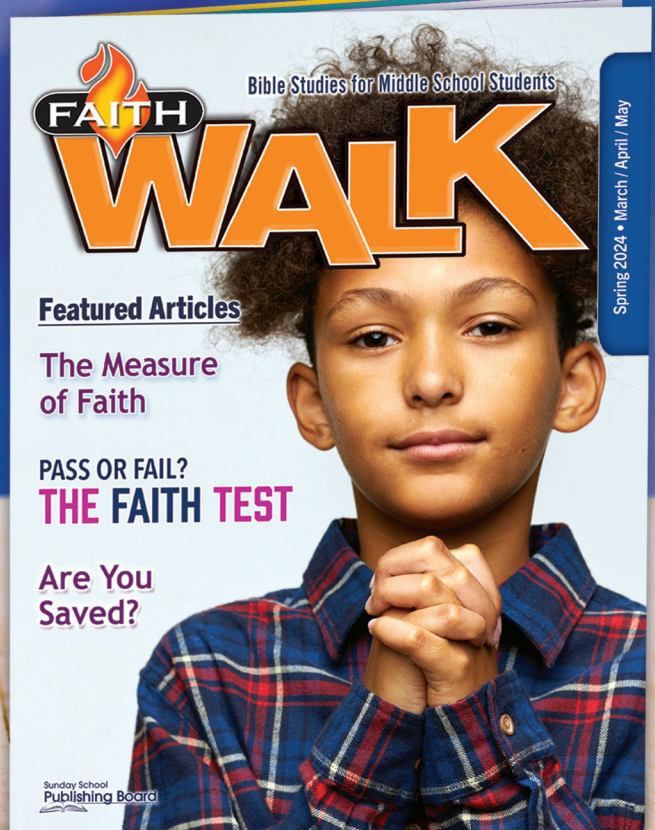


FAITH

YOUTH TEACHER'S GUIDE

for Middle School and High School Students



Faith Series YOUTH Teacher's Guide

For Middle School and High School Students



Summer Quarter—

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Letter to the Teacher

Dear Teacher,

Blessings to you! Sunday school continues to be one of the church's most important avenues for changing lives and impacting families, communities, and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I thank God for your commitment to this labor of love—nurturing spiritual growth in our teens. My prayer is that you and your students will have many meaningful encounters with each other, the curriculum, the Word, and the presence of the Holy Spirit. As you study and teach others, may God also impart a very special blessing to your life. Welcome to an exciting new quarter!

Go with God!

A PREVIEW OF THE CONTENTS OF EACH LESSON ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Layout of Middle/High School Student Lesson:

Wake Up!/Reflect: The contemporary story that expresses youth concerns and offers a thought-provoking question that should highlight a Christian response.

Word Up/Inspect: The lesson's Scripture passage.

Work Out/Intersect: Explanation of the lesson Scripture.

Inside Out: Offers questions that relate to the biblical text.

There's an App for That!: Applies the Scripture to the lives of youth today.

Walk Out/Connect: Links the biblical text to youth personally.

Stepping Out!: Challenges youth to put action to their faith.

It's Game Time! (Middle School Only): Provides youth with an activity or assignment that is tied to the lesson.

Media Mission: Provides youth with an online link to help enhance the main theme of the lesson.

Layout of Teacher Lesson for Middle/High School Students:

***Preparing to Teach:** Instructions for teachers to help them prepare to teach the lesson.

***Lesson Overview:** Overview for the lesson.

***Introduction (Status Update):** Check in with the students to get their status and provide an intriguing question to open up the lesson.

***It's Go Time!:** An illustration, a game, or an activity used to lead into the lesson.

Wake Up!/Reflect: Correlates with the contemporary story in the student book that highlights a particular youth topic.

Word Up/Inspect: The point in the lesson where the class reviews the lesson Scripture.

***Back Up:** Background information on the lesson Scripture.

It's Text Time!: The lesson's Scripture passage.

Work Out/Intersect: Correlates with the explanation of the lesson Scripture in the student book.

Inside Out: Correlates with the section in the student book which offers Scripture interpretation.

There's an App for That!: Correlates with the section in the student book that applies the Scripture to the lives of youth today.

Walk Out/Connect: Connects the Scripture to youth personally.

Stepping Out!: Correlates with the section in the student book that challenges youth to put action to their faith.

It's Game Time! (Middle School Only): Provides youth with the answers to the activity or assignment given.

Media Mission: Correlates with the section in the student book that provides youth with an online link to help enhance the main theme of the lesson.

*(*Teacher book only)*

Preparing to Teach

The Teacher's Lesson Plan

Adequate preparation is essential to teaching Bible study. It begins with a close relationship with the Lord and constant dependence upon Him for wisdom and direction. Pray for God's guidance in your life as you prepare to study the Word of God. Read and meditate on the lesson's Bible passage. Ask God to give you insight on presenting concepts that will impact the students and help them apply the Scripture to their lives. Seek God's guidance for each teaching experience.

The Resources

- *Bible Studies for High School Students*
- *Bible Studies for Middle School Students*
- New International Version (NIV) Bible
- Secondary Bible translation for comparison, such as the King James Version (KJV)
- *Townsend Press Commentary* (for expanded lesson exposition)

Note: Be sure that everyone in the class, including visitors, has a personal copy of the student book.

Youth Teacher's Guide

This teacher's book equips you to guide youth along their journeys. It includes the basic information needed for each session and a complete session plan for each week. Each teacher needs a personal copy of this teacher's guide and a copy of the student book (*Middle School or High School*).

What You Will Need

- Teacher's Guide and Student Book
- *New International Version* of the Bible
- Bible dictionary and Bible encyclopedia (with maps)
- A regular dictionary
- A Bible study Web site (such as **www.studylight.org** or **www.blueletterbible.org**) will supply a Bible dictionary and encyclopedia.
- Pencils/pens, markers

- Eraser
- Dry-erase board, large paper, or poster board

Prepare for Each Session

1. At the beginning of each unit, make a copy of the devotional calendar for youth to take home for their weekly devotional time with God.
2. Be sure to read the teaching tips for teens that will provide insight into how to teach this age level.
3. Be sure to clearly convey to the students the day's lesson focus or overview that students should remember on their way home.
4. To prepare to lead, you must also have a copy of the student book in order to familiarize yourself with the contemporary story, Bible exposition, and interactive questions.
5. Decide which teaching method or model you will use for that week's lesson. Remember the various learning styles. Some students learn visually (by seeing), some learn auditorily (by hearing), and some learn kinesthetically (by doing).
6. Periodically evaluate your teaching methods by reflecting on student involvement, student interaction, and student inquiry of the lesson.
7. Refer to the lesson guide explanation (on the next page) for the contents of each section.
8. Remember to prepare early so that you can be ready for this age group!

One Final Word

Plan carefully, but be spontaneous. Generally, you need to have a carefully developed plan in mind as you begin each session. At the same time, a lively study can take on a life of its own. Listen for the deeper questions that your students may raise. Some of those questions may lead you and your group to even greater depths than those you have planned or we have offered in this guide. Expect the Holy Spirit to give you unique and creative ways to teach.

Lesson Guide Explanation

The *Middle School* and *High School* quarterlies were developed with both students and teachers in mind. This teacher guide will introduce you to each element of the lesson's structure.

****Teacher book only***

***PREPARING TO TEACH**

This section provides you (the teacher) with instructions for how to prepare for the lesson. Some preparations might need to be known and completed before class. For example, it will help provide any directives that you will need to know, such as downloading online information, printing handouts, messaging the students to remind them about the week's lesson, and so forth.

***LESSON OVERVIEW**

This section explains the overview of the day's lesson and what your students should learn as a result of that particular lesson. It will indicate the key points and what your students should take away from the lesson.

***INTRODUCTION**

***STATUS UPDATE (check-in)**

This section will help you get a status update on your students before you begin teaching the lesson. It will provide an intriguing question or statement related to the week's lesson.

***IT'S GO TIME! (illustration)**

This is a great opportunity to get your students moving and thinking, and to draw them into the lesson. The lesson may provide an illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to that week's lesson.

WAKE UP! / REFLECT (10 minutes)

This section is the contemporary story (in the student book) that addresses a topic relevant to teens and gets them thinking about tough issues in life and finding a faith-based response.

WORD UP / INSPECT (10 minutes)

This section in the student book is the Scripture passage for the lesson.

***BACK UP! (background)**

Each week, you will be provided with background for the scriptural lesson. These contextual clues will help you back up and take a broader view of the passage so that you and your students can understand the Scripture historically. But, more importantly, the background information will also help you convey the Scripture's continued relevance for the present day. You do not have to use all of this information in your teaching, but we do encourage you to take a few minutes in your meeting in order to set the stage for the passage that you will be working with as a group.

Lesson Guide Explanation

***IT'S TEXT TIME! (Scripture)**

This section (of this manual) contains the lesson's scriptural passage. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading. You might even have other translations available for your students to read through when you meet.

WORK OUT / INTERSECT (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to examine the intersections of the passage. What is the passage about? How was it heard at the time? How does it apply now?

INSIDE OUT (interpretation)

In this section, the class will examine the passage from the inside out. Ask your students to consider what it meant for those who first experienced or heard it (putting the text in context). This section will provide thought-provoking questions about the Scripture.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT! (application)

Just like we can find an app for just about anything we want to do with our phones, every Scripture passage has an application for the present day. Help your students apply the passage to the present day.

WALK OUT / CONNECT (10 minutes)

The purpose of this section is to prompt teachers and students to think about how the Scripture connects to the students personally. How does it connect to their daily lives in general, and specifically to the upcoming week(s)?

STEPPING OUT! (challenge)

The challenge will dare your students to live out that week's lesson *right now*. Remind the students that the best way to accomplish these challenges is by walking in the way of Christ. How would Christ Himself respond to the challenge?

IT'S GAME TIME! (activity) {Middle School Only}

Only middle school students will have an activity (such as a word search, crossword puzzle, fill-in-the-blank activity, etc.) that uses words defined in the lesson.

<MEDIA MISSION> (after you meet!)

Finally, the purpose of this section is to explain the media mission. Ask your students to find their own examples of a Web site, video, or song that relates to that week's lesson.

Tips for Teaching Teen Bible Study

Be real with teens.

- Don't talk *at* them—talk *to* them. Be inclusive, not demeaning. Use language such as “we” and not “us versus them” (adults versus teens). Be real with them and listen to their stories and things that affect them, without violating their trust.
- Don't teach as though youth are a problem and they need to correct themselves. Talk to them honestly about life issues in order for them to guide their own thoughts and development.

Understand their developmental stages.

- Understand the basics of adolescent growth and development.
- Know methods and strategies that are effective for their age group. This time is a challenging and confusing—but also a very exciting—time of their lives.
- Organize and channel their growth and development. They are not adults. They have energy and excitement. They come from a different generation, which means they use a different language.
- Don't disrespect them. Help them learn lessons in life. Take them on a journey. Do not reprimand.

Know youth culture.

- Know what can influence their faith (e.g., peer pressure, social media, TV, music, movies, schools, social organizations, other adults, and parents).
- Pressure to conform to peers or society can include influence from friends with different views, friends from other religions or Christian denominations, TV, music,

movies, schools, recreational activities, sports teams, social groups, school activities, and the church.

- Be prepared. Preparation is the key. Be informed. Be ready for youth! Your role as teacher is a critical role in shaping how teens apply their faith to their lives. Make a difference!
- Be creative in your teaching approaches. Creative teaching requires using multiple learning styles and methods that include media.

Know the focus of your lesson.

- Clearly state lesson objectives, goals, and major theme or take-home messages. Lesson goals and objectives should stand alone each week in case students don't go to Sunday school consistently.
- Apply the biblical principles to the students' lives. Students learn when you apply the lessons to their lives and therefore make the Bible lessons come alive and be relevant. Share biblical truths with them with integrity. Remember that social issues present in the larger community are also present in the youth community.
- Teach with the goal of guiding their development toward critical thinking and how they can use their faith in action. Use relevant issues that affect their families and their lives.

REFERENCES:

Effective Teaching Practices for 21st Century Christian Educators, by Mary E. McConnell
Help! I Teach Youth Sunday School, by Brian Foreman, Bo Prosser, and David Woody

Quarter at a Glance

Spring 2024 (March–May)

Examining Our Faith

In this quarter, we explore the fullness of faith as a response to God’s desire to be in a relationship with us. To be “faithless” is to turn away from God—to put trust in something (or someone) other than God. The lessons for this quarter ask these questions: Is your faith steadfast? Are you contending for the faith? In the Old and New Testaments, there are as many examples of spiritual fidelity as there are examples of spiritual infidelity. What can today’s Christians draw from these ancient accounts that will help us grow more deeply in faith? The lessons of this quarter guide the learners to a reaffirmation of their confidence in God—because without faith it is impossible to please God.

Unit I, “Faith-FULL versus Faith-LESS,” has five lessons drawn from the books of Jude, 2 Corinthians, 1 Peter, Acts, and Mark that invite learners to turn the challenges of life into opportunities for nurturing a vibrant faith instead of giving up, turning away from God, or rejecting faith. Jude appeals to us to contend for the faith that was once entrusted to the saints. The second letter to the Corinthians warns Christians to examine themselves to make sure that they are living in the faith. Peter urges his readers to defend their faith with humility, gentleness, and reverence. The book of Acts encourages the church to be obedient to the faith, using Stephen as an example. In the book of Mark, God raised Jesus from the dead and in so doing unlocked the door to Resurrection faith.

- L1. March 3, 2024 **Yes! With God, We Can** (*Sustaining Our Faith*) Jude 17-25
- L2. March 10, 2024 **Discovering Our Deepest Values** (*Testing Our Faith*) 2 Corinthians 13:5-11
- L3. March 17, 2024 **Do Not Fear!** (*Defending Our Faith*) 1 Peter 3:8-17
- L4. March 24, 2024 **Stephen, the Spirit-full Hero!** (*Living in Faith*) Acts 6:7-15
- L5. March 31, 2024 **Faith to Grow beyond Our Fears** (*The Resurrection: Key to Faith*) Mark 16:1-8

Unit II, “The Measure of Faith,” has four lessons drawn from the books of Luke and Matthew to discuss the range of Christian faith. Luke cites four friends who went through various obstacles to get their sick friend to Jesus for healing—and when Jesus saw their faith, He forgave and healed the paralytic. Luke looks at the faith of a centurion who amazed Jesus with his faith, and Jesus acknowledged that He had not found such faith in all Israel; Luke identifies a sinful woman whom Jesus forgave because she had much faith; and Matthew identifies a Canaanite woman recognized by Jesus for her great faith.

- L6. April 7, 2024 **Our Faith Can Heal Others** (*The Faith of Four Friends*) Luke 5:17-26
- L7. April 14, 2024 **Words of Healing** (*The Faith of a Centurion*) Luke 7:1-10
- L8. April 21, 2024 **Expressing Love and Faith** (*The Faith of a Woman Who Loved Jesus*) Luke 7:36-39, 44-50
- L9. April 28, 2024 **Bread Crumbs for the Woman** (*The Faith of a Canaanite Woman*) Matthew 15:21-28

Unit III, “Standing in the Faith,” has four lessons drawn from the book of Romans that encourage believers to continue standing in the faith. Lesson 10 indicates that the righteousness of God comes through believers’ having faith in Jesus Christ. Lesson 11 provides an example from the life of Abraham. Lesson 12 explores the meaning of being justified by faith, and lesson 13 traces faith that comes from what is heard through the word of Christ. Thus, those who are called by Christ’s name are encouraged to confess with their lips, believe in their hearts, and stand in faith daily.

- L10. May 5, 2024 **Boasting or Faith?** (*Justified by Faith in Jesus*) Romans 3:21-30
- L11. May 12, 2024 **God Blessed Abraham** (*Reckoned as Righteous*) Romans 4:13-25
- L12. May 19, 2024 **Christ Sets Us Right with God** (*Reconciled to God*) Romans 5:1-11
- L13. May 26, 2024 **Confessing Our Faith** (*Who Has Believed?*) Romans 10:1-17

Meet the Writers

Middle School Writer

Royal S. Todd is a native of Louisville, Kentucky, where he accepted his call to ministry at the age of twelve. In 2013, Rev. Todd was licensed at the Cable Missionary Baptist Church under Pastor Anthony Middleton, where he would return to be ordained. Throughout his time in ministry, Rev. Todd has been blessed by God to carry the Gospel across the breadth of this nation.

Rev. Todd is an alumnus of the University of Kentucky as of 2020, having received a B.A. in Philosophy with minors in Sociology and African American Studies. A recent graduate, Rev. Todd holds a Master of Divinity degree from the School of the Prophets seated at Vanderbilt University. Currently, Rev. Todd is a Provost Graduate Fellow and Russell G. Hamilton Scholar of Vanderbilt University, pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree. Concurrently, Rev. Todd serves as Associate Pastor and Director of Christian Education, Discipleship, and Youth at the Mt. Gilead MB Church.

He is a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.

* * * * *

High School Writer

Wellington A. Johnson Sr. holds a B.A. in Bible and Theology from the American Baptist College (Nashville, TN); a M.Sc. in Applied Psychology from Tennessee State University (Nashville, TN); an Ed.S. in Human Development Counseling from George Peabody College (Now a part of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN); He has done additional work towards the Ed.D. in Human Development Counseling at George Peabody College (Now a part of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN). Rev. Johnson has been blessed to have served in academia as an instructor at the American Baptist College in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Simmons Bible College in Louisville, Kentucky. He has also served on the Committee on the Uniform Series as a member and chairperson. The Committee on the Uniform Series is responsible for developing the Sunday School Lessons Writers' guidelines for diverse denominations and publishing companies. Additionally, he has made his mark as an editor and Publishing Director at the Sunday School Publishing Board (SSPB) of the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc., in Nashville, Tennessee. He is currently a Publishing Associate at the SSPB, Nashville, Tennessee.

Middle School

Teacher's Plans



March 3, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Yes! With God,
We Can**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson

2

Background Scripture: Jude

Print Passage: Jude 17-25



You, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (*Jude 20-21*)

General Lesson:
Sustaining Our Faith

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards, sticky notes (two per student), a whiteboard (or easel pad paper)

LESSON OVERVIEW

A "shortcut to success" may persuade some people to compromise their standards. How do people remain true to their values despite enticing trends? Jude writes to the faith community, assuring them of God's promises: to keep us from falling and to make us stand without blemish in God's presence.

is that someone begins with making a sound using snaps or claps, and everyone must remember the sound. As you all go around the room, each person must repeat the sound chain and then add their own sound, forming a sound chain of snapping and clapping.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What was something nice that someone did for you this week?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Part of the lesson for today emphasizes the importance of memory. Get your students to play the "Sound Chain" game. The way that this game works

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "In our story, we see how James remembered the values that his parents taught him even when he was in a potentially dangerous situation. Likewise, we see James's parents exercise mercy even though James disobeyed them. Two critical parts of our faith are our recalling what we know to be true about God and reflecting on how we treat others. This Jude 17-25 lesson encourages us to do both things to strengthen our faith."

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Jude is one of the shortest books of the New Testament, but the message offered in its single chapter is important. The author of Jude was warning the church of false teachers who would manipulate the Word of God and the people of God to their benefit. Also, there is a warning against people who cause division in the church. While, admittedly, some would follow these people (as verses 11 and 12 tell us), Jude reminds us of our role as believers. Our role is not to judge or condemn those who have lost their way, cause division, or falsely proclaim the Gospel; instead, our charge is to show mercy to them. Our responsibility is to build one another up and continue building the kingdom, allowing God to be the ultimate judge. We can remain confident that God will render judgment to these false teachers and people of division at the appointed time. Jude reminds us that everything happening within the church's life was already foretold to us. Therefore, we ought to trust God to correct anything that needs correcting. While the message in Jude contains a warning, the book's conclusion is filled with encouragement. All our lives are sustained because of God's grace that keeps us from stumbling and presents us as faultless (verses 24-25), and we should hide this truth in our hearts as we extend mercy to others.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Jude 17-25)

17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. **18** They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." **19** These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. **20** But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. **22** Be merciful to those

who doubt; **23** save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. **24** To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— **25** to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: One of the central themes in Jude is a warning to the readers about people who cause division—that is, people who do or say things that cause people to turn on one another. Division within the church stands in opposition to another lesson that Jesus taught: "A house divided against itself cannot stand" (see Matthew 12:25). The church is no different; if the church is divided among itself, it will not be able to stand. This is precisely the context in which Jude wrote this letter, and Jude offers us a way to navigate such division while maintaining our Christian values: through loving others. Ask, "What may cause division today, and how can we use Jude's insight to resolve them?" Discuss.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Jude divided this letter into two separate parts: the things that God is supposed to do and the things that we are supposed to do. Jude says that God will render judgment, but we are to show mercy." Use this as an opportunity to exemplify that there will be things in life that we can manage. However, there are also things that only God can handle.

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read

aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Jude 22-23 encourages believers to show mercy to other people, even people who may not believe the same way we do, dress the way we do, or live the way we do. On sticky notes, have the students write down two things that they can do this week to “show mercy,” or, in other words, be nice to someone; encourage them to try to do both, as well as to try to find at least two different people toward whom to show mercy.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Sometimes, it is so easy to zone out on, ignore, or not pay attention to the things we may learn about God or faith. Jude 17-25 teaches us that those lessons will be helpful at a certain point in our lives and help us navigate tricky situations. Say, “This is true of our lessons from God and those that others (like our parents, teachers, or family members) teach us.”

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Relay the following (also found in the student book): “The themes of remembering and showing mercy are woven throughout our lesson today, and this week, you are challenged to do both. As you find people to whom to show mercy, you are also challenged to journal how it made you feel and how you think it made them feel. Showing mercy does not just have an impact on us but on the other people as well.”

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

Pass out sticky notes to the students which they will use to complete the activity. After the game instructions are read and understood, allow time for the students to engage in the activity. Once the sticky notes are on the board (or large sheet of paper), take a picture so that your students will not forget them.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Relay the following (which is also found in the student book): Use the following link to get more information about the book of Jude: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UoCmakZmys>. Make a note of something that you learned in the video that may have yet to be talked about in class.

NOTES

March 10, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Discovering Our
Deepest Values**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson
2

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-11

Print Passage: 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

General Lesson:
Testing Our Faith



Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Corinthians 13:5b)
(*Please note that in the student book, page 10, the Key Verse is listed as 3:5b instead of 13:5b. We apologize for the error.)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Background Scripture; (2) write down what you notice to be some of the challenges that Christians face in trying to live up to their Christian faith and principles.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Everyone has principles that they are challenged to uphold. How and where do we find the courage to live authentically, keeping true to our ideals? Paul challenges believers to examine themselves as they rely on the power of Christ in keeping the faith imparted to them.

This week's lesson is about identifying our values and testing our faith. Use this opportunity to "popcorn" around the room and ask the students to name some of their values. Be sure to give room for different kinds of values (i.e., family, biblical, and so forth) and the importance of having them. Take time to explain what values are and how they are connected to our faith.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What was something nice that someone did for you this week?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask, "What can Cynthia and Jaqueline teach us about faith, discipline, and community?" Say, "This week's lesson provides a scriptural backdrop for a highly potent biblical lesson. We all have the Spirit of God dwelling within us, and how we walk in our faith reflects the God we proclaim. While it is true that God will be the ultimate judge, we also have the opportunity to judge ourselves and to hold ourselves accountable to our principles of faith."

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The apostle Paul's closing and departing words to the church in Corinth were pretty stark. He was attempting to prepare them for his coming visit—as it would include rendering judgment to those who had continued to live sinfully since he left. The language of the text implies that the last time that the apostle Paul was with the church in Corinth he had shown mercy to those living outside of the way and will of God. It suggests that he spared them the punishment which they deserved. However, the apostle Paul made clear that upon his next arrival, there would be judgment. This is critical for us to remember because we know that it will not be the apostle Paul but Jesus Christ who will be our judge when He comes again. The apostle Paul gives us some helpful hints and biblical principles we ought to use in between that time and our present moment. One such principle is to examine ourselves, taking moments of meaningful introspection to ensure that our lives align with God's expectations. This is similar to the teaching Jesus gave us when He reminds us to be mindful of the plank in our own eyes before tending to the speck in someone else's eye. We all have Jesus Christ living inside of us; the Spirit helps us make good choices and live in a way that is true to our faith and pleasing to God. While there will be challenges in life, as the apostle Paul makes clear in these verses, ultimately, we have the strength to stand true to our walk of faith.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(2 Corinthians 13:5-11)

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the

faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? **6** And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. **7** Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. **8** For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. **9** We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. **10** This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. **11** Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: This message from the apostle Paul would have challenged how people lived when it was initially addressed to the people in Corinth. In this entire letter, the apostle Paul was writing to address some major areas for improvement for the people to adhere to, which they may have strayed away from in his absence. However, the conclusion of his letter includes more severe consequences than what may have been experienced or held back in earlier visits. Like many of us, this church was navigating the difficulty of too many worldly passions' taking priority in our lives of faith. But just as the apostle Paul had been gracious to show mercy before, so has God been so gracious to us, covering our shortcomings with the blood of Christ. Likewise, in the same way that Paul warned that he would soon return to judge in the power of God, so shall God return and be our final judge.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: A significant component of our faith is our living in a way that is pleasing to God. That includes treating others with kindness, spiritual devotion, and embodying the principles that Jesus Christ taught. To be effective as the church, we ought to be mindful that “putting our faith to the test” looks much different today than ever before. Ask your students, “What would it look like for your faith to be tested?”

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: The application for this passage is simple but only sometimes easy. As children of God, we profess that part of being like Christ is treating others kindly even when they may not deserve it. Sometimes, the easiest thing to do is what everyone else does—but God does not call us to be like everyone else. Therefore, we are challenged this week to do something different: find someone you would not typically talk to and compliment that person.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: This passage has reminded us that we have the opportunity to correct ourselves before anyone else has to do so. The apostle Paul encouraged the people to examine themselves before he arrived to render judgment. Today, we can live this out when we know that we are doing or thinking something that does not reflect the God in us. In those moments, we can reflect and correct.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: One of the most significant points that the apostle Paul makes in this text is that we all have Jesus Christ inside us. What does that mean, like, actually? On one hand, it means that God holds us to a higher standard than everyone else. God has made us more than just mere bystanders in the crowd! Yet, it also means that God gives us the power to do things through Him that we would not be able to do without Him. With God, we can indeed do anything that we set our minds to do!

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the students have all had an opportunity to share, remind them of the importance of showing kindness to others as part of our Christian values.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Relay this (also found in the student book): This week, you are challenged to learn more about the importance of accountability and how, if done correctly, it can lead to success. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyxhKt94Ebg> and watch the TEDx Talk from Janyssa, who tells her story of how accountability has helped her.

March 17, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Do Not
Fear!**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson
3

Background Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Print Passage: 1 Peter 3:8-17

General Lesson:
Defending Our Faith



Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? (1 Peter 3:13)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, print out copies of the word search (just in case not all students have one).

LESSON OVERVIEW

Adhering to dominant norms is a safe and convenient way to live. How do we voice objections to these norms without inviting conflict? In the book of 1 Peter, Christians are encouraged to defend their faith through righteous and humble actions, even at the risk of suffering.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Have you ever been upset and accidentally taken it out on someone else? Has someone ever done this to you?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Say, "Imagine that one of your younger siblings or cousins is playing a game on your phone, and he or she drops your phone on the floor while he or she is playing the game. The screen on your phone now has a crack on the side of it, and you are understandably upset—but you know that if you yell or hit your loved one, you will get in big trouble. What do you do? (Pause for responses.) How does this connect with what the apostle Peter is teaching us in this lesson?" Discuss as a class.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "Benjamin had a really tough day! Even though he started the day hoping to make it a good one, so many things that happened were outside his control. Like Benjamin, we sometimes have days full of things outside our control. Occasionally, we carry frustration with us, which may impact how we interact with people for the rest of the day. Yet, God reminds us in tough moments that we should be aware of how we feel but not try to make others feel as upset as we may feel."

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

In his first epistle, the apostle Peter emphasizes some helpful hints on how to live as a follower of Jesus Christ amid difficult circumstances. The first-century churchgoers to whom the apostle Peter was writing lived in a place where and time when it was difficult to be a believer and outwardly express a love for God. In the places where they lived, they were targeted, beaten, and sometimes even killed for being followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the apostle Peter's letter aimed to connect with these people and their circumstances. Consequently, the motifs of suffering and "harm" can be found throughout this epistle because that was precisely what these people were going through. They needed a word of encouragement to help them navigate the world they were living in instead of becoming a part of it. The language of the text insists that there was a temptation lingering in the air for these believers to "fight fire with fire," to use violence as a response to the violence they had to endure, or, as the apostle Peter writes, "repay evil with evil." The advice in this text, though, is to remain faithful and "be prepared to answer everyone who asks you, but do [it] with gentleness and respect"—that is, encourage these believers to stand firm on their beliefs but not resort to violence in defending them. In this letter, the apostle Peter reminds us that a part of our Christian faith is **thinking** good things and **doing** good things. God is just as concerned about what we think and how we feel as He is concerned with what we do.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(1 Peter 3:8-17)

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic,

love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. **10** For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. **11** They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." **13** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always 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, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **17** For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, relay this: The message from the apostle Peter was particularly critical for the first-century church audience at which it was aimed. This emerging church faced legalized oppression from the Roman government that may have led to death for some of its members. Therefore, the apostle Peter must be clear about how the church should react without compromising their faith. This message was also one of hope, to reassure the people that God was still with them, watching over them and attending to their prayers. This message remains relevant today; globally, there are still Christians whom their governments persecute for their beliefs. Not every country ensures a protected right of religious belief as the United States does. Likewise, we all ought to be ever mindful of how we respond to the violence around us to answer it in a way that is consistent with our faith and values.

Inside Out (*interpretation*)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Peter begins our text today instructing the church to be of “one mind” (or like-minded) and to be sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble. What does it mean to be like-minded? How should these instructions from the apostle Peter be applied today?”

There’s an App for That! (*application*)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

Relay the following (also found in the student book): “Sometimes, it is easy to get mad and frustrated with people who think differently than we do on any given topic, especially about faith. Our beliefs are so deeply personal that sometimes an attack on those beliefs can feel like an attack on our very being. This is especially true when people who may disagree with us use hateful language or are unkind. The easiest thing to do in an argument is to ‘match their energy,’ to give them what they have given us, or, as the apostle Peter says, ‘repay evil with evil’ (verse 9). However, this text reminds us that God expects us to allow Him to deal with those who mistreat us; our job is to ‘turn from evil and do good.’”

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “This passage provides some very pivotal instructions for our Christian walk. Like the people in the church the Apostle Peter is writing to, sometimes it is much more difficult to be kind to those who are not treating us kindly. With your students, brainstorm ways to help us ‘repay evil with a blessing’ even when tempted to do otherwise. What are we supposed to do when others mistreat us?” Allow time for discussion.

Stepping Out! (*challenge*)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

The students are challenged to grab a Bible (or open a Bible app) and find examples of conflict in the ministry of Jesus. Remind the students that the best way to accomplish these challenges is by walking in the way of Christ. Also, this week, challenge the students to do what the apostle Peter challenged the church to do in today’s passage. Say, “If someone does something or says something that upsets you this week, repay it with kindness; afterwards, journal how it made you feel and how you got past feeling upset.”

It’s Game Time! (*Answer Key*)

E	A	U	T	H	O	R	I	T	Y	N	I
E	I	D	G	D	M	E	R	C	Y	R	O
X	I	L	O	I	C	T	E	A	R	N	J
A	I	E	D	S	A	E	A	R	W	N	U
M	W	E	L	C	L	S	P	F	E	W	D
I	P	O	P	O	L	T	O	T	S	A	G
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Y	W	I	T	N	E	S	S	N	N	G	S
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MEDIA MISSION (*after you meet!*)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Relay the following (which is also found in this section of the student book): Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWs-AswW398> to speak with Alex, who gives us some helpful tips about mental health and wellness!

March 24, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Stephen, the
Spirit-full Hero!**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson
4

Background Scripture: Acts 6
Print Passage: Acts 6:7-15

General Lesson:
Living in Faith



They could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. (Acts 6:10)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, write the verses of the pep rally cheer on an index card for the “It’s Go Time!” activity.

LESSON OVERVIEW

People who are falsely accused and persecuted often feel that the whole world is against them. What sustains us in the face of injustice and persecution? The testimony of Stephen encourages us to be obedient to the faith inspired by the grace, power, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Why are rules and regulations important in our society?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Say, “Imagine that your teacher is giving your class a test. Somehow, one of your friends comes across the

answers to the test and offers to share the answers with you and the rest of the class. Some of your classmates accept the stolen test answers. You decide that you do not want to take the answers from your friend. You also know that it’s not right for your peers to cheat. However, if you tell the teacher what your friend has done, your friend may be mad at you. What would you do? How would you decide what the right thing to do was? How would you know that it was the right thing to do?” Lead a brief class discussion.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week’s contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week’s lesson.

After the story is read, say, “Jordan wanted to do something that he could not do without help from his father. And just as it is for Jordan, it is for us, too! There are obstacles or goals that we will have to navigate that we will need God’s help to get through. In those moments, we ought to pray to God, knowing that there are some things that we cannot do, but that God can do anything!”

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural

meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

In this chapter of Acts, we are introduced to one of the first deacons of the church who would become one of the most cited martyrs of the church: Stephen. Stephen had been selected by the church and consecrated by the apostles to do community-centered ministry. He was part of an initial delegation of believers assigned to the widows. Stephen was set apart—called out to do and be something more. This lesson offers a biblical case study detailing the life of one whom God had gifted to stand out and how others received him. The text shows us that some appreciated Stephen, who was described as performing “great wonders and signs.” Yet, still, others targeted Stephen because he was gifted and stood for that in which he believed. He would draw much attention from the Pharisees because of his strong abilities to debate, his depth of knowledge, and the power of the Holy Spirit working inside of him. Stephen’s message and ministry stood against what the Pharisees valued, emphasizing the grace that comes through Jesus Christ over the Law. When they could not out-debate or outsmart him, the Pharisees resolved to tell lies about him. However, despite the Pharisees’ lies about him and all the other things that they would do to him, Stephen could still positively impact lives, and God was always with him. One lesson that Stephen’s life and ministry stand to teach us is that the way people receive us does not denote the value that God has placed in us. Although Stephen would have to navigate being targeted by the Pharisees, he would still be able to do the work that God purposed him to do and would ultimately be part of a ministerial legacy that is still impacting the world more than two thousand years later.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Acts 6:7-15)

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. **8** Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. **10** But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. **11** Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” **12** So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. **13** They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. **14** For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.” **15** All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, relay this: The story of Stephen is very complicated—as it details, from beginning to end, one of the most infamous martyrs of the emerging first-century church. While the passage today does not include the actual stoning of Stephen, it does capture the events that led up to it. Stephen, one of the church’s first deacons, was lied on and arrested on false pretenses, and ultimately died for the faith. The first audiences hearing this story would be able to see parallels between Stephen’s story and that of John the Baptist and even Jesus. This story illuminates the relationship between popular culture and living by the faith in Jesus Christ. Now, more than ever, our culture pressures us to surrender our faith and individuality, but God has called, created, and purposed us all for more than blending into the crowd.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask, “What are some things about the story of Stephen that make him a hero?” Allow the students to offer their insights and to raise questions about the passage. After the students have shared their thoughts, remind them of the great wonders and signs (verse 8) that Stephen performed. Likewise, remind them that Stephen could care for the widows left out. Taking care of people in need is something that heroes are known for. Stephen got his power as a hero from God, which is available to all of us!

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Stephen’s story tells us how big of an impact that people can make with help from God and their living in their purpose. God has given us a purpose and a ‘Helper’ to do what He assigned us to do. Likewise, God cares about us and wants us to succeed—but success can only come when God is part of the equation! Write down something with which you need help from God.” Discuss.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “The passage for this week’s lesson highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit moves in our lives. The Holy Spirit is an integral part of our faith and our day-to-day lives. The Bible describes the Holy Spirit as a helper but also says that the Holy Spirit lives inside of us. Who is the Holy Spirit? What

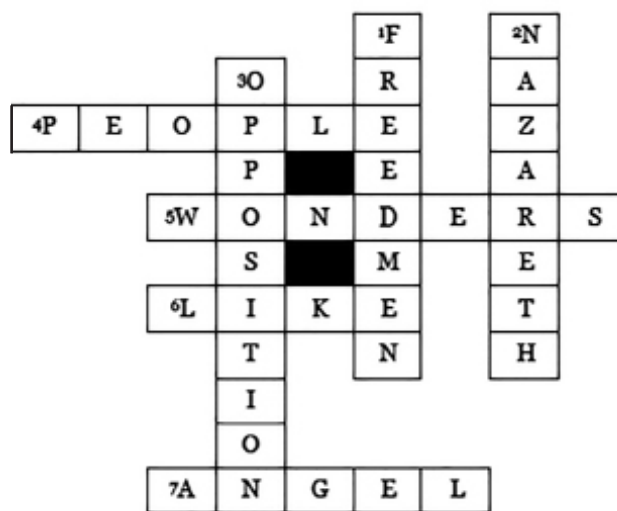
purpose does the Holy Spirit serve in the Trinity and for us? How can we become full of the Holy Spirit and bravely stand like Stephen?” Discuss as a class.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the challenge is extended and completed, relay the following: “In our stories about Jordan (contemporary story) and Stephen (biblical story) this week, we learn how our heavenly Father can help us do things that we otherwise would not be able to do. Therefore, we cannot be afraid to ask God for anything we need, knowing that God cares about us and is concerned with our flourishing. As James (the brother of Jesus) reminds us in the Scriptures, ‘[We] do not have because we do not ask God’ (see James 4:2-3).”

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)



MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Instruct the students to go online and find a picture of their favorite superhero and tell why he/she is their favorite. Say, “After sharing, tell us what we can do to be more like your superhero!”

March 31, 2024

Youth Topic:

Faith to Grow beyond Our Fears

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson

5

General Lesson:

The Resurrection:
Key to Faith

Background Scripture: Mark 16

Print Passage: Mark 16:1-8



“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.” (Mark 16:6)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards, cones/markers, a ball
- Prior to class, prepare for the “Roll the Stone Away’ Relay Race” (the kind of activity that would probably need to be facilitated in an outside space or a gym): fashion the cones in a big circle; this will be the “track” for your relay, so feel free to use as much space between the cones as you would like.
- These are the instructions you need to be prepared to follow when it is activity time: (1) Split up the class into teams. (2) Allow the students to decide who stands at each cone on their team.(3) The students will roll the ball from one team member to another; their hands must remain on the ball until it gets to the other person; if their hands come off the ball, they must return to their previous checkpoint and start again. (4) The team that gets through the relay first or has the shortest time for completion wins!

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people experience feelings of dread and apprehension as they navigate life’s uncertainties and tragedies. Where can we find a source of hope that can calm our fears and allay our apprehensions? The women who came to the tomb did not let their grief hinder them, and their faithfulness was rewarded with the good news of Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Today is Resurrection Sunday! What does that mean to you?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Say this to the students: “Imagine that you have an after-school activity one day. Your activity ends at 5:00 p.m. Your grandma is picking you up this time, and she promises to be there by 4:30 and tells you to come out to the pickup line at 5:00 p.m. She always texts you when she gets to campus to inform you of where she is parked. However, when you check your phone at 4:50, you don’t see any texts from her. You make your way out to the parking lot and find your grandma parked in the front of the line! Why might you have been worried if you didn’t get a text? What might you be able to learn about trust and promise keeping from this example?” Discuss as a class.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, discuss themes of doubt and trying new things. Say, "If Terrell had used the new moves he had been practicing, he might have gotten first place instead of second. He also showed us that sometimes, even doing things in our comfort zones does not pay off as much as we thought they would. That being the case, it is good that he was placed, but what lessons can he teach us about having faith? What difference can faith make in our lives?" Discuss.

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The Bible records that these three women (Mary Magdalene, Mary [the mother of James], and Salome [the mother of James and John]) went to the tomb of Jesus in the shadow of Calvary's crucifixion. Understand that much of their faith may have died as they watched their son and Savior be executed and take His final breath. They were on their way to anoint the body of Jesus, as was the cultural custom and a rite of passage for the deceased. Because the event surrounding the Crucifixion happened so quickly, they could not do it then; neither were they allowed to do it on the Sabbath. These three women continued to show their devotion to Christ in that while most of His disciples were scattered and had deserted Him, these women were at His crucifixion and now were coming to the tomb where they believed He remained. While they did not know how to do it, they were determined to anoint Jesus' body despite the obstacles. Not only would they have to worry about the stone's being rolled away, but they would also have to contend with the armed soldiers tasked with guarding the tomb, which had been marked and sealed with the Roman seal.

The faith of these three women shone—even within the looming shadow of doubt—as they journeyed to the tomb, unsure of how they would roll away the stone. Even amid their disappointment, they were still looking for Jesus. Imagine their surprise when He would not be where they thought He was, but He had risen just as He had said. This is the good news of our faith: that Christ is still rising above our disappointments, fears, and doubts.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Mark 16:1-8)

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. **2** Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb **3** and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" **4** But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. **6** "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" **8** Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: There will always be the temptation to give up when we are disappointed. Sometimes, that may involve giving up on people, dreams, assignments, or anything else. Faith in God does not mean we will never be disappointed or tempted to give up. Instead, faith in God means that we will choose to go forward even in those circumstances. That is the resolve these

three women had; they were disappointed that Jesus had died but were still committed to doing the work that they felt called to do. The irony of the passage is that they came to the tomb so determined but left the tomb afraid. The things we go through in life can get us all turned around, and our confidence is replaced by fear. When God does something miraculous, we should not keep it to ourselves! We should share the good news!

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask, “How would you have responded to the young man at the empty tomb?” Say, “Remember that things do not always happen as expected, but God has a plan.” Ask, “What do you think made these women afraid?” Gauge your students’ responses, reminding them that Jesus continued to tell His followers that He would be resurrected. Engage with the students’ inquiries and insights as they navigate faith and fear this Easter season!

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

Relay the following words (also found in the student book): “Throughout this story, there are a lot of different things that Mark discusses. One of the things that Mark discusses is hope—the hope that Jesus Christ had been raised just as He had predicted. These three women had trouble hoping and were understandably disappointed after witnessing Jesus’ death. What are things that happen to us that make it difficult to have hope?” Discuss.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “This passage teaches us that faith does not always make fear disappear. Instead, sometimes, we have faith and fear at the same time. However, what helps us grow in faith is our moving beyond our fears! The faith of these three women is shown in their determination to go to the tomb where they believed a dead Jesus lay. What are ways that we can show our faith even when we are afraid?” Discuss.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

In conjunction with the challenge extended in the student book, relay that the challenge for this week centers on the lesson that these three women lived out in other accounts of this narrative: going and sharing the Good News! Say, “God has different ways of blessing us daily; sometimes, we fail to acknowledge all that God does for us. This week, in addition to telling three people what the Resurrection means to you, your mission is to identify one good thing that God has done for you and tell someone about it!”

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

Divide the class into teams and give each team a ball. The teams’ goal is to be the first team to finish the relay. You will instruct one person from each team to stand at each checkpoint. The team members must roll the stone from one checkpoint to another, handing it off to the next teammate until the race is complete. In rolling the ball, the student’s hands must be on the ball until he/she reaches his/her teammate. That means that they cannot simply pass it from one to another.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have the text in this section of the student book read. Say, “Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQZyfunKkNc> to watch an animated retelling of our lesson today!”

April 7, 2024

Youth Topic:

Our Faith Can Heal Others

Unit II: The Measure of Faith

Lesson

6

General Lesson:

The Faith of Four Friends

Background Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

Print Passage: Luke 5:17-26



When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." (Luke 5:20)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, sticky notes, BINGO cards
- This section provides you (the teacher) with instructions on how to prepare for the lesson. Some preparations might need to be known and completed prior to class. For example, it will help provide any directives you need, such as downloading online information, printing handouts, messaging the students to remind them about the week's lesson, and so forth.

LESSON OVERVIEW

People need a support system when trying to overcome life's obstacles. How can our friendships lend strength and support to others who are in crisis? Jesus celebrated the faith and tenacity of the four men who helped their friend find healing and wholeness.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Why are friends important?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Refer to the template in the following link to access and print out a BINGO card for each student: <https://www.papertraildesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Find-Someone-who-BINGO.jpg>.

Say, "Just because we are friends with other people does not mean that we have precisely the same experience as them. This morning, we will find out how we are similar and different from our friends! Using your BINGO card, move around the room to find people who have experienced the answers in the box. Have them sign the proper box. The first person to fill out his or her whole BINGO card wins!"

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask, "What can Parker and Spencer's experiences teach us about how people's actions can be healing?" Pause for discussion. Encourage the youth to trust that following Jesus' lead in showing love and mercy is the right thing to do.

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

What this text teaches us correlates with what Galatians 6:2 reminds us, which is that we ought to bear one another's burdens, and, in this way, we will fulfill the law of Christ. These friends were determined to do for their friend what their friend could not do for himself. We are good friends, and we can detect good friends in our lives when we want our friends to have in their lives the good things that we have in our lives. These four men knew that the only way that their friend could have what they had was if he got to Jesus. They carried their friend the entire way, but the room was packed. Some may even suggest that they had done all they were obligated to do up to this point—but these friends took it a step further. The Bible says that they climbed up to the top of the house with their paralyzed friend and dug out the mud roof until they had fashioned a hole big enough through which to lower their paralyzed friend. This leaves us with potent departing thoughts regarding good, godly friendship requirements. It is hard to be a good friend; being a good friend requires a lot of work. To be a good friend may entail climbing over some things and digging through some things. Good and godly friends may have to go beyond what's considered obligatory—meaning, go the extra mile.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 5:17-26)

17 One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with

Jesus to heal the sick. **18** Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. **19** When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. **20** When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." **21** The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" **22** Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? **23** Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? **24** But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." **25** Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. **26** Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Part of the emphasis in this passage is the traction that Jesus' ministry was gaining during this time. In this account, Jesus had called His disciples at the beginning of this chapter, and now people were coming from the surrounding areas and all around to hear His teaching. Jesus had become so popular in this region that the men in the passage had learned about Him and believed that He had the power to heal their completely paralyzed friend. The Bible's emphasis on the growing popularity of Jesus also shines a light on the escalating controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees. This conflict is shown throughout the miracle when the Pharisees questioned Jesus' authority to forgive sin. This passage is overlaid with the ministerial complexities of Jesus' ministry. Still, the emphasis on friendship amid the narrative

displays the importance and impact of friendship. It foreshadows how much of a friend Jesus would ultimately be toward humanity.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “When the friends saw that they could not go through the front door, they decided to lower their buddy down from the roof! That is thinking outside of the box! Why do you think they did that? Due to the creativity of these men, their friend was able to be healed by Jesus, and even Jesus credited the healing to their faith.” Invite the students to reflect on the importance of ingenuity, friendship, and faith.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, relay that this passage is all about good friends and the impact that they can make in our lives. Good friends are as important today as they were at the time of the passage. After reading the passage, have the students reflect on some things that one of their good or best friends did for them. Afterward, have them share something that they may have done for a friend. Link their responses to some of the principles we get from the passage about friendship.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, encourage the students to understand and

articulate how important it is for our faith to have friendships in our lives. Say, “The friends in this passage were so committed to getting their buddy to Jesus that they carried him, lifted him up the side of a house, and pulled back the roof so that he could be laid at Jesus’ feet. The love of our friends ought to mimic and remind us of the love of God in our lives!”

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, lead a discussion on the information and the students’ responses to the questions. Then share the following: This passage demonstrates the impact that good friends can have. God sends us people in our lives to be our friends because He understands the value of friendship. Also, as this passage indicates, our friends should lead us to God. Our friends should be able to pray for us and petition God on our behalf! This week, you are challenged to be that friend and pray to God for someone else.”

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the students understand the activity, allow time for them to make their lists (you may pass out sheets of paper if they need more room for what they write). When they finish, review the lists as a class.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book): “God is our ultimate friend! Follow the link to learn about God’s loyal love toward us! This video defines God’s friendship toward us and highlights biblical examples where we can find it!” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfbyFLgs_NM

April 14, 2024

Youth Topic:

Words of Healing

Unit II:
The Measure
of Faith

Lesson

7

General Lesson:

The Faith of a Centurion

Background Scripture: Luke 7:1-10

Print Passage: Luke 7:1-10



"That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed." (Luke 7:7)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, write the verses of the pep rally cheer on an index card for the "It's Go Time!" activity.

LESSON OVERVIEW

There are times when the enormity of our problems diminishes our capacity to move forward. How should we respond to seemingly impossible problems? When a centurion whose servant was close to death responded in great faith, Jesus was amazed and miraculously restored the servant to full health.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What are some of the things that make us different? Should our differences matter?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Engage the class in the following activity: Say, "Find a partner (or make a small group) and write a script

for a thirty-second interview that imagines that you have just seen Jesus perform a miracle with your own eyes! Some things you might want to talk about in your interview are as follows: (1) What did you feel like seeing a miracle happen right before your very eyes? (2) In what way would you want to tell other people about it? (3) What would be the most important thing for other people to know?" Allow time for the class to complete the activity and then share their work.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask, "What might Georgette teach us about judging others, helping others, and giving to others? In what ways does Georgette 'stand in the gap' for Ella, and why might that be important for us? What can we learn from Ella about struggling, asking for help, and enduring in new or challenging places?" Allow time for discussion. Then say, "Our judging others may hinder our understanding of how complex their lives may be underneath the surface and hide how one person can learn from another."

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural

meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Jesus Christ and this centurion soldier, by all cultural and social standards, should have never been talking to one another to begin with. The centurion represented a Roman government ambivalent to Jesus and His ministry. The centurion was likewise representative of a system of power that Jesus completely resisted and worked against. Yet, this centurion soldier, symbolic of political and military power, sent for Jesus when circumstances became dire. The centurion's plea for help from Jesus signified a transcendence of difference and conflict and offered a pathway to the ultimate compassion of God. It serves as a reminder that God's love and compassion can extend beyond all differences. The differences between Jesus Christ and this centurion would not have been lost upon the first-century readers of this text. Much is evident, given that some Jewish elders stepped in to put in a good word on behalf of the centurion to Jesus, gesturing to the work that the centurion had done in their community. The centurion soldier requested that Jesus heal his sick servant, who was near death. Jesus ultimately agrees and begins journeying toward the home of the soldier. The biblical record states that before Jesus could even get to the centurion's house, another messenger met Him on behalf of the soldier. The message said the centurion did not even feel worthy of Jesus' being in his home. However, he believed that his servant would be healed if Jesus just spoke the word. The faith that this centurion soldier had exceeded that of Israel (verse 9) and has even become a standard for others to follow. The belief that this man showed and placed in just the word of Jesus is profound.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 7:1-10)

1 When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. **2** There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. **3** The centurion heard of

Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. **4** When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, **5** because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." **6** So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. **7** That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. **8** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." **9** When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." **10** Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Themes of difference, trust, and faith can be traced throughout this story. The mere fact that a Roman centurion was asking Jesus for anything already says a lot for the first hearers of this passage. This would suggest that this representative of the Roman military believed that Jesus was exactly who He said He was. Further, it indicates that this centurion believed that Jesus had the kind of power that He professed to have. Rome was a significant part of the opposition toward Jesus and His ministry, so for this centurion to go to such lengths put him against the Roman politics and culture he was supposed to represent. Yet, on the other side, for Jesus to perform this miracle also emphasizes God's commitment to extend His grace and mercy to all people, not just a few.

Discuss this: Today's Scriptures can be studied alongside the Ten Commandments. All three Scriptures point to God's justice. *Justice* means to do what is right; therefore, God's justice—one of the holy attributes of God that flows from His love, grace, and mercy—will always do what is right. God's blessings flow to His people as a benefit of obedience, while

disobedience triggers God’s justice. While God will forgive sin, punishment for disobedience shows how much God loves us. Punishing us for disobedience is meant to protect and discourage us from making the same bad choices. Use today’s Scripture passages to help the students understand that breaking the rules comes with consequences at home, at school, and in the community. Encourage them to do what is good and right. If they fail in a particular situation, encourage them to pray for God’s forgiveness and still expect the consequences.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: One of the things that this passage highlights is overcoming differences. Jesus and the Roman centurion were very different from one another—coming from different backgrounds, cultures, and social locations. However, that did not prevent Jesus from healing the centurion’s servant. Jesus was willing to set aside the things that made them different and focus on those things that they had in common: in this case, concern for the servant’s life. Similarly, there are times in our lives today when we must set aside the things that make us different and place more emphasis on those that draw us together.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: An incredible component of this passage is this centurion soldier’s sending messages to Jesus on behalf of his servant, believing that Jesus could heal what others could not. This soldier “stood in the gap” for his servant, perhaps even using his connections and position to go to Jesus in the first place. This centurion asked Jesus for a blessing, but it was not for himself but for someone else. Part of our faith encourages us to “stand in the gap” for someone, praying with or for him or her.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

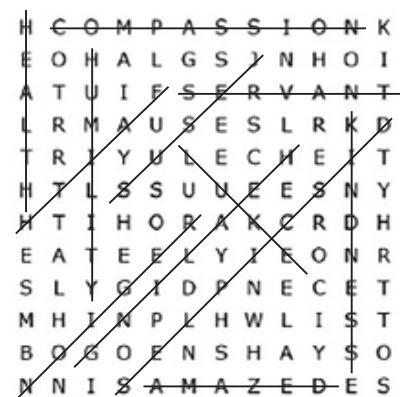
Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: We have seen Jesus heal people in various contexts, but this time Jesus was not even in the same place as the centurion soldier’s servant and healed him. How? Because this soldier had just that much faith. Sometimes, we do not see the great things God can do—not because God cannot do them, but because our faith is too limited. How different would our lives and walks be if we had the kind of faith in the words of Jesus that this centurion soldier had?

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book): “In our passage for today, Jesus demonstrates the healing power of His words. However, we all have God living and working on the inside of us, too! Therefore, our words can make someone’s day better or worse, depending on what we say. Your challenge this week is to use your words to make someone’s day better and show the love of God to someone who may need it!” Afterwards, encourage them to complete the challenge.

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)



MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discuss the information.

April 21, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Expressing Love
and Faith**

Unit II:
The Measure
of Faith

Lesson

8

Background Scripture: Luke 7:36-50

Print Passage: Luke 7:36-39, 44-50



"I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7:47)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards

LESSON OVERVIEW

The humiliation of our public failures can make it difficult for a fresh start. How do we overcome the weight of judgment and scrutiny from those who refuse to see past our mistakes? Luke teaches about a woman whose great faith helped her rise above the rejection of others so that she might express her gratitude for Jesus' love and forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Have you ever received a gift that you did not ask for?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity related to this week's lesson.

Hand out index cards and ask the students to write on them examples of situations where someone had

offended, wronged, or angered them or a family member. When they finish, collect the cards, fan them out facedown, and have each youth draw a card.

Arrange the students in pairs or small groups and then read the cards together. Have the youth share with their group whether they would forgive this person and why or why not. Discuss whether each situation would be easy or difficult to forgive and why forgiveness is easier in some situations than others.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "One of the side effects of difference is shame; sometimes, when we perceive someone as too different or their differences do not make sense to us, we try to convince them to be more like us. In our less-than-perfect moments, shame is one of the ways that we do that. However, Jesus teaches us to be mindful of how quickly we make others feel ashamed. What might Leticia and Jabril teach us about shame and kindness? What lessons do they offer us about the judgment of others and the concept of perfection?"

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

What Jesus Christ asserts in this narrative is that the grace and mercy of God can fall on anyone and is available to everyone. The Bible describes a woman who came to Jesus with a box of expensive perfume while He was at a dinner party. She intended to anoint Jesus with the oil, wetting His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. This interaction was an offering from the woman to Jesus; she lay herself at His feet and sacrificed her perfume (which she could have sold for a lot of money) to anoint Him. Even though people were judging her and Simon, the Pharisee who invited Jesus over for dinner thought it inappropriate for Jesus to allow this woman to do what she was doing because of her sinful history—yet the drama did take place. However, Jesus used this as a teaching moment to show that we all have a less-than-perfect past and are always welcome in the presence of Jesus. Also, Jesus reversed the feelings of shame and judgment away from the woman and back onto Simon. According to their custom, Simon should have been the one anointing Jesus when He arrived, but he did not. Instead, this woman did, and for that, she received mercy and the forgiveness of her sin. This serves as word of caution for all of us who are tempted to judge others based on their appearance or things they have done in the past. Jesus says that in those moments, we should reflect on ourselves and ensure that we are doing what is right in the eyes of God.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 7:36-39, 44-50)

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. **37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating

at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. **38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

.....

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. **46** You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. **47** Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." **48** Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." **49** The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" **50** Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share the following: This passage is overlaid with many meanings—as Jesus does so many things that are out of the ordinary. The ways Jesus behaved out of the ordinary would not have been lost on the first-century-church audiences listening to this story. For starters, Jesus accepted an invitation from a Pharisee to have dinner. This fact would have been understandably confusing for those who followed the continued tension between Jesus and the Pharisees throughout Jesus' ministry. The invitation to have been given by a Pharisee, then accepted by Jesus, demonstrates God's commitment to looking beyond differences and strife for the sake of ministry. Likewise, this woman came into the house of Simon the Pharisee with her expensive perfume and sat at the feet of Jesus. The woman, even being in the

house, would have been enough to make people suspicious. People like this woman would not have even been allowed to be in mixed company with a Pharisee or similar folks with higher social statuses. Instead of rejecting her, as would have been the custom, Jesus received her offering and consequently offered her forgiveness for her sin, another thing out of the religious ordinary.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Pharisees took issue not only with Jesus' forgiving sin in the first place, but also for Jesus' extending grace to this woman who had a history of sin—which would have caused more tension. Yet, one of the most interesting things in this passage is the elevation of the woman over the dinner host: Simon the Pharisee. While Simon judged the woman, Jesus reminded him that he neglected societal ("religious" in the student book) customs. It should have been Simon anointing the feet of Jesus, not this woman; in that way, Simon fell short.

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: This passage encourages us to be more like this woman than Simon the Pharisee. We ought not to be afraid of worshipping God regardless of the context or setting in which we find ourselves. We ought to worship as much as we can and as often as we think about the things God has done. It did not matter to this woman that other people did not want her to be there or that others had opinions about her; the focus of her worship did not change.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: "The woman in this story showed love toward and faith in Jesus by using her expensive perfume as an offering to Jesus and anointing His feet. While others felt that her very presence was inappropriate, others still felt as though she was utterly wasting the expensive perfume, and that was inappropriate. All this woman wanted to do was worship the One she recognized as Lord, but some people around her were more concerned with her manner of worship than the meaning of her worship. Similarly, we can be judged for how we do something and never asked why we do what we do." Say, "This is a lesson that we should continue to heed in our churches today."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: One of the easiest ways that we tend to shame others is through judgment. Sometimes, we judge others based on what they wear or what they eat, how they look, or even where they come from. Simon the Pharisee judged and shamed this woman because she was said to have been known as a sinner. However, while that may have been true, the Bible reminds us that the same could be said of all of us. This week, your challenge is to resist the urge to judge someone simply because he or she may be different from you. In doing so, we all honor God.

It's Game Time! (Answer Key)

Pass out blank slips of paper to the students. After the game instructions are read and everyone understands them, allow time for the class to engage in the activity.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discussion the information.

April 28, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Bread Crumbs for
the Woman**

Unit II:
The Measure
of Faith

Lesson
9

Background Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28
Print Passage: Matthew 15:21-28

General Lesson:
**The Faith of a
Canaanite Woman**



Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment. (*Matthew 15:28*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards

LESSON OVERVIEW

There are systemic problems in society that unfairly restrict access to resources for some while privileging others. How do we overcome the prejudice and hatred that deny some people equal access to resources that protect a decent standard of living? The Canaanite woman understood that Israel's Messiah would one day bring God's reign to all people and, by faith, she pressed Jesus to extend that blessing to her even before He had completed His work among the people of Israel.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "When you hear the terms 'insider' and 'outsider,' what do you think about?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity related to this week's lesson.

Use the video (found at the given link below) to spark conversation around equal access to resources and how people start life in different places. The video follows the social experiment called the "privilege walk," where a random group of people can identify the various aspects of their lives (mainly outside of their control) that significantly impacted their ability to access resources. Say, "The Canaanite woman approached Jesus to gain access to a resource that was thought to be exclusive to another community. Likewise, even today, some communities are seeking resources that have been restricted and made inaccessible." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2hvibGdg4w>

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "In our story today, Janice is a student who has a scholarship to school and looks to her teacher in hopes of finding a way to pay for the school trip out of fear that her parents would not be able to afford it. To Zaire, whose parents pay for tuition, it looks like Janice is looking for a handout

from the school after being given a scholarship. This assumption completely overlooks the possibility that Janice’s parents may not be able to afford her to go to private school, and the only way she can go to school is if she earns scholarships. What do Zaire and Janice teach us about respecting others in our community and feeling entitled or better than others?”

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today’s Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

In this interaction, Jesus is recorded as ignoring the cry of a woman in need, calling her a dog, and even asking why He should help her in the first place. The Canaanites had a long-standing history of conflict with the children of Israel (see Judges 2:3) and the cities of Tyre and Sidon were predominantly Gentile. Therefore, Jesus was in a region uncommon to His people and had an encounter with a woman to whom He would otherwise not be talking. It would stand to reason that Jesus even went as far as to make such a distinction when He said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel” in response to this woman’s plea for her daughter’s healing. Here, Jesus answered this woman like a typical Jewish person would during this time, and even His employment of the term “dog” was customary in Jewish and Gentile relations during this time. However, this woman was persistent in her efforts and insistent that Jesus do something about her daughter. The text does not indicate how this woman knew who Jesus was to the degree that she would use His messianic title—“Son of David”—but, significantly, even Gentiles had become aware of the power of Jesus and who He is. This woman’s persistence persuaded Jesus and maybe even reminded Him of the Canaanite women in His family history (like Ruth and Rahab). What remains transparent at the end of this encounter is that God’s grace, power, and promise extend to Gentiles and Jewish people. Such a revelatory moment shifted and challenged the “insider

versus outsider” dynamic prevalent during this time. In the end, Jesus called her from the outside to the inside, putting aside social norms of division. This makes a fitting preface to the feeding of the five thousand in the subsequent verses.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today’s Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Matthew 15:21-28)

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22** A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.” **23** Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.” **24** He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” **25** The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said. **26** He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” **27** “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” **28** Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: “In our passage today, this woman calls Jesus the ‘Son of David’; in response, Jesus refers to this woman as a ‘dog.’ One of these titles represents a messianic or divine assignment; the other is a cultural slur. This suggests that this woman knew who Jesus was and, at the outset, Jesus could not seem to be bothered to know who she was. This is Jesus’ acting not at all how we often picture Jesus acting. However, Jesus did respond according to the cultural custom of His time. We often think of Jesus as a Christian, forgetting that Jesus was a devout Jew. As a result, He had also been exposed to the relationship between Jewish communities and Gentile communities, who often did not get along with one another. Likewise,

this woman would have known that hers and Jesus' communities were at odds. Yet, the desperation of her situation weighed more on her than customary communal strife."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Read aloud the following (which is also found in the student book) and offer time for the students to respond: This woman came to Jesus because her daughter was sick and could die. No amount of "in-group" versus "out-group" controversy was more important than her daughter's being healed. Her deep convictions changed the nature of the conversation and relationship between who God considers in or out. Even today, we often struggle with notions of inclusion versus exclusion and create boundaries of access around God which the Lord never set. For God, everyone is in; no one is excluded from the grace and mercy of God.

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: In this passage, Jesus provides a pathway to overcoming social division. This meaningful encounter with this woman went beyond customary strife, and this woman's daughter was ultimately healed. Like Jesus, we cannot pretend that social struggles do not exist; instead, we should rise above them for the common good. Although Gentiles were customarily referred to as dogs, Jesus was challenged by this woman to look beyond what was normalized and see her as a person and a mother before her race or ethnicity. We ought to do the same for others in our lives.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Living in a world full of inequity, division, and social ills, we must look to God to help us navigate such a world. We look to Jesus as the ultimate example of how we should live out our faith and treat others. In this passage, even Jesus had to wrestle with social issues of access. This woman's daughter needed what would have otherwise been reserved for another community. Similarly, we are encouraged to be mindful of the resources in overabundance in some places and short supply in others.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: In this passage, "bread" is used as a symbol for the gracious gifts of God. This woman used this symbol to challenge Jesus' language and cultural references to gain the gift of healing for her daughter. Likewise, we are challenged to go beyond the social differences that have been normalized and extend kindness to those who are different from us. Therefore, the challenge for this week is to talk to someone who would typically be outside of your group and call him or her in through meaningful conversations about something that you both care about.

It's Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the game instructions are read and the students are clear on the assignment, pass out paper and allow time for the students to write about the social issue of choice and why that was the one chosen.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: This lesson invites us to consider how we treat one another. Follow this link and listen to "People" by Jonathan McReynolds; identify how the song's message connects with this passage! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_8d-W_lorY

May 5, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Boasting or
Faith?**

Unit III:
Standing in
the Faith

Lesson
10

Background Scripture: Romans 3:21-30

Print Passage: Romans 3:21-30



There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:22b-24)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, printouts of the crossword puzzle (in case some students do not have it)

LESSON OVERVIEW

People want to secure their fate on the basis of hard work and a well-earned reputation. Do we all get what we deserve? Paul told the Roman believers that their boasting would be excluded in God's economy and that a person is justified by faith apart from works.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Have you ever been on a team and had a boastful teammate? How did that make you feel? How did it make others on the team feel?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

"Rock, Paper, Scissors" Tournament: For this activity, have the students engage in a "Rock, Paper, Scissors" tournament. Begin by pairing up the

students with one another; if you have an odd number, feel free to jump in and even it out! The winner of each pairing must find another winner from another pair; this continues until there is only one winner left!

After the tournament, facilitate conversations about how the students felt when they won or lost. Overlay those reflections into what the apostle Paul teaches about competitiveness and boasting in the passage.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "In our story for today, Jameson and Randall disobeyed the instructions they were given and, as a result, broke things that they could not afford to fix on their own. Yet, their mother forgave them for what they broke, though those items were significant to her. What does their mother teach us about forgiveness and helping others when they have made mistakes? What do Jameson and Randall teach us about making mistakes and apologizing? What do all three characters teach us about relationships and loving one another? How does this story also remind us of what God has done and offered to us?" Lead a brief class discussion.

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the church in Rome, was attempting to outline some of the critical tenets for those who believe in Jesus Christ. Much of the apostle Paul's ministry was centered on extending God's salvation, mercy, and grace to Gentile believers. Some apostles believed that only people of the Jewish community who accepted Christ were part of the kingdom and could be saved, but that those privileges could not be extended to others. Part of what Paul does in this letter is to write against such divisive understandings of Christ. Inclusive language of "all" can be found throughout this letter. The apostle Paul was writing mainly in this context about the relationship between those who follow Jesus and the Law as established in the Old Testament. Whereas believers were justified by their adherence to the Law, Christ came to extend grace and opportunity to be justified by faith. This also dispels a belief that some are more righteous than others based on their works or personal accomplishments. However, in this letter, what is clear is that the ground is level at the foot of the Cross, and the righteousness previously sought through a "works righteousness" ethic of believing has been replaced by justification through faith. The fundamental principle that the apostle Paul acknowledges in this text is that no one would be worthy if righteousness is measured based on strict adherence to the Law. Instead, through faith in Jesus Christ, we are all counted worthy in the sight of God. Does that mean that we completely throw out the Law and teachings of Moses in the Old Testament? Absolutely not! The apostle Paul articulates that the Law has value; it can teach us many things and help us live better. However, the distinction to be made is that our salvation does not hinge on it!

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's

Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 3:21-30)

21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25** God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— **26** he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. **27** Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. **28** For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. **29** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, **30** since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: The apostle Paul was writing to a mixed audience filled with people of Greek descent and those of Jewish descent. Paul specifically wrote to this mixed audience to resolve internal conflict in the church, posting that one group is better. During this time, some apostles did not believe that Gentiles were part of the kingdom of God. As a result, some did not even minister to Gentiles, seek to save Gentiles, or include them in any fashion. The apostle Paul became known as the Apostle to the Gentiles, writing and teaching a doctrine of oneness between the two groups and emphasizing the inclusiveness within the ministry of Jesus Christ. This division was also centered on the Law of Moses, to which many converts from Jewish communities were still extremely devout.

Since these converts were familiar with the Law and Gentile converts were not, some thought themselves to be better than the Gentiles.

Inside Out (*interpretation*)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Boasting concerning adherence to the Law even though Jesus Christ had already come is precisely the divide that Paul attempted to eliminate. In his letter to the Romans, Paul argues that being a Jewish convert does not make one any better than another, neither does being a Gentile convert. He would argue that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord rules over all and is willing to bless all who call upon Him (see Romans 10:12).

Remind your students that boasting about the good that they have done does not put them in a privileged position. We should resist the urge to do things to feel superior over someone else. If we do good, it ought to be because it is the right thing to do.

There's an App for That! (*application*)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: What Paul taught against is an easy temptation we should still be mindful of. God does not draw lines of distinction between someone who has been saved for a long time and someone who was just saved yesterday. God loves both, as should we! Likewise, Jesus came so that no one would be superior or inferior to another in the sight of God. It is faith, not anything that we have done, that connects all of us.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly

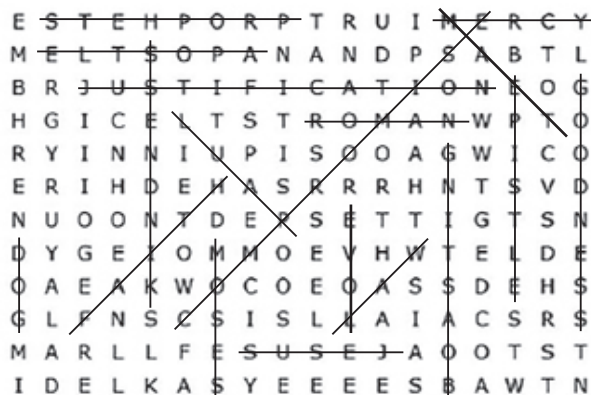
discuss it as a class: When we are good at something or win at something, it is natural to become excited and want to share that excitement with others. However, as we share our excitement, we ought to be mindful that such excitement does not become boasting nor is used to make us feel superior to others. Likewise, if someone else is better at something than us, it does not mean they are better than us. The gifts and talents that God gives to us are supposed to be used to make the world a better place, not cause division or complexes of inferiority.

Stepping Out! (*challenge*)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Part of Christ's mission on Earth was to include those who were excluded by others. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus was hanging out with, healing, eating with, or ministering to people who had been excluded. That is the kind of faith walk that the apostle Paul wanted the church in Rome to have and the kind of walk we all should have. Your challenge this week is to make someone feel included and to add someone to your team, friend group, or conversation.

It's Game Time! (*Answer Key*)



*(*Please note that the word "GOD" can be found in another place in the puzzle.)*

MEDIA MISSION (*after you meet!*)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discussion the information.

May 12, 2024

Youth Topic:

God Blessed Abraham

Unit III: Standing in the Faith

Lesson

11

Background Scripture: Romans 4

Print Passage: Romans 4:13-25

General Lesson:

Reckoned as Righteous



He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, sticky notes, index cards, a container (like a jar) for today's activity

LESSON OVERVIEW

People want to be rewarded for their good efforts. What successes do we hope to earn from our hard work? Paul told the Roman Christians that the blessing that God gave to Abraham was “reckoned to him as righteousness” and that, on account of Christ, God does the same for us.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? “What are some things that make it hard to have faith in God?”

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

As a class, watch the video clip “The Death Crawl” from the movie *Facing Giants* (found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fsaKwDPBTeM>). Afterwards, ask, “What does this video teach us

about having faith? What might this teach about how Jesus calls us to trust in Him and to follow Him?” (Hint: Jesus wants us to give our best to have faith not only in ourselves, but also in the way that He guides us and does not steer us wrong—just as the coach did not guide and steer his player wrong, and knew he could have more faith.)

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, “The puppy in our story today is kind of like us with God. The apostle Paul teaches in this passage how God could bless Abraham, but Abraham had to trust God. Similarly, Tatayana was only trying to feed and show care to her puppy, but her puppy had to trust Tatayana. Sometimes, our life experiences make it difficult to trust God or God's promises. Yet, like Abraham and like the puppy, we ought to be willing to believe what God has spoken, knowing that God only wants to give us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).”

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural

meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The apostle Paul spends a great deal of time in this text illuminating the faith of Abraham as an example for the emerging church of Rome. Some of the people in this church were of Jewish lineage and, therefore, would have had insights into who Abraham was and how integral he was to the faith. Other believers in the church did not come from Jewish religious traditions. They would have likely been unfamiliar with the story of Abraham and why he is considered the “father of faith.” Abraham’s story, beginning in Genesis 12, provides us with some principles of faith that should be considered. God’s call to Abraham required Abraham’s having a lot of trust in the power and promises that God was giving to him. This call required Abraham to leave everything he had ever known, including his family and home, and go to a place that God would show him. How difficult it must have been, especially at Abraham’s age, to leave all that was familiar and not have any clear idea where he was supposed to go. Further, the apostle Paul draws critical connections between Abraham’s faith and the faith necessary for first-century Christians. The apostle Paul uses strong language in describing Abraham’s body as being “as good as dead” due to his age and Sarah’s womb’s also being “dead,” since she was barren (verse 19). This “dead” language is intentional on the part of Paul in that he was connecting the depth of Abraham’s belief in God’s power over the dead with the church’s need to believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead. Therefore, the apostle Paul invited the church in Rome to follow Abraham’s lead in believing in the power that God has and, in doing so, receive the justification of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 4:13-25)

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir

of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **14** For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, **15** because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. **16** Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. **17** As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. **18** Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” **19** Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. **20** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” **23** The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Sometimes, the promises of God seem too good to be true, and it is hard to believe that God will do what He has promised us. That is precisely the feeling that Abraham had to navigate when God told him to leave his home but did not tell him where to go—or when God told him he would have a child, but he had already reached old age. The circumstances seemed impossible, and the promises seemed improbable. However, Abraham became the “father of faith” because he chose to believe God through what it looked like. The apostle Paul invited those in the church in Rome to have that kind of faith.

In drawing on a familiar person like Abraham, whom God blessed for his faith, Paul could encourage a church that may be filled with people struggling with faith or with little faith. The messages that the apostle Paul gave to the church in Rome are still relevant today. God is still blessing, and faith is the greatest tool that a believer possesses!

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: At the time that the apostle Paul was writing this letter, the people in the church in Rome were specifically having trouble believing in what the apostles had been teaching about Christ. In other words, they were having trouble with their faith. Therefore, to help them become stronger in their faith, the apostle Paul pointed to an example of great faith: Abraham. Abraham's story begins in Genesis 12, and there were a number of things he went through that caused him to need faith and to strengthen his faith. In skimming some of the verses that detail events from Abraham's life, can you identify some of the places where he needed great faith? Why might the apostle Paul have encouraged others to have this kind of faith?

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: One of the ways that our faith grows is when we can point to godly examples of figures in our own lives who have great faith. We are blessed to be surrounded by people who can guide us and help us when trying to grow stronger in our faith. When we have questions about God, it is good to have people who can teach us what we need to know and answer our questions. As a matter of fact, for faith to grow, we need to have these kinds of strong believers in our lives that we can emulate.

Ask your students, "When you have trouble understanding your faith or have trouble with your faith in general, to whom do you turn?" Discuss.

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "The foundation of this lesson is faith, but what does it mean to have faith? What does it mean for us to have faith like Abraham?" Pause for responses. Next, take this time to write the word FAITH on the board in giant print, then invite the students to call out what faith means to them. Then, add some of the things that the Bible says about faith. A critical lesson that the apostle Paul teaches in this passage is the relationship between our faith and our relationship with God. After the list is compiled, discuss how faith plays a role in our lives from day to day.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: This week's passage emphasizes how God blessed Abraham because of his faith. Consequently, we are challenged to have strong faith in God as Abraham did. Your challenge this week is to write down two prayer requests that you have. Every day, look at these prayers, pray about them, and cross them off your list when God answers them!

It's Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the activity instructions are read and the students are clear on the assignment, pass out sticky notes and allow time for the students to complete the activity. Meaningfully engage with some of the questions the students raise, inviting them to place as many questions in the container as time permits.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discuss the information.

May 19, 2024

Youth Topic: Unit III: Standing in the Faith

Christ Sets Us Right with God

Lesson 12

General Lesson: Reconciled to God

Background Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

Print Passage: Romans 5:1-11



Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards, at least one electronic device

LESSON OVERVIEW

There are many people who feel guilty if they are unable to overcome their weaknesses and failures. How can we remain strong and confident even when we encounter failure? In the letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul instills hope and assures us that we are justified, not by works, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What have you learned about the importance of Jesus? Who is He?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

In the lesson for the day, the apostle Paul teaches how we have been set right with God through Jesus.

As a class, watch the short video detailing why Jesus is necessary for our faith (found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_rzCrR4JJo). After the viewing, see if the students have any questions!

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask, "What does Travis's story teach us about forgiveness, grace, and justification?" Say, "Travis had broken his grandmother's expensive vase, which shattered into pieces. This was something that Travis could neither put back together nor replace on his own. While some people may have made Travis's mom pay for the vase, his grandmother forgave him and didn't ask for anything. With that forgiveness, Travis was spared from having to replace the vase and saved from the punishment he may have received from his mom! Like Travis's grandmother stepped in for him, Jesus stepped in between us and God, forever setting us right!"

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Justification is the biblical topic that the apostle Paul addresses in this portion of his letter to the church of Rome. The theme of justification has been laced throughout this letter, but in this portion, the apostle Paul goes into greater detail on what justification does on the believer's part. Once believers accept Jesus Christ, they receive the righteousness of God through faith, which brings forth this justification. This justification brings the believer into reconciliation with God; we are brought into the right relationship with God as we navigate the troubles, tribulations, and sufferings of our lives without being concerned that we would fall out of a reconciled relationship with God. Therefore, we can "glory in our sufferings" by knowing that God's love and power are working even the bad things together that we could gain from them. The apostle Paul further teaches us that there was nothing we could have done to place us in this right relationship. To reconcile humanity back to God, Jesus Christ had to come as the righteousness of God and die for the ungodly (verse 6). It may be easier to consider someone's taking a bullet for a good person, but Christ took one for all of us. For this reason, we can brag about God and take comfort in our relationship with God.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 5:1-11)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been

given to us. **6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **10** For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share the following: This passage covers the fullness of the Gospel message and the fundamental significance of Jesus Christ for our salvation. The apostle Paul wrote to help the people in the church in Rome navigate different religious convictions and practices that relied on the Law given by Moses. At the same time, it was not the apostle Paul's intention to convince the audience to do away with the Law but, instead, to emphasize the relationship between Jesus, the Law, and justification. The apostle Paul synthesized the Gospel message and encouraged the readers/listeners to have faith in Christ, who has already done the completed work that humanity was unable to do for itself. When he raises the question, "How much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him?" (see verse 10), it is indicative of the fact that we cannot add anything to what Christ has already done! The apostle Paul teaches that through Christ, we have been saved, given grace, and granted access to God, and we maintain the glory of God even when navigating difficult situations.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: In this passage, the apostle Paul encourages the people in the church in Rome to place their complete faith in Jesus instead of the Law of Moses. “What is the Law of Moses? Why is it so important for the people to whom Paul was writing?” While the Law does not give salvation, there is still importance within it. What might the importance of the Law be for those who have put their faith in Christ? The Law provided a standard for living, but only through Christ are we given reconciliation with God.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: The foundational truths of this text apply to us today, and the lessons that the apostle Paul was teaching those in Rome can still teach us today. One of the things that God does for us is to lend us help when we cannot do something on our own. The power of God in our lives can do things far beyond our capacities. In this passage, the apostle Paul details that Christ had to die for us to have the right relationship with God. However, that is not the only thing that God does for us. The Holy Spirit works in and through us every day!

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: The apostle Paul wrote that “suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame” (Romans 5:3-5a). We can “glory” in these things, but they seem like bad things to navigate on the surface. Don’t we have faith in God to escape the bad things? No. We put faith in God so

that God can guide us and bless us even amid difficult situations.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Part of the great message of this text is the encouraging news that we have been reconciled to God through Christ. Reconciliation is an integral part of our faith—and not just our relationship with God but our relationship with one another as well. To the best of our ability and when it is safe, we ought to be willing to reconcile with others when they do something wrong. Therefore, the challenge for this week is to reconcile with someone who has accidentally hurt or upset you. Walk out your faith, willing to extend some grace to others as God extends grace to us.

It’s Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the activity instructions in this section of the student book are read and the students are clear on the assignment, allow them time to complete the “Emoji Storytelling” activity.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: Jesus had to set us right with God because sometimes we easily fall into sin. Understanding sin and what it does to a person and his/her relationship with God is vital for our faith. It also helps us understand the importance of Christ and our salvation. Visit the link below; watch the short video giving an overview of sin and write down something you learn. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOZ7ocLD74>

May 26, 2024

Youth Topic: Unit III: Standing in the Faith

Confessing Our Faith

Lesson

13

Background Scripture: Romans 10:1-21

Print Passage: Romans 10:1-17

General Lesson:

Who Has Believed?



If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (*Romans 10:9*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards

LESSON OVERVIEW

People want to follow prescribed steps that allow them to climb a guaranteed ladder to success. How do we react when others are offered a path to success that seemingly bypasses the rules we’ve carefully followed? In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrestles with the insufficiency of the zeal for God that comes through the Law versus the new path to God that comes through having faith in Christ.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Where have you seen the beauty of God this week?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Say, “In today’s lesson, the apostle Paul gives us steps toward receiving salvation from God.” Ask your students to review the passage; then ask, “What are those steps?”

In reading verses 9-10 and discussing how we are saved, break down the verses into bullet points. What happens when we miss the correct methodology? Invite the students to pull into the conversation what they have learned in previous lessons about justification and the necessity of faith in Jesus.

WAKE UP! (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week’s contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week’s lesson.

After the story is read, say, “Today’s story shows how complicated our lives and friendships can be. John stole money from his best friend, Wesley, and used it for his gain. Instead of becoming angry with John, Wesley showed mercy after John confessed to taking the missing money—reminding John that if there was anything that he needed, all he had to do was ask. Our relationship with Christ is just like the one between John and Wesley. When we sin, we risk impacting our relationship with God. Yet, the apostle Paul reminds us that Christ is rich in mercy and will freely give it to all who ask.”

WORD UP (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome in this portion of his epistle in hopes that he would be able to guide them in their faith in Jesus and away from a dependence on the Law. There were believers in the church who, instead of accepting the righteousness given through Christ, set their own standards of righteousness, which hinged on the strictness of one's adherence to the Law. This establishment created a hierarchy within the church, suggesting that some believers were "more righteous" than others based on their merits and works. This dependence on the Law undermines all that Jesus accomplished in His life through the ultimate sacrifice on Calvary's mountain. Further, this hierarchical ethos, which set some believers over others, also undermined Jesus' emphasis on setting everyone on even and fair ground. Jesus' ministry emphasized the value of those whom some thought were less than others, and a hierarchy based on the Law within the church stands in opposition to all that Jesus taught. To that end, the apostle Paul reasserted that Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, the only pathway to righteousness, and without need of additive or supplement from the Law. Christ's work was already complete; therefore, additional measures given by church factions presented the grace that Christ gave as insufficient. This is a critical message that the contemporary church still needs to heed as we contend with "othering" people who look or live differently, or have need that is different from ours. As the apostle Paul wrote to Rome, so does God say to us: supplementing God's grace with our measures of righteousness is a rejection of the Gospel message. Ultimately, faith still comes by hearing the Word of God, and all other measures fall short.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 10:1-17)

1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. **2** For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. **3** Since they

did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. **4** Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. **5** Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." **6** But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) **7** "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8** But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: **9** If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. **11** As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." **12** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, **13** for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." **14** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **15** And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" **16** But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" **17** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

WORK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, discuss this: The apostle Paul was writing directly in spiritual opposition to those who lift the Law above the work that Christ did on the Cross. The critical element of this passage is to show Christ as the fulfillment of the Law and the only path to God. This is important because now, like then, many individuals have ideas about how to get to God without Christ. However, the apostle Paul reminds

the church in Rome that to hold themselves only to the Law rejects Christ, which also rejects God. While the Law can identify sin, only Christ's complete work can do something about it. Therefore, Jesus is the only one that a person needs to be saved, and it is through calling on, believing in, and hearing of Jesus that people are ultimately led to salvation.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: The apostle Paul warns about certain communities' resisting God's righteousness and going out to establish their righteousness (verse 3). Instead of following the path to what is right as God laid it out, these communities determined what they thought was right and wrong. Is that still something that we see today? Are people, influencers, or communities trying to make their standards for "goodness" instead of listening to what God has said? If they are, what might these messages sound like, and what might the apostle Paul say about them?

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: In today's passage, the apostle Paul states that "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (verse 17). This means that people can believe in God when they hear things about it. This message is still essential for us today—as one of the chief responsibilities of the people of God is to tell people about God. Therefore, we have preachers, teachers, and believers like you!

WALK OUT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, note some of the things that the students have mentioned. Draw comparisons among the responses given by the students. Are there things that are repeated or that resonate with many of the students in the class? After this exercise, provide ways for the students to navigate these dilemmas and stay on the path that God has set. Say, "Remember that it is okay to make mistakes and admit when you've done something wrong. Most importantly, when we make mistakes, we must get back on the right track!"

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following text (which is also found in the student book) and then briefly discuss it as a class: If faith comes by hearing the Word of God, then there is a way that we can help others find faith or grow in their faith. In telling others about what God has done for us, we provide opportunities for their faith in God to grow. Therefore, the challenge for this week is simple: Go and tell someone about three things that God has done for you or your family. Likewise, invite that person to tell you something that God has done for him or her after sharing!

It's Game Time! (Answer Key)

After the activity instructions in this section of the student book are read and the students are clear on the assignment, engage the class in the activity. **Instructions:** (1) Fashion your students into a circle. (2) Select one of the students to be the "guesser." (3) Have the "seeker" leave the room. (4) While the "seeker" is out of the room, select a "disciple" in the circle. (5) Instruct the "disciple" to perform a series of actions, with everyone else set to mimic the actions of the "disciple." (6) Once you select the "disciple," invite the "seeker" back into the room and into the middle of the circle. (7) The goal of the "seeker" is to figure out who the "disciple" is! (Play several rounds as time permits.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discuss the information.

High School

Teacher's Plans



March 3, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Yes! With God,
We Can**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson

1

Background Scripture: Jude
Print Passage: Jude 17-25

General Lesson:
Sustaining Our Faith



You, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (*Jude 20-21*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read Jude 17-25—considering why and to whom the letter was written, and what was happening at the time; (2) send your students a message, asking them, “What do you think about false teachers, and why do you need to know the truth for yourself?”

LESSON OVERVIEW

A “shortcut to success” may persuade some people to compromise their standards. How do people remain true to their values in the face of enticing trends? Jude writes to the community of faith, assuring them of God's promises: to keep us from falling and to make us stand without blemish in God's presence.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore the sources of unrest that Jude identified and how God is a source of strength.
2. Develop a sense of personal spiritual growth through relying on God's strength and promise.
3. Exercise personal faith in God by working to bring peace to places of unrest and challenge.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow through choosing what God requires.
2. Youth practice how to identify the conflicting values in society.
3. Youth grow in their understanding of practicing trust in God.
4. Youth discern strategies for faithful love.
5. Youth consider being agents of change.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? “How important do you think it is for religious teachers/teachers of religious matters to teach the truth and not false doctrines?”

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Ask the youth to use their phones to scroll through social media, paying attention to the ads that come up and/or the influencers they follow. Discuss how the media shapes their ideas about who they should be.

Brainstorm with the youth a list of individuals who stood up for change and what opposition/support emerged for their cause.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the contemporary story is read, invite the class to respond to and discuss the following questions: After hearing LeJuan's story, what can we learn about remembering to be faithful to our values? What might LeJuan's friends eventually decide to do? Do you think they will go through with their plans?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Jude provides a “litmus test” to enable believers to discern between false and faithful teachers: anyone whose words and/or lifestyle mimics the surrounding culture and who instigates division within the church should not be accepted as a faith model by believers. Review Jude 20-23—Those verses encourage believers to resist the immoral ways of false teachers and, instead, to “contend for the faith” (v. 3): building their lives on the foundation of the gospel, praying in the spirit, relying on God's love, looking forward to Christ's mercy and eternal life, offering mercy toward others, and rescuing others from the fire. Such living sets apart the faithful from those who are false.

Strange teachings were traveling through some of the churches. Christian imposters had begun assuming roles of leadership in the churches. They were teaching that it did not matter how people lived if they genuinely had been saved by grace. They were teaching that sin meant nothing to those who had been forgiven of sin.

Jude was concerned that slippery teachers of false doctrine might draw Christians away from the truth. He wrote this letter to urge believers to contend for the faith.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Jude 17-25)

17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. **18** They said to you, “In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.” **19** These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. **20** But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, **21** keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. **22** Be merciful to those who doubt; **23** save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh. **24** To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— **25** to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Even though the book of Jude is a brief book, don't miss its powerful impact. Watch out for the warnings that are presented in it—and look for God's tremendous promises that accompany those warnings.

Say, “What Jude encourages us to do is to remember the warnings that Jesus' apostles gave them about people who would come causing problems of division within the church. In addition to this warning, Jude flashes a light of scrutiny on the importance of “remembering” in our faith walks. We must remember the lessons we learn as we navigate life at home, at school, and in any other places we may be. As we study the Bible in Sunday school and listen

to sermons in church services, we are given tools that we can use daily to combat the onslaught of the false teachings that come our way. We must remember those tools so that we can be all that God has created us to be!"

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, have the students respond to the following questions (on a separate sheet of paper or using a notepad app on their cell phones): (1) Who was Jude? (*Jesus' half-brother*); (2) Why did Jude write this letter? (*To urge the Christians to remain faithful to the truth of the Gospel that they had received*); (3) Who was spreading false doctrine? (*Imposters who were pretending to be true teachers of the Word of God*)

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "In Jude 23, some of the believers in the church were on the verge of falling away and giving in to the false teachings to which they had been exposed. How relevant is that concern today? Do you think that there are false teachers in our churches today? How is it possible to be able to identify false teachers? Are there false denominations in our world today? How do we tell which denominations are true and which are false? Is sin a real thing? What makes something a sin? Is sin preached about much in this day and time?" Lead a class discussion.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "As we navigate through life, we will encounter lessons that will challenge us. We will face decisions that we must make regarding right and wrong issues. When we are faced with participating in something that goes against the values we have been taught, what should be our response? The lessons in Jude 17-25 will come in handy as you grow into adulthood. Those lessons will help you navigate those situations that call for firm convictions. At some point in your life (perhaps in college), you will encounter teachers that are atheists who will try to persuade you to discard your beliefs and accept their teaching that there is no God. Be strong and stand firm on the values you have been taught."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Jude reminds his readers that what is happening and will happen in their churches with respect to false teachers is to be anticipated. So, when it happens, don't let it 'sink your ship.' How does this warning fit into our twenty-first-century world? Are there false teachers we need to be aware of even now? In fact, there are a few things that you can do in preparation for when you meet such false teachers. Write down your responses to the following questions: (1) What do you believe about God? (2) Are you certain that you are a Christian? (3) What makes you so sure that you are a Christian? (4) What should you do if someone questions your Christianity? (5) What plans have you made to share your faith with others?" Allow time for the students to respond and for a class discussion.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Refer to the link below to get more information about the book of Jude. Make a note of something that you learned in the video that may have yet to be discussed in class. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UoCmakZmys>

March 10, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Discovering Our
Deepest Values**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson
2

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-11

Print Passage: 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

General Lesson:

Testing Our Faith



Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Corinthians 13:5b)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Background Scripture; (2) write down what you notice to be some of the challenges that Christians face in trying to live up to their Christian faith and principles.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Everyone has principles that they are challenged to uphold. How and where do we find the courage to live authentically, keeping true to our ideals? Paul challenges believers to examine themselves as they rely on the power of Christ in keeping the faith imparted to them.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Discuss challenges to living up to Christian faith and principles.
2. Internalize the desire to live as authentic representatives of the Christian faith.
3. Engage in self-examination about the aspects of their lives that are not consistent with the principles of the Christian faith—then pray and repent of their sin.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow through soul-searching.
2. Youth increase in spiritual maturity as they examine their faith.
3. Youth realize how life is connected with Christian values.

4. Youth discern ways to find a connection between faith and life.
5. Youth adopt self-check strategies.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students; check in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? “(Are you willing to live an authentic Christian life?)”

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Pose the following questions for discussion:

1. What distinguishes true believers from false believers?
2. What are some of the characteristics of false believers?
3. Is it possible to tell a true believer simply by looking at the person? If so, how? If not, why not?

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask and discussion the following questions: "Did LeJuan's friends come to their senses? Did LeJuan's challenge statement have the anticipated impact on his friends? What does it say about LeJuan's friends that they changed their plans? What would have happened if LeJuan's friends had not changed their plans?"

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

When Paul says in verse 5, "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves," he is not saying that the test of one's certainty of being a Christian comes from an individual test. The assurance of salvation comes first and foremost through the Word of God. The moment that we trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is the moment when we can know on the authority of the Bible that we have been born again.

When Paul uses the language of "tests" and "approval," he points toward examining and proving a claim, much like a lawyer analyzes, tests, and demonstrates his or her case beyond all reasonable doubt.

Paul teaches us that for our faith to withstand the "tests" and be "approved," the knowledge we gain about God must be reflected in how we live. However, sometimes it is not as easy as it sounds to embody all the principles that God has outlined in His Word—but it is always worth it. As Paul told the church in Corinth that there would come a time when he revisited them and judged those who had lived sinful lives, so shall God one day return to judge all of us.

Faith in Scripture is not about a theoretical

acknowledgment—it is about a lifestyle of obedience (see 2 Corinthians 13:7) that comes from trusting God fully both for the present and for the future.

Second Corinthians 13:5 is a rhetorical question, phrased in a way that shows that Paul expects an affirmative answer: he was confident that if the Corinthians examined themselves, they would, of course—obviously!—find Christ present within them, just as Christ was in Paul.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(2 Corinthians 13:5-11)

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? **6** And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. **7** Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. **8** For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. **9** We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. **10** This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. **11** Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Paul raised a very important question that is found within this passage. That question is this: What distinguishes true believers from false believers? That question sums up this entire lesson. The Corinthians must undergo internal tests, which

cannot be standardized to evaluate others. Each one must inspect his or her own heart to see what motivates personal behavior. No one else can evaluate the results. How are the results evaluated? Those who discover that they are motivated by Jesus Christ's living within are true believers. Those who find that they are motivated by selfish desires are false believers.

"Each Christian must inspect his or her own heart to see what motivates his or her personal behavior. No one else can evaluate the results. Just think, you cannot look at a person and determine whether or not that person is a Christian. The test is in the observance of that person's behavior. The Bible is clear when it states about Christians that 'by their fruit, you will know them.'"

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the class to respond to and discuss the questions posed therein.

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

Ask, "Have you heard of 'pop tests'? Those are tests that a teacher may spring on a class without warning. 'Life pop tests' often consist of challenges from family and friends, and even strangers. Are you prepared?" Then, after the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for discussion of the information.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, say, "One of the important issues

Paul dealt with in the passage of Scripture assigned to this lesson is that of exercising leadership. Even as a youth, you do exercise leadership to some extent. We should note Paul's comment about his authority (seen in verse 10). Paul felt frustrated when people rejected his lead, as the Corinthians had. This led him to deal severely with them. However, he matured in how he exercised authority as he grew up in the faith; he did not use his position as an excuse to let his anger fly. The same should be true of us."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): The lesson today focuses on the issues of authenticity and accountability. How authentic are you? How authentic are those you call your friends? Real Christians are genuine in their relationships. They do not live lives characterized by deceitfulness. In this lesson, Paul raises the issue of tests in connection with the matter of authenticity. Tests are designed to reveal what a person does and does not know, and the content of his or her character. This week, you are challenged to self-examine to find out where you need to improve in authenticity.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): This week, you are challenged to learn more about the importance of accountability and how, if done correctly, it can lead to success. Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyxhKt94Ebg> to watch a TEDx Talk from Janyssa Berrios, who tells her story of how accountability has helped her.

March 17, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Do Not
Fear!**

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson
3

Background Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Print Passage: 1 Peter 3:8-17

General Lesson:
Defending Our Faith



Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? (1 Peter 3:13)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Scripture text; (2) be prepared to lead the class in playing “WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?),” to discuss how Jesus would react to situations that arise in today’s world, as well as to then play “WWYD (What Would You Do?).”

LESSON OVERVIEW

Adhering to dominant norms is a safe and convenient way to live. How do we voice objections to these norms without inviting conflict? In 1 Peter, Christians are encouraged to defend their faith through righteous and humble actions even at the risk of suffering.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Understand how Christians are to react to suffering and challenges to their faith.
2. Internalize the meaning of personal righteousness and humility, which are central to our faith in Christ.
3. Pray and defend the Christian faith, even when suffering with Christ.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth commit to their calling of staying in faith.
2. Youth understand that staying in faith might bring about suffering.
3. Youth name their fears of suffering.
4. Youth grow in their trust of Jesus.
5. Youth practice staying Christ-centered.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Do you think that enduring suffering is a normal part of being a Christian?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Provide your students with sheets of paper that have on them the theme “A Typical Day in the Life of Youth.” Invite them to write down the challenges and choices they typically face.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week’s contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week’s lesson.

After the story is read, say, “LeJuan’s friends agreed that their plans for after the prom were not in line with their upbringing. Though they may have seen themselves as ‘grown’ now, they still felt that they should not forget the values instilled in them. How did LeJuan’s friends’ decision show LeJuan that he needed not to fear because the Lord was with him?” Pause for discussion.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today’s Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Peter encouraged the believers in his day (and ours) to do good and carry out what can be called “lifestyle evangelism.” That is sharing the Good News about Jesus Christ as we go through life day by day. Peter expands that teaching by pointing out that we are to do good and exercise lifestyle evangelism even when suffering is possible. Peter also points out that by doing good and being righteous we will avoid much of the suffering in the world. He reminds us of this fact in the Key Verse: “Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?” There are other biblical passages that also teach us this lesson. For example, the message of Proverbs is to do good and make good decisions and it will go well with you in life. The apostle Paul taught in Romans 13 to do good and we will have nothing to fear from the government and human authorities. However, we know that this is not an absolute rule, and Peter acknowledges this. We can suffer for the sake of righteousness. So, we are instructed to live good lives, reflecting God’s glory, so that people will glorify God and so that we will have good, joyful lives. But even if we do suffer for doing good, Peter reminds us that we must not be troubled by that. We must not let suffering for the sake of Christ cause us to stop. We must continue to honor Jesus as holy and teach others about the hope we have despite our suffering.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today’s Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(1 Peter 3:8-17)

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. **10** For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. **11** They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” **13** Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always 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, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **17** For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Peter has taught us something deep and important. Whenever we experience suffering is not the time to avoid the world, but to engage the world. We may not be able to fix our suffering. Most of the time we cannot fix or change our suffering. But we can use our suffering for the glory of God. We can make our suffering purposeful. Peter tells us that this is an opportunity to defend the hope we have. Will we use our suffering for selfishness? We need to make our suffering purposeful. You are suffering. You cannot change that. Your suffering

is what it is. But will you honor Christ as holy during your suffering? Will you give a defense of what you believe and show your faith during your suffering? This is true lifestyle evangelism to the world. All right, so they may see you go to church every Sunday—so what!

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Pass out a sheet of paper to each student. After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, say, “When we have joy when we ought to be sad, the world is going to look at us and wonder why we have not utterly collapsed. Suffering is the opportunity for us to honor Jesus as holy in our hearts. For the questions I am about to ask you, respond to them on your sheet of paper or using a notepad app in your cell phone.” Ask and discuss the following questions: (1) What kind of suffering do you think is common for young people to experience? (2) When you do suffer, is it because of something you have done or something that someone has done to you? (3) What should we expect as a result of our suffering?

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Being a Christian during good times does not teach the world much of anything. But if we continue our righteousness and service to Jesus in the face of devastating suffering, we then have opened doors for the world to consider this Jesus.”

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “While doing the right thing usually draws praise from others (verse 13), sometimes the godly thing to do draws criticism or negative consequences (verse 14): remembering that it is God who is our absolute priority (verse 15; see also Isaiah 8:12-13) helps strengthen our resolve.”

By reading and reflecting on the text, discuss with the class if fear and suffering are related.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “God’s desire for His children is for their good (Romans 8:28), yet in this fallen world, sometimes faithful believers suffer. Peter reminds us to trust God’s greater plan and to live faithfully so it isn’t our own sin that brings suffering (3:17). This week, identify how you should respond to undeserved suffering. What should be your response?”

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a website, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Visit the link to hear from Alex, who gives us helpful tips about mental health and wellness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWs-AswW398>.

NOTES

March 24, 2024

Youth Topic:

Stephen, the Spirit-full Hero!

Unit I: Faith-FULL versus Faith-LESS

Lesson

4

Background Scripture: Acts 6

Print Passage: Acts 6:7-15

General Lesson:

Living in Faith



They could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke. (*Acts 6:10*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Background Scripture; (2) create a list showing Stephen's positive characteristics; and (3) be prepared to use the following question to guide the discussion: What role did the Holy Spirit play in Stephen's life and witness?

LESSON OVERVIEW

People who are falsely accused and persecuted often feel that the whole world is against them. What sustains us in the face of injustice and persecution? The testimony of Stephen encourages us to be obedient to the faith inspired by the grace, power, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore how Stephen endured while being falsely accused and persecuted for living a life of faith.
2. Be spiritually attentive to how the Holy Spirit provides believers with grace, power, and wisdom from God.
3. Express gratitude that, as Christians, we have God present with us during times of suffering and persecution.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth practice relating the Bible with their own experience.
2. Youth grow in their understanding of the biblical text.

3. Youth feel affirmed as their struggles are acknowledged.
4. Youth trust the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.
5. Youth practice expressing gratitude.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What do you think are the characteristics of a hero?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Make a list of the strengths and weaknesses of Stephen. Ask the students to explain their choice to label some as "strengths" and others as "weaknesses."

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, reiterate this to the students: "Due to the fast work of LeJuan and his three friends, four lives were saved. LeJuan told his friends, 'Thank God we came around the curve when we did to save those people.'" Ask, "In what way were LeJuan, C. J., Josh, and Amari Spirit-full heroes?" Discuss.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Acts 6 teaches us that problems large or small can be solved by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. We must view every problem as an opportunity not only to solve the problem at hand but to expand our ministry by opening more doors of opportunity and windows of ideas. We should be inspired by the leadership of the Holy Spirit in the early church and know that the same Spirit guides our body of believers today. The source of inspiration, solutions, resources, and ideas that equipped the first-century church equips us today.

The prelude to today's lesson involved a dispute that erupted between Stephen and members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (probably a congregation made up of former slaves). Stephen had apparently insisted that true worship no longer required temple rites and rituals. These former slaves, finally back in their ancestral home, did not take kindly to the threats against traditional Judaism. They distorted Stephen's words to make them sound like a direct attack on the Law and God. These former slaves conspired to lie about Stephen in an effort to stir up the people and members of the local synagogue. Their conspiracy resulted in Stephen's being taken into custody, brought before the council of the synagogue, and charged with blasphemy.

During this inquisition, false witnesses were set up. After their false testimony, the high priest asked Stephen if these things were true. Instead of disputing the accuracy of their charges, he took the opportunity before the large numbers of people there to share the Gospel of salvation, beginning all the way back with the calling of Abraham out of idolatry. Verse 15 of the biblical text states that as Stephen presented his defense, "they saw that his face was like the face of an angel."

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Acts 6:7-15)

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. **10** But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." **12** So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. **13** They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. **14** For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." **15** All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Stephen was one of the deacons commissioned to address the physical needs of the vulnerable in the church (see Acts 6:1-6) and thus held a position of leadership and influence. His skill in teaching and debate shamed educated, honored synagogue members; so, to regain their reputation, these men tried to destroy Stephen's credibility (shame him). They brought false charges against him.

Say, "We are living in a period in history in which people are prone to believe lies and conspiracy theories. What can Christians do to focus on the need for truth telling in all areas of societal life?" Discuss.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text and questions in this section of the student book are read and the class has responded to them, say, "Let's look at Stephen's resume: (1) Stephen demonstrated that he was well versed in God's Word and could argue its truth with the wisdom that only the Holy Spirit could provide (see Acts 6:9-10); (2) Stephen did not back down when confronted by those who disagreed with the truth of God's Word (see Acts 6:11-15)." Ask, "What does Stephen's résumé tell us? We must recognize that no matter how gifted we are, how kind we are, how smart we are, or how committed we are to doing what is right, it does not mean that people will always like us. In fact, those characteristics may be the cause of some people's hating us. God has put value in us and wants us to live out His purposes in our lives."

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Stephen was a great man of faith who seemed to have come from nowhere—but because of his testimony, he was chosen by the members in the early church to take on the role of a deacon. He used his role to minister personally in ways not only that helped the apostles, but also was directly responsible for the growth in the church. Stephen also used his popularity to reach a broader base of people with the message of salvation. Stephen relied upon the Holy Spirit to give him the words to say, the

strength to persevere under persecution, and the heart to forgive those who were responsible for his death. Stephen's story shows us that no matter how insignificant we may think our role is, we can use it to reach others for Christ and endure the persecution that is sure to follow."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Stephen truly suffered for doing good, yet God encouraged him and strengthened his resolve by giving Stephen a powerful, more profound experience of God as well as a glimpse of the spiritual reality that Stephen (by faith) had defended. Stephen's experience reminds us that when God's Spirit is powerful in acting through His people, sometimes the immediate result is not immediate agreement but, rather, fierce opposition (see Acts 6:10-12). This should not discourage us but rather drive us even more solidly to Christ, trusting God to do amazing things through our obedience in opposition."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, have the students create a list of what it means to be a person of character. Name people from the Bible who demonstrated the traits you listed.

Say, "Examine the long-term results of Stephen's faithful witness, including the possible influence his testimony had on those who persecuted him. What enabled Stephen to remain faithful when some opposed him? What might have been the connection between Stephen's service in "distributing food" and his testimony to Christ? How did Stephen's suffering affect Saul (Paul)?"

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, review and discuss the information.

March 31, 2024

Youth Topic:

Faith to Grow beyond Our Fears

Unit I: Faith-FULL
versus Faith-LESS

Lesson

5

General Lesson:

The Resurrection:
Key to Faith

Background Scripture: Mark 16

Print Passage: Mark 16:1-8



"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him." (Mark 16:6)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Background Scripture; (2) be prepared to discuss the following questions: Did the women who went to the tomb expect to find the tomb empty? Why would they go expecting to anoint/embalm the body of Jesus? Did they not remember Jesus' promise about rising from the dead?

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people face feelings of dread and apprehension as they navigate life's uncertainties and tragedies. Where can we find a source of hope that can calm our fears and allay our apprehensions? The women who came to the tomb did not let their grief hinder them, and their faithfulness was rewarded with the Good News of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore the feelings of discouragement and fear that the women at the tomb experienced.
2. Experience awe at the power of the resurrected Christ that brings hope and strength.
3. Overcome feelings of discouragement to live as authentic people of faith.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow spiritually as they are empowered to live for Christ.
2. Youth practice showing hope in response to fear.
3. Youth grow through experiences that confirm the truth of the Resurrection in their own lives.

4. Youth gain agency in situations of hopelessness.
5. Youth practice having faith when they seek courage from God.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What makes today special for Christians?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Have the students name someone with whom they can share the story of Jesus' salvation. As a class, pray for each person named, then have the students make a card for them. Check in with the students next week and see how their conversations went.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, have the students turn to a classmate and share one thing that they learned from the lesson about Jesus' resurrection. Then, as a class, brainstorm about how the world would be different without Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The writer of the gospel of Mark now brings us to the early dawn hours on the first day of the week to the tomb where Jesus was buried. The Sabbath had passed and Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices to anoint the body of Jesus.

The writer reminds us of the importance of time; he writes, "Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb" (verse 2). The literal reading of the Greek text would be to translate it as a present-tense event: "they come." In Greek, this is known as the historic present tense with its purpose to draw us (as the readers or hearers) into the present time of the story. We, too, become witnesses, even participants with the women, in the action of coming to the tomb.

On their way, the women discussed the difficulty of removing the stone covering the entrance of the tomb (verse 3). However, when they arrived at the tomb, here is what happened: "When they looked up, they saw (Greek: *they see*) that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled away" (verse 4). Look at the details also drawing us into the tomb: "As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed (Greek: *startled or awe-stricken*)" (verse 5).

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Mark 16:1-8)

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. **2** Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb **3** and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" **4** But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. **5** As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. **6** "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. **7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" **8** Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "With the events that we have witnessed at the tomb, we have been drawn into this drama in the early dawn hours of a new day. With the women, we have come to the tomb and the discovery of the large stone having been rolled away. The message of the young man in white (the angel) is addressed to us. We, too, have received the commission to 'go and tell.' Finally, we understand the response of the women fleeing from the tomb—for terror (Greek: *trembling, fear*) and amazement (Greek: *extasis* [literally, ecstatic or ecstasy]) had seized them; 'and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (verse 8b)."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “The witness of the empty tomb is a message to be proclaimed: ‘But go, tell’ (verse 7a). The two imperative verbs convey an ongoing action and immediacy to the commission. The audience is the disciples, with Peter singled out as a spokesperson in the gospel of Mark. Jesus was already going on ahead of them to the place of His early ministry in Galilee: ‘There you will see him, just as he told you’ (verse 7b).”

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “When the women came to the tomb, there was no sign of anyone, and the door of the tomb was open. That told them that something amazing had happened. At this point, they did not know what it was, but they understood that something remarkable had occurred—for the stone was already rolled away, and the tomb was open. Here is an important observation: the tomb was left open—not to let Jesus out but to let His followers in to see that His body was not there. Jesus could have simply walked through the stone at the mouth of the tomb, but He wanted it opened to let His followers know that He had risen!”

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, have the students make any comments they may have. Ask, as a personal reflection, “How do you respond to the empty tomb?” Pause for discussion. Say, “When the women went into the tomb, the body of Jesus was gone! That which they had come to anoint was no longer there. This empty tomb has been the answer to all the arguments of skeptics for twenty centuries. No one has even been able to explain it. What does the empty tomb mean to us today? It is the affirmation that Jesus rose from the dead. The grave clothes in which He had been wrapped were still there. He simply rose out of the grave clothes and robed Himself in the majesty that belongs only to Him.”

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Try to get ‘inside’ the minds of Peter, James, John, Mary, and the others after Jesus’ death and before His resurrection. What were they feeling: fear, disappointment, grief, anger?” Ask the youth to describe a situation in which they experienced these same feelings. What would be their feelings now that they know Jesus has risen from the dead? Discuss.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Follow the given link to watch an animated retelling of our lesson today: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQZyfunKkNc>.

NOTES

April 7, 2024

Youth Topic:

Unit II: The Measure of Faith

Our Faith Can Heal Others

Lesson

6

Background Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

Print Passage: Luke 5:17-26

General Lesson:

The Faith of Four Friends



When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." (*Luke 5:20*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read the Scripture text; (2) create a "these are my sins" list, be prepared to have each student to write down his/her "sins," and be prepared to conduct a ceremony where they will tear up the list (symbolizing God's forgiveness).

LESSON OVERVIEW

People need a support system when trying to overcome life's obstacles. How can our friendships lend strength and support to others who are in crisis? Jesus celebrated the faith and tenacity of the four men who helped their friend find healing and wholeness.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Identify friends, like those of the man who was paralyzed, that provide strength and support through the difficulties in life.
2. Experience a sense of gratitude for supportive friends and family.
3. Express thanksgiving to God for faithful friends and family who give us support in life and throughout our spiritual journey.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth aspire to possess the same qualities that they look for in friends.
2. Youth grow in their commitment to being good friends to others.
3. Youth become more aware of the importance of faith in friendship.
4. Youth grow in their appreciation for having caring friends.
5. Youth find ways to express gratitude for friends and family.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Who is capable of forgiving a person's sins?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Invite your students to fill out the "My Sins" list, then have a brief ceremony to have them tear up their lists. As they tear up their lists, have the students repeat this statement after you: "Lord, thank You for forgiving me of all my sins. Amen."

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, ask, "What can LeJuan, C. J., Josh, and Amari's actions teach us about how people's actions can be healing?" Pause for discussion.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

When we think of Jesus' healing someone, we usually think that the person being healed must be the one who has faith in order to receive the healing. That makes sense, doesn't it? However, when we take a close look at the details of this story, and other stories in the biblical record, we discover that many times the faith came from other sources apart from the person being healed.

In today's lesson, we have such an event. It is clear that there is little evidence that the paralytic man was the one who exercised faith. All three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) include this event and point us to the fact that the crippled man's friends were the ones who had faith. Verse 20 in the lesson text reads, "When Jesus saw *their* faith . . ." The "they" that the writer Luke is referring to is this man's friends, who had just carried the man up to the roof, removed ceiling tiles, and lowered the crippled man down to Jesus because there was no way to get the man through the crowd.

It may be true that Jesus focused His message on the subject of forgiveness; however, we must not dismiss the faith that these four men had that Jesus could—and would—heal their friend. Had the friends not had any faith, or if their faith wasn't strong enough to have made them persistent in their mission, the crippled man would have finished his life as a cripple, and we would have missed learning the key lesson that Jesus wanted to teach that day—the lesson of forgiveness and His role in the process.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 5:17-26)

17 One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. **18** Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. **19** When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. **20** When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." **21** The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" **22** Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? **23** Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? **24** But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." **25** Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. **26** Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: The story of the man with paralysis and his friends is part of a series that the gospel writer Luke presents to demonstrate Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-2 (see Luke 4:16-21) in both the physical and spiritual realms: healing both physical and spiritual brokenness. It is important to recognize that faith is not just an individual attribute but is a corporate action: it was the friends' faith that moved Jesus to help the paralytic man. Observe that Jesus connected forgiveness with healing. Jesus knew the entire contents of this paralytic man's résumé and knew that his primary need was forgiveness.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): The topic of today's lesson is "Our Faith Can Heal Others." This may seem, on the surface, to be a strange topic. However, consider what happened during this encounter with Jesus. Verse 20 gives us insight into why this topic makes sense. Verse 20 reads, "When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'" That verse emphasizes "their faith." Whom does the use of "their" indicate? "Their" refers to the friends who deposited the paralyzed man in front of Jesus. The faith of this man's friends became the impetus for his healing. This text showcases how good friends can turn our lives around. The passage also encourages us to reflect on the kinds of friends we are and the kinds of friends we have. Are you a friend like these four friends were?

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Although Jesus does not here publicly claim His divine identity, actions like forgiving sins (verses 20-21) clearly communicated that faith and forgiveness belong to Him just as they do to His Father.

"The result of faithful and godly actions (which the friends of this paralytic man displayed), whether individual or corporate, is to honor God as the focus of that faith. As in this story, our faithful actions today should encourage those around us to look to God (and not to us!). We are simply the instruments that God can use to bring others to Him. He is the One who does the forgiving and healing."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: There are two lessons that connect us to this text. The first lesson from this incident is that our deepest need is forgiveness. Undoubtedly, something in the paralytic's situation dictated Jesus' method of dealing with him. Perhaps his sickness had been brought on by a life of degeneracy, and possibly his conscience was punishing him so that while his friends sought his healing, he himself was more in need of forgiveness. It is very unlikely that Jesus would have offered forgiveness unless He had known that it was what was needed in that instance. The second lesson from this incident is that Jesus Christ's claim to forgive sins is either blasphemy or a clear picture of divinity on His part. The connecting element for us today is the assurance that Jesus knows what we need, and He has the power to fulfill that need.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Pass out a sheet of paper to each student. After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, have the students create a T-chart on their paper. They are to label one side "GLOWS," which identifies areas of their lives that they do well. The opposite side is to be labeled "GROWS," which identifies areas of their lives with which they need Jesus' help. Say, "Identify an accountability partner in your class to share with via phone or e-mail in the middle of the week. As partners, you will pray and encourage each other with this project to track progress."

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): God is our ultimate friend! Refer to the link below to learn about God's loyal love toward us! This video defines God's friendship toward us and highlights biblical examples where we can find it! **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfbyFLgs_NM**

April 14, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Words of
Healing**

Unit II: The Measure
of Faith

Lesson
7

Background Scripture: Luke 7:1-10
Print Passage: Luke 7:1-10

General Lesson:
The Faith of a Centurion



“That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.” (*Luke 7:7*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, read and study the Scripture text
- Prior to class, be prepared to creatively dramatize the events in Luke 7:1-10—using contemporary language and modern dilemmas.

LESSON OVERVIEW

There are times when the enormity of our problems diminishes our capacity to move forward. How should or do we respond to seemingly impossible problems? When a centurion whose servant was close to death responded in great faith, Jesus was amazed and miraculously restored the man to full health.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Create an extended version of the dialogue between Jesus and the centurion that helps them identify with Jesus’ compassion.
2. Admit their need for a compassionate God.
3. Extend Christlike compassion toward someone who is in a difficult circumstance.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow in their understanding of biblical context.
2. Youth acknowledge their need for help.
3. Youth overcome their hesitation in requesting help.
4. Youth grow in their trust in God.
5. Youth consider how to extend compassion to others.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Have you ever been the recipient of healing words—where someone said something to you that ‘just made your day’?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Provide different translations of today’s Scripture passage. Divide the class into small groups of three or four and have the groups study the geographical and historical context. Ask, “Who was the centurion? Why was he there? Who would he represent in today’s context?” Allow time for the groups to engage in the activity and then to present their work to the class.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, invite your students to respond to the following questions: How would you feel if someone surprised you with a sizeable check for doing a good deed? What about when people of a different ethnicity apologize for the behavior of their race's past acts and actions?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

As this story progresses, we are struck by the concern shown by this centurion for his servant. Such concern would seem strange when we consider the reputation that Roman army officers had acquired in Israel. They did not have positive reviews concerning their reputation. The centurion identified in Luke's gospel is one of three featured in the New Testament who gave evidence of genuine faith.

We are also struck by the degree of respect this centurion had in the Jewish community that Jewish elders would be willing to bring his cause to Jesus. Apparently, he loved the Jewish nation and was somehow personally responsible for building the local synagogue (the Jews' place of worship).

Additionally, there are two other interesting insights that claim our attention: (1) the fact that these Jewish elders would come to Jesus on behalf of this centurion; apparently, they must have believed in Jesus' ability to heal; (2) the unworthiness expressed by this centurion in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He obviously was being drawn to Jesus by God Himself; however, he used intermediaries to state his case.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 7:1-10)

1 When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. **2** There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. **3** The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. **4** When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, **5** because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." **6** So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. **7** That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. **8** For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." **9** When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." **10** Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: The central theme of this lesson is the words of healing spoken by Jesus in response to the request by the Roman centurion for the healing of his servant. The servant's desperate situation surely prompted the centurion's request, but his history of honoring God and God's people (verse 5) and the limitless trust he placed in Jesus (verses 6-8) demonstrated a sincere faith so alive that it directed even the way he thought and acted.

Say, "We must also recognize that while Jesus certainly encountered faith within Israel, the centurion's faith was unique in its humility and recognition that Jesus' authority comes directly from God and thus is absolute."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, raise the following questions for class discussion: (1) What was the position of a centurion in the Roman army? (2) Why was the faith of this centurion so amazing to Jesus? (3) Are there any other instances of Jesus' doing "long-distance healing"? (Note: As the teacher, you may need to research this.)

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "In his dialogue with Jesus through intermediaries, the centurion pointed out that he knew something about authority and responsibility. He mentioned that he was under the authority of the Roman government as an officer in the Roman army, and he had responsibility for others under his command. So, he could relate to Jesus' having authority to merely speak and things happen (although, of course, not on the same level). And so, inviting Jesus just to say the word (of healing) reinforced his appreciation of authority and responsibility."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow the students to make any comments that they may have. Then, ask (as a personal reflection) the following question: How does your faith drive your actions—in school, at home, and at church? Say,

"This story recorded by Luke depicts the essential link between action and faith: it is clear that the centurion's faith drove his actions, resulting in his actions demonstrating his faith (7:4-8)." Say, "Today, purpose your heart to be willing to give words of healing to others as you go through life. Walk in the truth of God. Always be real, no matter what."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): In today's lesson, Jesus demonstrated the healing power of His words. How does this lesson impact us? As Christians, we all have God living and working on the inside of us through the Holy Spirit! Therefore, our words can make someone's day better or worse, depending on what we say. In fact, the writer of Proverbs (in chapter 18, verse 21) writes, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (KJV). The tongue can be used as a weapon to harm and destroy or as a tool to build and heal. The question for us is, what kind of impact do your words have? Your challenge this week is to use your words to make someone's day better and show the love of God to someone who may need it!

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Compassion is a central tenet of our faith and is what Jesus showed to the centurion's servant in the Bible passage for today. Refer to the link to learn more about biblical compassion and its importance to our faith: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJEtyAiAQik>.

NOTES

April 21, 2024

Expressing Love and Faith

Youth Topic: Unit II: The Measure of Faith

Lesson

8

Background Scripture: Luke 7:36-50

Print Passage: Luke 7:36-39, 44-50

General Lesson:
**The Faith of a Woman
Who Loved Jesus**



"I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." (Luke 7:47)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, pens, pencils, index cards, paper, coloring pencils
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Background Scripture; (2) write the word LOVE on the board or a poster; (3) be prepared to have your students write how love should be demonstrated.

LESSON OVERVIEW

The humiliation of our public failures can make it difficult for a fresh start. How do we overcome the weight of judgment and scrutiny from those who refuse to see past our mistakes? Luke teaches about a woman whose great faith helped her rise above the rejection of others so that she might express her gratitude for Jesus' love and forgiveness.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Discuss how one may experience forgiveness of sins and restoration by the mercy of God.
2. Accept God's gift of forgiveness and deliverance from shame.
3. Express gratitude to God by forgiving and loving others.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow in their understanding of their need for forgiveness.
2. Youth learn to seek forgiveness from others.
3. Youth trust God's forgiveness.
4. Youth practice expressing gratitude for being forgiven.
5. Youth grow to depend on God's love even when they are hurt or wronged by others.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Is LOVE a noun or a verb?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Write the name of each person who appears in the biblical story on a slip of paper and randomly give out the slips of paper to your students. Then, invite them to discuss the encounter from that character's viewpoint.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, have the students respond to the following questions: (1) In what way did LeJuan show his love to and appreciation for his parents? (2) Why did his parents respond the way they did? (3) What do we mean when we say that love is an action word?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

What Jesus Christ asserts in this narrative is that the grace and mercy of God can fall on anyone and is available to everyone. The Bible describes a woman who came to Jesus with a box of expensive perfume while He was at a dinner party. She intended to anoint Jesus with the oil, wetting His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. This interaction was an offering from the woman to Jesus; she lay herself at His feet and sacrificed her perfume (which she could have sold for a lot of money) to anoint Him. Even though people were judging her and Simon, the Pharisee who invited Jesus over for dinner thought it inappropriate for Jesus to allow this woman to do what she was doing because of her sinful history—yet the drama did take place. However, Jesus used this as a teaching moment to show that we all have a less-than-perfect past and are always welcome in the presence of Jesus. Also, Jesus reversed the feelings of shame and judgment away from the woman and back onto Simon. According to their custom, Simon should have been the one anointing Jesus when He arrived, but he did not. Instead, this woman did, and for that, she received mercy and the forgiveness of her sin. This serves as word of caution for all of us who are tempted to judge others based on their appearance or things they have done in the past. Jesus says that in those moments, we should reflect on ourselves and ensure that we are doing what is right in the eyes of God.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Luke 7:36-39, 44-50)

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. **37** A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. **38** As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. **39** When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

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44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. **45** You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. **46** You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. **47** Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little." **48** Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." **49** The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" **50** Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "The woman showed her love with humility, and Jesus forgave her sins—but the onlookers judged both of them. How would you react to this situation? How would you change this encounter?" Discuss.

Have the students anonymously write down bad choices they have made on a slip of paper. Have them wad up that paper, then have everyone throw their papers in the middle of the room. Read them aloud one by one, then all say together, "Jesus forgives you, go and sin no more."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, pose (and have the students respond to) the following questions: (1) Was the woman mentioned in the lesson invited to the dinner? (2) How did Jesus react to the woman's actions? (3) What was the response of Simon the host to this woman's actions? (4) How did Jesus "put Simon in his place"? (5) What could have been the motivation as to why Simon did not perform the usual courtesy to Jesus as a guest in his house?

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask your students to describe incidents where they forgave someone and/or asked to be forgiven. Discuss which is harder—forgiving or asking for forgiveness.

Next, provide paper and coloring pencils for your students to express in color or words an experience they have had with God's forgiveness. Invite the youth to share their gratitude for being forgiven. Ask, "How would this motivate you to forgive others?"

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "In this story of the 'sinner' who interrupts the dinner party and wipes Jesus' feet with her tears and pours perfume on His feet, there is a small detail that is overlooked by many students of the Bible. That small detail is seen in the following verse: 'When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself' That statement is noteworthy because of Jesus' response to it. Simon said something "to himself" regarding Jesus. Simon faced a choice regarding Jesus: he had to decide between two opposing views

of Jesus' identity: either Jesus is a prophet, or He isn't. His questioning that reality demonstrates that Simon lacked love, hospitality, and true discernment. Additionally, he clearly did not want to dialogue with Jesus; he simply '[thought] to himself.' What is remarkable is that Jesus knew what Simon was thinking to himself. This implies that Jesus has the divine power to know what a person is thinking."

Emphasize to your students the revelation that Jesus knows what we are thinking.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, discuss how Jesus had grace not only for the woman but also for those who were judging her. He forgives everyone who asks.

Say, "Crossing the social boundaries was taboo, particularly for one who was dishonored; the courage shown by the woman must have been driven by deep conviction." Have the students consider the following prayers as they relate to the idea of being forgiven:

1. *Dear Lord, please help me always believe in who You truly are—a Savior willing to forgive even the most terrible actions; please help me to do likewise.*
2. *Dear Lord, please lead me to identify persons whom I may need to forgive and to be willing to do so immediately.*
3. *Dear Lord, please give me the strength with my total being to trust You to forgive me for any wrong that I have done.*

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Shame and honor are laced throughout this passage and much of the Bible in the Old and New Testaments. Visit the link to learn more about the cultural significance of shame and honor during the time of Jesus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE77r3VKUXo>.

April 28, 2024

Youth Topic: Bread Crumbs for the Woman

Unit II: The Measure
of Faith

Lesson 9

General Lesson:
The Faith of a
Canaanite Woman

Background Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28
Print Passage: Matthew 15:21-28



Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment. (*Matthew 15:28*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Scripture text; (2) be prepared to ask your students to analyze Jesus’ awareness of the social divisions present in this encounter, how the societal norms impacted Jesus’ actions, and what social barriers might Jesus cross if He were to visit their hometown.

LESSON OVERVIEW

There are systemic problems in society that unfairly restrict access to resources for some while privileging others. How do we overcome the prejudice and hatred that denies some people equal access to resources that protect a decent standard of living? The Canaanite woman understood that Israel’s Messiah would one day bring God’s reign to all people and, by faith, pressed Jesus to extend that blessing to her even before He had completed His work among the people of Israel.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Understand the relationship between the Canaanites and the Jews in Jesus’ time.
2. Deepen awareness of their own biases.
3. Create a plan for community outreach to those who are experiencing injustice.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow in their knowledge of the Bible.
2. Youth practice critical study of the biblical text.
3. Youth trust that God’s love and compassion bridge all social divides.
4. Youth find ways to become God’s agents of compassion and reconciliation.

5. Youth extend their spiritual learning to include community outreach actions.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “What request would you like to make of God?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

The Canaanite woman had great faith and great perseverance. Plan a prayer time where your students can share situations in their lives for which they need faith and perseverance.

Discuss what it means for them to have faith to believe that God can answer their prayers.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, have the students respond to the following questions: (1) Why was it important for the school to recognize the actions of LeJuan and his friends? (2) How did their request of the principal go over with their schoolmates? (3) In what ways can you show yourself to be unselfish toward your schoolmates? Pause for discussion.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

As background to the events of today's story, Jesus left the Jewish territory and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Matthew 15:21-28 contains the story about a Canaanite woman who approached Jesus and begged for help for her daughter, who was demon-possessed. Jesus initially ignored her but later said that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel; He finally compared her to a dog that should not take the children's bread. However, the woman persisted, saying that even dogs eat the crumbs falling from their master's table. Jesus then commended her for her great faith and granted her request.

This story is significant because it shows that Jesus' ministry was not limited to the Jews but extended to the Gentiles as well. It also shows that faith in Jesus is not limited by race or ethnicity.

Jesus extended His mercy and grace to a Gentile woman who had faith in Him. The passage follows Jesus' teaching on what defiles a person, which is not external rituals but internal evil.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's

Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Matthew 15:21-28)

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22** A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." **23** Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." **24** He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." **25** The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. **26** He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." **27** "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." **28** Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "When we take a close look at this story, we need to understand that Jesus was not forcing this woman to beg for His healing. Scholars suggest that He wanted to probe the depth of her faith in the God of Israel. Or, He may have had an interest in teaching His disciples about the universal responsive love of God when He responded to the woman's persistence. It is also suggested that when Jesus used the word *dogs*, commonly used by Jews to refer to Gentiles, He may have been using sarcasm—His way to make the point that demeaning others is not a desire within the heart of God."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, pose (and have the students respond to) the

following questions and statement: (1) In what ways can people practice relating to others (who are on the outskirts of society) without prejudice? (2) How can youth grow in their willingness to see beyond social distinctions to the lordship of Christ over all people? (3) In what way(s) can youth practice sharing the Good News without regard for the artificial distinctions enforced by society? (4) Why is it important to trust in God’s unlimited power and love to help all people? (5) Discuss why Jesus never understood His mission, or that of His followers, as being solely to a single group.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to keep a distance from the Canaanites and other foreign peoples because of their worship of false gods (see Leviticus 18:3). Whenever the Israelites disobeyed and conformed to these cultures, they were severely disciplined by God (Psalm 106:34-43). At the time of this story, devout Jews would stay as far away as possible from Canaanites (Gentiles) and would certainly not expect God to show any mercy or compassion on them. However, Jesus showed that there is a wide expanse of God’s mercy.”

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

(Prior to class, prepare a brief background on the region [Tyre, Sidon, Canaan] and the reasons for

antagonism between these two peoples [Jews and Canaanites/Gentiles].) After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask if the youth can name regions with a similar history today.

As a class, identify the prejudices that exist among various social groups in the world today. Who are the people most likely to be rejected by the ruling majority? What is most unfair about such rejection?

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the challenge is extended, ask your students to analyze Jesus’ awareness of the social divisions present in this encounter. Ask, “How did the societal norms impact Jesus’ actions? What social barriers might Jesus cross if He were to visit your hometown?”

List some of the things that youth can do to bridge the gap between different ethnic groups and the political divide that is present in our country.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): This lesson invites us to consider how we treat one another. Visit the given link and listen to “People” by Jonathan McReynolds: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_8d-W_lorY. Identify how the song’s message connects with this lesson.

NOTES

May 5, 2024

Youth Topic:

Boasting or Faith?

Unit III: Standing in the Faith

Lesson

10

Background Scripture: Romans 3:21-30

Print Passage: Romans 3:21-30

General Lesson:

Justified by Faith in Jesus



There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (*Romans 3:22b-24*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Scripture text; (2) plan to create a courtroom scene where the students can act as judge, lawyer, defendant, etc.—acting out a scenario where the judge pardons the perpetrator of wrong. Connect this to what God does for us through Jesus.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Often, people want to secure their fate on the basis of hard work and a well-earned reputation. Do we all get what we deserve? Paul told the Roman believers that their boasting would be excluded in God's economy and that a person is justified by faith apart from works.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explain why personal accomplishments have no value in God's economy.
2. Appreciate that we are not justified by works but by our faith in Christ.
3. Engage in active prayer and devotion to God to demonstrate our gratitude for being forgiven.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth grow in their faith through their spiritual practices.
2. Youth explore misplaced values of competitive culture.
3. Youth value the nature of a God who is not influenced by selfish boasting.
4. Youth learn that God loves them regardless of their accomplishments (or lack thereof).
5. Youth grow in their appreciation of God's unconditional love.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "How do you express faith in God?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Ask your students to list any of our achievements that have any value for God. Point out that our achievements do not make us any more or less acceptable to God. Discuss what Paul says about boasting and being competitive. How are we justified?

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: Amari thought that he could ace the exam without spending time studying; why is it important not to become arrogant and boastful? How did Amari's friends respond when he admitted that he was wrong to miss the study sessions?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

The contents of Paul's letter to the Roman church is divided into a tightly organized argument about the nature of the sinful human condition and the way God's plan of redemption in Jesus Christ addresses that problem. Additionally, it focuses on the specific relationship of Israel to God's universal plan of redemption, and provides instructions about how to live in light of this Good News that God has given.

The Gospel is available to all and provides the details on receiving Jesus Christ by faith. Salvation is not just for a particular group. The Holy Spirit is not given or available for a specific group.

The way in which God freely and graciously justifies any sinner, Jew or Gentile—as testified to in the Law and the Prophets—is not by works of the Law but by faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice. His sacrifice demonstrates God's justice in dealing with sin and, at the same time, excludes all human boasting.

Have you ever felt like you did not measure up to something or someone? The good news is that with Jesus—because of His death on the Cross and resurrection from the borrowed tomb—you are good enough to be saved. Your past is forgiven, your personality does not matter, and your nationality is welcomed . . . but most of all, YOU are wanted by Jesus to be called His own. We simply need to exercise faith in what Jesus did on the Cross.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 3:21-30)

21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **22** This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. **25** God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— **26** he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. **27** Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. **28** For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. **29** Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, **30** since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share the following bullet points as a basis for discussion:

- God is righteous.
- God's righteousness is demonstrated separately from the Law.
- Both the Law and the Prophets bore witness to the righteousness of God.
- Faith in Jesus Christ reveals the righteousness of God.
- There is no difference between people. We are all sinners.

- Everyone has sinned.
- Everyone falls short of the glory of God.
- A person is justified by God’s grace.
- Justification is a gift.
- The gift of justification is received by faith.
- The gift of justification is through redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
- Redemption is in Christ Jesus.

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, pose (and have the students respond to) the following questions: (1) What does it mean to have faith in Jesus Christ? (2) What thoughts and feelings do we have when we think of God as righteous? (3) What does it mean to be Christian? (4) How do we come to believe in Jesus?

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “We are justified through faith. God wants to have a relationship with us and will be there through all of our failures. What does it look like to develop this relationship?” Discuss.

Encourage the youth to work in small groups to brainstorm and commit to spiritual practices such as prayer, devotion, or meditation.

Conclude this portion of the lesson by reminding the students that there is no competitiveness required in this practice, but only faith in Jesus and trust in God’s love.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read

aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, discuss the extracurricular activities in which the youth are involved. Ask them how “competition” impacts interaction with their opponents and teammates. How does this competitiveness make them feel? How do they perceive themselves through their involvement with this group?

Discuss what Paul would say about the competitive culture in which we live. What would Paul say about our choice of a competitive lifestyle? Would Paul encourage spiritual competitiveness?

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read, pose the following questions/statements to the students: (1) As a class, let us discuss our responsibility in response to the righteousness of God. How can we help others focus on the difference that divine forgiveness can make in ourselves? in our communities? (2) Identify ways that we live as people justified and redeemed by God. Brainstorm ways to boast while inviting faith and trust in a God who offers grace and redemption.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song that relates to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): This week, your “Media Mission” activity is to search the Internet to find one short video emphasizing showing kindness to others. Please share what you have learned with others. Be sure to also watch a video that someone else has suggested.

NOTES

May 12, 2024

Youth Topic: Unit III: Standing in the Faith

God Blessed Abraham

Lesson 11

Background Scripture: Romans 4

Print Passage: Romans 4:13-25

General Lesson:

Reckoned as Righteous



He did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:20-21)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, poster boards, colored paper
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Background Scripture; (2) display the word FAITH on the board; (3) be prepared to use the FAITH acronym (found below) in a brief teaching moment (for the “REFLECT” section).
- F = For
A = All
I = I
T = Trust
H = Him

LESSON OVERVIEW

People want to be rewarded for their good efforts. What successes do we hope to earn from our hard work? Paul told the Roman Christians that the blessing God gave to Abraham was “reckoned to him as righteousness” and that, on account of Christ, God does the same for us.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore how Abraham did (and did not) model righteous faith.
2. Desire to grow in faith and receive strength from God.
3. Celebrate Jesus’ gift of justification with praise and thanksgiving.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth gain insight on the strengths and weaknesses of their faith heroes.
2. Youth connect their faith struggles with those of Abraham’s.

3. Youth are assured of God’s promise of justification.
4. Youth learn how to grow in faithfulness despite daily challenges.
5. Youth practice praise and thanksgiving.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Will I exercise faith in God and His promises to me?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Make a list of as many of God's promises as you can find in Scripture. Create bookmarks that the youth can take home with some promises that they want to remember when times are hard. Say, "Spend time in prayer, affirming that God keeps His promises and asking for faith and hope to do what He says."

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "In the story, Josh told his friends, 'Well, it looks like we all have been blessed throughout our high school journey, especially this week of finals. Praise God!'" Invite the students to respond to the following: God is always there when we need Him. Ask, "What experiences have you had that provided that same assurance to you?"

Refer to the acronym for FAITH: **F**or **A**ll **I** **T**rust **H**im. Ask your students what the word FAITH and its acronym mean to them personally.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Romans 4:13-25 is part of a larger section in the book of Romans (see 3:21–4:25) that emphasizes that God has done something for us that we cannot do for ourselves. The passage explains that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world not through Law but through the righteousness that comes by faith. The passage also emphasizes that faith has value, while Law brings wrath.

Chapter 4 continues what has been said in 3:21-31, in which Paul (1) sets forth the Gospel of justification by faith apart from works of the Law, and (2) maintains that, since that is so, no one can boast about being able to obtain justification by works of the Law, and that applies to both Jewish and Gentile believers. Then, in chapter 4 itself, Paul takes up the story of

Abraham as proof that justification is by faith, not works. After all, he says, the great patriarch Abraham was justified by faith, not by observing works of the Law. He was justified while he was technically still a Gentile, since he was declared justified (see Genesis 15:6) prior to being circumcised (see Genesis 17:10-27). Moreover, the Law of Moses was not given until many years (centuries, in fact) after Abraham was declared righteous, so he could not have been justified by doing works of the Law.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 4:13-25)

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **14** For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, **15** because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression. **16** Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. **17** As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not. **18** Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **19** Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. **20** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." **23** The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Paul was writing to a mixed Jew-Gentile church in Rome and, thus, he had to address the question of what defines God’s people, particularly since Jews had been identifying themselves as God’s people by adherence to the Law of Moses and in using outward identifiers (such as diet, dress, lifestyle) for centuries. The point of Paul’s argument is that Gentiles (and Jews) do not need to submit to a checklist of diet, dress, or calendar to be or show themselves to be God’s people; even God’s true people descended from Abraham. Their lived-out faith in God in a broken world is enough of a sign and difference.”

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, have the class focus on the Key Verse. As the story of Abraham and the verses preceding the Key Verse make clear, it was a challenge to believe God’s promise to him.

Invite your students to respond to the following questions: (1) How do you explain Abraham’s faith? (2) Do you think Abraham’s faith was always strong, or did he have cold feet sometimes?

Share with the students what happened when Abraham got “cold feet.”

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the youth to define the word *faith*. Invite them to brainstorm and then write their ideas on a poster board. Try to conclude this portion of the lesson by coming to a definition based on Paul’s teaching in this passage.

Invite the youth to identify challenges they experience that test their faith.

Ask, “Is it easy to always have strong faith? How can we be strong? How would God reward our faith?”

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, mention that Abraham was not sin-free, but he trusted God to do what God had said. Ask, “How complete is our trust in God? What can we do to show that we believe in God’s promise to us in Christ?”

Discuss the role of Sarah in the fulfillment of God’s promises. In what way is her trust in God separate from Abraham’s faith? How did her responses demonstrate that her faith was not always mature? Ask, “Is our faith always mature?” Discuss.

Encourage the participants to write a paragraph or short poem about the righteousness of God that was manifested in Abraham or in someone whom they know.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the challenge is extended, invite the youth to choose their favorite “psalm of praise” and read it. Next, provide poster boards and colored paper on which they may include the psalm they chose and for them to decorate. They may take home their board as a reminder to celebrate and praise God for answering prayers.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): This week’s lesson is about faith and how to strengthen it. Refer to the following link and watch the short clip describing what it means to have biblical faith in God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4X1OjnBzj0>.

May 19, 2024

Youth Topic:

Unit III: Standing in the Faith

Christ Sets Us Right with God

Lesson 12

Background Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

Print Passage: Romans 5:1-11

General Lesson:

Reconciled to God



Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:1)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Scripture text; (2) write the words *justified* and *peace* (from the passage) on the board or on a poster; define the words (refer to Romans 5:1), come up with some sentences that use the words in them to help the students understand, and be prepared to explain that this peace isn't just a feeling; it's saying that because of Jesus, we are on good terms with God and become God's children.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people feel guilty if they are unable to overcome their weaknesses and failures. How can we remain strong and confident even when we encounter failure? In the letter to the Christians in Rome, Paul instills hope and assures us that we are justified—not by works, but by faith in Jesus Christ.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Discuss why Paul could remain confident in God when facing weaknesses, challenges, and failures.
2. Experience a sense of hope, assurance, and peace because of our faith in Christ.
3. Share innovative and creative ways that one can demonstrate confidence in God during times of temptation.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth can relate to those who are suffering.
2. Youth acknowledge their own challenges.
3. Youth learn how to find peace.
4. Youth grow in faith as they learn about the relationship between suffering, character building, and hope.

5. Youth find hope in God's love, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and faith in Christ.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Do you think you are right with God? Do you know what it means to be right with God?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week's lesson.

Invite your students to work together to define *peace*, *hope*, and *assurance*. Ask them to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a difference between "peace on earth" and "peace with God"?

2. How does this peace happen?
3. How have the students experienced peace with God?

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "LeJuan remembered how the four of them joined the youth choir and even served as junior ushers on the Sundays when they did not sing. They were made right with God, who had guided them on their journey since then." Then have the students respond to the following questions: (1) What experiences can you reflect on that have significantly impacted your life? (2) Have you ever encouraged your friends, who may not be Christians, to visit your church? (3) What does it mean to be made right with God? (4) What are some of the means through which God guides us?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Romans 5:1-11 describes the benefits of being declared righteous before God by faith in Christ's death for our sins. The passage weaves together themes of faith, love, hope, and glory, threading them through the story of the Christ event, the past work of God on our behalf, our current standing as God's beloved children, and the future that God holds in trust for us. The passage also reminds us that our suffering brings growth, which leads to even more potent hope.

This passage of Scripture also talks about the peace and hope that come from faith in Jesus Christ. It is part of a letter written by Paul to the church in Rome. The passage begins by saying that we have been justified by faith and have peace with God through Jesus Christ. It goes on to say that we can rejoice in our sufferings because they produce perseverance,

character, and hope. The passage also talks about how God demonstrated His love for us by sending Jesus to die for us while we were still sinners.

As you live this Christian life, remember that the Christian walk is not a destination but a process. Once we receive Christ, we have a new nature in Christ. It does not automatically mean that we will have perfect thoughts, attitudes, habits, and ways, yet if we keep listening to God, we will continually change. As you continue to grow in Christ, let God's Word be your guide, not other people's opinions.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 5:1-11)

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. **6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **10** For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “The faith that Paul talks about in this lesson is not just a conceptual acknowledgment but, rather, both a confident trust in our limitless God as well as a recognition that we are ourselves so very limited: it is a trust that submits to God as Creator, Lord, and Redeemer.”

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, provide the students with sheets of paper and then invite them to name some of the characteristics of a good friend. After they have written down their characteristics, mention the following as characteristics/qualities: (1) loyal; (2) kind; (3) trustworthy; (4) faithful; (5) dependable.

Discuss the verses about a person’s being willing to die for his or her friend. Use this to talk about Jesus and how He died for His friends and for us.

There’s an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students’ lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “‘Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame’ (5:3b-5a). Break down this sequence. How does one lead to the next? Is ‘not being disappointed’ a sure thing in the Christian life? Why or why not?” Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the youth to name persons of faith from previous lessons in the quarter. (Examples: Stephen; Abraham; the Canaanite woman; the centurion.)

Ask, “What about each of these stories indicates that these believers had peace with God through Jesus?”

Then ask the students to name people in contemporary society whom they believe are persons of faith. What are the characteristics that caused them to name those people?

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the challenge has been extended, ask your students to list people for whom they would be willing to die. (Lists may be short!) Ask, “Who would be willing to die for someone they consider to be ‘bad’ or ‘evil’? Why was Jesus willing to die for the sake of sinners (“bad” people)?” Invite your students to reflect on the current political climate; ask if there are any political candidates for whom they would be willing to die.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): Jesus had to set us right with God because sometimes we easily fall into sin. Understanding sin and what it does to a person and his or her relationship with God is vital for our faith. It also helps us understand the importance of Christ and our salvation. Visit the following link to watch this short video giving an overview of sin, and write down something you learned: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOZ7ocLD74>.

May 26, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Confessing
Our Faith**

Unit III: Standing in
the Faith

Lesson
13

General Lesson:
Who Has Believed?

Background Scripture: Romans 10:1-21

Print Passage: Romans 10:1-17



If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (*Romans 10:9*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens, pencils, index cards
- Prior to class, (1) read and study the Background Scripture; (2) be prepared to invite your students to think of why youth tend to more easily tolerate diversity than did previous generations.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people want to follow prescribed steps that allow them to climb a guaranteed ladder to success. How do we react when others are offered a path to success that seemingly bypasses the rules we’ve carefully followed? In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrestles with the insufficiency of the zeal for God that comes through the Law versus the new path to God that comes through faith in Christ.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Contrast the righteousness achieved by following the Law with the righteousness offered through having faith in Jesus.
2. Appreciate God’s gracious gift of salvation available to all humankind.
3. Commit to share your faith in Jesus as the pathway to God and salvation.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth can distinguish between actions that give glory to God and those that do not.
2. Youth possess an awareness of the glory of God in their growth.

3. Youth may seek to spread the Good News of God’s glory among their peers.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing the lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been.

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “What does it mean to confess Christ?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

Get your students moving and thinking by using the following illustration, a game, or an activity that relates to this week’s lesson.

Divide the class into groups of three to four. Make sure that at least one youth has a cell phone and is permitted to take photos. Each group should walk out and take five photos of “God’s gracious gift of salvation.” These could be of objects, colors, shapes, or any creative composition. After they come back, they have to share with you those photos. Project

these photos on the screen and let the youth share why they took that particular photo.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

Have a few students read this week's contemporary story aloud; then, as a class, connect it to this week's lesson.

After the story is read, say, "LeJuan's and his friends' parents felt the following sentiment: 'Our children have made us proud, and we can truly say that our faith in God has enabled us to bring our children to this point in their lives.' Many of you have completed high school this month; what have you done to make your parents proud? What can you do in the future to continue to make them proud? (*Pause for discussion.*) As you face the years ahead, remember that God loves you so much and wants you to succeed in life and pursue your dreams."

INSPECT (10 minutes)

Thoroughly pray for wisdom concerning the scriptural meaning for and delivery of the Word to the class. Make sure that you have Bibles or copies of the Printed Text(s).

Back Up! (background)

Here is some background for today's Scripture(s) that should be referred to throughout the teaching of this lesson—to set the stage for the passage(s).

Romans 10 is the tenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. It is authored by Paul the apostle while he was in Corinth in the mid-50s AD, with the help of an *amanuensis* (secretary), Tertius, who adds his own greeting in Romans 16:22. Paul continues his discussion of Israel's rejection of God's purpose which he had started in chapter 9: despite his "anguish over Israel" it remained his "heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites that they may be saved."

Romans 10:1-17 is a part of chapter 10 that talks about the righteousness of God and how it is extended as grace to humanity. The apostle Paul expressed his desire for the salvation of the Jews and how they had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. He also talks about how everyone sins and can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Everyone faithful is reckoned as righteous on the

grounds of that faith. The chapter also talks about how there is no distinction between Jew and Greek—for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture. However, you may consider studying another one or two translations in preparation for leading.

(Romans 10:1-17)

1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. **2** For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. **3** Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. **4** Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. **5** Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them." **6** But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) **7** "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). **8** But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: **9** If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. **11** As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." **12** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, **13** for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." **14** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? **15** And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" **16** But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" **17** Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in the student book read aloud; examine the intersections of the passage(s): the subject; how it was heard at the time; and how it applies now.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Following the Law brings righteousness, for the Law is God's standard. But our actions are not up to God's standard and cannot address the sins committed against God (verse 5; see verse 3) and thus cannot lead to restoration to God through salvation.

Say, "Paul's heart was in the right place. His heart's desire and prayers offered on Israel's behalf dwelled on her salvation. While Israel failed in regard to salvation, Paul had not failed in his hopes and prayers for their salvation. His persistence in desiring and praying for Israel's salvation was well-founded; God will someday bring this to pass. Israel's disobedience and failure were temporary. Paul's love and his desire for restoration were like God's for these people. Paul reaffirmed his hope for Israel based on God's character and purposes."

Inside Out (interpretation)

Have the text in the student book read aloud—working on the passage(s) from the inside out. Allow time for the students to raise their own questions about the Scripture.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Paul's quotation of Deuteronomy 30:14 in verses 6-8 of the lesson text is meant to remind us that Christ has already completed His ministry of our reconciliation with the Father (from His incarnation to His resurrection), and all that is left to do is trust Him for a process that He has already completed."

Challenge your students to practice engaging in open confession of their faith in Christ. What next steps is God calling them to take? Then provide a prayer that the group can pray aloud together.

There's an App for That! (application)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then, demonstrate how the Word of God is relevant and applicable to the students' lives.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Receiving the incredible gift of salvation should not make us narrow-minded but, rather, even more aware of the rest of the world that is suffering without Jesus: sincere faith has not only confession

as its natural action but also sharing the limitless, boundary-less gift with everyone. Our being reconciled to God should make us more concerned about those who are not reconciled to Him."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read aloud; then help the students think about how the Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Since we have been reconciled with God, we must have a selfless attitude instead of a selfish attitude. Being a Christian should never be about how this can benefit me but how I can help others. Your conduct and character should always glorify God wherever you go and with whomever you are around. While others may make selfish decisions, always make a point to seek God in all decisions so it can be a blessing to others."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

The students are to read and accept the challenge for the week. Emphasize to them that they can achieve it!

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the challenge has been extended, focus your students' attention on the Key Verse and the verses that follow it through verse 13. Discuss the relationship between the heart and the mouth, belief and confession. Ask, "How do we practice this as we exercise our faith?"

Your students' challenge this week and for the years ahead is as follows: Challenge them to commit to sharing their faith with others. As an extension of the challenge, encourage them to write down three things that they will commit to doing during the first semester when many of them are in college this fall.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

Finally, leave your students with a media mission. Ask them to find their own example of a Web site, video, or song related to this lesson.

Have a volunteer read the following (which is also found in the student book): For your "Media Mission" this week, search the Internet for images, using the word *faith*. Select pictures that remind you of faith. Be sure to share with others the images you chose and why.

Announcing!

VBS
2024!



Hebrews 11:1-2

GOD'S SUPERHEROES

Adventures in Faith!

Motto: Faith Is My Superpower!

This summer, **God's Superheroes** will lead us on **Adventures in Faith!** We will be encouraged to look within ourselves and find inner strength to believe and to endure whatever comes our way. When we believe, we see that God's promises are true for everyone.

So, let's activate our faith and enjoy the adventure!

OPERATION—DAY 1

Abraham and Sarah: "If God Said It, He Will Do It!"

Lesson Scriptures: Genesis 17:17-19; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:1

OPERATION—DAY 2

Joseph: "Hang in There"

Lesson Scriptures: Genesis 37:28, 35; 39:2, 17-18, 20-21; 41:39-40

OPERATION—DAY 3

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:
"I Said What I Said"

Lesson Scripture: Daniel 3:14-18, 26b-27

OPERATION—DAY 4

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus:
"You've Got a Friend in Me"

Lesson Scriptures: John 11:32-38, 43-44; 12:1-3

OPERATION—DAY 5

Peter: "You Can Count on Me"

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 14:22-31

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