

Journey Activities

Thank you for extending your Bible Study efforts to include these suggested Journey Activities! Please consider these as optional per lesson based on the time you have available. These can be done as a group, or you may choose in some cases to do these by yourself.

While most of these activities are related to the details of the lesson they are aligned to, that does not mean you can't use them out of order! Feel free to mix and match as you see fit. Each of these activities can stand alone and have value independent of the guide.

The main goal is to have fun and learn new things as you Seek God!



Lesson 1

The Art of Christian Symbols: *Reminders to Have Faith*



Symbolism has been part of Christianity since before it came into existence, if you consider references to events in the Old Testament that were symbolic of what was to come. Even the Star of Bethlehem preceded the birth of Jesus and the formation of His Church. All of these symbols point back to a Promise that God made to us. And they are all reminders of His Love for us.

Christian symbols come in many forms but are often manifested as works of art. They can represent momentous events, such as the Crucifixion of Jesus, or as concepts, such as Fishers of Men, or educational in nature with respect to worship services, such as Baptism. But they all serve as reminders to have faith.

In this activity we want to learn about some of the more well-known symbols and commit them to memory by painting a grid of 9 (3X3) that have special meaning to you! And then, we want you to take your work of art and place it in a special spot as a daily reminder to build on your faith each day.

NOTES:

Lesson 2

Caught in the Net: *Let the wicked fall into their own nets. Psalm 141:10*



This is a game of skill and cunning. The Bible points out that wicked people will try and trick you and trap you in all sorts of cleverly designed schemes. But as Christians our hope is in the Lord! And we pray that the wicked will eventually be caught in their own evil nets.

In this activity you can play individually against each other or in small teams of 2 or 3 each. Since two heads are better than one, we suggest the team-approach, as it will allow you to test ideas out on each other before presenting them to the opposing team.

Each team will present three verses, two verses will be from the Bible and the other will be made up to sound as if it comes from the Bible. Do not specify which Book of the Bible or the chapter and verse numbers on any of the verses. The opposing team has to identify which verse is wicked. Depending on how many teams are playing, each team makes their selection in secret and when all are finished the scores are tabulated. A correct answer gets 10 points. An incorrect answer gets minus 10 points.

Rotate around the room until all teams have presented their 3 verses then calculate the winner. Depending on the size of the group and time available you can go around multiple times. Ideally, everyone wins.

NOTES:

Lesson 3

The Nothingness Project: *The Foundational Issue of Creation*



One aspect of true understanding is an absolute belief in God. Most of us say that we believe, but we also occasionally lose our focus on His existence. Try the exercise that Little Preacher shares with Cat and Jane Alice as they lie there, looking up at the stars on The Hill. Wait for a clear night and find an unobstructed view of the heavens. Lie on your back with other friends and discuss the wonders of God's creation as a first step. It's the second step—trying to imagine what was in place before creation—that's the most difficult! The concept of creation, as it is spelled out in Genesis, is well known, and generally understood:

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

Since this is the very first sentence of the Bible, it must be pretty important! Let's not gloss over this too quickly. In this exercise—and this is not easy—try and imagine absolute nothingness.

Again, try and imagine absolute nothingness! Ask yourself: How did anything come to exist at all? Most of us take for granted that there have always been things—things around us, things in our minds. Sure, if we look around us, we see that we have solid ground below our feet, air to breathe, stars in the sky, food to eat, and so forth. But how did all this come about? Were they always here?

Extend the exercise: Take a moment and imagine you can roll up all the things in the infinite universe into a tiny ball and put the ball in your pocket. Cover your eyes to block out all the light. Be in total darkness. Don't make a sound. Now, pretend you don't exist. Nothing exists. Then, take a few minutes to lie there in silence, with your eyes closed, making no sounds, asking God: "How did You do this?"

Atheists who strictly believe in evolution and point to the Big Bang Theory as the answer don't start with zero material. They live in a world that they can't fully explain. How does anyone explain the origin of the universe without God? On the other hand, Christians accept a God that they can't fully understand, and the origin of the universe is explained.

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Lesson 4

Cemetery Trip: *Shine a Light*



There are countless souls in cemeteries around the country and each one has a story. So much history and so much mystery at the same time. But there are clues, literally carved in stone, waiting for you.

Jane Alice explored an old cemetery in Demopolis and gathered names and details from tombs and headstones to help solve the French Ghost Pirates mystery. Little Preacher took the names and did the research to make sense of it all. Cat brought them together to craft a plan of action. They worked as a team to make it happen.

If we could bring these souls back to life, so to speak, by shining a light on them, who knows what good could come from it?

In this Activity, you will need a camera (phone) and a flashlight (with fresh batteries!). You will also need a “Trusted Guide” (aka a responsible adult). The group should stay in close contact with each other (don’t do what Jane Alice did, wandering off by yourself in a cemetery at night is not a good idea). But you can spread out enough for you each to find unique headstones that you can take pictures of. Try and find at least 5 that you can take a picture of, capturing the name, date and any epitaph that is noteworthy. Please be respectful of the cemetery rules and grounds in this process.

Your job will be to research the various names and find one of them that has potential to make a good story that can be turned into a good deed for the community or the related family. The group members will each present one soul and then vote on the one that they would like to honor with a good deed project, and then put an action plan together as a team to make it happen.

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Lesson 5

Riddles: *The Mystery of Spiritual Matters*



Did you know that there are riddles in the Bible? In general, a riddle is a type of puzzle, but instead of puzzle pieces you have words to analyze. In both the Old Testament and New Testament riddles were used for a variety of purposes, from education and secret communication to entertainment and discerning wisdom. Making spiritual matters a mystery served a purpose. God wanted to challenge people to understand his message so they would fully comprehend and always remember. That same process is alive and well today. Seeking God is not always easy.

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

Proverbs 25:2

While on the surface a riddle can deliver a plain and simple message, those that were skilled in the art could grasp the deeper meaning of the message.

In Cat's case she was faced with the riddle of the Teddy Bear, BEFORE TIME, and the Dark Clock. What did it all mean? Little Preacher shared with her and Jane Alice what his daddy had told him about dreams and the idea that God might be trying to tell you something. He suggested that the three of them go up on The Hill and think about it.

In this activity, you need to think about some of the key riddles in the Bible (Hint: Google can help). To avoid overlap between teams or individuals, assign someone to be the Riddle Master & Judge, and have them match each group with a small set of (2-3) riddles to select from. The object is to fully understand the riddle you choose and then to tell the riddle to all the teams and give each team a chance to guess what it means. Each team can ask one question of the Riddle Holder, which needs to be answered clearly and accurately (the Judge can clarify if needed). The teams draw straws to see what order they go in. They can also trade positions, from first to last for example, if one feels confident that they can answer quickly, or another wants to hear the other team's questions first before they guess the answer. The Judge decides who wins and at what point a complete answer has been provided. The teams huddle briefly after the straws have been drawn (or written numbers) and the riddle has been presented to decide if they want to try and switch positions. Whoever holds the #1 position can decide to switch to any position they choose based on how hard the riddle sounds.

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Lesson 6

Sleepwalking: *Lord help me!*



Have you ever sleepwalked? Let me tell you, I have! And it was a scary experience for me. Believe it or not, I was staying with Cat's parents, Gertrude Leafy Flowers & Johnny Luker (my grandparents) in Aimwell. I was a teenager then and it was summertime, extremely hot outside. They slept with the windows and doors open, but with screens over the windows and with screen doors in place (unlocked!) so the fans could draw in the cool night air (without bugs coming in). I went to bed after a big dinner of fried chicken with biscuits and gravy (I always thought the last serving of biscuits and gravy before bed caused indigestion,

sparkling my sleepwalking). But it was so good! I got up (sound asleep) in the middle of the night and walked out through the front screen door and down the road to a wooded area, took a left into the woods and made my way to the ruins of an old church! I woke up as I was facing the dilapidated old structure and about had a panic attack when I realized where I was standing. Needless to say, I hightailed it back to my room in record time.

The best way I know to simulate sleepwalking is with a blindfold. In this activity you will divide the group into teams of 2-3 each. The goal is to navigate an obstacle course with a blindfold in place (no peeping!) and pick-up a small object and bring it back to the starting point. You can lift the blind fold when the object is in hand and race (hightail) back to the finish line, but you have to go through the same obstacle course on the way back.

The non-blindfolded team member(s) have to “guide” you through the obstacles to reach the goal. Think of them as the Lord placing your steps. You have to listen!

Note: You can do this inside or outside and use chairs, pillows, or cardboard boxes, etc. to create the obstacle courses. You can make one course and use a timer for each team or multiple, matching courses so that each team races against each other at the same time.

Please use safe obstacles and be careful! Hopefully, you will open your eyes and find yourself surrounded by vultures like Little Preacher.

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Lesson 7

Time Travel: *How could that happen?*



At first glance, the futuristic city appears gleaming and immaculate, with towering skyscrapers made of sleek, reflective materials that catch the sunlight and cast dazzling reflections. The streets are lined with futuristic vehicles gliding silently along, and the sidewalks are filled with bustling crowds of people in fashionable attire.

As time passes, however, signs of wear and tear begin to appear. The once-shiny surfaces of the buildings start to show cracks and stains, and the glass windows become dirty and cracked. The once-thriving businesses start to close down, leaving empty storefronts and

abandoned buildings in their wake.

The streets, once bustling with activity, become eerily quiet as people start to move away from the decaying city. Graffiti begins to appear on the walls, and trash piles up in the streets, giving the once-futuristic city a rundown and neglected appearance.

The once sleek and modern vehicles start to break down, their once state-of-the-art technology now outdated and unreliable. The city's infrastructure starts to crumble, with potholes forming in the streets and power outages becoming more frequent.

As the city continues to deteriorate, nature begins to reclaim its territory, with vines and weeds sprouting up through the cracks in the pavement and trees growing through the abandoned buildings. The once-futuristic city is now a shadow of its former self, a haunting reminder of the fleeting nature of progress.

In this activity, work in small teams and use AI or Google to create or find images that depict your written, documented vision of a specific place in time. Everyone will cast a vote for the best image that matches the visionary description.

Feel free to go forward or back in time and think about the possibility of going back in time to Aigleville (the Ghost Town)!

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Lesson 8

Muffins Rescue: *Who can you save?*



One activity for Middle Grade readers could be organizing a community clean-up day. Students can work together to pick up litter, plant flowers, and beautify public spaces in their neighborhood. This not only helps improve the environment, but also instills a sense of pride and responsibility in the participants as they work together to make a positive impact on their community. Saving someone does not have to be as dramatic as Cat saving Muffins from the evil circus, it can mean saving someone from a bad day by doing a good deed.

Consider for a minute the Bible verse that says, "you reap what you sow" from Galatians 6:7-8. This relates to the Law of the Harvest. The image below could be a flower garden that you plant

for an elderly widow, to bring her happiness. Imagine her harvesting the flowers to place on her kitchen table or to give to a friend.



There is no end to the possibilities that come from sowing good deeds (like seeds!) in your community. Start by making a list and then get busy.

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Lesson 9

Ringmaster: *What do you control?*



The art from the cover of the book depicts a scene from Chapter 15, The Ringmaster's Tent, and as described in the lesson was a work of art that I initiated with God's help and saw through to completion with a series of steps that required significant effort.

The Ringmaster, in this story, represents an evil character that “controls” the world around him. And in his case, that was his circus, and all that the circus included, from tents and equipment to people and animals. Poor Muffins was one of the animals under his control.

But a Ringmaster does not have to be evil. They can also be normal and good. What type of Ringmaster would you be if you were in control of your own world? What would that world look like? The reality is you are in control of your own world. You are the Ringmaster!

In this activity, just as I did with the cover art of this book. I want you to visualize what your world looks like now or in the future. Again, AI or Google can help you document your vision. You can make a collage of images and words that cover all aspects of your world, or it can be an epic rendering of the world to come, or, how about a movie of the important things in your world today? It is up to you; you are the Ringmaster.

This assignment might take some time to complete so feel free to work independently on the project and bring the results back to the group to share.

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Lesson 10

The Dark Clock: *What did God do BEFORE TIME?*



This activity is simple but mind bending. If you completed Lesson-3 (The Nothingness Project) you already have an idea of the VOID. In this activity we will take it a step further and imagine what God was doing BEFORE TIME.

Imagine God inviting you behind the Dark Clock to witness His thought process regarding not only the creation of the universe but also the weaving of time from beginning to end. He chose you before the foundation of the world! It says so in multiple places in the Bible.

In this activity, as one of God's chosen, you will sit on the floor in a silent circle and do a breathing exercise. Taking a breath was your very first act as you came into this world, and it will be your last act as you depart. In addition to the breathing exercise and silence, you will meditate on your visit with God and think about His Plan for you, where you have been from before the foundation of the world to where you are today and where God plans to take you in the future. He will share this with you through images in your mind. Visualize where God wants you to go then take his hand and follow.

To start, take a deep breath in, in honor of your first act of life. Hold it for a count of seven seconds in your mind, and then slowly exhale for a count of 7 seconds, in honor of your last act in this life. Don't take another breath at that point but rather, with your lungs empty, hold on for as long as you can without a breath, until you can't stand it, and then take the deepest, longest breath ever as you visualize life after death. Tilt your head back and start to pray in silence to God, thank him for the journey you are on and what he has in store for you. At this point as you continue to pray, imagine a star with five points, slowly take five shallow breaths, one at each point on the star, then slowly exhale in one continuous path around the points of the star. Then repeat the shallow breath points and exhale over and over until your meditation is completed.

A good, healthy meditation can last 10 or 15 minutes (or as long as you like!). And remember, you can repeat this meditation (in a group or on your own) anytime you feel the need to connect with God. As a variation, you can mix in soft sounds from the universe to stir your imagination (try- Travel the Universe While Relaxation (STAR) Space Ambient Music).

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A final note, if you have suggestions for additional activities or variations of these activities, please feel free to share and we will do our best to incorporate the best ideas. We will also continue to build on the Journey Activity Guide, so check back, or sign up for updates at....