

Welcome to
YEAR 1
CIA

2024-2025

CIA Year 1 Curriculum Scope & Sequence

| | <i>Lesson</i> | <i>Takeaway</i> | <i>Memory Verse</i> |
|----------------|--|---|---------------------|
| Explore | What is the Beginning of Our Story? | God is the creator of everything and everyone we see. | Psalms 19:1 |
| | What is the Plot Twist in Our Story? | We need to be rescued from the consequences of our choice to sin. | Romans 6:23 |
| | What is the Hope in Our Story? | God promised that He would send Jesus to rescue us from our sins and God always keeps His promises. | Isaiah 53:6 |
| | Unit 1 Review | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| | What are the Names of God? (Jehovah Shalom) | God is our peace when life is chaotic and scary. | John 14:27 |
| | What are the Names of God? (Jehovah Jireh) | Everything we need is found in God. | Philippians 4:19 |
| | Why Does God Allow Bad Things to Happen? | God is always good and always in control, even when we don't understand. | John 16:33 |
| | Unit 2 Review | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| Connect | How Do I Know the Bible is True? | The Bible is all true, all the time. | 2 Timothy 3:16 |
| | Why is There a Baby in a Manger? (Christmas) | Jesus came to earth as the fulfillment of the promise God made to send a Rescuer for sin. | Luke 2:11 |
| | What Does the Baby in a Manger Have to Do with Me? (Christmas) | Jesus came as light into our darkness, so that we could have relationship with God again. | John 1:14 |
| | Unit 3 Review | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| | What Are the Miracles of Jesus? (Lazarus from the Dead) | Even when we don't understand, we can trust God. | Isaiah 55:8 |
| | What Are the Miracles of Jesus? (Storm on the Sea) | Even when we are afraid, we can trust God. | Psalms 56:3 |
| | What Are the Parables of Jesus? (Parable of the Lost Sheep) | While we are still running from God, He is calling for us. | Romans 5:8 |
| | Unit 4 Review | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |

CIA Year 1 Curriculum Scope & Sequence

| | <i>Lesson</i> | <i>Takeaway</i> | <i>Memory Verse</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|
| Connect | What Are the Parables of Jesus? (Parable of the Persistent Widow) | Always pray and never give up. | Ephesians 6:18 |
| | What Did Jesus Teach? (The Beatitudes) | Jesus calls us to live a life opposite of the world. | Romans 12:2 |
| | What Did Jesus Teach? (Do Not Worry) | We can give our worries to God because He loves us. | Matthew 6:34 |
| | <i>Unit 5 Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| Grow | How Do I Grow in My Relationship with God? (Spiritual Disciplines—Prayer) | Prayer is the connection we have to talk with God all the time, any time. | Jeremiah 29:12 |
| | How Do I Grow in My Relationship with God? (Spiritual Disciplines—Bible Reading) | The Bible teaches us more about who God is and how to live as His follower. | Hebrews 4:12 |
| | How Do I Put My Faith into Action? | We must back up our faith in God by the way we live. | James 1:22 |
| | <i>Unit 6 Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| | Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross? (Easter) | Jesus died on the cross to pay the price of our sin. | 2 Corinthians 5:21 |
| | Why Does Jesus' Resurrection Matter to Me? (Easter) | Jesus rose from the dead to bring us eternal life through Him. | John 11:25 |
| | Who is the Holy Spirit? | God's Holy Spirit is with us and teaches us how to live for Him. | John 14:26 |
| <i>Unit 7 Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | |
| Multiply | Why Should I Tell Others About Jesus? | Jesus calls me to go and make disciples of all people. | Mark 16:15 |
| | How Do I Share My Story with Others? | I can share Jesus with others by the way I live and words I say. | Romans 1:16 |
| | <i>Unit 8 Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> |
| | What Are the Parables of Jesus? (Parable of the Talents) | God has given each of us a gift we can use to serve others. | 1 Peter 4:10 |
| | Do I Really Have to Love Everybody? | God calls us to share His love with everyone. | 1 John 4:7 |
| | Why Should I Serve Others? | Jesus gave us an example of serving others. | Mark 10:45 |
| <i>Bonus Unit Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | <i>Review</i> | |

Teacher Introduction

Welcome to Christians In Action (CIA)!

We are so thankful for your commitment, dedication, and decision to serve middle school students in this program. Did you know around 60% of students in our programs have never been to church and don't know Jesus? You might be the only glimpse of Jesus these students get to see and that is so exciting.

Whether this is your first time teaching in CIA or you've been with us for 20 years, we're thankful you're here. You aren't alone in this journey; we will train you and provide resources the whole way through.

This teacher curriculum is laid out in 8 units. Please, don't feel the need to rush through lessons just for the sake of getting the entire curriculum completed by the end of the school year. It's my recommendation that you have invite-a-friend days or celebration days (if you choose to have them for Christmas, Easter, birthdays, etc.) on review weeks so that you don't have to compromise new teaching content or rush through because of a busier schedule on that week.

The Scope and Sequence of this curriculum follows a pathway of becoming disciples of Jesus who then go out and make more disciples. The first 3 units are centered around **EXPLORING** faith. These units lay a foundation and understanding of Scripture and who God is by answering questions students ask such as, "Where did everything come from?" "Who is God?" and "Why would God allow bad things to happen?"

Units 4 and 5 are centered around **CONNECTING** our faith. These units look at the life and teachings of Jesus and how all of this connects to our own lives. Students will receive opportunity to begin a relationship with Jesus at Christmas, during this unit of study, and again at Easter.

Units 6 and part of 7 focus around **GROWING** in our faith. We look at questions students ask about, "How do I put my faith into action?" or "How do I grow in my faith?" and we teach important daily Spiritual disciplines for growth. Through unit 7 we will also be celebrating Easter and Jesus' death and resurrection for us.

Unit 8 is about **MULTIPLYING** our faith. We will look at answers to questions such as, "Who is the Holy Spirit and His role in my life?" and "How do I share Jesus with my friends?" Students will be equipped to go out and make other disciples of Jesus throughout the summer.

I'm so thankful and excited that you are on this disciple making journey with us. May God bless you, guide you, and anoint you with His Spirit as you teach His Word this school year.

Bella Kauffman
CIA Training and Development Coordinator
Joy El Ministries

What is the Beginning of Our Story?

Lesson 1
Unit 1

Takeaway: God is the Creator of everything and everyone we see.

Memory Verse

Psalm 19:1 – “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students can identify who created all things.
- Students can explain how God created the world.
- Students understand why it is important to know that God created all things.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a story from your life of a time when you created something that you loved. Maybe you painted an art piece, crocheted a baby blanket, wrote a book, or built the greatest Lego set ever. Share your story and how you felt when you created this thing you loved and enjoyed.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

➤ Open your Bibles to **Genesis chapter 1**.

To start our year with CIA, we are going to start at the beginning of the story of the Bible. The Bible is the greatest and truest story we will ever hear and to understand any story, you must start at the beginning.

➤ Have students take turns reading through the entirety of **Genesis chapter 1**.

➤ After reading, recap with these questions:

1. *Who created the world and everything in it?*
2. *How did God create everything we see? (He simply spoke.)*
3. *This chapter is the beginning of our story. Why do you think it's important to know how everything began?*

Throughout your life, you may hear different theories about how our world came into existence. It's important to remember that it is God who created everything and everyone for a purpose. God created us in His image and He loves us. We are not mistakes and we are not accidents.

Understanding the beginning of our story teaches us of the power and greatness of God.

When you've created something before, were you able to just speak it into existence? Of course not!

God is so powerful that even just His words can create life and bring things into existence.

➤ Read **Psalm 19:1**, our memory verse for today.

This verse reminds us that everything God created back in **Genesis 1:1**, the heavens and the earth and everything in them, all point back to Him. Everything reflects Him and declares how great & good He is.

This is why it's important to remember how the story started. Nature around us is not just a thing, but it's a creation that shows us more about God. How awesome is that?

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So what does this mean for you? How will you live differently now? When you observe God's creation, does it remind you of God's authority and power?

Challenge your students this week to consider how they can honor God by caring for His creation around them. If they built a Lego set, they would be sad if someone destroyed it.

How can we show respect towards people and the rest of God's creation?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 1

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: Packs of play doh, enough for each student to have one or two.

Give students five minutes to create something unique from their play doh. Give them a prompt: Maybe you want them to create a new animal species and give it a name, maybe you want them to build a house, or maybe you want them to shape the play doh into a person.

Once the timer is up, have students take turns quickly sharing what they created and why.

Ask them this question:

Could you have made this same object if we had not given you any play doh at all?

Connection: *God created everything and everyone we see from nothing.*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *How Genesis 1 Communicates What the Whole Bible is About*

Video time: 7 minutes and 42 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=afVN-7vY0KA>

Purpose of video: *To go into further detail regarding how and why God created the whole world.*

Note: This video does get a little wordy and lengthy so if you decide to show it, you may consider using only clips from the beginning of the video.

Skit

Split students into 6 groups. Nominate 1 student per group to be the "reader."

As you read through Genesis 1, number each group and allow their reader to read the verses explaining what God created on that specific day of creation. As the student is reading, their group must act out the descriptions.

What is the Plot Twist in Our Story?

Lesson 2
Unit 1

Takeaway: We need to be rescued from the consequences of our choice to sin.

Memory Verse

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students recognize what sin is.
- Students discuss the cost of sin and the negative consequences of sin.
- Students learn that God has given us hope for forgiveness through Jesus.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider your favorite movie or book. What is the attention-grabbing plot twist that occurs in the story? Share with students about the movie or book and how the plot twist changes the whole story.

In a story, a plot twist is the unexpected thing that happens that changes how everything was supposed to be.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Open your Bibles to **Genesis chapter 3** where our story is taking place today.

➤ Recap the beginning of our story and how God created a beautiful, perfect world. The place He created and the people He created were very good and He created it perfectly.

➤ Read aloud **Genesis 3:1**.

Give the context of this verse: God created the first woman and first man, Adam & Eve. He created a beautiful, perfect garden for them to live in. Everything was good. And God gave them a choice. He told them they could eat anything they wanted, except from one tree.

➤ Read **Genesis 3:1-7**.

Here is the plot twist of our true story.

The choice that Adam & Eve made caused sin to enter the perfect and good world God had created.

What is sin? Sin is missing the mark, not hitting the target right. It's the wrong choices we say, think, or do that go against the commands of God. It is disobedience to God and His instructions.

This is where the story gets sad.

Because Adam & Eve made the choice to sin, the world was no longer completely good and perfect. Sin made a mess of things.

Let's have some volunteers read through these verses about sin:

➤ Who sins? **Romans 3:10-12 & Romans 3:23**

What is the cost of our sin? **Romans 6:23**

The cost of Adam & Eve's choice to sin was death. We face the same penalty. The plot twist is the same in our life. We all sin, we all make choices that go against God every day. And the consequence of those sin choices we make is death and eternal separation from God.

However, what good story ends on a plot twist? Bring back up your favorite movie/book. How did the plot twist get resolved?

We have hope, even in the middle of our sin. And that hope is through Jesus. Because God had a plan, way back at the beginning, of how He would set everything right again.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Next week we're going to talk more about the promise and coming of Jesus.

As you go home this week, consider what sin do you commonly fall into? What could be a consequence of that sin? What can you do this week when you are tempted to sin?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 1

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: Paper plates, paper towels, multiple packs of chocolate pudding.

Before asking for volunteers, warn your students that this is a messy game.

Today we are playing Pudding Pictionary! Divide students into two equal teams. Each team will have a volunteer who will be given an object to draw out in the pudding, with only their hands. Whichever team guesses the object that is being drawn first wins a point. Go to 5 points.

Tie in with the lesson that sin is messy and gets on everything and everyone. Today we're talking about the mess of sin.

Connection: *Sin is messy.*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *Sin Involves More Than You Might Think (We'll Explain)*

Video time: 5 minutes and 42 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNOZ7ocLD74>

Purpose of video: *To explain what the Biblical definition of the word "sin" is and it's cost to humanity. The video ends with the Hope of Jesus.*

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: Piece of paper with a target drawn in the middle, nerf guns or finger slingshots, or plastic balls.

Tape the paper target to a wall. Have students line up at a distance and take turns trying to hit the target (whether you are using nerf guns, finger slingshots, or plastic balls). Have candy as an optional prize for students who actually hit the bullseye on the target.

Tie in with the lesson by explaining that today you're talking about sin. Sin is the things we do that miss the mark of God's goodness.

Connection: Sin is missing the mark of God's righteousness.

What is the Hope in Our Story?

Lesson 3
Unit 1

Takeaway: God promised that He would send Jesus to rescue us from our sins. God always keeps His promises.

Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:6 – “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students recall that God promises to provide a Savior who will rescue us from sin.
- Students learn that God always keeps His promises.
- Students are able to compare the sinful actions of Adam & Eve with the actions they do when they sin.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when someone made you a promise. Maybe they kept that promise or maybe they didn't. Share the story with your students and describe how it made you feel when they either kept their promise or broke it.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today, we are going back to **Genesis chapter 3** and we are recapping last week's lesson about our need for rescue from the penalty of our sin. Humans got themselves into a mess with sin and there seemed to be no way out. There is nothing we could do to fix this problem on our own.

We need a Rescuer. We need a Savior.

➤ Do a little bit of recap from **Genesis chapter 3**.

After the plot twist of our story when Adam & Eve sinned, God came looking for them. Even though He knows everything, He asked them what they had done.

Adam & Eve take turns trying to shift the blame of their sin onto each other, and even onto God! How many times have we played the "blame game" rather than admitting we messed up?

Finally, God explains to them what the cost of their choice to sin would be. They would be removed from the beautiful garden He had made for them. Life would no longer be perfect and completely good. Because of sin, they would now experience pain and suffering.

➤ However, tucked inside this scary and sad piece of Scripture, God makes a promise. Read **Genesis 3:15** out loud.

This might sound a little confusing. Let's understand it together.

God was explaining in this passage that Satan is our enemy. And that Satan would do anything he could to get God's people to sin and make wrong choices that pull us away from God.

However, even in the middle of this mess, God had a plan. He was foreshadowing the fact that He would send His Son, Jesus to earth, to die for our sins, and be raised back to life. This would be a deadly blow to Satan's evil plan.

In fact, this was not the only time that God promised to make right the mess we found ourselves in.

Over 300 prophecies in Scripture talk about Jesus and Jesus fulfilled every single one of them! How cool is that?

➤ Our memory verse today is another promise of Jesus coming to make things right between us and God. Read your memory verse, **Isaiah 53:6**, aloud as a group.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So what do we do with this?

This week I challenge you to think of a promise God has made to you and kept. God always keeps His promises. How can you remember that this week? How can knowing God's Word help you when faced with temptation?

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 1

Object Lesson/Activity

Bring in a string of rope (a jump rope also works great for this).

Call up a volunteer. Ask them to hold onto one end of the rope while you hold onto the other. Tell them to lean backwards, balancing with the rope.

Be sure to have a firm grip on your end of the rope!

Tell them you are not going to let go and drop them. But how would they feel if you broke your word? Is it hard to trust you? Is it scary?

It's a big deal to believe someone at their word and it builds trust when they keep their word or promise.

Connection: God has kept all His promises in the past, including sending Jesus to rescue us from sin!

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *This is the Hope for Ending the Evil That Affects Your Life*

Video time: 5 minutes and 47 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dEh25pduQ8>

Purpose of video: *To go into further detail about the promise of a coming Rescuer who would restore the mess we find ourselves in.*

Note: This video does end around 5 minutes and 12 seconds and then there is just advertising at the end.

UNIT 1 REVIEW

Lesson 4
Unit 1

Takeaway for the Unit: God created everything perfectly, sin created a plot twist in our story, but God promised a Rescuer to make everything right.

Memory Verses

Review *Psalm 19:1*
Romans 6:23
Isaiah 53:6

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students can recall the creation events in the Bible.
- Students can explain how sin separates us from God.
- Students can explain how Jesus rescues us from sin.
- God always keeps His promises!

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

➤ A: *Jeopardy style*. Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

➤ B: *Quiz style*. Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *How did God create the world and everything we see?* (He simply spoke!)
2. *Psalm 19:1 says "The heavens declare" what?* (The glory of God)
3. *What did God call everything He had made?* (Good and very good)
4. *How many days did it take God to create everything?* (6)
5. *What is sin?* (Failure to hit the mark, missing God's mark, the wrong things we think, say, or do, that go against God)
6. *What is the penalty of our sin according to Romans 6:23?* (Death)
7. *According to Romans 6:23, what is God's gift to us?* (Eternal life in Jesus)
8. *What two people first made the choice to sin?* (Adam & Eve)
9. *How did Adam & Eve sin?* (Ate from a tree God told them not to)
10. *When did God first promise to send a Rescuer for us?* (Genesis 3:15)
11. *How many prophecies in Scripture talk about Jesus?* (Over 300!)
12. *How did Jesus rescue us from sin?* (Died on the cross and rose again 3 days later)
13. *How many promises does God keep?* (All of them)

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information. Do you have a relationship with Jesus? Have you asked Him to forgive the mess of your sin? If you haven't, please talk to one of your Listener's about what it means to believe in Him and ask Him into your life. If you've already begun a relationship with Jesus, who can you share His story with this week?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

What Are the Names of God?

Jehovah Shalom (The Lord our Peace)

Lesson 1
Unit 2

Takeaway: God is our peace when life is chaotic and scary.

Memory Verse

John 14:27 – “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn a new name of God, Jehovah Shalom.
- Students learn about how Gideon trusted God in his own chaotic and scary situation.
- Students learn how to trust God with their own scary or chaotic life situations.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Can you remember a time in your life when you were in the middle of something chaotic or scary? Remember how that experience or moment made you feel. Share the story with your students and how you handled it. Maybe you trusted God and let Him help you through or maybe you tried to figure it all out on your own.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are going to start by learning about one of the Names of God.

☞ In the Old Testament, God was called several different names that described pieces of His character. For example, you might be called “Sister” or “Brother” or “Cousin” or you may be identified with a hobby like, “Writer” or “Painter.” You may have friends that call you different nicknames that mean something important to each of you.

God has many different names that explain different parts of who He is and today we’re learning about this one:

☞ **Jehovah Shalom.**

Jehovah means “The Lord” and was used when talking about God. Shalom means “peace.”

Have you ever had a time in your life when things felt chaotic and scary? Today we are going to look at the story of a guy named Gideon, in the Old Testament. Open your Bibles to **Judges 6**.

☞ Gideon was living at a time when things were really scary, chaotic, and uncertain. These bad guys called the Midianites attacked and controlled God’s people, the Israelites, for 7 years. During that time God’s people feared for their lives and would often hide in caves.

In fact, when we first meet Gideon, he is hiding and he is scared.

☞ God meets Gideon in that place. Read **Judges 6:12-24**.

God told Gideon that He was sending him out to bring peace to Israel. God wanted Gideon to trust Him and know that He would be with him in the middle of the fear and chaos. God tells Gideon not to be afraid, but to trust Him.

Gideon builds an altar to God and names it “*Jehovah Shalom*,” the Lord is Peace.

That altar was to be a reminder that in the middle of the fear and unknown and chaos, God was there and He was going to bring peace if His people trusted Him.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So what about you?

What situations in your life feel chaotic and scary and out of control? What areas of your life do you need to trust God in? Just like our memory verse reminds us, God gives us peace that allows us to be calm, even when scary things are still happening. We can trust Him no matter what is going on.

How will you trust God this week? What will that look like for you?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 2

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: Chairs or other objects to create an obstacle course, blindfolds.

Set up a small obstacle course with a start and finish. Have two students volunteer to get blindfolded and their objective is to make it through the course to the end without stumbling and falling.

Pick two volunteers to stand near them and call out the directions on where to go. All the other students are to create chaos and distraction. If you want to make it more difficult, give them plastic ping pong balls to toss at the blindfolded students. Those who are blindfolded will need to remain calm and trust the person telling them where to go, even in the chaos.

Ask: How similar is this to life? How often do we feel overwhelmed by the chaos and scary things happening around us, that we don't know who to trust? We can always trust God's voice and we know He will give us peace in the chaos.

Connection: *When life is chaotic and uncertain, God gives us His peace and we can trust Him.*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: "Shalom—Peace"

Video time: 3 minutes and 48 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLYORLZOaZE>

Purpose of video: *To explain the biblical definition of the word, "peace" or shalom.*

Note: This video approaches the word "peace" from the Biblical definition. It is not looking at it from God's character and name exactly. It's still very useful in helping students understand God's peace and their verse in John 14:27.

What Are the Names of God?

Jehovah Jireh (The Lord our Provider)

Lesson 2
Unit 2

Takeaway: Everything we need is found in God.

Memory Verse

Philippians 4:19 – “And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn that God provides for our needs.
- Students understand that God has provided the sacrifice for our greatest need—rescue from sin!
- Students realize that God provided Jesus as our Rescuer.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Share with the students about a time in your life when God provided for you in a miraculous way, whether it was a big thing or small.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are looking at another name for God—a name that describes His character and what He does. He provides for our needs.

➤ That's why He has this name, **Jehovah Jireh**. *The Lord our Provider.*

We're going to look at a story in the Old Testament when this name for God was first used.

➤ This story is found in **Genesis chapter 22**. (Turn to the Scripture, but consider summarizing the story to explain it better.)

God had promised Abraham a long time ago that he would have a son. Abraham waited, and waited, and he finally did have his son. Imagine how much he loved this son, Isaac!

One day, God comes to Abraham with a strange request. He asks Abraham to trust Him and take Isaac to the top of a mountain and sacrifice him to God. Wait, what?! Did Abraham hear God right?

Yet Abraham set out to do exactly what God had asked. Abraham trusted in who God was and in the promise that God had made to him.

➤ As Abraham and Isaac are hiking to the top of the mountain, they have this conversation. Read **Genesis 22:7-8**.

Abraham had confidence and trust that God would provide for what they needed.

Just before Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac, God stops him and tells him not to hurt Isaac. He had passed the test. Abraham looks up and caught in the brush is a ram. God had provided what they needed to sacrifice!

➤ Read **Genesis 22:14**.

Here's the really cool part though, guys. This story holds bigger meaning. It is parallel to the story of Jesus, God's only Son, being provided for our need to be rescued from sin!

Remember a few weeks back we talked about sin and our need for rescue from that sin? Way back at the beginning, God already had a plan to rescue us from that sin. God had already provided.

Thousands of years later, God's only son Jesus would also walk up a mountainside and be sacrificed for our sins. He would fill the need we had for rescue.

➤ Read **John 3:16**. (Or allow students to recite if memorized)

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So what are you going to do with this? Think of a situation in your life today where you need to trust God. We know that He provides for our needs, like our memory verse says. And He has already provided for our greatest need—rescue from sin.

Finally, what need can you help meet in someone else's life this week? How can you be the hands and feet of Jesus to someone?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 2

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies:

Split the students into two or three groups, depending on your size. Give each group a small Lego set, however don't let them see the box or instructions.

Tell them that their objective is to build the set exactly how it's supposed to look on the box, but they cannot see the box, only you can have the boxes.

Give them a time limit. As they work they most likely will get frustrated trying to figure out what they're even trying to build.

When they give up, or at the end of their time, ask: How come no one thought to ask me for help? I had the boxes. I could've given you direction on what to build and create.

Explain that in life, we often get frustrated trying to fix it and control it all on our own. And if would just go to God and ask Him, He would provide for us and care for us.

Connection: *God provides when we ask Him.*

Videos/Websites

Pastor Landon: *"Names of God in the Bible: Jehovah Jireh"*

Video time: 2 minutes and 20 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DbmzmloaRlc>

Purpose of video: *To explain the story of God providing for Abraham and Isaac, but how that actually ties into God providing His Son, Jesus as the sacrifice for our sins.*

Note about this lesson:

The Bible story used in this lesson can be hard for students to understand, especially if they don't have a church background. Take special care in approaching this lesson and if any of your students are struggling or you know they come from abusive backgrounds, please emphasize God's character. While we don't understand why God asked this test of Abraham, we do know that God loves His people. And we know God would not tell parents to abuse their children. Middle schooler's should have an easier time differentiating this difference.

If you really think your group will struggle with this particular Bible story/passage, consider using this alternate story with the same themes/verses/character of God:

The Widow of Zarephath.
1 Kings 17:7-16.

Why Does God Allow Bad Things to Happen?

Lesson 3
Unit 2

Takeaway: God is always good and always in control, even when we don't understand.

Memory Verse

John 16:33 – “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students understand that God is sovereign—in control of everything—even when it's hard for us to understand.
- Students recognize that sin entering the world caused brokenness and suffering.
- Students understand that God loves us and *is* good, even when things don't *feel* good.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider sharing a time in your life when something difficult happened. Maybe you lost a loved one or were physically sick for awhile. Share with them how you felt during that time of your life.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

At some point in our lives, we all ask this question. “*If God is good, why does He allow bad things to happen?*” It's a question we wrestle with because at some point in time, we all have suffered from something bad in this world.

So today, we're going to answer this question by looking at the story of a guy named Job.

➤ Open your Bibles and read **Job 1:1-3**. Job had a pretty great life.

Skip ahead, summarizing the next few verses. Explain that Satan came to God to accuse Job of just following God because he was blessed. So God gave Satan permission to test Job and then this is what happens: Read **Job 1:13-22**.

➤ Job had just had the worst day of his life. And I know you know exactly how he felt. Because at some point in time, we've all experienced the worst day of our lives.

Job's reaction is surprising. *He gets on his knees in the middle of the worst day of his life and he worships God.* Now this doesn't mean that he isn't hurting and he isn't questioning God's goodness at times.

In fact, the book of Job is **42** chapters long. Throughout the next several chapters we see this dialogue between Job, his friends and then ultimately between God and Job. Job is angry, he is sad, and he is hurting. And he knows that God is good, but he wants God to explain Himself. He basically wants the answer to this question: **How can You be good, God, and still let such bad things happen?**

➤ God answers Job, but not in the way we would think. God takes Job on this tour of the world. And He shows Job all the things He has made—creatures and animals and the ocean and the skies and the sunsets. He explains to Job that He is in control of everything, even when none of it makes sense to us.

➤ So when wrestling with this question, here are 2 important things to remember:

1. When Adam & Eve sinned, sin caused brokenness to enter the world. Because of that we have suffering. **This was not God's original plan or design.**

2. Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**. We may not understand why God allows certain things to happen, but we can trust that He is good and He loves us and He is in control. His plans are so much bigger than what we understand.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

What is the bad thing happening in your life today? How can you trust God in it and remember that He is good, no matter if you understand or not? How can you worship God today, like Job did?

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 2

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: *Baked sugar cookies, ingredients to make sugar cookies (flour, sugar, butter, baking powder, and eggs)*

Ask students who loves sugar cookies. Show them the mixed ingredients, but leaving out the sugar. Allow a volunteer to taste a small bite of the batter and let everyone know what they think. Of course it will taste awful because there's no sugar in it yet! Give them a baked sugar cookie and ask them if that's better. Of course it is!

Because of sin, in this world there is hardship and sadness. But there's still also good things. When we give God all of that stuff—the bad and ugly and good, He can make something beautiful. He can make something good from it, even when we don't understand or see how.

Enjoy the baked sugar cookies together for snack.

Connection: God can make something beautiful from the ugly and hard parts of our lives.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *The Book of Job's Wisdom on How God Runs the World.*

Video time: 7 minutes and 14 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GswSg2ohqmA>

Purpose of video: *To help students understand the full picture of the story of Job and how it helps us answer the question of "How is God good when life is hard?"*

UNIT 2 REVIEW

Lesson 4
Unit 2

Takeaway for the Unit: God is our peace and our provider and He is always in control, even when we don't understand.

Memory Verses

Review *John 14:27*
Philippians 4:19
John 16:33

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students recall from the unit how God gives peace in chaos and provides for our needs.
- Students compare how Gideon, Abraham, and Job trusted God when they faced challenges.
- Students have confidence to trust God, no matter what life throws at them.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

➤ **A: Jeopardy style.** Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

➤ **B. Quiz style.** Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *What does Shalom mean? (Peace)*
2. *What Bible character helped us to learn that the Lord is our Peace? (Gideon)*
3. *What does Jesus leave with us according to John 14:27? (Peace)*
4. *What does Jehovah Jireh mean? (The Lord our Provider)*
5. *What did God ask Abraham to do? (Sacrifice his son Isaac)*
6. *What did God provide for Abraham? (A ram to sacrifice)*
7. *What does God provide for each of us? (a Rescuer from the penalty of sin)*
8. *What does God tell us He will do in Philippians 4:19? (Meet all our needs)*
9. *What did Job do after the worst day of his life? (Worshipped God)*
10. *Why is there brokenness and suffering in the world? (Because of humanity's choice to sin)*
11. *According to memory verse, John 16:33, what does Jesus tell us we will have in this world? (Trouble)*
12. *How does God answer Job when he asks about why God allows suffering? (He shows Job all of creation and all that He has made and is in control over.)*
13. *What word to describe God reminds us that He is always in control and over everything? (Sovereign)*

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information. When life is hard or chaotic or you encounter your worst days, will you trust God? How will you work on building your relationship with God this week so it is easier to trust Him in the hard times?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

How Do I Know the Bible is True?

Lesson 1
Unit 3

Takeaway: The Bible is all true, all the time.

Memory Verse

2 Timothy 3:16 – “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students discuss the benefits of knowing God’s Word.
- Students will use Scripture to defend their belief that the Bible is all true.
- Students explore the Bible for historical events and people that show God’s Word is true.
- Students are challenged to determine what they believe about the Bible.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider the craziest and most unbelievable situation you have found yourself in. Maybe it’s funny like “I got my car stuck in a snow filled ditch” or it’s outrageous like, “That time I went sky diving in Italy.” Share the story and bring with you some kind of evidence to back it up (picture, souvenir from a trip, etc.)

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

➤ Today we are going to discuss the question, “How do I know the Bible is true?”

This is an important question to wrestle with, especially in a world that debates what is true and what isn’t. In this world, you will hear that there is no relative truth. However, we know that what is real is true and what is unreal is false. Someone can try to say that birds can’t fly, but no matter how many times they say they’re telling the truth, they’ll still be wrong.

To start off today, let’s look at some things the Bible tells us about itself when it comes to the truth.

➤ Read and discuss these verses: **2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17; Psalm 119:160; and Psalm 19:7.**

In Scripture itself we find the benefits of God’s Word and the defense that it is true. However, critics might argue that using the Bible to defend the Bible is illogical. So let’s look at some facts outside of Scripture itself that still defends the truth of the Bible:

➤ First, let’s consider the four Gospel accounts in the New Testament. These 4 books were written by 4 different men about the life of Jesus and their experience with Him. You may notice in these 4 books, different variants of the same story or facts that seem to be different. One may use this to say that the Bible is lying, but in fact, *this actually proves the validity of these stories.* If you and your best friend went through the same experience, your stories after the experience are going to be entirely different because your perspectives are different. Same is true for the 4 Gospel accounts.

➤ Second, many archeological finds throughout history have proved the stories in the Bible by finding evidence outside of the Bible of the same stories. Many early manuscripts or documents that have been found apart from Scripture have also given evidence for God’s Word.

➤ Third, even many atheists, people who don’t believe in God still believe in the history of the Bible. After all, it was written over a span of over 2,000 years by 40 men, yet it tells one cohesive story.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So then, the question we must ask ourselves is this: Do you have the faith to believe that God is who He says He is? Do you believe that God is telling the truth about who He is in the Bible? There’s evidence all around us of the history and truth of Scripture. But in the end, we must still have the faith to take the Word of God and believe what it says. We must have faith that Scripture is all true, all the time.

Do you believe that today?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 3

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: a list of true or false statements.

Create or google a list of true or false facts. It could be something silly like "Gorillas have purple skin (false)" or something more serious. You could have a theme like baseball facts or song lyrics.

Divide into boys vs. girls and as you say the statement, whoever gets it correct (true or false) wins.

Connection: *Truth matters!*

Videos

Bible Project: *What is the Bible? Where it Came From & What's in it*

Video time: 5 minutes and 47 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ak06MSETeo4>

Purpose of video: *Explaining what the Bible is and how we got it.*

Note: This video can get a little wordy and if you think it'll be over your student's heads, just consider using it as personal preparation for you and your team as you prepare to lead this lesson.

Videos

Bible Project: *The Story of the Bible. What it's About from Beginning to End*

Video time: 5 minutes and 37 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0

Purpose of video: *Explaining what the story and message of the Bible is.*

Note: This video is part 2 to the above video. It might not fit with the lesson for today, but it might still be good preparation or devotion time for your team.

Website

Teen Sunday School: *How Can We Know the Bible is True?*

Link: <https://www.teensundayschool.com/lessons/special-interest/bible-basics/how-we-can-know-the-bible-is-true>

Note: This website link provides you with optional activities and discussion related to this lesson. It also provides a more in depth look at the historical evidence for the Bible that could be very helpful in preparing to teach this lesson.

Why is There a Baby in a Manger?

Christmas

Takeaway: Jesus came to earth as the fulfillment of the promise God made to send a Rescuer from sin.

Lesson 2
Unit 3

Memory Verse

Luke 2:11 – “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students read about the birth of Jesus.
- Students can recall from prior lessons that Jesus was born for a purpose—to be our Savior.
- Students understand that Jesus was a real person who identifies with our needs in life.

Capture: Share an engaging story to capture their attention.

It's Christmas time! Share your favorite Christmas tradition with your students, whether it's something you do as an individual or as a family.

Connect: Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.

Often at Christmas, we can get so wrapped up in the shopping and the festivities and the gifts and the cookies and the traditions that we can forget to stop and ask ourselves, “Why was there a baby in a manger?”

You've probably seen pictures of the nativity or blow up mangers in people's front lawns. But maybe you've never stopped to ask yourself why we remember this manger and why it even matters.

That's the question we are going to focus on today in our lesson. Why was there a baby in a manger? Why did Jesus come?

▮ Let's open our Bibles to **Luke chapter 2**. Before beginning, let's take a quick detour to recap the history going on in this moment.

Who remembers our lesson from unit 1 about the plot twist in our story? What was it? *Sin*. Sin was the plot twist in the beautiful creation God had made. When humanity made the choice to sin, they were separated from God and would now experience a world filled with brokenness and suffering. However, even at the very beginning, when sin first entered the world, God had a plan. He promised that He would send a Rescuer to fill the need His people had for salvation. He would rescue them from their sin and be their Savior.

▮ Over the centuries of the Old Testament, God spoke to His people through prophets (they spoke the words of God about the future). Those prophets kept hope alive that God would still send a Rescuer and that He would save them. But then for **400 years** God's prophets were silent. It was a dark and quiet time for God's people. I'm sure they wondered if they had heard God correctly and maybe many of them lost hope. Then, in the middle of that darkness and that silence, a Baby was born in a stable and placed in a manger.

▮ Let's read the story in **Luke 2:1-14**.

Jesus was supernaturally born into this world through the power of the Holy Spirit. His birth broke the silence and filled God's people with new hope. Angels began to declare His birth and they declared that the promised Savior was born today in Bethlehem! God had kept His promise! He had sent Jesus, His Son, into the world.

Jesus didn't stay a baby though. He grew up and He lived a miraculous life, experiencing life and being human, just like we do (**Hebrews 4:15**). He was obedient to God, His Father, in every way during His life on earth. And He did all that so that one day, He would die on the cross for our sins. This was the path of rescue for us.

Call: How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?

So why is this important to us today? Jesus wasn't just any ordinary baby. How can you focus on the message of hope this Christmas season? How can you keep Christ at the center?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 3

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: None

Today, consider playing an old youth group favorite game called "Signs."

How this game works is that all your students & volunteers will sit in a circle and everyone picks their own unique sign. For example, the peace sign, a heart, or touching your left eye, etc.

One person will get selected privately to start the game and one other person will be sent into the middle. The first person will start the game by doing their sign and signaling someone else's sign to pass an "invisible ball." The person in the middle's goal is to guess who has the ball at any moment. So everyone must be sneaky in doing signs and passing "the ball."

Only rule: NO TALKING! This is a silent game.

Discuss after: How hard is it to not talk? Is silence difficult? Silence can be hard. Imagine if you couldn't talk for years! Or imagine if you didn't hear someone talk to you for years. This ties in with our lesson today about the birth of Jesus after 400 years of God's silence.

Connection: *After 400 years of silence, Jesus came as the fulfillment of God's holy promise!*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *The Birth of Jesus: Luke 1-2*

Video time: 5 minutes and 5 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OLezoUvOEQ

Purpose of video: *To help students understand the events surrounding the miraculous birth of Jesus, our Savior.*

Skit

Split students up with different character roles and invite them to act out the story of Luke 2:1-14 as you are reading through it for the lesson!

If you have time to prepare in advance, perhaps bring some fun props to go with it!

Christmas Note

If you are planning a Christmas party with your students or wanting to have a special time of snacks, etc. this would probably be a good week to do so. Next week is a more serious lesson with a Gospel invitation. It might work better for your schedule to work out your Christmas party this week if you plan on having one.

What Does the Baby in a Manger Have to Do With Me?

Christmas

Lesson 3
Unit 3

Takeaway: Jesus came as light into our darkness, so that we could have relationship with God again.

Memory Verse

John 1:14 – “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students will be able to explain the purpose of Jesus’ birth.
- Students look to Scripture to discuss how Jesus can restore our relationship with God again.
- Students will be given the opportunity to choose Jesus as their personal Savior.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Share about a time when you were in the dark and felt scared. Maybe as a kid you were scared to go to bed when the lights went off, or maybe it was a recent time when you had to walk alone in the dark outside and you felt scared.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Last week we learned about how Jesus came as a baby after years of God’s people waiting for a Rescuer. For so many years God had promised that He would send Someone to rescue them from the darkness and sin and brokenness of this world. That promise was fulfilled in the Baby Jesus being born into a manger.

Today, we’re going to talk about what Jesus in the manger has to do with us today.

➤ To do so, we are going to open our Bibles to **John chapter 1**.

Read **John 1:1-14**. Explain that “The Word” is another name used to describe Jesus.

When Jesus was born in that manger, he stepped into the darkness of this world—the sin, the brokenness, and the suffering. His life brought light into that darkness. That’s why Jesus came to this earth. His birth in that stable was eventually going to lead Him to the cross as an adult, where He would sacrifice His life for ours. On the cross He would take on our sins—even though He had never sinned—so that we could be restored to a relationship with God again.

That’s where this story becomes personal and that’s where the Baby in a manger becomes part of *your* story.

➤ Reread **John 1:10-13**.

Many people, even Jesus’ own people that He came to, rejected Him. They didn’t believe in who He was. But there’s this promise that He gives us: “To all who believe and accept Him, He gave the right to become children of God.” He gave them the best Christmas present of all time—the opportunity to have relationship with God again. How amazing is that!

➤ The most well known Scripture of all time, reads this way in **John 3:16**: “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

So that’s what this Baby in a manger has to do with you. He came to bring light to YOUR darkness. He came to bring healing to YOUR brokenness. He came to restore YOUR relationship with God.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So what will you do with this?

This Christmas, you have the most important decision of your life in front of you. If you’ve never believed and accepted Jesus and asked Him to be a part of your life, this could be your moment. And if you have in the past but you haven’t really spent time having a relationship with Him, this could be your moment to start that.

Will you accept His gift of light this Christmas? Will you ask Him into your life and start the greatest relationship you’ll ever have?

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 3

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: Strand of Christmas lights.

Ask students which they prefer better: white Christmas lights or multi-colored lights. This is a hot debate right now.

Turn off all the lights in the room and try to get it as dark as possible, staying away from windows. How does the darkness feel? Who is afraid of the dark?

Plug in the strand of Christmas lights. Talk about how beautiful they are and how they bring warmth and light into the darkness. That's exactly what Jesus did at Christmas time. He brought light into our darkness as a baby in a manger.

Connection: *Jesus is the light in our darkness.*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *What it Mean for Jesus to Be the "Word of God."*

Video time: 6 minutes and 41 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgsICbXOOIE>

Purpose of video: *To explain John 1 in more detail and what it means for Jesus to be "The Word."*

Note: This video would be great to show students for this lesson, but if you're unable to, consider watching this as preparation for your lesson time.

Second note: This video could also end early around minute 5 if you're looking to shorten it.

UNIT 3 REVIEW

Takeaway for the Unit: *We can trust that the Bible is true, Jesus came as the fulfillment of God's promise to rescue us, and because of that we have the opportunity to have a relationship with God again.*

Lesson 4
Unit 3

Memory Verses

Review 2 Timothy 3:16
Luke 2:11
John 1:14

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students can recall information taught during the lessons of this unit.
- Students recognize that Jesus brings light to our darkness.
- Students are able to explain the Scripture verses from this unit.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

➤ **A: Jeopardy style.** Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

➤ **B. Quiz style.** Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *According to memory verse, 2 Timothy 3:16, all Scripture is what? (God-breathed)*
2. *How many Gospels are there? (Four. Bonus points if they know it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)*
3. *Archeological finds in history do not support the stories of the Bible. True or False. (False. They DO support the Bible!)*
4. *Does God ever lie? (Nope.)*
5. *What promise did God fulfill when Jesus was born as a baby? (The promise to send a Rescuer from sin)*
6. *How many years was God silent to His people Israel? (400)*
7. *According to memory verse, Luke 2:11, in what town was the Savior born? (Town of David)*
8. *Who were the first people to hear that Jesus, the Savior, had been born? (Shepherds)*
9. *What is the name used to describe Jesus in John chapter 1? (The Word)*
10. *What did the Word do according to our memory verse? (became flesh and dwelt among us)*
11. *What does the baby in a manger have to do with me? (He was our rescue from sin!)*
12. **BONUS:** *What does the name Emmanuel mean? (God with us)*

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information. Will you believe that the Bible is always true? Will you choose to trust God's Word? And what about the Baby in the manger? He grew up and died on the cross for your sins. How will you let Him change your life? This holiday season, how will you build a relationship with the Light of the world?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

What Are the Miracles of Jesus?

Lazarus from the Dead

Lesson 1
Unit 4

Takeaway: Even when we don't understand, we can trust God.

Memory Verse

Isaiah 55:8 – “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn that God has a good plan, even when we don't understand it.
- Students are encouraged that Jesus understands our sadness and He helps us during trials.
- Students read in Scripture how Jesus showed compassion toward His friends.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when you experienced loss. Consider sharing about a family member or friend who passed away and how you felt during that time.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

In this unit of study, we are going to look at some of the miracles Jesus did while He was on this earth. We learned in the last unit that Jesus came to earth as a baby to be the promised Rescuer God would send to save us from sin. However, before Jesus died on the cross for our sins, He had a ministry that lasted around three years. And during that time He taught a lot, healed a lot of people, and performed many miracles.

☞ Let's open our Bibles to **John chapter 11**. That's where we will be looking at the miracle Jesus performed of raising Lazarus from the dead. Read **John 11:1-6, 17-44**. (If time does not permit you to read through the whole passage, consider paraphrasing parts.)

Jesus' friends were hurting. Mary and Martha had just lost someone they loved deeply. They couldn't understand why Jesus hadn't come to help. They were confused and sad.

☞ We often feel that way too. So many times in our lives we experience loss or pain and we feel confused and sad. We wonder where God is or why He hasn't showed up yet to "fix things."

☞ **Here are a few important things to remember from this miracle Jesus performed:**

1. Jesus had a higher understanding of the plan all along. His disciples didn't understand why He waited to go to Lazarus. Mary and Martha felt abandoned by Him. But He knew all along what He was going to do through this situation and how it was going to glorify God. Same is true in our own lives, as our memory verse reminds us. God's ways and plans are bigger than our own and beyond our understanding many times. We just need to trust Him.

2. Jesus understood their pain. The shortest verse in the Bible is in this story and it says "Jesus wept." Jesus understood that his friends didn't see the plan He saw. He understood that they were sad and hurting. HE was sad too! And He wept with them in the sadness. He understands all of our deep emotions. We can trust that He cares for us and understands, no matter what we are feeling or facing.

Even when situations in our lives hurt and are painful, we know God still cares for us and has a bigger plan beyond our understanding. All we need to do is trust in Him.

☞ Take a minute to reference how this lesson ties in with **Unit 2, Lesson 3** and how God is sovereign, even when bad things happen.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

How can you learn to trust God this week? When we know Him, we will trust Him. What does the Bible say about trusting God in challenging situations? What can you do this week to encourage someone who may need emotional support during a sad time?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 4

Active Game

Supplies: multiple rolls of toilet paper

Explain that today we are learning about a miracle Jesus performed when He raised His friend Lazarus from the dead.

Split students into two groups and have one "Lazarus" volunteered for each group. On "go" have each team wrap their "Lazarus" in toilet paper. Give each team 1-2 rolls. First team to wrap their volunteer in all of the toilet paper wins one point.

Next, call "Lazarus come forth!" and each Lazarus must run to a designated finish line area, while still wrapped up. First to make it across wins.

Finally, shout, "unwrap him!" and whichever team removes all of the toilet paper from Lazarus first wins a point. Award winning team with candy.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *The Reason You Can Trust God (Even When it Seems Risky)*

Video time: 5 minutes and 11 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCLuq_5o7_o

Purpose of video: *To explain the Biblical definition of trustworthy, and how God's character is defined by His trustworthiness.*

Note: *This video doesn't necessarily teach about Lazarus, but it does a great job driving home the point of why we can trust God, no matter what.*

Object Lesson

Collect and print out photos of enlarged, close-up objects that make it difficult to identify what the item in the picture is.

Have students take turns guessing.

Award anyone who guesses correctly with a piece of candy or sticker.

Discuss: Was it difficult to see what something was when you were looking so close? Did it make sense once you saw the zoomed out image? Of course it did.

Connect: God sees the bigger, better picture of our whole lives, even when it hurts or we don't understand. We can trust Him because He sees all the things that we can't.

Quote to Consider:

*"Whatever is in the cup that God is offering to me, whether it be pain and sorrow and suffering and grief along with the many more joys, I'm willing to take it because I trust Him."
(Elisabeth Elliott)*

Note: Even if you don't share this with your students, contemplate this quote this week and what it means for your own personal life as you prepare to teach your students about trusting God, no matter what.

What Are the Miracles of Jesus?

Storm on the Sea

Lesson 2
Unit 4

Takeaway: Even when we are afraid, we can trust God.

Memory Verse

Psalm 56:3 – “When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students examine Scripture to learn that God is always with us when we are afraid.
- Students discuss how Jesus encouraged His disciples when they were afraid.
- Students compare Peter’s reaction and their own reaction when in a fearful situation.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when you felt great fear. Maybe you were in the middle of a physical storm that was raging or maybe you were in an emotional scary situation. Share what was going on, how you felt, and what you did.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are going to look at another miracle of Jesus. This one is pretty impressive. Has anyone ever been able to walk on water before? A frozen lake doesn’t count! It’s physically impossible for us to walk on top of liquid water. However, that’s exactly the miracle Jesus pulls off in our story today.

☞ Let’s open our Bibles to **Matthew 14**. Read **Matthew 14:22-33**.

Here’s some context on this passage: Jesus had just performed a miracle previously to this situation. He fed 5,000 people with a little kid’s lunch. Jesus then sends off his disciples to cross the lake, while He went to pray. But His disciples were in danger. **Re-read verse 24**.

Finally after battling this storm for hours and being afraid, Jesus shows up. But He didn’t come in a boat, He came WALKING on the waves. The disciples freaked out. They were afraid.

Jesus encourages them not to be afraid and reminds them that He is there with them and they should have courage!

☞ One of Jesus’ disciples, Peter, makes a crazy decision. He decides to trust Jesus and get out of the boat and walk on the waves too. And the crazy part? He does it. For a little bit.

But then. Peter looks up, he looks around, and suddenly he sees everything except for Jesus. He sees the waves and the wind and the storm that has kept him afraid for the last several hours. And he realizes what is actually happening and he becomes paralyzed with fear and starts to sink.

Jesus catches him immediately. *Jesus was right there*.

☞ How often are we in situations like Peter? We get in situations that make us afraid. We face things that stress us out and make us anxious. We take our eyes off Jesus and His trustworthiness and faithfulness, and we get distracted by the wind and the waves around us. And just like with Peter, Jesus asks us, “Why did you doubt Me?”

☞ *Here’s two important things to remember:*

1. We all have a lack of faith at times, just like Peter. We all find ourselves sinking. But when we do, God is right beside us ready to rescue us and remind us of His faithfulness.
2. Jesus met His disciples in the middle of their fear. He didn’t expect them to have it all together before He came to them. He doesn’t expect us to never be afraid. But He wants us to remember that He is with us when we are afraid and because of that, we can have courage.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

What are you afraid of or anxious about this week? How can you fix your eyes on Jesus in that situation? How can you hand over to Him whatever you are facing today?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 4

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: a box, random sensory objects.

This game is called, "Box of Fear"! (Consider optional scary music for the background)

Take 4-5 volunteers. Inside this box is a bunch of stuff that might scare you, but I can't tell you what it is. I need volunteers who are brave enough to stick their hand in and feel whatever is inside, without knowing what it is.

Try to make students jump or get scared when they stick their hand in.

Ask: Was it difficult to put your hand in without knowing what you would be touching? Are you ever afraid to trust God, because you don't know how a situation will turn out?

Connection: *Trusting God can be scary when we don't always know how something will turn out.*

Videos/Websites

Christ In Youth: *A Study on the Apostle Peter: Walking on Water*

Video time: 5 minutes and 57 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGN4zCS9Vnl>

Purpose of video: *To explain in more detail the story of Peter walking on water and what we can learn from it.*

Note: This is an incredible video. If possible, please show to your students. It's visually engaging and has great truths to anchor the story to their own.

What Are the Parables of Jesus?

Parable of the Lost Sheep

Takeaway: While we are still running from God, He is calling for us.

Lesson 3
Unit 4

Memory Verse

Romans 5:8 – “But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students are able to define the meaning of a parable and why Jesus used them.
- Students learn that God is still calling for us to come to Him, even when we're caught up in sin.
- Students are able to explain the meaning of the parable of the lost sheep.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Remember when you were a kid and used to play hide and go seek? The best part of the game was getting found and laughing with your friends.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

When Jesus lived on earth, He not only healed and performed miracles, but He also taught people a lot of things. One of the ways that He taught people was through **Parables**. Who knows what a *parable* is?

☞ A parable is a short and easy to understand story that teaches or explains a moral or spiritual lesson. Jesus used parables to illustrate spiritual truths to His disciples. Often, Jesus would explain the parables to help them understand what He wanted them to learn.

Today we are looking at a parable Jesus told in **Luke chapter 15**. Let's open our Bibles there now.

☞ Read **Luke 15:1-7**.

First, let's understand who Jesus is speaking to. Pharisees were like the religious elite—the most religious, rule followers around. They often complained that Jesus met with and taught “sinners” and people who made wrong lifestyle choices. To answer their complaints Jesus tells this story about a shepherd who has 100 sheep.

The thing to keep in mind here is that in those days, shepherding and having sheep was extremely common. The people Jesus was talking to would understand this analogy easily.

☞ In this parable, Jesus was teaching the disciples that He represented the shepherd and the sheep represented people. Like a good shepherd loves his sheep, Jesus loves His people. Each person is important to Him. If there are 99 people who love God but one who does not, Jesus will show His love to that person so they will repent and come to know Him. This was why Jesus spent time with sinners.

He does the same thing still today.

☞ We are all sinners and we have each strayed away like the sheep in Jesus' parable. But Jesus loves us so much and is calling for us and searching for us to come home to Him. He wants us to be found and to have a relationship with Him again. That was the whole point of why He had come and why He was going to die.

☞ Read or recite **Romans 5:8**, our memory verse.

God's love for us is so amazing that He would leave 99 to come love and find you.

And it doesn't matter how messy your sin was or is. He came for you while you were still sinning, in the middle of your mess, because He loves you.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Have you come to Jesus? Have you listened to His call? He wants you to be a part of His sheep. He wants you to be His and to be found and rescued by Him. Have you made the decision to start a relationship with Him?

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 4

Object Lesson/Activity

Bring in a box of some special, personal items. Maybe a coin collection or gem collection that you have.

Purposefully hide the most special item somewhere in the room.

At the start of your lesson, bring out your box and tell students you brought in something special to show them today. Start to show them and then say, "Wait! One of my items is missing!" Become panicked as you drop everything for 30-60 seconds as you search for that "missing item."

When you find it, jump up and down and get the students excited with you. You found what you loved and had lost!

Explain: This ties in with our story today that Jesus told.

Connection: Just like the man left 99 sheep to find 1, God drops everything to seek after you and rescue you.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *Why Jesus told Parables (and How You Can Understand Them)*

Video time: 5 minutes and 41 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX-aAg4_U2Q

Purpose of video: *To explain why Jesus taught in parables and how we can understand what they're teaching us today.*

Note: This isn't particularly about the Parable of the Lost Sheep, however it does do a good job helping students understand what parables even are.

UNIT 4 REVIEW

Takeaway for the Unit: *We can trust God even when we don't understand or feel afraid, and while we were running from Him, He was searching for us to come back.*

**Lesson 4
Unit 4**

Memory Verses

Review *Isaiah 55:8*
Psalms 56:3
Romans 5:8

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students are able to recall information on the lessons taught in this unit.
- Students can explain what the Bible verses in this unit mean.
- Students understand that God is with them no matter what.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

▶ A: Jeopardy style. Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

▶ B. Quiz style. Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus came to the tomb?* (4 days)
2. *John 11:35 is the shortest verse in the whole Bible. What does it say?* (Jesus wept)
3. *Why did Jesus wait to go to Lazarus and Mary and Martha?* (Because He could see the whole picture)
4. *Is God always trustworthy?* (YES!)
5. *At what time in the morning did Jesus go to His disciples, walking on the water?* (Around 3am in the morning)
6. *Why did Peter get out of the boat?* (Jesus called for Him)
7. *What happened when Peter took his eyes off Jesus?* (He sank)
8. *How far away was Jesus when Peter started to sink?* (He was right there and reached out immediately to rescue him)
9. *Can we trust Jesus when things are scary?* (YES!)
10. *What is a parable?* (An easy to understand story that Jesus told to teach difficult to understand concepts or spiritual lessons)
11. *How many sheep were lost in the parable Jesus told?* (One)
12. *Why did the shepherd leave 99 sheep to go looking for one?* (Because the 99 were safe and the 1 was in danger)
13. *What does the one lost sheep represent in Jesus' story?* (Any one of us who was a sinner and turned to Jesus)

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information. Will you trust God even when you don't understand? Will you trust Him even when you're scared? Will you put forth the effort to get to know Him and His character so you can see that He is always worthy of trust? Have you started that relationship with Him at all? Or are you still like the one sheep that got lost and went astray? Come back to Jesus today, He will rejoice at a relationship with you.

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

What Are the Parables of Jesus?

Parable of the Persistent Widow

Takeaway: Always pray and never give up!

Lesson 1
Unit 5

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:18 – “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students examine Scripture that teaches the importance of prayer.
- Students can explain what it means to pray to God.
- Students conclude that they should continually pray to God and not stop praying.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when you prayed about something and it felt like God wasn’t listening but you kept praying anyway. Share how that turned out, whether He answered with a yes, no, or wait.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are continuing our discussion on parables by looking at another parable Jesus told and what we can learn from it. Who remembers what a parable is?

▶ We are starting our lesson today in the book of **Luke chapter 18**.

This is the parable or story of the persistent widow. Has anyone ever been told they’re persistent before? Or stubborn, they won’t give up?

▶ Let’s read **Luke 18:1-8**.

In this story, this woman kept asking the bad judge for what she wanted over and over and over. Finally the judge thought, she’s driving me crazy! This woman was persistent and stubborn. She never gave up.

▶ Here’s a couple of things we can learn from this story Jesus told:

1. First, over and over in Scripture we are called to pray continually and persistently. We’re called to make prayer a big part of our lives.

Read **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**. This doesn’t mean we have to say repetitive prayers all day every day. When God tells us to pray continually and without giving up, He is wanting us to make prayer a lifestyle. It becomes part of our every day. It’s not something we do because we “have” to but because we want to and get the opportunity to. And how cool is it that we get to talk to God any time?

2. Secondly, **what is prayer?** Prayer is our time to communicate and connect with God. It’s like when you call your best friend on the phone. Except we don’t need to wait for good cell service. Prayer allows us to communicate with God all the time, at any time. How awesome is that! What a gift. God wants us to use this gift in our personal lives to develop a better relationship with Him. And remember in the last unit, we talked about how developing a closer relationship with Him helps us to trust Him more.

3. Finally, *it’s important to remember that just because we pray without giving up and ask God for the same request over and over, it doesn’t mean that He will somehow “change His mind” and just give us whatever we want.* Prayer is about our hearts. And God wants to change our hearts through prayer. As we pray without giving up, our hearts start to change to want whatever God’s will is. Whether that’s Him saying “Yes!”, “No,” or “Wait.”

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So how will you make prayer a part of your life this week?

What are some times you can set aside to specifically pray? Maybe it’s when you’re driving on the school bus in the mornings. Maybe it’s before you get on social media after school. Pick a time this week and begin to make prayer a consistent part of your life. Don’t give up!

Always keep praying.

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 5

Object Lesson/Activity

Consider setting up "Prayer stations" in your room. Maybe one station could be a spot to pray about the hard stuff going on in their lives, maybe one station could be for sharing what they are thankful to God for, and another station to confess sin to God.

Split into Listening groups and switch between the different stations. Maybe give them 2 minutes per station. They can pray individually or as a group or with their Listener. Provide students paper if they wish to write their prayers down.

Connection: *A great opportunity to put into practice what they're learning today about prayer and praying without giving up.*

Videos/Websites

ONE* Kids: *The Persistent Widow*

Video time: 1 minute and 57 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcyftAhJsmY>

Purpose of video: *To read through the parable of the persistent widow and quickly explain its meaning.*

Note: This video is engaging because of the images happening on the screen. She reads through the entirety of the parable and then gives a 10 second recap on what it means. A great tool!

Skit

This would be a great opportunity to choose two students to act out the story as you read it in the Bible. One can be the persistent widow and one the mean, unjust judge. Tell them to give it as much energy and drama as they possibly can! Props would be a plus. Get creative.

What Did Jesus Teach?

The Beatitudes

Takeaway: Jesus calls us to live a life opposite of the world.

Lesson 2
Unit 5

Memory Verse

Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students are able to compare the values that Jesus promotes with what the world promotes.
- Students are able to compare their own beliefs with what the Bible teaches.
- Students are challenged to reflect on the teachings of Jesus and how to apply them to their life.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider someone that you wanted to be like growing up. Maybe it was a singer or your cool youth pastor. (When I was a kid I wanted to dye my hair red because my favorite singer did.) Share this story of who you wanted to be like growing up and why.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

This week, we are taking a closer look at some of the teachings of Jesus. Our first lesson is on the first part of Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” one of His most famous teachings. Let’s get started.

➤ Open your Bibles and read *The Beatitudes* in **Matthew 5:1-12**.

There’s a lot here that Jesus is telling us and some of it is a little confusing. It sounds completely opposite of what we’re told in the world! After all, the world tells us to be proud, but Jesus is saying that God blesses the humble? The world tells us to get more money and be rich and Jesus says that God blesses the poor who see their need for Him?

All of the things that are talked about in the Beatitudes is exactly how Jesus lived. He displayed all of those things and encouraged us to live like Him. He wants us to look like Him, not the world.

➤ It is so much easier to live like the world. Our human nature wants to fit in, follow the crowd, be like the people who are “cool” around us. We want to take the easy road now.

But Jesus challenged His followers that living like Him was hard. It was opposite the world. But it would ultimately bring them blessing from God. Being blessed and finding joy in God is more about our hearts than about our circumstances. While life may not be easy when we copy Jesus and live like Him, we know that we have God on our side and nothing can separate us from His love.

God’s way of living always looks different and contradicts how the world tells you to live your life.

➤ Let’s look at our memory verse for this week. Read or recite **Romans 12:2**.

We are called to transform—that means to completely change—our way of thinking and living. To make our thinking and living look more like Jesus. He lived a completely different way from the world. We should copy Him.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

So we are you looking like this week? Are you looking more like the world and copying the people around you? Or are you living out the truths Jesus talked about in the Beatitudes? Are you looking like Jesus?

He calls us to see our need for Him, mourn, be humble, desire justice, become merciful, have pure hearts, work hard for peace, and endure persecution and mocking from others for His sake.

He calls us to be different from the world.

What area do you need to work on this week to look more like Jesus?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 5

Game

This game is called “The Beatitudes Scavenger Hunt.” Explain that today we’re learning about Jesus’ call to live differently and what that looks like.

You have hidden 8 items around the room to represent each of the 8 ways Jesus calls us to live as members of God’s kingdom.

Divide into groups and in 3-5 minutes whichever group finds the most items wins. *(Tie the Scripture reference or passage to the items so they know they are part of the game)*

For example, for Matthew 5:3, “God blesses those who are poor and recognize their need for Him,” you could hide 2-3 small pennies in a can. Or for “those who mourn” you could hide a tissue, etc. It doesn’t need to be anything big.

Once they’ve gathered all the items come back together and look through them as you start the lesson and read Matthew 5:1-12.

Connection: *Helping students to visualize the different way of living God calls each one of us to as His followers.*

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *We’re Not Meant to Conform: Romans 12:2—Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 3 minutes and 02 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XsuXF8EJho>

Purpose of video: *To further explain the meaning between the memory verse Romans 12:2*

Note: While this video is not about the Beatitudes in Jesus’ sermon, I think it’s a great tie-in with the memory verse. It does a great job of summarizing how God calls us to live differently from the world and that His followers don’t look like the world. Which is the same message we’re getting across with the teachings on The Beatitudes.

What Did Jesus Teach?

Do not Worry

Takeaway: We can give our worries to God, because He loves us.

Lesson 3
Unit 5

Memory Verse

Matthew 6:34 – “Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students examine Scripture to learn what the Bible teaches about worry.
- Students learn that worrying about a situation does not solve the problem.
- Students are challenged to reflect on what causes them to worry and how God helps them to conquer it through prayer and trust in Him.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider the craziest thing you worried about this week. Maybe it was something serious or silly. (I worried this week that my cat would get into the dirty dishes in my sink and get hurt.) Share with your students.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

This week we are looking at another teaching of Jesus and this one is still in His famous “Sermon on the Mount” that we talked about last week.

☞ Today we are starting by opening our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 6**. This is a teaching Jesus gave on worry. How many of you have also worried about something this week? Maybe allow for 1-2 to share what their worry was.

☞ Read **Matthew 6:25-34**.

First, let’s look at the context of this teaching. Just before all these verses on worry, Jesus was talking about money and treasure. He told the people that where there treasure is, their heart will also be. And that was why He then started teaching them not to worry. Because the things we worry about often reveal a lot about what we value most.

Because of that, Jesus tells His followers not to worry about life. To not worry about the things of this world like eating and drinking. He wants our thoughts focused more on Him and living for Him, rather than being consumed by all the things that will pass away in this world.

But it is a lot easier to say “Don’t worry” then it is to actually not worry.

☞ *Let’s talk about a couple reasons why we don’t have to worry about the stuff going on in our lives:*

1. God cares for us. He loves us. Chapter 6 verse 30 says that He cares for the wild flowers and He cares so much more for you. You are loved by Him. He knows what you need. Not a day or a moment of your life goes by that He doesn’t see and that He’s not with you. Because of His great love for us, we can trust that He is good and will take care of whatever we are worried about.

2. Worrying distracts us. Worry keeps us focused on the wrong things. God wants us focused on Him, His kingdom, living for Him, and telling people about Him. Worry can distract us from all of those things.

3. This doesn’t mean that worry will automatically go away. It’s a struggle. I still struggle with worry or anxiety every day. But I know that God wants me to trust Him. So every day I work to fight worry. Maybe that looks like listening to worship music in the morning to focus on Jesus. Maybe it means praying more often (Philippians 4:6-7). Maybe it means journaling my worries so I can give them to God. Worry doesn’t have to control your life. Every day you can work to give it to God in new ways.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

How will you give your worries to God this week? Ask Him to help you when you are tempted to worry about something out of your control. Consider reading Philippians 4:6-7 or Psalm 55:22 out loud.

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 5

Object Lesson

Supplies: A gallon of water or large pitcher filled with water.

Ask for a student to volunteer to come up and hold the water. Instruct them to hold it in the air with one hand.

Ask: Is this easy or difficult? How difficult do you think it would be if you had to do this for hours?

It may be easy right now, but the longer you hold that gallon of water, the harder it will become. The more tired your arm will be. The more exhausted you will become.

Explain: Worry is the same way. It may seem easier right now to hold onto everything yourself and worry about it every day. But the longer you worry and hold onto things yourself the harder it becomes. The more tired you become. God wants us to replace our worries with trust in Him. He wants to carry our worries for us because He loves us.

Connection: *God wants us to give our worries to Him.*

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *How to Worry Less (Philippians 4:6-7)— Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 4 minutes and 14 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQauOFUKoAo>

Purpose of video: *To encourage us how to give our worries to God and worry less.*

Note: This is a great video to encourage students how to practically lay down their worries and trust God. A great clip to show.

UNIT 5 REVIEW

Lesson 4
Unit 5

Takeaway for the Unit: Pray without giving up, live opposite the world so you can look more like Jesus, and give Him your worries.

Memory Verses

Review *Ephesians 6:18*
Romans 12:2
Matthew 6:34

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students will play a review game to help them recall the lessons and verses in this unit.
- Students are challenged to live differently from this world and follow Jesus.
- Students are challenged to give their worries to God and trust in Him.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

▮ A: *Jeopardy style*. Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

▮ B: *Quiz style*. Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *What is Jesus' most famous teaching called?* (Sermon on the Mount)
2. *What is prayer?* (Talking to God)
3. *Does continuing to pray mean that we will always get exactly what we want?* (No. But prayer can change our heart.)
4. *Our memory verse in Ephesians 6:18 tells us to pray when?* (On all occasions and with all kinds of prayers!)
5. *When Jesus tells us what it looks like to follow Him, what were those teachings called?* (The Beatitudes)
6. *Our memory verse Romans 12:2 tells us to look more like the world in our thoughts. True or false.* (False. Don't conform!)
7. *Is it easy to follow Jesus and look like Him?* (No, but worth it.)
8. *Our memory verse Matthew 6:34 tells us not to worry about what?* (Tomorrow)
9. *Why should we not worry?* (Because God cares for us)
10. *What does worry do when it comes to living for God?* (It distracts us)
11. *What are some ways you can replace your worries this week?* (Open to their opinions: gratitude, worship music, prayer, etc.)

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information.

How have you spent more time talking to God in prayer? How can you continue to make that a daily practice in your life?

It's hard to follow Jesus because it means we look different from this world. Who are some people you can surround yourself with who look more like Jesus?

Giving our worries to God can take daily practice and that's okay. Try replacing your worries this week with gratitude. What can you say "thank you" to Jesus for today?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

How Do I Grow In My Relationship With God?

Spiritual Disciplines—Prayer

Lesson 1
Unit 6

Takeaway: Prayer is the connection we have to talk to God all the time, any time.

Memory Verse

Jeremiah 29:12 – “Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn the value of prayer.
- Students examine the Bible to see different types of prayer and how Jesus taught us to pray.
- Students apply their knowledge of prayer to their own life, using the A.C.T.S. prayer model.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when you were trying to start a new habit. Maybe it was the habit to read more, maybe it was a new hobby, maybe it was journaling, whatever it may be. Share about the work and commitment it took to get that practice to become a habit in your life.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

This week we are going to start a conversation about what steps we can take to grow our relationship with God. We want to create Spiritual Disciplines—or habits—in our life that help us get to know God better every day. Like we learned a few weeks back: When we know God better, we trust Him more.

▶ Today, let's get our Bibles open to **Matthew chapter 6** again. One of the important ways that we get to grow our relationship with God is through prayer. Prayer is a conversation with God. It's our connection to Him.

Now you may be wondering, how do I pray? What do I do when I pray?

▶ Let's read **Matthew 6:5-13**. In this passage, Jesus teaches us how to pray.

First, Jesus tells us that prayer is not supposed to be some flashy, over the top kind of thing. You don't have to worry about using all of the right words or phrases. God knows your heart and just wants you to come and talk to Him.

Secondly, we know that when we pray, God is listening. We're not just saying meaningless words. We're talking to the God who loves us.

▶ Read **Jeremiah 29:12-13**. This verse reminds us that God hears our prayers and that when we seek Him—that means when we get to know Him—with all our heart, we will find Him and learn more about Him. This is how we grow in our relationship with God. By talking with Him and listening for how He might answer.

▶ So how should we pray?

You can talk to God about anything and everything. There is a prayer model that follows the guidelines of the prayer Jesus prayed in Matthew 6 and that's what I want to teach you today.

▶ It's called the **A.C.T.S. prayer model** and here's how you use it:

A—stands for *Adoration*. When you adore (love) something, you talk about how great it is. Start your prayer time by telling God how awesome He is and what you love about His character.

C—stands for *Confession*. Tell God about the wrong things you've done and ask Him to forgive you.

T—stands for *Thanksgiving*. Be grateful! Say thank you!

S—stands for *Supplication*. That's a big word that basically means ask God for the things you or others need and want.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Prayer is an important habit to develop in your life as you grow in your relationship with God. How will you spend time praying more this week? How will you use the A.C.T.S. prayer model personally?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 6

Object Lesson/Activity

Watch the video at this link to describe how to set up and prepare this object lesson:

“Maria Eckersley: Easy Object Lesson to Teach Prayer, Obedience”

Run time: 3 minutes and 54 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFgtOxtoaq4>

This is my favorite object lesson to use when teaching teenagers about prayer. Follow her step by step instructions in this video.

Note: I have not approved everything she posts, but I do love this object lesson and she explains it best

Connection: *When we are struggling or confused in life, we should go to God in prayer.*

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *How Prayer Helps (Colossians 4:2) Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 3 minutes and 06 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufXsVeYh1Wk>

Purpose of video: *To challenge us to consider how important we make prayer in our life and what we miss out on when we don't pray.*

How Do I Grow In My Relationship With God?

Spiritual Disciplines—Bible Reading

Lesson 2
Unit 6

Takeaway: The Bible teaches us more about who God is and how to live as His follower.

Memory Verse

Hebrews 4:12 – “For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students read several Scripture passages that describe the benefits of reading and understanding the Bible.
- Students can list the different benefits of knowing and understanding Scripture.
- Students use the S.O.A.P. Bible study method to apply what they learned to their own lives.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Think of a letter or card you have from someone special (maybe a friend, spouse or parent, etc.) that you have cherished for awhile. Consider bringing it in to show. When we have a letter or card from someone we love, we cherish it and read it over and over.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are going to talk more about the most important book in all the world and why it's so important that we read it.

➤ Let's open our Bibles to **Psalm chapter 19**.

Recap the conversation last week about how to grow in your relationship with God. As we continue this discussion about growing in our relationship with Him, we are going to look at one of the ways we get to know Him even better—by reading His Word.

➤ Read **Psalm 19:7-11**.

This passage is talking all about Scripture, God's Word. It uses different words to describe it, like His instructions, decrees, laws, or commands, but it's all describing what Scripture is and what it does in our lives.

➤ Let's do a quick recap of the ways the Bible is described in this passage:

1. Scripture is *perfect*. There are no errors or mistakes!
2. Scripture is *trustworthy*. God never lies!
3. Scripture is *right*. It shows us the right way to live!
4. Scripture is *clear*. It helps us to understand how God works!
5. Scripture is *pure*. It is all good and it lasts forever!
6. Scripture is *true*. Again, no lies. It is always accurate!
7. Scripture is *more desirable than gold*. It has great value!
8. Scripture is *sweeter than honey*. It brings us true joy!
9. Scripture is a *warning*. It shows us the right way and we're blessed when we obey it.

➤ The Bible is more than just words on a paper. It teaches us and guides us and corrects us (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It brings us joy, it shows us what is right, it leads us, and it is good. The Bible is how we learn more about God, His character, His love for us, and His will for our lives. The Bible is not just a book. It's the very breath and word of God on paper. It's His letter to you. And just like we keep letters from those we love to look back on and read, we should do the same with the Bible if we want to grow in our relationship with God.

➤ Please use the **SOAP Bible study method** on the back of this lesson to explain how they can study the Bible on their own this week.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

➤ How will you make time for Bible reading this week? What will you read first? What time of the day would work best for you to set aside and read it? And if you have a hard time reading, don't forget that there are plenty of ways you can listen to the Bible on audio!

I challenge you to study your Bible this week, whether you're reading or listening to it.

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 6

Object Lesson

Note: When it comes to Bible reading the most common excuse is that, "I'm so busy! I don't have time!" I've used this excuse more times than I'd like to admit. This object lesson can help you address that concern. It's my favorite to use when teaching about making the Bible a priority in your schedule.

You will need: A jar or glass cup filled to the top with rocks, sand, water.

1. Put only the jar of rocks on the table where students can see it. Ask: Is this jar full? They will nod or agree that it is full.
2. Bring out the sand and pour it into the glass and it will sink down through the cracks between the rocks. Ask again: Is this jar full? They will hesitate now, unsure.
3. Bring out the water. Pour it in slowly until it reaches the top of the jar. Now the jar is actually full.

Ask: Would this have worked if we had done it opposite? If I'd first put in the sand and then the water and then all the rocks? No, it would have overflowed. They had to go in this order so everything fit.

Connect: Our lives are filled to the brim with many things. If we do not set our priorities correctly, everything will overflow and we will feel overwhelmed. We will be left with a mess. But if we set our priorities right first, everything else will fall in place and eventually get done. Our greatest priority should be our relationship with God and growing in that. When we put Him first, the rest falls into place.

Videos/Websites

Impact Video Ministries: *How Do I STUDY My Bible?*

Video time: 8 minutes and 21 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_T0xUCQK_m0

Purpose of video: *To teach teens how to study their Bibles and why.*

Note: This video is kind of long, consider using just parts of it or starting around 2 minutes. Or consider writing down the main "how to" points and sharing them yourself. It does have lots of great points in it that will be important to the students.

How to Study Your Bible

Please use this method to teach your students HOW they can study and read their Bible this week to grow in their relationship with God.

Draw the Acronym **S.O.A.P.** on a paper and explain what each letter means and what to do with it.

S: Scripture. Pick the chapter or passage that you want to read today in your Bible.

O: Observation. A big word that means, "What is this story saying? What is it about?" Summarize it and write it down.

A: Application. This means, "What does this have to do with me? How do I use this in my life?" Write down some practical ways you can use this Scripture personally to change your life.

P: Prayer. Write out a short, 1-2 sentence prayer to God before ending your time reading His Word.

Consider making up your own paper with a passage you studied this week so students have an example they can physically see.

How Do I Put My Faith Into Action?

Lesson 3
Unit 6

Takeaway: We must back up our faith in God with actions.

Memory Verse

James 1:22 – “Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students are able to distinguish between having faith in God and putting your faith in God into actions of obedience.
- Students examine Scripture to teach them why they should put their faith into action.
- Students will discuss how they can practice their faith through interactions with others they may come in contact with this week.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Take a minute to share about someone you love deeply. (Maybe a spouse, parent, sibling, or friend.) Do you only say that you love them and then never do anything about that? Or do you invest in a relationship and serve them? Do you put your love into action? Share.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

The last couple weeks we've spent time discussing how we grow in our faith and grow our relationship with God. Today we're going to talk about why and how we put our faith into action. Why should I live out my faith? And how do I put my faith into action?

To start, let's open our Bibles to James chapter 2.

➤ Read **James 2:14-23**.

Alright, there's a lot here to unpack. At first, these verses can be a little bit confusing. You may be asking or wondering, "I thought my faith in what Jesus did is what saves me? If I don't do enough good things will I still be saved?"

➤ First, let's answer that. Yes, we are saved from our sin by faith in Jesus alone and what He did for us on the cross. We could not earn His love or sacrifice and we could never do enough good to save ourselves from sin. (Read **Ephesians 2:8-9**)

Think again about someone that you love. When you first met them or started growing your relationship with them, did that love change you? Of course! You wanted to put your love for them into action by spending time with them, serving them, etc.

➤ James is telling us the same thing here. **Faith in Jesus and what He did saves us. Obedience—putting our faith into action—shows that our faith is genuine.** Jesus showed us His love by dying on the cross. We can show Jesus our love for Him by living for Him.

➤ Look again at **James 2:21-23**.

We learned this story several weeks back about how Abraham had so much faith in God that he was willing to obey and do whatever God asked, even if it didn't make sense.

When we obey God and live for Him, we are showing Him that our faith is real. Real faith in God always creates change in our lives.

So how do we show that change? How do we put our faith into action?

➤ We can show our faith in action by obeying God and living how He teaches us to live in the Bible. Maybe that looks like standing alone for Him at school and praying when others think you're weird. Maybe it looks like inviting friends to CIA. Maybe it looks like apologizing to someone when you've done wrong or forgiving when you've been wronged. Maybe it looks like trusting God even when life doesn't make sense.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Name two ways that you can put your faith into action this week. (Example: practice hospitality, be a friend to someone lonely, be responsible, pray for someone, etc.) Read **Colossians 3:23**.

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 6

Object Lesson/Activity

Ask for a volunteer who trusts you and then give them a blindfold. Make sure they can't see them. Spin them around twice.

Instruct them that they are going to trust you by doing what you tell them to do. Give simple instructions to get them across the room to where a chair is.

Ask them to sit down without feeling behind them or putting their hands out. Ask them to trust you and sit, because you said to.

Discuss after: Was it easy to sit down? Was it easy to obey my instructions when you couldn't see?

Our trust and faith in God leads us to act and obey His voice, even when it is difficult.

Connection: *True faith results in changed behavior and doing as God says.*

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *Say Yes to the Spirit (James 2:14, 17), Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 1 minute and 35 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_i1ECB2qTo

Purpose of video: *To quickly recap what James means when he talks about faith and action.*

UNIT 6 REVIEW

Lesson 4
Unit 6

Takeaway for the Unit: We have the opportunity to grow in our relationship with God by praying and reading our Bibles, and then we get to put our faith in Him into action.

Memory Verses

Review *Jeremiah 29:12*
Hebrews 4:12
James 1:22

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students can describe the different parts of the A.C.T.S. Prayer model.
- Students can describe the different parts of the S.O.A.P. Bible study method.
- Students can recall the different lessons from within this unit.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

D A. *Jeopardy style.* Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

D B. *Quiz style.* Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *Our memory verse, Jeremiah 29:12 tells us that when we pray to God, He will do what?* (Listen to us)
2. *What does the A in the A.C.T.S. prayer model stand for?* (Adoration—telling God how awesome He is.)
3. *What does the S in the A.C.T.S. prayer model stand for?* (Supplication—asking God for what we need or want.)
4. *True or false: Jesus taught us to always pray in public with a bunch of fancy words.* (False. Jesus taught us to come to God with a humble heart, without the need for fancy words.)
5. *According to memory verse, Hebrews 4:12, the Word of God is what?* (Alive and active)
6. *When using the S.O.A.P. Bible study method, what does the A stand for?* (Application—what does this have to do with me?)
7. *Psalm 19 teaches us about God's Word. What are some of the ways Scripture is described in the passage we read?* (Any of the answers from Psalm 19:7-11 count.)
8. *Why do we put our faith into action?* (To show God we love Him and that our faith is genuine)
9. *Do our good works save us?* (No, only faith in Jesus saves us)
10. *Which Bible story did James reference in James chapter 2?* (Abraham and Isaac)

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information.

How will you use the S.O.A.P. Bible study method personally? How about the A.C.T.S. prayer model? What time of day works best for you to focus on studying your Bible or praying?

How are you going to put your faith in God into obedience? What steps do you need to take today to put your love for Jesus into your daily life?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

Lesson 1
Unit 7

Takeaway: Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sin.

Memory Verse

2 Corinthians 5:21 – “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students can reflect upon when sin entered the world and its consequences.
- Students can recall the events of Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection.
- Students recognize we are all sinners in need of forgiveness of sin.
- Students can explain the symbolism of the temple curtain being torn after Jesus died.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

We are getting ready to celebrate Easter—Resurrection Sunday! Share with your students a favorite memory or tradition from Easter in your family. In my family we used to wake up to watch the sunrise every Easter and pray and read the Resurrection story in our Bible.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

We are getting to a very exciting time of year! The time when we celebrate Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

Right now, you may be overwhelmed with seeing Easter baskets in the stores and checking out the Reese’s peanut butter eggs or pictures of bunny rabbits. But Easter is a holiday where we celebrate something so much bigger and more important than all of that.

➤ To start, let’s open our Bibles to **Mark chapter 15**.

Read **Mark 15:16-39**.

Take a few moments to recap all the way back from Unit 1.

➤ Remember how the human choice to disobey God caused sin to enter into God’s perfect world? Sin separated us from God and the consequence of our choice to sin is death and eternal separation from God. However, there was also hope in our story because from the very beginning God made a promise to send a Rescuer who would pay the ultimate price of our sin. And He did. He sent that Rescuer when He sent His Son Jesus—who was fully God and also fully human—to earth as a baby in a manger. We’ve spent the last few months learning about a few of the amazing things Jesus did and taught while He was on earth. He never sinned and always obeyed God. And now we have come to the part of the story where everything changes. We come to the whole reason why Jesus came to earth in the first place—to die.

➤ Recap what is going on prior to the verses you read as a group. Jesus was taken and put on trial. He was then handed over to die. He was mocked, made fun of, beaten, spit on, and whipped. Then He was led up a hill and nailed to a cross.

➤ Let’s re-read **Mark 15:37-38**.

Why is this important? *Explain to them the purpose of the curtain in the temple*—it kept people out because our sin didn’t allow us to be in God’s presence. However, when Jesus breathed His last, He had taken all of our sin on Himself and died as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. That meant our separation from God could be repaired when we trusted in Jesus. When we believe in Jesus, we can have forgiveness of our sins and restored relationship with God. *How amazing is that!*

➤ Next week we are going to talk about what Jesus did next. Because He didn’t stay dead! And that’s the most exciting part of all...

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

This week, we challenge you to recognize that Jesus’ death tore the curtain that separated you from God. How will you thank Him for that gift this week? Have you asked Him to forgive your sins and become your personal Savior?

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 7

Activity

I like to use the Resurrection Eggs resource when teaching about Holy Week to students. My mom used these with me when I first began a relationship with Jesus and they're a great resource. You can find them at the information below and directions on what they are and how to use them.

Amazon: Family Life Resurrection Eggs (12 Piece Easter Eggs set with booklet and religious figurines inside)

Current price: \$23.75 (Prime)

Note: You may go through all of them or consider only going through half and saving some of them for next week's part 2 Easter lesson.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *The Crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 19-23)*

Video time: 4 minutes and 25 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_unHmAf7INK

Purpose of video: *To go into detail about the Holy Week and the Crucifixion of Jesus.*

Note: This video shares about Holy Week and Jesus' crucifixion from a different gospel, Luke 19-23.

Videos/Websites

Jesus Film: *Why Did Jesus Have to Die? (Wonder Series)*

Video time: 2 minutes and 59 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_rzCrR4JJo

Purpose of video: *To explain why Jesus died on the cross—for our sins.*

Why Does Jesus' Resurrection Matter to Me?

Lesson 2
Unit 7

Takeaway: Jesus rose from the dead to bring us eternal life through Him!

Memory Verse

John 11:25 – “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.’”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students read various Scriptures that show Jesus' death, His resurrection, and why they need Him as their Savior.
- Students discuss why Jesus' death and resurrection gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
- Students are encouraged to share the truth of Jesus with others.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider sharing about a time in your life when things felt really hopeless or scary. Maybe you weren't sure how a diagnosis or family situation was going to turn out. How did you feel in that moment? How did it turn out? I'm sure the disciples were feeling this way when they placed Jesus in the tomb.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Last week we discussed the story of how Jesus was crucified on a cross for our sins.

☞ The story seemed hopeless now. Jesus was dead. His disciples and followers were so confused. Wasn't He supposed to save them? Why did He die? Jesus was crucified on Friday night and so for three days, His disciples must have felt grief and confusion and sadness.

But Sunday was coming.

☞ Let's open our Bibles and read **Luke 24:1-9**.

This is the most exciting part of the story! Jesus didn't stay dead! He came back to life. After three days, Jesus defeated death, hell, and the grave and He brought new, eternal life to anyone who would believe in Him.

☞ Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 15** that if Jesus had stayed dead, we wouldn't have any reason to believe. But He didn't stay dead. He was raised back to life. Because of that, when we believe in Him and the fact that He was raised back to life, we receive the Holy Spirit in us that also gives us eternal life.

☞ Let's take a look at these verses: **John 3:16; John 11:25, 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 55-57.**

To receive eternal life, you just have to believe. You must believe that Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life. And that in His death, He took on all of our sins. Then three days after death, He came back to life, bringing us eternal life as well.

That's why this matters to us.

Because Easter is more than just bunny rabbits and chocolate candies and egg hunts. Easter is a time we can remember the sacrifice Jesus made because He loves us. We remember what He did and we reflect on our relationship with Him.

☞ Without His resurrection, we would have been dead in our sins forever, separated from God. *But because He came back to life, we have hope and a promise that when we believe in Him, once our earthly bodies die, we will have forever, eternal life with Him. Amen!*

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

☞ How can you help someone else remember the true meaning of Easter this year? Maybe you can read Luke 24 with a friend or family member who doesn't know about Jesus' resurrection. Maybe you can tell people you run into, "He is risen!"

And if you've never made the decision to believe in Jesus and ask Him to bring you eternal life, would you make that decision today?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 7

Object Lesson/Activity

Consider finishing going through the Resurrection Eggs from last week's resource if you bought them. Or maybe use all of them this week if you didn't get to them last week.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *The Resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24)*

Video time: 5 minutes and 15 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vb24Lk1Oh5M>

Purpose of video: *To teach about the resurrection of Jesus and why it matters.*

Recipe/Activity

If you have time with your group, this would be a great activity to make this recipe together. You could put the rolls in the oven and bake them as you teach and then enjoy them together during small groups. If you don't have time to bake them as a group, consider baking ahead of time for snack and explaining the process to them.

Resurrection Rolls

Ingredients: Pillsbury crescent rolls or biscuits (whichever you prefer), large marshmallows, butter, cinnamon sugar.

Instructions: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Melt your butter. Dip each marshmallow into the butter and then roll it into the cinnamon sugar to coat. Take your Pillsbury crescent dough or biscuits and wrap the dough tightly around the marshmallow, closing all the sides. Be careful to seal all the way. Bake the rolls on a baking sheet in the oven for 10-13 minutes or until golden brown.

Discuss: Wrapping the marshmallows in the dough was like them putting Jesus' body in the grave. The grave could not hold Jesus. When the resurrection rolls come out of the oven and students bite into them, the marshmallow inside will be gone—they will be empty! A great (and tasty!) visual reminder that Jesus didn't stay in the grave. He was gone. He rose to life to give us new life.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Lesson 3
Unit 7

Takeaway: God's Holy Spirit is with us and teaches us how to live for Him.

Memory Verse

John 14:26 – “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn about the Holy Spirit as they read various Scripture.
- Students can explain the role of the Holy Spirit in their life.
- Students will determine the Holy Spirit's influence in their life as they read Scripture and pray.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life where you were convicted of a choice or sin that was in your life. Share how the Holy Spirit worked to change your heart in that situation.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Over the last couple weeks we've talked about Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection. After He resurrected, He appeared to His disciples for forty days before ascending back to Heaven. When He ascended, He made them a promise that He would send the Holy Spirit to stay with them forever and live in them.

☞ We're going to look at a few different verses today, but let's start with opening our Bibles to **Acts chapter 1**.

We know that we serve one God. However, God exists as three persons, called the Trinity. Each one has a unique role—God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is confusing even for us adults! It's hard to wrap our minds around and that's okay. That's why we must have faith. Don't spend too much time on this unless your students have specific questions or are confused.

☞ Let's read **Acts 1:1-4**. Jesus reminded His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be sent to them as a gift. Just like Jesus was with His disciples physically while on earth, He would still be with them now spiritually through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would be the presence of God that would never leave them.

Jesus talked about the Holy Spirit a lot. The very spirit of God that would live in us and teach us.

Let's look at a couple passages where Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit and what He said.

☞ Read **John 14:15-17, John 14:25-27, and Matthew 28:18-20**.

So we know that the Holy Spirit is God's own spirit who lives within us. Just as the disciples had Jesus with them on earth, we have the gift of receiving the Holy Spirit to be present with us always! What a great gift that is—to know that God's own Spirit lives in us.

☞ The Holy Spirit has a special role in our lives. He reminds us of everything Jesus taught, He teaches us how to live according to God's standards, He brings us peace, He is our advocate (defends us and fights for us), He only speaks the truth, He prays for us when we don't know what to pray, and He is with us always.

When you are tempted to sin or struggling to make a right choice and you feel that tugging on your heart to do the right thing and follow God's way, that is the Holy Spirit working in your heart and life.

Not only did Jesus' sacrifice on the cross bring us redemption from our sin, but it gave us access to God at all times through the power of His Holy Spirit. *What a gift.*

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

This week, I challenge you to pay attention to God's Holy Spirit working in your life. First, read your Bible. Secondly, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Spirit. Does He remind you of Scripture when you need it most? If you listen, He will speak.

Resources: Lesson 3, Unit 7

Object Lesson/Activity

Ahead of time, set up a small obstacle course, with a chair at the end.

Ask for one volunteer to make it through the maze, then blindfold them. Instruct the rest of the group to be a "Distraction." They can shout at the volunteer, they can give wrong directions, they can sing, whatever will distract the person blindfolded from making it to the end of the maze.

Your role is to act as the "Holy Spirit" speaking calmly and gently, giving directions to the blindfolded student. They are to listen to your voice and instructions only.

Discuss at the end: It's hard to listen to God's voice with all of the other distractions and voices in our lives. We must spend time getting to know God and what the voice of the Holy Spirit sounds like so that we can follow Him throughout the challenges of life.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *Understand How the Holy Spirit Works in the Bible*

Video time: 4 minutes and 10 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNNZO9i1Gjc>

Purpose of video: *To explain God's Holy Spirit and His purpose in our lives. To also show us how He works throughout the Bible.*

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *How God is Both One and Three at the Same Time*

Video time: 8 minutes and 09 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAvYmE2YYIU>

Purpose of video: *To explain the Trinity in a way that makes it easier to understand.*

Note: You don't have to show this video, but it's a great resource for yourself as you're preparing for this lesson, especially if your students become confused or have questions about the Trinity and how God is one in three.

UNIT 7 REVIEW

Lesson 4 Unit 7

Takeaway for the Unit: Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin, and then rose from the dead to bring us life, and He promised God's Holy Spirit would be with us forever.

Memory Verses

Review *2 Corinthians 5:21*
John 11:25
John 14:26

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students can identify why Jesus died and came back to life.
- Students can recall/answer specific information they learned from the lessons in this unit.
- Students play a review game to reinforce what they were taught in this unit.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

▶ **A: Jeopardy style.** Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

▶ **B. Quiz style.** Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *Why did Jesus have to die? (To pay the cost of our sins)*
2. *Did Jesus ever sin Himself? (No, He was perfect! But He took on our sins on the cross)*
3. *Why was there a curtain in the temple? (To separate people from God's presence because of people's sin)*
4. *What happened to the curtain when Jesus died? (It was split in two, top to bottom! We now have forever access to God.)*
5. *How many days was Jesus in the grave? (Three days)*
6. *Jesus calls Himself what according to our memory verse, John 11:25? (The resurrection and the life.)*
7. *How do we receive eternal life and start a relationship with Jesus? (By accepting Him as Savior, believing in Him, and confessing our sins)*
8. *What is the Holy Spirit called in our memory verse, John 14:26? (The Advocate)*
9. *What role does the Holy Spirit play in our life? (Any of the following count: reminds us, teaches us, brings peace, Advocate, speaks only truth, prays for us, with us always.)*
10. *How do we receive the Holy Spirit? (By believing in Jesus and beginning a relationship with God)*
11. *Who is in the Trinity? (God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit)*

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information.

Have you made the personal decision to confess your sins and believe in what Jesus did for you on the cross? Do you believe in His resurrection that brings you life? How will you share that with others?

How will you draw closer to God as you learn the voice of the Holy Spirit in your life? Listen for Him this week.

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

Why Should I Tell Others About Jesus?

Lesson 1
Unit 8

Takeaway: Jesus calls me to go and make disciples of all people.

Memory Verse

Mark 16:15 – “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.’”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students discuss what Jesus meant when He said, “Go and make disciples of all creation.”
- Students recognize that their story of faith could impact someone else’s life.
- Students will practice and discuss how they might share the gospel with another person.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider a time in your life when you experienced something really exciting and wanted to share that with everyone in your life. Share about what that was and how you felt sharing it with people you love.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Before Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples, He gave them one last command and promise. That’s what we are going to focus on today.

☛ Let’s all open our Bibles to **Matthew chapter 28**. This is Jesus’ last human interaction with His disciples. After giving this final command and promise, He ascended back into Heaven.

☛ Read **Matthew 28:16-20**.

Jesus instructs His disciples to go and tell people the good news—which is that we have an opportunity to repent of our sin, accept Christ as our Savior, and live forever with God. Just as Jesus told His disciples to go and make more disciples of Him, we are to do the same. Jesus promised to always be with us forever through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will remind us of what to say when sharing the gospel.

☛ So what does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? The dictionary defines a disciple as *a student or learner and a follower*. That means that a disciple is someone who studies and learns about God and then applies what they’ve learned to their life personally as a follower of Him. Who are His disciples? Anyone who believes in Him and begins a relationship with Jesus.

Throughout this school year as you have been a part of CIA, you have been a student learning about God and it’s our prayer that many of you have begun relationship with Jesus and/or grown in your relationship with Him. And now it’s time to put all that you’ve learned into practice. Especially as the end of the school year is drawing close.

As a disciple of Jesus it is your calling and command from Him to go and tell others of His salvation. To help others become disciples—students/learners and followers—of Him too.

Earlier I shared about an experience in my life that I was so excited to tell others about. Can you think of one in your life? Something that happened or something you read or watched that made you so excited and you just had to tell everyone about it? Maybe you spread the word through social media or talked to your loved ones.

☛ *Jesus is the most exciting thing to ever happen in our lives.*

And we get the privilege of sharing Him with others around us by telling our story of how we came to relationship with Him.

That’s why we tell others about Jesus. Because He called us to and because He is the best thing to ever happen to us, ever!

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Our memory verse in **Mark 16:15** instructs us to go into all the world and share the gospel. How will you do that this summer? How will you go out and share Jesus with those around you? We’ll talk more about ways to do that next week.

Resources: Lesson 1, Unit 8

Object Lesson/Activity

Supplies: A few packs of dominos

Split your students into 2 or 3 groups. Give each group a pack of dominos and challenge them to set up their dominos so that when they knock one over they all fall over in a line perfectly. They can get creative with this. They can make one long line or do a circle, whatever they come up with.

Set a timer and when it's done, see which team used all their dominos. Tip over their first domino and watch them all fall over perfectly.

Connection: *Sharing our story is like this. Telling others the story of how we met Jesus is like knocking over one domino and it slowly knocks over another and another and another. Your obedience to answer the call to make disciples and tell others about Jesus could result in more people coming to Him than you could even imagine.
Spiritual multiplication!*

Videos/Websites

The Gospel Coalition: *David Platt on Matthew 28*

Video time: 6 minutes and 07 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JoOHsk5D8g>

Purpose of video: *To go into further detail about what Jesus meant in the end of Matthew 28.*

Note: This video can be a little long to just listen to him talk. If you don't think it'll connect with your group, consider just using it for message preparation.

How Do I Share My Story with Others?

Lesson 2
Unit 8

Takeaway: I can share Jesus with others by the way I live and the words I say.

Memory Verse

Romans 1:16 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students will discuss how and why we should share the gospel with others.
- Students organize a plan for how they will share their testimony.
- Students practice sharing their testimony with their peers.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Take a few moments before starting this lesson to share your own personal testimony with your students. Share with them how you came to know Jesus and how you’ve grown in your relationship with Him.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Last week we talked about why we should tell others about Jesus and why we make disciples of Him.

But how do we actually do that?

That’s what we’re going to talk about this week.

☛ Let’s open our Bibles to where our memory verse is found and we’re going to read **Romans 1:15-17**.

In this passage, Paul is writing and saying that he is eager and excited to preach the gospel. That’s because he understands the power of the gospel. He understands that everyone needs to hear about Jesus. Therefore he’s not ashamed of it and he doesn’t try to hide it. He shares it with everyone.

We too are called to share the gospel unashamed.

How do we do this?

☛ First, we let our lives and our actions look like Jesus. I’ve heard it quoted before to “Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words.” There will be plenty of times in our lives when people only watch our actions and behaviors, they don’t get to hear us share our story of faith or the gospel. Because of that, our lives and actions tell a story of God’s redemption. When you love others even when it doesn’t make sense or when you forgive even when it’s hard, people will wonder why. When you serve and put others first when it would be easier to do for yourself, people will want to know why. Let your life reflect Christ.

☛ Now keep in mind, just because we’re saved, we’re not perfect. We will still struggle with sin and we will still mess up. A lot. Our actions and our lives won’t always reflect Jesus. But what we do in those moments matters. If we look for how to fix it or how to apologize, we will be showing others our desire to live more like Jesus.

☛ Secondly, be prepared to share your story of relationship with Jesus and the gospel with others. This is called your “testimony,” like what I shared with you earlier.

Now that can be a really big word and it can feel really scary. You may even think, “Well I don’t have a testimony” or “I don’t know how I’d tell someone my story.”

Today we are going to learn how to tell someone a **15 Second Testimony** or your 15 second story.

☛ *Review the 15 second testimony on the back of this lesson.*

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Summer is almost here. How will you demonstrate your faith in God towards others in your life? Will they be able to see Jesus in you by the way you act? Who can you share your 15 second testimony with this week? Do you have a friend you could invite to summer camp?

Resources: Lesson 2, Unit 8

15 Second Testimony

I highly recommend using the suggested video to demonstrate and explain how to present a 15 second testimony, but if you can't, write your own out on paper to show as an example.

A 15 second testimony starts with your life before Christ: **"I was ____ & ____."** I might say, *"I was lonely and I had no hope."*

The middle stays the same, **"But Jesus saved me and I chose to follow Him."** It would be good to throw in a Bible verse here such as John 3:16 or Romans 5:8 to back it up with Scripture.

Then they explain their life now in Christ: **"Now I am ____ & ____."** I might say, *"Now I belong to Jesus and I have eternal hope in Him and what He's done."*

"Do you have a story like this? Would you like one?"

Provide students with a paper outline to write down their own 15 second testimony. Consider transitioning into small group time now and having students share their testimonies/stories with their group.

Four Chapter Gospel

If you have time, this could also be a good time to reflect back on the Four Chapter Gospel back at the beginning of this teacher guide.

Creation
Fall
Rescue
Restoration

You can remind students of this when sharing the gospel as well.

Videos/Websites

Southeastern Seminary: *Who's Your One Training—Fifteen Second Testimony*

Video time: 2 minutes and 46 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYef0-dM0lo>

Purpose of video: *This video explains how to present a 15 second testimony and also gives several examples of it. Definitely recommend using this to teach the 15 second testimony!*

Videos/Websites

Southeastern Seminary: *Who's Your One Training—Three Circles*

Video time: 2 minutes and 41 seconds

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1WAIXXp_n8

Purpose of video: *This video is just another extra resource to teach students how to quickly and accurately share the good news of Jesus with someone else.*

UNIT 8 REVIEW

Lesson 3
Unit 8

Takeaway for the Unit: God calls me to tell others about Him and I can do that by the way I live and what I say.

Memory Verses

Review
Mark 16:15
Romans 1:16

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students understand why we are called to share the good news of Jesus with others.
- Students receive tools and instruction on how to share their testimony/story with others.
- Students are challenged to tell someone else about Jesus.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

➤ **A: Jeopardy style.** Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

➤ **B. Quiz style.** Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *What was the last command Jesus gave His disciples before ascending back to Heaven in Matthew 28? (Go and make disciples and tell others about Him)*

2. *What was the last promise Jesus made His disciples before ascending back to Heaven in Matthew 28? (He would be with them always)*

3. *What does it mean to be a disciple? (To be a student or learner and a follower)*

4. *Our memory verse, Mark 16:15 tells us to go and tell who about Jesus? (All the world)*

5. *According to our memory verse in Romans 1:16, what are we not to be ashamed of? (The gospel)*

6. *What two ways did we discuss we can share the gospel with others? (Through our lives/actions and through sharing our testimony/story)*

7. *Does anyone want to share their 15 second testimony? (Allow for extra points if you want)*

8. *What are some ways you can share the gospel this summer? (Allow for their creativity, no wrong/right answers. Encourage them maybe to share Bible verses on social media or to invite a friend to camp, if they're struggling with ideas)*

9. *Who can you tell about Jesus? (Everyone!)*

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information.

What is your testimony or your story? How can you share it with someone this week? How will you use your voice on social media or in your friend circle to make disciples of Jesus? Who can you invite to CIA in the fall or summer camp at Joy EI?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

BONUS UNIT

This Unit is available for use if your program completes the curriculum early and you need additional lessons.

This bonus unit is centered around discipleship and living for Jesus.

What Are the Parables of Jesus?

Parable of the Ten Talents

Lesson 1
Bonus

Takeaway: God has given each of us a gift we can use to serve others.

Memory Verse

1 Peter 4:10 – “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students will analyze and compare each person in the parable of the ten talents.
- Students discuss how the Bible wants them to use their abilities for the kingdom of God.
- Students are challenged to use their own unique gifts to serve God and His people.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider the ways God has gifted you. Maybe you have the gift of teaching, encouragement, or leadership. Maybe you are gifted at singing or playing music. Share an example of a time when you used your gift to serve God and others.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Today we are going back to the parables of Jesus. Earlier in the year we talked about some of the miracles Jesus did on earth and some of His amazing teachings, including His parables.

☞ Does anyone remember what a **parable** is?

A parable is a story that teaches moral values and an important lesson. Jesus used parables to make hard lessons easier for His followers to understand.

The parable we are studying today is found in Matthew.

☞ Let’s read **Matthew 25:14-29**.

Alright, let’s dive into discussing this passage. First, the master in this story gave each of his servants a different kind of gift. He knew their strengths and abilities and so to each one he gave what he knew they were capable of handling. The first two servants did something with the money they were given. They invested it or used it and put it to work. And they doubled the amount they had originally been given!

But the third servant didn’t do anything with what he’d been given, he didn’t even put it in the bank! He buried it in a hole, hid it, and forgot about it.

The master was not pleased. In fact, he was upset! The first two servants had done well, but the third had failed the mission he’d been given.

☞ Here’s what Jesus was trying to get across:

First, we know that each of us has been given a gift from God. We each have unique talents, gifts, and abilities that are different from those around us.

☞ Read **Romans 12:4-8** and **1 Peter 4:10**.

Secondly, we were not given these special gifts to hide them. Over and over in Scripture and especially in this parable, we are challenged to use our gifts for God. To use what He has given us to glorify Him and serve the people He loves.

And when we do that, we too will hear the words the servants heard, “*Well done, good and faithful servant.*”

Be faithful now with the gifts He has entrusted to you.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

What is the gift God has given to you? Has He gifted you with encouragement? Has He gifted you with leadership or the ability to make people feel included? Has He gifted you musically or artistically? Has He gifted you with the ability to see a task that needs done and do it for someone else? I challenge you in small groups to identify amongst each other what some of your gifts are and ways that you can use them this week to serve God and others.

Resources: Lesson 1, BONUS

Game

For this game, divide into small groups of about 4-5 and give each group a set of random objects or supplies. For example, craft supplies, scissors, tape, screwdriver, marshmallows, whatever you have on hand, etc.

Each group must come up with a creative way to use these resources to solve a problem or create something meaningful. They will have a specified time limit to brainstorm and create their project.

After the time is up, each group will present their creation and explain how they utilized their resources effectively.

Connection: *We have each been given unique gifts and abilities that we can use to serve God's kingdom.*

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *Using Your God-Given Gifts (Romans 12:6) Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 2 minutes and 37 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-nPyZ3nLfE>

Purpose of video: *This video goes into further explanation of Romans 12 and encourages students to use their God-given gifts for His service.*

Do I Really Have to Love Everybody?

Lesson 2
Bonus

Takeaway: God calls us to share His love with everyone, even those we don't like.

Memory Verse

1 John 4:7 – “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students understand that God wants us to show love toward everyone.
- Students can explain the example Jesus gave to His disciples.
- Students reflect on a time when it was difficult to show love towards someone they didn't like.
- Students evaluate how they can use prayer, Scripture, and confession to show love towards others.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Consider someone in your own life that you have struggled to show love to. Describe a time or situation where you did or didn't show love to that person, like God called you to.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Sometimes there are people in our lives that just really irritate us or frustrate us or make us mad. Those people can be really difficult to love.

It might be because they look differently than us, talk differently than us, or believe differently than us.

📖 Today we are opening our Bibles to **John chapter 4.**

Read **John 4:3-14.**

You see, the Jews had this same issue. They struggled to love people who were different than them.

📖 Back in those days, the Jews did not associate with Samaritans, people from Samaria. Often when traveling between cities, Jews would even go across the long way, simply to avoid crossing through Samaria. However, when Jesus is traveling from Judea to Galilee, He doesn't travel the long way. He purposefully travels through Samaria and stops there to find food and water. I'm sure His disciples were wondering about this. This was different from the rest of the Jews.

However, Jesus knew that He had come for the Samaritans too. He loved the Samaritans also. He stopped at a well to have this conversation with a Samaritan woman. The story ends with this woman believing in who Jesus was and going and telling all her friends about Him! In fact, Jesus ended up staying in Samaria then for two days teaching and spending time with these people that the Jews normally hated.

Jesus always taught to love everyone, even those it was hard to like or those that were different.

📖 Read **1 John 4:7 and Luke 6:35.**

Over and over in Scripture Jesus commands His followers to love other people. We are instructed to love as Jesus loved us and we're commanded to show love because God's love lives in us.

Regardless of who the people might be and regardless of our differences, we are really called to love everyone.

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Who do you struggle to show love to? Who is the person in your life that you find challenging to like?

📖 This week we want to challenge you to pick a person in your life that you normally don't like or aren't kind to or that you typically avoid. Once you pick them, decide one way that you will show God's love to them this week.

Maybe you could start with praying for them, inviting them to sit with you at lunch, making a card for them, or even a simple smile.

Next week, share what you did.

Resources: Lesson 2, BONUS

Activity

Consider using this time to put love into action. Maybe you could write cards that talk about God's love for older people in nursing homes. Maybe you could have students write a card about God's love to share with someone they don't really like at school.

You could also do one of my favorites with a group, "Kindness cards."
Everyone writes their name on a paper and they each draw a name out of a basket. They then write a note of kindness to encourage the person whose name they drew. They can sign it or leave it anonymous. You can optionally read aloud your kindness cards to the group.

Videos/Websites

Bible Project: *Agape—Love*

Video time: 4 minutes and 48 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slyevQ1LW7A>

Purpose of video: *To teach the Greek definition of Agape (Love) and how Jesus defined loving others.*

Why Should I Serve Others?

Lesson 3 Bonus

Takeaway: Jesus gave us an example of serving others, so we can live like Him.

Memory Verse

Mark 10:45 – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Notes:

Goals for this Lesson:

- Students learn how Jesus served His disciples.
- Students recognize that Jesus calls us to serve others.
- Students are challenged to go out of their way to serve someone else this week.

Capture: *Share an engaging story to capture their attention.*

Share about a leader in your life (maybe a boss or youth leader) who went out of their way to serve you or someone else, even when they didn't have to.

Connect: *Point them to Scripture and open Bibles.*

Serving and loving others is something we've already talked a lot about in this unit.

Today, we're going to go even further in this study and learn about a time when Jesus served His friends.

☞ Let's read **John 13:1-17**.

Here's a little bit of background on what Jesus is doing here: While washing someone's feet may seem odd to us, it was normal in those days! If you think about it, they didn't have cars or bikes or motorcycles. People walked most everywhere they went or they rode animals. This made for very dirty, dusty feet. Because most people also just wore sandals. So in those days it was customary that when a guest entered someone's home, the servant or slave would wash the guest's feet. The thing that is really important for us to catch here is that Jesus was the most important person in that room. He was the most powerful and the One everyone was watching and following. And yet, He was the one to first get up and take on the form of a servant as He bent down and began to wash His disciples' feet.

His disciples were confused! Peter didn't want Jesus to wash His feet. But Jesus explained to them that He was teaching them a lesson.

☞ Read **John 13 verses 12-14** again.

Jesus gave His disciples an example. He wanted them to live and serve the same way He did. He didn't want them to think of themselves as the best or most important people in the room, who deserved to be served. But instead, He wanted them to live as His followers who sought out people they could serve.

☞ Have the group read your memory verse aloud, **Mark 10:45**.

Jesus lived His life for others. He spent His ministry serving others. He healed the sick, taught the crowds, gave sight to the blind, and ultimately gave His life for the sins of all.

If He could live His life serving others, as His followers how much more should we be serving those around us?

Call: *How does this apply to their lives? What do they do with this?*

Now, I'm not going to ask you to wash someone's feet this week! But I do want you to think of someone you can serve. Who is someone you can help out this week?

☞ **Start at home.** Maybe you can do some extra chores or take out the trash for Mom without being asked. Maybe you could help a sibling with homework.

Then move to your friends. How can you serve them? How can you serve your teachers? *Get creative and start serving!*

Resources: Lesson 3, BONUS

Videos/Websites

Our Daily Bread Ministries: *Serving Like Jesus (John 13:14-15), Our Daily Bread Video Devotional*

Video time: 2 minutes and 18 seconds

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBsyc1jfdPM>

Purpose of video: *To discuss Jesus' example of servant leadership through washing His disciples' feet.*

Note: This video is a great recap to the lesson!

BONUS REVIEW

Lesson 4 Bonus

Takeaway for the Unit: God has given us each gifts to serve others and we are called to love everyone and serve them as He did for us.

Memory Verses

Review 1 Peter 4:10
1 John 4:7
Mark 10:45

Notes:

Goals for this unit review:

- Students recognize the unique gifts God has given each one of them.
- Students understand that God wants us to love everyone—even the ones we don't like!
- Students are challenged to serve others in the way Jesus served.

Capture:

It's review week! Begin lesson time by playing a game to reflect back on what they've learned over the last few weeks.

Two ways this can be played:

➤ A: *Jeopardy style*. Split into two teams (boys vs. girls or whatever works for your group). Each team takes turns selecting a point value from 25-300. The point value reflects the difficulty of the question. The winning team can receive candy (optional).

➤ B: *Quiz style*. Line their chairs in a row. After asking a question, the first person to stand and answer correctly earns 10 points. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins candy (optional).

Questions to include in the review:

1. *According to our memory verse in 1 Peter 4:10, how should we use our gifts from God? (To serve others)*
2. *In Jesus' parable, how many people were given talents/money to take care of by their master? (Three)*
3. *How many used their talents and multiplied what they had? (Only 2)*
4. *What words did the master in the parable tell his servants who multiplied what they'd been given? ("Well done, good and faithful servant.")*
5. *Who did the Jews not like? (The Samaritans)*
6. *Who did Jesus talk to in our lesson on John 4? (A Samaritan Woman)*
7. *Who does God want us to love? (Everybody!)*
8. *Where does love come from according to our memory verse in 1 John 4:7? (From God)*
9. *What did Jesus do in His example of serving others? (Washed His disciples' feet)*
10. *Why did Jesus wash His disciples' feet? (To give them an example they could follow of how to serve one another)*
11. *According to our memory verse in Mark 10:45, why did Jesus come? (To serve and give His life for others)*

Connect:

Have students all open their Bibles to each of the unit memory verses and read them aloud. Ask if anyone can explain to the group what each of them means.

Call:

Your challenge this week is to ask yourself what you will do with this information. Identify the gifts that God has given you, whatever they may be. Ask a leader or trusted mentor in your life to help you if you aren't sure what your gifts are. Once you've identified them, how can you use your gifts for God? Who is someone in your life that you need to show God's love to? Even if you don't like them. And finally, how can you follow the example of Jesus this week and serve others around you?

Notes:

What did God teach me this week?

What are some thoughts I have for next week?

Prayer requests from volunteers and students:

Extra Resources

In here you will find additional resources for your year, including the 4 Chapter Gospel for leading a student to Jesus, and a plan for Opening Day.

4 Chapter Gospel Overview: A Gospel Resource for Teachers

This resource is for you to use when presenting the Gospel to students. It gives you an overview of what to teach through as you lead a student to Jesus.

*The 4 Chapter Gospel words: **Creation, Fall, Rescue, Restoration***

- **Creation: Genesis 1:1**- *How did it all begin? Where did I come from?*

God created a perfect world.

Genesis 1:31- "God saw all that He had made and it was very good."

God made a man from the dust of the ground.

God made a woman from the rib of the man.

It was very good.

CREATION



- **Fall: Romans 3:23**- *What went wrong? Have you experienced hurt and pain?*

Romans 3:23- "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Sin entered the world. We all make the choice to sin.

Sin is anything we think, say, do, or don't do that goes against God.

Genesis 3- Adam and Eve were in the perfect garden. But they disobeyed God.

Sin now separates us from God.

FALL



- **Rescue: Romans 5:8**- *Can anything be done? How does Jesus fix this broken world?*

The picture is a life ring. A rescue ring is used in water rescues when someone is in trouble.

Jesus is our rescuer. He died on the cross to rescue us from our sin.

We all need rescuing from sin.

Romans 5:8- "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

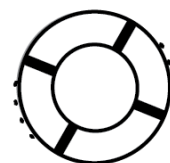
He died on the cross for each of us because we sin.

He came back to life to bring us eternal life through Him.

To be rescued, you need to **pray, admit that you sin, ask Jesus to forgive you and live inside of you.**

When we ask Jesus to rescue us, we have the promise of eternal life in heaven.

RESCUE



- **Restoration: Mark 16:15**- *How can I join God now in His work?*

Look at the picture. It is like the first picture, but better!

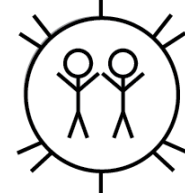
We are restored because of Jesus.

He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."

We can join God by telling others about Jesus and His plan to rescue us.

It is our job to tell others about Jesus and the Good News of life with Him.

RESTORATION



Christians In Action (CIA) Opening Day Plan

Opening Day is filled with excitement and anticipation as you meet your students and begin to form important relationships. We don't have a specific lesson for this day, as it is usually very busy with introductions and getting into the schedule of things. Beginning to build these relationships with the students is vitally important as they get to know you. This is a great week to introduce to them what the year is going to look like as far as lessons go. You can read them some of the questions we'll be looking at and answering from Scripture throughout the year such as, "*Why does God allow bad things to happen?*" "*Why did Jesus come as a baby in a manger?*" or "*How do I grow in my relationship with God?*"

Here is a sample of what Opening Day might look like for your program:

1. Pick up students from school.
2. Welcome students and introduce staff/volunteers.
3. Share with the students the purpose of CIA—why you're here.
4. Share what happens at CIA and what students can expect throughout the year—engaging lessons, relationship centered small groups, fun activities/games, and points/awards from camp.
5. Play a get to know you game/activity (a game that involves using student names is very helpful as you're just beginning to learn their names).
6. Small group time—introduce students to their Listeners, ask questions to get to know students and begin forming relationships, provide students with verse sheets and explain how to receive points for personal devotions or Scripture memory, ask about prayer requests and pray with students.
7. Drop off students at school.

*Praise God! You've completed your first day of CIA for the school year. May God bless your program with a thriving and wonderful year as students encounter God in personal ways.
We are praying for you.*