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EXPLORERS

FAITH

Bible Studies



TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Middle and Upper Elementary (Grades 2-6)

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Explorers

Teacher's Guide for Older Children

Middle and Upper Elementary

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Overview of the Quarter

Unit I: Looking at Our Faith

Lesson 1 • March 3—When We Stumble, He Restores Us

Scripture: Jude 17-25

Key Verses: [Jude wrote,] You, dear friends, . . . keep yourselves in God's love. (*Jude 20, 21*)

Scripture Review

1. Jude teaches that anyone whose words and lifestyle mimic the surrounding culture and who instigates division within the church should not be accepted as a faith model by believers.
2. Jude 20-23 encourages believers to resist the ways of false teachers. Instead, they must build up their faith.
3. Jude entrusted these believers to God's love and infinite power.

Lesson 2 • March 10—Meeting the Test

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

Key Verse: 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. (*2 Corinthians 13:11*)

Scripture Review

1. Paul was confident that if the believers examined themselves, they would find Christ present within them, just as Christ was in Paul.
2. Faith in Scripture is about a lifestyle of obedience (verse 7), trusting God for the present and the future.
3. The purpose of both Corinthian letters had been to correct misunderstandings and conflicts within the young church during Paul's absence—so that when Paul was present, he could focus on building the church into a community of love and faith.

Lesson 3 • March 17—Love Is the Best Way

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-9, 13-17

Key Verse: Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. (*1 Peter 3:8*)

Scripture Review

1. Peter reminds believers in verse 9 that they are Abraham's spiritual children, recipients of his blessing and calling.
2. While doing the right thing usually draws praise from others (3:13), sometimes the godly thing to do draws criticism or negative consequences (3:14). Remembering that it is God who is our absolute priority (3:15) helps strengthen our resolve.
3. Remaining faithful—in action as well as attitude—during suffering is a witness itself to our hope in Jesus.

Lesson 4 • March 24—Stephen: Strength and Power

Scripture: Acts 6:5, 7-15

Key Verse: Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. (*Acts 6:8*)

Scripture Review

1. So far, the number of disciples had increased from 120 (1:15) to more than 8,000 (see 2:41 and 4:4), which included a large number of priests (6:7).

2. Stephen's experience reminds us that when God's Spirit is powerful in acting through God's people, sometimes the immediate result is fierce opposition (6:10-12). This should not discourage us but drive us to Christ even more solidly.

Lesson 5 • March 31 (Easter)—Filled with Amazement

Scripture: Mark 16:1-8

Key Verse: "Don't be alarmed," [the young man in white] 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*)

Scripture Review

1. Normally, the anointing would have taken place before the burial—but in this case, the Sabbath began before Jesus' disciples could care for His body or even place it in His family tomb.
2. Mark's story of the Resurrection ends on a disappointing note: the women did not live out their faith but, rather, let fear control their actions (16:8). Mark's ending forces the reader to ask how they would respond in fear or faith.

Unit II: How Much Faith Do You Have?

Lesson 6 • April 7—Good Friends Lead to the Master

Scripture: Luke 5:17-26

Key Verse: When Jesus saw [the friends'] faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." (*Luke 5:20*)

Scripture Review

1. Having faith is not just an individual attribute but a corporate action. It was the friends' faith that moved Jesus to help the paralytic man.
2. The friends of the man with paralysis demonstrated the highest ideal of friendship in the first century. Love is not passive but, instead, actively overcomes every obstacle to help a friend.
3. Actions like forgiving sins (5:20-21) clearly communicated that faith and forgiveness belong to Jesus just as they do to His Father.

Lesson 7 • April 14—Healed from a Distance

Scripture: Luke 7:1-10

Key Verse: [Jesus] said [to the crowd], "I tell you, I have not found such great faith [as the centurion] even in Israel." (*Luke 7:9*)

Scripture Review

1. The centurion honored Jesus by not demanding that Jesus cross the Jew-Gentile boundaries when the centurion had the right to make that demand (7:3-4, 6).
2. The story depicts the essential link between action and faith (7:4-8).
3. 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.

Lesson 8 • April 21—He Loves Us Always

Scripture: Luke 7:36-39, 44-50

Key Verse: Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (*Luke 7:50*)



Overview of the Quarter

Scripture Review

1. There is a distinction between “oil” and “ointment” in 7:46. Olive oil was typically used to cleanse and refresh traveling guests. But the woman brought a costlier and more valuable gift of ointment, likely scented with spices as an aromatic perfume.
2. Jesus ignored social solecism in favor of responding to (accepting) the woman’s sincere gratitude and love (7:47-48).
3. Simon’s lack of hospitality (a cause for shame) suggests some insincerity or ulterior motive in his invitation.

Lesson 9 • April 28 —A Mother’s Faith

Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28

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

Scripture Review

1. Throughout the Old Testament, the Israelites were commanded to keep a distance from the Canaanites and other foreign peoples because they worshipped false gods (see Leviticus 18:3).
2. That the woman named Jesus as the “Son of David” (15:22) is significant theologically, for Matthew believed that the Son of David is the prophesied Messiah.
3. This was no accidental encounter: though Jesus’ ministry was to Israel, for those who would follow in His steps, He calls us to step out of our comfort zone, place our faith in the limitless God, and reach out to those in the margins.

Unit III: Learning to Stand in Faith

Lesson 10 • May 5—Forgiveness Is a Gift

Scripture: Romans 3:21-29

Key Verses: 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*)

Scripture Review

1. Jews and Gentiles are equally guilty of sin before God.
2. The “righteousness of God” (3:21) is Paul’s wordplay on both God’s being fully in line with all standards of rightness and on God’s ability to erase a person’s record of sin, to count a person “right” with God, which God does through Jesus’ faith(fullness) in making a sacrifice of Himself on the Cross.

Lesson 11 • May 12—Children of Hope

Scripture: Romans 4:13, 16-21

Key Verse: Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations. (*Romans 4:18a*)

Scripture Review

1. The promise Paul refers to here is the blessing of Genesis 12:1-3, where God promised to make Abraham into a great nation, to bless him, and eventually to bless the entire world through him.
2. Abraham’s faith was grounded on who God is, not on merit or his resources.
3. Revisiting an earlier argument (see Romans 3:20), Paul reminded the church that the Mosaic Law was instituted to identify sin, not to resolve the spiritual exile and judgment that sin brings (see 4:15).

Lesson 12 • May 19—Peace in Believing

Scripture: Romans 5:1-11

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

Scripture Review

1. The faith that Paul talks about here (5:1) 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.
2. *Peace*, here, is more than the inner peace of Philippians 4:7. It also refers to relational peace with God. We are no longer God’s enemies but God’s children.
3. Paul adds another dimension in that God is never absent in our waiting. While we wait for the outward manifestation of our hope, God works internally on the heart and character, transforming us into His image (5:3-5; see also 2 Corinthians 3:18).

Lesson 13 • May 26—The Way

Scripture: Romans 10:5-13

Key Verse: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (*Romans 10:13*)

Scripture Review

1. Returning to his earlier argument (see Romans 2-3), Paul reiterates that the Jews had fallen into the trap of believing that their obedience to the Mosaic Law resolved their sins and brought them peace with God (see 10:1-4).
2. Following the Law brings righteousness, for the Law is God’s standard. But our actions are not up to God’s standard.
3. Paul’s quotation of Deuteronomy 30:14 (10:6-8) is meant to remind believers that Christ has already completed His ministry of our reconciliation with the Father (from Incarnation to Resurrection), and all that is left to do is trust Him for a process He has already completed.

Teaching Helps

TEACHER'S LESSON PLANS

The weekly plan includes the Background Scripture, Lesson Scripture, and Key Verse. The Lesson Objective is the desired outcome for the students as a result of hearing God's Word. The list of Materials Needed helps identify items to gather for lesson activities. (**Note:** You will need to have extra NIV versions available in your classroom throughout the quarter. Also, you may want to keep an offering container if you plan to collect offerings each Sunday [if applicable/feasible].)

The *Middle Elementary* and *Upper Elementary* student books include thirteen lessons. Each lesson of the *Middle Elementary* book is comprised of four pages: the Bible story (first page); the contemporary story and words from Ruby the Red Panda (second page); and activities (third and fourth pages). In the back of the book are two pages containing extra activities to use as you wish. Each lesson of the *Upper Elementary* book is comprised of three pages: the Scripture text (first page); the Bible story and words from Nicholas and Cornelius (second page); and a contemporary story and an activity section (third page).

The schedules provided below are suggested time periods for each section. Adapt the schedule to meet your particular class needs.

Middle and Upper Elementary Teacher Lesson Format

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY (10-15 minutes)

(*Consists of the Welcome and Worship time and the Opening Activity)

Welcome and Worship: This is a special time to greet your students by name as they enter the classroom, making them feel welcome and comfortable. The prayer period is a quiet, serious time to think about and communicate with God. During this time, you might also lead the students in singing songs of praise, saying the opening prayer, and collecting an offering for the support of God's work. (**Note:** You may also allow a volunteer to lead the opening prayer.) This period should be short but meaningful, and it should always include the

children as active participants. You may also want to do the following: (1) Introduce yourself as the teacher and your assistant(s) (if applicable). (2) Welcome any parents or guardians who are sitting in on the session (usually a feature of the Middle Elementary-aged class). (You may also choose to keep the parents/guardians informed on what the students are/have been learning.) (3) When guests are in attendance, have the class say, "We're glad you're here with us today." (4) Complete the roll call. (5) Engage in a weekly check-in, letting students who desire to do so give a praise report or prayer request (prior to the opening prayer).

Opening Activity: The activity serves as an introduction to the lesson. It allows the students to be active participants through discussions, games, and other activities. This time is also a wonderful time to get to know each student better. After the activity has concluded, prepare the students for the Bible story.

BIBLE VOYAGE (5-10 minutes)

(*Consists of the Bible Story)

The Bible story is the most significant segment of the Sunday morning session. It retells the Bible lesson, using age-appropriate language. Use additional teaching aids whenever possible. Since the Scripture text is not printed in the *Middle Elementary* student books, you may choose to read it from the Bible first. Then, let volunteers take turns alternating reading the different paragraphs of the Bible story aloud in their student books (during each lesson). For the *Upper Elementary* lessons, let the students take turns alternating reading the lesson Scripture and the different paragraphs of the Bible story aloud (during each lesson).

As is a good thing to practice, always encourage your students to bring Bibles (New International Version) to class (though you should have extra Bibles available for classroom use). For those who may not have a personal Bible, try to provide a checkout loan procedure whereby the students return the Bibles every so often so that they can then be rotated out to other students.

In the *Middle Elementary* teacher's lesson, there are questions provided that are to be asked and reviewed after the Bible story has been read. Lead a brief discussion

of those questions/observations. Whenever there are questions or things to ponder provided in the *Upper Elementary* teacher lesson, lead a brief discussion of those.

FUN EXPEDITIONS (10-20 minutes)

(“Consists of the Contemporary Story time, the Exploring the Story in Ruby’s Lab/Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius segment, and the Lesson Activities [including any Reproducibles])

This section includes activities, which are designed to reinforce the lesson and serve as independent activities for the students; however, the younger students may require assistance. Please provide guidance when necessary. The contemporary story and “Exploring the Story” are also in this section.

The *contemporary story* relates the Bible lesson to the student’s daily life and personal experiences. Read the story to the class, or let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs/sentences of the story aloud. (**Note:** The contemporary story in the *Upper Elementary* lessons is split into two parts to offer suspense after the first part and a way for the students to ponder how the story will or should end up.) In the *Middle Elementary* teacher’s lesson, there are questions provided that are to be asked and reviewed after the contemporary story has been read. Lead a brief discussion of those questions/observations. Whenever there are questions or things to ponder provided in the *Upper Elementary* teacher lesson related to the contemporary story, lead a brief discussion of those.

“Exploring the Story” includes characters Ruby the Red Panda (Middle Elementary), and Nicholas and Cornelius (Upper Elementary), who will discuss the lesson and provide questions, comments, insights, and/or activities for the students. As the questions, observations, or comments are presented, help the students to be good listeners by instructing them to give their attention to the other students who have something to share with the class. Give everyone a chance to speak. Remind the students that everyone’s questions, insights, or comments will be different and everyone’s response(s) should be respected. **Things specific to the Middle Elementary lessons:** (1) At the start of this section, say, “It is now time to explore today’s lesson with Ruby. As you listen to Ruby, think about what she says. After we read this section, we will go

back and discuss her questions and observations.” (2) Let one or two students read Ruby’s words aloud. (3) Then discuss Ruby’s words with the students and, if applicable, explain any take-home projects Ruby has assigned. (4) If a take-home assignment was extended in a previous lesson, take the time at the start of the section to allow the students to share any findings or work; then continue with the lesson. **Things specific to the Upper Elementary lessons:** (1) For the first section, let students volunteer to read the information in this section of the student book aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to any questions that are posed. (2) For the second section, let students volunteer to read the information in this section aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to any questions that are posed, offering insight as deemed necessary.

Selected lessons include **Reproducible pages** (craft/puzzle activities) to supplement your teaching.

ENDING THE JOURNEY (5-10 minutes)

Keep these guidelines in mind for closing out the session: (1) Use this time to review the lesson (including the Key Verse[s]) with the students; you may reflect on the main points of the lesson by focusing on the central characters, places, conflicts, etc. (2) Take the time to answer any remaining questions that the students might have. If there are any questions or observations posed in the teacher lesson, pause for a brief discussion of them. (3) Prepare for closing by playing soft music or having the students sing a quiet song. (4) Ask for a volunteer to end the class session with a prayer, encouraging him or her to include in the prayer some aspect related to the lesson. (Use a variety of praying styles—including prayer songs, sentence prayers, the Lord’s Prayer (in unison), and individual prayers. Saying the Key Verse(s) at this time will reinforce the meaning of the lesson.) (5) Dismiss the children in a quiet and orderly manner.

ICONS

In addition to section headings, there are icons to assist you in identifying special instructions or activities that may appear in a lesson. The icons found on the next page will help you locate these special items easily.

✂ **Special Preparation:** In addition to the standard study preparation, this icon indicates that the lesson requires additional preparation.

- ☺ **Optional Activity:** This activity is one that you can include if you desire to do so, or if time permits.
- 📄 **Reproducible Activity:** An activity page appears in the back of this book that requires making photocopies.
- 👉 **Looking Ahead:** Provides special instructions and plans for future lessons.

EVALUATE THE SESSION

Check on the effectiveness of your teaching: Did you use your time wisely? Were the students attentive? What could have been done differently? Plan ahead prayerfully for next Sunday. Study the lesson and read the Background Scripture.

Preparing to Teach

Teaching Tips

You will want to skim each lesson at the beginning of the quarter to list materials you will need and note ideas you want to try. Each week, prayerfully plan and prepare the lesson. Become familiar with each step of the lesson plan. Gather the materials needed and have them easily accessible. Provide an offering container, name tags, and space for the children's personal belongings. Make sure the room is safe for the children. Ask God for the presence of His Holy Spirit and expect Him to help you think of and plan unique and creative ways to teach.

Listed below are a few age-level characteristics:

Middle Elementary Children (Grades 2–3) (1) have a rigid sense of justice (a frequent cry from the playground is, “That’s not fair!”); (2) are becoming more aware of rules and what happens when they disobey them; (3) are quick to say, “I’m sorry”; (4) seek independence and like having more responsibility; (5) are curious and eager to learn new skills; (6) may be sensitive and have their feelings hurt easily; (7) may want to be first or be the leader; and (8) enjoy expressing their opinions and showing their knowledge.

Upper Elementary Children (Grades 4–6) (1) ask meaningful questions; (2) have attention spans of at least thirty minutes; (3) are beginning to grasp abstract concepts and are quickly developing reasoning skills; (4) need less adult approval, but lots of encouragement;

(5) can understand biblical facts and principles; (6) enjoy role-playing, memory work, Bible research, and group projects; and (7) understand the concepts of time and space.

The ABCs of Salvation

The *ABCs of Salvation* are listed below to help you discuss with your students questions or concerns they may have about the free gift of salvation that Jesus offers to everyone.

A. Say, “Admit you have sinned (see Psalm 32:5), or done wrong.” Go through just a few of the Ten Commandments—stealing or lying and so forth. Tell how our sins separate us from God (see Isaiah 59:2 and Romans 3:23).

B. Say, “Believe Jesus is God’s Son. He took the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross (see Romans 5:8). We must believe that Jesus is God’s Son and that God raised Him from the dead.”

C. Say, “Call on God to forgive you (see Acts 2:21). When we are sorry for our sins and want to stop doing wrong, we can ask God to forgive us” (see Acts 16:31).

Basic Classroom Supplies

If your church does not have some of these recommended materials, use this list to prioritize the items you need. Then, as resources permit, add to the materials in your Sunday school room.

1. **Art**—crayons, watercolor markers, pencils, scissors, tape, glue/paste, construction paper, stapler, paper punch, yarn, chalk, paper cups/plates, paper bags, and paper towels.
2. **Books**—Extra Bibles, general and Bible reference books (dictionaries, concordances, atlases), children’s books and magazines, catalogs, and newspapers.
3. **Music**—CD/DVD player, CDs of worship/praise and instrumental music.

When We Stumble, He Restores Us

March 3, 2024—Lesson 1

Background Scripture: Jude • **Lesson Scripture:** Jude 17-25

Key Verses: [Jude wrote,] You, dear friends, . . . keep yourselves in God's love. (Jude 20, 21)

Lesson Objective: The students will discover that God promises to stand with us even when others question our faith.

Materials Needed: Upper Elementary student books, Bible, a CD of instrumental praise music and CD player (or an electronic device with Internet access), pencils, markers, art supplies, scissors, a hole puncher, yellow construction paper, white card stock. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

✂ Prior to class, (1) use yellow construction paper to create a set of four-inch-diameter circles (one per student); write a choice relevant to your students' age group on the back of each circle. On the opposite side, write a question mark (?). Include good and bad choices (examples: "I will cheat on a test"; "I will help others"; "I will obey my parents"; "I will not tell the truth"); (2) make copies of the reproducible door-hanger template.

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Give each student a circle cutout. Instruct the students to turn over their circle and read the choice on the back. Ask each student to share with the class if the choice is right or wrong. If the choice is wrong, the class must decide how to change the choice and do what is right. After each choice is read and discussed, prompt the students to say, "I want to make the right choice."

Tell the students that today's lesson reminds us to make the right choice and follow God. Have them listen to today's Bible story to learn about the choices we can make.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

When We Stumble, He Restores Us

In today's letter, the writer, Jude, encourages believers to remember what the apostles of Jesus Christ taught them. The apostles were followers of Jesus who also saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

Jude reminds the believers that the apostles taught that there will be false teachers who do not tell the truth about God and His instructions. These false teachers would make fun of God's Word and not obey God. They would not accept Jesus. And they would not have the Spirit of God living in their hearts.

Jude encouraged believers to trust God through faith and prayer. Prayer would give them the power to talk to and hear from God. He encouraged the believers to remember God's Word. Believers should remember God's love and show kindness to others. Their kindness may help save those who believed the false teachers. He encouraged believers to be careful and not be trapped by those who did not believe God's Word.

Jude ended his message by ensuring believers that God would keep them from falling. But if they stumbled and did not obey, God would save and restore them. Jude reminded the believers that God has all power and authority now and forever. God will never leave us; He will always stand with us.

Ask: Who did not tell the believers the truth about God? (*False teachers.*) What did the false teachers do? (*They did not tell the truth or obey God's Word.*) What did the writer of Jude encourage the believers to do? (*Trust God by faith and prayer; also, to remember God's promises [His Word].*) What would happen if the believers stumbled and did not obey God? (*God would save them; He would always be with them.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Do What Is Right (Part 1)

When Erica saw her friend Samantha looking at her answers to the test, she said, "Don't do that."

Because Erica talked during the test, Mr. Edgerton, their teacher, said, "Erica, no talking during the test. Turn in your test and go to the office."

After school, Samantha called Erica.

She said, "Erica, I didn't want you to get in trouble. I didn't know the answers. Why did you talk during the test?"

Erica said, "I didn't want you to cheat. We prayed before our test. Did you think God wouldn't know you cheated even if Mr. Edgerton didn't see you? I want you to do what's right and live for God. Cheating isn't right."

Samantha said, "Maybe I didn't want to make the right choice."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the sentence in this section of the student book.

Completed Message: The false teachers did not tell the truth about God!

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Do What Is Right (Part 2)

The next day at school, Erica was not in class. Samantha was worried about her friend.

At lunch, Samantha saw Erica and her parents walking to the office. Samantha knew that Erica was in trouble because of her.

Before lunch ended, Samantha said, "Mr. Edgerton, I need to tell you something."

After Samantha talked to Mr. Edgerton, he said, "Thank you for telling the truth. You did what is right and helped your friend."

Samantha said, "I want to do what is right and help Erica. She always reminds me to do what is right."

Ask: What would you do if you saw a friend do something wrong? (*Responses will vary.*) What would you want your

friend to do? (*Tell the truth; do what is right and obey God.*)

Do you know that you can make the right choice? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*) What did Erica want Samantha to do? (*Do what is right and not cheat—but obey God.*) Tell the class about a time when you made the right or wrong choice. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think that God is with you if you stumble and do not make the right choice? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: Who helps us to do what is good and make the right choice? (*The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, helps us do what is right.*)

Decode the Message

Provide pencils and allow the students to decode the message in their student books by finding the letter where the two numbers intersect in the puzzle. (For example, 2-3 is M.) Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

Answers: always; stand

Completed Message: God promises to always stand with us!

📄 Make a "God Is Always with Me" Bookmark

Refer to the reproducible activity (*page 65*) and, using sturdy white card stock, make a copy of the page for each student in your class. Distribute the template copies and art supplies. Allow the students to decorate their bookmarks, using the art supplies. Once they are done, give the students scissors and instruct them to cut out the bookmark. Punch a hole at the top center and thread yarn through the hole, tying the ends into a knot.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Meeting the Test

March 10, 2024—Lesson 2

Background Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-11 • **Lesson Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

Key Verse: 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. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

Lesson Objective: The students will discover that they can pass the test by trusting and living for God and encouraging others.

Materials Needed: Upper Elementary student books, NIV Bible, markers, a multimedia device with a large screen (laptop or computer) and Internet access, 3x5 note cards, envelopes (at least two per student), pencils, other art supplies. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Say: Today, we will watch a video about making good choices. The video asks several questions, and we will pause to discuss them. So be attentive so you can pass the test.

Access the video "Social Emotional Learning Video Lessons: Week 9—Making Good Choices" (May 15, 2020) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8upPvRMG6w>. Begin the video and pause where the statements and questions below are mentioned in the video. (Additional questions have been added.) Allow discussion, then hit PLAY and continue. (The video time stamp for pausing and the questions and answers are noted below.)

Video Time Stamp and Questions:

1. Pause the video at the 25-second video time stamp and ask, "What is involved in making responsible decisions?" (*Developing personal values such as honesty, reliability, or loyalty.*) "How do we get these values?" (*Responses may vary but should include that good values come from following God's Word and living for God.*)
2. Pause at the 53-second time stamp and ask, "What personal values (like trust, loyalty, honesty, love, kindness, etc.) are important to you and why?" (*Responses will vary.*)
3. Pause at the 57-second time stamp and say, "Predict what might happen if Tim skips his class." (*Responses*

will vary.) "What would you do if you were Tim?" (*Responses will vary.*)

4. Pause at the 1:05-minute time stamp and pose the question, "Can you think of a time when you had to delay doing something fun because you had chores or work to do? Tell us about it." (*Responses will vary.*)

Tell the students that today's lesson is about our meeting the test and doing what is right while praying for ourselves and others.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Meeting the Test

The apostle Paul sent a second letter to the believers in Corinth. An *apostle* is sent by Jesus to share God's love and message. The apostles saw Jesus after His resurrection. Paul promised to visit the believers in Corinth a third time and encouraged them to prepare for his visit.

Paul encouraged the believers to examine themselves before he returned to Corinth. Paul wanted the believers to ask themselves if their lives showed that they followed Jesus. Were they Christians who lived for God? He encouraged them to "test" themselves by looking at their lives. They met the test when they did what was right. Paul was happy when the believers showed strong faith (belief and trust in God). He prayed that they would return to following and loving God.

Paul told them that he passed the test. Paul lived by and followed God's Word. Paul hoped that the believers would be living for God when he returned. Paul had the authority from God to build up the believers. Paul did not want to use his authority to be harsh with them.

Paul ended the letter by encouraging the believers to rejoice and live right. He told them to help one another, be agreeable,

and live in peace—and that the God of love and peace would be with them.

Ask: Who planned to visit the Corinthian believers and evaluate them? (*Paul.*) What test did Paul want the believers to pass? (*Doing what is right by following and living for God.*) How did Paul end the letter? (*He encouraged believers to rejoice, live right, help each other, be agreeable, and live in peace—and God would be with them.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Right Way to Go (Part 1)

As Evan and his family drove to their family reunion, Evan's dad said, "We should get to the reunion in time for breakfast."

Evan said, "I can't wait to see my cousins! I miss Jonathan."

Evan's sister, Simone, said, "Every year, you both fight more than you play."

Evan's mom said, "Evan, please be kind to your cousin. Try to show him love and kindness. Remember that God expects you to do what is right . . . and so do we."

Evan said, "We're older now; we're in the sixth grade."

As soon as they arrived at their destination, they went to their family breakfast.

Within a few minutes, Evan's dad was asking, "Is that Evan and Jonathan I hear arguing at their table?"

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Provide pencils and allow the students to trace Paul's path during his second missionary trip to Corinth.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Right Way to Go (Part 2)

As Evan's mom rushed to their table, she heard Evan say, "Jonathan, I love you. I don't want to fight. We can take turns playing games."

Jonathan said, "I don't want to fight, either. I want to have fun every day."

As Evan's mom returned to her table, she told her husband, "They did what was right and showed God's love."

Later, Evan's dad said, "Evan, we're proud of you. You did

what was right and showed kindness to Jonathan."

Evan said, "I remembered arguing with him at the last family reunion. I prayed and asked God to help me do what is right."

Ask: What do you do if you disagree with someone? (*Responses will vary.*) What does God want us to do when we do not agree with someone? (*Show love and kindness, but do not argue with the person because it is not doing what is right.*) Do you know that you can follow God and do what is right? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*) What did Evan do that was right? (*He didn't argue with Jonathan but told him he loved him.*) Tell the class about when you made the right choice and showed love. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

A Double Puzzle

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the double puzzle. (The letters "D" and "W" have been provided.) Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

1. UALP	<table border="1"><tr><td>P</td><td>A</td><td>U</td><td>L</td></tr></table>	P	A	U	L			
P	A	U	L					
2. INCOHRT	<table border="1"><tr><td>C</td><td>O</td><td>R</td><td>I</td><td>N</td><td>T</td><td>H</td></tr></table>	C	O	R	I	N	T	H
C	O	R	I	N	T	H		
3. GTIRH	<table border="1"><tr><td>R</td><td>I</td><td>G</td><td>H</td><td>T</td></tr></table>	R	I	G	H	T		
R	I	G	H	T				
4. TETS	<table border="1"><tr><td>T</td><td>E</td><td>S</td><td>T</td></tr></table>	T	E	S	T			
T	E	S	T					
5. THURT	<table border="1"><tr><td>T</td><td>R</td><td>U</td><td>T</td><td>H</td></tr></table>	T	R	U	T	H		
T	R	U	T	H				
6. NSRGOT	<table border="1"><tr><td>S</td><td>T</td><td>R</td><td>O</td><td>N</td><td>G</td></tr></table>	S	T	R	O	N	G	
S	T	R	O	N	G			
7. XNMEIEA	<table border="1"><tr><td>E</td><td>X</td><td>A</td><td>M</td><td>I</td><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr></table>	E	X	A	M	I	N	E
E	X	A	M	I	N	E		

Completed Message: God will help you to do what is right!

☺Make Encouragement Cards

Give each student at least two 3x5 note cards and envelopes. Instruct the students to create a card for someone who needs to hear about Jesus' love. Allow time for each student to decorate and write a note to the person. After the students are finished, pray for all the people to whom the students have written a card.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Stephen: Strength and Power

March 24, 2024— Lesson 4

Background Scripture: Acts 6 • **Lesson Scripture:** Acts 6:5, 7-15

Key Verse: Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8)

Lesson Objective: The students will discover that as He was with Stephen, God is with them even during difficult times.

Materials Needed: Upper Elementary student books, Bible, a multimedia device with a large screen (laptop, tablet, computer) and Wi-Fi access, pencils, markers, other art supplies, white card stock, scissors. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, create 3x7-inch card stock bookmarks (one per student) for the optional activity. On each bookmark, write or type at the bottom “_____ Can Choose to Obey God.” Leave room for a drawing.

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Gather the students around a multimedia device with Internet access. Access the video clip “Our Special Superpower” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QQbiwNvzYU>. This video clip is an animation that shares what to do when witnessing someone being bullied.

View the video as a class, then replay it, pausing at different intervals as you discuss the following questions: (1) What is bullying? (2) What is a bystander? (3) What are the different ways bystanders respond to bullying? (4) How can you stop bullying and stay safe? (5) Have you ever seen someone being bullied? (6) What did you do? (7) Now that you have seen this video, how do you feel about whatever you did or did not do? (8) What will you do differently the next time you see someone being bullied?

Tell the students that today’s lesson is about Stephen. Stephen was mistreated for sharing God’s Word. But Stephen had strength and power because he obeyed God. Encourage the students to listen closely to today’s Bible story to hear more about Stephen.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Stephen: Strength and Power

Stephen and six other men were chosen as the first *deacons* (or servant-leaders) in the church. The seven men were responsible for giving food to people in need in the early church. Stephen was a man of strength and power who obeyed Jesus when it was difficult to do so. Stephen had faith in God, and God revealed many wonders and signs through Stephen. More people believed as the message of God spread in the early church.

When Jews from different places disagreed and argued with Stephen, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, gave Stephen wise words to say. No one could stand against the wisdom that God gave Stephen. Then, the Jews who disagreed with Stephen had people say untrue words about Stephen. They said that Stephen did not believe Moses and did not love Jesus. They also said that Stephen spoke badly about God’s message and wanted to change the laws that Moses had given to God’s people. Nothing they said was true.

Because of the false statements against Stephen, he was judged by the religious leaders. As Stephen stood before the religious leaders, they looked at Stephen’s face—and what they saw was the face of an angel. His face showed his peace and love for God, whom he trusted. Stephen was not afraid but had faith in God.

Ask: What did God allow Stephen to do? (*Perform many wonders and signs.*) What happened because of the signs and wonders that God revealed through Stephen? (*More people believed.*) What untrue statements did the Jews from different places say about Stephen? (*That Stephen did not believe Moses and did not love Jesus.*) What did the religious leaders see when Stephen stood before them? (*They saw the face of an angel; his peace and love for God.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Make a Choice (Part 1)

As Terrance played soccer during recess, Graham ran over to Isaiah, a new student, and took the ball that he was bouncing.

When their teacher, Mr. Atwood, said, "Recess is over . . . let's go in," Terrance didn't say or do anything.

After school, Terrance and his sister, Elisa, went to Nana's house.

During dinner, Nana asked, "Terrance, is everything okay? You're too quiet."

Before Terrance could answer, Elisa said, "Nana, there's a bully named Graham who was mean to Isaiah, a new student, today. We both saw him."

Nana asked, "Terrance, what did you do?"

Terrance said, "Nothing. I didn't know what to do."

Nana said, "You can always choose to help the person that the bully is hurting. You can show him kindness and encourage him to talk to an adult. Everyone wants to be shown kindness."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Provide pencils and allow the students to list qualities from the Bible story that describe the Synagogue of the Freedmen and Stephen. Assist as needed.

Possible Answers: Synagogue of the Freedmen—dishonest, jealous; Stephen—strong, powerful, faithful, peaceful, showed God's love

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Make a Choice (Part 2)

The next day at school, Terrance was playing with his friends when Graham walked up to Isaiah and took his basketball.

Immediately, Terrance approached Isaiah and said, "Do you want to play with me and my friends? We're playing soccer."

Isaiah said, "Thanks. I'm Isaiah."

Terrance said, "I'm Terrance, and you can always play and talk with us."

After recess, Elisa ran over to Terrance and said, "I saw you talking to Isaiah. You showed God's love!"

Terrance said, "Thanks. Nana was right. We do have a choice."

Ask: What do you think about Terrance's ignoring the bullying? (*Responses will vary.*) To whom can you talk if you don't know what to do? (*God, your parent(s), or another responsible adult.*) What can you do to show God's love to someone? (*Responses will vary.*) What did Terrance do to help Elijah? (*He invited him to play and talk with him and his friends; he showed God's love.*) Tell the class about a time when you struggled with a difficult decision. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think that God is happy when we show His love? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: What is one thing we can do before we make a choice? (*We can pray and ask God to help us and talk to an adult who knows God.*)

Point the Way: What Will You Do?

Provide pencils and review the instructions provided in the student book. Allow the students to complete the activity and decode the message. Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

Answers: (1) C; (2) H; (3) O; (4) I; (5) C; (6) E; (7) T; (8) O; (9) O; (10) B; (11) E; (12) Y; (13) G; (14) O; (15) D

Completed Statement: Like Stephen, I will make a choice to obey God!

☺Make "I Can Choose to Obey God" Bookmarks

If time permits, give each student an "I Can Choose to Obey God" bookmark. Tell the students that God gives strength and power to those who obey His Word. Ask the students to raise their hands if they want to be strong and faithful children of God. Allow the students to respond. Instruct them to write their name on the blank in the phrase "_____ Can Choose to Obey God," use coloring pencils to highlight the phrase, and then draw a self-portrait picture in the center of the bookmark.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Good Friends Lead to the Master

April 7, 2024—Lesson 6

Background Scripture: Luke 5:17-26 • **Lesson Scripture:** Luke 5:17-26

Key Verse: When Jesus saw [the friends'] faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." (Luke 5:20)

Lesson Objective: The students will identify the qualities of a good friend.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bible, markers, a multimedia device with a large screen and Wi-Fi access (computer, laptop, tablet), pencils, markers, other art supplies, 23x28-inch poster board or whiteboard, double-stick tape, and red construction paper. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, (1) use red construction paper to create a set of 5x5 heart cutouts (one per student). Write one quality of a friend relevant to your students' age group on the back of each heart. Include good and bad qualities. A few examples are as follows: caring, truthful, dishonest, good listener, prays for you and others, and kind; (2) bring additional blank heart cutouts for each student.

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The students will perform an activity as a reminder of today's lesson.

Give each student a heart cutout. Instruct the students to turn over their heart cutouts and take turns reading the quality on the back aloud to the class. If the word describes a good friend, place it on the poster board or whiteboard. If the word does not describe a good friend, then the class can decide how to change the description to that of a good friend. Give the students another heart cutout and allow them to list qualities that they possess or want to possess and to decorate their hearts.

Tell the students that today's lesson is about good friends who helped their friend who could not walk.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Good Friends Lead to the Master

After reports of Jesus' healing, many people came from the Galilee villages, Judea, and Jerusalem to hear Jesus speak and to be healed. God's power was revealed when Jesus healed the sick.

Several friends brought a paralyzed man on a mat to Jesus because the man could not walk. However, because of the crowd, they could not take him through the front door to see Jesus. But the paralyzed man had good friends who were determined to lead him to the Master. So, they lowered the man from the roof to be right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw the faith of the paralyzed man's friends, Jesus said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." But the religious leaders were not pleased. The religious leaders believed that only God could forgive sins. Jesus knew what the Pharisees and teachers were thinking.

Jesus asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'" Jesus had the power to forgive sins on earth. Jesus then told the man to get up and take his mat home. The paralyzed man was healed! When the man stood up and walked, everyone was surprised. The man and others praised and thanked God.

Ask: Who took the paralyzed man to Jesus? (*The man's friends.*) What did they do so that Jesus would see the man? (*They lowered him from the roof.*) What did Jesus know about the man's friends? (*They had faith.*) What did Jesus do for the paralyzed man? (*He forgave his sins and healed him.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Helping Others (Part 1)

When Jevante transferred to Weston Elementary School, his homeroom teacher was Mr. Alegre.

On his first day in class, Mr. Alegre said, "Jevante, our class has a service project each year. Your family just moved here, but you can show service by helping at home, at church, in the community, or at school. Let me know if you need help finding a way to serve."

Jevante told his younger brother that evening, "Andre, I need to find a service project for my class. But I don't know how I can help anyone."

Andre said, "Jevante, my class could use your help. My teacher, Mr. Eaton, told us that our family members can volunteer to help."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the activity in this section of the student book. Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers with the class.

Answers: God's; love; others

Completed Message: When we live for God, we show God's love to others!

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Helping Others (Part 2)

Andre asked Jevante the following day at school, "Are you going to talk to Mr. Eaton today?"—to which he replied, "Yes, I will."

Later, Jevante and Mr. Eaton talked for a few minutes.

Mr. Eaton said, "My students need help with reading. Can you help?"

Jevante said, "Yes, I love reading. I can help." As Jevante left the classroom, he waved at Andre.

After school, Andre asked, "Are you going to help our class?"

Hugging Andre, Jevante said, "Yes! Mr. Eaton asked if I could help with reading. I'm great at reading! I'm happy to help!"

Ask: Would you want to do a service project and help someone in your neighborhood, school, or church? (*Responses will vary.*) Why do you think Andre wanted his brother, Jevante, to help his class? (*His class needed help.*) Why do you think God wants you to help others? (*God wants us to help others and show His love by what we do.*) What would Jevante do to help in Andre's class? (*Help the students with reading.*) Tell the class about a time when someone helped you. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think that you can help someone? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: When you help someone, what do you show? (*You show God's love and kindness to them.*)

Complete the Activity: Matching

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the matching activity. Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

Answers: (1) c, f, h; (2) a, d; (3) b, g; (4) e; (5) i

☺ "What Is a Quality Friendship?" Video Viewing

Gather the students around a multimedia device and allow them to view the 3.47-minute video entitled "Friends—Friendships: What Is a Quality Friendship and Why Are Friendships Important?" The video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNzFPPMnF1Y>. After the video, discuss the following questions: (1) What are the two types of friendships? (2) What are the qualities of a good friendship? (3) How can you identify a bad friendship? (4) Give an example of an acquaintance. (5) Why are good, quality friendships important? (6) Do you need lots of good, quality friendships? (7) What can you do to be a good, quality friend?

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Healed from a Distance

April 14, 2024—Lesson 7

Background Scripture: Luke 7:1-10 • **Lesson Scripture:** Luke 7:1-10

Key Verse: [Jesus] said [to the crowd], “I tell you, I have not found such great faith [as the centurion] even in Israel.” (Luke 7:9)

Lesson Objective: The students will begin to understand that the centurion’s actions showed great faith in Jesus.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bible, markers, a CD of instrumental praise music and CD player, pencils, other art supplies, safety scissors, white card stock. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, do the following: (1) on white card stock, create a set of 5x7 cross cutouts (one per student); write the words “I Believe” horizontally and “In Jesus” vertically on the cross; (2) secure a template of a 3-D map of Galilee, including Capernaum and other areas around the Sea of Galilee—where Jesus performed miracles and conducted ministry; make copies of the map (enough for each student to have one).

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

The students will perform an activity as a reminder of today’s lesson.

Give each student a cross cutout. Instruct the students to decorate their crosses. After the students have finished, talk about the meaning of “believe” as it relates to faith or belief in God. Explain that “belief in God” is an action phrase that involves your mind and your heart. Allow the students to write synonyms for “believe” on the back of their cross cutout. Then, allow them to share the words. They should list a few of the following terms: *trust, rely on, accept, know, understand, faith, hold onto, lean on, expect*. Encourage the students to trust and believe that Jesus hears them and will help them during challenging times.

Tell the students that today’s lesson concerns a centurion or Roman army officer who commanded one hundred soldiers or servants. The centurion had a servant who was very sick. Have the class listen to today’s Bible story to discover what the centurion did.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Healed from a Distance

After teaching many people, Jesus went to Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. A servant of a centurion was very sick. The *centurion*, an officer or leader in the Roman army, cared for his servant very much and believed or had faith that Jesus could heal him. When the centurion heard that Jesus was coming, he sent the elders of the Jews to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant. When the elders went to Jesus, they pleaded with Jesus to come. They told Jesus that the centurion was a good man who deserved his servant’s healing. They told Jesus that the centurion loved their people and built them a synagogue.

Jesus agreed to go with the elders. As Jesus and the elders traveled, friends of the centurion met them. Jesus was not far from the centurion’s home. The friends told Jesus that the centurion did not want Jesus to come to his home. The centurion believed that Jesus could say the words and his servant would be healed. Seeing as though the centurion commanded armies, he understood authority because his soldiers did what he asked. The centurion believed that Jesus had spiritual authority or power to say the word and his servant would be healed. When Jesus heard this, He was amazed at the centurion’s great faith and healed his servant from a distance.

Ask: What was a centurion? (*A leader in the Roman army.*) Who did the centurion believe could help his servant who

was sick? (*Jesus.*) How did Jesus know that the centurion had faith? (*The centurion believed that Jesus could speak the word and his servant would be healed.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Having Faith (Part 1)

When Jessica's parents came home, Jessica asked, "How is Grandma doing? Is she better?"

Jessica's dad said, "The doctors are doing everything they can. So, what we must do now is have faith."

Jessica said, "We've been praying for Grandma. Why isn't she better?"

Jessica's mom replied, "That is what faith is. We pray and believe that God hears and helps us. God is helping her right now."

Jessica's brother, Elton, asked, "Doesn't having faith mean trusting God and not worrying while we wait?"

Their dad said, "Yes!"

As tears ran down her cheek, Jessica said, "I guess I don't have faith because I'm worried. She needs a miracle."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Pass out a copy of the map to each student. Allow the students to locate and circle Capernaum on the map. Share with the students that Jesus performed many miracles of healing in Capernaum (see Mark 1:32-34), including a centurion's servant (see Luke 7:1-10), Peter's mother-in-law (see Mark 1:21-31), the paralyzed man (see Mark 2:1-12), and the man with the withered hand (see Matthew 12:9-13). Relay that remembering Jesus' miracles in the Bible and our lives strengthens our faith.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Having Faith (Part 2)

Later that evening, Dad checked on Jessica and Elton.

When Dad checked on Jessica, she asked, "Dad, how do you know God hears you?"

Her dad said, "I have faith that He hears me because He loves me."

Jessica asked, "Does God still do miracles and heal people like Grandma? She needs a miracle—right?"

Jessica's dad explained, "Yes, she does. Have you forgotten about your Uncle Patrick and Grandpa? God healed both of them. They were miracles. When no one believed they would get better, they did."

Hugging her dad, Jessica said, "Thank you, Dad. I forgot those miracles. God does hear us!"

Ask: What would you do if you had a sick family member? (*Responses will vary.*) To whom can we turn to ask for someone to receive help or healing? (*God in prayer.*) Do you believe that Jesus can still perform miracles? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*) What did Jessica's dad remind her of? (*God had healed people in her family that were sick.*) Share a time when you believe that God helped someone or even you. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think that God is pleased when we believe? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary but may include that God is happy when we trust and believe Him.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: How can we learn to trust and depend on God daily? (*Pray, read our Bibles, and ask God to help us; attend Sunday school; talk to an adult who knows God.*)

Searching for Words

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the word search. Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

J	E	S	E	L	C	A	R	I	M
A	U	T	H	O	R	I	T	Y	U
T	F	A	I	H	S	Y	N	J	A
N	A	L	R	T	A	M	A	E	N
A	I	V	E	I	L	C	E	S	R
V	S	Y	N	A	G	O	G	U	E
R	M	I	E	F	O	D	K	S	P
E	A	H	R	D	E	Z	A	M	A
S	N	O	I	R	U	T	N	E	C

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

A Mother's Faith

April 28, 2024—Lesson 9

Background Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28 • **Lesson Scripture:** Matthew 15:21-28

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

Lesson Objective: The students will discover that the Canaanite woman had faith and believed that Jesus could help her daughter.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bible, a multimedia device with a large screen and Wi-Fi access (laptop, computer, tablet), pencils, markers, art supplies, construction paper, 6x9-inch envelopes, white card stock. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, (1) use construction paper to create a set of 5x7 cards (at least one per student) and bring envelopes for the cards; (2) print out copies of the reproducible template.

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Give each student a card and an envelope. Instruct the students to create get-well cards for people who are sick or recovering. Provide time for the students to create and decorate at least one or more get-well cards. Allow the students to share their decorated cards if they prefer. As a class, pray for each person listed on the card(s).

Tell the students that today's lesson is about a Gentile (non-Jewish) woman who called repeatedly to Jesus. They may listen to the story to find out what she asked Jesus.

BIBLE VOYAGE

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

A Mother's Faith

In the Scripture passage for today, Jesus traveled north toward Tyre and Sidon, where He met a Canaanite woman. The people of Canaan worshipped pagan idols and did not believe or follow God. They were considered enemies of Israel. The Gentile woman from Canaan asked Jesus to heal her daughter from an evil spirit that controlled her. She called Jesus the “Son of David.” She knew who Jesus was and believed that He could heal her daughter.

Initially, Jesus did not answer the woman. The disciples wanted Jesus to send the woman away. Jesus told His disciples He came to save the Jews, the people of Israel, God's chosen people. The mother continued to ask Jesus to help her daughter, but Jesus told her that it was not good to give the bread of children to the dogs. Jesus was not being rude. Jesus did not want the people of Israel's blessings to be thrown away like pieces of bread thrown to little dogs.

The woman replied, “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.”

The woman showed great faith by believing that Jesus could bless or help her. She also believed that Jesus could help the Israelites, who were Jews—and the Gentiles, who were not Jews. The woman believed that Jesus could help everyone. When Jesus saw the mother's faith, He healed her daughter.

Ask: Why did the woman call repeatedly to Jesus? (*Her daughter was sick and needed Jesus to heal her.*) What did Jesus tell the woman? (*He did not want Israel's blessings to be thrown away like bread is thrown to little dogs.*) What did Jesus see in the woman? (*Jesus saw her faith because she believed that He could help the Jews and the Gentiles [everyone].*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Praying for Others (Part 1)

At school, Mrs. Baton said, "Class, during morning prayer, we are going to pray for Justin's grandmother. She is still not feeling well."

At recess, Ayanna and Alexa saw Justin.

With the kickball in hand, Ayanna and Alexa asked (almost in unison), "Justin, do you want to play kickball?"

Justin said, "Yeah. That would be great!"

By the end of recess, everyone was playing kickball together.

When the kids returned to class, Mr. Thompson, the principal, came to the door. Shortly thereafter, Justin left with him.

At lunch, Ayanna said, "I hope nothing bad has happened."

Alexa asked, "Do you think God hears us when we pray? His grandmother isn't getting better."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Encourage the students to have faith (continue to trust and believe God's promises) as they wait for God's answer to their prayers.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Praying for Others (Part 2)

Ayanna said, "Yes, I do believe that God hears our prayers."

Alexa said, "I hope He does—because I want Justin's grandmother to get better."

Ayanna said, "My parents encourage me to always pray for others because God hears us and will answer. We have to believe and trust God. We must remember to pray for Justin's grandmother at home."

Alexa said, "I will pray for Justin's grandmother and believe and trust God to heal her."

Ayanna said, "Great. That's what faith is—believing and trusting God as we wait for God to answer our prayers."

Ask: What would you do if someone's family member was sick? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think God hears our prayers when we pray? (*Responses will vary; but, yes, God hears everyone who prays to Him.*) What should you do when you pray, and nothing seems to change? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you remember to pray for others? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*) What did Ayanna encourage Alexa to do? (*Remember to pray for Justin's grandmother at*

home.) Tell the class about a time when you know that God heard your prayers. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think that God is happy when we pray? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary. Yes, because we can talk to and hear from God.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: When we pray, what should we remember to do? (*Pray for others who may need help and not just for ourselves.*)

Solve the Picture Puzzle

Provide pencils and allow the students to solve the picture puzzle. Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

Answers: (1) God; (2) hears; (3) our; (4) prayers

Completed Message: God hears our prayers!

✂️ Make a "God Loves and Hears Everyone" Flag

Refer to the reproducible activity (*page 68*) and, using sturdy white card stock, make a copy of the page for each student in your class. Distribute a copy of the template and art supplies to each student. Allow the students to decorate the flag, using the art supplies. Once done, give the students scissors and instruct them to cut out the flag.

📺 "Being Different Is Beautiful" Video Viewing

Allow the students to view the 2.26-minute video "Being Different Is Beautiful" by LittleSikhs.com (Diversity Video for Children, Kids, & Schools) by Jasmine Kaur and Manpreet Singh found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJ1ygFknjYo>. After the video, discuss the following questions: (1) How should we view and treat people who are different? (2) What can we learn from people who speak different languages and have different habits? (3) What lesson did the disciples learn when Jesus healed the Canaanite woman's daughter?

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Forgiveness Is a Gift

May 5, 2024—Lesson 10

Background Scripture: Romans 3:21–30 • **Lesson Scripture:** Romans 3:21–29

Key Verses: 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*)

Lesson Objective: The students will discover that when they accept Jesus, God forgives them.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bible, markers, a CD of instrumental praise music and CD player, pencils, other art supplies, popsicle sticks, a trifold board, tacky glue, double-stick tape. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, label a trifold board "Jesus Died on the Cross to Save Me!"

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The students will perform an activity as a reminder of today's lesson.

Give each student popsicle sticks to decorate. Instruct the students to glue the popsicle sticks in the shape of a cross. After the glue has dried, use the double-stick tape and place the smaller crosses on the trifold board to form a large cross. Explain to the students that Jesus died on the Cross for them.

After the larger cross is made on the board, review *The ABCs of Salvation* on page 8 of this teacher's guide. Ask the students if they believe that Jesus died for their sins. Allow them to accept Jesus as their Savior. Pray as a class for people to accept Jesus by faith or trusting that Jesus died on the Cross for them. Talk with the parents of any students who accept Christ.

Tell the students that today's lesson is about God's gift of forgiveness. Have the students listen to today's Bible story to hear about God's gift.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story

Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Forgiveness Is a Gift

In today's Bible verses, the apostle Paul wrote that being made right (forgiven of sins) in God's sight does not happen by obeying the Law. Being made right in God's sight occurs by our having faith in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. This was the way promised in God's Word long ago. All people (Jews and Gentiles) are made right in the same way.

Everyone has sinned (disobeyed God) and fallen short of God's ways and standards. Everyone is *justified* (declared not guilty and made right in God's sight) by God's *grace* (undeserved favor) and kindness.

Jesus Christ has taken away our sins. Believers are free! Jesus died on the Cross to take the punishment for our sins. We are made right with God when we trust and believe that Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and gave His life for us. God declares that this gift of forgiveness is fair.

We cannot brag that we have done anything to be accepted by God. Jesus Christ did it all! We are made right through faith (belief and trust) in what Jesus has done for us. We are not made right by obeying the Law. God is the God of the Jews and Gentiles.

Ask: What happens when sinners are made righteous? (*They are forgiven and made acceptable to God.*) What did Jesus do for everyone? (*Jesus died on the Cross for our sins.*) How do we receive the righteousness of God? (*By having faith or believing that Jesus gave His life for us on the Cross.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Jesus Saved Me! (Part 1)

As Brooklyn and Eric played basketball after school, Brooklyn asked, "Are you going to the youth conference?"

Eric said, "Probably not; going to church and Sunday school is enough for me."

Suddenly, Eli ran over, saying, "Hey, guys, I'm playing ball, too!"

Brooklyn asked, "Eli, are you attending the church youth conference?"

Eli said, "I'll be there. Every year, I learn so much more about Jesus!"

Brooklyn said, "Same for me. Since I accepted Jesus, the conference helps me understand what it means to be saved."

Eric said, "Maybe I need to go. I accepted Jesus, but I'm not sure if I'm saved. I still make wrong choices."

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask the students if they understand God's gift of forgiveness. Ask volunteers to explain it in their own words.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Jesus Saved Me! (Part 2)

Holding the basketball, Eli said, "Eric, you should attend the conference. I know that Jesus saved me, but I'm learning what Jesus did for me and how to live for God."

Before Eli could finish, Brooklyn said, "Eli's right. You'll learn about God's love for you."

Eli said, "We learn a lot when we go to class and ask questions. The conference has small classes, and we can ask questions and hear what other kids have to say."

Eric said, "I want to learn about God and know for certain that I am saved."

Brooklyn said, "We can go together. My parents will take us."

Eric said, "Thanks, guys! I'm choosing to go!"

"Good choice," Eric's friends said.

Ask: Would you invite someone to church to learn about Jesus? (*Responses will vary.*) Whom can you talk to if you need to learn about Jesus? (*God; your parent(s) or another adult who believes and has accepted Jesus Christ.*) Do you

believe that you can tell someone who Jesus is? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*) How did Eli and Brooklyn encourage Eric, who wasn't sure that he was saved? (*They invited Eric to the conference, where he could ask questions and learn about God's love for him.*) Tell the class about a time when you had questions about God. What did you do? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you know that forgiveness is a gift from God? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: How can we receive God's gift of forgiveness? (*By believing that Jesus is the Son of God, who gave His life for us.*)

Decode the Message

Provide pencils and allow the students to decode the message in their student books by finding the letter where the two numbers intersect in the chart. (For example, 5-2 is "R.") Assist as needed. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

Decoded Words: God; forgives; us

Completed Message: When we accept Jesus, God forgives us!

☺ "God Forgives Us" Courtroom Role-play

1. Create a courtroom scene and assign students to role-play a judge, prosecuting and defendant lawyers, the defendant, jurors, and so forth.
2. Have students act out a scenario where someone did something wrong, and the defendant's lawyer argues for the defendant—and the prosecuting lawyer argues against the defendant.
3. After the lawyers rest their case, have the jury reach a guilty verdict.
4. Then, have the judge pardon/forgive the guilty defendant.
5. Lead a discussion connecting the courtroom scene to what God does for us through Jesus Christ.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher's guide for general instructions for this section.

The Way

May 26, 2024—Lesson 13

Background Scripture: Romans 10:1-21 • **Lesson Scripture:** Romans 10:5-13

Key Verse: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (*Romans 10:13*)

Lesson Objective: The students will begin to understand that when they accept Jesus Christ, it is the way to God.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bible, markers, a CD of instrumental praise music and CD player, pencils, other art supplies, white copy paper, a red marker, masking tape. (**Optional:** whiteboard)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

✂️ Prior to class, (1) using a red marker and two sheets of copy paper, write the word “TRUE” in large letters on one sheet of paper, and the word “FALSE” on another sheet. Tape the TRUE/FALSE sheets on opposite walls in the classroom; (2) conduct an Internet search for weird laws in the Bible and our society and prepare your list, changing some elements to make some laws false. See the links below for a list of “dumb” and “weird” laws.

- <https://forestgrove.pgusd.org/documents/Computer-Lab/Strange-State-Laws.pdf>
- <https://www.thelawyerportal.com/blog/top-10-weirdest-laws-around-world/>

Welcome and Worship

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Opening Activity

Refer to page 6 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Say: We are going to play the “‘True or False?’ Law Game.” Did you know that most laws were created to maintain order and protect people and animals? But, some laws in the Bible and our society today are very unusual. I will read a law or statement. You must decide if the law is true or false. If the law or statement is true, stand by the TRUE sign. If the law or statement is false, stand by the FALSE sign. If you choose incorrectly, you are out of the game. The last student standing wins the game. (*A few laws are listed to get you started.*)

- (1) You may not wear blue jeans down Noble Street in Alabama. **TRUE**
- (2) It is legal to break a vow in some circumstances. **FALSE (Numbers 30:2)**
- (3) In Arizona, donkeys can sleep in bathtubs. **FALSE**
- (4) It is illegal to curse a father or mother. **TRUE (Exodus 21:17)**
- (5) In Baldwin Park, California, you can ride a bicycle in a swimming pool. **FALSE**

After the game, explain that in the Old Testament, we read how the Jewish people tried to obey the Law, and they couldn’t do it. So, they repeatedly gave sacrifices to God to gain God’s approval and cover their sin. Then, God sent Jesus as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, we will not suffer the eternal consequences of our sins; we will receive an eternal reward for following God. Today’s lesson focuses on how believing in Jesus is the way to God.

BIBLE VOYAGE

The Bible Story
Refer to pages 6–7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

The Way

In today’s Scripture, Paul referred to Moses’ writings in the book of Deuteronomy. Moses wrote that righteousness (or being made right) by the Law requires one to live by the Law. Living by the Law is too difficult because you must obey every law perfectly. The way to God is through having faith in Jesus Christ.

We are *justified* or made acceptable to God by our faith or belief in Jesus. We do not have to bring Jesus down from heaven. And we don’t have to bring Jesus to life again. *Salvation* (forgiveness of sin) through Jesus Christ is easy to reach. It is as close as your heart and your mouth.

We only need to say with our mouths that “Jesus is Lord” and believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead to be saved from the consequences of sin. By believing in our hearts, we are made right with God. And by confessing with our mouths, we are saved.

God’s Word states that “anyone who believes in Jesus will not be ashamed or disappointed.” There is no difference between Jews (God’s chosen people) and Gentiles (non-Jewish people). God loves everyone and will save all who call on Him.

Ask: What must we do to be justified or made right before God by faith? (*Believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who died for our sins and was resurrected—and confess that we believe.*) To whom is salvation—freedom from sin—offered? (*To everyone who believes [Jews and Gentiles].*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

I Need What You Have (Part 1)

After Julia was baptized, she was excited to live for God.

Each morning, she would say, “God, help me to do what makes You happy!”

One day during lunch, Julia went to sit with her friends Antonia, Levi, and Felicia. But Levi was sitting at another table.

Julia asked, “Why is Levi sitting by himself?”

Antonia said, “I think he’s upset. Mr. Winton talked to him this morning. But I’m not sure what happened.”

Julia walked over to Levi, whispering to herself, “God, please help me.”

When Julia sat down, Levi said, “I want to be by myself.”

Julia said, “I just want to sit with you. I’ll be quiet.”

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Provide pencils and allow the students to trace on the map in the student book the path of Paul’s missionary trips (in his quest to share the message that Jesus lives).

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

I Need What You Have (Part 2)

As lunch was about to end, Levi said, “Mr. Winton showed me my history test results. I didn’t do well, but he’s letting me retake it.”

Julia said, “Be thankful that you can retake the test.”

Levi said, “You’re right, but I thought I did better.”

Julia said, “I’m learning to call on God for everything. Do you know that I always ask God to help me before I take a quiz? I know God helps me.”

Levi said, “I’ve been wondering why you have so much peace and joy. I need what you have.”

Smiling, Julia said, “I’m happy to share Jesus’ gift of salvation with you!”

Ask: Whom does Julia trust to help her? (*God.*) Have you ever helped a friend when he or she was upset? What did you do? (*Responses will vary.*) Why do you think God wants us to help others? (*We’re showing them God’s love/kindness.*) Why was Levi upset? (*He didn’t do well on his history test.*) Tell the class about a time when you were upset. What happened? (*Responses will vary.*) Do you think God is happy when we share the message of salvation with others? Why or why not? (*Responses will vary.*)

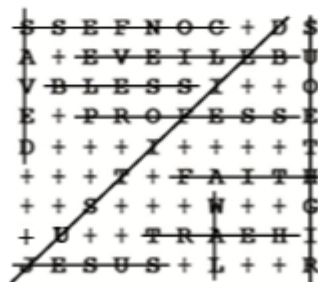
Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Ask: How can you encourage someone to want to accept Jesus Christ? (*Allow God’s Spirit to lead you to show God’s love and kindness to others and be ready to tell others about Jesus when they ask you.*)

Searching for Words

Provide pencils and allow the students to complete the activity in the student book. When they finish, review the answers aloud.

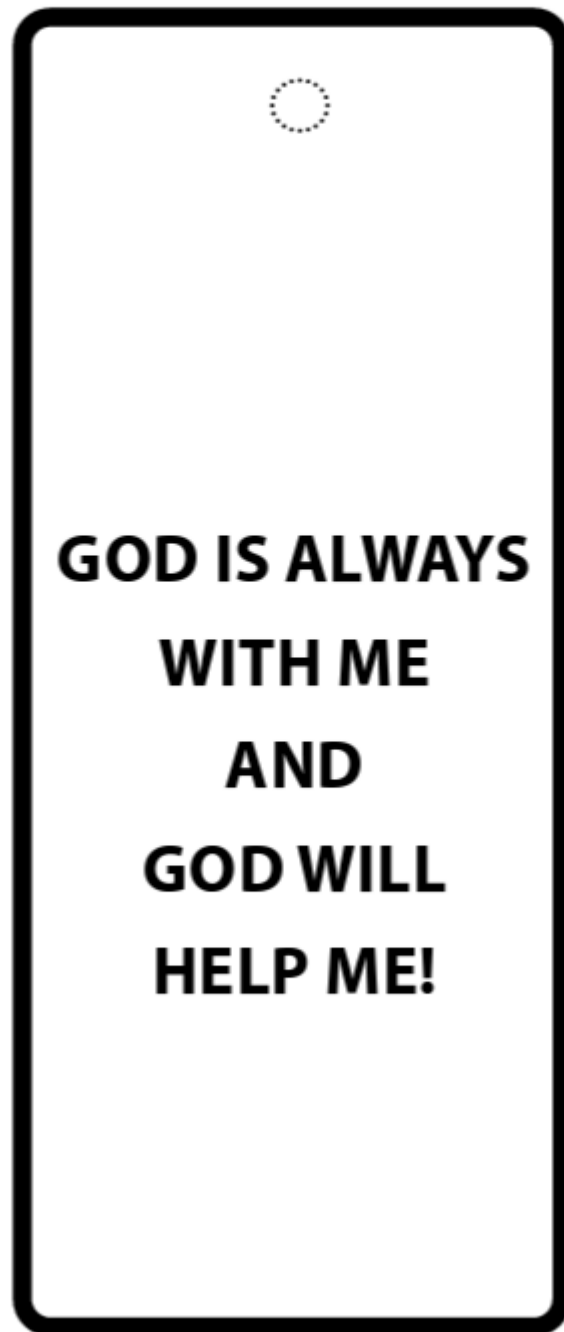


ENDING THE JOURNEY

Refer to page 7 of this teacher’s guide for general instructions for this section.

Upper Elementary Reproducible
Lesson 1

Make a “God Is Always with Me” Bookmark



Lesson 3

Make a “Love Is the Best Way” Door Hanger



Lesson 9

Make a “God Loves and Hears Everyone” Flag

