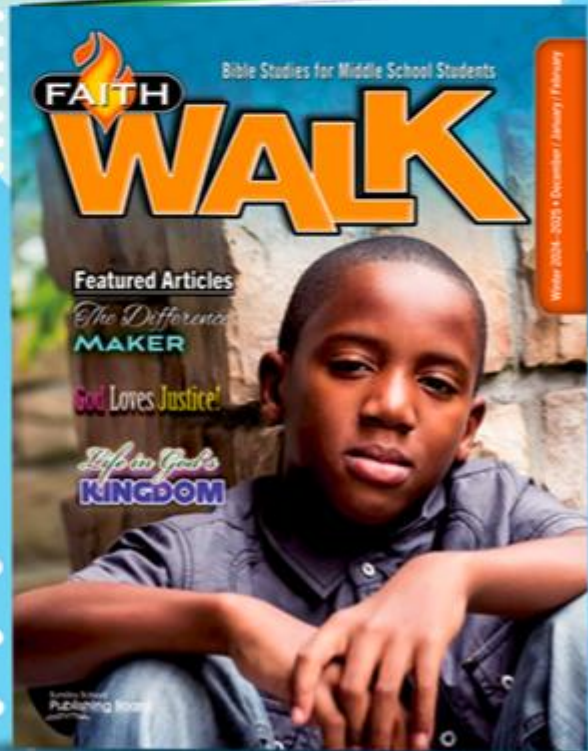


FAITH

YOUTH TEACHER'S GUIDE

for Middle School and High School Students



Sunday School
Publishing Board

Winter Quarter 2024–2025 • December / January / February

Faith Series YOUTH Teacher's Guide

For Middle School and High School Students

Winter Quarter 2024–2025: December / January / February



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Letter to the Teacher

Dear Teacher,

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

Go with God!

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

Layout of Middle/High School Student Lesson:

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

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

Work Out/Intersect: Explanation of the lesson Scripture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Layout of Teacher Lesson for Middle/High School Students:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*(*Teacher book only)*

Preparing to Teach

The Teacher's Lesson Plan

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

The Resources

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

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

Youth Teacher's Guide

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

What You Will Need

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

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

Prepare for Each Session

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

One Final Word

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

Lesson Guide Explanation

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

****Teacher book only***

***PREPARING TO TEACH**

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

***LESSON OVERVIEW**

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

***INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

WAKE UP! / REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

WORD UP / INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

***BACK UP! (background)**

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

Lesson Guide Explanation

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

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

WORK OUT / INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

INSIDE OUT (interpretation)

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

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT! (application)

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

WALK OUT / CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

STEPPING OUT! (challenge)

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

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

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

<MEDIA MISSION> (after you meet!)

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

Tips for Teaching Teen Bible Study

➤ **Be real with teens.**

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

➤ **Understand their developmental stages.**

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

➤ **Know youth culture.**

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

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

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

➤ **Know the focus of your lesson.**

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

REFERENCES:

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

Quarter at a Glance

Winter 2024–2025 (December–February)

A King Forever and Ever

In this quarter, titled “A King Forever and Ever,” we explore the broad sweep of biblical teachings about God’s reign and connect to Jesus as the earthly exhibition of the divine kingdom. Beginning with key moments in the history of David’s ancestors, Unit I highlights Jesus’ birth as the “Son of David.” Unit II is a four-week study of psalms that extol the reign of God, while Unit III gives a New Testament look at Jesus’ teaching on “Life in God’s Kingdom.”

Unit I, “Jesus, the Heir of David,” prepares us for the Christmas season with five lessons from the books of Ruth, 2 Samuel, and Luke. Lessons 1 and 2 deal with key moments in the history of Jesus’ ancestors. Lesson 3 considers the role of John the Baptist in preparing the way for “a Savior from the house of David,” while lesson 4 highlights how Jesus’ birth, as the heir of David, brings good news to the world. Lesson 5 offers a glimpse of Jesus (as the “Son of David”), who bestows mercy on those in need.

- L1. December 1, 2024
- L2. December 8, 2024
- L3. December 15, 2024
- L4. December 22, 2024
- L5. December 29, 2024

Family Connections (*The Ancestry of King David*) Ruth 4:9-17; Luke 3:23, 31b-32
You Can’t Always Get What You Want (*God’s Promise to David*) 2 Samuel 7:4-17
Laying the Groundwork (*The Prophet Who Prepares the Way*) Luke 1:67-80
Unexpected Messengers (*Born in the City of David*) Luke 2:1-16
The Blind Man Who Sees (*The Merciful Son of David*) Luke 18:35-43

Unit II, “Our God Reigns,” is a four-week study of psalms that extol the reign of God. Lesson 6 explores Psalm 10, a lament in which the psalmist finds comfort in the assurance of God’s reign. Lesson 7 examines two psalms (47 and 93) that praise God as the eternal and all-powerful King. In lessons 8 and 9, we study Psalms 103 and 145, which recount God’s merciful and powerful acts as ruler of an everlasting kingdom.

- L6. January 5, 2025
- L7. January 12, 2025
- L8. January 19, 2025
- L9. January 26, 2025

God of Justice (*The Lord Is King*) Psalm 10:12-18
Peace as Praise (*The Lord Is Robed in Majesty*) Psalm 93:1-5
I Am Blessed! (*The Lord’s Throne Is Established*) Psalm 103:1-14
Steadfast Love (*My God, the King*) Psalm 145:1, 10-21

Unit III, “Life in God’s Kingdom,” contains four lessons from Matthew in which Jesus explains the nature and obligations of kingdom life to His disciples. In lesson 10, we contemplate what it means to pray for God to “forgive us our debts” in a world sustained by debt and obligation. Lesson 11 presents a frank acknowledgment that the kingdom of heaven will meet resistance in this world. Lesson 12 contains a promise of reward in the kingdom for those who have given up much to follow Jesus. Finally, in lesson 13, Jesus tells a parable about the judgment to challenge His followers to serve the King faithfully.

- L10. February 2, 2025
- L11. February 9, 2025
- L12. February 16, 2025
- L13. February 23, 2025

A World without Obligation (*Praying for Relief*) Matthew 6:5-15
Enacting Change (*Resistance to the Kingdom*) Matthew 11:7-15, 20-24
An Upside-down Kingdom (*The First Will Be Last*) Matthew 19:16-30
Faith in Action (*Kingdom Life*) Matthew 25:31-46

December 1, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Family
Connections**

Unit I: Jesus,
the Heir of David

Lesson

1

Background Scriptures: Ruth 1–4; Luke 3:23–38

Print Passages: Ruth 4:9–17; Luke 3:23, 31b–32

General Lesson:

The Ancestry of King David



The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (*Ruth 4:17*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards, copies of a family tree chart
- Prior to class, do the following: (1) Visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h1eoBeR4Jk; review the video “Book of Ruth Summary: A Complete Animated Overview” and be prepared to discuss it during the “Media Mission” section. (2) Read today’s Bible verses and assess how migration, poverty, a mixed marriage, and redemptive love were viewed during Ruth’s time versus today, and what their inclusion in both the Bible and the lineage of Jesus say about God’s perspective on them. (3) Send your class a message to discuss the feelings (both at the beginning and end of the narrative) and actions of Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi. Ask them, “As a whole, what do we learn about God through the telling of this story?”

LESSON OVERVIEW

People belong to families that extend across generations. What can we learn about ourselves by knowing our ancestral families? Jesus’ and King David’s family tree features an unlikely marriage between Boaz and Ruth, serving as a testimony to the wideness of God’s grace to effect divine purposes.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Learn Ruth and Boaz’s significant roles in David and Jesus’ ancestral line.
2. Rejoice in God’s salvation that comes to us through ordinary, unlikely people.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth are interested in hearing their family’s history and heritage.
2. Youth want to make a difference in the world but aren’t always sure what they can contribute.
3. Youth want to belong and realize that others want the same; they value when others invest in them.
4. Youth value compassionate and fair people.
5. Youth are concerned with how the present will impact their future.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Do you think ancestral family history is essential to your heritage?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

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

Family Tree Chart: Pass out the copies of the family tree chart. Get your students thinking about their family history in relation to this week’s lesson. Give them a few minutes to fill in their family tree charts. Encourage them to continue this activity with their families at home. Discuss Jesus’ ancestry and how it relates to them.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: What can we learn about family ancestry? How can Brandon and Allison further use the information they've learned?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, Boaz announced to the elders and people that he was marrying Ruth. In biblical times, there was the law of levirate marriage: If a man died without having children, the nearest male kinsman (relative) was expected to marry the man's widow and give her a child to carry on the deceased husband's legacy. For Ruth, the nearest kinsman/relative declined his levirate duty and transferred it to Boaz.

Some considered Boaz foolish for marrying a foreigner and taking on the responsibility of providing for Ruth and Naomi. Ruth and Naomi were widows who depended on the compassion of others. Naomi was disregarded because she was a widow. A widow without sons and past the age of bearing children faced an uncertain and bleak future: without standing in the community, legal representation, and a respectable source of income, Naomi was utterly dependent on the kindness of others for her survival. Ruth was discounted because she was foreign-born. However, due to Ruth's self-sacrificial love for Naomi and her commitment to God (see Ruth 1:16-17), God blessed both women through Ruth's marriage to Boaz.

Boaz's actions show compassion (Ruth 4:10), giving Naomi's family a future and showing his respect for God's laws: he's a man of selfless character. Obed changed all that for Naomi (Ruth 4:14).

Ruth gave birth to a child named Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse. Jesse became the father of David. David became Joseph's ancestral father. Jesus was born to Joseph and Mary. Jesus' family

tree (see Luke 3:23-38) establishes that He was a descendant of David's (see Luke 1:27, 32, 69) through His relationship with Joseph. Luke traces Jesus' line to Adam to demonstrate that He was a member of the human race. Thus, Jesus' story is humanity's, fully inclusive of Gentiles like Ruth (see Matthew 1:5).

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Ruth 4:9-17; Luke 3:23, 31b-32)

9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. **10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!" **11** Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. **12** Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah." **13** So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. **14** The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth." **16** Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. **17** The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

.....

23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli,

.....

31 the son of Nathan, the son of David, **32** the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: The book of Ruth shows how God can turn disorder into divine order. Ruth was a Moabite who married an Israelite (Naomi's son). It was forbidden in biblical days for an Israelite to marry someone from Moab. But there was a famine in Israel, and Naomi's family moved to Moab for survival. However, both of Naomi's sons married Moabite women. Eventually, Naomi's husband and two sons died, leaving her alone with her two Moabite daughters-in-law. Naomi decided to return to Israel, her homeland, and Ruth insisted on going with her. Even though Ruth was a Moabite, she worshipped the God of Israel. She had a deep love for God and Naomi.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow the students time to respond to the questions.

Answers: (1) Ruth was disregarded because she was a Moabite woman living in Israel. (2) Ruth struggled to take care of herself and Naomi. Ruth worked in Boaz's fields for provision. (3) Ruth was redeemed through her marriage to Boaz. Boaz was a wealthy man and took great care of Ruth and Naomi.

There's an App for That! (application)

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

Relay the following (also found in the student book): "In the book of Ruth, we notice how one woman's love and faithfulness to God and her mother-in-law can bring the gift of Jesus to the whole world! We are blessed with the love and salvation of Jesus because of Ruth! Always strive to do what pleases God, for you never know the magnitude of the blessing you generate for yourself and others. Ruth's loyalty to Naomi was sincere and true. On an index card, write

down how you can become God's servant. How can you be of service to God?" Discuss as time permits.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that staying in constant communication with God is important. Before they make any decision, especially major decisions like attending college, encourage them to pray about everything. Ask God for the right college choice and to keep them focused on Him as they complete their academic studies. Advise them that if they place their faith totally in God, He will give them His best provisions. Counsel them to pray to God for discernment to help them make the right decisions during college and beyond.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, challenge the students to draw a family tree of Jesus based on the genealogy listed in Luke 3:23-38. Ask them why they think that Luke intentionally traced Jesus' genealogy to Adam. Emphasize that Luke wanted to demonstrate Jesus' humanity. Say, "He wants us to know that Jesus was a member of the human race and is relatable to us. In every situation you encounter, Jesus is familiar with it. That's why you can give all your cares and worries to Jesus in prayer. Jesus has released all burdens of the heart, freed you from the world's worries, and delivered you from sin. Enjoy His wonderful gift of salvation and receive God's peace, calm, and resolve daily."

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Lead them to discuss something they learned.

December 8, 2024

You Can't Always Get What You Want

Youth Topic:

Unit I: Jesus, the Heir of David

Lesson

2

Background Scripture: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

Print Passage: 2 Samuel 7:4-17

General Lesson:

God's Promise to David



"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."
(2 Samuel 7:16)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvoWDXNDJgs>; review the video "Book of 2 Samuel Summary: A Complete Animated Overview" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

People value permanence and seek to build structures that will outlast themselves. In what ways can such plans be superseded? When David wanted to build a house for God, God promised to build a "house" for David—a never-ending kingdom.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Understand the significance of God's promise to establish a royal family in David's lineage.
2. Develop a sense of wonder for God's invitation to be included in the family of Christ.
3. Remember and give thanks for how God follows through on promises.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth want to feel that their lives matter.
2. Youth understand the importance of having a community and a "people."
3. Youth understand what it means to make a promise, and what it feels like to have a promise kept and to have a promise broken.
4. Youth desire relationships where they are valued simply for being themselves, not because of anything they can offer.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What promises has God fulfilled for you?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Reread the passage; then give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions:

1. What is the best thing you think you can offer God?
2. How did God respond to David's best offering? How do you expect God to respond to your best offering?

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: What lessons can we learn from Erica? How would you compare Erica to David? Discuss as a class.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In the events of today's Bible passage, David displayed his kind heart toward God. David desired to bless God with a temple, but God intervened in David's plans. David was a man of great wars and bloodshed (see 1 Chronicles 22:8). God did not need David to build Him a temple due to his warfare. God told Nathan that He had never dwelt in a house since His time with the Israelites. He never asked for a cedar house. God had moved about with Israel in a tent and a tabernacle. God has never needed anyone to provide for Him. He has always been and will always be the Provider!

God humbly reminded David of his many blessings thus far. David was removed from being a shepherd to becoming Israel's king. God had been with David in every location. God had protected David from all his enemies. God made David's name great! God promised to designate a place for Israel and plant them in their land. They would not be oppressed anymore. God promised Israel rest from their enemies. And God said that He would make a house for David.

God made a covenant with David to build an eternal kingdom from his family line. His heir, Jesus Christ, would build a house for the Lord, and God would establish the throne of His kingdom forever. The heir of David would become the Son of God and reign forever. God remained faithful to His promises of the Davidic Covenant.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(2 Samuel 7:4-17)

4 But that night the word of the LORD came to Na-

than, saying: **5** "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? **6** I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. **7** Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' **8** Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. **9** I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. **10** And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning **11** and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: **12** When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **14** I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. **15** But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. **16** Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.'" **17** Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Second Samuel 7:4-17 gives the details of the Davidic Covenant. God promised David that the destructive cycle of sin-judgment-rescue repeated throughout

human history (compare 7:10-16 with Judges 2:11-19) would finally end through David (see Matthew 1:1, 17).

God revealed His plans for the throne of David and His eternal kingdom. Like other biblical covenants, God makes His promises for all His people. The Davidic Covenant would bring forth a Savior for the whole world. God will give the gift of Jesus Christ to all who believe in Him. Salvation from the world's sins belongs to all of God's people. God shows His great love for all by freeing them from sin. The spiritual blessings of the Davidic Covenant go far beyond David himself. God has blessed the nation with David's heir, Jesus, the Son of God, the King of Kings!

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

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

Answers: (1) God sent Nathan to tell David that his son Solomon would be the one to build the Temple for God. (2) The best thing we can offer God is our love and faithfulness. (Other responses are possible.) (3) Responses will vary.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, as a class, read 2 Samuel 7:10; Genesis 2:8-10; Ezekiel 47:1-12; and Revelation 22:1-2. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond: (1) How is God depicted in these Scriptures? (*God is depicted as a gardener.*) (2) What does the metaphor of God as gardener tell us about who God is? (*God is our sovereign provider. God sustains the life He created in us via the food of trees, the healing properties of earth's waters, and the medicinal nature of tree leaves.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "King David was a shepherd and Jesse's youngest son. In his society, he was guaranteed to be a background figure. Yet, God made him king, and as we saw in today's passage, God loved him dearly enough to have Jesus continue in his family line. In

what ways do you feel like you are in the background? What are your hopes for how God will use you? Write them down and release them to God."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that God is faithful and keeps His promises. Say, "David's gratitude for God and his heart's desire to do his best for God is a great model of your relationship with God. David wrote psalms to honor and praise God. God wants to have that same kind of relationship with you, too. God already loves you unconditionally and gives you His best blessings. God wants all of your heart in return. He wants you also to express your great love for Him."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "David's desire to build a 'house' for God was prompted by gratitude (7:1-2); God's plan to build a 'house' out of David's heritage was God's response to David's acknowledgment that God, not David, was the reason for David's success. How do we experience God's promise to David today?

"As we reflect on the Davidic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, and the Sinai Covenant, which of God's promises sticks out to you the most? Why? Which promise feels nearest to you—something you have experienced, perhaps?"

Challenge the students to write their own "psalm" to honor God like David did. Provide time for creative writing.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

December 15, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Laying the
Groundwork**

Unit I: Jesus,
the Heir of David

Lesson
3

General Lesson:
**The Prophet Who
Prepares the Way**

Background Scripture: Luke 1:5-23, 57-80
Print Passage: Luke 1:67-80



[Zechariah said to John,] "You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins." (Luke 1:76-77)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9NgHAY-0yM>; review the video "The Bible Miniseries—John the Baptist" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

In times of trouble, people require rescue. Who can save us in such times? Zechariah prophesied that his son, John, would prepare the way for the coming Savior, Jesus Christ, who would redeem Israel.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore the meaning of Zechariah's prophecy concerning his son, John.
2. Turn to Jesus as they prepare for the future.
3. Commit to one spiritual discipline to help prepare the way for God's plan of redemption.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth worry about their future and want to act to improve it.
2. Youth value speaking the truth.
3. Youth understand what it is like to feel hopeless.
4. Youth know what it is to hope.
5. Youth don't want to stand out from their peers or be considered strange.
6. Youth have a lot of pressure from adults to plan for their future and achieve a predetermined measure of success.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What ministerial groundwork will you do for God?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about their blessings in relation to this week's lesson. Reread the passage. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions:

1. How does Zechariah describe God?
2. Read 2 Samuel 7 (from last week) again. What similar themes arise?
3. What does this tell us about God? about the person of Jesus?

Allow the students to discuss their thoughts and guide the discussion openly.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: How does the mother of this story compare to Zechariah? Does your name have a special meaning like John's?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, Zechariah praised God for Israel's coming redemption and salvation. Zechariah prophesied the coming of Jesus as the "horn of salvation" that would come to defend and save God's people. Zechariah also prophesied the ministry of John. John would become a prophet of God who would publically speak to people, declaring the redemption of Israel and the salvation of God. God sent John as His messenger, telling people to repent and get people ready to accept Jesus as their Savior. He went before the Lord and prepared the way for Him. John was filled with the Holy Spirit and shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with many people.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Luke 1:67-80)

67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: **68** "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people

and redeemed them. **69** He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David **70** (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), **71** salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— **72** to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, **73** the oath he swore to our father Abraham: **74** to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear **75** in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. **76** And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, **77** to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, **78** because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven **79** to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." **80** And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Both Zechariah and John the Baptist were filled with the Holy Spirit. Before Acts 2, being filled with the Spirit was a divine empowering to perform a specific, frequently limited duration action or, in the case of the prophets, to speak God's words; it was not the indwelling, permanent presence that we are gifted with today (see Exodus 31:3; 35:31-35; Numbers 11:25-26; 1 Samuel 10:10-11).

John prepared the way for Jesus—as he was also a "follower of the Way." "Followers of the Way" was the earliest term Christians used to describe themselves. Jesus showed them how to live, so they simply followed the Way (compare ["the way"] in Luke 1:76 to John 14:6; also see Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). What words would you use to describe the Way?

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, as a class, read Luke 1:69—in which Zechariah refers to Jesus as the “horn of salvation.” Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) What does the phrase “horn of salvation” imply? (*The “horn of salvation” describes Jesus as our Redeemer and Savior.*) (2) How do you interpret the characteristics that Zechariah used to describe Jesus? (*Jesus is our mighty Savior and the Son of David.*) (3) What is Jesus’ purpose in this text? (*Jesus’ mission is to rescue and defend God’s people.*)

There’s an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Here is Luke’s introduction: God will come to rescue and restore so that all people may be restored (in right standing) in their relationship with God. This restoration means living in God’s presence without fear, moving toward God in peace, and trusting obedience. Luke 1:76 echoes Isaiah 40:3-5; see the link to John’s message of actions-proved repentance in 3:3-14, where repentance is how God’s people clear away the obstacles and make a straight pathway for God to be present in/among them. Describe your relationship with God. Do you repent to God? Have you received God’s restoration? In what ways do you feel restored?”

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that Jesus is our Redeemer and Savior. John the Baptist was God’s prophet to the people of Israel. John lived in the wilderness of Judea, wore clothes made of camel hair, and ate locusts

and wild honey. John lived a simple life but had an extraordinary mission. He preached redemption and salvation to everyone. He encouraged people to repent and receive Jesus as their Savior. John took his ministry seriously. He focused solely on preparing the way before the Lord.

John 3:30 reads, “He must become greater; I must become less.” John is saying that Jesus is far more important than himself. He testifies that Jesus is the One who will come to save the entire world. John emphasizes the magnitude of God’s redemption and salvation in his ministry. Ask, “How did John prepare the way for Jesus? Has the Lord redeemed you? Have you received God’s salvation?” Discuss.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, “Luke 1:78-79 reads, ‘Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.’” Ask, “What does peace mean to you? How has God provided peace in your life?” Encourage the students to speak with a parent or caregiver about the story of their births at some point this week. Ask, “What hopes did they have for you when you were born? What hopes do they have for you now? What hopes and plans do you have for your own future? Does the prospect of the future give you anxiety or hope? How has Jesus provided for you in the past? How does He meet you in your present? Create artwork based on the word *peace*—*shalom* in Hebrew and *Eirene* in Greek. Let the artwork be an exploration of peace as well as thanksgiving for God’s provision.” (Provide time for the students to create their artwork.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

December 22, 2024

Youth Topic:
**Unexpected
Messengers**

Unit I: Jesus,
the Heir of David

Lesson
4

Background Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Print Passage: Luke 2:1-16

General Lesson:
**Born in the
City of David**



When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." (Luke 2:15)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqWtSBGjnXE>; review the video "Episode 1 of 13: The Story of Jesus' Birth (Luke 2:1-11)" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Everyone likes to hear good news. What good news can we expect in our day? God announced the Good News of Jesus' birth to shepherds, who were amazed at hearing it.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Evaluate the significance of including shepherds in the news of the Messiah's birth.
2. Marvel at God's love in sending His Son, Jesus, to the earth as a baby.
3. Interpret the birth of Jesus in words that might relate to their friends who do not go to church.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth know the difference between bad news and good news.
2. Unlike older generations, most youth receive news through social media.
3. Youth value those who are humble.
4. Youth understand and dislike social dynamics that uphold the powerful and oppress others.
5. Youth appreciate the significance of action versus words.
6. Youth value sincerity.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What does it look like to be a witness to God today?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about the responses to the birth of our Savior in relation to this week's lesson. Read Luke 2:17-20. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions:

1. What was the shepherds' response to Jesus' birth?
2. How did Mary react to the fact that she had just given birth to the Messiah?
3. What were the people of Bethlehem's responses to Jesus' birth?

Compare the three responses to the Good News in Luke 2:17-20 by the shepherds, Mary, and the people of Bethlehem. Discuss ways to honor each type of response. Allow the students to discuss their thoughts and guide the discussion openly.

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: How did Michael's suggestion help Kelly in this story? Do you know your life's purpose? Discuss.

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

Luke wrote about the birth of Jesus in today's Bible passage. Under Roman governing, people were required to participate in the census and went to their hometowns to register. Joseph was from the line of David and, therefore, a native of Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. There were no vacancies for Joseph and Mary. They resorted to using the animal shelter for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to Jesus and wrapped Him up in cloths. She laid Him in a manger. An angel appeared to the shepherds in the nearby fields. They became afraid at the sight of the angel. The angel comforted their fears and announced the Good News of the Savior's birth. A heavenly host of angels praised God for the Messiah. The shepherds quickly ran to see their Savior when the angels left to return to heaven.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Luke 2:1-16)

1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. **2** (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) **3** And everyone went to their own town to register. **4** So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5** He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. **6** While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, **7** and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. **8** And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." **13** Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, **14** "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." **15** When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." **16** So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Israel had heard about the coming of their Messiah and was waiting for His arrival. Finally, Jesus was born quietly in the night. Mary clothed Jesus and laid Him in a manger. A few nearby shepherds witnessed the glorious birth announcement and praise by the host of heavenly angels. The Savior's birth brought forth redemption and salvation to God's people. The people of Bethlehem praised God.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that the Bible tells us that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He came to us as a baby. Allow a brief amount of time for the students to respond to the following statement/questions (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) Jesus holds the same divine power as God; what does this say about Jesus? (*God is three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is a member of the Trinity.*) (2) Read John 10:30; 14:10; and 1 Corinthians 8:6. Describe the relationship of God and Jesus. (*God and Jesus exist as one.*) (3) Read Matthew 28:18; what does this text say about the authority of Jesus? (*Jesus shares the sovereignty of God.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "As God demonstrates with the inclusion of shepherds in the birth narrative, human social and power dynamics do not apply to God's ways. All are welcome. All are loved. Whom do you discount? How can you welcome them? Whom does society say matters today? List what people value about other people (money, connections, influence, etc.). Explain the social position of shepherds in the New Testament. Why did God choose them to share the Good News?" Pause for discussion.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

Have the text in this section of the student book read

aloud; then help the students think about how this Scripture connects to them personally.

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that sharing the Gospel of Jesus with others is important. Review the reputation of shepherds in the ancient Near East—a shepherd's testimony, deemed untrustworthy, was not valid for legal matters. Who are the shepherds today through whom God is speaking? Who in your life needs to hear the Good News? What are some of the ways that you can share it with them?

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "The Bible contains various prophecies about the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior." Break up the class into groups; have each group read one of the following Scripture verses/passages: Isaiah 9:6-7; 61:1-2; Micah 5:2; 1 Samuel 16:1; and Genesis 12:1-3. Using their phones or study Bibles, ask them to tell a little bit about their passage (who wrote it, when, why) and the connections they see between the prophecies and the birth narrative. (Allow time for the students to research their Bible text and write their analysis.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

NOTES

December 29, 2024

Youth Topic: **The Blind Man Who Sees**

Unit I: Jesus, the Heir of David

General Lesson: **The Merciful Son of David**

Lesson **5**

Background Scripture: Luke 18:31-43

Print Passage: Luke 18:35-43



Those who led the way rebuked [the blind man] and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 18:39)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit a video site that tells the story of Blind Bartimaeus; be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

People who ask for help are sometimes silenced. How can we respond to those who call for help? When the crowd tried to silence the cries of a man who called out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped to ask the man what He could do for him.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explain how Jesus was of the family lineage of King David.
2. Desire to worship Jesus as the merciful Son of David's lineage.
3. Engage in compassionate service to others as merciful people of Christ.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth believe that everyone has a voice that may be heard.
2. Youth are tempted to follow the crowd.
3. Youth value works as an expression of compassion.
4. Youth admire those who have strong ideals and stick to them.
5. Youth tend to live in the present and, therefore, do not put a lot of stock in one's family lineage.
6. Youth can relate to being silenced or told their voices don't matter.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What changes could occur in people's lives if they gave their lives to Christ?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about the salvation of Jesus in relation to this week's lesson. Read Luke 18:35-43. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following statements/questions (and then lead a discussion):
(1) People who ask for help are sometimes silenced. How can we respond to those who call for help? (*We can be stewards of the Lord and help others in need.*)
(2) What does the crowd's response to the blind

man's cries say about how we tend to label and treat people? (*Society tends to label and treat helpless people poorly.*) (3) What does Jesus' response say about Him? (*He is no respecter of persons. He loves and treats everyone the same.*)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: Carson's discernment prompted him to ask Stephen what was wrong, and then he used his voice to get help from his mom. How did God guide Carson in this situation? Do you use discernment?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, a blind beggar was healed because of his faith. Jesus was walking toward the city of Jericho. A blind beggar was sitting near the road. He heard the crowd commotion and asked what was going on. They told him that Jesus was coming near. The blind man cried out to Jesus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" The man kept shouting out to Jesus for help. The crowd told him to be quiet, but he shouted more and more. Jesus stopped and asked the man what did he need. He responded, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." The people witnessed that miracle and praised God.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Luke 18:35-43)

35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging, **36** When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening. **37** They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." **38** He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **39** Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" **40** Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, **41** "What do you want me to do for you?" "Lord, I want to see," he replied. **42** Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you." **43** Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also praised God.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Luke's placement of this story is intentional and strategic. Luke 18:31-34 is a story about how the disciples knew Jesus best yet were blind to His real purpose on the earth. Luke 18:35-43 isn't a story about healing a blind man as much as it is about truly seeing the faith we should have in Jesus within us. We are saved when we have spiritual sight (see Luke 18:26). By naming Jesus "Son of David," the beggar also placed himself under Jesus' authority as the Davidic heir. The beggar's insistence on this drew Jesus' attention and presence in a perfect example of James 4:7-8. When Jesus heard the man call out His name as "Son of David," He knew the man was a believer, for his faith was verbally expressed in the way he called out to Jesus. In the first century, blindness was considered a judgment from God for sins committed (for example, John 9:2), so receiving his sight would have been the equivalent of being rescued from God's judgment.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, reiterate that the blind man referred to Jesus as the “Son of David.” Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) What role does David play in the narrative of the people of Israel? (*David was the king of Israel.*) (2) What does “Son of David” mean regarding Jesus’ ancestry? (*Jesus was an heir of David’s.*) (3) What lesson of faith do we learn from the blind man’s cries? (*When your faith is displayed to the Lord, instant healing [of the mind, body, and soul] can happen.*)

There’s an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the application is understood, say, “The man who was blind could have heard Jesus’ question (Luke 18:41) as a superficial query into his post as a beggar (see Acts 3:4-6) but, instead, let the question sink deeply in to expose his true need, his helplessness, and his vulnerability; and Jesus answered him, healed him—at the level that he internalized Jesus’ words. Do you internalize the words that God speaks to you in your heart? Can you see your healing?”

“It is important to note that when Jesus says, ‘Your faith has saved you’ (for example, Luke 8:48), He refers to someone’s belief in Jesus’ ability to rescue them, not their faith that Jesus will do as they ask (see Mark 9:24). Our faith is in God’s strength and goodness to rescue and save, while accepting God’s sovereignty and what might seem the strangeness of God’s plan. We know God can do it; we ask that God’s will be done.

“Define *Messiah* and its connection to the term *Christ*. Knowing the history of this term, what is the significance of the beggar’s using it in Luke 18?” Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that our sharing our testimonies and praising God with others are important. The blind beggar paid attention to his surroundings and recognized the movement of God in the world. Ask the students to recall a time when paying attention enriched their understanding of a relationship, an event, or the world. Ask, “How have you received mercy recently?” Discuss.

Again, we see Luke’s emphasis on witnessing. The blind man cried out, and Jesus healed him. The people in the crowd witnessed the blind man’s miracle and gave great praise to God. Here, we see the contagiousness of witnessing. We who experience God’s rescue find our testimony bubbling out of us. Those who hear then bear witness themselves and honor God for His divine actions. Ask, “What do Jesus’ actions and reactions show you? What does the crowd’s praise say about God? What significance does this have for us today as the people of God?”

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, as a class, plan an outing for the Sunday school group or larger church for compassionate service. Say, “Look at your everyday life—your family, neighbors, student classmates—who could use some kindness? What are some ways that you can be compassionate to them? In what ways can you help your community? After your act of compassionate service, take time to reflect. How did it feel to serve others? Who were the others—what do we know about them and their lives? How did those whom we served serve us in return?” (Provide time for the class to come up with a compassionate service plan.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

January 5, 2025

Youth Topic:
**God of
Justice**

Unit II:
Our God Reigns

Lesson
6

Background Scriptures: Psalms 9–10

Print Passage: Psalm 10:12-18

General Lesson:
The Lord Is King



You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry. (*Psalm 10:17*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit a video site that provides more information on Psalms 9–10; be prepared to discuss it during the “Media Mission” section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

People are greatly troubled by overwhelming violence, injustice, and oppression. How can we survive and overcome such abusive conditions? The psalmist appealed to God to rise up as King and Ruler and restore justice to the defenseless who suffer under the attacks of the wicked.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore the Lord’s purpose for and definition of justice.
2. Value the Lord’s path to establishing justice in the world.
3. Identify a place of inequity and implement a plan to restore justice.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth believe it is up to them to create change.
2. Youth see the lack of equality in the world as something that they inherit from previous generations.
3. Youth desire to enact justice but don’t always see how to do so in ordinary ways.
4. Youth can feel that adults don’t respect their voices due to their age.

5. Youth understand organizing and communication through technology.
6. Youth believe that they can change the world.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “How can we overcome violence and injustice?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week’s lesson. Read Psalm 10:12-18. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions/directive (and lead a discussion): (1) Name some

injustices that you see and experience in the world. (We see on social media and the news ongoing wars between countries, police brutality, racism and discrimination, corrupt governments, etc.) (2) What are we to do with our anger at the injustices in the world? (We first pray and give our anger to God. Then, we become motivated to make a difference by bringing awareness to injustices so that justice begins to happen.) (3) Looking at Psalm 10, how would you define the term *biblical justice*? (Biblical justice is the triumph of God, victory by God's power.)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: What injustices had Kira and Megan witnessed? Do you think that positive outcomes can follow negative events?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, David called on God to rise against evil and protect His people. In Psalm 9, David gives God great praise. He expresses a thankful heart for all that God had done. Yet, David also called on God to rise and judge the nations. David mentioned the "nations" in Psalm 9:19-20 and Psalm 10:16. "The nations" David refers to would be the Philistines, who had a long history of oppressing Israel (read 1 Samuel 17; see also Judges 13:1). David wanted the evildoers to fear the Lord and stop their wicked ways. He wanted God to strike the wicked and lift the oppressed.

Consider "the nations," obsessed with self-determination and power. In what sense is our nation among "the nations" described in the Psalms?

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Psalm 10:12-18)

12 Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God. Do not forget the helpless. **13** Why does the wicked man revile God? Why does he say to himself, "He won't call me to account"? **14** But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted; you consider their grief and take it in hand. The victims commit themselves to you; you are the helper of the fatherless. **15** Break the arm of the wicked man; call the evildoer to account for his wickedness that would not otherwise be found out. **16** The LORD is King for ever and ever; the nations will perish from his land. **17** You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, **18** defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: David was urging God to rise up against wickedness. He knew that God saw how the poor orphans were being attacked. David was calling on God to conquer the evildoers and protect His people. As he asked God for justice, he also gave God praise. David had witnessed the works of God and glorified His holy name. David had great hope that God would defeat the wicked. David knew that the nations would perish—as the kingdom of God will last forever. David was looking forward to deliverance and justice for the orphaned. He asked God to destroy the bodies of the wicked so that they may no longer have the ability to attack innocent people. David placed his faith in God and gave this battle to the Lord. He knew that the Lord is triumphant and would remove all evil from around them.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that in Psalm 10, David describes the injustice of taking advantage of the vulnerable and powerless who cannot defend themselves (see verses 14, 18). Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) What was David complaining about in Psalm 10? (*The wickedness of the evildoers and injustice of the orphans.*) (2) What should we do with our anger? (*Pray about the circumstances making us angry and give our anger to God in exchange for calmness.*) (3) Are you confident in God's justice? (*Responses may vary but should indicate yes—because God is victorious.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Violence happens somewhere in the world every day. The words of David in Psalm 10 guide us on how to pray against evil. In times of injustice, we must ask God to rise against evil people and protect the poor.

"We hear stories of injustice on the news and see it on social media constantly. Psalm 10 teaches us to oppose evil via our call to God. We are to use our voices and call on the Lord as we pray for deliverance and justice for all oppressed people. The Lord is strong and mighty. He will prevail.

"Have you witnessed or experienced injustice yourself? Did you work toward receiving justice?" Lead a discussion.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that it is important to

call on God during times of trouble. Say, "Read Psalms 9 and 10. Psalm 9 is used as background for Psalm 10 because the two psalms are treated as one acrostic psalm and share several themes. Make a connection between the two psalms and note their themes on 'praise and thanksgiving,' 'times of trouble,' 'a call for God to arise'; express assurance that God will not 'forget the oppressed.' Write down the similarities and differences between Psalm 9 and Psalm 10."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, relay the following: Psalm 9 focuses on praise and thanks, while Psalm 10 is primarily a lament. A lament psalm expresses deep grief or sorrow. It is usually a cry to God for help in times of trouble. The psalmists often place their trust in God and ask the Lord for His protection. While it is not apparent in the English translation, it is interesting to note that Psalm 9 is the first half of an acrostic poem, covering half of the Hebrew alphabet—and Psalm 10, also an acrostic, covers the rest of the alphabet.

Explain the biblical genre of lament psalms and their essential elements—address, lament proper, confession of trust, petition, motivation, exclamation of certainty, and vow of praise. Ask, "How do these psalms fit into this general category? What is the purpose of having laments in the Bible?" Briefly discuss. Say, "Using the essential elements of a lament psalm, write a lament for the injustice(s) you feel most profoundly in the world." (Provide time for the students to write a lament.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

January 12, 2025

Youth Topic:
**Peace as
Praise**

Unit II:
Our God Reigns

Lesson
7

General Lesson:
**The Lord Is Robed
in Majesty**

Background Scriptures: Psalms 47; 93

Print Passage: Psalm 93:1-5



The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. (*Psalm 93:1*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit a video site that provides more information about Psalm 47; be prepared to discuss it during the “Media Mission” section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Throughout the world, we find chaos and disorder. Who can restore order and peace? Psalm 93 proclaims God as the almighty and creative power whose reign stands firm amid crisis and unrest.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Consider how God’s majesty restores peace.
2. Nurture awe for God’s almighty and creative power.
3. Work to establish peace as praise to God.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth desire security.
2. Youth can be overwhelmed by all the chaos of this world and suffer from anxiety.
3. Youth admire creation.
4. Youth value peace.
5. Youth may feel limited by using the term *king* as a gender-exclusive term.
6. Youth value independence.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking

in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Describe God in your own words.”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week’s lesson. Read Psalm 93. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions:

1. How does David describe the Lord?
2. When was God’s throne established?
3. What is the significance of the seas?

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following question: Dave and Ashley saw the

sign of God’s protection as they traveled the countryside and stopped to pray to God; what did the news alert bring to their attention?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

Today’s Bible passage acknowledges God’s majestic power. The Lord’s divine strength creates and rules. God established the world simply by speaking (see Genesis 1:1-5). He has sovereign control of all creation. His throne was established from the beginning (see Genesis 1:2, “and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters”). The divine gestures of the waters display God’s greatness.

The seas lift their voices to the Lord. The holy Word of God stands firm and is trustworthy.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Psalm 93:1-5)

1 The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength; indeed, the world is established, firm and secure. **2** Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity. **3** The seas have lifted up, LORD, the seas have lifted up their voice; the seas have lifted up their pounding waves. **4** Mightier than the thunder of the great waters, mightier than the breakers of the sea—the LORD on high is mighty. **5** Your statutes, LORD, stand firm; holiness adorns your house for endless days.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: In Psalm 93, David praises God’s greatness. He reflects on the Lord’s divine power and authority. David speaks graciously of the Lord and His majesty in this psalm. God is the King on the throne that sits high and mighty. The seas give reverence to the Lord. God’s sovereign rule is forever. When David referred to the statutes of God standing firm, he declared that God’s guidelines for human conduct are reliable and trustworthy and are to be followed without deviation.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses. (*The response to #1 is God.*)

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that in Psalm 93, David gives great reverence to God. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) In this text, what is being communicated about the Lord? (*The Lord is robed in majesty and strength.*) (2) What is the state of David’s heart in Psalm 93? (*David has a heart to fully praise and obey God.*) (3) What are the Lord’s statutes? (*God’s holy laws.*)

There’s an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, say, “As the Psalms demonstrate, God has almighty and creative power. How do you experience this power in your life? (*Pause for responses.*) Think of your favorite place in the world, for instance. How does the beauty of this place reflect an almighty and powerful God?” Lead a brief discussion.

January 19, 2025

Youth Topic:
I Am Blessed!

Unit II:
Our God Reigns

Lesson
8

Background Scripture: Psalm 103

Print Passage: Psalm 103:1-14

General Lesson:
**The Lord's Throne
Is Established**



The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (*Psalm 103:6*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxPn05J_5Dc&t; review the video "Unlocking the Power of Psalm 103, Rev. Cheryl Hauer" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Good and fair leadership engenders confidence and peace. How do we express our gratitude to leaders who embody these qualities? Psalm 103 offers praise and thanksgiving to the Lord Almighty, who rules with steadfast love, justice, and compassion.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Examine how the Lord rules with love and righteousness.
2. Worship and praise God for demonstrating His steadfast love and fair leadership.
3. Exercise disciplines of faith and love when given responsibility.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth understand the importance of gratitude.
2. Youth have difficulty seeing beyond themselves—their desires, pains, and motivations.
3. Youth understand their need for forgiveness.
4. Youth value mercy.
5. Youth desire fairness.
6. Youth want mentors and leaders who are compassionate and fair.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Do you give God great praises?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week's lesson. Read Psalm 103. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following statements/question (and lead a discussion): (1) Make a list of verbs attributed to God. (*Forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, satisfies, works, etc.*) (2) Make a list of adjectives attributed to God. (*Compassionate,*

gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love, etc.) (3) How is God's kingdom characterized? (*The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.*)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following questions: In this story, what did Tammy encourage Romeo to do? Do you exercise disciplines of faith and motivate others to do so as well?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, David expresses his gratefulness to God. David's soul was full of love for the Lord. He blessed God with great praise. David was reminded of the things the Lord had brought him through and was forever thankful to God. God had protected and provided for David countless times. Like David, we must never forget how good God has been to us.

God is forgiving and slow to anger. He is very compassionate and merciful toward His people. God never gives the severity of punishment that our sins deserve. God's love for His children is greater than any other love known to humankind. The Lord is our Creator and loves us unconditionally. God's goodness lasts forever. His name is greatly to be praised!

Ask your students, "For what are you most thankful? Have you expressed your gratitude to God?"

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Psalm 103:1-14)

1 Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. **2** Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits— **3** who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, **4** who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, **5** who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. **6** The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. **7** He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: **8** The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. **9** He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; **10** he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities **11** For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; **12** as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. **13** As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; **14** for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: In Psalm 103, David praised the Lord because God had been so good to him. God had delivered justice and redemption for Israel. The anointing of God had been with David throughout his life. God's Spirit rested upon David's life. David was so grateful that he had to give God praise.

Ask your students, "Do you feel God's anointing over your life? Are you a temple of Christ?" Discuss.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the

students in a discussion of their responses (and the proper responses for #1 and #2).

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that in Psalm 103, David expressed great fear of the Lord. Allow a brief amount of time for the students to respond to the following statement/questions (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) What is the difference between servile fear and filial fear? (*Servile fear is the fear of being tortured or executed by a malicious person. Filial fear is being afraid to disappoint or displease the person you deeply respect and love.*) (2) Define the use of the word *fear* in Psalm 103. (*Psalm 103 discusses filial fear.*) (3) What would it look like to be God-fearing today? (*To be God-fearing is to reverence and honor the Lord; other responses are possible, as long as they line up with God's Word.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "People often go about their day in the world, aiming to accomplish their daily tasks. Students work on school assignments, teachers give curriculum instruction to their students, employees complete their work tasks, parents nurture and care for their children, pastors provide Christian leadership to their members, and so on. As we accomplish all these tasks, do we ever think about the mental and physical labor required to complete each task? Most people don't. David teaches us in Psalm 103 to praise the Lord for His many blessings. Looking at your life, list the blessings that God has bestowed upon you." Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that we bless God with our praise and worship. As a class, read Psalm 103:5. Relay that an eagle is the emblem of strength, vitality, and youthful endurance. Invite the students to draw and color an eagle. As they work, say, "Define the symbolism of the eagle in your life." Discuss.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, Say, "Think about how God has provided, protected, and cared for you. Complete the phrase, 'God, I bless you for . . .,' then discuss your response with your classmates." When they finish, combine all students' responses and work together to create your class's "Psalm of Praise."

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

NOTES

January 26, 2025

Youth Topic:
**Steadfast
Love**

Unit II:
Our God Reigns

Lesson
9

Background Scripture: Psalm 145

Print Passage: Psalm 145:1, 10-21

General Lesson:
My God, the King



Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. (*Psalm 145:13*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKJpGTYqSog; review the video “Best of Psalms//Psalm 145//5 Minute Bible Study” and be prepared to discuss it during the “Media Mission” section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

We live in an ever-changing world of turmoil and uncertainty. Where can we find a source of relief and a reason for joy? Psalm 145 invites us to find constancy in God’s everlasting kingdom of steadfast mercy, power, goodness, and compassion.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Define *steadfast* in relation to the character of God.
2. Build character that reflects God’s steadfast mercy, goodness, and compassion.
3. Offer practical ways to share God’s steadfast mercy, goodness, and compassion with others.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth desire role models who show mercy, goodness, and compassion.
2. Youth desire to be good but have difficulty defining what exactly that means.
3. Youth value action when it comes to beliefs.
4. Youth want to be accepted.
5. Youth want to have hope.
6. Statistically, youth often struggle with anxiety and depression. While they desire hope and joy, these may feel very far away from them.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND? “Do you show compassion to others?”

It’s Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week’s lesson. Read Psalm 145:18 alongside James 4:8. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following statement/questions (and lead a discussion): (1) Describe your relationship with God. (*Responses will vary, but encourage the students to have a personal relationship with God.*) (2) What effect does dishonesty have on our relationship with God? (*Dishonesty with*

God is a significant obstacle to experiencing God's anointing and work in one's life.) (3) What does being honest with ourselves and others look like? (*Honesty looks like steadfast love and freedom in Christ.*)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following question: In this story, Brian consoled Jayden and reminded him that God is his rock; do you share the goodness of God with your younger siblings or relatives?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, David gives a song of praise to the Lord in Psalm 145. David testified that God is great! He praised God the King. The Lord is highly worthy of being praised every day and forever. God is so great that each creature He created will praise Him. Children of God will give Him glory and bless Him for His good and mighty works. Christians will speak about His everlasting kingdom and tell about His sovereign power. Everyone will know the majesty of God's kingdom. The Lord will lift all who bow down and worship Him. God satisfies the desires of His children. Everything the Lord does is just and right. The Lord is near to those who pray to Him. Call on the name of the Lord, for He hears your cries and will save you. God protects the ones who love Him but destroys the wicked. I will praise the Lord. Let everyone praise His holy name forever.

David's critical foundation is his acknowledgment of God as sovereign (145:1) and submission to God's plans and direction. The rest of Psalm 145 is David's explanation of why he rejoices in God's sovereignty. God's goodness and faithfulness are constant, making trusting God the only option that makes sense in this world (see 145:3-7).

Unlike many other psalms, Psalm 145 does not focus on specific historical actions by God but, rather, on general actions that consistently flow out of who God is: actions that God will always do because they are a natural outworking of who God is (see Psalm 145:8-9, 14-20). David mirrors Luke's emphasis on witness/testimony (see Psalm 145:4-12), describing the natural cycle of experiencing God at work: seeing and experiencing bubbles forth in telling, explaining, and teaching others about our experiences of God. In David's time, most Israelites were subsistence farmers/herders, so sufficient food was a real cause for concern (145:14-16). While many of us don't face the real possibility of starvation, we should not lose sight of that reality around us and throughout the world and experience God's generosity working through us as we share our resources (see Acts 2:45; 2 Corinthians 8).

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Psalm 145:1, 10-21)

1 I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

.....

10 All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. **11** They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, **12** So that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. **13** Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. **14** The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. **15** The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. **16** You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. **17** The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does. **18** The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. **19** He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. **20** The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. **21** My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: In Psalm 145, David blessed the Lord with a song of praise. He proclaimed that God is great. David encouraged Christians to be witnesses among others and talk about the glory of God. Say, "Speak about the Lord's power and His good works. Praise the Lord forever!"

Encourage your students to share the Gospel with others. Ask, "How has God taken care of you?" Discuss.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that in Psalm 145, David passionately expressed love for God and gave Him great praise. Allow a brief amount of time for the students to respond to the following statements/questions (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) Define the word *chesed*. (*Chesed is steadfast love, God's faithful love for His people.*) (2) Have you experienced *chesed*? Give an example. (*Responses may vary but should indicate yes—as God wakes us up every morning and takes care of our needs.*) (3) How can you bless God? (*By praising His name forever; other responses are possible.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read and the assignment is completed, say, "David set God's consistent actions out as proof of God's unwavering character and as a rationale for our response to God. This raises the question of what our actions prove about our character and how grateful

we should be for God's grace—that God doesn't use that as a rationale for actions toward us!"

In a circle, have everyone share about one role model in their lives or from a favorite show/movie/book. Ask, "What do you admire about the person? How do human excellence and goodness relate to the ultimate goodness of God?" Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that we are to display a character that mirrors Jesus Christ's. Relay that Psalm 145 enumerates several attributes of God: "great" (verses 3, 6), "good" (verses 7, 9), and "merciful," "compassionate" (verses 8-9). Say, "Select one attribute to meditate on per day. Pay attention to events or circumstances that call God's attributes to mind."

Allow time for the students to write a prayer of praise and gratitude.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, as a class, trace the development of the phrase "steadfast love" (Hebrew: *chesed*) from a term for covenant loyalty between YHWH (Yahweh) and Israel to a universal characteristic of God's common grace to all creatures.

Separate the class into groups; while they are in groups, allow time for the students to identify and write where they recognize mercy, goodness, and compassion in the psalm, the greater story of Scripture, and their lives today. Discuss the resulting thoughts together.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

February 2, 2025

Youth Topic: **A World without Obligation**

Unit III: Life in God's Kingdom

Lesson **10**

Background Scripture: Matthew 6:5-15

Print Passage: Matthew 6:5-15

General Lesson:
Praying for Relief



"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (*Matthew 6:10*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbF5aizWQzM>; review the video "In Matthew 6:5-13, Why Did People Who Already Knew How to Pray Need to Be Instructed?" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people struggle to achieve sustainable lives in a world of debt and obligation. How can we be released from the obligation to make ends meet? Jesus teaches us to pray for the forgiveness of debts, which is a hallmark of God's reign.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explain how God's kingdom will change one's life and motives.
2. Cultivate a sense of the need for God's forgiveness.
3. Offer a prayer, in their own words, that reflects the pattern of prayer that Jesus taught His disciples.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth often feel that their beliefs make them stand out from others.
2. Youth desire a just society.
3. Depending on their social location, youth may be acquainted with or ignorant about monetary debt.
4. Youth understand their need for forgiveness.
5. Youth desire to be good people.
6. Youth are often in volatile relationships that require a lot of forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Do you pray silently and truly talk to God?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week's lesson. Read Matthew 6:12. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following statement/questions (and lead a discussion): (1) What debts is Jesus talking about? (*Jesus refers to debts [what we owe to God and fail to do] as sins.*) (2) What does Jesus teach about forgiveness? (*Jesus teaches us to pray for the forgiveness of debts. We ask God to forgive our sins as we*

forgive the sins done to us by others.) (3) Many people struggle with monetary debt. How can we prevent financial debt? (*Living within a monetary budget can make us financially responsible and accountable.*)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following question: Nicole demonstrated God's forgiveness and accepted a new relationship with her mother; do you forgive others and renew relationships?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. Jesus wanted His disciples to sincerely pray to God and not pray publicly for a display to others. The religious leaders were hypocrites and would shout out loud to God in the streets to "show" everyone that they were praying. God does not want us to pray loudly to Him before others in that manner. God wants our focus solely on Him—that is the implication of praying in secret.

Jesus explains in Matthew 6:6 that God wants us to go to our prayer room and close the door when we pray to Him. God wants us to come to Him silently in a secret place. He wants our full attention so that He can speak to our hearts and we may also hear His voice. God wants a quiet place where He can communicate with us alone.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Matthew 6:5-15)

5 "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. **6** 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. **7** And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. **8** Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, **10** your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. **11** Give us today our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' **14** For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Jesus teaches that prayer is the communication you have with the Lord alone. You can go into your secret prayer room and tell God all the needs and desires of your heart. When you go to God in prayer, you are activating your faith. Commit to prayer alone with God every day.

Encourage your students to examine their prayer lives closely. Ask them how they would rate their prayer life on a scale of 1 to 10. Ask, "Do you have a prayer room?" Discuss.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to

the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that Jesus teaches in Matthew 6:5-15 that how we pray matters to God. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) Where should we pray? (*Matthew 6:6 instructs us to go into our room to pray. Encourage the students to pray in their bedrooms if they don't have a designated prayer room at home.*) (2) To whom should we pray? (*Matthew 6:9 states that we should pray to our Father in heaven.*) (3) For what should we pray? (*Matthew 6:10-15 teaches that we can pray for God's will to be done in our lives, for daily bread [spiritually and physically], for forgiveness, and to be righteously led daily.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Accompanying the how, the why, the way, and to whom we pray is the concept of forgiveness. Jesus talks more about forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35. Forgiveness is at the heart of our relationship with God, our righteousness, and our lives in the Christian community. Jesus teaches that forgiveness is limitless in God's kingdom. In other words, we should never count the times when we may have to forgive someone who has done us wrong. We should simply have a lifestyle of forgiveness."

Ask, "Do you hold any anger or resentment against someone for not meeting your expectations or obligations? If so, pray to God for a heart of forgiveness."

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that we are to pray to God about everything. Say, "Read The Lord's Prayer line by line in Matthew 6:5-15. Write your own version of The Lord's Prayer and pray it throughout the week."

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, encourage the students to study The Lord's Prayer and meditate on the topic of forgiveness in Matthew 6:12-15. Say, "This Scripture should not be taken as a formula to ensure forgiveness but, rather, as a warning that when we harbor sin (unforgiveness, bitterness) in our hearts, we harbor something that remains an obstacle between us and God, no matter how devout we are in every other way. What does God expect of us? What does it look like to forgive the sins of others—and to be forgiven of your sins by others? Make a plan to give to someone freely without expectation this week." Lead a brief discussion.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

NOTES

February 9, 2025

Youth Topic:
**Enacting
Change**

Unit III: Life in
God's Kingdom

General Lesson:
**Resistance to the
Kingdom**

Lesson
11

Background Scripture: Matthew 11
Print Passage: Matthew 11:7-15, 20-24



Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. (*Matthew 11:20*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4uK6kUfoyQ>; review the video "Matthew 11: Jesus Acclaims John the Baptist; Come unto Me; the Bible" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Some people tend to resist changes that affect them. What resistance might we expect when we stand up for changes that are good and right? Matthew records Jesus' pronouncement that there is violence against the kingdom of heaven, which is under constant attack.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Identify sources of resistance in the world toward the kingdom of heaven.
2. Desire the Holy Spirit's guidance in standing for what is right.
3. Identify and implement a Christian practice that effects good and right changes.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth desire to be around and respect those who work to change the status quo.
2. Youth desire to effect change.
3. Youth have experienced a discrediting of their beliefs by others.
4. Most young people identify as "nones," meaning "no religious preference."
5. Youth struggle with standing out/being different.
6. Youth desire to be bold.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "What special ministry does God want you to do?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week's lesson. Read Matthew 11:11-12. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions (and lead a discussion): (1) How does Jesus refer to John? (*Jesus refers to John as being "greater than any other man who has ever lived."*) (2) Of what type of opposition does Jesus speak? (*Jesus speaks about the opposition to God's kingdom and the work of His chosen stewards.*) (3) What opposition to the church do you

see today? (Responses will vary. Discuss the opposition that the students notice. Today, in churches, we have seen an increase in violence (shootings) in the Lord's house. There is also a decrease in church attendance due to social-media viewing.)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following statements/questions: Jesus denounced the sin of the nonbelievers. In this story, Justin made the right decision for himself and Keith. Having good friends can be a positive influence in your life. Do you have good friends? Do you ask God to guide your decisions?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today's Bible passage, John wanted reassurance of who Jesus was. Jesus replied by referring to the healing miracles He had done. Jesus revealed to John His sovereign power through His works, confirming that He was the Messiah.

Jesus approached the crowd to speak about John. He told of the foretold prophecies of John as God's messenger. Jesus said that John the Baptist had come to prepare the way for the Lord. Jesus urged all people to listen to John's preaching.

Jesus denounced the towns that witnessed His miracles and didn't repent. These towns observed that He was the Messiah and continued to sin. They did not change their ways or prepare their hearts to follow Christ. Jesus became angry and announced that they would feel God's wrath on Judgment Day.

It's Text Time! (Scripture)

Here is the New International Version of today's Scripture.

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

(Matthew 11:7-15, 20-24)

7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? **8** If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. **9** Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **10** This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' **11** Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. **12** From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. **13** For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. **14** And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. **15** Whoever has ears, let them hear."

.....

20 Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. **21** "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. **22** But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. **23** And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. **24** But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: When John the Baptist wanted reassurance that Jesus was all that He claimed to be, Jesus replied with a list of things He had done that revealed God's presence, power, and love. The most forceful evidence was His work among the poor and broken.

As a class, read Matthew 11:2-6 to see the deeds of Jesus that others opposed. Ask your students, "Of those deeds, which can you practice as a sign of the coming kingdom in our midst? Pledge to serve Christ in this way and throw yourself into it."

Encourage the students to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as stated in Matthew 11:5.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the statements/questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, relay that in Matthew 11, Jesus speaks about the opposition to the kingdom of heaven. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) What resistance against the kingdom of heaven have you seen or experienced? (*Decrease in church attendance, increase in consolidating secular music with gospel music, etc.*) (2) In what ways are we like the people of Israel and reject the kingdom? (*Today, some pastors are heavily influenced by the secular world, leading people astray from the kingdom of heaven.*) (3) In what ways do we get it right? (*Amid opposition, most Christians remain true to their identity in Christ, continue praising the Lord's name, and teach younger generations about the Gospel—pushing God's ministry forward.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Matthew records Jesus' pronouncement that there is violence against the kingdom of heaven, which is under constant attack. Some people oppose the Word of God and resist changes that affect them.

"What opposition is expected when we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What resistance might we expect when we stand up for good and right changes?" Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read and discussed, emphasize to the students that we are to pray to God about everything. John and Jesus experienced resistance, as expressed in Matthew 11:7-15, 20-24. And as God's activity increases through His people (John the Baptist, Jesus, and today His church), so does opposition to His work. In responding to resistance, Jesus gives the best example: He did not limit Himself to what the public expected and accepted. Instead, He worked in response to God's voice and for God's approval.

In smaller groups or as one collective group, have the students share a time when they resisted something new or different, but it was a good thing. Ask, "Why does it seem to be human nature to resist change?" Discuss.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Develop the practice of praying to God with the assistance of the Holy Spirit this week and listening for the Holy Spirit as He guides you. Respond to God's voice and His approval for your life. Write down in a journal the messages you hear from God as you pray to Him. Do you have spiritual insight into who God is? Is there evidence of Christ's love working within you?" (Allow time for the students to complete the activity.)

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.

February 16, 2025

Youth Topic:
**An Upside-down
Kingdom**

Unit III: Life in
God's Kingdom

Lesson
12

Background Scripture: Matthew 19:16-30

Print Passage: Matthew 19:16-30

General Lesson:
The First Will Be Last



[Jesus said,] "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." (*Matthew 19:24*)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBUEuunESBs>; review the video "DISCOVER JESUS: Jesus Christ's Advice to a Rich Young Man (Matthew 19:16-30) ESV" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Many people seek to acquire wealth and possessions. How might the pursuit of wealth stand in the way of a purposeful life? Jesus says that it is practically impossible for rich or poor to enter God's kingdom if they attempt to do so through their own effort—because it is only possible for those who put their trust in God.

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Evaluate the place of forgiveness and mercy in the kingdom of God.
2. Be honest about what interferes with their commitment to follow Jesus.
3. Extend mercy and forgiveness to others and learn to receive forgiveness from others.

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth desire a just world.
2. Youth are aware of the economic disparities between and within nations and groups of people.
3. If youth come from privileged families, income/wealth disparity will seem very distant.
4. Youth don't understand the difference between income and wealth.
5. Youth know they need forgiveness.

6. Youth may need help to identify idolatrous standards for income/wealth.
7. Youth have experienced asking for and extending forgiveness.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Is God placed first in your life?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week's lesson. Read Matthew 19:21. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following statement/questions (and lead a discussion): (1) Define the word *perfect*. (*To live/be without blemish, guilt, or*

fault.) (2) What does Jesus teach will bring a complete life here? (To have the salvation and peace of God in your life; surrendering your life to God.) (3) What is “treasure in heaven”? (Eternal life; responses will vary.)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following statements/question: The things you do for Christ will last. In this story, Marissa invited Jade to become her friend. Do you have a welcoming spirit toward others?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today’s Bible passage, Jesus tested the rich young man’s heart. Jesus knew that the young man would not fully commit and surrender his life to Him. Jesus already knew that this young man valued his money and wealth more than sacrificing his possessions to help the poor for the Lord.

Read Matthew 19:16-30. The young man inquired about becoming a disciple in this Scripture, wanting to follow Jesus. Even though he followed some of the Lord’s commandments, he wasn’t fully committed to God. He overlooked *loving your neighbors as you love yourself*. If he loved God, he would have understood that giving his possessions to the poor would have been an act of love for God that would have fulfilled “loving your neighbors as you love thyself.”

Jesus explained to His disciples that it is hard for a rich person to enter heaven. To fully love God, you must free yourself from the love of money. When God is first in your life, He will provide you with what you need and fulfill your heart’s desires. God can’t lead you to His abundance if you hold on to worldly possessions.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Matthew 19:16-30)

16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” **17** “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.” **18** “Which ones?” he inquired. Jesus replied, “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, **19** honor your father and mother, and ‘love your neighbor as yourself.” **20** “All these I have kept,” the young man said. “What do I still lack?” **21** Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” **22** When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. **23** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. **24** Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” **25** When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “Who then can be saved?” **26** Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” **27** Peter answered him, “We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?” **28** Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. **29** And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. **30** But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Matthew 19:22 states that when the young man heard Jesus’ response, he left grieving because

he had many possessions; the young man's wealth overshadowed his love for God. He knew then in his heart that he was sinful and became sad. The man's sorrow demonstrates that he clearly understood Jesus' point. Sorrow doesn't have to mean rejection; just let go and give all conflicts to the Lord. He had the opportunity to repent but instead walked away.

Ask, "Do you allow your love of possessions to come before your love of God?" Discuss. Then encourage the students to repent to the Lord and free themselves of sorrow and pain.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, as a class, read Jesus' response in Matthew 19:28-30. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) How does Jesus' response apply to you? (*It convicts me to let go of worldly things to obtain heavenly gains.*) (2) Have you ever let go of any worldly thing to follow Jesus? (*Allow the students to share their responses with the class. Encourage them to stand strong in the Lord.*) (3) What does verse 30 indicate? (*The authority on the earth will be reversed in heaven. Those who love the Lord will have greater rewards in the kingdom of heaven.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "In Matthew 19:27, Peter questioned Jesus about what there would be for the disciples who left their 'stuff' to follow Jesus. Peter's response demonstrates that he missed the point a bit. He was still concerned about the stuff they had left behind, not his heart's devotion to God."

Ask, "Do you focus more on stuff or obedience to God? Are you entirely devoted to God?" Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, emphasize to the students that they are to commit themselves to God entirely. Jesus' response in Matthew 19:28-20 was one of compassion, offering hope for many in the church who have sacrificed everything for Him. Yet, it is a reminder that we cannot expect justice or reward from this fallen world but that our hope is in the eternal God and the life God gives us through his Son—and the rewards God promises for our eternity with Him.

Say, "Free write and then brainstorm the following: What does it mean for life to be complete? What relationships, objects, or attributes do we desire for a full life?" Allow time for the students to respond.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, as a class, read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. Say, "Godly grief produces repentance to the Lord, leading to salvation and freedom in Jesus Christ. Worldly grief produces sorrow, sin, and death of the soul. Godly grief—the pain of letting go of oneself and surrendering to God to become a new creation in Spirit—is a part of the Christian life. When you accept Jesus as your Savior, you receive salvation and freedom of your soul. You begin to live the abundant life that God created for you.

"Share instances when you experienced pain growing up, but it was for the better. What keeps you loving God? How do you depend on God's forgiveness and mercy?" Provide time for the students to write their responses.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Allow them to share something they learned.

February 23, 2025

Youth Topic:
**Faith in
Action**

Unit III: Life in
God's Kingdom

Lesson
13

Background Scripture: Matthew 25

Print Passage: Matthew 25:31-46

General Lesson:
Kingdom Life



"The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.'" (Matthew 25:34-35)

PREPARING TO TEACH

- **Resources Needed:** Bibles, student books, paper, pens or pencils, sticky notes, index cards
- Prior to class, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCVSi3YjaaE>; review the video "The Sheep and the Goats/Matthew 25:31-46" and be prepared to discuss it during the "Media Mission" section.

LESSON OVERVIEW

We are often judged based on known and unknown criteria. Whose (or what) standards should matter to us the most? Matthew 25 tells us that the criterion for the Son of Man's final judgment of responsible kingdom living will be based on service to the "least of these."

The youth should glean the following from this lesson:

1. Explore responsible kingdom living as it pertains to the treatment of others.
2. Celebrate the unconditional love of Christ for all humanity.
3. Participate in a ministry that serves "the least of these."

As the teacher, be cognizant of the following:

1. Youth feel pressured to meet many people's expectations (friends, family, teachers, coaches, etc.)
2. Youth deeply understand that the world is broken.
3. Youth desire unconditional love.
4. Youth value actions.
5. Youth fear judgment and punishment and have difficulty relating to images of wrath and revenge.
6. Youth are prone to believe everyone is entitled to their beliefs.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

STATUS UPDATE (check-in)

Before introducing your lesson, take some time to get a quick status update from your students—checking in with them to see how their week has been (and if anything new or exciting happened).

Status Update: WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND? "Are you a sheep or a goat?"

It's Go Time! (illustration)

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

Freewriting Exercise: Get your students thinking about biblical justice in relation to this week's lesson. Read Matthew 25:35. Give the youth a few minutes to write their responses to the following questions (and lead a discussion): (1) What needs does Jesus indicate should be met for the "least of these"? (*Feeding the hungry, hydrating the thirsty, clothing the poor, caring for the sick, and visiting*

the prisoners.) (2) What have you done for the “least of these”? (Discuss the students’ responses, which will vary.) (3) Do you live life by the guidance of the Holy Spirit? (Responses may vary but should indicate yes.)

REFLECT (10 minutes)

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

After the story is read, invite the students to respond to the following statements/questions: In this story, Katy follows God’s standards and makes the right choice. She did not give in to the temptation of negative peer pressure. Are you easily persuaded to do wrong, or do you consistently choose to do what’s right? Are you a sheep or a goat?

INSPECT (10 minutes)

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

Back Up! (background)

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

In today’s Bible passage, Jesus talks about what will happen during His return to judge the nations. Jesus will gather all the people before Him. He will separate the good people (sheep) from the evil people (goats). The sheep will be on His right hand, and the goats will be on His left hand. The good people—on the right hand—will be honored for how they live their lives. The sheep will inherit the kingdom of God. The evil people on the left hand will be banished from Jesus and go down to the eternal fire pit. The goats will join the devil in hell for eternal punishment. The sheep will enjoy a righteous eternal life in heaven.

It’s Text Time! (Scripture)

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

(Matthew 25:31-46)

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. **32** All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. **34** Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36** I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ **37** Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **38** When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? **39** When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ **40** The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ **41** Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ **44** They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ **45** He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ **46** Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

INTERSECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, share this: Jesus expects us to live lives of compassion and generosity, just like He did. *Generosity* is merely sacrificing part of yourself—your time, resources, energy, even emotion—on behalf of someone else’s needs. First John 3:16-18 tells us that real generosity

flows out of gratitude for what we have been given and out of following God's generous example (see 1 John 2:5-6). Generosity is also an act of trusting in God for our resources, and God will generously supply what we need as we give freely (see Proverbs 11:24-25; Luke 6:37-38; 2 Corinthians 8:12-15).

Ask, "Are you generous in your giving to others?" Allow time for discussion. Then encourage the students to treat others with love and kindness.

Inside Out (interpretation)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, allow time for the students to respond to the questions posed in the student book. Lead the students in a discussion of their responses.

Now, to further expound on the theme of the lesson, as a class, read Jesus' response in Matthew 25:40. Ask the students the following questions and allow a brief amount of time for them to respond (either on a separate sheet of paper or via a notes app on their cellphones): (1) Who are the "least of these" in your life? (*Those struggling in our communities and neighborhoods.*) (2) How can you serve the "least of these"? (*Serve them in the community kitchens, donate clothing to needy people, and so forth.*) (3) How does your church minister to the "least of these"? (*Responses will vary. Discuss the students' responses.*)

There's an App for That! (application)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, say, "Jesus is with and among the 'least of these.' The needs Jesus describes in Matthew 25:35-36, 42-43 are all material, physical needs. Yet, meeting them also addresses requirements for security, significance, and friendship. Read Acts 2:42-47. The church is still called to minister to physical, emotional, and spiritual needs."

Ask, "What have you done for others that Jesus would consider your having done for Him?" Discuss.

CONNECT (10 minutes)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, reemphasize to the students that they are to commit themselves to God entirely. Say, "Celebrate the unconditional love of Christ for all humanity. Meditate on Genesis 1:27. We are all made in God's image. Jesus considers the services rendered to all as services rendered to Him. Your service to others demonstrates your faith and trust in God. Sheep are willing to give to others, for they know that God will continually provide so that they can continue to do so. Have you neglected opportunities to show compassion to poor, sick, lonely, or alienated people? Break patterns in your behavior that have stopped you from being more compassionate. What kind of steward are you?" Lead a discussion over this information.

Stepping Out! (challenge)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, as a class, read Proverbs 11:24-25; Luke 6:37-38; 2 Corinthians 8:12-15. Ask, "Where does generosity come from? How does it fit in the upside-down kingdom? How does this connect to the upside-down kingdom we discussed in Matthew 19? What statement does this make? (*Pause for responses.*)

"Did the 'sheep' earn their place in the kingdom of God through their works? Do we? Read James 2:14-26 and Ephesians 2:1-9. Explore the tension. How do faith and works fit together? The connector, the mediator, is Christ."

Invite the students to gather pictures of people, places, and things that they feel compassion for, create a prayer collage, and spend time praying about each.

MEDIA MISSION (after you meet!)

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

After the text in this section of the student book is read, ask the students to describe which of their emotions are evoked as they watch and listen to the video. Encourage them to share something they learned with the class.