

TEACHER'S GUIDE



High-Speed Rendezvous

Second Quarter 2024

REAL-TIME FAITH TEACHER'S GUIDE Second Quarter 2024

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WHAT THE LESSONS ARE ABOUT

The emphasis of this curriculum is God's kingdom of grace, being a recruited citizen (steward) of that kingdom, and the battle between it and the kingdom of evil. Being in God's kingdom requires action—being doers and not just listeners (James 1:22) of how to live as God's citizens on this earth.

The first lesson of each quarter of the two-year cycle is a different section of the Sermon on the Mount, which is "at once Christ's inaugural address as King of the kingdom of grace and also the constitution of the kingdom" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 322).

After the first lesson of each quarter each of the other 12 lessons (or sets of lessons) is about a different challenge, right, or privilege in the "real-time" of being a citizen of God's kingdom. A Christian never knows what he or she will be encountering next.

The curriculum includes two websites:

- www.realtimfaith.net where students and teachers can access additional resources.
- guidemagazine.org/rtf where students can explore a topic each week with other earliteens.

HOW TO USE THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

- > > **STEP 1: Read through the entire Preparation section of the *Teacher's Guide* to become familiar with the lesson concepts.** You will be best able to use the teaching material if you thoroughly understand the core concepts of the lesson.
- > > **STEP 2: Read the rest of the *Teacher's Guide* material for the week, including the student lesson.** Get an idea of the options provided for teaching the concepts. Go to www.realtimefaith.net to find additional resource material that might be available.
- > > **STEP 3: Choose the specific options you will use in teaching the lesson.** There are more options provided than you will be able to use. Try to choose something from each category: **Beginning**, **Connecting**, and **Applying**. Keep in mind that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.
- > > **STEP 4: Note when and how you will distribute or refer to the student lesson during the program.** The student lesson for each week is integral to the teaching process and will be referred to throughout. The lesson should be distributed to the students (if they don't already have it) a week in advance so that they may study it in preparation for Sabbath School.
- > > **STEP 5: Collect the materials you need to conduct the lesson.** Once again, keep in mind that student participation is vital.
- > > **STEP 6: Prepare the student lessons.** If you keep the student Bible study guides at church, remove the appropriate student lesson for the week and prepare it for distribution. If the students take their Bible study guides home at the beginning of the quarter, make arrangements to be able to teach the lesson smoothly even if the students forget to bring that week's lesson back with them. (Have the necessary Bible references listed on the board, have additional copies of the student illustration available, etc.)
- > > **STEP 7: Keep the end in mind.** Plan to wrap up your lesson with a summary of what the students have learned.

Teachers, in your role as a discipler of youth, the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department wants to help you in every way possible to be equipped for this important work. You are encouraged to go to www.growingfruitfuldisciples.com. There you will find resources to help you be more intentional and fruitful in the discipling of your students.

O V E R V I E W



Real-Time Faith Sabbath School for Earliteens

TEACHER'S GUIDE

APRIL

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WAY TO PRAY, PART 1 • 7 • / The President and the Little Boy

Our primary source of communication with God (Matthew 7:7-12) lies in seizing the opportunity to consistently share with Him in prayer.

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WAY TO PRAY, PART 2 • 19 • / Grace for a Sandwich; Grace for a Friend

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WALKING WITH GOD, PART 1 • 29 • / Long Walk to Freedom

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Drawing conclusions and applying principles regarding success and prosperity in the Christian walk.

HIGH-SPEED RENDEZVOUS

Second Quarter 2024

REAL-TIME FAITH® is a Sabbath School curriculum offering an application-oriented study of Scripture for earliteens.



ERT240401



WAY TO PRAY, PART 1

The President and the Little Boy

April 6, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Daniel 6:10 (NIV) • “Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.”

Psalms 143:1 (NIV) • “LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief.”

Psalms 66:20 (NIV) • “Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

1 Peter 3:12 (NIV) • “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Daniel 9:23 (NIV) • “As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision.”

Matthew 26:36 (NIV) • “Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ ”

Isaiah 29:13 (NIV) • “The Lord says: ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.’ ”

Luke 9:28, 29 (NIV) • “About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning.”

Acts 10:9 (NIV) • “About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.”

Matthew 6:5-8 (NIV) • “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT "WAY TO PRAY, PART 1"

Studying the topic of prayer is like observing the many angles of a precious diamond. You can step back and look at the whole diamond and say, "Wow, that's beautiful!" or you can get a magnifying glass and observe the nuances and details. This lesson is the first of a two-part series on prayer focusing on "when" we pray (Matthew 6:5-7). The next lesson covers what we pray about (verses 9-13).

Three themes should emerge: (1) **real** conversations with God; (2) **regular** conversations with God; and (3) **random** conversations with God.

This lesson is about citizens of the kingdom living in an **attitude of prayer** in which talking to God isn't a ritual but a reoccurring conversation throughout the day. The words of Christ about "real praying" call us to "close the door" (verse 6, NIV) for a moment while we talk with God. It is also important that we help students discover the **nature of prayer**—that it is a moment of thoughtful, heartfelt conversation. And, it is also important that we help them learn how to develop the **ability to pay attention** to the One to whom they are talking (close the door). The final component in this lesson would be a challenge to experience moments of real conversation with God throughout the day at **random, spontaneous moments** as well as planned periods of communion.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "WAY TO PRAY, PART 1"

As a result of this lesson we would like the student to be able to:

1. Examine the real purpose of prayer as a way to know and be known by God, as in a friendship.
2. Discover the value and joy of being able to give God their full attention while praying.
3. Develop the habit of simply talking to the King throughout each day.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) handout "Heart Check."

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to get the students to think about the nature of their conversations on a normal day. We all have routine, mundane, and mindless conversations.

We also have thoughtful and important interactions as well. The object is to get students to chart their conversations as best as they can for the last day or two. Do the exercise yourself to familiarize yourself with it.

Get set • Give each student a copy of the handout from page 13. Go over the instructions with them and ask them to work individually.

Go • Say: **Don't labor over this, but simply list as many conversations throughout any given day as you can remember.**

After the students have charted their conversations, have them share the results in pairs or in small groups.

Debriefing • Help students process their results by asking some or all of the following questions:

As you looked at your graph, how did you feel about having to assign a number to the importance of your conversations?

Did you notice any patterns about your conversations?

Do the more personal conversations take place at school, home, over the phone, or through texting?

Keeping in mind what you've learned about your conversations with others, how would you characterize your conversations with God (your prayer life) on a graph like this?

Why does it seem difficult to really have personal conversations with God?

What are the obstacles that get in the way?

What are some things you might do to improve the situation?

Whom do you know who seems to have personal conversations with God regularly?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The goal of this activity is to have students discuss something relatively important while other students talk to them, distract them, and seek to get their attention off the topic (verbally, not physically) with "good things."

Get set • Divide the students into groups of four or five. Have each group number off and then choose two numbers to carry on an important conversation (have them suggest the subject matter of a conversation that would be important to them). The others in the group will be distracters. The two conversers are to avoid being derailed or distracted. (You might also appoint "observers" to watch and report the dynamics.)

Go • Observe the dynamics as the "distracters" inundate the "conversers" with information so you will be able to comment. Give them two to three minutes to have this interaction, then stop them.

Debriefing • Say: **This activity was to help us experience the necessity of "closing the door"** (Matthew 6:6).

Help students process their experience by asking some or all of the following questions:

Was it difficult communicating under these circumstances? Explain.

To what degree can we really block things out?

When have you felt that someone wasn't really paying attention to you in a conversation? How did you feel?

When have you disengaged from really being attentive when someone was talking to you about something important?

What do you think are the major "distractions" in our conversations with God?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

A Native American and his friend were in downtown New York City, walking near Times Square in Manhattan. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing, and the sounds of the city were almost deafening.

Suddenly the Native American said, "I hear a cricket."

His friend said, "What? You must be crazy.

You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all of this noise!"

"No, I'm sure of it," the Native American said. "I hear a cricket."

"That's crazy," said the friend.

The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the street to a big cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes, beneath the branches, and sure enough, he located a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed.

"That's incredible," said his friend. "You have phenomenal hearing!"

"No," said the Native American. "My hearing is no different from yours. It all depends on what you're listening for."

"But that can't be!" said the friend.

"It depends on what is really important to you. Here, let me show you." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. With the noise of the crowded street still blaring, every person within 20 feet turned and looked to see if the money that had fallen on the pavement was theirs.

"See what I mean?" asked the Native American. "It all depends on what is important to you."—Wayne Rice, *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Used by permission.

Debriefing • Ask: If you were to look at what things you are "in tune" with as was the Native American in the big city, what positive/negative things could you list? How does a person's beliefs about the importance of prayer affect the way they pray? Be specific.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share with the students the following concepts of **real**, **regular**, and **random** conversations with God (the three R's of prayer). Make notes on a white/chalkboard as

you talk.

Explain that most kings and leaders have very little contact with their subjects, and certainly don't know them personally. Quite the opposite is true in God's great kingdom of grace here on earth. The only way to be part of this kingdom is to have a personal relationship with the King. When we don't communicate (through prayer and Bible study), our connection with the kingdom disintegrates little by little until we no longer feel that we belong in the kingdom. The more we talk openly with God, the more comfortable we feel as His agents.

1. Real Conversations With God

Explain that God wants more than anything to have real conversations with us. Real conversations are rare in this world. We often talk about nothing just to pass the time. And we often pray without even thinking about what we are saying. Many prayers are just replicas of one another. If we desire to really talk with God, we should think about the personal conversations we have with friends and talk with Him in the same way. We have a direct line, a mobile phone, direct access, no waiting. We are even told, as children of the kingdom, to use this privilege boldly (Hebrews 4:16).

Distribute or call attention to the student lesson. **Say:** Look at the verses in your lesson and choose one or two that seem to really speak to the idea of direct access with God.

Ask: Think of some prayers you have heard that gave you the sense that the person praying was having a real conversation with God. What did they say? How did you feel? What impact did this have on you? To what extent do you think that knowing God is eager for "quality time" with you might motivate you to pray more sincerely?

2. Regular Conversations With God

Explain that any exercise, activity, or skill that we want to become good at requires repetition if we don't want to feel awkward. The more we ride a bike, sing up front, or tell the truth, the more we become comfortable doing it. Many

pass on praying to God because it feels strange to them. But the truth is that the more we pray, the more prayer will eventually matter to us.

Ask: Think of some biblical characters who demonstrate “regular conversations with God.” What is it that drove them to be so consistent?

3. Random Conversations With God

Explain that wherever we are there are moments we can experience real communion with God. Short words, songs, thoughts, thanksgiving, or requests as we are walking to and from class can be moments in which we connect with God. The more we talk to God outside of the routine, the more God becomes a part of our daily lives.

Ask: Can you think of some random conversations with God in the Bible or in your own life in which you felt the communication with God was very real? (Peter screaming, “Help.” The woman touching the hem of Jesus’ garment.) **Have you ever just talked with God as you were walking, sitting in a car, or alone in your room? Again, the more you practice it, the more real it becomes.**

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Say: Ephesians 2:13 (NIV) describes the work that Christ has done to make it easy to talk to and relate to God. Ask someone to find and read it from the student lesson, or the Bible.

Say: In the same way that Tad Lincoln was able to give the soldier direct access to the president of the United States, Christ makes a clear path from our heart to the heart of God without any obstacles, interruptions, or prerequisites. What we do with that clear path is entirely up to us; it’s up to us how we choose to respond to the Holy Spirit, who points out the path to us.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Ask: Of the three R’s of prayer outlined in the previous section, Connecting to the Kingdom, which is most prominent in your life? Which is least?

Present the following scenario:

Kendra has always knelt down and prayed before she goes to sleep at night. It’s not just a habit for her; it is one way she worships God. But tonight she is staying at Lisa’s house, where God is not a big part of the home. They have had a great day together, but she feels tempted, just this once, to lie in her bed and pray so she doesn’t make her friend feel awkward. Is she missing an opportunity to talk to her friend about her faith? Would kneeling and praying be misunderstood by Lisa? What should Kendra do? How can she be true to her relationship with God and be a witness to her friend without making her feel strange?

Ask a volunteer to find and read **Matthew 5:16** and discuss with your students how it might apply to the scenario.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Explain to the students that sometimes having a prayer partner helps foster a life of prayer. Challenge them by saying: **If there is someone you feel comfortable with and you think they may be willing, invite them to be a prayer partner with you for a month and see how it goes. Make sure you strive to pray regularly together; most of all, make sure you talk honestly and openly with God; and share examples with each other of random moments of prayer that were especially meaningful.** Help the students make definite plans to do this. In some situations it might be appropriate to choose prayer partners for the month from among the other members of the class.

Ask: If you were to rank the type of prayers you pray, which would occur more often than others—real, random, or regular?

Say: In the passages given in the student lesson, note which verses seem to talk about the three types of prayers. Look at your prayer life and consider what kind of praying you need to work on.

Ask: Why do you think that is?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Agree or disagree: Having a routine of prayer is good for the soul.
2. What are some different ways to pray other than the traditional approaches? Have you thought of writing or singing your prayers?
3. Agree or disagree: The fact that prayer seems to be a one-way conversation makes it difficult to do. Why?
4. How do random prayers out of the blue build your relationship with God? Can you live on random prayers alone? What do you think?

5. What do you think God is doing when you pray? Have you ever imagined this from His perspective? How does trying to visualize God while you are praying help you?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Let's be honest with God. He knows what we are thinking and feeling, and even though He is aware of our situation He wants us to talk with Him about it. Practicing real communication with God can be the greatest experience you have as a Christian. In fact, people who refuse to be honest and open with Him fail to know Him and are simply playing games. Say exactly what you want to say to God. He can take it. Also, be willing to say what you know you need to say as well. Ultimately, the real challenge of praying sincerely is remembering to pray and shutting the doors on the things that get in the way.

FOR LESSON ONE:
THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE BEGINNING ACTIVITY.

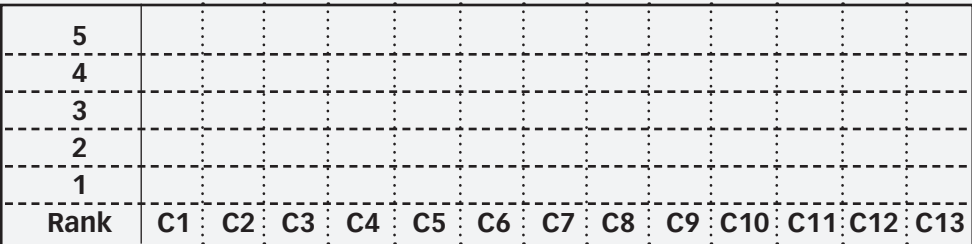
“Heart Check”

On the list below briefly describe who you had a conversation with and rank the conversation as to its depth. For instance, I had a conversation with the person who was selling groceries at the grocery store. Since the conversation wasn’t terribly thoughtful, personal, or deep, I ranked it as a 1. I called my dad and we talked about a cousin who was asking questions about God. I ranked that a 3. A young person and I talked about a friend who was considering suicide. I gave that one a 5.

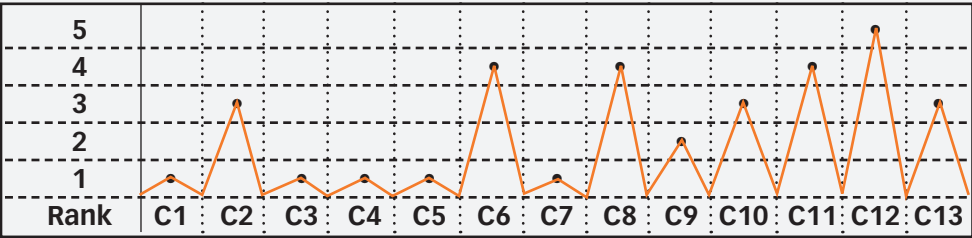
List and rank the conversations you had on one day this week:

Conversation	Who and what was it about?	Rank (1 being superficial; 5 very personal)
C1		
C2		
C3		
C4		
C5		
C6		
C7		
C8		
C9		
C10		
C11		
C12		
C13		

After you make the list and rank your conversations, plot them on the “heart check graph” with a dot in the appropriate rank column below.



After you have plotted your ranked conversations, connect the dots. But be sure to draw the line to the bottom between each conversation so your graph should have the appearance of a cardiac readout. Like this:





STUDENT LESSON

WAY TO PRAY, PART 1

The President and the Little Boy

April 6, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 11, Growing in Christ:** “By His death on the cross Jesus triumphed over the forces of evil. . . . In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the Church.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 102, 103.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE LITTLE BOY

During the American Civil War a young soldier in the Union Army lost both his older brother and his father in the Battle of Gettysburg. The soldier decided to go to Washington, D.C., to see President Lincoln. He had decided to ask for an exemption from military service so that he could go back to the family farm and help his sister and mother with the spring planting.

When he arrived in Washington, he went to the White House. Approaching the front gate,

he asked to see the president.

The guard on duty told him, “You can’t see the president, young man! The president is a very busy man! Now go away, son! Get back out there on the battle lines, where you belong!”

So the young soldier left, very disheartened, and was sitting on a park bench not far from the White House when a little boy came up to him. The boy said, “Soldier, you look unhappy. What’s wrong?”

The soldier looked at the little boy and began to share his sad story. He told of his father and his brother being killed in the war. He explained that his mother and sister had no one to help them with the farm.

The little boy listened and said, “I can help you, soldier.” He took the soldier by the hand and led him back to the front gate of the White House. Apparently the guard didn’t notice them, because they weren’t stopped. They walked straight to the front door of the White House and walked right in. After they got inside, they walked right past the generals and high-ranking officials, and no one said a word. The soldier couldn’t understand what was happening. Why didn’t anyone stop them?

Finally they reached the Oval Office—where the president was working—and the little boy didn’t even knock on the door. He just walked right in and led the soldier in with him. There behind the desk were Abraham Lincoln and his secretary of state, looking over the battle plans that were laid out on the desk.

The president glanced at the soldier and then looked at the boy with a smile. “Good afternoon,

Tad. Can you introduce me to your friend?"

And Tad Lincoln, the son of the president of the United States, said, "Daddy, this soldier needs to talk to you."

The soldier pleaded his case before Mr. Lincoln, and right then and there he received the exemption from the war that he desired. —Wayne Rice, *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Used by permission.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Psalm 5:3.
- » Corin has a friend who is struggling with her parents because they are getting a divorce and the whole situation is getting ugly. Her friend seems bitter about God, but Corin really wants to pray with her or for her and show her that God can be a source of strength and hope. She doesn't want to drive her friend away, but she feels this is a great moment to talk honestly to God with her friend. What do you think she should do? What should she be careful of?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON GROWING IN CHRIST

- » Read 1 John 4:4; James 1:27; Colossians 2:6.
- » We live for Jesus because of what He has done for us and what He is doing in us. Since Jesus lives in us, we are to live as He lived—doing good and helping others. And we do this by staying connected to Him through prayer and Bible study.
- » How can you make prayer and Bible study a priority in your life?

- » Unscramble the words in the word box and fill in the blanks with the correct words.

oedeirmtpn
nigdokm
srsdakne
gionfrsvsee
ldidreeve
ocnvyydee

"He has _____ us from the power of _____ and _____ us into the _____ of the Son of His love, in whom we have _____ through His blood, the _____ of sins" (Colossians 1:13, 14, NKJV).

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Mark 1:35.
- » The question isn't whether we should pray or not—even those who don't believe in God will pray when they face a moment of potential disaster. There are other people who repeat prayers all throughout the day, but still never really connect with God. The question is: What is the quality of the communication?
- » Jesus would steal away at night just to be able to talk with His Father in prayer. Jesus knew talking with His Father was worth more than sleeping. Think of a conversation you have had with someone that means the world to you—maybe a parent, or a friend. That is what a conversation with God can be like.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks.
- » Look up the texts from the NIV translation and fill in the blanks. If you do not have a New International Version, go to www.BibleGateway.com, where you will find many translations of the Bible.
- 1. "Very early in the _____, while it was

still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a _____ place, where he _____" (Mark 1:35).

2. "In the _____, LORD, you _____ my voice; in the _____ I lay my _____ before you and wait _____" (Psalm 5:3).
3. "_____ always, _____ continually, give _____ in _____ circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).
4. "And _____ in the _____ on all _____ with _____ kinds of _____ and _____. With this in mind, be _____ and _____ keep on _____ for all the Lord's _____" (Ephesians 6:18).
5. "In the same way, the _____ helps us in our _____. We do not know what we ought to _____ for, but the _____ himself _____ for us through _____ groans. And he who _____ our hearts knows the _____ of the Spirit, because the Spirit _____ for God's _____ in accordance with the _____ of God" (Romans 8:26, 27).
6. "By His _____ and His _____, Christ has achieved even more than _____ from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an _____ separation between God and man; but in _____ we become more closely _____ to _____ than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the _____ has bound Himself to _____ by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is _____ with us" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25 [*The Desire of Ages* is online at www.WhiteEstate.org]).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Romans 8:26, 27.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Have you ever wanted to pray but just couldn't bring yourself to do it because it had been so long since your last conversation with God? The fear or guilt that keeps us from opening our hearts to God in prayer is not coming from Him. It is the work of someone else. Take the Savior at His word when He says, "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away. . . . And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day" (John 6:37, 39, NIV).
- » Jesus understands how hard it is to stay connected to God while we are here on earth. He knows how busy life can be. He spent whole nights in prayer so He could be ready for the day ahead! The key is making time to spend with God. The more you talk with God just as you would a friend, the more you will experience how wonderful He is.

Friday

APPLYING

- » 1 Peter 4:7.
- » This week, identify three things that keep you or distract you from having a real interaction with God. Plan how you are going to close the door on those distractions, and journal a few thoughts about your experience doing this throughout the week. Also think of someone you could hold yourself accountable to for this activity. (You will discuss the concept of accountability in class on Sabbath.)

Close the door on . . .

Close the door on . . .

Close the door on . . .

Journal: _____





WAY TO PRAY, PART 2

Grace for a Sandwich;
Grace for a Friend

April 13, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Prayers from Scripture:

Prayer for Sodom—**Genesis 18:20-33**

Prayer that destroys an army—**2 Kings 19:15-20, 32-35**

Prayer of heartfelt thanks—**2 Samuel 7:18-29**

Prayer of repentance—**Psalms 51:1-13**

Prayer of worship—**Psalms 138:1-8**

Prayer for the believers—**John 17:1-26**

Prayer for Israel's rebellion—**Daniel 9:1-19**

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT "WAY TO PRAY, PART 2"

While saying exactly "what's on your heart" is primary to developing a meaningful conversation with God (see last week's lesson), it is also true that there might be things we should be saying that we don't even think about. The disciples asked Jesus for a crash course in prayer. The prayer Jesus models (Matthew 6; Luke 11) covers the things we should be talking to God about. In this lesson we will look at the components of prayer (confession, forgiveness, praise, thanksgiving, requests, commitment, intercession, adoration, surrender, and many others). From a few of the conversations Jesus and others in the Bible had with God we will draw

guidelines for shaping our own prayer life.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "WAY TO PRAY, PART 2"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Evaluate the way we pray in light of what God wants us to talk to Him about.
2. Develop thoughtful and creative ways to interact with God in sacred conversation.
3. Sense a need to pray, both for what they think they need and for what God thinks they need.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) white/chalkboard and markers/chalk; OR paper, pens or pencils; (Activity B) white/chalkboard and markers/chalk.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Bibles, paper, pencils or pens.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief

highlighted this week.

3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • You need a white/chalkboard and markers/chalk OR paper, pens or pencils. The goal of this exercise is to help students see the value of the words we choose when we pray. The first step is for them to observe how “saying the same old thing” doesn’t make for good conversation.

Get set • Have the students in groups or as a class brainstorm all the most-used words and phrases they hear people pray. Prompt them with “How do prayers begin and end?” or “Think about words and phrases you hear repeated all the time.” Have the students fill the board or their sheet of paper for a few minutes.

Go • Have the students share their list of most repeated words and phrases with the rest of the class and comment on such words as “forgive” and “bless” and “be with.” Point out that we say these words to God mindlessly sometimes. If we were having a serious

talk with a friend, parent, or teacher—perhaps asking for forgiveness—we would probably not be using mindless words and phrases.

Have the students develop a list of synonyms or other ways to say some of the common words and phrases on their list. Then have them, either personally or in groups, write out a prayer to God saying exactly what they want to say, and using none of the words or phrases on their list. Have the students share their prayers with the class.

Debriefing • Ask: How did you feel about the list of “common prayer sayings” when you saw them in front of you? What do you think is the most misunderstood word or phrase people use in prayer? (Possibly “in Jesus’ name” or “bless” will top the list.) **What do you think about writing out your prayers to God? What are the positives and negatives of journaling for you? What do you think we pray about more than we should? And what should we be talking to God about that we neglect?**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • You need a white/chalkboard and markers/chalk.

Get set • Say: We have many ways to communicate messages that are important. Our world is all about communicating effectively. Everything depends on choosing the best ways to get the message across.

Go • Say: Think of all the things we use to communicate messages today. Think of the most important kinds of messages there are to communicate. Make two columns on a white/chalkboard. With the students’ help, list important methods or modes of communication in the left column (things such as texting, e-mail, letters, TV, phone, satellite, sticky notes, pagers, etc.) and in the right column, list the most important messages the students think should be communicated (emergency calls, acceptance to a certain college, marriage

proposal, birth announcement, presidential address, sermon, etc.).

When the columns are completed, have the students pose some combinations of mode and message that would be least effective. For example, one way to communicate with people is by e-mail, but if the message is that the building is on fire, a mass e-mail memo with attached evacuation plans would probably not be effective. Neither would it be advisable to propose to a girlfriend on a sticky note.

After having some fun with this, ask the students to choose a more appropriate mode for the messages you have mentioned. (Have a plan for getting them back on track.)

Debriefing • Ask: While mixing up messages and modes may be humorous, how does this apply to the way God has chosen to communicate with us? How does this exercise apply to prayer and what we pray?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

Eric Liddell was an Olympic champion and an ambassador of faith to the world. After winning one gold medal and one bronze medal in the Olympics, he went to China as a missionary, where he had been born to missionary parents. As Chinese warlords battled with Japan he went from place to place teaching and sharing the message of God's love with people.

At an internment camp his influence permeated the place to the point that others were deeply affected by his faith. People wondered about the source of his love and devotion for others. His kindness prompted many to inquire about the secret of his abundant life. The secret was no secret at all. Those who stayed in the same dormitory as Liddell remember well an oil lamp burning in the early hours of the morning. Eric Liddell would crawl out of his bunk before the others would wake and read his Bible and pray fervently to God for guidance and wisdom.

While people remember the medals and the bold position of faithfulness that made

him famous, the people in China discovered what rests at the heart of such a champion: an abiding devotion to God in prayer.

Debriefing • Ask: How many times do you think you talk to God in a day? What do you actually say to God about your day? As you pray, what do you pray for the most? (Give examples: sick friends, travel mercy, forgiveness, help with something, good weather, etc.) Now think about your conversations with friends. Do you have some friends with whom you can talk about anything and everything, and others with whom you focus more on hobbies or similar interests? How does what we pray about describe what our relationship with God is like? Give an example.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

Citizenship! Imagine having the right to walk right up to the leader of the kingdom and ask him for a favor, maybe invite him to dinner, or just thank him for his faithful service to his citizens. It's not difficult to visualize different people bringing different comments and questions to such a conversation with their leader. Imagine what it is like for God to see us coming to Him in prayer.

Ask: What do you think is His response to people who pray out of habit and not out of a heart of love? How do you think He responds when a child asks for lots of toys for their birthday? What about the prayers that just thank Him for His goodness?

While we cannot know how God responds to all of the various prayers, we do know He hears each one. In the same way that God's kingdom is made up of several core characteristics (grace, justice, service, selflessness, worship, joy, etc.) it is also true that our communication has several

core elements as well. This is what the disciples were asking for when they asked Jesus to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1).

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's portion of the lesson.

Say: Let's find and read the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4) and see if we can make a connection between the prayer Michael prayed at the lunch table and something in the Lord's Prayer. What connections can we find? (Pray about the things that matter—both to you and to God. Sometimes what matters to us falls short of what matters to God.)

In your own words share the following:

Perhaps you want to win the ball game, get chosen for the school play, acquire lots of friends who think you're cool. But perhaps God wants your camaraderie with friends to be more important than winning the game. Perhaps He has one friend in mind for you who will help you grow spiritually. Perhaps He wants you to serve in a way that nobody notices you. Sometimes what we ask for and what God asks for are two different things. Not always, but sometimes. This is why Jesus taught us to pray for certain things, knowing we might accidentally leave them out.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

With your students, read the Lord's Prayer again carefully and name each part of the prayer with one word or phrase. For example, "Hallowed be thy name" might be "Praise." (Categories that have been suggested: Praise God; pray for His work in the world; pray for our daily needs; pray for help with our daily struggles.) List these section names on the white/chalkboard. Then ask the students to choose a partner or form a small group and paraphrase (rewrite in their own words) the Lord's Prayer from the perspective of one of the persons

listed below (list them where all can see and choose). Tell students to take some time to think about how that person sees the world and the struggles that they might face. What would the Lord's Prayer sound like if prayed in their shoes?

- >> Single mother working to raise two young children
- >> College student whose parents are going through a divorce
- >> Young man in Africa who wants to go to school to be a teacher but has no resources
- >> Father who is observing his only daughter hanging around with the wrong crowd
- >> Grandma who is alone in a nursing home
- >> Ten-year-old girl who struggles to make friends at school

Have students share their prayers. Let the others guess from whose perspective they were "praying."

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Say: Being a citizen of God's kingdom has advantages. One of the greatest rights of being a child of God is the ability to talk to Him about anything. But sometimes we don't really know what to say.

Have the students divide into groups or pairs, distribute paper and pencils or pens, and ask each group to find one of the following prayers from the Bible:

Prayer for Sodom—Genesis 18:20-33

Prayer that destroys an army—2 Kings

19:15-20, 32-35

Prayer of heartfelt thanks—2 Samuel 7:18-29

Prayer of repentance—Psalm 51:1-13

Prayer of worship—Psalm 138:1-8

Prayer for the believers—John 17:1-26

Prayer for Israel's rebellion—Daniel 9:1-19

Give the groups time to find and read their passage, and then discuss the following questions together. When they have answered the questions in their groups, ask each group to

report a summary of their findings to the larger group. If time is limited, focus on the responses to question 3.

Debriefing

1. Who is the person praying? What do you know about the person praying—character traits, strengths/weaknesses, especially their attitude in prayer?
2. What is the main reason for the prayer? Why are they praying? Why do you think this prayer is even recorded? (Obviously there are many prayers that have been prayed—why is this one mentioned in the Scriptures?)
3. What details, phrases, or words in this passage really capture what meaningful praying is all about?

Say: Let's take another look at John 17.

Whom does Jesus pray for first, and what does He pray for? (Jesus prays for Himself first, then for His disciples, then for all those who will believe because of His disciples, and He prays that they will be one with God even as He is one with God.) **Have you ever thought of praying like this?**

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. When you pray, how would you characterize what your prayers are about? What do you pray for the most? What do you pray for the least?
2. What scripture above demonstrates the kind of praying you want to have in your life? Why?
3. If you were to characterize whom you pray for on a continuum with 1 being

yourself and 5 being everyone else, where would your prayers fit?

4. When in your life has prayer mattered to you the most?
5. How would you rank the following themes of prayer in order of importance to your prayer life?
 - ___ Confession and Forgiveness
 - ___ Adoration and Praise
 - ___ Intercession and Requests
 - ___ Thanksgiving
 - ___ Submission and Recommitment

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

What we say and how we say it matters to God. He knows our hearts and minds but knows that the more we think about our conversation with Him, the more meaningful it is. As Christians we have so many reminders of God's love for us, but none more important than prayer. There are people around the world who don't even have Bibles, but they pray to a God that reveals Himself to them through prayer and nature. The difficult part about prayer is practicing it. It can be awkward and seem strange at times. But the Holy Spirit can help us to pray, and no one at the end of their life regrets praying as much as they did. (Also remember to use the different ways to help you pray that you learned in Friday's section of your lesson this week.) Some say they are too busy to pray. Being too busy to have a conversation with your Savior is too busy. The most important thing about prayer is that you do it.



STUDENT LESSON

WAY TO PRAY, PART 2

Grace for a Sandwich;
Grace for a Friend

April 13, 2024

Sabbath FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers” (1 Peter 4:7, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 24, Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary:** “The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences . . . who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 107, 108.

GRACE FOR A SANDWICH; GRACE FOR A FRIEND

I sat down for lunch with a few students, and across from me Michael did something quite strange while we all bowed our heads and privately said a short blessing for our food. Michael sat down, looked right at his sandwich, then pushed the sandwich out in front of him toward me. I thought, *That’s a bit dangerous, putting your lunch in arm’s reach of me.* He bowed his head, prayed for a few seconds, and then lifted his head, smiled, reached forward, recovered his sandwich, and began to eat. I didn’t say anything.

Each week I would jockey for position to sit in front of Michael to see if he did this regularly. Every time I ate with Michael and his friends he would repeat this little ritual without failure. I had to know what in the world he was doing. So I asked, “Michael, why do you push your food away from you while you pray before you eat?”

He hung his head down for a second and then replied, “My best friend committed suicide two years ago.”

“Oh, Michael, I’m sorry; I had no idea,” I replied.

Michael continued. “During the funeral I thought about how little I had prayed for him. As a matter of fact, the day he died I spent more time praying for my food to be blessed than for my best friend to be saved. So now when I pray I push my food forward and pray for my friends. And I think God knows that I’m also thankful I have a sandwich to eat.”

Three times a day (maybe more, knowing how teenagers eat) Michael would lift up his friends, not out of guilt or fear, but because grace is more than blessing a sandwich.—Pastor Troy.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read James 5:16.
- » Justin prays regularly to God, and if you were to ask him, he would say that prayer is the most important part of his faith. But he feels really uncomfortable praying out loud in

front of others because it is so personal. He doesn't want to fake it, but he feels guilty when he is asked to pray and he refuses. What would you say to him to help encourage him? What do you think he should do, if anything?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON CHRIST'S MINISTRY IN THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

- » Read Hebrews 4:14-16; Revelation 8:3, 4.
- » We are living in the last days. It is important that we pray that we will be found right with God. It is also important that we pray for those who have not given their lives to Him. We and those around us will either be found worthy of heaven or we won't. The Holy Spirit will help us know how to pray, but it is up to us to come to God in prayer.

- » What does it mean to be alert and sober so we can pray?

- » Why is it important to pray for others?

- » Unscramble and write the Bible verse below to find out why we should pray for others.

"books the in written were which things the by works their to according judged were dead the And Life of Book the is which opened was book another And opened were books and God before standing great and small dead the saw I And" (Revelation 20:12, NKJV).

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Romans 8:26, 27.
- » Even the most skeptical person in the world will have moments when they lift their eyes to heaven and pray to God. Most people sense that God is listening.
- » You have heard the saying "You can't get there from here." Well, it's probably true that you can't know God without praying. There are no shortcuts, back doors, or simple tricks to get to God without having an honest open conversation with Him. Whether it be a planned meeting or just some casual conversation, young people who pray develop a peace and a presence of mind that cause them to stand out.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the texts from the NIV translation and fill in the blanks. If you do not have a New International Version, go to www.BibleGateway.com, where you will find many translations of the Bible.

1. Matthew 6:9-13: "This, then, is how you should _____: 'Our _____ in heaven, _____ be your _____, your _____ come, your _____ be done, on _____ as it is in heaven. Give us today our _____ bread. And forgive us our _____, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And _____ us not into _____, but _____ us from the evil one.' "

2. 1 Samuel 12:23: "As for me, far be it from me that I should _____ against the _____ by failing to _____ for you. And I will _____ you the

_____ that is _____ and _____."

3. Romans 8:26, 27: "In the same way, the _____ helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we _____ to _____ for, but the _____ himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who _____ our _____ knows the mind of the Spirit, because the _____ intercedes for God's people in _____ with the _____ of God."

4. Colossians 4:2-4: "Devote yourselves to _____, being _____ and _____. And _____ for us, too, that God may _____ a door for our _____, so that we may _____ the _____ of Christ, for which I am in chains. _____ that I may _____ it _____, as I should."

5. 1 Peter 4:7: "The end of all _____ is near. Therefore be _____ and of _____ so that you may _____."

6. James 5:16: "Therefore _____ your _____ to each other and _____ for each other so that you may be _____. The prayer of a _____ person is _____ and _____."

7. Mark 11:24, 25: "Therefore I tell you, whatever you _____ for in _____, _____ that you have _____ it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything _____ anyone, _____ them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your _____."

Thursday CONNECTING

» Read Mark 11:24, 25.

» Review the memory text.

» Prayer is a vehicle for God's grace. If you are going to receive it—you will have to talk to Him about it. And the moment you lift your attention toward heaven God is ready to listen. In Mark 10 a blind man cries out to Jesus, and He stops. A woman makes a last-ditch attempt to find healing by touching His garment, and as soon as her fingers touch the cloth He stops. When Zacchaeus climbs a tree, Jesus stops. When the Syrophenician woman calls out for help, Jesus stops and heals her daughter.

» At the well, in the house, on the mountains, in the boat, on the water, under the water—the result is always the same: When we lift our attention to God in prayer, He stops and you have His undivided attention. Incredible! So what is keeping you from praying? Has it been awhile? He's not keeping score; talk to Him. Do you fumble around for things to say? Talk to Him on paper, in a song, in your mind, out loud, but don't pass up a chance to stop and talk to God. You will be different because of it.

Friday APPLYING

» Read Matthew 6:9-13.

» Here are some different ways to pray this week:

Four-Part Prayer

Say as much as you want to God about these four things in order:

1. Praise
2. Confession
3. Requests
4. Thanksgiving

The Lord's Other Prayer (John 17 prayer)

1. Pray for yourself to be one with God.
2. Pray for your friends to be one with God.

3. Pray for others who will come to know God because of your friends.

Pray With David

Scan through some of the psalms in which David prays and pray for the same things David prays for—in your own words.

Pray for the Big Picture

On one day, pray about all the big things that are happening and what needs to happen (examples: the gospel going to the ends of the earth, world leaders to be converted, relief from major disasters, cures for cancer, etc.).

Write Out a Prayer to God as a Letter.

[illegible]



WALKING WITH GOD, PART 1

Long Walk to Freedom

April 20, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Genesis 1:27 (NLT) • “So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Matthew 28:20 (NLT) • “And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

John 15:5 (NLT) • “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit.”

Acts 2:1, 2, 4 (NLT) • “On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. . . . And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “WALKING WITH GOD, PART 1”

We were created to walk with God, to have an intimate everyday relationship with Him. Such was the experience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But sin broke that rela-

tionship, and the rest of the sad history of our earth has been filled with God's attempts to reconnect with His people. He directed His people to build Him a physical building in which He could live among them but was repeatedly rejected. These attempts culminated in Jesus. Through His life, death, and sacrifice for our sins, God made a way to reconnect with His people eternally.

As people created for a relationship with God, we find our true purpose in that relationship. We live in the midst of the “long walk to freedom” that is God's plan to bring us back to Him. As we live our everyday lives, there is an unfinished element in our relationship with God, but we are given glimpses of what that friendship might be. We can take positive steps to spend time with God through Bible study and prayer, and get to know Him now through His Holy Spirit. We also look forward to the time when the earth is re-created and God will again dwell with His people (Revelation 21:3).

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “WALKING WITH GOD, PART 1”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Appreciate the role of spending time together as a part of friendship, and particularly as a part of our friendship with God.
2. Learn—or be reminded of—some of the history of God's attempts to reconnect with His people.

3. Commit to spending time with God every day and forever.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity B) small pieces of paper for each student, pens or pencils of similar colors. (Activity C) a potted plant or weed, preferably of a kind that spreads by roots growing daughter plants; plant identification book.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Bibles, pens or pencils, student lessons.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive

(participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Plan to take the students for a five-minute walk, allowing them to talk among themselves as they walk. Plan a safe course for this walk, perhaps around the church grounds, to a nearby park, or other safe place. Have a sufficient number of adults to supervise this activity unobtrusively. Try to avoid distractions to the students or to other Sabbath School classes.

When you return to the room you will discuss the ordinary human interaction involved in going for a walk together.

Get set • Tell the students that a good way to start this week's lesson would be to take a walk. Comment on some of the health and concentration benefits of exercise. Ask them to follow your directions, to stay together as a group, and to be considerate of other classes.

Go • Direct the group along your planned course. Be vigilant but relaxed. Allow the students to interact, talk, and express themselves as comes naturally. Do not rush the walk but try to avoid taking too much of the classtime with this activity. Have students return to the classroom or area and settle again.

Debriefing • **Ask: Who enjoyed the opportunity to get outside and get some exercise?** (A variety of responses are to be expected.) **What did you notice about how you and other students interacted while walking?** (Various members of the class will have acted and interacted differently; discuss these differences but highlight the natural interactions that took place.) **How did you interact differently from the way you do in the more formal setting of a classroom?** (more relaxed, more natural, more friendly, more fun)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this activity is to

see how well members of the group know one another and to learn more about one another.

Get set • Choose three questions to ask the students. For example, naming their favorite animal, song, food, hero, pet, or anything else other students may not know about them. If possible, have students sit in a circle. Distribute paper and pens or pencils.

Go • Instruct students to number 1 to 3 on their piece of paper and next to each number answer one of the three questions you have posed. They are not to put any other identifying features on their paper. Collect the papers, shuffle them, and hand them out randomly. Go around the circle with each person reading out the three answers on the paper they have been given. The rest of the group then tries to guess whose answers they are reading. Decide how and when to reveal the true writers.

Debriefing • Ask: Who learned something new about someone else in the class? (There will usually be something found out that others did not previously know.) **How well or how poorly do we know one another?** (Answers will vary depending on how easily fellow class members were identified.) **How could we get to know one another better?** (spend time together, share common interests, be interested in one another)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Bring a plant or weed and a plant book to class. Show photographs or diagrams of how roots work through the soil to find nutrients. If possible, identify the plant and find some interesting facts to teach students about a plant from their local region. Point out how the different parts of the plant support and feed one another and how the plant reproduces itself.

Debriefing • Ask: How might we compare the Christian life with a plant? (Suggest the parables of Jesus such as that of the mustard

seed [Matthew 13:31, 32] and the vine and the branches [John 15:1-8].) **What do these parables tell us about our connection with God?** (It is our source of life, it should grow, it should produce fruit.)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

Explain that often when pulling out weeds, we find it interesting to discover that seemingly unconnected plants may in fact be part of the same network of roots. Beneath an area of lawn, a large number of such connections may link together many single plants. There is a reality beneath the surface of the lawn. This network is the real target if one is trying to remove the weeds. It is of limited benefit to keep mowing the surface weeds; they will keep coming back. While it may be less than flattering to compare the kingdom of God with a network of weeds, it is interesting to note the number of times Jesus used plants in His parables. As followers of God, we choose to be connected to the underground network that is the reality of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit" (John 15:5, NLT). It is a choice to remain in Him, to abide in Him: a living, walking, talking connection to God as the source of life.

Point out that as followers of God, we live in a kingdom that is not yet fully in control of our world. It is a reality, but there is another kingdom competing for our loyalty. We make the choice to become a part of God's kingdom. We become a part of that kingdom by choosing to accept God's offer—made possible by Jesus' death for our sins—to reconnect with Him.

Ask: What image do you think of when you hear "the kingdom of God"? (There might be a variety of responses but guide students back to the kingdom of God as a living,

growing plantlike reality.) **How can we be connected to the kingdom plant?** (It is our choice through the influence and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.) **How do we “remain in Jesus”?** (Through a daily, conscious decision for prayer, Bible study, and practical activities we can undertake to focus our lives and direction on God.)

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Say: Throughout history many people have committed and even sacrificed their lives to restore something to the way they believe it should be. It might be an injustice done that needs to be fixed or a challenge that must be beaten. They are the heroes of human history. The story of Nelson Mandela’s “long walk to freedom” is an example of such a struggle from recent history.

Ask: Who are some of your heroes? (A wide variety of answers are possible.) **What do you look for in a hero?** (a winner, someone who overcomes the bad guys, strength, someone who will help those in need, other possibilities)

In your own words, explain that as followers of Jesus and citizens of the kingdom of God, we are involved in our own “long walk to freedom.” The big history of our world has been to rebuild the connection between us and God—to make a wrong right.

Assign the verses in the Bible Insights or from the Daily Readings of the student lesson to different groups or members in the class and ask them to answer the following questions about their verse.

- >> What does this verse tell us about the long struggle for freedom?
- >> How does this verse portray Jesus as the hero of this struggle?
- >> What does this verse tell us about God’s desire to reconnect with us?

If Bibles are available, ask the students to

find their verses and read the few verses before and after the assigned texts to get greater insight into the circumstances from which the particular verse comes.

Have each smaller group share their answers with the larger group. Encourage discussion. **Ask: Does Jesus fit the model of a hero?** (Yes; even before humanity became “hopeless,” Jesus decided to become a human, and give His life to conquer the evil one. Jesus gave His life to save each one of us from sin and eternal death. And finally, He will return triumphantly, and we will all “live happily ever after.”)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: When someone asks you to go for a walk with them, what are they expecting? Whether it’s time spent together in a break at school, hanging out at a friend’s house, going for a walk in a park, or heading to a nearby woodland for a longer hike, there is more involved socially than simply covering the distance or filling in the time. It is a time to relax together, to connect, and to encourage one another.

If possible, share a story from your own experience (or ask someone else to come in and share one) in which you became friends with someone or were encouraged in this way. Point out that when we enjoy such a time together, we look forward to and plan toward doing it again. A shared experience such as this can be the beginning of a deepening friendship.

Ask: Do any of you go for walks or hikes with friends to talk as much as for the exercise? (Allow a variety of responses and stories, if students are willing to share.) **What are some of the ways we can “walk with God” today?** (spending time with God, Bible study, prayer, worshipping, serving others)

Remind students of the texts from this week’s student lesson that suggest an intimate friendship with God: Genesis 3:8; Exodus 25:8; Revelation 3:20; 21:3. **Ask: What do these texts tell us about God?** (He is a God of love

who wants to have a close personal friendship with us.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

As a group (this might be done as a whole group or in smaller working groups that will then report back to the larger group), work through the first graphing activity in the How Does It Work? section of the student lesson. Most of the Bible texts are included in the Bible Insights section; have Bibles available for those texts not already included.

Encourage students to consider the spaces between the specified points, which tend to be the high points and big events of this analysis of the history of our world. Explore the significance of each of the plotted events and how they impact upon the relationship between God and us. There may be some variations in interpretation of the events, and these variations can be explained and discussed. Note that this is not a measure of how far God is from us—He promises to be always with us (Matthew 28:20)—rather it explores the distance sin has caused in the relationship between God with His perfect goodness and us with our sin. Having worked through this graphing process, encourage students to complete their personal graph during the coming week. (Some students will have already begun or completed this activity. If so, encourage them to give some additional thought to how they can walk more “with” God rather than “away from” or merely “toward” Him.)

Debriefing • Ask: What can we learn from a graph like this? (We can see a representation of God’s attempts to reconnect with us and humanity’s repeated failures to respond to that.) How important is the renewed closeness of the relationship between God and humanity to the end of the history of this world? (Very important—in fact, it is the point of the whole plan of salvation.) How much do and will our choices affect a graph of our relationship

with God? (Our choices determine our “graph” and more important our relationship with God as such.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. How does recognizing God as a hero affect how we relate to Him?
2. How does recognizing God as a friend affect how we relate to Him?
3. What can we learn from our relationships with others about our relationship with God?
4. Is it important to monitor our relationship with God and how close we are to Him?
5. How do we monitor our closeness to God?
6. What impact does it have on your life to realize the larger history of God’s longing to walk with His people?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

God wants to be friends with us. Throughout the Bible, He repeatedly asks His people for a place and time He can share with them. The language God uses suggests some of the simplest forms of personal interaction: talking, walking, spending time, sharing a meal. Jesus was the living example of this as He lived with humanity and died to pay the price of our sin and to remove the gap sin had created between God and us. One of the key elements of the description of our eternal home in heaven is the statement that now God can live with His people forever. He gives us the invitation to begin this walk today and start growing that incredible friendship that will last forever.



STUDENT LESSON

WALKING WITH GOD, PART 1 Long Walk to Freedom

April 20, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 1, The Holy Scriptures:** “The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 7-9.

LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

Nelson Mandela was one of the true heroes of the twentieth century. From his rural upbringing, he struggled to become a lawyer and became involved in the struggle to rid his home country—South Africa—of the system of apartheid, a legal system that forcibly separated people of different colors and races.

Mandela’s work with the African National Congress and his leadership in the Black community attracted the attention of the minority White government. He spent some years living

and traveling in secret, trying to stay out of sight of the authorities.

Inevitably Mandela was arrested, tried for treason, and sentenced to life imprisonment. Mandela was imprisoned with hard labor on Robben Island. Over the 27 years he spent there, Mandela became a still more powerful leader and symbol of the struggle for equality and freedom in South Africa.

In the late 1980s Mandela began secret negotiations with the White South African government—at great personal risk. These delicate talks led to Mandela’s release from prison in early 1990, the reform of South Africa’s political system and the first free elections in South Africa’s modern history, at which Mandela was elected the first Black president of South Africa.

Like all human stories, there are highs and lows, but Mandela’s commitment to the possibility of a peaceful transition to majority rule in South Africa is an inspiring example of noble struggle against seemingly overwhelming odds. It was a struggle to reclaim what Mandela and his people considered rightfully theirs.

Reflecting on his life journey in his autobiography, Mandela comments, “I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare

not linger, for my walk is not yet ended.”
—Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), p. 617.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Matthew 18:20.
- » A group of five teens from your church meet one night each week to do Bible study with some older church members. You have been enjoying the studies and the time spent with the older people. You feel that you are learning a lot and are glad you are coming. Three of the teens told you they are not going to come anymore because they do not feel engaged.
- » What would you say to them? Do you have any ideas that might help the meeting be more interesting for everyone? Why is Bible study and time with God important?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

- » Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.
- » God has given us everything we need to figure out how we should live and how to be ready for heaven. His Word, the Bible, gives us examples of men and women—both their failures and successes. The New Testament tells us about the life and death of God’s Son, Jesus. His life is an example of how we should live and treat others. The Bible tells us what is important and explains the great controversy between God and Satan. It tells us that Jesus is coming again, and explains how to be ready for His coming and life eternal spent with Him in heaven. The Bible was given to us to help us live in a world of sin and prepare us for a world without sin.

- » In what ways do you apply the truths found in the Bible in your everyday life?

- » What are you doing to take the messages given in the Bible seriously?

- » Unscramble this verse and find out what will help you in this life and prepare you for heaven. Write what it is on the line below.

my lamp Your path a 105 on feet a Psalm
word my 119: light is NIV for

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Revelation 21:3.
- » When God perfectly created our world, He personally spent time with Adam and Eve, walking with them in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned, this close relationship was no longer possible—in fact, they hid from God when they heard Him walking in the Garden (see Genesis 3:8).
- » But God already had a plan to rebuild that relationship. He first worked through the people of Israel and lived among them, first in the Sanctuary tent and then in the Temple built in Jerusalem. However, this plan found its fullest reality in Jesus, who was God once again walking with people on the streets of our world. He was “God with us” (see Matthew 1:23).
- » In dying for us, Jesus paid the price for and made the way for our permanent reconnection with God. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to live in us as a continuing presence of God with us, and He promised that one day we will live in the actual presence of God (Revelation 21:3).

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the texts from the New Living Translation and fill in the blanks. If you do not have a New Living Translation, go to www.BibleGateway.com, where you will find many translations of the Bible.

1. Genesis 3:8: "When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God _____ about in the _____. So they _____ from the LORD God among the _____."
2. Exodus 25:8: "Have the _____ of _____ build me a holy _____ so I can live among them."
3. Matthew 18:20: "For where _____ or _____ gather together as my _____, I am there _____ them."
4. Luke 24:15, 27: "As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly _____ and began _____ with them. . . . Then _____ took them _____ the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the _____ the _____ concerning _____."
5. John 1:14: "So the _____ became _____ and made his _____ among us. He was full of _____ and _____. And we have seen his _____, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."
6. Ephesians 3:17: "Then Christ will _____ his home in your _____ as you _____ in him. Your _____ will _____ down into God's _____ and keep you _____."
7. Revelation 3:20: "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you _____ my

_____ and _____ the door, I will come _____, and we will share a meal together as friends."

8. Revelation 21:3: "I _____ a loud shout from the _____, saying, 'Look, God's home is now among his _____! He will live with _____, and they will be _____. God himself will be _____ them.' "

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:20.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Some Bible descriptions of God can be overwhelming to our human minds. Others are more comforting, like of a loving father or mother. All are important and help us have a balanced picture of God and His love. But the most appealing is God wanting to be with us, to share our days, to eat together, and to talk—sometimes seriously, sometimes more lightheartedly. And ultimately, to live with you forever. Wouldn't it be incredible to have such a relationship with God! In fact, this is truly possible. Jesus is willing and ready to start a genuine friendship with you right now!

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Ephesians 3:12-20.
- » Monitoring the relationship. On these two tables, plot the progress of the relationship between God and humanity. On the first, observe the course of human history and how it reflects humanity's walk with God. For each event listed on the left, decide whether this was a step with God, toward God, or away from God.
- » On the second table, monitor your walk with God. Use the blank spaces to write in

important life events in your own life and walk with God. Note some of the future choices you may have to make. In which

direction do you want those decisions to move you?

TABLE 1:

	With God	Away From God	Toward God
Beginning—Genesis 1:27			
The Fall—Genesis 3:8-10			
Flood—Genesis 6:5-7			
God’s covenant promise to Noah—Genesis 9:14-18			
Sanctuary—Exodus 25:8			
Temple—1 Kings 6:13, 14			
Israel continues to turn away from God—(rest of the Old Testament)			
Jesus—John 1:14			
Resurrection—Luke 24:15, 27			
Holy Spirit—Acts 2:1, 2			
Babylon and this world’s system falls—Revelation 18:1-3			
Forever—Revelation 21:3			

TABLE 2:

	With God	Away From God	Toward God
Birth—Psalm 139:13-16			
A choice—Revelation 3:20			
Growing closer—Ephesians 3:17			
Your future walk			
Forever—Revelation 21:3			





WALKING WITH GOD, PART 2

Run On

April 27, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Mark 3:13, 14 (NIV) • “Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.”

John 7:37 (NIV) • “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink.”

Acts 20:24 (NLT) • “But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.”

1 Corinthians 9:24, 25 (NLT) • “Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize.”

Hebrews 12:11 (NLT) • “No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “WALKING WITH GOD, PART 2”

Walking with God is simply another way of talking about living our lives in connection with God. Developing a walk with God is a result of our choice and is further developed through our intentional decisions, committing our time and priorities to seeking a relationship with God, and being open to His Holy Spirit. It is not that God is hiding from us, but we as weak and sinful people are too easily distracted from the opportunities for communion with God.

When we look at the lives of God’s people through history—and especially in the Bible—we are given a demonstration of how ordinary people can choose to live extraordinary lives in a growing friendship with God. This does not mean they were perfect saints; indeed the Bible often includes stories of their failures. However, we are given a glimpse of a connection with God that made a difference to their lives and to those around them.

Learning these stories can give us examples and encouragement to “run the race” of a lifelong friendship with God and to become people whom God will call His friends, forever. As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Recognize that God wants to have a friendship with us, which impacts upon our lives and the lives of those around us.
2. Appreciate some of the different ways

God works with His people today and has worked in the Bible.

3. Show a renewed commitment to running the race set before us with God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) paper, pens and pencils; (Activity B) clay, paper, construction paper, scissors, white paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, paper, pens or pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • Students lessons from this week and last week, paper, pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own pro-

gram with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • This activity is designed to have students recognize the footprint they leave behind them wherever they go and to aspire to leave a positive impression.

Get set • Have paper and pens or pencils available for each student.

Go • Ask students to line up in order of the size of their feet. Allow a few moments of interaction as they arrange themselves in the right order. Then go along the line with everyone telling their shoe size. Hand out paper and pens or pencils to each student. Ask them to trace around their shoe or foot—showing the size of their footprint.

Ask: What would you like to be remembered for? What lasting impact or footprint would you like to make on the world around you and those you come into contact with?

Instruct them to write their hoped-for impact inside their “footprint” on the piece of paper and keep it, perhaps in their Bible, to remind them of the footprint they make every day.

Debriefing • **Ask: How much impact can we make on those around us?** (We can make a huge impact, perhaps on just one life, perhaps on countless lives.) **How can we ensure we leave positive footprints in our world?** (Walking with God is our assurance of walking well through all aspects of our lives. If we are true to Him, we are doing the best for everyone with whom we come into contact.)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • This activity will introduce students to running the race of life with God.

Get set • Explain the meaning of Isaiah 40:6-8. Grass in the springtime is new, healthy, and often a vibrant green. It is soft and pliant—when it is stepped on, it bounces back. And flowers are fragrant and colorful. Flowers are used to bring joy to our senses and are often used as decorations. But over time, they fade and die. And just like the grass and flowers, we all have a limited time on earth. Youth fades over time. Each year people grow a little older. They become weary in old age. They may move slower and suffer more pain than they did in their youth. Being 70 years old may seem like a long way off to you, but ask someone who is 68, and they will tell you that time has gone by very quickly! Point out that the time to make a difference is while they are young and have youth on their side. At the same time, no matter how young or old, in God both are given strength and energy to be used by and for Him (see Isaiah 40:29-31).

Go • Have the students use the clay or art supplies to depict how they want their lives to be seen by others using the references from Isaiah 40.

Debriefing • Ask: How do you see youth being an advantage to being a witness for God? (Someone who is young has more time to get to know God and be a witness for Him.) Have a student read Hebrews 12:1. **Ask:** What does it mean to run the race in the context of our Christian lives? (It suggests the need to put in an effort and go into training to become better friends with God. As with any friendship, to fully grow our relationship with God it needs time and attention.)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

There is power in walking. Perhaps one person going for a walk does not look like a significant event, but when thousands of people do it together, they can change the world. In most Western countries, protest marches are

common occurrences. They are one way people can make their feelings known to a government with whom they disagree. For example, consider some of the great protest marches of the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1960s, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and others. People with limited rights and opportunities were able to make a difference in their world simply by walking together with a common purpose. This is a difference that can happen powerfully when we choose to walk with God. When we walk with God, we will be changed and we will be empowered to influence the world around us.

Debriefing • Ask: Why are people more powerful when they walk together? (In a democracy, their combined statement is stronger than their individual voices. They can also support one another to continue their protest—and their walk.) **Does a large group mean they are right?** (No, the majority is not always right—but as far as possible we should try to understand other people's concerns.) **How can we use our influence to make a difference about things that concern us or on behalf of those who are voiceless?** (Get involved with groups who share our concerns, write letters, even attend a peaceful protest concerning an issue about which we feel strongly.)

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

Throughout history God has had His special people whom He has been proud to call His friends. They have been the “kingdom people,” who have remained faithful to God no matter what their circumstances. Sometimes they have been popular; often they have been persecuted.

Often those with special leadership responsibilities have been given extra moments of closeness with God. **Ask:** Can you think of some special friends Jesus had? Perhaps one of the best examples of this extra-close relationship

with God was that of Jesus' disciples. Of the thousands of people who followed Him, Jesus selected 12 men "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14, NIV). It is interesting to note that within this group there was another group—Peter, James, and John (the disciples Jesus loved)—who enjoyed an even closer friendship with Jesus.

Yet within both these groups of close friends—the 12 and the three—were those who betrayed, denied, and questioned Jesus. This in-crowd status was not a shortcut to a perfect life or perfect relationship with God.

Ask: Does this mean God is exclusive in His friendships, leaving some shut out? God is not exclusive. He does not have special friends for the purpose of shutting others out. Jesus said, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink" (John 7:37, NIV).

Look over the "faith hall of fame" in **Hebrews 11** with the class. Point out that these were real people who lived real lives. We should not be intimidated by their stories; instead we should be inspired to choose and seek a closer walk with God.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Point out that as this story reminds us, it is easy to start a race well, but life with God is a race with no finish line. A good start is great, and perhaps that might come in the form of being born into a Christian family and being taken to Sabbath School for as long as you can remember. Or it might be the enthusiasm with which a person new to the church embraces their new-found faith and begins to "run the race." But a good start is just the beginning. At times, living an enduring life of faith can be more like running a marathon.

Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the following Bible characters. Give them the list of verses, along with paper

and pens or pencils, and ask each group to report back to the whole class on the experience of faith of each of these real-life people.

>> **Enoch:** Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14 (see also quote in Bible Insights section of student lesson).

>> **Noah:** Genesis 6:9-14, 22; Genesis 9:8-17; Hebrews 11:7.

>> **Abraham:** Isaiah 41:8; Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19; James 2:23.

>> **Daniel:** Daniel 1:18-20; 2:19-23; 6:1-5; 12:13.

>> **Peter:** Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 26:69-75; John 21:15-23; Acts 2:38, 39.

>> **John:** Luke 5:9, 10; Mark 9:2-8; 1 John 1:1-3; Revelation 22:8, 9.

>> **Paul:** Acts 9:4-9; 26:12-18; 20:24; Ephesians 3:17.

Discuss the similarities and differences between these characters' experiences.

Each of these people had different experiences with God, but all are heroes of the faith and friends of God. They chose to run the race with God.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: It is unfortunate that the Bible tells us so little of the story of Enoch. Although he lived at a time in history when many people were doing evil, he walked so closely with God that the Bible simply says, "God took him" (Genesis 5:24). It seems he became such good friends with God that God let Enoch come over to His place so they could be together forever. It would be amazing to get full details of how Enoch spent his 300 years on earth.

On a white/chalkboard, make a list of students' suggestions as to how a modern-day "Enoch" might spend his daily life. **Ask:** What kind of things might he do? Would he have a specific job? Where might he live? Could he be a missionary in an obscure country or could he be an ordinary person you pass each day on the street? Compose a daily planner for someone walking with God Enoch-

style in today's world.

Have students read **Deuteronomy 10:12, 13** and **Micah 6:8**. **Ask:** What do these verses tell us about walking with God? Are there any changes or additions we would like to make to the "Enoch daily planner"? Suggest to students the link between "walking with God," loving God, and doing right by and looking to help those around us, particularly those in need of justice and mercy.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Say: On a personal level, Christianity is best described as a relationship between God and an individual. However, from a human perspective, the practicalities of such a relationship developing—and being maintained—with a God who seems invisible and untouchable, are daunting and puzzling. This is where God's offer of a simple friendship—walking together, eating together, spending time together, and ultimately living together—is so important.

Distribute paper and pens or pencils. Using the texts in the Bible Insights in this week's and last week's sections of the student lessons, instruct students to work in small groups and plan a day to spend connecting with God. **Discuss the different activities that might be suggested** (possibilities include: time spent alone in prayer, Bible reading/study, reflection and time spent together in worship, prayer, serving others). Encourage students to plan to spend such a day and refer them back to Friday's Applying activity.

Debriefing • Ask: Is such a day possible in everyday life? (Perhaps sometimes, and some elements may be incorporated into ordinary days, but there may not be time available for completely planned days.) **How can we walk with God more in our everyday lives?** (Be open to a variety of suggestions, including intentional and spontaneous events. Perhaps suggest prayer triggers: every hour or when waiting at various

times during the day or when they see something that reminds them to turn their thoughts to God.) Encourage students to plan regular moments with God in the course of their everyday lives.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Does it seem that other people have a better relationship with God than you do? Should we feel that way? How should we react to such feelings?
2. Are the Bible stories of great people intimidating or encouraging? Why?
3. Should we live an isolated life (away from other people) so we can live a more godly life?
4. How important is it that we balance our quiet times alone with God with our service for humanity? Why?
5. How can we, as a part of our walk with God, have a greater impact on our world? List some possibilities.
6. Do you spend enough time with God?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Walking with God is a lifelong commitment, involving all aspects of our lives and all the days of our lives. We can choose to be a part of God's group of friends: God asks us to come to Him. The Bible is filled with examples of ordinary people who made that choice and in connection with God made a positive difference in their world. In the same way, we need to choose to run the race with perseverance and to let God use us as a part of His kingdom in our everyday walk.



STUDENT LESSON

WALKING WITH GOD, PART 2 Run On

April 27, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 15, Baptism:** “By baptism we confess our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and testify of our death to sin and of our purpose to walk in newness of life. Thus we acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, become His people, and are received as members by His church. Baptism is a symbol of our union with Christ, the forgiveness of our sins, and our reception of the Holy Spirit.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 19, 20.

RUN ON

For many high school students the annual school cross-country race is a less than inspiring occasion. English sports journalist Ian Stafford—admitting he has never had a fondness for running for the sake of running—tells of similar experiences in his school cross-country runs. In fact, one year Stafford and a group of friends tried to set the record for the slowest time for the school cross-country. However, in his final

year of school he decided he would see how well he could do. He hatched a plan to start the race as fast as he could—at least he could say he had led the race for a part of it—and see what would happen. As the race progressed, Stafford was unable to keep up the pace but it took some time for any of the other competitors to catch up with him. He was eventually caught but was surprised to finish a creditable eighth.

Some years later Stafford—still not a fan of running—was persuaded by a friend to enter the Lambeth Half Marathon in south London. Since he was not a regular runner, on the entry form he had to guess at his time for the distance. Upon arriving at the start of the race, he discovered that his estimated time put him among the fastest entrants and so he was assigned a starting place right at the front of the 3,000 entrants.

On seeing this situation and realizing he had no hope of seriously competing at that level, Stafford decided to adopt the tactics from his school running “success.” At the starter’s gun, he took off as fast as he could. Only this time, the serious runners around him were keeping pace with him and he soon dropped back through the field, eventually finishing about 300th.

Some months later Stafford was amused to pick up a copy of a new book, *Fitness: Training Tips for Distance Runners*. “In one of the most blatant cases of fraud I can think of,” Stafford writes, the cover photo was of the Lambeth Half Marathon, showing him leading the runners away from the start line.

As any runner will attest, the beginning of

a race does not tell the full story. One of the joys of sports is the uncertainty in a race or a game. Until it is finished or the time runs out, there is always room for an upset, a comeback, a last-minute play, or some other turnaround. A good start is important, but the focus must be maintained until the race is run or the game is won.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Matthew 5:8.
- » Moses asked God, "Please, show me Your glory" (Exodus 33:18, NKJV). God told Moses that He would have all His goodness pass before Moses. But Moses could not see His face and live. God covered Moses until He had passed by, and then He removed His hand and Moses could see God's back—but not His face. Do you know why? It is because of sin. Sin cannot exist in the presence of God, and all of humanity is sinful. (See Exodus 33:18-23.)
- » If you had the chance to see God face-to-face and see all His glory, but it meant your death, would you? We can know God, without seeing His face, through prayer, Bible study, and walking with Him each day. And one day, when Jesus comes again, we will see Him face-to-face.

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON BAPTISM

- » Read Acts 16:30-33; Romans 6:1-6.
- » You will make many important decisions in your life, but the most important one of all is choosing to be a child of God. Baptism shows your family, your church, your community, and the world that you have decided to follow Jesus—to be part of His family. Baptism is symbolic of being buried in death

(to our sins) and being raised to new life (a new person) in Jesus.

- » Jesus is waiting for your decision. Will you accept Him as your Savior today and walk with Him as a child of God? If you have made the decision to follow Jesus, talk to your Sabbath School teacher, leader, pastor, and your parents and make arrangements to take baptismal classes and be baptized.
- » I have decided to follow Jesus and be baptized.

Signed: _____

- » In the table below are two Bible verses mixed together. Can you separate the blocks into the correct Bible verses? Both verses are from the New King James Version. (Hint: find the verses by using every other block to form the individual verses.)

"And now	"For	why are	as	you
many	waiting?	of	Arise	you
and be	as	baptized,	were	and wash
baptized	away	into	your sins,	Christ
calling	have	on the	put	name
on	of the	Christ"	Lord"	(Galatians
(Acts	3:	22:	27).	16).

Verse 1: _____

Verse 2: _____

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read 2 Peter 3:18.

- » Learning about the people whose stories are recorded in the Bible is an amazing thing to do. We need to continually stop to remind ourselves that these were real people. They had hopes and dreams. They were sometimes tired, afraid, and sad. But, most important, they chose to follow God and become better friends with Him.
- » The stories in the Bible challenge us and let us know how we should live our lives. We see how the men and women of Bible times lived either faithful lives, like Abraham, or unfaithful lives, like Cain. Can you think of others who were faithful to God and set good examples for us to live by? How about Noah? Joseph? Daniel? Ruth? Jesus? Peter? Paul? Dorcas? John? In reading the Bible we see how God interacts with men and women, not only in Bible times, but today. We learn how much He loved them and how much He loves us! God calls us to repentance and faithfulness. He asks us to be examples to those around us—to help others come to know His love, goodness, mercy, and grace.
- » So, the stories of God’s faithful men and women are not just stories to be learned for a Bible quiz or exam. They are real-time examples of what a relationship with God can look like. These people are all different, and at different times in our lives we might be better able to understand parts of their stories. The God in the Bible is the same God who wants to walk with us and have a forever relationship with us.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the texts listed below. Write the positive characteristic(s) found in each of these verses that talks about a person’s relationship with God. (Hint: sometimes there are more than one.)

Genesis 5:24 (Ex.: Enoch walked with God.)

Genesis 6:9 _____

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13 _____

Daniel 6:4, 5 _____

Micah 6:8 _____

Matthew 5:8 _____

Hebrews 11:5 _____

Hebrews 11:13, 14 _____

1 John 1:1-3 _____

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Deuteronomy 10:12, 13.
- » Review the memory text.
- » The Bible regularly uses the idea of running a race as a picture of living life as a Christian. We are urged to “run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1, NIV).

Paul writes with certainty of his motivation in this race: “Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever” (1 Corinthians 9:25, NIV). For Paul, the manner of our running and even the ultimate result is a matter of choice—“Run in such a way as to get the prize,” he writes (verse 24, NIV). We choose the play; God ensures the result. Those who put their trust in God “will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint” (Isaiah 40:31, NIV).

APPLYING

- » Read 1 John 1:1-3.
- » Make a list of all the different ways you can learn about God. For example, Bible study, God's providential workings, the influence of the Holy Spirit, life circumstances, talking with other people, and spending time in nature.
- » Over the next week, try to do each thing on your list and record what you learn about God. Decide if certain activities help you connect with God more than others and plan to do those things more regularly for the next month. Keep writing down the things you learn, and you will begin to see that you are getting to know God more. By spending quality time with God, you are developing a deeper relationship with Him that will last through all eternity.





HANGING ON IN GOD'S APPARENT ABSENCE

Hang On!

May 4, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Romans 8:28 (NIV) • “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

Matthew 5:43-45 (NIV) • “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

1 Peter 4:16-19 (NIV) • “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, ‘If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?’ So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”

James 1:2-4 (NIV) • “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perse-

verance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:12 (NIV) • “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

Matthew 5:10 (NIV) • “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Revelation 22:12 (NIV) • “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV) • “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.”

Hebrews 2:17, 18 (NIV) • “For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

2 Peter 2:9 (NIV) • “If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and

to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.”

Job 30:25, 26 (NIV) • “Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “HANGING ON IN GOD’S APPARENT ABSENCE”

One reality touching all of humanity is tragedy. Some say “bad things happen because of sin” or “one day God will make it all right,” but neither leaves believers or unbelievers with much to fortify them through tragedy. This lesson has two goals: (1) to help us understand the nature and purpose of trials and trouble and (2) to help us understand what it means to trust God in those moments. The major skill needed to do this is to be clear about what we know about God without letting what we don’t know confuse us. Ultimately when tragedy strikes, we will find ourselves striving to breathe, but with God we have what it takes to see us through. We may not be seeing clearly, but we can still see.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “HANGING ON IN GOD’S APPARENT ABSENCE”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Explore the realities of pain and suffering and the questions people assume about their source.
2. Understand what the Bible says about trials and apply it to the questions people have about God.
3. Develop a thoughtful approach to handling trouble in light of an abiding trust in what God says.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) a piece of rope six to eight feet long for each group of three or four students; (Activity B) a few rocks that fit in the palm of the hand (one for each student, if possible), blindfold.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, handout (p. 54), pens or pencils, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with

one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to get students to consider how enduring trials faithfully increases our ability to endure more. They will be given a piece of rope about six to eight feet long. Their task will be to do whatever they need to the rope to make it easier to hold on to. They will find that making loops, knots, belts, and harnesses are ways to redistribute the weight so they can hang on to the rope.

Get set • Divide the students into groups of three or four and give each group a piece of rope. (This exercise is an example, so you don't have to have climbing rope. Just make sure they don't try to scale the building with a piece of string when you're not looking.)

Go • When each group has its piece of rope, **say: Imagine you were stuck on the side of a mountain and you had only this rope to hang on to. What could you do to this rope to make it easier to hold on to? If you could do anything to this rope before you had to rely on it, what would you do?** (Some students will make knots in the rope or even loops to rest their weight on. Some have manufactured a harness to sit in.)

Debriefing • Go around the class and ask the students to report on their plan to hang on.

Ask: What did you choose to do to make your rope easier to hang on to? Why did you choose to do it this way? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each approach? What analogies about enduring trials can you make by looking at tying knots in the rope to hang on to?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Collect a few rocks that fit in the palm of your hand easily (if possible, one for each student). Try to find as many shapes

as you can. The goal of the exercise is for the students to choose a rock (they will do this blindfolded) that they would be willing to rest their weight on. Make the rocks small enough to illustrate that when we go through trials, we don't always have a lot to stand on, but we have enough. The students need to be able to stand on the rock, without touching the ground, for 30 seconds. The more varied the shape of the rocks, the more choices they have to make about which one they will choose.

Get set • **Say: Line up from one end of the classroom to the other by age, oldest to the left and youngest to the right. And one more thing: "You can't say a word!" No talking. You have to communicate in other ways.**

Go • Once the students have lined up, from oldest to youngest, walk down the line and have them close their eyes and choose a rock out of your box or bag. They are not to feel all the rocks, just reach in and grab one. When everyone has a rock invite them to see if the rock will hold their weight.

Debriefing • **Ask: Why did you choose the rock you chose?** (actually didn't have much choice) **How do you feel about resting your entire weight on something so small? How is this like living by faith amid the struggles and traumas of life? When in your life have you felt there wasn't much to rest your weight upon? What is significant about going from oldest to youngest?** (actually nothing)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

Three illustrations to consider about hanging on in trials:

"A vine clings to an oak tree and in so doing finds the protection in times of trial that preserves it. If a violent storm should arise and the vine is on the side of the tree away from the wind, the tree serves to protect the vine from the wind, which would otherwise tear it

away and rip it into shreds. If the vine is on the exposed side of the tree, the wind serves only to press the vine closer to the tree it already clings to.”—Michael Green, *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1989), p. 382.

“A man was shopping in a grocery store. His young son followed closely behind, carrying a large basket. The father loaded the basket with one thing after another until another customer began to feel sorry for the boy. She said, ‘That’s a pretty heavy load for a young fellow like you, isn’t it?’ The boy turned to the woman and said, ‘Oh, don’t worry. My dad knows how much I can carry.’”—*Ibid.*, p. 380.

“A young boy carried the cocoon of a moth into his house to watch the fascinating events that would take place when the moth emerged. When the moth finally started to break out of his cocoon, the boy noticed how very hard the moth had to struggle. The process was very slow. In an effort to help, he reached down and widened the opening of the cocoon. Soon the moth was out of its prison. But as the boy watched, the wings remained shriveled. Something was wrong. What the boy had not realized was that the struggle to get out of the cocoon was essential for the moth’s muscle system to develop. In a misguided effort to relieve a struggle, the boy had crippled the future of this creature. Trials are necessary for growth.”—*Ibid.*, p. 384.

Debriefing • Ask: Which illustration did you relate to most? Who has gone through a tremendous amount of suffering in your sphere of influence? What are some of the questions for God or problems with God people have when they are suffering?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

Every kingdom has its own history. Understanding the big picture is an important reference point in working through pain, suffering, and loss. No amount of knowledge lessens our pain or frustration when “life turns on us” or “Satan attacks us” or “God allows things to happen.” The most important thing to realize is that as much as we know, there is still so much we don’t see. This is the primary problem in understanding **why** bad things happen the way they do, because we have no explanation for tragedies—other than they just happen or they are the result of living in a sinful world. When we have these bad things happen to us we look around for answers because we want them to stop. And in our thinking, knowing why things happen may help us find a way to stop them from happening. But ultimately, we can’t avoid problems and suffering, and that causes many to get bitter. This is why we need a guiding rule to help us.

Try this one: Don’t let what you don’t know confuse you about what you do know.

Distribute the handout (p. 54), along with pens or pencils. **Say:** We are going to take a simple quiz. Please answer true or false to the statements by yourself, and then we will discuss the answers. When they have finished, go through the answers quickly. (All of the answers are true—some may want to argue the nuances—but we will get a chance to explain further in a moment.)

Ask: Which statements are no-brainers or easy to explain? Which of these true-false statements are more difficult to agree with than others? Why?

Distribute or call the students’ attention to the Bible Insights section of the student lesson.

Say: Look at the verses listed in the student lesson and see if any of them gives insight

into whether these statements are true or not. Go back now and write a verse that corresponds to the statements on the handout.

When the students have matched statements with verses, have volunteers complete the “true” statements with an “and” or “but” attached to the end of the statement. For instance: “Heaven is real, **but** it is not here yet.” Or “God never breaks His promises, **and** in time that will never be questioned.”

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Say: When tragedy strikes others, it is easier for us than for them to see the bigger picture. To those who are in the middle of the pain, it is terribly difficult to “shut off the pain and just think about what’s going on.” So how do we hang on when our world falls apart? Think about the stories mentioned earlier.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Ask: Should we try to explain every problem that assaults people? How should we answer or respond to the pain people experience in life? What are some things you shouldn’t say?

Have your students refer to the passages listed in the Bible Insights section of the student lesson and any others they can think of in the Bible, and choose which verse they would use to respond to each of the persons going through the trials listed below. You may want to list the situations on the white/chalkboard.

- >> A young family has to file bankruptcy and start all over again.
- >> A young child is abused and bullied.
- >> Thousands of children starve to death while the cows in other countries never go hungry.
- >> Two teenage boys lose both of their parents.
- >> A mother gives birth to a beautiful child and five days later dies for no apparent

reason.

- >> Entire villages are murdered as a result of political strife.

Ask: How do we as children in God’s kingdom respond to these events? What do we say about God? What do we explain? What do we remain silent about? How can we encourage others to hang on? What verses or promises seem to make sense to you personally?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

In your own words, share the following:

Another way to look at how to hang on is the sport of rock climbing. Have you ever noticed how a small piece of rock can hold a tremendous amount of weight? In times of trouble we need to put the full force of our weight on something strong. Often, what we have doesn’t seem like much to stand on, but it is enough. Whether you use the idea of footholds or knots in a rope, we all need to know what we believe and know to be true—no matter what happens.

Distribute paper and pens or pencils. Ask your students to make two columns on a piece of paper. On the left side, write “What I Know to Be True” and in the other column, “What I Don’t Know.” (Refer to Friday’s Applying section of the student lesson.)

Say: Using the Bible verses and statements made by others in the class as well as your own, choose five truths you think you will always be able to hang on to no matter what comes your way. Write the truths in the space given next to the knots in the rope.

Ask: What are the things that you hang on to no matter what? What are your knots? What are your footholds? Why did you choose the ones you chose?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. When have you been tossed around by life's circumstances?
2. When have you felt that you were protected or life was going well?
3. Who do you know who has endured more than enough trouble and done so faithfully?
4. How did they do it? What character qualities do they have? What support did they have?
5. How does going through trials help you serve others as a citizen of the kingdom of God?
6. What Bible characters can you think of who seemed to hang on no matter what? How did they do it?
7. What individuals in history seemed to be able to hang on no matter what?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

We are promised by Jesus to have trouble: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33, NIV). Take heart! The most important thing we will ever do is trust what God says to be true. What God says about creation, His love for us, our forgiveness, the free gift of grace, power to overcome, the Second Coming, heaven, etc. We will never be stronger than when we are trusting fully what God says. And while we don't know why everything happens, we know enough to hang on.

FOR LESSON FIVE:
THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE CONNECTING ACTIVITY.

True or False Quiz

Indicate whether the statement is true or false:

- _____ God is a God of love.
- _____ God allows us to make our own decision about whether to follow Him.
- _____ God is just.
- _____ Sin is the source of pain and suffering.
- _____ Satan has power to hurt all people.
- _____ God sometimes punishes people.
- _____ God sometimes lavishes blessings on certain people.
- _____ God never breaks His promises.
- _____ God takes responsibility for evil.
- _____ God uses trials to make us stronger.
- _____ Heaven is real.



STUDENT LESSON

HANGING ON IN GOD'S APPARENT ABSENCE

Hang On!

May 4, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 8, The Great Controversy:** “All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. . . . To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 104, 105.

HANG ON!

Long ago, in the days of sailing ships, a terrible storm arose, and a ship was lost in a deserted area. Only one crewman survived, washed up on a small uninhabited island. In his desperation the castaway daily prayed to God for help and deliverance from his lonely existence. Each day he looked for a passing ship and saw nothing. Eventually he managed to build a crude hut, in which he stored a few things he had recovered from the wreck and those things he had made.

One day, as the sailor was returning from his daily search for food, he saw a column of

smoke. As he ran to it he saw his hut in flames. All was lost. Now not only was he alone, but he had nothing to help him in his struggle for survival. Stunned and nearly overcome with grief and despair, he fell into a deep depression and spent a nearly sleepless night wondering what was to become of him and questioning whether life itself was even worth the effort.

The next morning he arose early and went down to the sea. There, to his amazement, he saw a ship lying offshore and a small boat rowing toward him. When the once-marooned man met the ship's captain, he asked him how he had known to send help. The captain replied, “Why, we saw your smoke signal yesterday, but by the time we drew close the tide was against us. So we had to wait until now to come and get you.”—Michael Green, *1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), pp. 381, 382.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read John 16:33.
- » Dominic came home from his mother's funeral today. His mother was only 34 and had died suddenly of a rare virus. Sitting in his room amid all the pain and loss he feels, he is troubled by some of the things people said to him at the funeral. One person quoted Romans 8:28 to him, saying that “in all things God works for the good of those who love him” (NIV). Another mentioned

that his mother’s death must have been part of God’s will. While there were many compassionate words spoken, these statements troubled him. How could this work for good? How could this be God’s will? Dominic is confused by the things he heard. What would you say to him if you could write him a letter as he sits in his room?

Monday

**BIBLE ANSWERS
ON THE GREAT
CONTROVERSY**

- » Read Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 5:8-10.
- » For 6,000 years the great conflict between good and evil has been going on between God and Satan. Even though we are sinners, God is with us. Every day He helps us fight our battles over selfishness and helps us to put the needs of others before our own. Satan brought sin and ruin to our planet. But when we accept God’s gift of grace, He covers us with the righteousness of Jesus. It is important that we prepare ourselves in this controversy so we may overcome temptation and remain faithful children of God.
- » What steps are you taking to make sure you remain faithful to God?

- » Chose one of the activities below and complete it.

Get some paper and draw a series of pictures to illustrate Romans 5:18, 19.

“Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many

will be made righteous” (NKJV).

Rewrite Romans 5:18, 19 in your own words.

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read Romans 8:28.
- » We could make a list of all the things we know about God. He is the Creator. He loves us. He created us with free will. He hears and answers all prayers. Sometimes we receive what we prayed for. Other times God knows what we prayed for isn’t for our best and He says no. And there are times we just must wait. He lived and died for you and me. He is preparing a place for us in heaven. He is coming again, and we will be with Him forever. Heaven will be perfect. We will finally understand how evil and sin (rebellion against God) brought disastrous consequences into our world. We will hate evil and sin so much that we will never choose to sin again.
- » And there are many things we don’t know. It’s difficult to understand when bad things happen to us. We know it is because of sin in the world, yet we might still wonder, “Why me?”
- » Are you allowing something you don’t understand to keep you from believing and following God? Do you know exactly how the Internet works? Does the lack of understanding how something works keep you from using it?
- » We shouldn’t let what we don’t know confuse what we do know. Think about how Joseph must have felt when he was sold into slavery by his brothers! Genesis 39:1, 2, 20, 21 says that when Joseph’s life hit rock

bottom again and again, the Lord was with him. Do you remember how God used him to save the Egyptians and the Israelites? The same God promises to be with you.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Look up the Bible references below and choose the correct match. All the Bible texts are from the New International Version of the Bible.

Matthew 5:43-45

James 1:2-4

Job 42:1-5

John 16:33

Romans 8:28

Job 34:10-12

1 Corinthians 10:13

1. "All things God works for the good of those who love him."
2. "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy."
3. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds."
4. "In this world you will have trouble."
5. "My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you."
6. "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind."
7. "So listen to me, you men of understanding."

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- » Being prepared for what may come is very important. When things are going well and are peaceful is the time to prepare for trying times. How do we prepare for difficulties? By studying, praying, and memorizing Scripture so that when the difficult days come, you

will have a tight hold on God! It's like having a smooth rope and tying knots in the rope so you have good handholds in your rope. Trouble comes to all of us at some time. You want to be sure that when it comes to you, you won't lose your hold on God.

- » And in your moments of pain, anger, frustration, and confusion, know that God will be right beside you. God has promised to be with us in trouble and to deliver us. Sometimes we might not see or understand how we are being delivered, but we can know for sure that God is helping us (see Psalm 91:15). Just remember that no matter what is happening, hold on to God—don't let go.
- » Jesus Himself cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" He heard no answer. But there was an answer. It came three days later when God the Father called His Son out of the tomb. Jesus will be with you through your trial. Even if you don't feel as if He is there, He is. And you will be stronger, sing louder, believe more fully, and know that your Father never let go of you. It is your choice—will you hold on to God no matter what is happening in your life?

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read James 1:2-4.
- » Write what you know to be true about God on the numbered lines. Find and choose five Bible texts that encourage you when you face trials and hardships. Write the references beside the knots on the rope. And when hard times come, use these Bible verses to help you trust in God.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____





RETREATING BEFORE YOU CHARGE

Five-Minute Retreat

May 11, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Lamentations 3:22-26 (NIV) • “Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly.”

Isaiah 33:2 (NIV) • “LORD, be gracious to us; we long for you. Be our strength every morning, our salvation in time of distress.”

Galatians 1:15-18 (NIV) • “But when God, who set me apart from my mother’s womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus. Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days.”

1 Kings 19:11-13 (NIV) • “The LORD said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.’ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the

LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.”

Psalms 23:1-3 (NIV) • “The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.”

Lamentations 3:25-29 (NIV) • “The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young. Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust—there may yet be hope.”

Steps to Christ, p. 94 • “Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children, and yet there is much manifest reluctance on our part to make known our wants to God. What can the angels of heaven think of poor helpless human beings, who are subject to temptation, when God’s heart of infinite love yearns toward them, ready to give them more than they can ask or think, and yet they pray so

little and have so little faith? The angels love to bow before God; they love to be near Him. They regard communion with God as their highest joy; and yet the children of earth, who need so much the help that God only can give, seem satisfied to walk without the light of His Spirit, the companionship of His presence.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “RETREATING BEFORE YOU CHARGE”

As our world gets busier, louder, and more demanding of our free time Christians need to radically carve out moments to be alone with God. Being alone may not be a naturally easy thing for teens to aspire to. In a way, it goes against the flow of accepted behavior. Hanging out with friends is high on the value scale, while being alone raises eyebrows. But there could be nothing more right than stealing away to be quiet and alone with yourself and God. Some may see seeking solitude as one of many options, or having to do with personal style or taste. But the Savior, our example, needed the quiet times to retreat before He charged the forces of evil again. The idea many have of the word “retreating” is that you are losing, or getting sucked in and you need to re-think what you are doing. But Christ was not losing, or being sucked in. He needed the silence of retreat in order to come out victorious. So, for agents of the kingdom, the cry, “Retreat!” comes just before the victorious cry, “Charge!”

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “RETREATING BEFORE YOU CHARGE”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Appreciate the value of being alone as outlined in Scripture and as required by the way people live today.
2. Learn ways to communicate with God when they are alone.
3. Set some personal goals of solitude.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity B) glass of water, blindfold.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • White/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to see if the students can experience “real quiet.”

No materials necessary.

Get set • Say: Today we are going to start by experimenting with absolute silence. What I want you to do is to be absolutely still. Close your eyes and don't make a sound until I say we are finished.

Go • After one minute of silence get their attention and tell them how long they were quiet.

Ask: Did it seem like a minute? Longer or shorter? Next I want you to listen for things you don't normally hear. Be absolutely still and quiet and listen for sounds that you never notice. Again, I will tell you when to stop. (Right now I'm hearing the hum of my computer.)

Debriefing • Ask: Why do you think that the time we are absolutely silent seems to take longer than it really does? What noises did you hear that you never notice? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all and 5 being very much) indicate how much you think teens need regular moments of solitude and quiet (not sleeping) to grow spiritually? Encourage discussion.

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how difficult it is to follow directions if everyone is talking at the same time and the one voice you are supposed to be listening to is overshadowed by the many. You will need a volunteer. The volunteer is the seeker. The seeker will choose a friend who is the guide, who will try to guide the seeker to walk to and drink a glass of water which is placed strategically in the room. The seeker will leave the room to be blindfolded. The goal will be to have the one giving directions (the guide) direct the seeker to the glass of water and then give instructions on how to take and drink it without spilling it.

Get set • Say: Class, your job is to continually talk at the same level as the one giving directions, but to give alternate directions to

detract the seeker from drinking the water. Your goal is to drown out the directions—no yelling or screaming; keep your voice at the same level. After a few seconds of pandemonium I will begin muting the crowd and when I mute you, you need to remain quiet. To the guide **say:** You are not to yell or scream either, just try to guide the seeker step by step.

Go • Bring in the seeker, and as soon as the guide begins talking so does the class. Mute them one by one after a bit so that the seeker little by little begins to hear the voice of the guide until the only one speaking is the guide.

Debriefing • Ask the seeker: How did you feel when you were trying to listen for the voice of the guide? What are some of the things you heard or thought you heard? When did you start to get the instructions more clearly? What was it like to be able to hear only the guide?

Ask the guide: How did you feel in this process? How do you think God feels when trying to communicate with us above the noise of our everyday lives?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

While we are a part of God's kingdom and in many ways tied to one another in a community, the value of a citizen is not necessarily who they are in the crowd but who they are when they are alone. When the King Himself was on earth He created time to be alone.

Have the students read the verses listed in the Bible Insights section of the student lesson and answer the following questions (they will need to use their Bibles to read around the context of the passages referred to in the student lesson):

- >> Why do you think He was trying to be alone?
- >> What were the circumstances surround-

ing His stealing away to solitude?
>> What was the result?

Now list the following questions on the white/chalkboard:

- >> What big events in the apostles' lives would bring them to a place where they would need to be quiet and alone?
- >> What do you think they did when they were alone with God? (pray, sing, talk, listen, etc.) Why?
- >> How do you think solitude had an impact on their effectiveness in promoting God's kingdom? (1=big difference; 5=not so much of a difference.) Why?

Discuss David's, Elijah's, and Paul's experiences in the light of those questions. Have students find and read the following references (some of which are found in The Source section of this teacher's guide).

1. David
 - Psalm 23:1-3
 - 1 Samuel 16:6-11
 - 1 Samuel 17:34-49
 - 1 Samuel 18:6-11
2. Elijah
 - 1 Kings 19:11-13
 - 1 Kings 17:2-7
 - 1 Kings 18:16-21
 - 1 Kings 18:22-38
 - 1 Kings 19:1-5
3. Paul
 - Galatians 1:15-18
 - Acts 7:57-60 and Acts 8:1-3
 - Acts 9:1-9
 - Acts 22:4-19

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask: When you consider the circumstances that Viktor Frankl endured in the death camps, is it difficult to imagine someone "needing" solitude? How does the

story of Viktor Frankl underline the importance of solitude? Why do you think that time was so precious to him?

What do you think would be harder to accomplish in today's world: making time to be alone with God or making people sense a need to be alone with God? Is it possible to be alone even if you are in a crowd?

Where would you go to be alone with just yourself and God? What is your favorite place? What do you need for quiet time with God? (peace, quiet, communion, prayer, listening, thinking, choosing)

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: Pair up with someone in the class and take a minute to go over your daily schedule on Monday. Think of four options during the day from which you could choose to take a retreat/charge.

When would you take a few moments?

Where would you go to do this?

How do you think it would change the course of your day if you took time out?

When the pairs have discussed, ask volunteers to share responses with the larger group.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

In your own words, share the following:

There are at least two ways to begin thinking about quiet time alone with God. One is scheduling or taking real chunks of time to be apart and alone. You could spend this time anywhere you can be alone and quiet. Sometimes taking time to journal where you are in your walk with God can be helpful.

The other way is to have moments in which you quiet your heart and mind and listen to God—smaller moments in which you are open to talk with and listen to Him. It can happen on your way to school, when you're walking home, or even when you're waiting in line at lunchtime.

Say: The desire to spend quiet time with God had been on Jeff's mind more and more this year. He made some choices about his relationship with God and wanted to make good on his commitments. When it came to spending time with God in prayer or Bible study he would always forget. It wasn't because he didn't care, he just didn't develop the habit of a devotional life. His schedule is busy, which made it harder for him to talk to God consistently and regularly. So he asked several people he knew who spent quality time with God what he should do. Here are the suggestions he was given:

Write the following on a white/chalkboard:

- a. Create reminders such as notes or symbols that will continually remind you that God is waiting to spend time with you.
- b. Get a partner who wants to do the same thing and set up a daily system by which you communicate and remind one another of your commitments.
- c. Just spend time with God when you remember to; it doesn't have to be so strict. Just take time with God whenever you feel like it.

Ask: What would you recommend? What else might be a suggestion for Jeff?

Ask a volunteer to add items to the list on the board as they are suggested by the students.

Debriefing • Ask: Which of these ideas might work for you? Lead students in a discussion of things they will try in the coming week to get their retreat/charge time on track. Refer students back to the Friday section of their lesson for some good ways to focus during their time with God.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think are the big roadblocks that keep people from taking time to be alone?
2. Who do you know who is a better per-

son for taking time to be alone with God regularly?

3. If you were to plan moments in which you would "retreat/charge" into solitude, what would be the reasons that would drive you?
4. To what degree do you think solitude makes or breaks a person's walk with God?
5. Can we spend too much time alone? Explain.

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Our citizenship in the kingdom of God has everything to do with our relationship with the King. Diving into quiet spots of communion with God is like working in the sulfur pits and occasionally getting to climb a mountain and breathe the fresh air and feel the breeze of God's Spirit on your face. The purpose of solitude is to get quiet long enough so that the Holy Spirit can make contact with the "real you." Your most important thoughts can be developed and encouraged by the Spirit. The goals God has placed in your heart can emerge above the agenda of everyday life in the "other" kingdom. More than anything else, solitude brings you face-to-face with God in ways that you won't regret. Anyone who has taken a time out knows how much they needed it, especially when they are done.



STUDENT LESSON

RETREATING BEFORE YOU CHARGE

Five-Minute Retreat

May 11, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 20, The Sabbath:** “The Sabbath is a day of delightful communion with God and one another. It is a symbol of our redemption in Christ, a sign of our sanctification, a token of our allegiance, and a foretaste of our eternal future in God’s kingdom.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84-86.

FIVE-MINUTE RETREAT

Viktor Frankl miraculously endured the seasons of horror in the Nazi death camps during World War II. One of his most basic needs, however, was to experience quiet moments of solitude. Even under the most grueling circumstances he would find a sweet release and the presence of mind to endure the hardship and the horror that confronted him daily. Viktor Frankl recalls finding opportunities to take five-minute retreats of quietness on the way to and from tasks in the camp. He worked in a place where dozens of peo-

ple were crowded into one spot, so any chance he had to retreat behind the mud hut he seized. There, surrounded by barbed wire and covered by a canvas tarp, corpses were thrown for disposal. Amid the stench of rotting bodies and the constant reminder of death he would sit alone and gaze out at the Bavarian countryside. In the quietness of those moments he would leave behind the hopelessness of the death camps and be renewed enough to survive until the next opportunity to spend five more minutes came along. He recalls the dire circumstances and the reminders of death all around him. While the sight and the stench of decaying bodies might have been difficult to ignore in his moments of solitude, more distracting than anything else were the footsteps of guards coming, marking the end of his time alone with God.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read 2 Timothy 4:2.
- » Jenna is in the eighth grade. She writes: “I invited my neighbor Cassandra to spend the weekend at my house while her parents were away. I take time to reflect and pray every night before I go to bed. Cassandra noticed I was praying and said her mother does the same thing because of yoga classes. ‘It’s all the same,’ she said. I didn’t know what to say. I don’t want her to think that spending time with God is the same thing as yoga. But I didn’t want to offend her

by telling her she was mistaken. What could I have said? Was it right just to leave it alone? It just seemed like a good opportunity to share, and I think I blew it."

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE SABBATH

- » Read Exodus 20:8-11; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Ezekiel 20:12.
- » Rest. Our minds and bodies need it to be healthy. Our spirit needs it to remain in contact with our Lord and Savior. Every day we need to spend time with God. When we spend time with God, He helps us to make decisions and to know what is right. And God has given us the Sabbath—a day to set aside our worldly interests and get to know Him and His will for us. It is a day to celebrate not only creation but salvation! Time spent with God during the week and on Sabbath restores our minds, bodies, and spirit for the work God has for us to do.

- » How do you spend quiet time with God?

- » What can you do to guard against distractions during your quiet time?

- » The Bible story from Mark 1:29-35 (NKJV) shows how Jesus honored the Sabbath rest and how He took time to spend with His Father early in the morning. Indicate with numbers the correct order of the verses.

_____ "So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her."

_____ "Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the

house of Simon and Andrew."

_____ "Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."

_____ "And the whole city was gathered together at the door."

_____ "Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases."

_____ "At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed."

_____ "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever."

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Mark 1:35.
- » At first, spending quiet time with God may feel unusual. But, if you keep doing it, you will discover a joy and peace that nothing else gives.
- » Think you are too busy just to sit and listen for God to speak to you? Look at how busy Jesus was in Mark 1—the whole chapter is fast-paced. But Jesus gets up before the sun because more than sleep He needs to know what His Father has planned for Him on this day. He also wants to be sure His life is in the hands of His Father. After His prayer time, He knows what His Father wants Him to do. God may have instructed Jesus that it was time to move on. Perhaps He would say, "Let's move on to the next village—we have work to do there."
- » Time with God is a precious privilege. What are the obstacles in your life? A few minutes of extra sleep? A phone call cut five min-

utes short? One less e-mail or text message to write? What would our church be like if young people became involved? Imagine a whole generation of teenagers who make Jesus a priority in their lives. What might happen if young people would take time out of their busy lives to get in touch with the One who bought them eternal life? What is holding you back from making God first in your life?

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

» Look up the following texts in the New International Version of the Bible, and answer the questions.

1. Matthew 14:13—How did the crowds follow Jesus?

2. Mark 1:35—When did Jesus go out to pray?

3. Mark 6:32—How did they go away by themselves?

4. Luke 4:42—What time of day was it when the people tried to keep Jesus from leaving?

5. Luke 22:39-44—Where did Jesus pray this prayer: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done”?

6. John 7:53-8:1—Where did Jesus go?

7. John 6:15—Where did Jesus go this time and why?

8. Mark 6:30, 31—What did Jesus say to His apostles and why?

“Christ’s words of compassion are spoken to His workers today just as surely as they were spoken to His disciples. ‘Come ye yourselves apart, . . . and rest awhile,’ He says to those who are worn and weary. . . . While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 362).

Thursday

CONNECTING

» Read Mark 6:30, 31.

» Review the memory text.

» The image of God waiting for us to spend time with Him is powerful. God is waiting for His children—you and me—to want to be with Him. We don’t spend time with God because it is required. We do it because we enjoy it so much and want to spend time with Jesus! God is not interested in us having “devotions” as much as He is interested in our “devotion” (loyalty, faithfulness, dedication, and love). Devotions have a beginning and an end. Devotion is a lifetime commitment.

» In the Bible we clearly see Jesus hanging out with sinners all the time. The Pharisees would ask, “Why does He eat and drink with

sinner?” The religious leaders may have snarled at Jesus, but His Father was smiling. No matter how busy Jesus was, He made sure to take moments of solitude—away from the people and teaching—just to be with God. No one, not even Jesus, could keep going day after day without quiet moments with God. And God smiles when we demonstrate our love to Him by sharing time with Him.

» God waits for you. He patiently watches you. When you hear God calling you, answer and give Him some of your time. Ask God to remind you if you need help doing this. He is more interested in moments alone with you than anything else. You will be amazed at how much He can do for you and through you when you invite Him to spend time with you.

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read John 7:53-8:1.
- » Schedule or spontaneously spend some time apart in the quietness with God. You might want to focus on one thing at a time and journal some of your thoughts and experiences as you go throughout the week.



Ear: What did you hear?



Bible: What verses came to your mind/did you read?



Heart: What honest communication did you have with God from your heart?



Eye: What did you “see” and learn about God, yourself, or others as you spent time with Him this week?



Illustrations by Terry Crews



LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 1

The Banana Principle

May 18, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

James 1:19, 20 (NIV) • “Take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

Proverbs 10:19 (NIV) • “Sin is not ended by multiplying words, but the prudent hold their tongues.”

Proverbs 12:13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 23 (NIV) • “Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk, and so the innocent escape trouble. From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things. . . . The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice. Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult. . . . The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. . . . The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves, but a fool’s heart blurts out folly.”

Proverbs 17:19 (NIV) • “Whoever loves a quarrel loves sin.”

Proverbs 18:2, 6, 7, 13, 19-21 (NIV) • “Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions. . . . The lips of fools bring them strife, and their mouths invite a beating. The mouths of fools are their undoing, and

their lips are a snare to their very lives. . . . To answer before listening—that is folly and shame. . . . A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel. From the fruit of their mouth a person’s stomach is filled; with the harvest of their lips they are satisfied. The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Proverbs 19:2, 11, 20, 27 (NIV) • “Desire without knowledge is not good—how much more will hasty feet miss the way! . . . A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense. . . . Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise. . . . Stop listening to instruction, . . . and you will stray from the words of knowledge.”

Psalms 141:3 (NIV) • “Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.”

James 3:8 (NIV) • “It [the tongue] is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 1”

“We were given two ears and only one mouth because God knew that listening is twice

as hard as talking!” (unknown source). There would be fewer misunderstandings, less fighting, and fewer wars if people would be quiet, listen more, and talk less! To understand what someone is saying, you must listen well. Look for other signals to help you clue in to what is being said as you listen—watch their facial expressions, hear the tone of voice, notice if their body is tense or relaxed. These are clues to help you identify what is being said. One other thing to help you listen well: let go of any preconceived thoughts and ideas, and just listen.

Not only is listening well necessary for good relationships between families and friends, but it will also help determine your students’ future success in life for here and eternity. This lesson and the one that follows will introduce the students to, and give them opportunities to practice, effective listening skills that can be used as tools for personal growth and for spreading the gospel.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 1”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Understand the importance of listening in relationships.
2. Learn the techniques of listening well.
3. Practice those techniques in their daily lives.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) 8½" x 11" (A4) sheets of paper, one for each student.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • (Activity A) white/chalkboard, markers/chalk; (Activity B) “What They Really Meant to Say” handout (p. 75), pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Distribute an 8½" x 11" (A4) sheet of paper to each student.

Get set • Have the students sit so they can’t observe what others are doing.

Go • Say: I want you to follow my directions exactly without asking any questions of me or of your classmates. Without looking at your neighbor, fold your paper in half. Now tear off the upper left-hand corner. Now

fold the paper in half again and tear off the lower right-hand corner. Now fold the paper in half again and tear off the upper and lower left-hand corners. Finally, unfold the paper and compare it with your neighbor's.

Debriefing • Ask: What does your sheet look like compared to the person next to you? (different) **Why do you think they are different or the same?** (We heard the same thing differently. We interpreted it differently.) **If this were a test, who would be to blame for the results being so different?** (you) **What could I have done differently to make it easier or for the results to be more uniform?** (Allowed us to ask questions. Given clearer instructions.) **What could you have done?** (Ignored your directions to not ask questions.) **Why didn't you?** (You told us not to.) **What does this say about our communication?** (It's difficult to get your point across or fully understand when you can't clarify.)

Say: It's difficult to listen well when you can't ask questions. Giving and receiving feedback, asking questions, and clarifying are all a part of listening well.

B. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Say: One of the texts in this week's lesson is **James 1:19**. Ask a volunteer to find and read it aloud. **Today we will explore the how-tos of doing what we are told to in this passage.**

Share the following illustration in your own words.

The story is told "about a farmer who wanted to buy a parrot. He went to a pet shop and told the proprietor what he wanted.

"'I have just what you have in mind,' said the store owner. With that he slipped into a back room and came back with an owl. 'This is an especially fine bird,' he said.

"The owl sat perched on a bar and stared . . . just stared. 'But will he learn to talk?' asked the amazed customer.

"'Of course,' said the store owner. 'You just have to be patient and keep talking to him.'

"So the farmer took the owl, and was quite pleased with his purchase.

"A few weeks later the two men met again, and the pet shop owner asked, 'Well, how's your parrot? Is he talking yet?'

"'No,' the farmer replied, 'he's not talking, but he certainly knows how to listen.'"—Pastor Hermann Wilm, in Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Copyright © 1998 Paul Lee Tan. All rights reserved. Database © 1998 NavPress Software.

Debriefing • Ask: In what way was the owl listening well? (It wasn't talking. It was quiet.) **Is being quiet all it takes to listen well?** (No, you need to try to understand what the other person is saying. Sometimes you will have to say something—ask a question or something.) **What kind of relationship was being built between the owl and the farmer?** (None; the man didn't even realize that the owl wasn't a parrot.) **Say:** Obviously there is more to listening on purpose than just closing our mouths and letting the other person talk.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Ask: Who has influenced you more in this life? The people who did most of the talking or those who listened to you? (Encourage the students to share examples, experiences.) **Say:** Listening is one of the greatest skills an agent of God's kingdom can have. Listening well does not just happen. It is a skill that needs to be practiced and refined over time. **James 1:19 tells us to be quick to listen and slow to speak.** (If you have not done so already, have a volunteer find and read the verse aloud.) **Ask:** How can we be quick to listen? Here are a few tips to use when someone else is talking (so our listening will be more effective than the owl's!).

Share the following concepts in your own words. Ideas are always reinforced if they are

written as well as spoken. Write this list on the board as you speak.

1. Put aside your feelings, prejudices, arguments, need to impress, and preconceived ideas.
2. Focus. Don't daydream, let your mind wander, rehearse what you are going to say next, allow yourself to be distracted, or look for an opening to jump into the conversation.
3. Don't interrupt—unless you need brief clarification or there is a fire.
4. Listen and watch for emotions being displayed. Ninety-three percent of the message is communicated in that way.

Of course, you have to know when to do these things. These come with practice, but more important, they come from listening—to the Holy Spirit. Before you can listen to humans well, you have to be open to the Holy Spirit's revealing to you your prejudices, helping you focus, and knowing when to clarify and how to read emotions. Prayer and the study of God's Word open our minds and hearts to the needs of those around us. Only after you have done these two things can you "be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19, NIV).

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask: What problem did the mother and daughter have? (They were not communicating. They could not hear what the other was saying.) **Ask:** What did the mother use to help her listen? (banana) **Ask:** How was using the banana helpful? (Because the mother wasn't talking, she could hear the daughter. The daughter could talk and share her feelings and points of view.) **Ask:** Is the banana important? (No. It was a tool to learn to listen.) **Ask:** How can we be like the mother in this story to our friends and families? (Listen to what people are really saying, not be offended by how they say it, not take what they say personally.)

Say: To listen well, we have to get beyond people's anger and demands and hear what they really need.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Present the following scenario:

You really want to be with your friends, but no one can drive you to the school where everyone is meeting. You whine, cry, storm, sulk, slam doors, and try the silent treatment on the family, but still no one will take you. You accuse everyone of hating you and ruining your life. Later, your older brother hisses, "Pipe down, Mom and Dad both lost their jobs today." You feel really bad for the way you behaved. What lesson did you learn from this? (Encourage discussion.)

Say: The book of Proverbs has some great things to say about our response when things don't seem to be going our way. Let's look at some of those verses. Have the students find and read **Proverbs 12:13-16, 18, 23; 18:2, 6, 7, 13, 19-21; 19:2, 11, 20, 27.**

Say: Tough words, aren't they? No one likes to be called a fool, but we don't have to be slaves to our foolish (sinful) behavior. God promises us that He will help us overcome our tendency to react rather than observe and listen. Let's read some of those promises.

Have the students read **Proverbs 19:20** and **Psalms 141:3.**

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Have the students divide into pairs.

Say: Within your pairs I want you to have a conversation in which one of you talks and the other listens. The talker may talk about whatever is on their mind. The listener will listen and observe the talker. Notice how

the person feels about the subject, whether they are interested or uninterested, whether or not they are telling how they really feel or are hiding something, what outcome they want regarding the subject, what kind of body language or voice inflection (high, low, quivery, angry, panicked) they use. You have about five minutes to talk. I will let you know when to stop. Give the students three to five minutes to converse.

(Write the list of things the observer is to observe where all can see.)

Say: Now reverse the roles and repeat the exercise.

Debriefing • Ask: What did you hear the person saying? (Ask the person's partner: Is that what you meant?) **How did the person feel about the topic?** (excited, bored) **How did you know?** (bright eyes, didn't look at me) **What did their voice sound like?** (chirpy, high-pitched, loud, slurred or mumbled words) **How were they sitting?** (upright posture, at edge of seat, slouched)

Ask: What was the hardest thing about being the talker? (Thinking of something to say. Letting the other person know how I really felt.) **The listener?** (Trying to be really interested in what the other person was saying. Staying focused. Not laughing.) **What kinds of things did you have to do to stay interested in what the other person was saying?** (Ignore my friends and other people. Not think about anything else. Pretend to be interested. Look at the person.)

Say: Like the mother in our story, sometimes you have to go beyond words to understand what another person is saying. Only 7 percent of what is said is communicated in words. Listening well means reading emotions, body language, and tone of voice to get the real message.

B. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Distribute the "What They Really Meant to Say" handout (p. 75) and pens or pencils. Have the students get into groups of three or four and work together to complete it. (Some students will have already begun the activity.) When everyone is finished have them report back to the class.

Debriefing • Say: Often listening well begins with how we respond to others. When people are overly excited, shouting, and frowning, a substance called adrenaline rushes through their bodies. It changes the whole atmosphere around them. They become part of what is called the "fight or flight syndrome." If they don't leave, they will be ready to fight verbally or physically. Not only do they get themselves upset, they may have the same effect on you. The way they are acting can affect your ability to listen to them. And that's why God in His wisdom says, "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19, NIV). When someone is out of control, by God's grace we can help to restore peace by the way we respond to them.

C. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why is listening well so important?
2. List three important things you must do in order to listen well.
3. What shouldn't you do when someone else is talking?
4. What else should you pay attention to other than a person's words?
5. Describe a recent conversation that went badly and tell what you could have done to help it go better.
6. What is the best way to start a difficult conversation? Give an example.

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

A proverb from an unknown source says, "We were given two ears but only one mouth." God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking. Listening well may be one of the hardest

things we will ever do, but it is also the most important thing we can do as members of our families and communities and of the family of God.

Listening well is a skill that, as we've seen today, can be practiced. It must be practiced for our future success in school and careers. Even more important, we must practice listening well, because the world is depending on citizens of the kingdom to listen and respond to their needs.

FOR LESSON SEVEN:

THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE APPLICATION ACTIVITY.

What They Really Meant to Say

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

Now, record how listening this way has affected your relationship with someone.

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say was: _____

What I said to: _____

How _____ reacted: _____



STUDENT LESSON

LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 1

The Banana Principle

May 18, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips” (Psalm 141:3, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ:** “We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. . . . This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 58, 59.

THE BANANA PRINCIPLE

“A woman once came to me and told me that she had learned to use the ‘banana principle’ with her teenage daughter.

“I wondered, ‘What on earth is the “banana principle”?’

“She explained. She’d noticed that her daughter often clammed up when they got into a discussion. The girl just wouldn’t share what was really on her heart.

“One day the woman got a banana from the kitchen, sat beside her daughter, and asked a question. While the girl answered, the mother very deliberately peeled the banana and took

a bite. After she chewed the piece, she asked another question and took another bite. And so it went, through the evening. She found that her daughter opened up about a lot of things.

“What had happened? The mother had made sure she listened after she asked a question. She didn’t rush in with a comment or criticism while her daughter was answering. She just listened and chewed, and chewed, and listened.

“The ‘banana principle’ simply means take time to listen. Ask, and then listen carefully.

“Jesus was a master at asking questions and patiently listening to the answers people gave. Jesus focused on others. Most people focus on themselves. To them, listening is simply a pause. They can hardly wait for the other person to stop talking so they can say what is on their minds. They are more interested in unloading their thoughts than really hearing the answer.

“Here is a vital principle. You can’t learn what is in another individual’s mind if you do all the talking. The essence of Christianity is concern for others. Love allows other people the freedom to share their inmost thoughts and feelings. To love another is to genuinely care. . . .

“You cannot love me if you do not know me. And you cannot know me if you don’t take the time to listen to my heart. So grab a banana. Peel it. Ask a question and take a bite. Then listen with your heart as well as your ears.”—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), p. 174.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 18:2-13.
- » Sheilah and her mother seem to always be fighting. Sheilah's mother will say something, and Sheilah will react by sighing or rolling her eyes. Sometimes Sheilah just ignores her mother. There are times that one or the other of them will respond by saying, "You never listen to me!" or just walk away shaking their heads. Sheilah and her mom are frustrated. What can each of them do to make things better between them?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

- » Read Psalm 133:1; Ephesians 2:14, 16; Ephesians 4:3.
- » God wants us to get along in our families as well as in the church family. With Jesus in our hearts, it is easier to be loving and kind. He brings us together in unity. He knows how much happier and more peaceful our lives would be if we would get along! In Christ we can put aside our own desires, thoughts, feelings, and opinions and open our hearts to be kind, understanding, and forgiving.
- » What are some ways you can bring peace and understanding into your family situation?

- » Unscramble the words and phrases in the word bank and write them on the lines below the scrambled words. Next, place the corrected words/phrases in the correct blank spaces in the Bible verse from the New King James Version to learn how we can show unity in our homes.

oGd fo escape	gniref- fusgnlo	rehtona eon htwi gnirabe	evlo	lufknaht eb
ssendnki	rehtona eon gnivigrfo	seicrme rednte	strahe royu ni elru	ytilimhu

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on _____, _____, meekness, _____, and _____, if any one has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on _____, which is the bond of perfection. And let the _____, to which also you were called in one body; and _____" (Colossians 3:12-15).

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read James 1:19.
- » Have you noticed that we are devoting two lessons to listening? Wonder why?
- » Think about this: "We were given two ears but only one mouth. God knew that listening was twice as hard as talking." Not only is listening difficult, but listening well is even more difficult—maybe one of the most difficult things we will ever do. But it is also one of the most important things we can do as we mature and grow.
- » The same skills we use in the real world, we carry over into the spiritual world in our

walk with God. We need to learn to set aside distractions and preconceived ideas and let God speak to us through the Bible, good books and music (and this Bible study guide), and godly people. Those same skills will be needed when we attempt to tell others about God. First we will need to listen to what they think. Then we can frame what we say to meet their needs.

- » The skill of listening well affects everyone for eternity.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Please read each text and fill in the blanks. Texts are from the New International Version of the Bible. You can go to www.BibleGateway.com if you don't have an NIV Bible.
 1. "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be _____ to _____, _____ to _____ and _____ to become _____" (James 1:19).
 2. "Sin is _____ ended by _____ words, but the _____ their _____" (Proverbs 10:19).
 3. "Set a _____ over my _____, LORD; keep _____ over the door of my _____" (Psalm 141:3).
 4. "Evildoers are _____ by their _____ talk, and so the _____ escape _____. From the _____ of their _____ people are filled with _____ things. . . . _____ show their annoyance at once, but the _____ overlook an _____.

"The _____ of the reckless pierce like _____, but the _____ of the wise brings _____. . . . The prudent keep their _____ to themselves, but a fool's _____ blurts out folly" (Proverbs 12:13, 14, 16, 18, 23).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Proverbs 12:12-23.
- » Review the memory text.
- » Ever wonder why every conversation with your parents or siblings seems to turn into an argument? It could be because you're too serious! Play a game with yourself called "what they really meant to say." Recall conversations that have gone bad over the past few days and figure out how you could have responded to make the situation better. Think about what the other person is really trying to say through not only their words but also their tone of voice and facial expressions. Here's how you play.

Example 1: Your sister (you share a room) says to you before going to bed: "You're such a mess. You always throw your clothes on the floor and never pick them up. No one will ever want to room with you." **Playing the game, you would say:** What she really meant to say was: "When you throw your clothes on the floor after you come home from school and don't pick them up, I feel frustrated and like I'm the only one who wants to keep the room neat. When my friends come over, I feel embarrassed by how our room looks."

Example 2: Your brother says to you: "You never pay any attention to me. You're always doing things with your friends." **Playing the game, you would say:** What he really meant to say was: "When you play with your friends, I feel left out. I feel as if

you don't like spending time with me any-
more."

Friday **APPLYING**

- » Read Proverbs 10:19.
- » Refer back to Thursday's lesson to refresh your memory about playing "what they really meant to say."
- » Keep track of your attempts to listen "between the lines" and hear what your friends and/or family are really saying to you:

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say
was: _____

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say
was: _____

- » Now record how listening this way has affected your relationship with someone.

What _____ said: _____

What _____ really meant to say
was: _____

What I said to _____:

How _____ reacted: _____





LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 2

The Incredible Power of Influence

May 25, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

James 1:19, 20 (NIV) • “Take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV) • “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Acts 13:47 (NIV) • “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Romans 1:14, 16 (NIV) • “I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. . . . I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

1 Corinthians 9:19, 22 (NIV) • “Though I am

free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. . . . I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.”

Revelation 2:7 (NIV) • “Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says.”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 2”

In last week's lesson we talked about listening well. This week we will talk more about listening techniques and how crucial they are to spreading the gospel.

We again turn to communication professionals to explain the importance of listening well. In the communication field, the name for listening well is effective listening. In the field of psychology, it is called active listening.

Effective listening is essential for anyone who wishes or needs to understand how to motivate and influence other people. Effective listening also:

1. enables us to control our feelings while we concentrate on hearing what another person is saying.
2. helps us avoid misunderstandings and wrong interpretations of what people are saying and to clarify what is actually being said to us.
3. is important when other people have

- ideas or knowledge we don't have.
- 4. enables us to capture ideas and knowledge and learn new ways of doing things.
- 5. helps us recognize and reward other people for the contributions they make to achieving our aims and objectives.
- 6. is important when other people are blaming us for something.

Active listening is important when people are asking for advice. Active listening:

- 1. prevents us from giving solutions to problems prematurely.
- 2. helps us to avoid or minimize conflict.
- 3. gives us confidence in promoting an argument if we have correctly understood someone else's argument to their satisfaction.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 2"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

- 1. Learn active and effective listening skills.
- 2. Be clear about the need to listen before speaking.
- 3. Because they have learned to be good listeners, speak in a way that answers questions people are asking.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) balls of yarn, twine, ribbon, or string; (Activity B) white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

- 1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.

- 2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
- 3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have the class group themselves in sets of five to seven.

Get set • Introduce a provocative or controversial topic for the class to discuss or a problem to solve. (This may be in the form of a question.) And tell them that they have five minutes to come up with a list of solutions.

Go • Give one person in each group a ball of yarn, twine, ribbon, or string. The first person to speak gets the ball and passes it on to the next person to speak, while still holding onto a piece of the yarn, and so on. After they have finished have them examine the pattern of the yarn created by their sequence of speakers.

Debriefing • **Ask:** Did one person speak more than others? Was there anyone who did not speak at all? Why do you think that

was? (They were shy, the speakers didn't give them a chance, we didn't have enough time.) **What would the ball pattern have looked like if the listeners got the string instead of the speakers?** (We would have used more/less string.) **What role did the listeners play, if any?** (They silently encouraged the speakers. They didn't help at all.) **How did the listeners relate to the speakers?** (They deferred to the speakers. They encouraged the speakers with their nonverbal communication.) **How did the speakers relate to the listeners?** (They used the listeners for reassurance.) **What does the pattern of yarn reveal about the discussion and how the group arrived at its solution?** (It was/was not a joint effort.) **Let's find and read James 1:19, 20. How might these verses relate to this activity?**

Say: The relationship between listeners and speakers is a delicate one. In order for communication to be effective, someone has to listen.

Ask: What can you do to make sure someone is listening and everyone can be heard? (Take the role of the listener as much as you can.)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have the students sit in two rows facing one another.

Get set • Have one row of students step outside the door. While they are out, tell the remaining students that they must "mirror" or copy everything the person seated facing them does.

Go • Bring the other classmates in. Tell them to describe to their partner an embarrassing or funny incident that happened to them or someone they knew. Observe the class as if nothing special is happening. Expect some laughter and/or confusion on the part of the students.

Debriefing • **Ask:** What is so funny? How does it feel to have someone mirror everything you do? (funny and strange) **How does it feel to have to match a person's every movement?**

(Nerve-racking because you have to watch them so carefully. You can't even think about yourself.) **What is the value of mirroring?** (It forces you to focus on the other person and try to think like they do.) **What, if any, is the downside to mirroring?** (Sensitive people might think you are mocking them.) **How can mirroring be used as a listening skill?** (You show that you are interested or that you want to understand what the other person is saying to you. You repeat back to the person what they said to you.) **Do any of you have thoughts to share from doing this activity as listed in yesterday's section of your lesson? How might 1 Corinthians 9:19-22 relate to this exercise?** Have volunteers find and read the texts, then discuss.

Say: An important part of listening to others is showing that you are interested in what they are saying by reflecting their interest back to them.

Ask: What are some of the ways we did that in this exercise? (leaned forward, copied the other person's facial expressions)

Say: Although in this exercise we exaggerated what to do to show that you want to hear what someone is saying, here are some things you should do. (These may be listed on the board.)

1. Face the person and maintain eye contact.
2. Maintain an open posture; don't cross your arms or legs.
3. Lean forward.
4. Nod your head.
5. Without interrupting, ask questions or paraphrase to clarify what you don't understand.
6. Ignore distractions. Don't look at your watch or answer your cell phone.

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustrations in your own words.

"There is a form of deafness known to

physicians in which the person affected is able to hear everything except words. In such a case the ear, as an apparatus for mere hearing, may be so perfect that the tick of a watch or the song of a bird is really appreciated. But owing to a local injury deeper than the ear, for it is in the brain itself, all spoken words of his mother tongue are as unintelligible to the sufferer as those of a foreign language.

"Give him a book and he may read as understandingly as ever, but every word addressed to him through his ear reaches his consciousness only as a sound, not as a word."—W. H. Thomson, in Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations: Signs of the Times*. Copyright © 1998 Paul Lee Tan. All rights reserved. Database © 1998 NavPress Software.

Debriefing • Ask: What does this illustration tell us about listening effectively—about listening in such a way that we can make a difference in our world, particularly as agents of God's kingdom? (Accept various insights from your students. Point out that listening is not just a matter of using one's ears, nor is it something we can fake.) Have students find and read **James 1:19** together.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

Agents of God's kingdom need to be willing to go wherever God asks them to go. **Matthew 5:13-16** compares believers to salt and light. Salt does no good just sitting in the shaker. It has to be poured out to be effective. It changes the flavor of whatever it becomes a part of. Not enough salt makes things tasteless; too much makes them inedible. If salt is not salty, it has no reason to exist.

In the same way, light is useless if it is covered. But if you put light in a dark place, it chases away the darkness. Darkness has never been able to overcome light.

Christians need to be involved in the lives of people who do not believe in God, and share the light they receive from living in His Spirit.

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Ask: What does this story have to do with listening? (It is important to be willing to talk about God's love to anyone, anywhere. We also need to get over our fears and preconceived ideas so we can listen and understand others.)

How did the spiritual leader respond? (He thanked the man for sharing principles of God's kingdom.) **Do you believe this was helpful to the spiritual leader?** (Yes. He appreciated the man sharing his faith. It may have helped him know what to do in a situation he was facing.) **How is this like relationships we have with people?** (When we listen to people and take care of their needs, they allow us to become a part of their world. Then we can share our world, God's kingdom, with them.)

Share the following concepts in your own words:

Being an active listener means participating fully in the communication process. This means listening to everything the other person has to say. It also means listening to yourself. You must be sensitive to the signals of your own body. You must realize the impact of your body language in the communication process. Active listening involves paying attention to the nonverbal as well as verbal messages you send to the other person.

Remember we said last week that 93 percent of communication is nonverbal. Your posture and behavior reflect your interest. This can be demonstrated in several ways.

Say: Sit across from one another again. I am going to give some commands and I want those on my right to do what I say. Those on

my left should do the opposite:

1. Face the other person squarely.
2. Adopt an open posture.
3. Lean slightly toward the other person.
4. Make good eye contact.
5. Be comfortable and relaxed.

Now switch and do the opposite.

Debriefing • Ask: How did it feel to have someone show interest in you nonverbally? How did it feel to have someone push you away with their nonverbals?

Say: Try to show your interest in others by your nonverbal communication. As the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:14 and 16 (NIV), we are “obligated” to people who do not believe as we do. Have students find and read the verses.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

NOTE: For the following scenario, use clothing descriptors considered offbeat in your region of the country.

Say: A teenager wearing all black and sporting multiple piercings, tattoos, and strange hair walks onto the playing field at your Christian school. He doesn’t seem drunk or high. How do you approach him? If that same teen seemed drunk, high, or violent, what would you or should you do?

Debriefing • Allow the students to discuss their answers to each question. (Say “Hi.” Ask him about his tattoos or piercings or hair; ask if he lives in the neighborhood. If someone looks high, drunk, or violent, quickly move away from him and head for shelter or the nearest adult. Call the police if he seems out of control.)

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

In your own words share the following:

Three basic listening modes exist, but only one of them is really effective.

1. **Competitive Listening** happens when we are more interested in promoting our own point of view than in understanding or exploring someone else’s view. We either listen for openings to speak, or look for flaws or weak points we can attack. We pretend to pay attention, but we are really waiting for an opening, formulating our argument, and planning our attack on the other person. Jesus’ many conversations with the Pharisees are examples of competitive listening. Let’s look at two of them in **Mark 2:23-3:6**. (Have the students read the story. Discuss what the Pharisees said or did to show they were not genuinely interested in what Jesus had to say.)
2. In **Passive Listening** we are genuinely interested in hearing and understanding the other person’s point of view. The problem is that we assume that we hear and understand what they said correctly. We just don’t bother to clarify it with the speaker. Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in **John 3:1-9** is one example. (Have the students read the passage.) Nicodemus came late at night to talk with Jesus for two reasons: because he was genuinely interested and because he was afraid of what the other members of the Jewish ruling council would think. Because of the conflict in his heart between his position in Israel and what Jesus was saying, Nicodemus did not become a believer at that time, but it appears from the Bible record he did later. (See John 7:50-52; 19:38-42.)
3. **Active Listening** is the single most effective listening skill. In active listening we want to understand what the other person is saying, thinking, feeling, or needing. We check with them to see if we understand what they mean. We wait to respond until we’re sure we understand. We restate or paraphrase

what they say to make it clear to both of us. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman in **John 4:7-26** is a good example of active listening. Jesus not only responded to the woman's words, but to her heart. When she tried to change the subject, He kept coming back to the point that He was the Messiah she was seeking.

Divide the students into three groups. Assign them each a listening mode and have them make up a skit demonstrating the modes.

Debriefing • Ask: How did it feel to be on the receiving end of the competitive or passive modes? (I felt defensive, not listened to or understood.) How did it feel to act that way? (strange, unlike me, good) Think of a time when you acted in either of these ways with your friends or family. How did things turn out? What would you do differently next time? What are some other examples from the Bible of people using the three different listening modes in their conversations with one another or with Jesus?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why is listening to people who are not Christians so important?
2. What kinds of things would you expect to hear when you listen to people who are not Christians?
3. What may be some of the hidden messages in what they say?
4. What dangers, if any, might there be in befriending people who don't believe as you do?
5. When was the last time you had an extensive conversation with a non-Christian? What did you talk about? Did your faith or relationship with God come up? If not, how will you bring it up in the future?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Many companies have become successful because they listened to their customers. They listened to learn what their customers wanted, and then they gave it to them. Because we have so much more to offer as agents of the kingdom, we need to listen carefully to people in the world around us.



STUDENT LESSON

LISTENING ON PURPOSE, PART 2

The Incredible Power of Influence

May 25, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 13, The Remnant and Its Mission:** “The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 38, 39.

THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF INFLUENCE

“Buckling my seat belt to prepare for a quiet flight, I glanced up and noticed an Indian spiritual leader walking down the aisle of the plane. His long white robe, flowing shoulder-length hair, and full beard attracted my attention. I was even more surprised when he took his seat beside me. His warm brown eyes and gentle smile put me at ease instantly.

“During the flight we discussed our philosophies of life. Of course, I shared the ‘good news’

about my best friend Jesus. I told of His inexhaustible mercy, His limitless love, His infinite power. I told of His creation, His salvation, His friendship, His priesthood, and His soon coming.

“At the end of the two-hour flight, to my utter surprise, this Indian [spiritual leader] placed his hand upon my shoulder and, with his face only a few inches from mine, spoke in distinct, deliberate tones. He hadn’t said much during our flight. He let me do most of the talking. Now it was his turn.

“‘Son,’ he declared, ‘everyone we ever meet in life has influence upon us. There are no chance meetings. No life is an accident. We all influence one another for eternal life or for death. Thank you, young man, for influencing me for the nobler principles of the heavenly kingdom today.’ Then he turned and walked away. . . .

“He was right. There are no chance meetings. Our words and actions have an incredibly powerful influence on other people. Every encounter for the Savior is an opportunity to share the Father’s love. Some of Christ’s most life-changing moments resulted from unexpected meetings. They were not planned ‘witnessing events.’ They were divine encounters in the daily routine of life. . . .

“Today you can be an influence for good on someone around you. You can share God’s love with someone who needs you. Someone needs your hopeful words today. Someone needs your encouragement today. Make yourself available to the Spirit [of God], and look for an unexpected encounter with one of God’s needy children

today.”—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), pp. 122, 123.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read Acts 13:47.
- » To hear the needs of those around us, we need to listen through their pain, anger, and hurt to hear what they are really trying to say. We need to reach out to people to understand what they need. We are called to be channels of God’s love to others. He uses us to meet people where they are; then we can lead them into a saving relationship with God.
- » Priyanth has gone to Christian schools all his life. He doesn’t really know anyone who is not of his faith. But now he will have to go to a public high school. He wants to share his faith, but he is afraid people will think he is strange. What advice would you give him?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE REMNANT AND ITS MISSION

- » Read 2 Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 14:6-12; Revelation 18:1-4.
- » As children of God we have a message for the world. God loves them. Jesus died for them. And the Holy Spirit helps us to obey God’s command to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15, NKJV). We are to take the three angels’ messages to the world. Jesus is coming soon, and He wants us to help others to be ready for His coming (see Matthew 28:19, 20).
- » Knowing that God is with you, to whom will you reach out to share His message of love?

-
- » What are some things you can do to share God’s messages?
-

- » Take a piece of paper and lightly draw a background that goes with the verse below. Now, write the verse across your picture. Take a pencil and mark various shapes on the picture and verse—so it looks like a puzzle. Now cut out the pieces, mix them up, and put the puzzle together upside down (so you can’t see the picture). Once you have put it together, glue a piece of card stock on the back. After it has dried, turn the picture verse over. Hang your picture in your room to remind you that everyone needs a chance to become a follower of Jesus and the opportunity to be ready for His coming.
- » “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10, NKJV).

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Matthew 5:13-16.
- » We are to be a blessing to those around us who may not know or follow God. Jesus wants us to be like salt—seasoning the area where we are with His love and goodness. We are also to be light to those around us. Since we are God’s children, we must allow our light to shine to reach those in darkness.
- » It is true that today people can get facts, figures, and information about being a Christian from social media and the Internet. But people need to know someone is listening and is willing to be a friend and to offer a helping hand. Humans need one-on-one contact to thrive.

- » You can reach out to others by getting involved. There are many community outreach projects. Find one that matches your personality.
- » Even though we are not to love the things of this world, we do have a part in this world—we are to carry the Good News to others. So, don't be afraid to reach out to those around you who do not know God and are not a part of your normal circle of friends. Just remember to whom you belong. It is important to be around people who are different from you so you can learn how to relate to them and meet them where they are with the Good News of Salvation.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts from the New International Version of the Bible (available at www.BibleGateway.com) with the words that correspond to them.

- A. James 1:19, 20
- B. Matthew 5:13-16
- C. 1 Corinthians 9:19-22
- D. Acts 13:47
- E. Romans 1:14-16

- _____ "... A town built on a hill cannot be hidden ..."
- _____ "... I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."
- _____ "... Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry ..."
- _____ "... I have made you a light for the Gentiles ..."
- _____ "... I am not ashamed of the gospel ..."

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read James 1:19, 20.
- » Review the memory text.
- » In a few more years you will be in high school and then off to college. You will probably take a course in effective listening. This will enable you to take better notes during class and to retain lots of information for tests.
- » The wonderful thing is that these skills translate into other areas, such as relationships. The skills gained may have eternal consequences for the people that you meet as well. God doesn't need our help to save people, but He can use our talents to reach others if we are willing to be instruments in His hands.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.
- » For one two-hour period today, when you know you will be around a lot of people, make an attempt to clarify everything that another person says by mirroring their actions and paraphrasing what they say. Note the outcomes—their nonverbal reaction, how you felt, what they said. Be prepared to share them in class on Sabbath.

Example 1: "Today when I talked with Juanita, she was sad about her pet dying. I made a sad face when she made one. I told her I knew that it was hard to lose a pet. She cried a little bit and thanked me for taking the time to talk with her and smiled. I felt good that she seemed to feel better about it."

Example 2: "Manny was pumped about

winning the geography bee. At first I wasn't going to say anything because so many people were around him. I gave him a high-five and asked him how he did it. His eyes lit up when I asked him that. He told me how his uncle made map flash cards for him to study

with during the day and how he drilled him at night. I kept nodding my head and asking questions, and he kept talking. I even asked to see the cards. The more interested I was, the more he talked. We talked longer than I thought we would. I learned a lot, though."





GOLD LIKE GLASS (Being Real, Part 1)

The Emperor's Seeds

June 1, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

The development of microelectronic manufacturing technology has enabled researchers to produce ultrahigh purity materials. When gold was purified to the limits of the technology, it had the appearance of clear glass and was completely transparent. This interesting and curious revelation brought to mind a Bible passage that was written some 1,900 years ago: "And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Revelation 21:21, KJV). It is now known that the deep rich yellow color is not a natural property of absolutely pure gold, but is instead the result of impurities.

Revelation 21:18 (NIV) • "The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass."

Revelation 21:21 (NIV) • "The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."

Revelation 3:14-18 (NIV) • "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to

spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."

Daniel 11:34 (NIV) • "When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them."

Romans 12:9 (NIV) • "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good."

1 Timothy 3:8 (NIV) • "In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain."

2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV) • "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Luke 12:1-3 (NIV) • "Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: 'Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have

whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.’ ”

2 Corinthians 2:14, 15 (NIV) • “But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.”

Psalms 66:16-20 (NIV) • “Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!”

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GOLD LIKE GLASS”

This lesson on authenticity and hypocrisy is all about the problem of pretending. The word “hypocrite” means an actor playing a part in a play. Pretending. It is sobering to think that humans can hide behind masks and pretend that even God doesn’t see through them. The first of this two-part series on authenticity will focus on removing the mask and being true in our relationship with God (vertical). The second will focus on how we become sincere with others (horizontal). It seems that fear underwrites the desire to put on a front and resist full disclosure with God. Although we talk about God’s grace and His accepting qualities, experiencing intimacy with God can be challenging. It is necessary in this lesson to expose the myths that make us play make-believe with God. God’s almost unbelievable grace is the only thing that will enable us to come clean with who we really are.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “GOLD LIKE GLASS”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Unmask the notion that pleasing people is more important than pleasing God.
2. Examine the qualities that make people genuine.
3. Have the opportunity to deepen the commitment of who they really are to God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) paper, pens or pencils; (Activity B) three bottles of bottled water, salt, sugar, a few dry crackers.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Bibles OR copies of Matthew 23:1-36 in a contemporary translation.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to develop an understanding of what it means to be genuine by looking at the synonyms and antonyms of key words. The students will need paper and something to write with. They will be divided into groups of three or four, or pairs (depending on how many people you have) to develop a list of words (synonyms and antonyms) that describe what “being real” (or not) looks like in real life (concrete examples) to share with the rest of the class.

Get set • Divide the students. Give each group a different word (*sincere, genuine, pure, authentic, hypocrite, impostor, fake*).

Go • **Ask:** First, what is a synonym? (Another word describing the same thing.) **Good! What is an antonym?** (Another word that shows the opposite!) **Make a list of synonyms and antonyms as quickly and thoroughly as you can.** After they have exhausted their mental powers have them share their list with the class. Then ask them to consider how their lists are similar and how they are different.

Say: Take the word you were given and think of an individual from popular culture, history, or from the Bible who is a good example of the word you were given. Be able to share why you chose that person.

Debriefing • **Say:** Please vote whether you agree or disagree with this statement: **Most people are a mixed bag of hypocrisy and authenticity.** Use a voting procedure that works for

your group. **Now, let’s have some volunteers explain why they voted the way they did.**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this experiment is to have students experience the disappointment of water that isn’t what it appears to be, mixed with the satisfaction of tasting water that is. Using three bottles of bottled water, add salt to one, sweetener to another, and leave the third with pure water. Make sure that you dilute the sugar and the salt in warm water first so that it is clear like pure water, then put it in the bottles labeled pure water. Be aware of any food allergies the students may have and adjust the activity accordingly.

Get set • **Say** to the students: **I need three volunteers. You have just finished running a marathon and you are thirsty.** (Give them a few dry crackers to aid in drying them out.) **Your mouth is so dry you can hardly wait for a taste of pure water.**

Go • Sit each volunteer before one of the bottles of water and say, “You may drink now.” Note the expressions on their faces as they do.

Debriefing • **Ask:** How did it feel to be thirsty and taste the salt or sugar water? How did it feel to have the bottle label match the drink? How do you think this applies to people who wear the name Christian? Can you think of scenarios in which interacting with a Christian can be disappointing? refreshing?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

How good is Jesus at seeing the “real thing” at a distance? When the disciples brought Jesus to meet Nathanael, Jesus said something peculiar about Nathanael. Have students find and read **John 1:47**. It says: “Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” (KJV).

“Guile? What is guile?” you ask. Guile is the word that used to be in use for “fish bait”! In other words: “How refreshing to see someone who doesn’t trick people by being someone he is not.” While Nathanael probably had his shortcomings, he was genuine, or “true blue,” as they say in Australia.—From Robertson’s *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997 by Biblesoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright © 1985 by Broadman Press.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

We are going to be talking about hypocrisy and authenticity. Citizens of God’s kingdom are called to be genuine. Some think this means flawless, but in reality, we all know how imperfect we are. Being genuine or authentic has to do with transparency more than perfection. “What you see is what you get” or “the real thing” are common ways to describe something that is genuine. Covering our shortcomings and pretending to be something we are not is outright acting. The other word used in the Bible is “hypocrite.” In what areas of church life do you think it is easy to pretend to be something we are not? Knowing what we know about God’s love and acceptance of us, why do you think people (we) so often masquerade as someone they are not?

Say: In this lesson we focus on our relationship to God. Consider whether people really believe the following myths are true or just behave like they are true.

Myths:

1. God is not able to really see my motives. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)
2. God is not paying attention all the time to my life. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)

3. God is disappointed with me because of my failures. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)
4. God overlooks my insincerity, hoping I’ll become more genuine as I continue to grow. (Do people really believe this or behave like it’s true?)

Say: Now let’s look at the Bible Insights passages in the student lesson and try to determine which ones speak directly to these myths. What does it mean to have an authentic relationship with God?

1. **Psalm 139:1-4.** Acknowledge that He sees and knows you completely—and He still thinks you are the most precious part of His creation.
2. **Hebrews 10:22.** In order to draw near to God or be close to Him, we have to be honest about who we are. The biggest thing that stands in our way is when we are not truthful about ourselves with Him.
3. **1 Peter 1:6-8.** We are made more genuine as we struggle through life in honesty with God.
4. **1 Timothy 1:5.** The bottom line of the Christian life is a love that comes from an authentic walk with God. There is nothing more important than this.

Ask: Why is sincerity a cornerstone to our relationship to God? What does an authentic Christian look like? sound like? act like? live like? When does it seem difficult to be honest with God about where we are in our walk with Him?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask: In what sense does it pay to be forthcoming and genuine with God? What about the story of Ling? How does this story apply to being a part of God’s kingdom? Explain how this may be true: Being

authentic/genuine is a reward in itself—no games, no pretending, no masks, no acting, no double-talk or hypocrisy. What other rewards come from living in an authentic relationship with God?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Have the students find and read **Revelation 3:14-18**. Point out that the church of Laodicea (that's us) is described there.

Say: Here's your chance to line up your beliefs with your life. The following are some scenarios in which taking a risk is required. Let's use the three categories listed in the verses we just read to categorize responses that could be made to these scenarios: cold, lukewarm, or hot.

For each scenario, think about what a cold response would be, what a lukewarm response would be, and more important, what a red-hot action that proves you to be genuine would be. Remember: **Ice Cold, Lukewarm, Red-hot**. Stop and discuss the possible responses to each scenario.

1. A good friend asks if they could see your homework assignment. They are behind, and while they did not use the word "copy" or "cheat," you both know what is going on. What do you do?
2. In a group of friends the conversation leads to attacking someone else behind their back. In a moment of weakness you participated in the slander, but now you feel horrible. You know this is wrong and no one deserves this kind of treatment. How do you respond to your friends in light of the conviction you feel? How do you respond to the person you were talking about?
3. You and some others are hanging out at a friend's house and they are looking at inappropriate websites. What do you say or do to be true to your beliefs?
4. You were not honest with your parents about what you did after school. You lied to avert trouble, but you know it was wrong.

How do you deal with this problem?

5. You want to sing out because you love singing praise to God, but you worry it could bring some ridicule your way. What do you do?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Ask: What is so wrong with playing the game or pretending? Compared to adultery or murder or stealing, surely hypocrisy can't be all that bad. Right? **Say:** Take a look for yourself. There were people caught in the act of adultery who found compassion with Jesus. Simon the Zealot, one of Jesus' disciples, probably knew too well how to kill Romans. A thief on the cross got a quick pardon at the last second.

Now, notice how Jesus responds to people who play games, wear masks, and pretend to be something they are not.

Have the students all find **Matthew 23:1-36**. (You might reproduce it from a contemporary translation and distribute it to the students.) Ask them to read through and find the three rebukes they think are most surprising. Have them explain why. (If you are using a reproduced copy of this passage, have the students circle, highlight, or underline the three rebukes they choose.)

Now, ask them to imagine if the leaders would repent and change as a result of each rebuke. **Ask:** Which rebuke, if the behavior was turned around, would bring the most positive change to our church? Why?

Which rebuke strikes closest to home with you?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Why is talking to God honestly so difficult to do? In what areas of your life do you find it difficult to be genuine or up-front with God?
2. Who in Scripture seems to be as genuine

as they come? Who do you know today who is sincere with their faith in God? What qualities or experiences seem to have helped them with being genuine with God?

3. When in your life have you felt that you were not wearing a mask or pretending with God?
4. What do you think causes people to pretend or live two lives?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

No amount of goodness or badness is going to cause God to love you more or less. Do you ever wonder why we fake it? Why do we pretend or wear the masks? It's not like God can't see to the very depths of our motives. God has always been able to forgive the most atrocious behaviors in people. Think of the worst of sinners in the Bible who turned around and became agents in God's kingdom: Saul/Paul, Mary Magdalene, David with the Bathsheba incident, etc. God cleanses us completely when we come clean with Him. His hands are tied, however, when we refuse to recognize how much we need Him and how far we are from Him. If anything, hypocrisy is not "getting" (understanding) God's grace. Authenticity is being transparent with God. It is probably safe to say that God is more comfortable with the "real me" than I am.



STUDENT LESSON

GOLD LIKE GLASS (Being Real, Part 1)

The Emperor's Seeds

June 1, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (James 3:17, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 10, The Experience of Salvation:** “This saving faith [faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord] comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God’s grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God’s sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 76-78.

THE EMPEROR'S SEEDS

Once there was an emperor in eastern Asia who was growing old and knew the time was coming to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his own children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, “It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you.” The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. “I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant

the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!”

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day, and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. By now others were talking about their plants, but Ling didn’t have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Ling didn’t say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by, and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go and to take his pot and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful—in all shapes and sizes. When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. “What great plants,

trees, and flowers you have grown,” said the emperor. “Today one of you will be appointed the next emperor!”

All of a sudden the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. “The emperor knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!” When Ling got to the front, the emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!”

Ling couldn’t believe it. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, “One year ago today I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds, which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!”—Wayne Rice, *More Hot Illustrations for Youth Talks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Used by permission.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Hebrews 10:22.
- » Kim wrote this question: “When I pray to God, I want to be open and honest, but I don’t know where to begin. I feel as though there is so much to tell Him, but He obviously knows already. How do you talk with someone who knows what you are going to say? I have made so many promises to Him that I have broken. I keep asking for forgiveness. Is there a better way? I’m really open for suggestions.”
- » What would you say to Kim? Is there any-

thing you have experienced that might encourage her? When have you felt the same? What solution did you find?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

- » Read Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 10:17; Galatians 3:26.
- » When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we become sons and daughters of God. And as sons and daughters of God we want our actions and the words we speak to match. We want to be examples of living according to God’s plan for us. God’s plan is found in His Word—the Bible. When we study His Word, our faith in Jesus will grow.
- » Why is it important that the things we do and the words we speak reflect clearly that we have a genuine relationship with Jesus?

- » Unscramble the verse below and answer the following question.

God Now to then 20 reconciled we be are
behalf Corinthians ambassadors Christ’s for
2 on Christ you as implore 5: though we God
us were NKJV through pleading

- » What does Christ implore us to become for Him? _____

- » What does this mean? _____

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Revelation 3:14-18.

- » Having a “see-through” faith is what God is calling young people to. Have you noticed how difficult it is to believe people are who they say they are today? They say one thing and do something different. Their actions do not match what they say. They leave you confused as to the type of person they really are. Are they someone you want to be with or be like?
- » The Bible refers to our faith as being “of greater worth than gold” (see 1 Peter 1:6, 7). When gold is completely purified, it is transparent—the yellow color in gold comes from the impurities still remaining in the metal. When John describes the streets of gold, they are “like glass.” God’s hope for you is that you become pure and others can see the real you—a child of God.
- » It’s not as though God can’t read your thoughts and know your mind. He does not scratch His head and wonder what you are thinking or if you really do love Him. He knows. He also knows that a relationship is a two-way street, and although your ticket to heaven isn’t earned by being good, it has everything to do with knowing God (see John 17:3).
- » One thing is certain: no one will sneak through the pearly gates with a mask on pretending to be a child of the King. God’s children will let the world see who they are and to whom they belong. How pure is your life?

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts with the words that correspond to them. All texts are from the New International Version of the Bible. If you do not have a copy, you can find one at www.BibleGateway.com.
 - A. 1 Peter 1:6, 7
 - B. Hebrews 10:22
 - C. Psalm 139:1-4
 - D. James 3:17
 - E. 2 Corinthians 11:3
 - F. 1 Timothy 1:5
 - G. 2 Corinthians 6:2-10
- _____ “You have searched me, LORD, and you know me . . .”
- _____ “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure . . .”
- _____ “In all this you greatly rejoice . . .”
- _____ “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor.”
- _____ “The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”
- _____ “But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning . . .”
- _____ “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings . . .”

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Galatians 3:16.
- » Review the memory text.
- » While shopping with his father, a young boy tried to scare his dad by putting on a mask and sneaking up behind him. He donned the image of some weird creature, but the father saw the boy’s sandy hair sticking up. His shoes, which the father had bought him the previous week, were untied, as always. The hands contorted in the form of scary claws were familiar.
- » The father had held those hands as they trembled with fear when the boy got his first shot from the doctor. The father had wrapped countless Band-Aids on those fingers over the previous five years. The voice, although garbled by the plastic lips of the mask, was unmistakably clear—it was his son’s. Although the son was pretending, the father could never imagine his son, no

matter how crazy or scary he dressed up,
being anything other than his son.

- » The boy pulled the mask off and said, "It's me!" God is waiting for you to say the same thing. Probably the safest place to remove your mask is on your knees before Jesus.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read 1 Timothy 1:5.
- » Make a list of three things you want to pray about this week to practice being authentic.











MADE WITHOUT WAX (Being Real, Part 2) Coming Home

June 8, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Acts 24:16 (NIV) • “So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.”

2 Corinthians 1:12 (NIV) • “Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God’s grace.”

2 Corinthians 2:17 (NIV) • “Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.”

2 Corinthians 8:8, 9 (NIV) • “I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

Ephesians 4:14-16 (NIV) • “Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him

who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Philippians 1:15-18 (NIV) • “It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”

1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13 (NIV) • “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.”

1 Peter 1:22 (NIV) • “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

Philippians 2:19-23 (NIV) • “I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for

their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me."

Philippians 1:9-11 (NIV) • "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God."

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT "MADE WITHOUT WAX"

Made without wax is the description of someone who is sincere, genuine, or authentic. In New Testament times dishonest people would patch broken pottery and sculptures with wax, then whitewash or paint them to make them appear authentic and whole. When the objects baked in the Middle Eastern sun they would soon fall apart. The genuine article is something made without wax. In this lesson we will focus on becoming sincere or authentic with one another. Owning up to our true self with God might be easier than it is owning up to other people, because we know that He already knows everything. When it comes to our relationships with other people in the church, family, or school, being authentic emerges as one of the more difficult tasks of kingdom citizens. This lesson will focus on stories and sections from the Bible that show people interacting with one another with sincerity and grace.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "MADE WITHOUT WAX"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Discover the connection between being real with one another and being real with God.

2. Deepen their confidence in the joy and grace that grow out of communities that practice authenticity.
3. Explore how their personal relationships can become more genuine.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) two identical clear glass saltshakers, one filled with salt, the other with sugar; (Activity B) index cards, pens or pencils.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • Bibles.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students

need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

If you chose to do a similar activity when it was suggested in the first quarter, your lesson will be more effective if you choose Beginning Activity B).

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate how difficult it is to really know each other by looking at the surface. As a result of the veneer we so easily wear, we may not know one another as well as we should. To do this we will have students see if they can tell the difference between salt and sugar in saltshakers. You need two identical clear glass saltshakers. Fill one with salt and one with granulated white sugar.

Get set • **Say** to the class while holding up the saltshakers: **These are saltshakers! But one of them is sugar. The goal is to be able to look at the saltshaker and see if you can tell which one is the salt. I will ask you to choose which is the salt. Are you ready? I will pass in front of you, show you the saltshakers, and you will need to choose without much delay. You will then open your hand, and I will sprinkle the substance in your hand. Do not taste or smell it until I give you the word.**

Go • Go around the room and let them choose. For each person, mix the shakers up behind your back because some will be able to tell whether they have chosen correctly once the substance is in their hand. When everyone has chosen, let them all taste their choice. Ask those who chose correctly to stand. (Usually about 50 percent.)

Debriefing • **Ask:** **How did you make your choice? What qualities did you look for? Did you feel confident or unsure? What was your reaction when you got it right? wrong? What are some lessons this teaches us about how to relate to others?**

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The purpose of this exercise is to get students to play the game “To Tell the Truth.” Give each student an index card and pen or pencil.

Get set • Each student will write on an index card five things about themselves that are true but that most people would not know about them, even their close friends. Then they are to write another statement that is untrue, but disguised in such a way as to leave doubt.

You make your own list and read it to them to demonstrate what you are asking them to do. Let them decide which statement about you is untrue. Then have them make their lists.

Go • After they have made their lists they can turn them in to you or read them from where they are, and the rest of the class can decide which statement they believe is untrue.

Debriefing • **Ask:** **Thinking about your group of close friends, how well do they really know you? On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being not as much as they think and 5 being probably more than you think) decide how well your friends know you. Who knows you the best? Even so, are there things that they don’t know that would surprise them? Even if we don’t know everything or even most things about a person, can we still know them? How and in what way?**

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

The story is told of a young man who was invited to preach at a church in Nashville, Tennessee. On an impulse he used this text, “Thou shalt not steal.”

The next morning he stepped onto a city bus and handed the driver a dollar bill. The driver handed him his change, and he walked to the rear of the bus to stand, since there were no seats available.

Once he had steadied himself, he counted his change. There was a dime too much. His first thought was *The bus company will never miss this dime.*

By now the bus had stopped again, and the narrow aisle between him and the driver was one long line of people. Then it hit him; he could not keep the money that did not belong to him.

Half a dozen “excuse me’s” and several scowling looks later, he made his way to the front and said to the driver, “You gave me too much change.”

The driver replied, “Yes, a dime too much. I gave it to you on purpose. You see, I heard your sermon yesterday, and I watched in the mirror as you counted your change. Had you kept the dime I never again would have had any confidence in preaching.”—*Quiet Moments With God for Teens* (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Honor Books, 2003), pp. 288, 289.

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

The word “sincere” (or authentic) means to be “sun tested” and comes from the act of making sure pottery and statues were “made without wax.” In the New Testament era dishonest folk would sell artifacts in the marketplace that only looked genuine, but in reality were patched together with wax and paint. If there is one quality that marks the many citizens of God’s kingdom, it is a desire to be genuine or made without wax. The “sun tested” part comes when the artifacts are heated. It becomes clear whether they are genuine or not. As a citizen of the kingdom of God, what you do and how you act speak concert-size decibels beyond anything you say. Even when Jesus rebuked the Pharisees He said, “Do as they say, but not as they do, because they do not do what they say.” A good slogan might be “promise less, deliver more.”

Say: Think of some scenarios in the Bible

that show how the heat of the moment exposed the genuineness of someone’s character. (Examples: David and Nathan, Jesus and Peter, Daniel’s friends and the furnace, Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Jesus and Pilate, Jesus and Satan’s temptations, etc.) Give the students a chance to come up with names. Then **ask:** **Who were they? What happened? What was the result? How are they remembered?**

Ask: When have you had moments that were “sun testing moments”? (This would be a good time to have small groups with adult participants.)

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Say: How others perceive our sincerity affects how they relate to us and to our Father in heaven. Genuine people have power to influence others. Consider why Paul sent Timothy to minister to the church in Philippi. Have volunteers find and read **Philippians 2:19-24**. (Timothy had proven he loved them with a genuine, sincere love. In all the problems the church had, one solution topped the list: a young man named Timothy.)

Have the following items listed on the white/chalkboard. **Say:** Rank the following according to the power that each item has to influence others for Christ with 1 being the most powerful and 6 the least. Let the students discuss their responses and come to consensus.

- ___ Acceptance and unconditional kindness to visitors who come to church
- ___ Teachers and pastors who can communicate messages that are relevant and exciting
- ___ Churches who are busy with serving broken people in the community
- ___ Hearing teenagers testify of their commitment to Christ in spite of the world’s ridicule
- ___ Seeing someone endure tragic sickness

ending in death and hold unwaveringly to their faith

— Believers in the church who are humble and helpful to anyone

Ask: Which of the above can you see making a real difference in your church? What role could you play in making this happen?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Present the following scenario:

Imagine if one of you noticed a friend becoming more and more depressed. One day you hear them mention things like, “What does it matter if I’m gone anyway? No one will miss me.” Or “There isn’t anything worthwhile to live for.” You see them begin to disengage and put you at a distance. All of the signs of depression leading to suicide are there, but you fear losing the connection with them by confronting them or someone else on behalf of them.

Ask: How would you react to this behavior? What are some examples from Scripture that may help you respond to this situation?

Say: Before you go too far ahead, look at the stories and sayings in the Bible Insights section of the student lesson and see if you can find some principles to help you work out this problem. (Galatians 2:11-14; Luke 22:31-34; 2 Samuel 12:1-7.)

Ask: In the scenes above, what action is taken to help the one who is struggling? Is it wrong to help others by exposing their faults? When and in what way should this be done?

Say: Consider the statements made in the Bible verses given and try to make a few rules for being authentic with your relationships with others. And remember that if someone is in danger, it is always the right thing to seek help from your parents, teacher, pastor, or someone in authority.

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Say: Looking at the New Testament church, we see a group of genuine “sun-tested, made-without-wax” believers. In groups of three to four look carefully at the verses given and discuss what you see to be important facts that made them a real body of believers: Acts 2:42-47; Acts 4:32-35. Here are some questions to guide you:

Ask: What do you see them doing? (praying, sharing, hanging out—remember it’s still festival time) What are they not doing? (They don’t isolate themselves—you know, do church then go home.) If you were to identify a quality that held them together like glue, what would it be? (love, mission, shared experience) What would this look like today? Is it even remotely possible to see people giving up their possessions for the Christian cause? (It would be weird, but I suppose it’s possible.) Why or why not? What do you think needs to happen to us as individuals for this kind of revival to be real in our lives today? (They were 100 percent about one thing. We are divided over many things.)

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. In what sense is it easier to be authentic with your friends than with adults?
2. How or in what scenarios is it hard to be authentic?
3. How much of what we do for God is based on what others might think of us?
4. How does understanding and experiencing God’s grace make it easier for us to be genuine with one another?
5. What are some of the risks involved in becoming an authentic citizen of God’s kingdom?
6. How does being sincere and honest with others help your relationship with God?
7. Is authenticity negotiable? Can you wear the mask or pretend and still live as a

citizen in God's kingdom? To what degree are we all on the journey? (not perfect or not even close, but moving forward anyway)

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

The tipping point of the Christian life is the place where we decide whether we will play

the game or be sun-tested. As we rest in God's grace we have nothing to fear from being exposed. The sneaky little lie that steals away our courage to be real with God and one another comes from a snake called Satan. The challenge of authenticity will be a continual battle to the end. When we fake it with God and one another, we deny our need of God and one another temporarily. We were created to know one another and be known by one another.

Be true. Be connected. Be constantly seeking ways to deepen your impact on others by the genuine faith you live out day by day.



STUDENT LESSON

MADE WITHOUT WAX (Being Real, Part 2)

Coming Home

June 8, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Blessed are those who keep justice, and he who does righteousness at all times!” (Psalm 106:3, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 12, The Church:** “The church is God’s family; adopted by Him as children, its members live on the basis of the new covenant.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 84, 85.

COMING HOME

Turning off his Honda 750, Chad paused a moment. Conflicting thoughts raced through his head as he stood in the church parking lot. He hadn’t been to church for a while, and he was already 15 minutes late. What would people think when he walked in dressed in a T-shirt and faded blue jeans? Would they disapprove of his long hair?

Yet something drove him on, compelling him to keep going. Deep inside, his heart ached, and something was missing. Somehow he felt this was his day to “come home.” A voice within seemed to urge, “Chad, just do it.”

Entering the sanctuary as quietly as possible, he hoped to slip into the last row unnoticed, but it was packed. As he moved down the aisle, it seemed as if every row were jammed. The congregation quietly sang, “Softly and tenderly

Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me.”

Heads turned. Chad felt that everyone was staring at him.

Nervously he made a quick decision. *I guess I’ll just sit in the aisle*, he thought to himself. He sat there a moment feeling as if dozens of eyes were boring into his back. Then he heard footsteps behind him. The church’s head elder approached. *Oh, no! He’ll probably throw me out*, Chad thought. But to his utter amazement, the older gentleman sat on the floor beside him, gently touched him on the shoulder, and simply said, “Glad you’re here, boy.” Placing a hymnal in Chad’s hands, the elder added, “It’s number 287.”

Kind words, a caring gesture, a moving sermon, an invitation to dinner, and Chad knew he had come home.

God wants our church to be a place of love, acceptance, and forgiveness. Bruised, battered, broken, beaten-up people will come through the doors of our church this week. As children of God we want to open our arms and hearts to receive them.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read Psalm 146:3-8; Jeremiah 17:5-8.
- » You love going to church and being with others who love Jesus just as you do. One of your friends seems sad and angry. You ask her if everything is OK. She tells you that she doesn’t understand how the Bible says

to love one another, and yet she sometimes sees the opposite happening.

- » How would you respond? What solution does the Bible offer? See Bible reading for today.

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE CHURCH

- » Read Acts 2:38-42; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:9.
- » We are God's children and are part of the church family. The church and His children have a mission—to share God's grace, mercy, and love. We are God's hands and feet here on earth—we are to show love to everyone—both in the church family and in the world.
- » How can you be an example and share God's love with your church family?

- » Put this verse back in its proper order.

in whom the whole building,

but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"

grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners,

being fitted together,

(Ephesians 2:19-22, NKJV).

Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone,

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read Acts 4:32-35.
- » Why is it so difficult to genuinely love one another in the church? Why is it so difficult to be real with one another? With your friends—you choose them. In the church, we don't get to choose who we are supposed to love. We come from all walks of life with so many different problems and issues, and we are expected to become like a body, a single unit? How is that possible? 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13 says, "And may the Lord make your love for one another and for all people grow and overflow, just as our love for you overflows. May he, as a result, make your hearts strong, blameless, and holy as you stand before God our Father when our Lord Jesus comes again with all his holy people. Amen" (NLT).
- » God is the source of that kind of love. It doesn't happen overnight, but it does happen. People from different ethnic groups and political positions come together to work on behalf of God. Even in the unchurched world there is a movement to build community and understand one another. It's part of being human. It's part of what it means to be made in the image of God.
- » Another reason to take off your mask and be real with others is that it would be lonely to go through life alone—never allowing others to know the real you. You know how lonely can feel. All of us need for the real us to be seen, recognized, and known.

Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Match the following texts from the New

International Version of the Bible (available at www.BibleGateway.com) with the phrases that correspond to them. The verses will give you the biblical view on “being real.”

- A. Philippians 1:15-18
- B. 1 Peter 1:22
- C. Galatians 2:11-14
- D. Luke 22:31-34
- E. Acts 2:42-47
- F. Acts 4:32-35

_____ “. . . For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”

_____ “. . . The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.”

_____ “. . . Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.’ ”

_____ “Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.”

_____ “. . . How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

_____ “. . . And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Thursday
CONNECTING

- » Read Acts 2:42-47.
- » Review the memory text.

» Everything about you is known by God: the number of hairs on your head, what you would say today, how you will feel tomorrow, what makes you most angry, and what fills you with joy. Always be encouraged by your desire to be “made without wax” because God begins with your desire and your choice and coaches you through. Remember this promise, “Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps his promise, and he will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, he will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out” (1 Corinthians 10:13, GNT).

Friday
APPLYING

- » Read 1 Peter 1:22.
- » Think about the people you have a difficult time being around. Who are the people around whom you feel you must wear a mask or pretend? First, pray for them throughout the week and see if your attitude shifts a little when you think of them. Second, write down a few ways to be “real” in their presence. Be sure to write a few thoughts as you pray and practice being authentic (real).



LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

Angel's Treasures

June 15, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

1 Peter 1:4 (CEV) • “God has something stored up for you in heaven, where it will never decay or be ruined or disappear.”

Proverbs 14:21 (NIV) • “It is a sin to despise one’s neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.”

1 Timothy 6:17 (The Message) • “Tell those rich in this world’s wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage.”

Philippians 4:19 (NIV) • “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NLT) • “Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.”

Romans 14:7-9 (The Message) • “None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It’s *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That’s why Jesus

lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other” (emphasis in original).

2 Corinthians 9:8-11 (The Message) • “God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you’re ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it,

He throws caution to the winds,
giving to the needy in reckless abandon.
His right-living, right-giving ways
never run out, never wear out.

This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God.”

2 Corinthians 9:7 (CEV) • “Each of you must make up your own mind about how much to give. But don’t feel sorry that you must give and don’t feel that you are forced to give. God loves people who love to give.”

Proverbs 24:34 (CEV) • “Suddenly poverty hits you and everything is gone!”

Proverbs 11:24 (NLT) • “Give freely and become more wealthy; be stingy and lose everything.”

Proverbs 11:25-27 (CEV) • “Generosity will be rewarded: Give a cup of water, and you will receive a cup of water in return. Charge too much for grain, and you will be cursed; sell it at a fair price, and you will be praised. Try hard to do right, and you will win friends; go looking for trouble, and you will find it.”

(See additional passages in student material.
Also: *Education*, p. 75; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 341, 342; *The Adventist Home*, pp. 369-371.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD”

Our culture is saturated with messages that try to convince us that “we’re worth it,” “we deserve the best,” and “we can have whatever we want right now.” These messages make it seem as if you deserve as much as you can get. If you have it, you should spend it. And if you don’t have it, that’s too bad for you. This kind of mentality makes it difficult for young people to think about those less fortunate than themselves. Poor people are generally “far away” and easily dismissed when deciding what to do with an unexpected cash windfall from a birthday or next payday’s check.

Early teenagers are reaching an age when they will become responsible for their own resources, particularly cash resources. They may already have small jobs baby-sitting or helping with yard work. They need to know how God wants them to use His blessing of the money with which He entrusts them. The Bible tells us that God expects us to take care of one another (Proverbs 14:21). Selfishly hoarding our resources, whatever they are, is not part of God’s plan.

God is concerned about our attitude toward money. It can be a great blessing or a great curse (Proverbs 28:27).

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH “LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD”

As a result of this lesson we would like the

students to be able to:

1. Discover our biblical responsibility toward those less fortunate than ourselves.
2. Commit to sharing, not only monetary resources, but time, energy, and skills to help the poor.
3. Make definite plans to “share the wealth” and “spread the bread.”

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) play money (such as the kind used to teach currency), charts of items to buy, and charitable causes (see explanation in the activity); (Activity B) coins and a one-dollar bill (enough for each student).

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • For each student: a tithe envelope and a copy of the “Wallet Inventory Challenge” worksheet (p. 116), pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Students will get to practice using their resources wisely. You will need play money for this activity. Also, prepare two charts. One with items they might like to purchase and one listing charitable giving options. Adjust your prices according to the money available. The goal here is to make them pay a fair price for what they want so they are forced to choose between what they want, what they need, and what they can give to help others.

Get set • **Say:** Like the stewards whose master left them talents, God gives each of us certain resources, including money, to invest for Him. Today you're going to be the Master's stewards and see how wisely you invest your blessings. (This might be a good time to discuss the word "steward" and its implications for "stewardship" in our lives, since neither word is common in everyday use.)

Go • Pass out the play money, but be sure to give some students more and some less. It is important that they understand that God expects us to give to those less fortunate than ourselves, even when we do not have much for ourselves. Explain that the students can spend the money any way they wish, choosing items from your list to purchase. If there is something they want that is not on the list, agree on a reasonable price with them. They have to spend all their money. They can also donate as much money as they want to charitable causes or simply to the church.

Debriefing • **Ask:** When you had all that money, were you tempted to keep it? (Yeah, there was some stuff I wanted to buy and couldn't.) **How did the amount of money you received influence how much you wanted to give?** (It made me want to give less away; it was easier for those that got more money to give more.) **What do you think God will do for us if we give generously to others?** (He will bless us, and often He gives us more money to give if we are faithful to help others with it.)

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Students will understand the injustice of poverty. You will need change (coins) and a one-dollar bill. For the coins, use varying denominations (quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies).

Get set • **Say:** There is a saying, "There but for the grace of God go I." Any one of us could have been born into poverty. Because there are always people poorer than we are, we have an obligation and a responsibility to help those who are.

Go • Pass out the coins and the dollar bill, but do not explain why you are giving some students more and others less; wait until they bring it up themselves and begin to complain about the "unfair" treatment. Then invite everyone who has a penny to trade the penny with someone who has a higher amount (even the dollar bill). Those who are receiving the pennies will probably complain. Then invite everyone who has a nickel to trade. Then dimes, quarters, and finally the dollar bill. Everyone **MUST** trade, even if they must trade down.

Debriefing • **Ask:** If you got less money, how did you feel? (It wasn't fair.) **If you got more money and someone took it and gave you less, how did you feel?** (I felt cheated; I wanted the bigger coin; I didn't do anything to deserve having my money taken away.) **How do you think poor people feel when they consider how many others around them live?** (Unhappy, cheated. They didn't do anything to deserve their life of poverty, and many of them

can't do anything to change it.)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words.

When Ellen White was 12, she learned a trade with her sister. They earned the princely sum of 25 cents a day. They even bought their own clothes with their money. Still, they saved a little at a time until they had managed to scrape together 30 whole dollars; a fortune in the early 1800s! When they heard that Jesus was coming soon, Ellen and her sister gave their \$30 to their father and asked him to invest it in tracts and pamphlets to send the message to people who did not know Jesus so they would be ready when He came.—Based on *The Adventist Home*, p. 384.

Debriefing • Ask: When you save money, what do you do with it? (Spend it on clothes, music, amusement.) **What would you do with \$30?** (Answers will vary.) **Do you think there is a connection between how much God gives us to spend and how we spend it?**

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Say: On earth, our worth is judged by our bank account balances. But this earthly kingdom won't last. In the kingdom to come, heaven, there won't be any money. We won't need it. Everyone will be treated equally. **Ask:** Even though we are living as agents of God's kingdom here, is money really important to our lives here? (Yes, you can't do anything without money.) **We're going to be dealing with money our whole lives. What should our attitude be toward it?** (We should not let it control us; we should realize that we are only managing it for God and we should let Him guide us in its use.)

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask: What had happened to Angel and his family? (They didn't have any money or food. Father and Mother were out of work. Angel didn't have clothes that fit or real toys to play with.) **What made him devote his life to helping others and how should that inspire us?** (He knew what it was like to suffer. He didn't have proper clothes, food, or toys.) **Say:** Angel decided to follow God and wants to spend his life helping others. **Ask:** Do you have any idea what you'd like to do with your life? (Answers will vary.) **Ask:** Where is God's place in your plans? How much influence do you think God should have on your lifework? **Say:** If we listen, He will direct us. **The challenge is:** Are you ready to follow where He leads?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Ask students to place themselves in the following situation:

You begin to pray about what you should do with your life. One night you feel that God is guiding you to become a missionary. You think about what it would mean to leave your home and family and travel to some far-off country where everything is different, even the language. You worry about how difficult it will be to possibly live in humble circumstances, maybe even poverty. What do you do?

Allow time for answers, then **ask:** How important is it when God wants you to do something? (Very important because I'm living for Him; I want to do what God wants, but it's hard if I don't feel like it.) **If God asks you to do something that frightens you, what should you do?** (Ask an adult you trust to help you make sure it's God who is asking; pray until you are sure there is no doubt about what God wants; ask others to pray with you about what God is asking you to do.) **Giving up the possessions and/or money**

we consider ours can be a scary thing. Our “things” are part of who we are. That’s why people who sell things try to make us want their product by convincing us of what will happen to us if we own it: we’ll be cool, we’ll be attractive, people will like us better, people will envy us, people will look up to us. When we give up our “stuff” or our money to buy “stuff,” we’re saying that we trust God and others to accept us just the way we are. What part does contentment play in our willingness to share what we have with the poor? Ask someone to find and read **1 Timothy 6:6-10**. (Religion helps us to be happy with what we have and not strive like the world to accumulate more wealth. When we are content with a little we are willing to give a lot.) **What should our attitude be toward money?** Ask someone to find and read **Matthew 16:26**. **What should be most important to us according to this text?** (Our soul. It is the only possession we have that cannot be replaced. Money comes and goes, but we have only one soul.) **According to God, what is our responsibility to people less fortunate than we are?** Assign volunteers to read the following texts: **Proverbs 14:21; Proverbs 11:24; Proverbs 11:25-27**. (God will bless us if we help the poor.)

Say: Jesus said that the poor will always be with us, so why do you think God still wants us to help them?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Pass out pens or pencils and the worksheet, “Wallet Inventory Challenge,” on page 116. Ask students to empty the contents of their wallet and record it on the sheet. Choose a worthy project that the students can have ongoing contact with as the beneficiary of this challenge.

Say: A pastor in New York always wondered how much he should give if the offering plate was passed to fill a need. He decided

that God knew exactly how much was in his wallet at any given time and that he would dedicate all of it whenever there was a special call. So the next time the offering plate was passed he emptied his wallet into the plate. Everything we have belongs to God. We have a choice. We can give it back to Him and let Him multiply it or we can use it however we see fit. On your sheet you’ll see two totals, the total in your wallet and a challenge total. The challenge total is the amount you decide to give from what is in your wallet. **Put that amount in the tithe envelope.**

Pass out the tithe envelopes and allow students a quiet time to prayerfully consider how to answer the kingdom challenge. As mentioned above, make sure that this offering goes for a worthy project that the students can have some ongoing contact with.

Debriefing • Ask: What was the most difficult part of this challenge? If you gave often and generously, do you think it would be easier or more difficult to give now? Why? How do you think God feels when we give generously?

Say: In Luke 6:38 Jesus promised us, “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (NIV). Give generously and get ready for God’s downpour of blessings (which may or may not be financial).

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What is our responsibility toward those who have less than we do?
2. What part do we all play in world hunger and poverty?
3. Why can’t we say, “The poor are not my problem”?
4. How do you think our popular culture (magazines, television, movies, advertising, etc.) affects how we think about what we have and what we should have or what we need?

5. What can you personally do to help those who are needy? (Remember your activity in Friday's section of the lesson.)
6. Why is our attitude toward money so important to God?
7. How should we think about money?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

As God's special agents in a materialistic world, we have to be very careful of our attitudes about money. In order to be content we must tune out the many messages Satan plants

all around telling us that we deserve the "good life." This earth is only our temporary home. Our possessions are all from the kingdom treasury and only ours to manage. We must answer to Him for how we use these resources.

It's no crime to have money if we see God as its source and our role as managers. We are CFO's (chief financial officers) of what comes into our hands, but God expects us to invest it in His work helping others. We all have a responsibility to those who are less fortunate than we are. We can't simply shrug it off saying, "Oh well, I'm just glad it's not me." Every suffering person enduring poverty is a child of God and our neighbor, no matter how far away. Our special mission is to find and help them in every way that we can.

FOR LESSON ELEVEN: THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE APPLICATION ACTIVITY.

Wallet Inventory Challenge

Open your wallet or purse; look in your pockets. Record exactly, down to the last penny, what is in them:

\$20s: _____
 \$10s: _____
 \$ 5s: _____
 \$ 1s: _____
 Quarters: _____
 Dimes: _____
 Nickels: _____
 Pennies: _____

Grand Total: \$ _____
 Challenge Total: \$ _____



STUDENT LESSON

LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

Angel's Treasures

June 15, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "Then He said to His disciples, 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing'" (Luke 12:22, 23, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 21, Stewardship:** "We are God's stewards, entrusted by Him with time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources. We are responsible to Him for their proper use."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 88-90.

ANGEL'S TREASURES

Can you hear the little boy crying? He is hungry. He's had nothing to eat all day and is now going to bed with a growling stomach. Do you see the father sitting with his head in his hands because he hasn't been able to find a new job? Watch as the mother stands on the street and begs for help.

From the time Angel learned about God, he would divide any money he received into three parts: (1) for God, (2) for helping others in need, and (3) for himself. You see, when Angel was younger he knew what it was like to not have a family that could provide for him. He knew what

it was like to have to go to bed hungry and hear his stomach growl all night. He knew what it was like to have clothes that didn't fit. The toys he played with were just sticks that he imagined were people and rocks that he pretended were cars.

Things are better now for Angel and his family. Angel is no longer hungry. He has food to eat—three times a day! His clothes fit him, and he has real toys to play with. Angel remembers the people that came and helped his family. A man came to visit and brought food for them to eat and gave them money so they could pay their bills. A lady had come and talked to his mom about going back to school to learn skills so she would qualify for a good job. And another man had offered and given his dad a job.

Not long ago Angel heard the pastor read Matthew 25:31-46. In this text the righteous ask, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" (verses 37, 38, NKJV). And Angel has never forgotten what Jesus replied: "I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (verse 40, NKJV).

Angel loves God and has given his life to Him. He trusts God to lead and direct him. He has dedicated everything—his friendships, his plans, his possessions—to God so they can be used to help others.

He never hesitates to give what he owns to someone else—clothes, food, toys, money.

Angel says, "Everything belongs to God anyway, so if He impresses me to give something I have to someone else, then that person must need it more than I do."

Angel is being a good steward. He is faithful in the things God has given him, and God will trust Angel with more as he grows up. The Bible says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth . . . , but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19, 20, ESV). And that is where Angel wants his treasures—in heaven! How about you? Where are you putting your treasures?—Kathleen Sowards.

Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read Matthew 16:26.
- » At church your best friend comes in waving a ticket to a concert by your favorite band. You manage to swallow your envy as you remember "Thou shalt not covet" and all that. Then you realize you have enough savings. Barely. You could go. The guest speakers that day at church are missionaries. They live with no running water and not enough food. Families in their village live in shacks made of boxes. They'll pass a basket soon for donations. What will you decide to do with your savings—use it for the concert or to help others less fortunate?
- » If you decide to use the money for the concert, do you think you'll be able to enjoy yourself? What do you think your responsibility is toward missions?

Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON STEWARDSHIP

- » Read 1 Chronicles 29:14; Malachi 3:8-10.
- » Everything we have belongs to God, who is the giver of all our blessings. In return we should offer to God ourselves and everything

we have received from Him (our time, talents, and money). When we allow Him to use us as instruments to bless others and to spread the news of His soon return, we ourselves will be greatly blessed and will become more like Jesus.

- » How much that you now possess are you willing to give up to serve God and others?

- » How can you be sure you are using your blessings to help others?

- » In the box below, find the letters that finish each word in the verse.

sity	od	ea	lo	che	or
oses	Cor	grud	ver	ve	hea

"So let ____ch one gi____ as he purp____ in his ____rt, not ____gingly or of neces____; f____ G____ ____ves a ____erful gi____"
(2 ____inthians 9:7, NKJV).

- » Ask God to help you become a cheerful steward. Sign the pledge card below telling God that you want Him to use you and all you have for His kingdom.

"Dear Lord, Everything I have is from You. I give it all back to You to be used as You want. Help me to always remember that everything I have is to be used for Your glory. I dedicate my life and it belongs to You."

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Tuesday REFLECTING

- » Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10.

- » You may think this subject doesn't have much to do with you. After all you probably don't have a lot of money to call your own. Maybe your parents insist that most of your money go straight into a bank account so you'll have money for college. Perhaps you have a baby-sitting or lawn-mowing job, but your pay doesn't stretch very far. You probably figure that you can't be corrupted by materialism if all you've got is the change jingling in your pocket.
- » But here's the thing. God isn't waiting for you to get rich before you get concerned about His people who are living in poverty. He wants you to care about them right now, no matter where you are, with a dollar in your pocket or a couple hundred stuffed into your piggy bank.
- » You've probably heard the saying "Money talks." It means you have a strong voice as someone who buys things. When your buying dollars are put together with others', you send a message to the people who are selling things. And how you spend your money can speak for you. It can tell businesses that you care how they treat workers in developing countries and that you aren't willing to pay big bucks just to have the name of someone famous on your sneakers. You can run as fast and jump as high without them.
- » The time to start thinking about the money you will earn and how to manage it for God, and how God wants you to use it is now! If you let God show you how He wants you to use the money He gives you now and get used to listening to His voice, it will be much easier to hear Him when He gives you more money later.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Are you trustworthy?

- » Write Luke 16:11 on the lines below:

1. How do you handle your possessions?
Are you careless? negligent? responsible?
Explain.

2. How do you show by the way you handle your worldly possessions how you'll take care of the true riches—such as your character, your relationships, and your obedience to God's Word?

3. How would your parents or friends answer the question: "Would you trust [your name] with your most valuable possession?"

4. What would you tell God in prayer about how you want to take care of the true riches He has given you?

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Matthew 25:31-46.
- » Review the memory text.

- » Money can seem to disappear very quickly. A couple bucks for some snacks and toys, and it's gone. But as Christians we need to think about what else our money could buy. In another country, the money spent on that little after-school snack could easily have provided a simple meal for a whole family.
- » When Jesus was here He asked us to love our neighbors because He knew we would come closest to understanding Him when He was working through us. He said it was great when we even gave someone a cup of water or our extra clothes. When we help others it's as if we're helping Him.
- » Try this. Next time you get some money, hold it in your hand and dedicate it to God. All of it. Not just 10 percent and some change for the mission offering. Tell God that you want Him to tell you what to do with all of it. And just stand back and see what happens. All true blessings come from God—even money. He knows exactly what you should do with it and He has ways to multiply it that we don't know anything about. Check it out.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Luke 16:11, 12.
- » All talk and no action isn't going to get things done. So this week, get out and see how the other half lives. Find a soup kitchen or rescue mission in your neighborhood, town, city, or somewhere close by. Or you can go to a nursing home. Write down the names of the places and contact persons along with

the phone numbers. Ask an adult to help you contact them until you find one where you can volunteer for a few hours this week. After you go, take some time to record your experience. In what ways was your experience an eye-opener? Consider volunteering on a regular basis.

Place: _____

Phone number: _____

Contact person: _____

Interest?: _____

Place: _____

Phone number: _____

Contact person: _____

Interest?: _____

Place: _____

Phone number: _____

Contact person: _____

Interest?: _____

How it went: _____

Notes: _____





GOD'S ARMOR

The Best in Us

June 22, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Matthew 19:30 (NIV) • “But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

Luke 13:30 (NIV) • “Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.”

1 Corinthians 10:23 (NIV) • “ ‘I have the right to do anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive.”

Colossians 3:17 (GNT) • “Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Ecclesiastes 9:10 (NIV) • “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.”

A Contest in Which All May Win • “[1 Cor. 9:24-27, quoted.] This glorious contest is before us. The apostle seeks to inspire us to enter into a noble emulation, a competition in which will be seen no selfishness, unfairness, or underhanded work. We are to use every spiritual nerve and muscle in the contest for the crown of life. No one who does his best will fail in this contest” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1089).

(See additional passages in student material.)

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GOD'S ARMOR”

There is a great battle going on around us. It is called the great controversy. This controversy is the battle between good and evil, between God and Satan, and humans are caught in the middle. God gave everything to make a way of escape for us, but the devil is determined to keep us from accepting God's gift of salvation.

Every person throughout the day faces making countless decisions. Some decisions are routine, and others are life-changing decisions. If you stop and think about it, though, even routine decisions could be life-changing. We may think that what we eat for breakfast would be routine and require very little thought, but what you eat for breakfast could impact your health in the future or possibly even that day.

God has given us a road map to help us make decisions. He wants us to make decisions that lead to life eternal. However, every time we face making a decision, the controversy becomes real in our lives. We may know what God says is the best way to go, but often there is a battle that takes place in our hearts and minds. Sadly, we argue within ourselves because we want to do what we want instead of following God without question.

Satan wants us to get caught up in the competitions of this world—but the competition taking place inside ourselves is the one that needs our attention—will we follow God or self? When we settle this question, all the other competitions we will face in life will fall under the guiding hand

of our Father in heaven. We won't get excited and angry over a game, job, or a person. We will ask God to help us be the best that we can be and we will show others God's love.

C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "GOD'S ARMOR"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Realize that the competition that matters in life is the one they face everyday in their own lives—follow God or their own desires.
2. Know the difference between how God and the world looks at winning and success.
3. Understand that what we do and say affects how others see us and how they see God.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) blindfold, sign that reads ARRIVED and another that reads DISTRACTED.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons.

Applying • Copies of Friday's section of the student lesson, pens or pencils.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Arrange chairs and tables to make maneuvering to the right (ARRIVED) side of the classroom difficult (lots of dead ends and turns), but still doable. Arrange the left (DISTRACTED) side with easier maneuverability (fewer turns). Have two signs ready to set up: one on the right front side of the class, saying ARRIVED, and the second sign to set up on the left front side of the class that says DISTRACTED (you will put these up later). Depending on the size of your class, choose two or four students (students that will not mind being blindfolded) and have them step outside the classroom with a teacher. Have the teacher blindfold the students. While these students are out of the classroom, divide the class in half. You can set up your signs as you give the following instructions (you don't want the students that will be blindfolded to see the signs ahead of time).

Tell half the class that their job is to give instructions to the blindfolded students to help them navigate to the ARRIVED sign in the front of the class (hopefully without too many crashes). Remind them that they cannot block or touch the blindfolded students. They can direct only by giving instructions.

Tell the other half of class that they are to try to distract the blindfolded students so they will be unable to follow the instructions that will get them to the ARRIVED sign in the right front side of the class. Let them know that they will be trying to persuade the student to follow their instructions and get to the sign on the left that says DISTRACTED. They cannot block the student's pathway or touch the student, but they can talk to the student, call out directions, or use other verbal distractions, such as singing, to get the student to follow their orders. Let them know that they will begin when you say so.

Bring in the blindfolded students and tell them that their goal is to make it to the front of the room safely while wearing the blindfold. Tell them that the class will be helping them navigate the room.

Go • Remind the students to use only inside voices—no yelling or shouting. They do not want to disrupt other classes, and they want to remain respectful, since they are in the house of God. Give the command for the class to begin giving their instructions to the blindfolded students.

Debriefing • **Ask:** How difficult was it to get to the ARRIVED sign with so many voices telling you what to do? Was it hard to pick a voice and follow it? How did you choose which voice to follow? How did you tune out the other voices so that you heard just the person you chose to give you the right instructions? One direction was much easier to navigate; what struggles did you have in choosing the more difficult path? How difficult do you think it would be to follow the right voice when you really want to go in the other direction?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Ask: Do you believe competition as the

world knows it is something that we will have in heaven? (Answers will vary.) **Say:** The competition we see around us leads us to believe that you should win at all costs. You must be the best and the greatest. But this is not God's way. Ask two volunteers to find and read the following stories: Mark 9:33, 34; 10:35-41.

Say: Here we see that even the disciples had a competitive spirit and argued about who was the greatest among them. **Ask:** Do you think wanting to be the greatest came into this world because of sin? How did Jesus deal with those who had a competitive nature and wanted to be first? Have a student read Mark 9:35, another Mark 10:42-45, and a third student read Luke 13:30.

Ask: Does wanting to be the best, the greatest, or first give a good impression of what being a Christian is all about? How does this impact you personally? **Say:** The greatest competition we are in is the one for our souls. The real question is: Will we follow God or our own desires? **Ask:** What is most important to you? What position do you want to be in?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Ask the students to think of illustrations from their own experiences that show a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. It could be an experience with their family, at school, at church, or their activity club (Pathfinders).

Ask: Can you think of someone who fits God's ideal of working together? (Answers will vary.) What kind of person do you want to be? Are you someone who has a positive influence on those around you?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Say: The devil is always trying to distract us from the important things in life—

knowing God, helping others, and preparing for His coming. He isn't opposed to getting us busy doing good things just to keep us from spending time in prayer and Bible study. Have someone read Ephesians 6:11. **Say:** The great controversy is a battle between God and Satan, good and evil. The battleground is our hearts and minds. We may think, *This is a nonissue, or It's of no importance, or God isn't concerned with this*, but everything is important, and God does care. He loves us and wants us in heaven with Him. God knows that the battles we fight are big. Our real battles are not with one another (although the devil likes to make us think so). Have someone read Ephesians 6:12. **Say:** There are only two outcomes in life—eternal death because we have chosen to go our own way, or eternal life because we realize that there is nothing more important than knowing, loving, and serving God. **Ask:** What has God given us to help us know how to win the battle and be sure to stand strong? (the Bible, His Word, the Spirit of Prophecy)

Have individual students read the following verses from Ephesians 6:13-17. Allow time for the students to discuss and answer the following questions. **Ask:** What is the "truth" that is spoken of here? How do we get the "breastplate of righteousness"? What do you think it means to have "your feet shod" with the "gospel of peace"? How does the "shield of faith" work? What does it mean to "take the helmet of salvation"? Does memorizing Scripture help to take "the sword of the Spirit" and use it to keep from becoming like the world?

Say: There will always be someone faster, smarter, or better than you at some things. **Ask:** How do you feel about that person? Are you OK with being the next in line or last in line? Are you willing to let the other person have the best seat, the nicest toy, and the coolest trip? Are these things important to your salvation? What type of influence do you want to have with this person? Do you see them as your equal despite

their status? Do you recognize that they are a child of God, that He loves them and wants them to be saved too?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Make sure the students have this week's lesson. Ask them to look at Friday's Apply section. Tell them that you are going to give them a few moments to reflectively answer the questions, if they have not already done so. You can do this activity one of three ways. When they have finished: 1. Have the students volunteer and read their papers out loud. 2. Collect the papers and hand them out randomly. Have the students read aloud the responses on the paper they have been given. (If it would be appropriate in your group, you could have the students guess to whom each set of answers belongs. This could be fun in a small group, but can be embarrassing to a larger group.) 3. Discuss the questions as a class.

Debriefing • Say: Life is short. We don't know how much time we will have on earth. Seventy years is not a long time. Think about how your family prepares for a family vacation or for visiting family far away. **Ask:** How much time was spent planning and getting ready? How long did it take to get the clothes ready and packed? Were you allowed to go off to play and relax, or were you given things to do to help get ready for the trip?

Say: The trip to heaven takes preparation. **Ask:** Are you getting ready? Are you helping others to get ready? Should a Christian spend their time and energy on the things the world thinks are important? Are you putting God and His kingdom before the things of this world? Do the people you associate with know that God is first in your life? **Say:** Now is the time to make the decision to follow and serve God. Quietly tell Him you are giving your life and plans to Him.

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Are there any biblical guidelines we can find to help us in preparing for heaven? (Refer them to the Bible Insights section of the student lesson.)
2. What do you want your life to say about you?
3. What are some positive things that you can do to influence others for Christ?
4. Are you defining success the world's way or God's way?
5. How can we be sure to act as a child of God in everything we do?

6 CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

If we are citizens of the kingdom of God, we are bound by the laws of God's kingdom, not by the expectations of this world. Therefore, we should take a "kingdom perspective" on every action we take and every decision we make. We know that we can do nothing good without the help of God, and through Christ we can do all things (Philippians 4:13), so it is important that we invite Christ to help us live our lives according to His plan for us. The best representative of the kingdom of God is one who exhibits a Christlike character, revealing grace, compassion, and love.



STUDENT LESSON

GOD'S ARMOR The Best in Us

June 22, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown” (1 Corinthians 9:24, 25, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 22, Christian Behavior:** “We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. For the Spirit to recreate in us the character of our Lord we involve ourselves only in those things that will produce Christlike purity, health, and joy in our lives. This means that our amusement and entertainment should meet the highest standards of Christian taste and beauty.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 141-144.

THE BEST IN US

The story is told of a group of children that ran in the Special Olympics in the mid-1970s. These were boys and girls enjoying a day out in the sun and running races. They were happy and excited to be in the 100-yard race. They were jumping up and down waiting for the signal

so they could begin. Then the signal was given to begin the race. The children took off for the finish line. They started running as fast as they could. They were giving it all they had. If you had been there, you would have seen the joy on their faces as they ran down the course—they were having a great time!

Then, suddenly, one of the children tripped and fell shortly after starting. There was a gasp and then a hushed silence as the crowd looked on. A couple of the other racers heard crying and looked behind them. They saw the fallen child lying on the ground. They stopped running, turned around, and started running back toward the starting line. The crowd wondered, “What are they doing? The finish line is the other way!” Then the crowd watched as these two children stopped by the fallen racer. They reached down to help the child up. They had given up their chance to win the race. And they had gone back to help the child who had fallen.

Once they had brushed the dirt off the fallen child, the two children linked their arms through the fallen child’s arms, and together they once again started toward the finish line. Those three children crossed the finish line, not as individuals, but together! The crowd was moved to tears, and those three children received a cheering applause.

There are several other stories in which an athlete has fallen and another has given up the race to help the injured person. Why? Because they realized that the race wasn’t just about winning, it was about how they wanted to reach the finish line. This is what it means to truly care

about others. Our goal is heaven, and we want to “run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Hebrews 12:1, NKJV). And along the way, we want to help others learn about Jesus “so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24, NKJV).—Kathleen Sowards.

Sunday
RESPONDING

- » Read Colossians 3:17.
- » It’s Friday afternoon, and you and some of your good friends are trying to decide how to spend the afternoon. Someone suggests playing a sports game, but you know that these types of games usually end up with someone hurt or in a disagreement. Another suggests visiting a friend who is recovering from a long illness.
- » How will your decision affect your friendships? Are you willing to spend the afternoon visiting a sick friend? How could you make this second option more appealing to your friends?

Monday
**BIBLE ANSWERS
ON CHRISTIAN
BEHAVIOR**

- » Read Psalm 106:3; Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 5:1, 2.
- » We represent God here on earth. Everything we do and everything we say will bring either dishonor or glory to God. The things we do and say can influence others to accept God as their loving Savior or influence them to turn away from Him. If we accept and follow God’s plan for our lives, we will be influences for good. We will show His love to the world around us.

- » In what ways do you represent God’s love to those around you?

- » Unscramble the following words and put them in the verse below where they belong.

itphrr- wsaoey	ovlyle
uert	utirev
rrtpoe	upre
bnole	ujts

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are _____, whatever things are of good _____, if there is any _____ and if there is anything _____—meditate on these things” (Philippians 4:8, NKJV).

Tuesday
REFLECTING

- » Read James 1:19, 20.
- » The biggest competition a Christian will face is not the kind found on a sports field. It is the one found in our own lives. There are things in life that guide us, and they are called “priorities.” Each of us must decide what our guiding priorities are.
- » We need to focus on the competition within ourselves. We all face struggles in making decisions—will we put Jesus first, or will we follow our selfish desires? Will we make the decision to follow the Lord, or will we choose the easy path that leads to the destruction of our souls? We need the power of the Holy Spirit to help overcome the natural human tendencies to put ourselves first at any cost.
- » This race for heaven is not a competition against others. Jesus died for everyone.

Salvation is a gift offered to every person ever born. Our highest priority is to win others for Christ!

- » Only God can give us a kingdom perspective to help us understand where this race really is in the grand scheme of things. Are the things of this earth more important than the relationships we build for heaven? Are power, money, and fame more important than reflecting God's love to someone else? Are our own wants more important than winning someone for Christ and His kingdom? That is the real "race" we are involved in on this earth.

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks after looking up the texts in the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. If you do not have an NIV Bible, you can go to BibleGateway.com.
1. "A person's _____ yields _____; it is to one's glory to _____ an _____" (Proverbs 19:11).
 2. "My dear _____ and _____, take note of this: _____ should be quick to _____, slow to _____ and slow to become _____, because human anger does not produce the _____ that God _____" (James 1:19, 20).
 3. "'I have the _____ to do _____,' you say—but not _____ is _____. 'I have the _____ to do _____'—but not _____ is _____" (1 Corinthians 10:23).
 4. "And _____ you do, whether in _____ or _____, do it _____ in the name of the _____, giving _____ to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

5. "Whatever your _____ finds to _____, do it with _____ your _____, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither _____ nor _____ nor _____ nor _____" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).
6. "Put on the _____ armor of God, so that you can take your stand _____ the devil's schemes. For our _____ is _____ against flesh and blood, but _____ the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the _____ of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to _____, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand _____ then, with the _____ of _____ buckled around your waist, with the _____ of _____ in place, and with your _____ with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, _____ up the _____ of _____, with which you can extinguish _____ the flaming arrows of the evil one. _____ the _____ of _____ and the _____ of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:11-17).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Ecclesiastes 9:10.
- » Review the memory text.
- » We have to be students of the Bible and of the principles that Christ put forward while He was here on earth. The more we study Christ, the more we realize that the kingdom of God is not about status, position, winning, or even getting ahead. Rather, His kingdom is about the willingness to see others as equals, regardless of their talents, and to

create a cooperative effort with those with whom we come in contact.

- » Christ is asking you to see everyone as a brother or a sister. Always do the best you can, but keep a perspective of Christ's will for you and His kingdom close to your heart.

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Matthew 16:26; Philippians 3:7, 8, 14.
- » Look at the questions below. We know that winning and losing are different in the world's estimate from how God and Christians view and understand them. Answer each question by listing or drawing various attributes (qualities, characteristics, aspects) of each.
- » How does the world understand success and winning?

- » How does the Christian understand true success?

- » How does the world understand losing and failure?

- » How does the Christian understand losing and failure?





SUCCESS, GOD'S WAY! Strength in Weakness

June 29, 2024

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

Matthew 7:12 (NASB) • “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Proverbs 16:18, 19 (NIV) • “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.”

Proverbs 16:20 (NIV) • “Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.”

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV) • “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”

Hebrews 13:5, 6 (NIV) • “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’ ”

Luke 12:15 (NIV) • “Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.’ ”

Genesis 39:23 (NKJV) • “The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph’s authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.”

Mark 8:36 (RSV) • “For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?”

Luke 9:23 (RSV) • “And he said to all, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.’ ”

B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT “SUCCESS, GOD'S WAY!”

Success means achievement, accomplishment, attainment. It can also mean victory, triumph, and winning. Success in the world is defined by winning. This “win at all cost” mentality can become detrimental to our Christian walk. We want to focus the meaning of success on a biblical and Christ-centered perspective. This week’s lesson will concentrate on what God wants for us as kingdom agents regarding success. So many people have simply not thought about how God views the competition we see all around us. We will explore the concept of success in God’s eyes. Is success simply winning, or does God judge success in a different way? We will look at the way God wants us to live in this world filled with competitive situations.

Last, we want to look at the word “prosperity” and what it means to a Christian. Prosperity means wealth, affluence, success, richness, and

fortune. These are blessings from God to be used in His service. “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8, NKJV).

God wants us to set goals and reach them. “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it” (1 Corinthians 9:24, NKJV).

Through Him He wants us to be successful at overcoming sin. “But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57, NKJV).

God wants us all to be successful and to prosper. He wants us to use our success and prosperity to help others by meeting their physical needs—feeding and clothing them—as well as their spiritual needs: leading them to Jesus.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “SUCCESS, GOD’S WAY!”

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Differentiate between God’s view of success and the world’s view.
2. Understand how God wants us to be successful and use our prosperity.
3. Commit themselves to answering God’s call to excellence and love in every aspect of life.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) colored construction paper, scissors, glue, poster board, different colored markers or colored pencils, tables; (Activity B) materials will vary according to craft chosen by instructor.

Connecting • Bibles and/or student lessons, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk.

Applying • Paper, pens or pencils, white/chalkboard, markers or chalk.

2 BRIDGING

A. WHERE WE’VE BEEN

Allow 10 minutes at the beginning of class for students to:

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at www.realtimefaith.net)
- >> Service project reports

3 BEGINNING

NOTE TO TEACHER: Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word.

A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have tables set up with the materials the students will need to create a picture collage of what they believe it means to be successful in God’s eyes.

Get set • As the students enter, let them sit where they want. Ask them not to touch the materials until you give them instructions on what the project will be.

Go • To begin the activity, pray with the stu-

dents, and then ask them to create a collage of what they believe is success in God's eyes. Encourage them to be as creative as possible, and let them know that you are planning on posting these collages on the walls of the Sabbath School room. At the end of the activity, have them write "How God Views Success" somewhere on their collage.

Debriefing • As the students are working on their projects ask the following questions: Is humanity's idea of success the same as God's? Is it easy to know how God views success? Is it possible to know what God's idea of success is? How would you go about learning how God views success? Is there anything you would change about your picture?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • The concrete objective of this activity is for each table of students to create a given "craft." (You can have them all create a sculpture with marshmallows and toothpicks or have them make a paper-and-glue Goliath; the possibilities are endless.) However, do not give every table everything they need or the correct amount of the supplies needed to complete their project, so that no one table has everything or the amount needed to be successful. Leave instructions on the tables in sealed envelopes that say they are not to be opened until the instruction to do so is given. Each envelope will contain instructions that state the goal of the project (to make the sculpture, figure, etc.).

Get set • Always begin with prayer and welcome them to Sabbath School so they feel comfortable, and then ask them to open the envelope at each table and begin.

Go • Tell the students to begin working on their craft. As the students realize they do not have all the materials they need, they may begin to get frustrated. Some may even ask another table for the missing material. Pass out the second set of instructions, which say: "The only way to be successful and complete your proj-

ect is to go around to the other tables and ask for any materials you may need or trade what you have with the group at the other table that needs that item." Remind them that the only way they will be able to finish their project is by each team working cooperatively with the other table teams so each table will be able to complete their project.

Debriefing • **Ask** the following questions:

1. How did you feel when you realized you did not have all the materials you needed to complete your project?
2. How did others respond when you asked for some of their materials?
3. When you were asked to share the materials on your table, were you willing to share? Or were you afraid you wouldn't have enough to finish your own project, and so you said no?
4. Did it make you want to help others when they came to ask you for help?
5. With the first set of instructions, was it possible to finish and be successful?
6. How did it feel when you were instructed to use the cooperative approach and help one another?
7. How can you use more cooperation and follow God's ways of positive interaction in your everyday activities?

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

Share the following illustration in your own words. (This could also be adapted to work as a beginning activity.)

A teacher hands out a test to his class. At the beginning of the test he mentions that it is important to read the instructions to do the test right. Johnny is in a hurry to go out and play basketball. He is a bright student and decides that this test is like any other, and so he hurries directly to the first question. It tells him to put his name in the lower left-hand corner. He does this and quickly glances at the rest of the class. Some of his friends are already getting up and leaving the room. He thinks that this test must be very easy, since some of his

classmates are leaving only five minutes into the test. He is very anxious now and decides to look at the second page of the test to see how long it is. It is only six questions, and he can't wait to get to them.

He moves on to question 2, which instructs him to draw a picture of an aardvark. This takes Johnny a while because he can't remember what exactly an aardvark looks like. However, after a few minutes, while more of his classmates are making their way up to the front and out the door, he finally finishes the aardvark.

The third question is equally as strange and time-consuming. He is to take out a piece of scratch paper and fold it into an airplane.

Johnny is confused now. He can't understand what the teacher is doing, and time is rapidly running away from him. So after answering the fourth question and doing the activity, he quickly scribbles anything in the fifth and sixth questions and then runs up to the front of the empty room. He is the last student to finish the test, and he is really wanting to get out and play some basketball in the few minutes left in class.

The teacher looks at Johnny and asks him if he read the instructions. Johnny nods his head indicating that he had read the directions. The teacher doesn't believe him, and asks Johnny to read them out loud. Johnny is so anxious to get out of class that he doesn't argue, but just begins reading out loud. What he reads surprises him.

Instructions for this test: Wait five minutes, put your name in the upper right-hand corner, and turn the test in. Then please go outside and enjoy a great day out in God's nature.

The teacher looks at Johnny and says with a smile, "It's always important to make sure you know what the instructions are before you take any sort of test."

Johnny realizes that he has made a great mistake, but now, at the end of class, there is nothing he can do about it. He sadly looks back at the teacher and says, "Now I understand what you were trying to teach us." And Johnny walks out to the basketball court to catch the

last 30 seconds of the game.

Debriefing • Say: In our understanding of success, it is always important to know what it is that God is saying to us in His Word and what His plan is for us. He only wants the best for us. Have someone read Jeremiah 29:11. **The Bible is our map to help us find our way and live our life on earth.** Please ask the following questions:

1. Have any of you ever had a teacher do this to you?
2. Did you get caught in the trap of moving too fast and not looking at the instructions?
3. Do you think we do this when it comes to success?
4. Do you think you know what God wants for you in regards to success?
5. How can we know better the will of God for our lives?

4 CONNECTING

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

In your own words, share the following:

As we learn more about the kingdom of God, we find that God's goal is character building in our personal lives, and unity in our relationships. How we approach success and prosperity is completely up to us. God defines success as obedience to Him and prosperity as commitment to loving our fellow human beings through the power of His Spirit. Taking these two points into any given situation will allow us to represent God as we continue to live in this world.

Ask: How many of you want to have the success and prosperity that God offers? Can you live and enjoy life while living for God? Do your activities agree with God's idea of excellence? Do your activities and lifestyle represent God to others? (Answers will vary.) Read Matthew 25:31-46. How does this fit with the concept of God's kingdom and His view of success?

B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.

Debriefing • Say: Dave Dravecky's faith in a loving God never wavered. He trusted God even when things were bad. **Ask:** Do any of you know someone in your life who trusts God this way? What was the greatest miracle in Dave's life? (He wanted his life to show that his will and commitment was to God in all things.) Is this the type of example you want to be—faithful to God and trusting Him no matter what is happening in your life? Direct students to see the connection between following God's will for their lives and the outcome of true happiness and meaningful living they will enjoy in this life and in God's kingdom.

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Present the following scenario:

You love hanging out and playing games with your friends. You like the camaraderie that comes from being part of a group. However, you find that some of your teammates are unhappy if they don't win, and you are embarrassed by their attitude when they do win.

Ask: What do you do? What are some biblical guidelines that will point you in the right direction? Have students find and read the references listed in The Source in this teacher's guide. List on the white/chalkboard the principles at which the students arrive.

Ask: Based on these biblical guidelines we have established, what can you do to help your friends have a better attitude and to focus on what is really important?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Pair the students and supply each pair with a piece of paper and pencil. Give them a few minutes to put down the attributes of someone they think is successful. It does not have to be a particular person, but just words that define those who are successful in their minds. At the end of the time, have them report to the rest of the group. Using a white/chalkboard, write down the words that you hear and put checks beside the words used by more than one group. If there is time, have them do the same thing but instead of using the term successful, use the term prosperous.

Debriefing • Ask: What is the difference between being successful and prospering (flourishing, thriving) in God's eyes and making sure you are successful by the world's standards? Can you be successful God's way and at the same time be successful by the world's standards? Which do you want to be in life? **Say:** The world sees the person who competes and pushes their way to the top as successful. God sees the person who has put Him first in their life and made it their lifework to put others first and to help others, both physically and spiritually, as successful. **Ask:** Are they both successful? Does God see the person who has hurt others to get where they are as successful? Which one looks more like the kind of success that God wants for us?

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Would you define yourself as successful?
2. Would you define yourself as prosperous?
3. Does prosperity have to do only with money? Or can its definition be expanded?
4. What is your biggest obstacle in becoming prosperous?

5. Is being successful and winning by the world's standards important to you?
6. What does excellence mean? (superior merit) How does this apply to our Christian walk?
7. Can you be loving, have a standard of excellence, and be a follower of God and still continue to strive for the world's standard of success?
8. What does God call us to be?
9. Are you using the Bible as your "standard of excellence"—to be the person that God wants you to be?

CLOSING

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

God is looking for young people to uphold His standards, not the standards of the world.

This will often put you at odds with what the world views as successful. In fact, there may even be times that the world seems to hate you. However, John 15:18 states, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you" (NKJV). We are not called to be of the world, but to be a light to the world. One way we can do this is to hold ourselves to a standard of excellence and refuse to follow the world's way of success. We don't succeed by hurting those around us. Rather, our goal is to win life eternal and help others find God by using the prosperity with which He blesses us. When we work and play with others, showing them a spirit of kindness and cooperation, we draw them to Christ. The kingdom of God is a place where a brother helps a brother, and a sister helps a sister, and so forth. Be part of the kingdom of God here on earth and live by the principles He has given us in the Bible to prepare for His Kingdom of glory some day very soon (see the Beatitudes, in Matthew 5).



STUDENT LESSON

SUCCESS, GOD'S WAY!

Strength in Weakness

June 29, 2024

Sabbath

FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** "He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered. He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (Proverbs 28:25, 26, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 7, The Nature of Humanity:** "Their [Adam and Eve's] descendants [all of us] share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker. Created for the glory of God, they are called to love Him and one another."
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 79-81.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

"A devoted Christian, Dave Dravecky entrusted his life to God every morning. . . . When a cancerous tumor in his arm threatened to cut short his career, Dave did not demand to be healed. Instead, he committed himself to God's will, and his quiet faith was a witness to millions.

"God worked a miracle for Dave Dravecky. Although his cancer operation required the removal of muscle that he used for pitching, against all odds he came back to play again.

Thousands of San Francisco fans cheered wildly when he took the mound again at Candlestick Park. Incredibly, he even won the game.

"Dave Dravecky was back! But the comeback miracle lasted less than a week. Dave was playing in Montreal, winning the game, when suddenly, as he pitched, his arm broke. He collapsed in a heap at the foot of the mound. The whole crowd heard that awful snap of the bone.

"As they carried Dave off the field he quietly affirmed his faith in God. That faith did not waver during long months of uncertainty. Finally doctors determined that they had no choice but to amputate his arm, and they did.

"Did Dave become bitter when God did not heal him . . . ? Not at all. Secular sports writers around the country marveled at his faith, solid as a rock. . . . God displayed a miracle greater than physical healing in the amazing display of Dave's contented commitment.

"The apostle Paul experienced this rock-solid faith. He too suffered from an incurable physical affliction. Three times he asked God to miraculously heal him. God's response was plain. 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9, NKJV). Paul's answer is remarkable: 'I will rather boast in my infirmities. . . . I take pleasure . . . in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong' (verses 9, 10, NKJV). . . .

"Like Dave Dravecky and the apostle Paul, God invites us to hang on to Him today with the hand of faith."—Mark Finley, *Solid Ground* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald®, 2003), pp. 158, 159.

Sunday

RESPONDING

- » Read Proverbs 16:18, 19 (NASB). "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud."
- » Keri loves to play piano. Her teacher is proud of her and has advised that she can participate in the national piano competition for her grade if she would come faithfully to her 7:00 A.M. intensive practice sessions each day for an extended period of time. This is not always possible for Keri to do. Keri lives in a single-parent home with her mom and a sister too young to be left alone. Her mom works all night and doesn't always make it home in time to take care of the little sister and get her to school on time. If you were Keri, what would you do? How would you distinguish between the world's idea of success and God's ideal plan for true success in our lives?

Monday

BIBLE ANSWERS ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

- » Read Genesis 1:27; Romans 5:12-17; 1 John 4:7.
- » We were created in God's image. When Adam and Eve sinned, God's image was damaged in humanity, and all of us are born with tendencies to sin. So even though our nature, through Adam, bends toward evil, in Christ we can be made whole again and restored to God's image. When we love and put God first, we will love others and think of their needs before our own.
- » What is it in your nature that you struggle with? How can you be sure that God is first in your life?

- » Below are two Bible verses mixed together. Can you separate them into proper verses? Verses are from the New King James Version. Write the verses below. (Hint: both are found in 1 John.)

1 John He another who one does love 4:
not to love ought does also not we 8 know
us 4: God loved for so God God is if love 11
Beloved 1 John

Tuesday

REFLECTING

- » Read Matthew 5:1-15, 43-48.
- » The world's idea of success is that of being rich, important, and powerful. In God's eyes true success is becoming more and more like Jesus, and leading others into a saving relationship with Him. The Bible asks, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26, NKJV). God does not want us to be successful by the world's standards and not be ready to meet Him when He comes. Real success is working together to save others. When God blesses us prosperously, we can help others with what we have been given.
- » God's concept of prosperity teaches us that our value is in a job well done. We should be looking on the inside and asking if we are doing well on what we know we are capable of. In Matthew 5:3-10, Jesus gave the Beatitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . . those who mourn . . . the meek . . . those who hunger and thirst for righteousness . . . the merciful

... the pure in heart ... the peacemakers
... those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake ... " (NKJV). Ask yourself, "Do I have these qualities?"

Wednesday

BIBLE INSIGHTS

- » Fill in the blanks after looking up the texts in the New International Version of the Bible. If you do not have this version, you can go to BibleGateway.com.

1. "So in _____, _____ to others what you would _____ them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).
2. "Pride goes before _____, a _____ spirit before a _____. Better to be _____ in spirit along with the _____ than to share _____ with the _____" (Proverbs 16:18, 19).
3. "The _____ bring _____ to their households, but the one who hates _____ will _____" (Proverbs 15:27).
4. "Make it your _____ to lead a _____ life: You should _____ your _____ and _____ with your _____, just as we told you, so that your daily _____ may win the _____ of _____ and so that you will not be _____ on anybody" (1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12).
5. "And the Lord's _____ must not be _____ but must be _____ to _____, able to _____, not _____. Opponents must be _____ instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance _____ them to a _____ of the _____" (2 Timothy 2:24, 25).

Thursday

CONNECTING

- » Read Matthew 7:12.
- » Review the memory text.
- » God wants to see His kingdom here on earth. As well, He wants to see His people cooperate with and love one another. He even wants us to succeed and prosper in whatever it is we choose to undertake. But remember, success to God is very different from how this world defines success. It is not about money or power or popularity. It is not about how you look. It is not about comparing yourself to someone else. Rather, it is about how you love and give away the grace that God has given you. He wants you to be a wonderful representation of Him. He knows that someday someone will look at you and determine what God is like because of how you act. What an awesome responsibility! But He will not fail you! Not one of us is worthy of the love and grace He has given us, but we can with God's help achieve what He has planned for us.
- » The devil is always trying to use our own human nature to get us to focus on the wrong things. What is it you want? What will you do to achieve your goals? Are the things you want and the goals you are setting in line with God's plan for your life and with the kingdom of God? When your desires match His, He will be right there with you to provide the power to do it through His Spirit (see Psalm 37:4). What a powerful promise!

Friday

APPLYING

- » Read Proverbs 3:5, 6; Galatians 6:9.
- » How do your ideas about life, success, and the goals you want to achieve fit into God's ideas about life and success? Answer the questions below:

1. What does success mean to you?

5. What is God's standard of excellence?

2. Do you think that your idea of success is in line with God's idea of success?

6. How does being the best you can be glorify God?

3. In what areas of your life do you want to ask God to help you succeed?

7. How does helping and loving others fit in to your picture of success?

4. What does it mean to have a standard of excellence?

