God created the heavens and the earth, and that God created them "good." Also believe God created marriage as a special relationship between a man and a woman. God created this world to be a blessed home for man, a place where we could thrive, work, and enjoy our relationship with God and others. God also created marriage, which is a special relationship between a man and a woman in which they become "one flesh."

Questions

- a. Why is humanity special among all God's creations, and what responsibilities does this place upon humanity?
- b. What happens when a husband and wife do not put God first in their lives and marriage?

III. God creates good things.

God declared, though, that man was "very good." We have a special blessing, for we are created in God's image. Because of all the blessings God has given to us in Creation, and in our relationships with one another, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of all God has entrusted to us. We will be tempted in this world to live our lives only for ourselves, to be selfish. However, as those created and saved by God, we are to live our lives for God, and to be a blessing to others. Christians should know that God creates good things.

Questions

- a. What does it mean to you that humanity was created "very good?"
- b. Why, as we see in John 1, do those whom God created not recognize God as their Creator?

CONCLUSION

A second creation begins with the birth of Jesus Christ. Not a physical creation of the earth and heavens, but the spiritual creation of a new People of God. Through Jesus Christ, God will offer salvation, healing, and future blessing to all peoples. God created all things "good," but sin brought pain and brokenness into the world. In Jesus Christ, God offers to bring healing to this fallen Creation.

Lesson	JESUS CHRIST	
27		
	Lesson Text: Mark 2:1-12	Secondary Text: Isaiah 35

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - Explain the deity of Jesus Christ - Believe that Jesus is the Son of God who has the power to both forgive sins and perform miracles. - Celebrate that Jesus is concerned with both our souls and our bodies. God creates both, and therefore, sees both as precious. - Be ready to help others in need.	Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. (Isaiah 35:6)

INTRODUCTION
Jesus went to the town of Capernaum. This was the place He called home. So many people wanted to see Jesus that some had to stand outside the house where He was preaching. There were four men who heard that Jesus was in Capernaum. These men had a friend who could not walk because he was paralyzed. So, they picked up the paralyzed man and took him to Jesus. They knew that Jesus was the only one who could heal their friend. When they got there, they couldn't get inside to see Jesus, so they carried the paralyzed man up to the roof. They dug a hole in the roof and lowered the man into the room until he was beside Jesus. Jesus knew that this man's friends had faith that He could heal their friend. Jesus told the paralyzed man that his sins were forgiven. Then Jesus told him to get up and pick up them at he was lying on. And he did! He could walk again! Jesus had healed the paralyzed man.

I. Jesus Christ is God (Philippians 2:6)

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity, He is God in nature, power and work. Jesus Christ is equal to God. He was there from the beginning and He created all things (John 1:1-3). While Christians commonly speak of God, the first person of the Trinity, as the Creator, Christians commonly speak of Jesus as Redeemer. When humanity not only fell into sin, but proved unable to serve God with a true heart through the Law given in the Old Testament, God came to earth as Jesus Christ to provide a path of true salvation. The two natures of divinity and humanity dwelled within Jesus Christ. Through Jesus' obedience to God's will, his death and resurrection, God placed the punishment of sin upon Jesus at his

crucifixion. Through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, humanity receives forgiveness for their sins.

Questions

- What does it tell you about the nature of God that Jesus came willingly to earth to die for a sinful humanity?
- How does knowing that Jesus faced every kind of temptation you face help you believe in the power and love of God?

II. Jesus is the Son of God Luke 1:31-32

Anyone can claim to be the Messiah. How can someone discern whether the person really is the Messiah? God filled the Old Testament with prophecies about the Messiah. Therefore, we can ask, "Does this person claiming to be the

Messiah fulfill those prophecies?" Jesus does. Secondly, we can ask, "is this person performing miracles only God can work?" Again, Jesus performed miracles like no one had before him. Jesus knew it would be hard for people to believe someone from Nazareth was the Messiah. Therefore, he did not only teach about God, he performed miracles to back up his teaching. In this passage, we have two miracles, one much harder than the other one.

Questions

a. Many people saw Jesus' miracles but did not believe he was the Messiah. Why do you think they refused to believe even after witnessing the miracles?

III. Jesus is concerned with both our souls and our bodies.

God creates both, and therefore, sees both as precious. God knows we have both physical and spiritual needs. Ultimately, our spiritual needs are the most important since our souls are forever and these earthly bodies are temporary. However, our bodies are still very important to God. God may not always answer our prayers for physical healing as we would

want, however, we can know our souls are always safe with God.

Questions

a. How does Jesus prove His power to us these days, now that he has returned to heaven?
b. In what ways is our body a miracle from God in the first place?

IV. Be ready to help others in need.

The paralyzed man's friends were essential to his healing, both because of their physical help and because of their faith. Do you help your family members, your community friends, your church friends when they need help? Sometimes they need physical help, as did this paralytic man, but other times they simply need someone to pray with them, cry with them, encourage them. When Jesus saw the extent to which this man's friends were willing to go in order to get him to Jesus, he knew they had a lot of faith. Some of the religious leaders were upset Jesus believed he could forgive sins.

Questions

a. What are three things you can do this week to be a faithful friend to others?

CONCLUSION

Isaiah prophesied about the ministry of the coming Messiah. Part of the way people would be able to recognize the Messiah is that he would perform miracles. Specifically in verse 6, we hear that the lame would leap like a deer, a prophecy fulfilled in the healing of this paralytic man.

Lesson	HOLY SPIRIT	
28		
	Lesson Text: Acts 19:1-20	Secondary Text: John 11:1-54

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To grasp the truth about the Holy Spirit b. Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. c. Remember, only Jesus Christ can bring true peace and joy to your heart.	"When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour." (Acts 19:17)

INTRODUCTION
We have seen that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and He is God. We saw that Jesus and His Father are one. Today are going to learn who the Holy Spirit is. He plays a very important role in our lives because He is the one who bring about the new birth in our souls and He also lives in us on a daily basis. But who is the Holy Spirit? Some people believe Him to be a spirit or wind who make people roll on the ground when they are possessed by Him. Some see Him as a power they need to do miracles or overcome demons. Who do you think He is? Let us take this time to hear from you before we hear what the Bible has to say about who the Holy Spirit is!

I. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who continually works in the Church of Jesus Christ and through it. He convinces the world of sin, and He gives new life to those who repent and believe. He sanctifies believers. While Christians commonly speak of God, the first person of the Trinity, as the Creator, of Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, as Redeemer, Christians commonly speak of the Holy Spirit as Sustainer. Because in Jesus' resurrection God broke the power of sin, when a Christian invites God into their hearts, God as the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian's heart. With the Holy Spirit's indwelling, God's power is at work in the Christian's life. This power of God at work in the Christian empowers the Christian to live out the life of Jesus, a life of purity, love, and joy.

Question

- a. How can the power of God be at work within a Christian's life?
- b. What steps can a Christian take to be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- c. What should we expect to see in the life of a Christian who claims to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

II. Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Acts 19:13- 16)

Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour means recognizing God is the only true God, and relying on any magical arts or worshipping false gods is sinful. Many people recognize there are strong spiritual powers at work in this world. Many of them do not recognize, however, the one true God who controls the good powers at work in this world. Instead, they serve the dark powers at work in this world, trying to manipulate their powers for

their own good. It is very dangerous to try to manipulate any of the spiritual powers at work in this world. As the sons of Sceva realized, simply knowing the good and right power at work in this world does not mean they have that power at work in their lives. They tried to use God's name to their own ends. However, the demon recognized they did not actually have the power of God at work in their lives, they were just trying to manipulate God's power. This mistake did not end well for them. However, because the people saw they could not manipulate God's power, there was a great revival in Ephesus, and many people abandoned their magical arts and believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Questions

- Who are some of the "false gods" people in your community serve?
- Why is it so dangerous to engage in spiritual warfare if you are not possessed with the true power of God?

III. True peace and joy.

Remember, only Jesus Christ can bring true peace and joy to your heart. Anything else you

worship as a god will only leave you empty and weak. God calls all people into a personal relationship. The one true God is not an impersonal being to be used, manipulated, or coerced. Instead, the one true God is personal, loving, and wants to be in relationship with humanity. To prove this, God came to earth in Jesus Christ, to demonstrate God's love for us, a love that suffered so people could find the true path of salvation. God is love, and calls on his creations to accept that love and respond to that love. Because God loves us, we should love God and love others. No other power at work in this world loves us. All other powers, other than God's power, are weak, selfish, and seek to destroy men and women, instead of redeem them. Therefore, it is essential for people to not only know about the love of God, but also accept the love of God so that they can then share the love of God.

Questions

- Why is God the only spiritual being that can bring true peace and joy into someone's heart?
- Why do so many people seek to find peace and joy in places other than in their Creator and Savior?

CONCLUSION

The Holy Spirit is third person of the Triune God. He is a spiritual being; therefore, He is a person. He is God in every way. He is the one who gives life to new believers; He gives life just as God the Father and the Son do. When we think of Jesus Christ being in our lives and ruling our lives, it is the Holy Spirit really who does all these things. He makes His own decisions. He distributes spiritual gifts to individual believers at His own discretion. The Holy Spirit has many other things that He does in the lives of and for the believers. He wants to fulfil the purposes of God in and through our lives. He will not force His way if we do not choose to cooperate with Him, but we may lose Him, and as a result lose our fellowship with Him.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

Lesson Text: 2 Timothy 3: 14-17

Secondary Text: Romans 8:18-30

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To know that Scriptures of the New Testament are reflection of the Old Testament
- Be aware that as Christians will live very differently from others in this world.
- Put into practice the values Jesus says lead to blessings.

Memory Verse:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3: 14-17)

INTRODUCTION

God gives the Bible to Christians as a guide to the path of salvation and to living a holy life. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments reveal the heart and will of God for man. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Christians receive wisdom and instruction from God through the study of the Bible. Jesus demonstrates in the Sermon on the Mount the importance of knowing more than facts about the Bible, but about correctly interpreting the Bible. In the specific passage for this study, the Beatitudes, Jesus declares the type of person who results from following God's scriptures. God blesses this person as they live out the teachings of scripture.

I. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the map that leads the reader to where God wants us to go, to do and to be. If you want to know how to live a good and profitable life according to God's standard, you will need to read or study the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God that he has given to humanity therefore; it is fully and divinely inspired. God gives the Bible to Christians as a guide to the path of salvation and to living a holy life. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments reveal the heart and will of God for humanity. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Christians receive wisdom and instruction from God through the study of the Bible. Jesus demonstrates in the Sermon on the Mount the importance of knowing more than facts about the Bible, but about correctly interpreting the Bible. In the specific passage for this study, the Beatitudes, Jesus declares the type of person who results from following God's scriptures. God blesses this person as

they live out the teachings of scripture. In 2 Timothy 3:10-17, the Apostle Paul teaches Timothy the importance of the Bible in becoming wise and becoming equipped for God's mighty work.

Questions

- Why does simply reading the Bible not necessarily result in a person becoming wise?
- What should a Christian do when they read something in the Bible with which they do not agree?
- What kinds of habits and practices should you have in place in order to become wise in the Holy Scriptures?

II. Living our lives for Jesus

Christians need to be aware that living our lives for Jesus means Christians will live very differently from others in this world. Jesus calls his disciples to a very different kind of life than others around them are living. Jesus' disciples

are to put God's values and God's desires first in their lives. This means they could experience sufferings now, but it also means God's love and blessings will flow through their lives. When Christians are able to understand that denying their selfish desires and accepting God's loving desires are the best way to live, they need to live by the word of God which find in the Holy Scriptures and they will have a deep peace and joy no matter what happens in their life.

Questions

- a. Why do some people persecute those who are trying to live out Jesus' teachings?
- b. What do we see in Jesus' life that can help us when we go through times of persecution?

III. Putting the teachings of Christ into action.

Put into practice the values Jesus says lead to blessings. Practicing these values will not always feel good; however, Christians are

living for a heavenly reward, not an earthly reward. "But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand" (Matthews 7:26). Jesus' teachings are meaningless to us if we do not live them out. It is not enough to just believe in our head what Jesus said is true, we must put those teachings into action. While this will not be easy, it will result in great blessings both for us and for those blessed through our Christlike actions.

Questions

- a. Is there someone in your life mourning right now, whom you can comfort?
- b. Are there friends you know who are in conflict with one another? How can you display Jesus' love by trying to be a peacemaker between them?

CONCLUSION

The Bible is the Word of God. It is given to you and I to bring us to a living relationship with God our heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ. God expects us to read the Bible with the purposes of understanding it in order that we may do His will. The Apostle Paul wrote these words, and wrote about what he had experienced first-hand. Namely, that following Jesus' teachings for your life will lead to sufferings. However, as Paul says, those present sufferings are not worth comparing the future blessings of God. Nor are they worth comparing to the good that God's love works through those who live according to God's purposes. God loves us so much that He has put everything He wants us to be in the Bible. Study it. Memorise it. Live by its directives daily.

Lesson	SIN, ORIGINAL AND PERSONAL	
30		
	Lesson Text: Genesis 3	Secondary Text: Romans 1:16-32

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To understand Sin, Original and personal. b. Recognize Satan uses deception to cause us to doubt God. c. Watch your life closely so that you live under power of the Gospel.	"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile." (Romans 1:16)

INTRODUCTION
Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. God told Adam and Eve that everything in the garden was theirs. They could eat the fruit from any tree, except for the tree in the middle. It was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now, Satan had disguised himself as an evil snake. He told Eve that she could eat the fruit from the tree. He said that if she ate the fruit, she would be like God and would know what was good and evil. Eve was being tricked by the snake. She saw the fruit on the tree, and it looked delicious. Eve wanted to be wise like God, so she took a bite. Then, she gave some to Adam. Right away Adam and Eve knew that they had disobeyed God, and they were very afraid. God made them leave the Garden of Eden because they had disobeyed Him. Disobeying God's commands is sin.

I. The Fall of Man

Sin came into the world when our first parents Adam and Eve, disobeyed God. There are two kinds of sin: original sin and personal sin. Original sin is different from sinning. It is an inherited inclination that drives us to commit sinful acts. Personal sin also called actual sin is the act of intentionally breaking a known law by persons who are capable of understanding their actions. While God created this world and man as an expression of God's love, God did not force man to love in return. Instead, God created man with the ability to live either serving God or serving themselves. Adam and Eve chose to live for themselves when they fell for the lies of the Serpent who promised them they could be like God if they only disobeyed

God. Because of this sin of Adam and Eve, sin entered the world and infects the life of every person born. Each person born is born with this Original Sin, this desire to live selfishly. When a person acts on this desire to live selfishly, they commit Personal Sin. This Personal Sin causes all manner of evil and harm to the person and to others as they live contrary to the laws and will of the Creator God.

Questions

- a. Why do you think God allowed the Serpent to enter the Garden, and did not simply make sure Adam and Eve never faced temptation?
- b. How does sin in hearts corrupt the ways in which people view this world, themselves, and God?

c. Why is Sin never content with only infecting a person's heart, but will always find expression in a person's actions?

II. Doubting God's love and goodness

The power of sin has touched the life of every man and woman. The Christian theologian Augustine speaks of sin as "humanity curved in upon itself." While, as creatures, we should focus our lives on living for our Creator and loving others, instead sin leads people to focus on themselves. Instead of what God wants, sinful man obsesses over their own thoughts, actions, and priorities. The result of such a life is great pain and brokenness for both that person and the people around them. Satan uses deception to cause us to doubt God's love and goodness.

Questions

a. How did the serpent trick Eve into eating the fruit?

b. What are some of the ways today in which Satan tricks people into believing they know better than God how to live their lives?

III. Live under power of the Gospel

Living without sin is not possible under our own power or with our own good intentions. Only Christ can conquer sin in this world and in our lives. Therefore, Jesus calls us to live our lives by the power of the Gospel, under his Lordship and direction. This is not just for the sake of our hearts, but also for the sake of those around us whom we will harm if we allow sin to reign in our lives. Watch your life closely so that you live under power of the Gospel and not under the power of sin.

Questions

- a. What should we do if we have allowed sin to reign in our lives, even after becoming a Christian?
- b. What steps can you take to protect yourself from falling into the traps of temptation Satan brings into the lives of all Christians?

CONCLUSION

There are two kinds of sin: Original sin and personal sin. All people are born with a corrupted nature, called original sin or depravity. Personal sin, also called actual sin, is the act of intentionally breaking a known law by persons who are capable of understanding their action. Therefore, in the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans he lists many ways in which sin grew over the history of the world. In the first chapter of Romans Paul makes clear God gave man the opportunity to know the Creator of heaven and earth. However, man chose instead to continue the sin of Adam and Eve, following their own desires instead of following God's commands.

Lesson	ATONEMENT	
31		
	Lesson Text: Matthew 27	Secondary Text: Isaiah 53:7-12

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - To define Atonement? - Reflect on the painful death Jesus suffered at the hands of sinful people. - Believe the love of Jesus for humanity led him to offer his life as a sacrifice for sins.	"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'" (Matthew 27:54)

INTRODUCTION
The priests took Jesus to Pilate, the governor of Judea. They lied to Pilate and told him that Jesus had committed terrible crimes. The Jews told Pilate that Jesus wasn't their king and they wanted Him crucified. Being crucified was the worst death anyone could suffer. Some soldiers took off Jesus' clothes and wrapped a purple robe around Him. Then they hit Jesus many times with a whip, pushed a crown of thorns on to His head, and spat on Him. Simon, a man from Cyrene, had to carry the cross up the hill called Golgotha, because Jesus was too weak to carry it by himself. The soldiers laid Jesus down on the cross, stretched out His arms, and pounded nails into His hands. Before they lifted up the cross, they took another nail and pounded it into Jesus' feet. The moment Jesus died, there was a terrible earthquake. After seeing all of this, one of the soldiers realized that Jesus really was the Son of God.

I. The Atonement

It is the restoration of the fellowship between two parties who are enemies to each other. Jesus Christ suffered, bled, and died on the Cross to bring God and human beings into a right relationship. This is called the atonement. Sin breaks relationship between a Holy God and a sinful humanity. In order to provide a path to reconcile a Holy God and sinful humanity, Jesus Christ came to earth to live a perfect life without sin and take upon himself the guilt of all humanity's sins. "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:19). Because Jesus died the death each person deserves because of their sins, Jesus' death provides freedom for a sinful

person to accept God's love and forgiveness. Jesus' death provides a path of salvation for every person who hears the Good News of the Gospel and in faith accepts Jesus' offer of salvation.

Questions

- Has there ever been a person in your life who has modeled a love so deep they make sacrifices in order for you to know joy and peace?
- What happened in your heart when you heard Jesus died for your sins and took upon himself the punishment you deserved?
- How can you model a life of sacrifice for others this week?

II. The painful death Jesus suffered (Isaiah 53:5-6)

Man committed sin. Man brought this enmity between himself and God. Man is the offender. He has nothing in his possession that can bring an end to this enmity. The crucifixion proved the incredible love God in Jesus has for us. With the death of the Passover Lamb, God rescued the Israelites from their slavery to Egypt. Now with Jesus' death, God rescued the whole world from their slavery to sin. While the political and religious leaders conspired to kill Jesus, Jesus willingly submitted to their wicked plans. Jesus knew, while the authorities acted out of sin, God would use their wicked plans to release the greatest salvation the world has ever seen. The painful death Jesus suffered at the hands of sinful people in order to become the perfect Passover Lamb who can take away our sin.

Questions

- Why do you think the religious authorities wanted Jesus dead?
- What does Jesus' willingness to die such a painful death tell you about the depths of Jesus' love?

III. Love of Jesus for humanity (Mark 10:45)

The power of sin runs deeply in people's lives. However, the love of Jesus breaks the power of sin in Christians' lives. In response to Jesus' great sacrifice, Christians should accept this great power and allow Jesus to purify their heart and mind. Believers should know that the love of Jesus for man led Him to offer His life as a sacrifice for sins. Christians can live confidently in the power of Jesus Christ to give them strength to say "no" to temptation. Live confidently knowing nothing can separate you from the love of God in Jesus Christ

Questions

- If Jesus breaks the power of sin in the lives of Christians, why are Christians still tempted to sin?
- What is the proper response a person should have to someone who has made a great sacrifice for Him or her?

CONCLUSION

While those who mocked Jesus viewed his death as proof he was not the Messiah, in fact, his death fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. This passage from Isaiah foretells many details about Jesus' ministry and death, centuries before it happened. Jesus died in our place as a substitute sacrifice in our behalf (the concept of substitutionary atonement). We deserved the death He died; Jesus was completely innocent and sinless. Jesus died as the Lamb of God, a sacrificial lamb, atoning for the sins of those who believe in Him. It is important to understand that the death of Jesus was in God's plan for Him and mankind: Jesus willingly agreed to God's plan and died in our place and for our sins.

Lesson	PREVENIENT GRACE	
32		
	Lesson Text: Acts 8:26-40	Secondary Text: Isaiah 53:7-12

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To understand the meaning of Prevenient Grace b. Believe God's salvation in Jesus Christ is for all peoples. c. Be ready to share the testimony and the Gospel of Jesus Christ at any time.	"Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:35)

INTRODUCTION
Philip (not the apostle) was a missionary who preached to people about God. One day God sent an angel to tell Philip to walk down a desert road that would lead out of Jerusalem. Philip obeyed the angel. As Philip was walking, he saw a man from Ethiopia sitting in a chariot. The man was reading the book of Isaiah from the Old Testament Scriptures. As the man was reading, Philip walked up and asked him if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian man told Philip that he didn't understand, but would like someone to explain it to him. Philip explained to the man that he was reading the good news about Jesus.

I. What is Prevenient Grace?

The Grace of God, through Jesus Christ free and given to all people. Therefore, this is the love in God that goes to all people to prepare them for salvation long before they hear the Gospel. It is the Grace that goes before any attempt from our side to want to change our lives towards God (Rom 5:6-8). The grace of God empowers people to live in ways that are pleasing to God and acceptable to Him. This is called "prevenient grace." God always makes the first move in love and salvation. God created the heavens and the earth for humanity to enjoy. Yet, man chose to sin. When man continued to live in brokenness and sin, God reached out in Jesus Christ to provide an even better path to salvation. When a person becomes convicted of their sins and turns to God, it is only because God first reached out to them.

Questions

- a. What would your life be like if God had not taken the first step toward you, but waited on you to reach out for salvation and healing?
- b. What should be a person's response to God's prevenient grace?

II. God's salvation in Jesus Christ is for all people

Persecution did not stop the early Christians from telling others about Jesus Christ. In fact, just the opposite, even more people heard about Jesus because the Christians preached about him as they scattered from Jerusalem. Before Jesus ascended into heaven he told the disciples they would be his witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), and now that is coming true.

After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit so filled the early Christians that they are doing the same

things Jesus did while on earth: teaching about the Kingdom of God and working miracles to prove the Kingdom of God had come to earth. This Ethiopian official is one example of how the Good News about Jesus is spreading all over the world. Believe God's salvation in Jesus Christ is for all peoples, no matter their nation, race, gender, or background.

Questions

- a. What were some of the many of the differences between Philip and this Ethiopian official?
- b. Why do you think the Ethiopian official would invite a stranger into his chariot to teach him about the book of Isaiah?

III. Obeying God's call to share the Gospel.

Discern if there are any barriers in your heart to sharing God's love with others. Do you have any biases, fears, or prejudices that could prevent you from obeying God's call to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. Be ready to share your testimony and the Gospel of Jesus Christ at any time. God will bring

people into your life who need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Good News about Jesus is for all people. God wants Christians to share the Good News about Jesus with everyone they can. However, sometimes people allow differences between them and others prevent them from helping others. Sometimes the differences are racial, economic, religious, or many other ways. God does not want anything to stop Christians from sharing the Good News with others. God wants Christians to see beyond race, nationality, wealth, and see others simply as beloved creations of God who need the Good News. Share your testimony and the Gospel of Jesus Christ at any time. God will bring people into your life who need to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. What are some differences between people in your community that keep people from getting along with each other?
- b. What should you do if God brings someone into your life to share the Gospel with who is very different from you?

CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian official was reading this text. Hundreds of years before Jesus was crucified, God gave this prophecy to Isaiah to tell of the way in which God would save people from their sins. While the Bible says many important things about God, often times people need a Christian to explain what the Bible means. Not only that, but people often also need Christians to share with them personally the difference Jesus has made in their lives before they will understand the changes Jesus can make in their lives. It is very important for Christians to be prepared to share with others the Good News about Jesus.

Lesson	REPENTANCE	
33		
	Lesson Text: Luke 19:1-10	Secondary Text: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
: At the end of the lesson learners should: - Understand the meaning of Repentance - Understand no sinner is so far from God's grace that God cannot save them. - Reflect on why it is sometimes very hard for Christians, forgiven by God, to forgive others.	: "Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.'" (Luke 19:9)

INTRODUCTION
Jesus was passing through a city called Jericho. A man named Zacchaeus lived in this town. Zacchaeus was a very wealthy man because he was a tax collector. Tax collectors were known for taking money that wasn't theirs. When Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was in Jericho, he wanted to see Him. Because Zacchaeus was a short man, he wasn't able to see Jesus through the crowd. Instead, Zacchaeus climbed to the top of a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. When Jesus passed by the tree, He looked up. Then Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down from that tree. I want to go and stay at your house today." Zacchaeus was excited and climbed down from the tree. The people couldn't understand why Jesus would want to go to the house of someone who was a sinner. Because Jesus showed love to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus made restitution by paying back four times the amount of money that he owed the people.

I. Repentance

What is repentance? The Holy Spirit graciously gives a penitent heart and the hope of mercy to all who will repent. Repentance involves a sense of personal guilt and voluntarily turning away from sin. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon." (Isaiah 55:7). Repentance is the proper and joyful response to the grace of God. In repentance, a sinner turns from their sin and selfishness and turns to the grace and mercy of God. This repentance includes a willingness to change thoroughly, not just a change of heart but a change of mind and lifestyle as well. Though it is the work of God in the believer that will make this change, the believer must be open

and willing to accept this work of God in their lives.

Questions

- Why is it important for a person to not only believe in their head that Jesus died for them, but to repent of their sins?
- What are some of the emotions you experienced when you understood that Jesus had died for you and offered to forgive you of all your sins?
- What are some steps Christians can take in order to cooperate with God in purifying their thoughts, feelings, and actions from the power of sin?

II. No sinner is so far from God's grace.

Is anyone so much a sinner God cannot save him or her? One of the points of this episode in Jesus' life is to declare "NO!" If Jesus' salvation can save someone like Zacchaeus, then his salvation is for anyone. This is oftentimes hard for Christians to accept, for Satan tempts Christians to believe Jesus only saves certain kinds of people. Namely, people like them. However, every person is a creation of God, and is therefore loved by God. No matter how great their sins, no one is so sinful God cannot save them.

Questions

- What types of people do you struggle to believe will ever accept Christ Jesus as their Lord and Savior?
- If he knew his fellow Israelites would hate him so much, why do you think Zacchaeus decided to become a tax collector?

III. Why it is sometimes hard for Christians to forgive others.

Amazingly, some people who experience God's great forgiveness for their sins can struggle to forgive others of their sins. When we have been hurt or taken advantage of by someone, it is natural for us to want that person punished. It is not natural to rejoice when they escape accountability. However, God's grace is not "fair," as we humans view fairness. Instead, God's grace is extravagant, reaching people who do not deserve it. The point is not that people get to escape justice or making restitution, but that Jesus usually grants salvation before a person makes restitution.

Questions

- What does it say about a Christian's salvation if they say they cannot forgive someone else?
- Why does forgiveness not necessarily come quickly or easily for humans?

CONCLUSION

If the Israelites viewed Zacchaeus as the worst of all sinners before his salvation, then the early Christians viewed the Apostle Paul as the worst of sinners before his salvation. In fact, Paul calls himself the worst of sinners. Before Jesus saved Paul, Paul blasphemed Jesus and persecuted the Christians. It was only by God's grace Paul received salvation from Jesus.

Lesson		
34	JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, ADOPTION	
	Lesson Text: John 3:1-21	Secondary Text: Ezekiel 36:22-29

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Understand Justification, Regeneration, Adoption b. God sent Jesus to earth to provide a way to eternal life. c. Celebrate the great salvation God provides for you	"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)

INTRODUCTION
Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a group of men who knew Old Testament Scriptures and taught them to other people. When the Pharisees met Jesus, they believed He was a teacher, not the Son of God. But Nicodemus became very curious. He wanted to learn more about this man named Jesus. During the night, Nicodemus went to see Jesus. Nicodemus knew that God was with Jesus, but he wasn't sure if he should believe what Jesus was teaching. Jesus told Nicodemus that in order to go to heaven, he had to be born again. Nicodemus didn't understand what Jesus meant by being born it again. Jesus wanted Nicodemus to realize that it takes more than just knowing the Bible to get into heaven. A person needs to ask God for forgiveness of his sins, and accept God into his life. Nicodemus left Jesus and thought about what He had said.

I. What it means to be saved-Salvation

Justification is that all who believe in Jesus Christ and receive Him as Lord Saviour are justified. It is the gracious acts of God as The Judge by which he grants full pardon of a guilt and complete release from the penalty of sins committed and acceptance as righteous, to all who believe on Jesus Christ and receive Him as their Lord and Savoir (Romans 5:18).

Regeneration, God freely regenerates all those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord Saviour. He provides them with a new spiritual life and a new moral nature, which is capable of faith, love and obedience to God. This is called the new birth. (John I: 12)

Adoption, God who freely justifies and regenerates new believers, adopts them as

children into the family of God (1 John 3:1). A person who was a stranger is accepted and given all the rights of being a child by the parents who want him to their child. The moment a person repents of their sin and asks God for salvation, God saves the sinner and the sinner becomes a completely new person. They are no longer separated from God by sin or rebellion. Instead, in salvation God removes all their guilt for all their sins by granting them a full pardon. Secondly, they are "born again," no longer ruled by the sin they inherited at their birth, but now ruled by God as one saved by grace. Third, the Christian is transformed, going from a child of wrath to a Child of God. All three of these actions happen at once, and represent the complete and total salvation God offers to all people.

Questions

- a. Why do you think Nicodemus, so thoroughly trained as a religious teacher, struggled to understand this teaching from Jesus about needing to be born again?
- b. How does it make you feel when you hear God has adopted you as a Child of God?
- c. How can you help people who think God's forgiveness is too good to be true, really is a promise they can receive?

II. Jesus is the way to eternal life.

God sent Jesus to earth to provide a way to eternal life. Through faith in Jesus Christ God forgives Christians, and Christians are born again. Jesus is not just a miracle worker. Jesus is not just a great teacher. Jesus is the Messiah, the only Son of God. This truth was hard for people like Nicodemus to accept, because they had preconceptions about what the Messiah should be like. Jesus challenged those preconceptions in hopes of helping Nicodemus see the obvious truth in front of him: Jesus is the Messiah. Believing in Jesus Christ is the only path to salvation. While this passage ends without Nicodemus making a decision, later in John's Gospel Nicodemus

advocates for Jesus before those who want to arrest him (John 7:50-52).

Questions

- a. Why do some people believe in Jesus as Lord and Saviour right away, and others take time before they will believe?
- b. How has your life changed since being born again?

III. The great salvation God provides for you

Therefore, we should understand that, the great salvation God provides for you and me, is only for who will believe in Jesus Christ Lord and Saviour. We can celebrate in times of worship with brothers and sisters in Christ. We can celebrate in being compassionate and loving to others. We can celebrate in living a life of love. Jesus has given us a new life, we should celebrate!

Questions

- a. Just because Jesus saves us does not mean life becomes easy. However, how does being a Christian make us handle life's problems differently?
- b. How can you share the Good News of Jesus' love with someone this week?

CONCLUSION

This is a text prophesying about Jesus. Nicodemus should have thought about this text as Jesus taught him. The Pharisees knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well. In this text, God promises a time when the Israelites get new hearts and new spirits. As with Jesus' teaching, this is not literal new hearts, but new spiritual hearts. Nicodemus should have understood Jesus' talk of "being born again" being grounded in this text. God makes many other promises in the text God fulfilled in Jesus' ministry and in the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Lesson	DAY OF PENTECOST	
35		
	Lesson Text: Acts 2	Secondary Text: Joel 2:28-32

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. To know what is Entire Sanctification. b. Celebrate the Holy Spirit's infilling of the disciples. c. Should be able to understand the Spirit of Jesus filling your heart, soul, and strength? d. Witness to God's great salvation.	"Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" (Acts 2:38)

INTRODUCTION
Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told the disciples to stay in Jerusalem. He was going to send the Holy Spirit to help them. One day the disciples and some other Christians went to a house to visit together. Suddenly, they felt a strong wind blow through the house. Then, they saw what looked like a fire come down from heaven. The fire divided into different sections, and each part touched one of them. This was the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised to send. As the fire touched them, they started to speak in different languages. Jesus wanted them to know that the good news about Him should be available to everyone in the world. Jesus sent the apostles and the other Christians out to preach to all people. The day that Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His followers is called the Day of Pentecost.

I. What is Entire Sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Luke 3:16-17)

Entire sanctification is the result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which is so called the infilling of the Holy Spirit. It includes the cleansing of the heart from sin and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. He empowers the believer to live and serve like Jesus Christ. God's plan of salvation is more than to save people from the guilt of their sins, God's plan is to save people from the power of sin in their lives. Therefore, while the resurrection of Jesus Christ provides a path to salvation, the infilling of the Holy Spirit is a subsequent work of God in which God cleanses the heart from sin. Through the Power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian is able to reject sin and have the power to love others with the love of God. This

infilling of the Holy Spirit leads the Christian to a life of communion with God and growth in grace.

Questions

- a. Why would God want to do more than just save people from their sins? What does a Christian lack who is only forgiven of their sins, and not released from the power of sin in their lives?
- b. What were some of the manifestations of the Holy Spirit among the believers on and after Pentecost, according to Acts 2?
- c. Why is it important to, in addition to testifying to sanctification by God, to demonstrate that sanctification through holy behaviors?

II. Celebrate the Holy Spirit's infilling of the disciples.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to make the life of Jesus alive in the Christian's life and empower them to live in the power of God. With the power of Holy Spirit at work within them, Christians can fulfill God's commands to love God and love others. With the infilling of the Holy Spirit, Christians can also live fully devoted to God's Kingdom, and free from bondage to sin. Though the disciples often misunderstood Jesus' mission to the world while Jesus ministered on earth, once filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to understand better the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Jesus' mission to the world.

Questions

- Why are the disciples able to live more like Jesus after the infilling of the Holy Spirit than when Jesus walked the earth?
- What is the significance of the disciples' speaking so many different languages?

III. Is the Spirit of Jesus filling your heart, soul, and strength?

When filled with the Holy Spirit, the Christian is able to live their lives fully devoted to God, and

free from bondage to sin. Instead of living a life of struggle between trying to live for Christ and yet always bound by sin, the Christian is able to live wholly for Jesus.

Questions

- Why are all people born with the desire to live selfishly?
- Do you feel yourself torn between living for God and living bound to sin? If so, what can you do to allow God to have all of your life?

IV. Witness to God's great salvation.

The Holy Spirit's filling of the Christian is not to be a one-time event, but a daily reality. When the Christian lives out of God's power instead of their own power, they bear witness to the work of God in their lives. They are able to accomplish exceedingly more with God's power than under their own power.

Questions

- How can you demonstrate the Good News that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved?
- What can you do if you have never been filled with the Holy Spirit?

CONCLUSION

God never intended salvation to be limited to Israel. Because God created everyone, God wants everyone saved. In this passage from Joel, the prophet speaks God's promise that one day, not just the Israelites, but everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. God also speaks through Joel of the coming Holy Spirit who will fill the Children of God

Lesson	THE CHURCH	
36		
	Lesson Text: Acts 13:1-5	Secondary Text: 1 Samuel 15 – 16

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Define the term Church b. God directs the early church to send out Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles. c. God sees the potential of people. d. Be ready to commit people to the Lord's work	"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

INTRODUCTION
Paul, Barnabas, and three men from other countries were at a church in the city of Antioch. While they were there, they fasted and worshiped God. To fast means to go without food. While the men were praying, the Holy Spirit told them to set apart Paul and Barnabas for a special task. To be set apart means to be chosen to do something special. The Holy Spirit wanted Paul and Barnabas to go out to different parts of the world and tell people about Jesus. When the Holy Spirit was finished speaking, the other men walked up to Paul and Barnabas. They placed their hands on Paul and Barnabas and prayed that the Lord would help and protect them as they went out to preach.

I. What is the Church?

In the New Testament times, God has formed the Church to be gatherings of Christians who share with each other the blessings of God and then share with the world the blessings of God as well. The church is the community of those who believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior and have been saved from their sins regardless of denomination. It is the people of God's covenant who are made new in Christ. The Church is the Body of Christ called together by the Holy Spirit through the Word. The word church is used in several ways in everyday language:

- a. It can refer to a place where Christian gather to worship.
- b. Church may refer to an organized community of Christian believers-denomination.
- c. The word church can refer to a local congregation.

Questions

- a. What were some of the actions believers in Acts 13 did that bore witness to them being The Church?
- b. What are some of the benefits Christians receive with they gather together with other Christians to worship together and to practice their spiritual gifts?
- c. Why is it important for churches to send out ministers and missionaries into the world?

II. God directs the early church to send out Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles.

Rejoice! God directs the early church to send out Paul to be a missionary to the Gentiles. God calls all Christians to be witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God, however, calls some Christians to the more public positions of pastors and missionaries. It is important for the

church to discern if a person who feels God's calls upon them to this kind of position is in fact a calling from God.

Questions

- a. Why would God use someone like Saul, who persecuted the Christians, to be a missionary to the Gentiles?
- b. What gifts and talents do you think God gave Saul to enable him to carry the Gospel to the Gentiles?

III. God sees the potential of people.

Recognize God sees the potential of people much differently than they see their own potential.

Rejoice in the fact that God sees Christians, not according to what they have done in the past, but for the potential they have for God's use in the future. God places many gifts and talents in Christian's lives that are only made manifest when the Christian cooperates with God's call upon their lives.

Questions

- a. Why do some Christians doubt God could do anything great through their lives?

- b. What do you think are the most important qualities a Christian needs to develop in order for them to be of service to God?

IV. Be ready to commit people to the Lord's work

Be ready to commit people to the Lord's work, even if that means God sends them out from your community in order to bless others. When God calls people to special positions of ministry, like pastoring or being a missionary, God uses other Christians to confirm that calling. In this way, the whole Church plays a very important role in the more public ministries of the Church, not just in leading those ministries, but also in confirming, supporting, and encouraging those called to lead those ministries.

Questions

- a. Why might it be hard on a group of Christians to send out one of their members to be a missionary?
- b. Why is the work of a missionary so important for the Kingdom of God?

CONCLUSION

God often calls the most unlikely of people to do great things. When God sent the prophet Samuel to Jesse's house in Bethlehem to anoint the new king of Israel, everyone would have assumed Samuel would anoint Jesse's firstborn. However, not only did God not choose the firstborn, God ended up choosing the opposite, Jesse's youngest, David. God looked at the potential in David's heart when looking for someone who would serve God faithfully. So also, when God chose a missionary to the Gentiles, no one thought God would choose Saul. Saul was the opposite of a man pursuing God's kingdom, Saul was persecuting God's new church. However, God identified in Saul a person through whom God could do great things.

Lesson	BAPTISM	
37		
	Lesson Text: Matthew 3:1-17	Secondary Text: Isaiah 42:1-9

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Explain the meaning of Baptism. b. Celebrate Jesus' willingness to demonstrate his love for us. c. To take our sins upon himself on the cross. d. Fulfill all righteousness in your life.	And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

INTRODUCTION
When Jesus was about 30 years old, He left Galilee and travelled south to the Jordan River. John baptized people who wanted to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus walked into the river and stood before John. Jesus told John that He would like to be baptized. John couldn't believe what Jesus was saying. Jesus didn't need to be baptized, because He had never sinned. Instead, John wanted Jesus to baptize him. But Jesus said that He needed to be baptized in order to fulfill God's mission. When John heard this, he agreed to baptize Jesus, even though he felt unworthy. When John brought Jesus out of the water, the sky opened up and a beautiful dove came down from heaven and landed on Jesus. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (NIV).

I. What is Baptism? (Matthew 3:17)

Baptism is the first of two sacraments practiced by the Church of the Nazarene. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments that have been adopted by the church because Jesus had commanded that they be practised. A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. As such, Baptism signifies a person's acceptance of the gifts and blessings God offers in salvation. In Baptism, the Christian symbolically moves from being dead to God to alive in God. In this sense, it represents being "born again." Baptism also includes many allusions to the Old Testament. Young children and the morally innocent are participants in the new covenant. Therefore, they may be baptised at the request of their parents or guardians. The church pledges to provide Christians training. A person may be baptised by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. Being

saved through water recalls the way in which God saved Israel by parting the Red Sea during the Exodus. Baptism also alludes to circumcision, in which God gave the Israelites a practice in which to be marked as set aside for God's use and blessing.

Questions

- a. What does it mean to you to be "born again?"
- b. What changes has God brought into your life since your baptism?
- c. What would you tell others is the benefit to being baptized?

II. Jesus demonstrates His love for humanity. (Matthew 3:16))

To take our sins upon Him on the cross, Jesus needed to participate in baptism. (Galatians 3:26-27). It can be confusing to talk

about how God is one, yet expressed as three in the Trinity. It can also be a challenge to explain why the sinless Jesus said He needed baptism. However, what is clear is Jesus, the Son of God, fully obeyed God's call upon His life. Fully God and fully human, Jesus displayed to us both God's mighty love for man and His obedience to God. Because Jesus obeyed God's plan all the way to death and resurrection, salvation is available to us. Jesus demonstrated His love for us in His obedience to God. Celebrate Jesus' willingness to demonstrate His love for us.

Questions

- a. Why can baptism be such a powerful symbol of God's work in a person's life?
- b. Besides baptism, what are some other outward signs of inner grace working within Christians?

III. To take our sins upon Himself on the Cross.

Recognize the depths of Jesus' love for us expressed in His obedience to God. He who knew no sin became sin for us. (2 Corinthians 5:21). Obedience to God is not always an easy virtue to practice. Sometimes, as in Jesus' life, being obedient to God results in rejection, suffering, and pain. However, greater than all that, obedience also results in joy, peace, and

love. Though it is not always easy, when Christians learn obedience to God's commands and God's ways, God blesses their lives beyond all measure.

Questions

- a. What should a Christian do when it looks like the sacrifices of obedience to God look bigger than the benefits of obedience?
- b. What do you think happens in a Christian's life when they begin to practice obedience to God's commands and will for their life?

IV. Fulfill all righteousness in your life.

Ask God what you need to do in order to fulfill all righteousness in your life.

We are not sinless or faultless like Jesus. However, we can strive to, like Jesus, "fulfill all righteousness" in our lives. This does not mean we work hard under our power to be righteous. It means we surrender all our life to God's will for us, and are willing to do whatever God asks.

Questions

- a. What are some virtues a person who strives to "fulfill all righteousness" will demonstrate in their life?
- b. Why can Christians not "fulfill all righteousness" under their own power?

CONCLUSION

The Isaiah text foretells John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus. This ministry of Jesus continues today as Jesus continues to bring justice to the nations and free captives from the prison of sin. .

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Lesson Text: **Luke 22:1-23**Secondary Text: **Exodus 11:1 – 12:13**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To state the requirement for partaking the Lord's Supper.
- Understand that Jesus transforms the Passover meal from being a redemptive meal.
- Reflect on the incredible price Jesus paid in order to bring salvation to the world.
- Participate in the Lord's Supper with deep reverence for Christ's sacrifice.

Memory Verse:

And He [Jesus] said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (Luke 22:15)

INTRODUCTION

One Passover evening, Jesus and all of the disciples ate the Passover meal together. This would be the last supper that Jesus would have with His disciples. While they were eating, Jesus looked at His friends and said that one of them would betray Him. The disciples were sad and said they would never do that. Jesus said that the man who dipped his bread into the bowl at the same time Jesus did would betray Him. When Jesus looked at Judas, He said, "Yes, it is you" (NIV). Then Jesus took some bread and broke it. He said that when they ate the bread, they should think of His body that would be broken. Then Jesus picked up a cup filled with red-colored wine. He said that when they drank the wine, they should think of the blood that He would shed for their sins. When we do this in church today, we call it Communion.

I. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is the second of two sacraments practiced by the Church of the Nazarene. A sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. The Lord's Supper proclaims Jesus' life, suffering, sacrificial death, resurrection, and the hope of His coming again. It is the means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. While the first sacrament, Baptism, is normally practiced only once at the beginning of a Christian's spiritual journey, the Lord's Supper is to be practiced on a regular basis until the Christian receives their eternal reward. Jesus established the Lord's Supper on the night of his betrayal, as he gathered with his disciples to celebrate the Passover meal. Jesus redefined the Passover meal and infused

it with new meaning in anticipation of his coming death and resurrection. While it was the blood of a lamb that saved the Israelites from the last plague God sent upon Egypt, now it will be through the blood of Jesus Christ, God's perfect Lamb that salvation will come to the world.

Questions

- What are some similarities and differences between God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt and God's deliverance of Christians from their slavery to sin?
- What difference does it make in your life that Jesus died on the cross to provide a path of salvation for you?

II. Jesus transforms the Passover

Jesus transforms the Passover meal from being a redemptive meal about freedom from slavery in Egypt, to being a redemptive meal about freedom from slavery to sin. God's desire is to free men and women from their slavery. Whether it is slavery to Egypt or slavery to sin, God provides a path of salvation. These meals serve not to only remind the Children of God what God has done for them, but also serve as an opportunity to renew their devotion to God and God's work in their life and in the world. The Lord's Supper, as Jesus' new Passover Meal, is very special for Christians because in it they remember not just a lamb who died for their salvation, but the very Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Christians also believe God's strengthens them and encourages them as they participate in the Lord's Supper.

Questions

- What comes to mind when you reflect on the pain Jesus suffered in order to bring you salvation?
- Why is the celebration of the Lord's Supper so important for the life of the Christian?

III. Jesus paid to bring salvation.

God purchased the Christian's salvation at a very high price, the life of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians should not treat cheaply what was costly for God. Therefore, Christians are to live with a deep reverence and gratitude

for the love and sacrifice of Jesus. The death of our Lord was for real a sacrifice to humanity it was done on the Cross; price Jesus paid in order to bring salvation to the world.

Questions

- Why do you think Jesus willingly endured the pain of the cross?
- How do you think the disciples felt about this meal after Jesus' resurrection?

IV. Participate in the Lord's Supper.

The practice of the Lord's Supper should be both a reverent time of humility, and a joyful time of celebration. All should come respectively, appreciating its significance. By participating in this sacrament, we testify to the Lord's death until He comes again. Those who have faith in Christ and who love the people of God are invited to participate as often as possible. To take part, one should be a child of God who acknowledges and appreciates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then, with the grace God gives in the Lord's Supper, the Christian should live the next week with both great humility and celebration. Participate in the Lord's Supper with deep reverence for Christ's sacrifice and great joy for your freedom from slavery to sin.

Question:

How can you prepare your heart and mind to receive the Lord's Supper in a meaningful way?

CONCLUSION

After refusing to free the Israelites from Egypt, even after many plagues, finally, after the plague of the Firstborn, Pharaoh threw Israel out of Egypt. As a lasting memorial of God's mighty work on behalf of Israel in which God killed the first-born of the Egyptians, but "Passed Over" the homes of the Israelites marked by the blood of the lamb, the Israelites are to celebrate the Passover meal each year.

Lesson	JESUS KNOWS YOUR PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS	
39		
	Lesson Text: Mark 10:46-52	Secondary Text: Ruth 1

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - Be encouraged, Jesus knows your needs. - Choose to believe Jesus will answer your prayers. - Recognize people will often need their physical needs met before they will be able.	<i>When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:47)</i>

INTRODUCTION
As Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem, He passed through the city of Jericho. A large crowd of people surrounded Jesus as He walked down the street. He heard a man calling out to Him, saying, "<i>Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!</i>" Many of the people who were around Jesus told the man to be quiet and not to bother Jesus. When the man heard the people talking to him, he shouted even louder. He wanted Jesus to hear him calling. Jesus looked through the crowd and saw a blind man, named Bartimaeus, sitting at the side of the road. Jesus told the people to let Bartimaeus know that Jesus heard his cry. Then Jesus asked Bartimaeus what he wanted Him to do. The blind man said, "<i>Teacher, I want to see.</i>" Jesus told Bartimaeus that because he had faith, he would be healed. When Bartimaeus raised up his head, he could see!

I. Jesus knows your needs.

Unfortunately, people can misunderstand God's love and plans. In Jesus' day, they thought God punished people for their sins by making them disabled. Jesus, however, demonstrated God's love for disabled people. Sin seeks to disable people while God seeks to heal people. God's healing comes in many forms. In Jesus' ministry, Jesus' healing often physically healed people, spiritually healed people, socially healed people. Today, Jesus' healing also comes in many forms. Be encouraged, Jesus knows your needs, and listens when you call out to Him.

- How can you know God hears your prayers?

II. Jesus answers prayers.

Christians need to always be humble in heart and open to God's message to them. Because many in Jesus' day assumed they knew how God always works and did not listen to God's message though Jesus, they rebuked Bartimaeus' calls for healing from Jesus. Whenever Christians think they know exactly how and when God will act, they can be hindering God's redemptive work. Instead, Christians need to believe God always hears their prayers. Choose to believe Jesus will answer your prayers, even when others do not believe.

Questions

- Why does God not always answer our prayers the way we want God to answer them?

Questions

- a. Why do you think people felt they had the right to rebuke Bartimaeus?
- b. Why do you think Bartimaeus ignored those people and kept shouting for Jesus anyway?

III. People often need their physical needs met.

People have physical needs and spiritual needs. It is important for Christians to recognize Jesus calls us to meet both kinds of

needs. While the spiritual needs are the most important, oftentimes Christians need to meet their physical needs first, in order for them to recognize they have spiritual needs as well. It is important to know that people will often need their physical needs met before they will be able to recognize their spiritual needs.

Questions

- a. What are some of the physical needs people in your community have?
- b. What are some of the spiritual needs people in your community have?

CONCLUSION

Like Bartimaeus' blindness, people would have looked at Ruth's loss of both her husband and her sons as signs of God's punishment. However, life is much more complicated than just, "good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people." Because of sin in this world, sometimes bad things happen to good people, and good things happen to bad people. What is important is to look at a person's heart, not their circumstances. Are they a person of faith? Then no matter what their circumstances, God will work to bring healing and goodness into their lives.

JESUS IS COMING TO RESCUE CHRISTIANS AND DEFEAT THE BEAST

Lesson Text: **Revelation 19:11-20:6**Secondary Text: **Luke 21:5-19**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. To understand that Jesus will come back to judge his enemies.
- b. Jesus has promised you will enter eternal life, if you stand firm.
- c. To be prepared to given and answer to everyone who asks you.

Memory Verse:

Be prepared to given and answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this will gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

INTRODUCTION

In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John shares many of the visions God gave him about events that will occur in the future. Using vivid imagery and symbols, John communicated these visions through his writing. John saw these visions as pertaining to the end of the Roman Empire of his day. However, Christians believe these visions also communicate truths about the future reign of Christ on earth. In this passage, using vivid imagery and symbols, we hear that one day, Jesus Christ will return to earth and the curse of sin will be broken as the unrighteous are defeated and the righteous are rescued.

I. Jesus will come back to judge.

Though Satan is wrecking havoc in the world these days, at the end of time he will be defeated by the heavenly powers. At the end of this age, Jesus the Messiah will come back to judge his enemies, reward his people, and reign as King over the whole earth. Though sin and evil seem to run rampant in this world, there will come a day in which God completely destroys the power of Satan, and rescues believers in Jesus. John was given this vision, and shares it in the scriptures as a source of hope for Christians throughout the centuries.

Questions

- a. What are some of the ways in which you see the power of sin at work in the world around you?

- b. What do you think life will be like when Jesus returns, and there is no more sin on earth?

II. Entering eternal life.

Be courageous, though you may suffer trials and persecutions in this life, Jesus has promised you will enter eternal life, if you stand firm. When times are tough, sometimes we need encouragement. This vision given to John was to give the early Christians encouragement as they were suffering under the persecution of the Roman Empire. So too, the passage has been a source of hope for Christians throughout the centuries who have also suffered for being followers of Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. What encourages you in this passage?

- b. Do you feel like you have suffered for being a Christian?

III. Be ready to provide a reason for your faith. (1 Peter 3:15)

Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15). When we are encouraged, and have a clear understanding of both God's love and power, then we can live confidently in this fallen world. Though we may suffer many trials and persecutions that does not make us unique. Instead, it places us

in the long line of faithful Christians throughout the centuries who did not consider suffering for Christ as something to be avoided.

Questions

- a. How can you support and encourage a fellow Christian who is being persecuted for their faith?
- b. If you are not being persecuted now, what can you do to prepare yourself, train yourself, and equip yourself now to be ready in the future if those sufferings and persecutions come?

CONCLUSION

Jesus also uses vivid imagery and symbols to try and communicate heavenly truths to the disciples about the future. The immediate future Jesus was talking about to the disciples is the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in AD 70. Christians also understand this passage to be talking about the end of time as well, when Jesus will return with power and glory.

RESURRECTION, JUDGMENT, AND DESTINYLesson Text: **Revelation 21**Secondary Text: **John 14****Lesson Aims:**

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To explain Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny
- Recognize, the earthly life we live is only the beginning of our existence.
- Take comfort in knowing God is preparing a place for all Christians.
- Live confidently, knowing God will reward any sacrifice you make for Jesus.

Memory Verse:

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
(Revelation 21:4)

INTRODUCTION

One night, John the apostle had a vision. A vision is like a dream. God wanted to show John what heaven would be like. God called it the new Jerusalem. John saw the most beautiful city he had ever seen. He saw a city with walls made of jasper, and the inside of the city was made out of pure gold. There were four walls around the city, and each wall had three gates. The gates were named after the 12 tribes of Israel. Each gate was made out of a giant pearl. John looked inside the city and saw that there wasn't a temple to worship God in. An angel told John that there wasn't any need for a temple because God and Jesus would be the Temple.

Then the angel told John that there would be no sun in heaven because God and Jesus would shine brighter than the sun. The people whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life, since Jesus had forgiven them of their sins, would be able to enter this wonderful city.

I. Resurrection, Judgment, and Destiny

When Christ returns, the bodies of both the just and unjust will be raised to life and united with their spirits. The saints will join God in heaven that is resurrection. *"Those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned."* Every person will also stand before the judgment seat of God. Every person will appear before God to be judged according to his or her deeds in this life. The last judgment is when God separates the righteous from the evil forever. God is just a judge and justice will be without favor. Judgment for sinners and saints will be different. Therefore,

because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians will be saved. Eternity is defined as the existence which is not limited and space. It also refers to "age to come" after the resurrection. All mankind, saints and sinners alike are destined for eternity through in different places. However, those who reject the forgiveness of Christ will be eternally lost in hell.

Questions

- Does the promise of end-times judgment bring you joy or fear? Why?
- How should the prospect of the end times affect how you look upon your daily life?

- c. How can you help save people from eternal hell, and bring them with you into eternal glory?

II. Earthly life we live is only the beginning of our existence.

After death, all Christians go to heaven where we will live worshipping God and enjoying God's presence without any pain or suffering ever again. This earthly life is only a small part of who we really are as the Children of God. When this life is over, all Christians will enjoy an eternity in Heaven with God. There all our questions will be answered, all our sufferings taken away, and all our tears be dried. It will be a place where we can worship God perfectly, for there will no longer be any pain or sin.

Questions

- a. What are you looking forward to most in Heaven?
- b. What are some of the questions you will ask Jesus when you see him face to face?

III. God is preparing a place for all Christians

Living the Christian life can be very hard. In the midst of temptations and persecutions, many Christians are tempted to walk away from the faith. In addition, if not explicitly walking away from the faith, at least they are tempted to compromise their faith. One of the

reasons why God gives Christians the hope of Heaven is to remind us that we are living for something greater now than these momentary pains and trials. God is preparing a place for all Christians, a place of perfect peace, joy, and love.

Questions

- a. How does knowing about Heaven bring comfort to you now?
- b. What do you think it will be like to live without any temptation to sin?

IV. Any sacrifice made for Jesus will be reward.

God will reward any sacrifice you make for Jesus in this life in Heaven. In addition, God will wipe away any sufferings you face in this life in the joy and peace of Heaven. Live confidently, being ready to share your hope of heaven with someone this week. It may mean you risk having them laugh at you; however, everyone needs to know there is hope not only for this life but also for the life to come. They also need to know there are consequences for how they live their life, consequences both for this life as well as for the life to come.

Questions

- a. How can you make sure you are going to Heaven?
- b. Who do you most want to see (besides Jesus) when you get to heaven?

CONCLUSION

The only time we have to make everything right by trusting in Jesus Christ and live a holy life, is now. When the Day of Judgement comes it will be too late. God is the Most Righteous Judge of all times. All mankind, saints and sinners alike are destined for eternity through in different places.

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISES

Lesson Text: **Exodus 2:1-10**New Testament Text: **Matthew 2:13-23**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. To celebrate that God can be trusted because He continues to be faithful.
- b. Affirm that racism is wrong God created all peoples and Jesus died to save all peoples.
- c. Put into practice the conviction that it is our responsibility to stand up and protect those being oppressed.

Memory Verse:

When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:10)

INTRODUCTION

The new pharaoh of Egypt thought there were too many Hebrew people in his land. The Israelites were also called Hebrews. So, Pharaoh ordered that all of the Hebrew baby boys be killed. When Moses was born, his mother wanted to hide him so that he wouldn't be killed. As Moses grew, his mother found it difficult to hide him. She had to quickly think of another way to save her little boy. She made a small basket to put Moses in and put it into the Nile River. Her daughter, Miriam, watched the basket to make sure that nothing happened to the baby. When Pharaoh's daughter went down to the river to take a bath, she found the small basket. In it, she discovered a little Hebrew baby. Pharaoh's daughter decided to keep the baby boy. Moses didn't grow up with his real family, but he was safe.

I. God continues to be faithful

The fact that God can be trusted, because God continues to be faithful to the covenants by providing a rescuer for the Israelites when they cried out to from their slavery in Egypt. God continues to protect the Israelites, being true to the covenant with Abraham. While God sent the Israelites to Egypt in Joseph's day to save them from a famine, now, generations later, Pharaoh is oppressing them and using them as slaves in Egypt. God sees their suffering and begins raising up one of Abraham's descendants who will deliver the Israelites from their slavery. God continued being faithful to the covenant made with Abraham by protecting the Israelites. Many generations of God's people have lived in Egypt after Joseph.

Questions

- a. Why is there so much conflict between people groups in Bible times and today?
- b. How does the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the status of all Christians as the People of God, demonstrate racism is a sin?

II. All people are God's Creation

We can do great harm to others in trying to protect ourselves when we allow our hearts of be filled with fear. This happens on national levels with one race oppressing another race, but also happens in our own personal relationship level when people allow fear to breed racism in their hearts. All Christians need

to know that racism is wrong. God created all peoples and Jesus died to save all peoples.

Questions

- a. How can we make sure the differences we have with others do not become hindrances to us loving them in Christ?
- b. What steps can we take to engage people who are different from us, and seek to understand their values and priorities?

III. Stand up and protect those being oppressed.

In the midst of Pharaoh demanding the deaths of Hebrew baby boys, God is able to use Pharaoh's daughter to be part of the salvation history of God's people Israel. We need to remember that sometimes God's blessings and

protection will flow into our lives by people who are not following God or seeking to honor God with their lives. In addition, that God will use us to protect and bless those who are in need of protection, whether or not they are Christians. Put into practice the conviction that it is our responsibility to stand up for, and protect those being oppressed, no matter how different they may be from us.

Questions

- a. If God can use people who do not believe to bless and protect others, how then can you as a follower of Jesus Christ bless and protect those who do not say they follow God?
- b. How can you stand up for and protect those in your community who are being oppressed, even if they are very different from you?

CONCLUSION

God continued being faithful to the covenant made with Abraham by protecting the Israelites. Many generations of God's people have lived in Egypt after Joseph; however, God's people are no longer living in freedom and blessing, but in slavery. Their cries have risen to heaven, and God begins providing a way of freedom for them through saving the infant Moses from death. Like Moses, God provided a means of safety to the infant Jesus whose life is in danger by another ruler, like Pharaoh, who was fearful of losing power. Just like God rescue Moses He will provide means to rescue us.

EXPRESSING KINDNESS IN HARDSHIP MOMENTS TO OTHERS

Lesson Text: **Ruth 1**New Testament Text: **Matthew 2:1-8**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To understand that God chooses the unexpected people to be essential parts of keeping covenant promises.
- God does not give us specific guidance for specific situations.
- Be diligent, being a Christian means being a faithful and hard worker.

Memory Verse:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."
(Micah 5:2,4- Matthew 2:6)

INTRODUCTION

Naomi and her husband had two sons, Mahlon and Kilion. Naomi's family had to move to the country of Moab, because there was no food left in their town of Bethlehem. When Naomi's sons grew up, they married Ruth and Orpah, who were from Moab. Ruth and Orpah liked Naomi, and they respected her very much. Many years later, Naomi's husband and her two sons died. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah were left all alone. Naomi decided to go back home to Bethlehem. She begged Ruth and Orpah to go back to their own families. But, because they loved Naomi so much, neither one of them wanted to leave her. After much begging, Naomi finally convinced Orpah to go back to her family. But Ruth stayed with Naomi, and they travelled to Bethlehem. Ruth later married a man named Boaz. Do you know who Ruth's grandson was King David!

I. God chooses the unexpected people.

God often works in mysterious ways. One example of this truth is when God uses the most unlikely people to be essential parts of God's redemptive plan. In this story, we see how Ruth, a non-Israelite, becomes an essential part of how God keeps his covenant promises. Because of Ruth's compassion and determination for caring for her Israelites mother-in-law, she marries into the Israelite nation. Christians need to be alert, and look for God at work around them, both through those they would expect God to work, but also through people they would never guess God would work through. God sometimes chooses the most unexpected people to be essential parts of keeping covenant promises.

Questions

- Who are some people who have blessed your life because of their compassion and determination?
- Are there people in your life who need to you show them compassion and determination?

II. Living within the will of God.

As Christians we need to know that sometimes God does not give us specific guidance for specific situations. However, if we are living out Christian virtues like love and compassion, we will always find ourselves within God's will. One of the lessons of this book is that, while the Israelites are in rebellion against God, God is

still true to his covenant. He is true to His covenants, even though He chooses to work through a Moabite to be grafted into the story of Israel.

Questions

- a. What are the heart qualities required for someone to be used by God?
- b. Who are the “outsiders” in your community, and how do you treat them?

III. **Being faithful and hard worker**

People can tell a lot about our Christian faith when they watch us, and we will not often know when they are watching. As Christians, you are part of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom much bigger and more significant than any earthly nation, state, or peoples. Because of

this, Christians are called to love all Christians, both to show God’s compassion, and also to show our solidarity with all God’s people. We are also called to love non-Christians, because God loves them, works through them, and because they may be the ones through whom God will bless us. As Christians we need to be diligent; being a Christian means being a faithful person and hard worker, whether in the Church, at home, or at your job.

Questions

- a. What specific steps can you take to show God’s love to someone this week who is very different from you?
- b. Think of someone in your life who needs to receive an act of compassion this week, and then make a plan on how you can show them compassion.

CONCLUSION

Bethlehem is a very important town in Israel, even if they did not recognize that at the time. Out of Bethlehem came both Israel’s greatest king, King David, and Jesus Christ. Ruth shows how God’s people can experience his sovereignty, wisdom and covenant kindness. These often come in hard circumstances and are expressed through the kindness of others.

Lesson	GOD CALLS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES INTO REDEMPTIVE SERVICE	
44	Lesson Text: 1 Samuel 3	New Testament Text: Acts 9:1-19

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: - To be able to recognize that, God calls people of all ages into redemptive service. - Understand that, God's direction in our life means Christians will be discerning. - Set aside times of quiet and stillness in order to hear God's voice.	<i>Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."</i> (1 Samuel 3:10b)

INTRODUCTION
Hannah prayed to God and asked Him to give her a son. God answered Hannah's prayer, and she named her little boy Samuel. When Samuel was very young, his mother took him to Eli, the priest. Samuel grew up helping Eli in the temple. One night, when Samuel and Eli were asleep in the temple, Samuel heard someone call his name. <i>"Samuel!" He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am." Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."</i> Samuel heard someone call his name three times. Eli realized that it was God calling to Samuel. Eli told Samuel that the next time he heard his name, he should say, <i>"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening"</i> (NIV). God called Samuel again, and Samuel talked with Him. When Samuel was older, God made him a prophet, priest, and judge over Israel.

I. **God calls people of all ages.**

Eli and Samuel are transition figures as the last two judges as Israel transitions from judges to kings as leaders. Although Eli's sons did not honor God or their calling, the boy Samuel did. God's call came upon young Samuel when he was young. This call from God was in an audible voice Samuel heard as he tried to sleep. After confusing Samuel told him he kept hearing a voice, Eli finally recognized it was God's voice speaking to Samuel. He gave Samuel directions on how to receive God's message (1 Samuel 3:4-10). God's message to Samuel was not a pleasant message; it confirmed that the priesthood would no longer run through Eli's family line. Though God did not explicitly call Samuel to become the new high priest, or give Samuel direction on what he is supposed to do with his life, the mere fact

that God spoke to Samuel directly in this way signaled that God would use Samuel to minister to Israel. This happened when Samuel was very young. Christians should recognize that, God calls people of all ages into redemptive service.

Questions

- Hearing God's audible voice is very rare, even in the Bible. What are the more common ways in which God gives direction to Christians?
- Eli's sons were rebellious (we will later hear that Samuel's were as well – 1 Samuel 8:1-3). What causes children to turn away from their parent's teachings?

II. Be open to God's direction.

The key to a life of joy and peace is having a heart open to God, our Creator and Savior. Prevenient grace is God's blessed work in the life of a Christian before they know God as Savior. We see this prevenient grace at work in Samuel's life from a young age, as God spoke to him before he even recognized the voice of God. After becoming a Christian, Christians need to make sure they remain open to hearing God's voice. Being open to God's direction in our life means Christians will be discerning and ready to receive it, whenever God's direction comes.

Questions

- a. What are some of the ways God was reaching out to you, drawing you to salvation, before you even knew you had a sin problem?
- b. Saul's conversion is very unusual, but an example of God confronting people with their sin problem. What are ways in which God confronted you with your need to repent?

III. Be quiet and still allow God to speak.

One night Samuel heard a voice call to him and thought it was Eli. Eli told him it was not him and to go back to bed. This happened two more times, and then Eli realized it was God's voice calling to Samuel. He told Samuel to say to God, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10b). Then God began revealing to Samuel God's plans for the future. Samuel's life focused on doing the work of God before he even knew God personally. As Samuel grew, God revealed Himself more and more to Samuel. Christians need to create places and times in which they can receive God's continued revelation to them. Set aside times of quiet and stillness in order to hear God's voice.

Questions

- a. What are some steps Christians can take to be open and ready to hear God's voice to them?
- b. In what ways do you know God better now than you did when you first became a Christian?

CONCLUSION

One night Samuel heard a voice call to him and thought it was Eli. Eli told him it was not him and to go back to bed. This happened two more times, and then Eli realized it was God's voice calling to Samuel. He told Samuel to say to God, "Speak, for your servant is listening." God began revealing to Samuel God's plans for the future. Paul, the greatest missionary in the Bible, received a direct call from God. Unlike Samuel, though, who was serving God, Saul (later called Paul), was actually trying to destroy the early Christian church. He thought he was doing God's will, but on the road to Damascus God confronted and corrected Saul. Jesus revealed to him that he, whom Saul thought was a heretic, in fact really was the Messiah.

GOD WILL SOMETIMES ANSWER SELFISH PRAYERS

Lesson Text: **1 Samuel 10**New Testament Text: **Titus 3:1-8**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Understand that God will sometimes answer selfish prayer requests.
- Strive to have prayer times that are marked not by trying to get from God what we think we need.
- Practice writing down prayers so that can they see how much prayer time you spend.

Memory Verse:

And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good.”(Titus 3:8)

INTRODUCTION

Samuel had been the judge of Israel for many years. He was getting very old and would not be a judge much longer. Samuel was ready to choose someone to take his place. The Israelites told Samuel that they didn't want another judge. They wanted a king because all of the countries around them had a king. God was disappointed in the Israelites, but He told Samuel to listen to what the people were saying. There was a young man named Saul; he was a head taller than any other man in Israel. God told Samuel that Saul was the man He had chosen to be king over Israel. Samuel went to Saul and poured a special oil over his head. This is called an "anointing." Samuel took Saul back to the Israelites and told them that Saul would be their king. The Israelites were very pleased.

I. God will sometimes answer selfish prayer requests.

Sometimes God gives us the answers to our prayers, even though God knows those answers are not the best for us. God had Samuel warn the people of the consequences of having a king (1 Samuel 8:10-21). The Israelites refused to heed God's warning, and kept demanding a king. Therefore, God chose Saul to be their king. While Saul began his reign well, as the months and years progress, he became a very bad king. Through his actions and decisions, he demonstrated he cared more about pleasing people than pleasing God. God will sometimes answer selfish prayer requests, even when the answer is not the best for the Christian. The only way Christians will be full of joy and love is when our hearts and minds are devoted fully to God.

Jesus' words, "*not what I will, but what you will.*" (Mark 14:36). When a Christians' heart and mind are devoted to God, they will more easily pray for the right needs, and receive from God only good blessings. Sometimes God gives us the answers to our prayers, even though God knows those answers are not the best for us. God does this to teach us the dangers of selfish prayers.

Questions

- How can a Christian discern whether their prayer requests are selfish?
- What causes people to fall away from keeping God first in their lives?

II. Having prayers that are marked.

To have prayer times that are noticeable not by trying to get from God what we think we need, but asking God to give us what we actually need. Jesus' words, "not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36). Discernment is a very important quality for a Christian to develop. Unlike the Israelites who refused to listen to Samuel's warning, a person who is developing discernment is learning not to rely on their own wisdom or insights. A discerning Christian will seek out God's will, seek out advice from mature Christians, and try to remove selfishness from their life. They will strive for a prayer life focused on receiving from God what they need, not what they want.

Questions

- a. Why are people tempted to judge others by their appearance, and not wait to get to know their character?
- b. What does it take a Christian to follow God's will, even when that course of action will require them to practice self-denial?

III. Practice writing down your prayers.

Practice writing down your prayers so you can see how much of your prayer time you spend praising God and how much time you spend petitioning God. Seek to discover what would be a good balance between praising and petitioning. Deciding to incorporate Jesus' prayer "*not what I will, but what you will*" (Mark 14:36) is an excellent step in training ourselves to put God's will first in our prayers. It will also help us not mistakenly pray for desires contrary to God's will. In addition, writing down prayers can help Christians see how much of their prayer time is focused on what they want from God verses praising God.

Questions

- a. What are some of the best pieces of advice you have heard about how to pray?
- b. What are some of the worst pieces of advice you have heard about how to pray?

CONCLUSION

God will sometimes answer selfish prayer requests, even when the answer is not the best for the Christian. It can be a tough lesson to get what we want, only to realize it does not satisfy. The only way Christians will be full of joy and love is when our hearts and minds are devoted fully to God. One way of doing this is to pray Jesus' words, "*not what I will, but what you will.*" (Mark 14:36) When a Christians' heart and mind are devoted to God, they will more easily pray for the right needs, and receive from God only good blessings. With the Holy Spirit within, Christians can live lives of love and holiness. We must be careful we do not fall away from God as King Saul did, but that we remain obedient to God.

OPPORTUNITIES AND DANGERS OF LIVING AS EXILES

Lesson Text: **Esther 4**New Testament Text: **1 Peter 2:9-17**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Appreciate the unique opportunities and dangers of living as exiles.
- Recognize the importance of courage in the Christian's life.
- Practice fasting as a means of denying yourself and drawing closer to God.

Memory Verse:

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

INTRODUCTION

Xerxes chose her to be his queen. Haman was the king's highest officer, and he didn't like the Jews who lived in his country. Haman had planned to kill all of the Jews. Esther was worried when she found out about his plan. She was also a Jew. Esther wanted to tell the king about Haman's evil plan, but she couldn't go right in to see him. If she went in without the king calling her, the law said that she would be killed. The only way she would live was if the king would hold out his scepter to her. Esther took that chance. She bravely walked right in to see the king. Everyone was shocked! What would the king do? He lowered his scepter to Esther, and she touched it. When Esther told the king about Haman's evil plan, the king had Haman killed. Esther saved her people.

I. Opportunities and dangers of living as exiles.

Christians should learn to appreciate the unique opportunities and dangers of living as exiles in the midst of people who do not honor God. Human sinfulness expresses itself in many forms. Rage and racism are two of the forms on display in the book of Esther. Haman's rage was so great, he did not just want to punish Mordecai for his disrespect, but his rage fueled his racism to the point of plotting to destroy all Jews living in the Persian Empire. This is an example of sin within a person expressing itself in outward forms. Humans cannot control sin under their own power. However, God is able to frustrate the work of sin, and in Christ, destroy the power of sin. With Jesus' power and presence, Christians can reject sin. Esther and Mordecai's

situation displays some of the unique challenges facing exiles.

Questions

- Why is there such a great temptation for people to hate or be suspicious of others who are different from them?
- Besides race and religion, what are some other categories in your culture that people use to discriminate others?

II. The importance of courage in the Christian's life.

When people become a Christian, they become members of the greatest kingdom of all, the Kingdom of God. This is a kingdom whose citizens are *"from every nation, tribe, people and language."* (Revelation 7:9) Sometimes, before becoming a Christian, the new Christian hated other nations or groups of people. Part

of what it means to grow in your Christian faith is to allow God to heal those prejudices (biases), and see all people as God sees them, as God's beloved creations. It can take great courage to allow God's transforming work in a Christian's life. For God will often instill values in the transformed Christian at odds with the values of the nation in which they live. As Christians we need to recognize the importance of courage in the Christian's life.

Questions

- a. What are some reasons why a person would feel prejudice (biases) against others?
- b. Besides prejudice, what other inner sins can cause someone to lash out in anger towards others?

III. Denying yourself and drawing closer to God.

One of the best ways to fight prejudice (biases) and hate is to sit down with someone who is different from you and get to know them (and allow them to get to know you, too!) Massive walls fall down when we start by just taking one brick away at a time. Jesus wants us to love others as He loves them. This is not always easy, but fasting is one way a Christian can spend a specific time of prayer and reflection for God's healing work in their life. Practice fasting as a means of denying yourself and drawing closer to God.

Questions

- a. In what ways can fasting bring spiritual growth in a Christian's life?
- b. What is something courageous you can do this week?

CONCLUSION

Regardless of the earthly nation in which Christians live, they are "foreigners and exiles" in that nation, for their true citizenship is in the Kingdom of God. In this passage, the Apostle Peter gives some guidelines on how Christians are to conduct themselves while living as exiles in their earthly nation. They are to show honor and respect for the earthly rulers and authorities, and live such good lives that they will be witnesses of God's glory to the pagans.

Lesson	GOD’S PERFECT HOLINESS AND HUMAN WEAKNESS	
47	Lesson Text: Isaiah 6:1-8	New Testament Text: Revelation 4

Lesson Aims:	Memory Verse:
At the end of the lesson learners should: a. Reflect on the great divide between God’s perfect holiness and our human weakness. b. Celebrate the wonderful grace of God that bridges this great divide by offering salvation to all people. c. Offer your life to God as Isaiah did, as a messenger of God’s great love and holiness to lost and dying people.	<i>"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."</i> (Revelation 4:11)

INTRODUCTION
One day Isaiah, who was a prophet, had a vision. A vision is like a dream. Isaiah saw God in the Temple, and He was sitting on a throne. God’s robe was so big that it filled the inside of the Temple. Isaiah also saw angels called “seraphs.” When the seraphs talked to each other, the doorways in the Temples shook, and the inside of the Temple filled up with smoke. Isaiah couldn’t believe what he was seeing! One of the seraphs picked up a hot coal from the altar and put it on Isaiah’s lips. The seraph was showing Isaiah that God wanted to take away his sin. Then, Isaiah would be ready to go out and tell others about God. God asked Isaiah whom He could send to tell others about Him. And Isaiah answered, <i>"Here am I. Send me!"</i> (NIV). Like Isaiah, the Apostle John had a vision of God in the temple. Also similar to Isaiah’s vision are the flying creatures with six wings and their singing the <i>"Holy, holy, holy" praises to God.</i>

I. God’s perfect holiness and our human weakness.

God is a mighty and awesome God. God’s holiness is so majestic Christians will be overwhelmed when they see God face to face. Isaiah had a unique experience when he had a vision of God in the temple. Like Isaiah, God calls all men and women to be his messengers. Some of those, like Isaiah, God calls into full-time ministry. Others may have secular jobs, but God still calls them to share God’s love and the Gospel with others. No matter what kind of ministry God calls us to, we can always give praise and thanksgiving to God for crossing the great divide between heaven and earth in Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. How can you celebrate the wonderful grace of God that bridges the great divide of heaven and earth by offering salvation to all people?
- b. What are some of the qualifications you feel a person needs in order to share the Gospel with others?

II. The wonderful grace of God.

It is appropriate to feel great humility when in God’s presence. Whatever holiness a Christian may possess, it is nothing compared to the holiness of God. Isaiah describes his experience when God commissioned him to be

a prophet. In this vision, God's holiness overwhelms Isaiah. Isaiah fears his and his people's own sinfulness will ruin him. God graciously forgives Isaiah after his confession. God then commissions Isaiah to go and warn the Israelites destruction was coming upon them if they did not repent of their sins. In addition, while God does call Christians his sons and daughters, it is good for Christians to remember to treat God with great honor and respect. The wonderful grace of God that bridges this great divide by offering salvation to all people.

Questions

- a. What happens to a person's spiritual life when they start taking God for granted?
- b. In what ways was Jesus different from all other people when he came to earth?

III. Offer your life to God.

No matter where Christians find themselves, there are people around who need to hear about Jesus Christ. There are also people who need to see the love and compassion of Jesus Christ in action. Christians are to offer their lives to God, so God can show them ways to translate their experiences with God into ministry opportunities in their community. Offer your life to God as Isaiah did, as a messenger of God's great love and holiness to lost and dying people.

Questions

- a. How should having a wonderful worship service on a Sunday affect the way you live the other six days?
- b. Do you have to have all the answers to all the possible questions someone might ask you about Jesus before you share the Gospel with them? Why or why not?

CONCLUSION

The seraph was showing Isaiah that God wanted to take away his sin. Then, Isaiah would be ready to go out and tell others about God. God asked Isaiah whom He could send to tell others about Him. And Isaiah answered, "Here am I. Send me!" (NIV). Just like Isaiah was ready to go out to tell people about God's Holiness we should be also ready to do the same. Challenge your students to answer the call of God.

CHRISTIANS FACE PERSECUTION BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH

Lesson Text: **Daniel 3**New Testament Text: **Acts 5:12-42**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Understand that many Christians face persecution because of their faith.
- Believe that in a world hostile to the Gospel, Christians must carefully discern how to keep their hearts pure and be of service to the Kingdom of God.
- Be willing to endure sufferings and persecutions for the Gospel, knowing Christ will never abandon you.

Memory Verse:

Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!"
(Acts 5:29)

102

INTRODUCTION

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were three Hebrew men who helped King Nebuchadnezzar in his palace. One day, the king decided to have a large statue built that was made of solid gold. The king said that when the horns, flutes, harps and other musical instruments begin to play, everyone must bow down and worship the gold statue. Anyone who doesn't will be thrown into a blazing furnace. When the music sounded, everyone bowed to the idol except for the three Hebrew men. They knew they should only bow to the one true God. The king was so angry that he had his soldiers throw the men into the blazing furnace. Later, when the king looked inside the furnace, he saw four men. God had sent an angel to protect the Hebrew men. When they came out, none of them were burned or even smelled like smoke.

I. Christians face persecution because of their faith.

As we have chosen to be Christians, we should be ready to face persecution because of our faith. They are willing to suffer because they know that while the evil powers of this world may cause persecution now, in the end God's sovereignty will prevail. While in exile, the Jews in Babylon must discover ways to live faithfully to God while living in an empire that does not believe in the one true God. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego give an example of being willing to live in opposition to what is contrary to God's law. They believe God will protect them if they are faithful to God. However, even if God does not, they know it is better to die for being faithful to God than to live being unfaithful to God. (Daniel 3: 12-16)

Questions

- How can a Christian discern what laws of their nation they are to follow and which ones are contrary to God's will?
- What are some sacrifices Christians in your community make in order to live faithfully for God?

II. Keeping the hearts pure and be of service to the Kingdom of God.

As Christians we should remember that we are living in a world hostile to the Gospel, Christians must carefully discern how to keep their hearts pure and be of service to the Kingdom of God. No matter the nation in which Christians live, their ultimate allegiance is to

the Kingdom of God. This requires Christians to be wise and discerning about how to be *"in the world but not of the world."* (John 15:19) In order to have this wisdom and discernment, Christians need to have a vital and growing relationship with Jesus Christ.

Questions

- a. Where can a Christian find courage to make a stand in the face of persecution?
- b. What are some rewards of being faithful to the Kingdom of God rather than the kingdoms of this world?

III. Endure sufferings and persecutions for the Gospel

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three Israelites living in exile in Babylon after Jerusalem was conquered. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had ordered all people to bow down to a massive idol he had built. The three Israelites refused, for they knew this was against God's law, and they

knew God would keep them safe. Rather than only being recognized by what they do, sometimes Christians can be recognized by what they refuse to do. Refusing to participate in community activities that are contrary to God's law can lead both to persecution, but also to a powerful witness to others. Being willing to suffer for Jesus Christ is not easy, but is an important step in Christian maturity. In our Christian walk we should know that, time will come for us to suffer therefore, we should be willing to endure sufferings and persecutions for the Gospel, knowing Christ will never abandon you.

Questions

- a. What are some common activities others in your community engage in, which are contrary to God's commands?
- b. Thinking of these common activities, what can Christians do as alternatives, which could bring glory and honor to God?

CONCLUSION

Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, some people were jealous of the success Peter had serving God. They arrested Peter and threw him into jail. Also like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, God protected Peter and provided a path to freedom. When his enemies threaten Peter again, he declares, *"we must obey God rather than human beings!"* (Acts 5:29)

GOD WILL RESTORE THE HUMBLE PERSON

Lesson Text: **Nehemiah 2:11-20**New Testament Text: **Luke 19:28-48**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- Understand that regardless of the failure, God is always willing to forgive and restore.
- Living out God's will requires courage and persistence
- God does not require Christian to do all the work of fulfilling God's will on their life.

Memory Verse:

*I answered them by saying,
"The God of heaven will give us
success."* (Nehemiah 2:20)

INTRODUCTION

A long time ago, the Jews built a wall around Jerusalem to protect them and the Temple from their enemies. However, because the Jews did not obey God, He let the Babylonian army attack and burn Jerusalem to the ground. Then, the army took the Jews to Babylon as prisoners. Many years later, Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes if he could go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city's wall. Some rulers told Nehemiah that they would attack him if he tried to rebuild the city. However, that did not scare Nehemiah. He was excited about rebuilding Jerusalem, the "Holy City." Nehemiah took many families with him to Jerusalem. He had each family rebuild one section of the wall. Some men stood guard in case anyone tried to attack. After much hard work, the wall was finally completed!

I. God is always willing to forgive and restore.

When they conquered Jerusalem, the Assyrian army tore down the city walls and carried off the Israelites in exile. God allowed the Assyrians to destroy Jerusalem because the Israelites continually sinned and refused to listen to the prophets God has sent calling them to repentance. The Israelites cannot count on God's protection from the consequences of their sins and rebellion. However, consequences never have to be the last word in a person's relationship with God. God always wants to forgive and restore those who turn away from sin and toward God. Recognize rejection never has to be the final word in a Christian's relationship with God. Regardless of the failure, God is always willing to forgive and help restore the humble Child of God. It is not God's desire to punish people.

Questions

- What are some of the consequences that come into a person's life who refuses to live by God's laws and commands?
- Why do some people refuse to seek God's forgiveness, even after experiencing the painful consequences of their sins?

II. God's will requires courage and persistence.

There will be many challenges and people who would like to see the Christian fail. There are many responsibilities people have in their lives. God knows Christians need to care for their homes, families, jobs, and churches. The people listened to Nehemiah and started

working hard to rebuild the walls, even though the peoples who lived near them opposed the work. They did not want the city walls rebuilt, or the Israelites might become a powerful people again. However, God gave the Israelites success, and they rebuilt the walls. However, God must always be first in their life. Whenever a Christian's responsibilities to others become their life's first priority, they will experience great frustration and trouble. Living with this first desire will not make life easy, but lived with courage and tenacity, the Christian's life will be joyful and a great benefit to the Kingdom of God. Be courageous, living out God's will requires courage and tenacity.

Questions

- a. Why do some Christians struggle to trust God will provide for their needs as long as they put God first in their hearts?
- b. How can a Christian discern the difference between what they want for themselves and what God wants for them?

- b. What is one-step you can take this week to show others God's love?

III. Fulfilling God's will in our lives.

God wants Christians to work hard to provide for themselves and for others. Whenever Christians only work hard for themselves, and do not care for others, trouble and frustration will come into their lives. The Babylonians allowed the Israelites to return to the Promised Land. When they returned, life was hard. They had to build new homes, replant the fields. The Israelites spent so much time building their homes and planting their fields, they ignored the destroyed city walls and the destroyed Temple. They did not think rebuilding the Temple or city walls was as important as building homes and planting their fields. God calls Christians to live out their faith with God's power, loving others in tangible ways. Live confidently, God does not require Christian to do all the work of fulfilling God's will on their life. God works with the Christian to bring about that will.

Questions

- a. What is something you did this last week to help others?

CONCLUSION

Jesus gazed upon the city of Jerusalem just days before his crucifixion. Rather than being a light to the nations, a people who loved God and loved one another, the Israelites sinned continually and harmed one another. After decades of refusing to listen to God's words of warning to repent through the prophets, God allowed the Assyrians to conquer the Promised Land. In Jesus' day, the Israelites rejected God by rejecting Jesus. Jesus knows that once again God would allow a foreign army to destroy Jerusalem. This prophecy came true in 70 AD when God allowed the Romans to conquer Jerusalem.

PROPHETS SPEAK OF JESUS AS A REDEEMER

Lesson Text: **Isaiah 52:13-53:12**New Testament Text: **Luke 24:13-35**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- To understand that Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection were all foretold by Old Testament prophets.
- Celebrate the love of God that prepares a way for a sinful humanity to be reconciled to a holy God.
- Diligently listen for God's voice in your life.

Memory Verse:

"They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'" Luke 24:32

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the centuries, God inspired various prophets to foretell many details concerning a special Chosen One who would save his people from Satan's power and one day rule as a mighty king.

I. The coming of Jesus.

While the messages God gave the prophets were messages for their own time and location, many of the prophecies were also concerned with the future as well. In particular, there are many messages the prophets gave that foretold the birth, life, and death of the Messiah. Most of the religious leaders in Jesus' day were waiting for a military Messiah in the tradition of King David who would come in and overthrow the Roman authorities. However, Jesus did not come to free Israel from her political bondage, but from her spiritual bondage. While most of the religious leaders could not understand how Jesus could be the Messiah, thousands of ordinary men and women flocked to hear Jesus' message, observed His miracles, and believed He was sent by God. Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection were all foretold by numerous Old Testament prophets.

scriptures, and miss out on the blessings God wants to give?

- What steps can you take to make sure you are understanding the Bible correctly?

II. Sinful humanity to be reconciled to a Holy God.

The love of God prepares a way for a sinful humanity to be reconciled to a holy God. No one likes to suffer. However, Jesus suffered a terrible death in order to win our salvation. If we embrace Jesus' great salvation, then that means we must be willing to also suffer for Jesus as well. These passages make very clear the type of suffering Jesus would face. As the early Christians read the Old Testament in light of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, they identified these passages as especially relevant to the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. What we find, when we surrender fully to Jesus, is that Jesus brings a joy and peace in our lives that surpasses all understanding.

Questions

- How can men and women today, as in Jesus' day, misunderstand God's

Questions

- a. What is there in your life that is holding you back from completely embracing the life and sufferings of Jesus in your life, that you might be more like your Savior?
- b. In what ways have you been blessed and strengthened by God when you fully surrendered your life to Christ?

III. Listen to God's voice.

One night Samuel heard a voice call to him and thought it was Eli. Eli told him it was not him and to go back to bed. This happened two more times, and then Eli realized it was God's voice calling to Samuel. He told Samuel to say to God, *"Speak, for your servant is listening."* (1 Samuel 3:4-10b). God began revealing to Samuel God's plans for the future. Carefully listen for God's voice in your life, revealing to

you God's desires and will for your life to be a witness of God's great grace to others. Living a life of self-denial does not come easily or naturally for anyone, whether they are a Christian or not. In fact, living a life of self-denial requires a lot of practice and commitment. It begins with small steps of self-denial as we learn that if Jesus is faithful in the small things, he will be faithful in the large things as well.

Questions

- a. What activities or habits can you change this week that will help you more deeply and faithfully hear God's voice spoken to you?
- b. What servant actions can you take this week that will help others see Christ in you?

CONCLUSION

However, while humans may misinterpret or misunderstand God's Scriptures, that does not change the fact that the ministry of Jesus was clearly laid out in the Old Testament. We see this is Jesus' message as he is walking with these two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Graciously, though, Jesus laid out for these two the truth of his ministry, and how his ministry was foretold in the Scriptures.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Lesson Text: **Luke 2:1-38**New Testament Text: **Isaiah 9:2-7**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- a. To rejoice, for God comes to earth in Jesus to make a way for salvation.
- b. Reflect on why Jesus came in such humble circumstances.
- c. Reach out to a needy family in your community this week and find a way to bless them.

Memory Verse:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

INTRODUCTION

After Joseph and Mary were married, they had to travel to Bethlehem to be counted in the census. While they were there, it was time for Mary to have her baby. Joseph took Mary to an inn. An inn is like a hotel. The innkeeper said he didn't have a room for them to stay in for the night, but they could stay in the stable where he kept his animals. Joseph thanked the inn keeper and took Mary to the stable. Later that night, Mary gave birth to a little baby boy. She wrapped him in pieces of cloth and placed him in a manger to sleep. A manger is where hay is placed for animals to eat. An angel from God spoke to some shepherds who were in a field nearby. The angel told them that a Saviour had been born and that they would find Him lying in a manger. When the angel left, the shepherds went to Bethlehem and found the baby just as the angel had told them.

I. **Jesus makes a way for salvation.**

These were not ideal circumstances in which to give birth. The couple was far away from home, housed in an animal stable, unmarried. God's plans for the Messiah's birth take everyone by surprise. Yet, in the midst of these less than ideal circumstances, shepherds arrive bearing witness to a divine message given through a chorus of angels. It will not just be his birth that takes people by surprise; Jesus' teaching and ministry will also take people by surprise. Many will be surprised when Jesus teaches that God loves all people, no matter their nationality, gender, social status or economic status. For God comes to earth in Jesus to make a way for salvation, a path for us to experience the depths of God's love.

Questions

- a. From a human point of view, what are some of the many things that could have gone wrong in this birth story of Jesus?
- b. What do the circumstances of Jesus' birth tell you about the nature of God's love?

II. **Jesus came in humble circumstances.**

What does it say about God's heart that Jesus' birth happened in a manger, and not the home of the Temple High Priest? Humility is one of the most important Christian virtues. Humility

is not self-hatred or self-loathing. Instead, it is an honest assessment of your own abilities and limitations, seen through the loving eyes of Jesus. When Christians are humble, they are open to the work of Jesus working through their lives. They are also willing to set aside their pride and put others before them, that others might see the love of God expressed through their lives. Jesus came in such humble circumstances.

Questions

- a. What are some examples of ways in which a person's humility has helped you understand God's love?
- b. What does it say about God's heart, that Jesus' birth happened in a manger, and not the home of the Temple High Priest?

Reach out to a needy family.

In the midst of the less than ideal situations in which to have a child, God brings messengers of joy to the young couple. These shepherds must have glowed with joy, just as Mary must have glowed with a new mothers' joy. One of God's joys is bringing people into our lives, especially during difficult times, to encourage us, support us, and model God's love to us. As God's children, God will call us to go to people in their times of need to encourage them, support them, and model God's love to them.

Questions

- a. Who are some people who have showed God's love to you during difficult times?
- b. What do you have to offer others, through God's love and power, which can bring encouragement, support, and love to a family this week?

CONCLUSION

Isaiah prophesied about the coming Messiah. Isaiah prophesied he would be a mighty warrior and powerful ruler. This is one reason why so many rejected Jesus as the Messiah, they were looking for a military Messiah. However, rather than a military warrior or political ruler, Jesus would be a spiritual warrior and spiritual ruler. Rather than simply do battle against nations, Jesus battled Satan himself! Moreover, as Isaiah prophesies, "his kingdom will have no end."

GOD COMES TO EARTH IN JESUS TO MAKE A WAY FOR SALVATION

Lesson Text: **Matthew 2:1-12**New Testament Text: **Micah 5:1-4**

Lesson Aims:

At the end of the lesson learners should:

- God brought Gentiles from distant lands to worship Jesus as Israel's king.
- Recognize that while Jesus came as a Jewish Messiah, his ministry was to turn the hearts of all people.
- Be alert for the work of God around you this week.

Memory Verse:

"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2)

INTRODUCTION

The Magi, who were also called wise men, went to Jerusalem. They asked King Herod where they could find the King of the Jews. They had been following a star that shone in the Eastern sky, and they knew that the star would lead them to the King. The Magi had gifts for the new King, and they wanted to worship Him. Herod was surprised to hear the Magi say this. He thought that he was the only king in Jerusalem. Herod wanted to trick the Magi. He told them that when they found the King, they should come back to Jerusalem and tell him, because he wanted to go and worship the new King. The real reason Herod wanted to find Jesus was so he could have the new King killed. When the Magi found Jesus, they worshiped Him and gave Him their presents of gold, incense, and myrrh. In a dream, God told the Magi that Herod wanted to kill Jesus. So they didn't return to Jerusalem. Instead, they traveled a different way to return to their homes.

I. Worship Jesus as Israel's king.

God's love is bigger than we can comprehend. God's plans are more beautiful than we can fathom. Israel's leaders did not have ideas about the Messiah this big or beautiful. Instead, they imagined a future Messiah to be a military leader who would free them from Roman occupation. However, God's plans are bigger and more beautiful than this. God desired to free all humanity from their sins, and so provided a Messiah whose sacrifice provided a path to salvation for all peoples. God's sending of these Magi to Israel signaled Jesus' ministry would be much bigger than to just rescue Israel from Roman occupation. God brought Gentiles (non-Jews) from distant lands to worship Jesus as Israel's king. Three Magi

(Gentile Wise Men) from the East traveled a long distance to worship the new King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1).

Questions

- Why do you think Israel's leaders focused their hopes on a military Messiah instead of a spiritual Messiah?
- Like the star the Magi followed, what are some ways in which God uses nature to reveal God's will?

II. Jesus came as a Jewish Messiah

God's love is for all people! While God established Israel as His "Chosen People," this did not mean God's love was limited to Israel. God wanted Israel to demonstrate God's love

and mercy to the world. However, Israel often failed to fulfill this purpose, and instead focused only on herself. As Christians, we need to remember God's love extends far beyond us. God's love encompasses all peoples, and therefore, as God's servants, we need to share God's love with all the people we can. Jesus came as a Jewish Messiah, His ministry was to turn the hearts of all people, Jews and Gentiles, toward God.

Questions

- a. How do you think God's love for others is like human love, and how do you think it is different from human love?
- b. So, if we are to love all people, what do we do about people who are hard to love?

III. Worship makes us more aware of God's presence

Be alert for the work of God around you this week. Because worship makes us more aware of God's presence, strive to worship God every day this week. God calls all people to worship. Because of the great salvation offered to us, our lives are to be lives of worship: lives lived in response to God's love. We worship Jesus together with Christians on Sundays. However, we are also to worship God every day of the week. We worship God whenever we live our lives in gratitude to God's great power and love.

Questions

- a. What are the habits you can practice throughout the week that can focus your heart on worshipping God?
- b. What makes worshipping together with your brothers and sisters in Christ different from how you worship alone during the week?

CONCLUSION

The Scripture text the Jewish scholars used to establish where the Messiah would be born was Micah 5:2. While Micah first spoke these words about a Jewish leader in his own time, the scholars understood the text also as a prophecy about the future Messiah as well. Bethlehem also produced Israel's greatest human king, King David.



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