A New Order

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Understand how and why the Book of Numbers is universal and timeless in its message.
► Recognize the significance of the church as the corporate body of Christ.
► See how God’s justice and love are always in harmony.

Preparing to Lead

Generations X and Y, today’s 20-to 40-year olds, tend to see a personal relationship with Jesus and a corporate relationship with God as two distinct relationships not necessarily connected to each other.

The Book of Numbers is about God organizing, preparing, and mobilizing a people for a special task. It is a journal of a people’s journey from bondage to deliverance, from their constant rebellion and failure to God’s continual grace and endurance. Does that sound familiar?

Getting Started

A. Share the following: A scene in the film Bella opens on a sidewalk in New York City. A couple is stopped by a blind man selling handmade frogs. When the girl says she has no money, the blind man urges her to take it in exchange for a description of what’s going on around her. Except for some yellow and purple flowers, her description focuses on the negative attributes of the crowd around them. The blind man hands her the frog and says he wishes he could see all that she just described. As the couple walks away, the camera pans to a handmade sign next to the blind man: “God closed my eyes. Now I can see.” Value is often attained when perspective changes.

B. Share the following: The original Hebrew name for the Book of Numbers was “In the Wilderness,” referring to the wanderings of the people of Israel. The name “Numbers” only came about when translators focused on the census taken at the beginning and again at the end of the wilderness experience.

While God’s original plan may have been to get out of Egypt and into Canaan as quick as possible, He was compelled to move to Plan B. Plan B was about getting His people ready to claim, to live in, and to appreciate the Promised Land. This training occurred in the wilderness over a period of 40 years.

Materials

flipchart, blackboard, or large sheet of paper taped to the wall; appropriate markers

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Discussing the Ideas

1. What are some of the universal and timeless messages in Numbers that are applicable to us today?
2. Numbers emphasizes the corporate body of Christ, a people who serve God and walk in His way. What are the elements in Numbers that we can apply to strengthen our churches today?
3. Deuteronomy 4:24 describes God as a consuming fire and very jealous. Is there relevance in your life for this metaphor of a God of fire? Explain.
4. Numbers reveals the meticulous records that were kept of the people. The records were kept this way because it was what God required. What did these statistics have to do with the primary themes of Numbers? Compare Matthew 10:30.

Closing the Activity

Say: “Numbers covers 40 years, the span of one generation and the start of the next. Chapters 1–25 cover the first generation and depicts them as a negative people full of unbelief and rebellion, while chapters 27–36 introduce the following generation as a positive people who exhibit faith and a zeal for life.

“The miraculous change in attitude of the next generation was the result of a loving God who traveled the wilderness with them. God’s sovereign ability to balance goodness and severity (Rom. 11:22) brought about the change in the second generation. In the same way, God restores us to a perfect, intimate relationship with Him (1 John 1:9).” Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 31).

Fylvia Kline, Medford, Oregon, U.S.A.

Search your Bible for verses that give you hope. Then share your thoughts with the rest of the class. (One text is done for you.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>The hope it brings</th>
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<tr>
<td>“If your heart is broken, you’ll find God right there; if you’re kicked in the gut, he’ll help you catch your breath” (Ps. 34:18, <em>The Message</em>).</td>
<td>In tough times, God feels even closer to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>My thoughts and reflections:</td>
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Preparing a People

Surveying the Source
Numbers 5, 6; Ezek. 33:15; Luke 19:8, 9; Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Consider the planning involved in taking a long journey.
► View some of the Old Testament rules as valid, purposeful guides for healthy living.
► Discuss heaven as a place we should be getting ready to visit.

Preparing to Lead
Suppose you will soon take a once-in-a-lifetime trip, a journey to an exotic and exhilarating place where you will spend many weeks immersed in the wonder and beauty of being there. To get ready, you must first anticipate what you will likely need during your stay. Next you prepare for your trip, gathering and packing those things that you will need. Finally the day comes when you realize your anticipation and preparation by leaving on your incredible trip.

Heaven also awaits us as the ultimate destination after a lifetime on this sinful earth. Are you getting ready?

Getting Started
A. Ask and discuss these questions:
What is your ultimate vacation destination? Explain why and what you imagine it would be like to be there now. Assuming that your choice is in another part of the world, how important is it to know the local laws and customs? How might you get into trouble if you don’t know the cultural differences between your country and where you are visiting? How do you prepare for these differences? Are there things about heaven that we should be preparing for? What are they?

B. Ask and discuss these questions:
Suppose you will soon take a once-in-a-lifetime trip, a journey to an exotic and exhilarating place where you will spend many weeks immersed in the wonder and beauty of being there. To get ready, you must first anticipate what you will likely need during your stay. Next you prepare for your trip, gathering and packing those things that you will need. Finally the day comes when you realize your anticipation and preparation by leaving on your incredible trip.

Anarchy is a state of society without government or law. It is not uncommon for someone to advocate anarchy as a solution for society’s failures. Imagine a street intersection where both directions of travel are controlled by traffic signals. An anarchist might not feel bound by the rules of the road. What will happen if one driver entering the intersection is a practicing anarchist? What is the ultimate result if nobody driving on the road obeys simple traffic laws? Is the Bible irrelevant, or does it have valid “rules of the road” for our lives? Explain your answer.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “A common criticism of Scripture, especially the Old Testament, is that it contains ‘do’s and don’ts’ that are irrelevant to today. Numbers 5 might seem
to support this.” Then discuss what it must have been like for a million people to be camping in close proximity to each other in the Sinai Desert. Read Numbers 5:1–4 and discuss the following: How advanced do you think the available medical care was for the Israelites? Can you think of any examples from Scripture? What wisdom is there in this passage about combating the spread of disease? Say: “A skeptic is a person who doubts the truth.” Then read Numbers 5:23–28 and point out the test involving bitter water that the priest was to administer. Ask: Do you believe in putting God to the test? Do the verses we just read involve putting Him to the test? Do you believe this worked to prove guilt or innocence? Why, or why not? Does an answer from God have to be this momentous to be real? Is there such a thing as a small answer to prayer? Give examples.

A. Say: “God has always been concerned with our physical and spiritual well-being.” Then read John 14:1–3 with

Discussing the Ideas

1. Highlight the principles in Numbers 6. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. How are these two passages compatible? Can you think of other examples of this from Scripture (for example, the Ten Commandments and Luke 10:27)?

2. There is a song that starts “Heaven is a wonderful place.” Do you believe that?

3. What is the mental image you have of heaven, and why?

4. What things about heaven cause you concern? How can we become more knowledgeable about what heaven will be like?

Closing the Activity

Discuss: A youth pastor once wrote on the chalkboard all of the descriptive words the class could think of about Jesus’ personality and character. When the suggestions started slowing and the board had over 50 words on it, one of the members blurted out, “If I told all of that to a non-Christian, they would never believe me!” Do you think this is true? Why or why not? What role does the Holy Spirit take in impressing the truth upon those who might be hearing it for the first time? Can you think of any passages of Scripture to support your position?

Hand out the reproducible activity (p. 32), along with pens/pencils. Allow time in class for the students to complete it. Discuss their responses.

Tom Macomber, Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A.

Ella Jean is a visitor to your Sabbath School class. She has never heard of heaven, but has the immediate desire to learn about it. In your own words, write out for her what heaven will be like. Use passages of Scripture such as Revelation 4. Also include in your answer how living in heaven will be different from living on earth.
Worship and Dedication

Surveying the Source
Exod. 25:22; Numbers 7: 8:1–3, 5–19; Zech. 4:1–6, 11–14; Rev. 4:2, 5; 11:4.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Review the meaning and implications of spiritual consecration, dedication, and service.
► Understand that worship is not only a corporate participation in ceremony and song, but that it is also how we express our faith in service and life.
► Examine whether they are daily consecrating themselves to God and moving forward in their relationship with Him.

Preparing to Lead
God gave Moses detailed descriptions on how to build the tabernacle. He also directed its placement—right in the center of the wilderness encampment. God wanted to have center stage in the minds, hearts, and lives of His people as He led them away from Sinai to the Promised Land. He wanted all the tribes to know, from the cloud by day and the fire by night, that He was preparing them to be a nation above all nations, bringing His light to a dark world.

Getting Started
A. Write the words Consecration, Dedication, Worship, and Praise on a large pad or board. Say: “The word consecration is an old-fashioned word in the church today. As Adventists, we can go on about baptism, prophecy, the sanctuary, and righteousness by faith, but consecration gives us pause.”

B. Divide the class into two groups. Distribute the activity sheet (p. 33), a Bible dictionary, and regular dictionary to each group. Have each group do Instruction Set B. Before they come together to share their findings, ask each group to select one or two Scripture passages that speak to the action and meaning of these words and to be prepared to share that with the class.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class in two groups. Group 1 will read Numbers 7. Group 2 will read the rest of the verses for this week’s lesson. Both groups will provide a summary of their verses. Give each group its set of questions:

Group 1. (1) Who were the princes who brought the gifts to Moses?
(2) Why the meticulous recording of each tribe’s gifts, given that the gifts were exactly the same? (Teacher note: When we receive gifts, do we group them all with one acknowledgement, or do we note each person’s gift and honor them by acknowledging them individually?) (3) What was significant about each gift? (Teacher note: Recall that the tabernacle was to be mobile and the activities of the priests in caring for the tabernacle and its ceremonies. Moses did not ask for these gifts. The people gave them spontaneously.)

**Group 2.** (1) What was the significance of the lampstands in the tabernacle? (2) What is the source of our spiritual light and understanding? (John 12:46). (3) Who/what are the two olive branches of the lampstands mentioned in Zechariah 4:1–6, 11–14? (John 14:16; John 15:5, 26; Rev. 4:5). What’s the significance? (3) What was the role of the Israelites in relationship to the world? By extension, what is our role in relationship to the world? (Matt. 5:14).

Once each group has had enough time to cover the questions, have a joint discussion of the highlights of each group’s discoveries.

Ask: (1) “What does coming to Moses with all these gifts teach us about the role we each have in our church and community?” (2) “Are only the priests responsible to and for worship? How do our individual contributions to our spiritual community help to move us forward in relationship to God corporately and individually?”

**B.** Divide the class into four groups. Have each group discuss one of the subsections in this week’s Logos article by way of the following questions:

(1) What elements of today’s worship do these things remind you of? (2) What is different about worship forms today? (3) How does working together to support the worship mission of the community apply to our congregation?

Ask the entire class: ●“What do the experiences of the tabernacle say to us today about worship, community, and service?” ●“What are some of the elements of worship that became confused in the minds of the people by Jesus’ day?” ●“How did He, through teaching and in deed, help people understand the heart of worship?”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why do you think God was so specific about all the details of the tabernacle and its ceremonies?
2. What is the relationship between such orderliness and God’s preferences regarding worship?
3. How should order, reverence, and respect guide our daily lives, especially when it comes to how we treat other people and God’s creation?
4. What does this week’s lesson teach us about living our lives at church? What things might we do differently while we are in church?

**Closing the Activity**

*Say:* “Wherever we choose to worship, we need to remember Who we are worshiping. Church and worship aren’t just weekly activities. Instead, worship is our daily act of giving God what He alone is due. Worship is expressed in our heart, mind, attitude, service. It is our whole being reaching out in response to Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us. He is our light. He gives us the gift of His Spirit. The Spirit is the oil that keeps us burning for Him, that helps us shine the light of His love in a dark world without hope. Then others can see Him in us and with us, as we look forward to His promised return.” Allow a quiet time for personal prayer and contemplation. Then close with prayer.

Jean Kellner, Columbia, Maryland, U.S.A.
Under each of the words below, write words or phrases that identify the meaning of each word. Then, either using a computer/Internet on screen, or with a Bible dictionary and regular dictionary, look up the definitions and fill in any words or phrases you didn’t think of.

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<td>Worship</td>
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<td>Praise</td>
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Trumpet, Blood, Cloud, and Fire

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Be able to explain how the Lord’s Supper relates to God’s plan of salvation from prototypes in the Old Testament to the present.
► Understand the significance of the Lord’s Supper to the church as a body and to the individual believer.
► Experience the Lord’s Supper as a commemoration of God’s mighty acts on behalf of His people in the past, and as a celebration of what He does and will do for us in the present and future.

Preparing to Lead
Whatever the reason, humans have a need to celebrate and commemorate. The Old Testament is full of examples of feasts, fasts, and ceremonies God instituted to remind Israel of their covenant with Him, of hard times in the past from which He delivered them, or of good times which He brought about for them.

All of those things are important. But what could be more important than God’s invasion of human history itself to redeem us through His own blood? That’s what we’re recalling when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper.

Getting Started
A. Start with prayer, introductions, and whatever else is customary in your class. Then distribute the reproducible activity sheet (p. 34). When everyone has completed it, take five to ten minutes to discuss the answers and allow the class members to express any thoughts they may have. Explain that when fully understood, the Lord’s Supper is the most joyful and most solemn occasion of all. It commemorates our liberation from sin, like the various independence days and the biblical Passover commemorate our freedom from hostile powers. Like New Years, it marks a new start every time we celebrate it. Yet like days commemorating wars or those who have died in wars, it is solemn. It marks the occasion when God’s Son had to die so we could live.

B. Start with prayer, introductions, and whatever else is customary in your class. Ask class members to break up into groups of 3–5, then give each group a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 34). Have each group discuss the survey and suggest answers to fit each of the categories.

Each group will then appoint one member to report their answers to the class as a whole. Then discuss their answers according to option A. (This variation may be more effective if you think that class members might be reluctant to share their thoughts and opinions, or if your class is fairly large.)
Delving Into the Word

A. **Say:** “The last supper described in Luke 22:14–20 is how Jesus revealed His covenant with the Christian church. He refers to it as a new covenant. In some ways it is new. In other ways it is a continuation of the other covenants He has made with His people. God doesn’t need a new covenant with us. What He wants for us is the same as He has always wanted for His people—to know Him better and to give Him the opportunity to prove His goodness and love for us. The new covenant is proof that He will go to any length to communicate with us and to save us, even when we don’t know we need saving.” Emphasize that every time we celebrate Communion, God is renewing His covenant with us as individuals, and is giving us the opportunity to leave our sins in the past, just as He did with His people in the past.

Ask individuals to read the following texts: ●Genesis 17; ●Jeremiah 31:31–34; ●Luke 22:14–20. **Ask:** “Describe the covenants between God and His people in these passages.” ●“How are they similar?” ●“How are they different?”

B. **Ask:** “Most of us are aware that the Last Supper was a Passover meal, the one celebrated by Jews every year in commemoration of the Exodus. It was not accidental that Jesus chose to bring His ministry to its climax at this time. Look at each of the symbols of the Passover feast. What parallels to Christ’s ministry do we find in each symbol?”

Have the class explore Exodus 12 for elements of the Passover feast such as the lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and the blood used to mark the doorposts. Some questions that may occur to you or your class are: ●Why is the bread unleavened? (See Matthew 16:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:6–8.) ●Why are the standards for the lamb so precise? (Exod. 12:5; John 1:29; Rev. 5:6–14).

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why is the Lord’s Supper the one rite practiced by all Christian denominations, even those that agree on little else?
2. How did the Exodus point toward the coming redemption?
3. God gives us opportunities to realign ourselves with Him at every Communion. What is the attitude we need to bring with us? How can we cultivate that attitude?
4. “Christ’s example forbids exclusiveness at the Lord’s Supper.”* How can we cultivate inclusiveness in our celebration of the Lord’s Supper?
5. Why do some people think it is necessary to be baptized to participate in the Lord’s Supper, or even to be a member of a specific church or denomination?

Closing the Activity

**Say:** “The Lord’s Supper helps us to remember God’s plans for us.” **Ask:** “Why do you think God instituted the Communion service but no other feasts or festivals?” **Say:** “Human beings are inconsistent. We may start an exercise program or a healthy diet. Then when we start to reap the rewards, we promise ourselves we’re going to keep at it. But then comes one donut . . . and another. Then it becomes too much trouble to get off the couch, and we forget how good we felt and the promise we made to ourselves, unless we have something or someone to remind us. The Lord’s Supper is that thing to remind us what God did for us, and the rewards of following Him.”

*The Desire of Ages, p. 656.

Alan Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>What are we celebrating? Is it joyous or solemn?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
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<td>Birthday</td>
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<td>Easter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving (or equivalent)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veteran’s Day (or equivalent)</td>
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From Complaints to Apostasy

Surveying the Source

Numbers 11–14.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Understand the consequences of complaining and the ramifications of what it says about our trust in God.
► Place greater value in listening to God and will commit to thinking before complaining.
► Be empowered by the positive example of Caleb and Joshua and will strive to be positive role-models for their peers and family.

Preparing to Lead

The Israelites were God’s chosen people, but they seemed to forget His directions and His great love for them. They were only three days into their march when they began to complain.

Getting Started

A. Bring a pop culture news magazine (such as People or Us) to class. Ask someone to find one or two stories which demonstrate why people complain. It may be a story about a health issue, a relationship issue, a financial issue, etc. Discuss how God can use that situation to show His love for us and give us more reasons to trust Him than to complain. Discuss the decisions that people make when looking at something as a reason to trust God or as a reason to complain.

B. Have the class discuss the following scenario: Two students are classmates. One comes from a tough background. He grew up with a single parent, left home at 16 to work, and doesn’t have many people in his life whom he can trust. The other student comes from a big family, gets good grades, and has a happy disposition. Ask: “What can each student do to improve his perspective on life and change it from a complaining one to a healthy one that God can be a part of?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Briefly describe Moses’ relationship to God, Aaron and Miriam, Caleb and Joshua, and the people of Israel (read selections from Numbers 11–14). Discuss how would they have related to God if they had trusted Him. Ask several people from the group to describe a healthy way of “complaining”—one that is based on a relationship of trust with God.

B. Read to the class selections from Numbers 11. Discuss the story of Moses’ faith in God compared to the Israelites complaints about food. Discuss how the Israelites could have seen the miracle of manna yet still be unaware of God’s awesome power. Ask the students to share...
illustrations from their own lives where people have complained about something when instead they could have done some-
thing about the situation, or they just needed to wait.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Numbers 11:23 says, “‘Is the Lord’s arm too short?’” (NIV). What does that mean? Can you share a time when you’ve seen God’s long arm help you or someone you know?
2. What made Miriam and Aaron jealous of Moses’ leadership?
3. What was God’s response to their complaining?
4. Have you ever been around a complainer? What do you observe about people when they are around someone who complains?
5. In Numbers 13:26–30, what techniques did Caleb use to try to stop the complainers? How is that similar to what we can do when we face a complainer?
6. How do we stop ourselves from complaining? Give an example to the class.
7. What kind of advice could you give to friends who like to complain (tactfully, of course)? What Bible verses or stories could you share with them to help them decide to stop complaining?

**Closing the Activity**

Using your notepad or a large piece of paper, make a vertical line to divide the paper in half. On the left side, make a list of things people complain about. On the right side, make a list of how trusting in God might change the issues (lessons learned, changed perspective, be a witness to others, etc.).

Or pass out copies of the reproducible activity (p. 35). Give them about 15 minutes to work on it. Then have them share some of their responses.

Close with prayer.

*Stephanie Yamniuk, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada*
1. Write a reflection about your own life in response to this question: Do you complain because the roses have thorns, or rejoice because the thorns have roses? Why?

2. Make a list of things to be happy about. Now think of some complaints that you’ve heard others make about these same things. What do you choose to do?

3. Describe five spiritual responses that can stop complaints.

4. Write a letter to a friend or family member who is a complainer. Cite a few Bible verses that you could give to that person that deal with complaining. (Use the back of this paper if you need to.)

Counteracting Complaining

Lesson 5

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Planning Ahead

Surveying the Source

Num. 15:2; 2 Cor. 2:15, 16; Gal. 3:26–29; Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:1–11.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Experience the mercy of God who has great plans for us in spite of our disappointments and failures.
► Discover new ways to keep the mind centered on God.

► Learn to set priorities so that submitting to the plans God has for us will take precedence over our trying to control the future.

Preparing to Lead

Following their defeat at the hands of the Canaanites and the Amalekites, Israel retreated to the wilderness. God had promised that this rebellious generation would not occupy the Promised Land. However, in spite of their failure to trust Him with their future, He did not erase them from His plans. As if to guarantee His promises, He laid out specific instructions about how their future generations must live when they would occupy the Promised Land. These details included worship rituals, treatment of foreigners, and Sabbath observances are included here.

Getting Started

A. Say: “Your class is the coaching staff for a high school sports team (choose the specific sport). Your team has just endured their worst nightmare defeat of the season. The head coach has announced that none of the seniors will start the next game, so there is a general feeling of discouragement among the athletes. Students are speculating that ‘Coach’ is so angry he will dismiss the entire team. Tomorrow afternoon is the first practice since the defeat. What approach should be taken to restore feelings of confidence and enthusiasm?”

“Assuming that there are a lot of bad feelings between the starters (insiders) and the bench players (outsiders), what could ‘Coach’ say to unify the squad?”

B. Bring a foot-long section of pine 2 x 4 lumber to class. Bring several tools such as hammers, screwdrivers, chisels, etc., which class members will use to mar the wood’s surface. After beating the wood, discuss which tools or strategies could be used to restore the natural beauty of the lumber. Discuss what plans and strategies God uses to restore human beings who have marred His plans. Ask: “How might Numbers 15 fit into a divine restoration strategy?”

Materials
hammer, chisel, lumber, screwdrivers, notepads, pencils
Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into three smaller groups (two to eight people). Each group should appoint a scribe to record the major concepts the group will develop. When the smaller groups come back together, the scribes will report these concepts to the entire class.

The first group will study Numbers 15:1–10, 18–21.

Discussion points: ●“How do these Old Testament offerings display thankfulness?” ●“How should contemporary Christians display thankfulness today?” ●“How does Paul apply concepts of thankfulness in Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 2:15; and Ephesians 5:1, 2?”

The second group will study Numbers 15:11–16.

Discussion points: ●“How should Adventist Christians relate to those who belong to other denominations and other religions?” ●“What principles should govern the relationships of ethnic groups within the church?” ●“How does Paul apply these concepts in the New Testament (Galatians 3:26–29; Colossians 3:11)?”

The third group will study Numbers 15:37–41.

Discussion points: ●“What was the significance of the tassels?” ●“What practices within our daily routines constantly remind us of God’s providential care?”

Allow ample time for small group discussion, remembering to also allow sufficient time for “reporting” to the larger group.

B. Using the reproducible activity sheet for this lesson (p. 36), discuss the various components of Numbers 15. Chart the following: the Old Testament principle as enunciated in this chapter (or other parts of the Old Testament), the New Testament refinements or examples, and finally, contemporary applications.

Ask: “What safeguards can ensure that our contemporary applications harmonize with the original intent found in these scriptural passages?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. What attitudes and methods encourage defeated people to regain their confidence and enthusiasm? Which ones discourage?
2. Which spiritual disciplines help you to stay focused on spiritual realities rather than becoming distracted with worldly things?
3. How should we treat those who hold views which we believe are wrong? How can our faith be shared without somehow acting superior?
4. How would you relate the blue tassels to 1 Thessalonians 5:17?
5. Why do you think Sabbath observance was so vigorously enforced in Numbers 15?
6. How do sins of ignorance and defiance differ, and why did the atonement rituals for each, as recorded in Numbers 15, differ?

Closing the Activity

Ask class members to share brief stories of forgiveness. The stories may be personal testimonies or stories they have heard or read. Then ask the following questions: (1) How do you demonstrate forgiveness or how would you like forgiveness demonstrated toward you? (2) How does God demonstrate forgiveness and restore our spiritual confidence? Finding ways to do that in our community is our assignment for this week.

Conclude with prayer.

Dan Solis, College Place, Washington, U.S.A.
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<td>Numbers 15:14–16</td>
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<td>Isaiah 56:6, 7</td>
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<td>Numbers 15:37–41</td>
<td>2 Corinthians 8:15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastes 12:1–7</td>
<td>Galatians 6:7</td>
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<td>Colossians 4:1</td>
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Power Struggle

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Learn that leadership has many challenges.
► Identify signs of a rebellious spirit.
► Learn practical ways to cope with congregational conflicts.

Preparing to Lead
The makeup of any congregation is diverse and dynamic. The diversity can be cultural, racial, and social-economical. This diversity also includes the various personality and temperament types. Add to this dynamic group, age, gender, and generational differences, music preferences, worship styles, and pastoral leadership style and you have a potential power struggle. The power struggles experienced today in local congregations are nothing new. Both the Old and New Testaments tell us of similar situations that were often tragic.

Getting Started
A. Say: “The book Word Origins: A Classic Exploration of Words and Language, says that a 'rebellion' is an unsuccessful attempt at revolution. In Latin, rebellio meant “a renewal of war,” based on re-, “ anew,” and bellum, “ war.” The implication is that rebels usually want to try again. A rebellious nature is one that is constantly ready to renew the battle’ (p. 216).” Then ask the class to share stories of rebellion or rebels they’ve heard about. Ask them to describe a typical teenage rebellion, and what a political rebellion looks like.
B. Invite your class to think about the history of their church—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Remind them that a congregation is a dynamic organism with constant movement and development. This movement and development can create power struggles. Ask: ● “What are some of the power struggles your church has been through?” ● “What were the issues at stake?” ● Were the issues superficial, like the color of the carpet, or were they deeper issues, like pastoral leadership style or doctrinal interpretation?” ● “How did the congregation resolve the conflict?” ● “What residues of the conflict might still be floating in the air?”

Delving Into the Word
A. In the Seventh-Adventist Church, congregational leaders are nominated by a committee and voted by the church. Pastoral leadership is voted by the local conference committee and then assigned to the congregation. Ask: ● “Do local...
congregational leaders have an advantage over pastoral leadership since they are voted by the church? If so, what is that advantage?” ● “Is the pastor seen/treated differently since he or she is appointed by the conference?” ● “Compare this to how Moses, Aaron, and Korah were elected.” ● “Korah gathered 250 people in support of him. Who were these people?” ● “What was the core issue Korah had with Moses and Aaron’s leadership? Was it their style? their views?” ● “Why should Korah have talked to Moses and Aaron alone first about the issue?” ● “What are the advantages and disadvantages of rallying support first?” ● “Is it wrong to disagree with our leaders? Why or why not?”

Do the reproducible activity on page 37.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Is it wrong to disagree with our leaders? Why or why not?
2. When faced with conflict, how should congregations go about resolving it?
3. What are the benefits of having a process to appoint pastors to local churches?
4. How drastic should measures be in dealing with “rebels” in the church?
5. What role does jealousy play in power struggles?
6. Do leaders envy other leaders? In what areas?
7. Is there any time when it might be OK to rebel? If so, when?

**Closing the Activity**

Pass out the reproducible activity on page 37. Have the students write a letter to your pastor on this “piece of stationery” to let him/her know how much they appreciate his/her ministry. Instruct them to give the minister his/her letter when they leave church today.

Sergio Torres, Miami, Florida, U.S.A.
Dear Pastor ________________________________,

Sincerely,

Sincerely,
Priests and Levites

Surveying the Source
Numbers 9: 18; 19; 1 Pet. 2:9; Heb. 9:13, 14; Rev. 14:6–12.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Know that God calls them to be a chosen people.
► Know that the blood of Jesus cleanses them from all sin.
► Feel grateful for God’s call and for Jesus’ sacrifice.
► Respond by inviting the Holy Spirit to make a difference in one area of their lives.

Preparing to Lead
First Peter 2:9 states: “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (NIV). This lesson deals with several instances of God’s direction in the lives of the ancient Israelites: (1) how to observe Passover, (2) the cloud of God’s presence, (3) commands for ordering the priesthood, and (4) purification from defilement. In each of these, God provided for the specific needs of His people. The death of Jesus gives these Old Testament passages relevance to our lives today. They teach us that Jesus is the One who meets our needs and calls us to be His chosen people to make a difference in our culture.

Getting Started
A. Pair/Share. Share an experience you have had when you were chosen for a specific task. Then invite the participants to work in pairs and share an experience when someone chose them for a specific task. Ask them to share what the task was, who gave them this task, and what they did.

Debrief: ● “How did you feel being chosen for a specific task?” ● “Was it a positive or negative experience?” ● “How is being chosen for a specific task similar to being chosen by God?”

Say: “In our lesson this week we are called a ‘chosen people’ and given a specific task to do. Let’s discover how this description applies to us today.”

B. Pair/Share. Share an experience you have had when you became especially dirty. What made you dirty? How did you get clean? Then invite the participants to share an experience when they were very dirty and needed to clean up. Allow two minutes for each pair.

Debrief: ● “Why did you want to be clean?” ● “What did you do to become clean again?” ● “How is this similar to being cleansed of our sins by Jesus?”

Say: “Our lesson this week discusses the ritual of water cleansing that God gave to the ancient Israelites. Let’s discover how this ancient ritual applies to us today.”
**Delving Into the Word**

**A. Divide the participants into sub-groups of 4 to 8 people. Give each sub-group one of the following assignments.**

Allow 10 minutes for each sub-group to read their texts and answer their questions. Then ask each sub-group to report on their passage and summarize their findings for the whole group. Here are the assignments:

**Group 1—Numbers 9:1–11, 15–18, 22, 23.**
(1) Who could not celebrate this specific Passover? Why?
(2) What did Moses do to answer their question? What does this reveal about him?
(3) What provision did God make for this group?
(4) How did the Israelites know when and where to move?
(5) What does the cloud demonstrate about God?

**Group 2—Numbers 18:1–4, 7–10, 20–29.**
(1) How were the priests in ancient Israel to be supported?
(2) Why do you think the priesthood is called a “gift”?
(3) What is significant about verse 20?
(4) Why did God direct the Levites to also tithe?
(5) Seventh-day Adventists do not have priests but pastors. Why?

**Group 3—Numbers 19:1–10, 17–19, 22, Hebrews 9:13, 14.**
(1) What specific details were given in regards to selecting and burning the red heifer? (2) How did an “unclean” person get clean? (3) What does Jesus’ blood cleanse? Why is this contrast to the ashes of the red heifer important?
(4) What must we do today to be clean?

**Group 4—1 Peter 2:9.**
(1) Identify four “labels” Peter gave Christians.
(2) Which one of these is different from the “labels” given to the Israelites?
(3) Why is it significant that each believer is a priest?
(4) According to Peter, what is God’s purpose in choosing us?

**B. Invite the participants to scan each passage below, identify the main point, and make a present-day application. Allow 3–4 minutes for each passage to be read. Then ask for their responses. Write summary statements on a flipchart.**

The passages are:


**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why do you think God instructed the Israelites to observe Passover one year after the Exodus?
2. What does it demonstrate about God that He provided for those who were unable to participate in the Passover?
3. Why don’t we have a visible cloud of God’s presence today? Do we have something better? If so, what is it?
4. God instructed that the “best and holiest” part of everything be given as tithe. What does this tell us about tithing today?
5. The tribe of Levi was given no land inheritance in Canaan, for God said, “I am your share and your inheritance.” What does this mean?
6. What was the impact upon the ancient Hebrews of the red heifer ritual?
7. How does the cleansing ritual apply to us today?
8. What is the point of being specially chosen by God?

**Closing the Activity**

Make one copy of the closing activity (p. 38) to give to each participant. Instruct the participants to reflect upon the question in each box and write their answers. Invite them to reflect upon the last box. Allow 4–6 minutes. Then invite the participants to divide into pairs and pray for each other. Instruct the partners to ask each other: “How can I pray for you?” Offer a closing prayer for the whole group after the pairs are done.

Kathy Goddard, Ooltewah, Tennessee, U.S.A.

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Read each lesson summary and reflect upon the question following it. Write your response in the space provided.

**Lesson Summary One:** God meets the needs of His people.

What need(s) can I entrust with God right now?

**Lesson Summary Two:** We can come with confidence before God’s throne.

What barriers keep me from coming with confidence to God?

**Lesson Summary Three:** The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all defilement.

What areas of my life needs to be cleaned up?

**Lesson Summary Four:** We are called to be *su generis*—a class of our own—to declare His praise to our generation.

What am I doing to demonstrate that I am specially chosen by God? What can I do to declare His praise to my generation?

Which point above is the Holy Spirit calling you to apply to your life right now? What difference would it make if you did?
The Sin of Moses and Aaron

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Explore their own spiritual journeys and make wise choices that will lead them closer to God’s plan for their lives.
► Identify specific ways in which God has guided them through the deserts and obstacles in their own lives.
► Experience how God continues to love them with patience and grace in spite of their mistakes and disobedience.

Preparing to Lead

Make a timeline of the events in Numbers 20 and 21. Chart the events along the horizontal axis, then use markers to draw three different-colored graph lines to illustrate how obedient to God’s instructions you think Moses (green), Aaron (blue), and the Israelites (orange) were throughout the events.

Then draw three more graph lines along the timeline to illustrate how much love (red), patience (yellow), and grace (purple) you think God demonstrated throughout the stories. Then do a similar timeline and graph for your own life journey. Reflect prayerfully on what you have experienced during this activity.

Getting Started

A. Choose one person to write four simple instructions that that person could ask others to perform. Number people from 1–4 and ask them to respond to this person’s instructions in one of these ways: (1) obey willingly; (2) obey reluctantly and complain; (3) actively disobey, but silently; (4) disobey and complain loudly.

Then instruct the person to ask people to perform the different activities until someone obeys him or her willingly. Ask this person how he or she felt during the experience. Discuss the connections between this activity, this week’s Bible study, and Moses’ and God’s experiences with the Israelites.

B. Give each person an index card and a marker pen. Have them write the name of any well-known Bible character on the card. Collect the cards, and redistribute one to each class member. Ask people to pair up and discuss the character on their card. Invite them to think of at least one time when this person disobeyed God’s instructions, yet He continued to love and bless that person. Then go around the class naming the characters and how God worked in their lives. Reflect on the hope these stories offer us today.

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into three sets of groups, depending on the size of your class, and give each group 6 inches or 2-meter lengths of plain wallpaper and
some marker pens. Invite each group to create a timeline for the stories in Numbers 20 and 21 that fills the length of the paper, with plenty of space along the line.

Ask each group to focus on one of the following: God; Moses and Aaron; or the Israelites. Then ask them to work together on their timeline, in any way they like, and to illustrate (with words, pictures, or cartoon faces, etc.) the many possible feelings their characters may have been experiencing during the different events. Next to each identified emotion, they need to write a few words about why they thought the person or group might be feeling this way.

Allow time at the end of the activity for each group to talk together about their “emotional timeline” experience. Stick the timelines on the walls, and let the class wander around, reading what has been written. Close by inviting class members to share their reflections on the activity.

B. Divide the class into seven groups

Discussing the Ideas

1. How do we know God’s will for our lives when He doesn’t speak to us directly, as He did to Moses and Aaron?

2. When you feel like complaining about the leaders in the church or at work, what other responses could you make? How can you encourage your leaders and lighten their heavy loads?

3. When the Israelites were bitten by snakes, all they had to do was look at the bronze snake to be healed. How can looking up at a loving God bring healing into your life?

4. The Israelites faced many obstacles along the way. Sometimes God led them around the obstacle and sometimes He destroyed the obstacle. What obstacles are there in your life, and how do you think God wants to help you tackle them?

5. Can you remember a time when you disobeyed God but He made something beautiful out of your mistake? What did this experience teach you about God’s love?

Closing the Activity

Give each person a copy of the reproducible activity sheet, some pens and markers and allow each person five minutes to begin the activity. They may wish to complete it at home.

Give each person a lidded jar with a small amount of sand in the bottom. Include a tea light to represent God’s guiding light over the Israelites on their journey. This is their “desert jar.” As a reminder of His continued love and protection, invite them to take it home and add small items to it that symbolize how God has taken care of them in the deserts of their lives.

Karen Holford, Hemel Hempstead, Herts, England

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My Lifeline—God’s Love Space

On the chart below, express your life’s journey so that the line you draw indicates your closeness to God/obedience over the years.

Notice that the lower your line dips, the greater becomes the area of God’s love above the line.

Write along your journey line some of the special evidences of God’s love you have experienced.

God’s love for me

Closeness to God/obedience to His will

Years of my life
The “Madness” of the Prophet

Surveying the Source

Numbers 22, 23, 24; Deut. 1:30; 20:4; Matt. 15:14; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Pet. 2:12–16; Rev. 3:17, 18.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

- Contemplate what it means to have God use roadblocks in life to protect them from unseen danger.
- Evaluate and discover what it means to let God speak through someone giving them wise counsel.
- Appreciate the serious nature of going against the will of God in spite of what others ask them to do.

Preparing to Lead

“Angels help and protect those who walk humbly before God. Never will our Lord betray one who trusts in Him.” (Prophets and Kings, p. 571).

Getting Started

A. Ask: “What emotions do you experience when you see or read about someone abusing an animal?”

B. Say: “Share a time you felt that an angel intervened in the circumstances of your life.”

Delving Into the Word

A. Take turns reading Numbers 22 aloud in the group as a whole. Then divide the class into smaller groups according to their interest in (1) magazines, (2) television, (3) newspapers, or (4) the World Wide Web. Have each group write a headline to an article for their media that would draw attention to a story of a talking animal. Report back to the class and share each group’s creative writing.

B. Take turns reading Numbers 22–24 aloud in the group as a whole. Divide the class into pairs or four small groups. Pass out the activity sheet (p. 40). Assign Group 1 Balaam’s first oracle, Group 2 his second oracle, Group 3 his third oracle, and Group 4 his fourth and final oracle. Have each group determine from their passage Balak’s desire, Balaam’s desire, and God’s desire.

After the allotted time, come together to determine whether or not there are any common themes that flow through all of the oracles. Discuss what we can learn from Balaam and Balak’s experience that we can apply to our lives today.

Discussing the Ideas

1. What roadblocks are you encountering that might be part of God’s plan for your life?

2. If Balaam had a sure word from God the first time that he should not go to Balak, why did he tell Balak’s messen-
givers he would inquire of God again?
3. Why did God change His mind about allowing Balaam to go with Balak’s noblemen?
4. Explain what you believe was the key assumption Balaam was making each time he told the noblemen that he could not go with them?
5. In the story of Balaam and Balak, what surprised you the most?
6. Review the five prophecies Balaam gave to Balak. In what way did cursings turn to blessings?
7. Share a time when you realized God put words in your mouth or sent an angel to protect you. When you recognized what had taken place, how did you feel?
8. When making an important decision, why is it a good idea to let the decision settle in your mind awhile before acting on it?

Closing the Activity

This lesson challenges us to reflect on the fact that God only wants good for each of His children. Point out that the same Jesus who allowed an animal to see danger ahead when Balaam couldn’t is there for them today.

Distribute pieces of paper and pencils to everyone. Ask the class to reflect on a potential roadblock they may be experiencing or a circumstance they are facing that they need to consult God before doing.

Close by having each individual write out a short prayer focusing either on a roadblock or on something they need to consult with God about before doing. Don’t collect the papers, but close with prayer for the class asking God to bless each one this week and to honor their request.

Carole Kilcher, Burleson, Texas, U.S.A.
There are four messages given to Balak by Balaam in Numbers 23 and 24. In this context, an oracle is a message from God given by a person considered to be a source of wise counsel or prophetic opinion.

● Group #1: Balaam’s First Oracle (Num. 23:1–12)
  What is Balak’s desire?
  What is Balaam’s desire?
  What is God’s desire?

● Group #2: Balaam’s Second Oracle (Num. 23:13–26)
  What is Balak’s desire?
  What is Balaam’s desire?
  What is God’s desire?

● Group #3: Balaam’s Third Oracle (Num. 23:27–24:13)
  What is Balak’s desire?
  What is Balaam’s desire?
  What is God’s desire?

● Group #4: Balaam’s Fourth and Final Oracle (Num. 24:14–25)
  What is Balak’s desire?
  What is Balaam’s desire?
  What is God’s desire?
Immorality on the Border

Surveying the Source
Numbers 25:31; Deut. 21:10–14; 1 Cor. 10:1–14; Rev. 2:14.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Acknowledge that sexual immorality of any kind is a sin and therefore a symptom of a broken relationship with God.
► List and discuss ways that Christians can avoid sexual immorality.
► Affirm a commitment to putting God first, especially when it comes to personal sexuality.

Preparing to Lead
“No natural feelings are high or low, holy or unholy, in themselves. They are all holy when God’s hand is on the rein. They all go bad when they set up on their own and make themselves into false gods.”

“Christianity recognizes that we have desire gone mad within us. But it does not seek to rectify the problem by killing desire; rather, it seeks the healing of desire, just as it seeks the healing of every other part of our human being.”

Getting Started
A. Prepare two small gift-wrapped packages. One should contain a candy bar or other inexpensive sweet. The other should contain enough money to purchase the candy several times over. Ask for a volunteer to open the first package. Ask whether he or she would rather keep the candy, or exchange it for the contents of the other box. (If they keep the candy, ask for a second volunteer to open the other box.) Discuss: “When I follow God’s plan for my sexuality, I am choosing the more lasting, valuable gift.”

B. Discuss this sentence from a bumper sticker: “Your body may be a temple, but mine is an amusement park.” List the characteristics of a temple, and contrast them with those of an amusement park. Read Genesis 1:27 and 1 Corinthians 6:12–20. Ask: ●“Why is the ‘amusement park’ concept not an option?” ●“What do we say about our relationship to God when we leave Him out of our sexual choices?”

Delving Into the Word
A. On a flipchart or whiteboard, write the following headings: Sex God’s Way, and Sexual Immorality. Ask the group to read each of the following passages, then place the names of the characters from each story under one heading or the other: ●Gen. 29:16–21 (Jacob, Rachel); ●Genesis 39 (Joseph, Potiphar’s wife); ●Joshua 2; 6:25; Matt. 1:5 (Rahab); ●2 Samuel 11 (David, Bathsheba); ●Hosea 1, 3 (Hosea, Gomer); ●Matt. 1:18–25 (Mary, Joseph); ●John 8:3–11 (woman).
Discuss the following for each person: 1. Do you think this person regretted his/her choice(s)? 2. What were the consequences of this person’s choice(s)? 3. Did this person always make good choices about sexual issues? 4. What principles can we condense from this person’s experience to guide our own choices? (List answers on the board if space allows.)

B. Define the following terms: adultery, fornication, sexual immorality, homosexuality. Cite biblical examples of

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. How is sexual immorality connected to the first commandment?
2. Why do you think the Israelites seemed to be susceptible to sins of sexual immorality?
3. Some believe that sexual immorality is a symptom of a larger problem. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
4. Why do you think Satan has devoted so much energy to perverting God’s gift of sex and marriage, especially in current times?
5. What are your options if you have already made bad sexual choices?
6. How did Jesus expand upon the seventh commandment? Do you think this came as a shock to His listeners? Explain.
7. What does sexual purity look like in the life of a single Christian? A married one?

**Closing the Activity**

Distribute and read the passage from *The Great Divorce*, by C. S. Lewis (p. 41). Ask the group to list things we give up when we sacrifice lust. Contrast the things we gain when we submit our desires to God.

Bring enough small polished stones (available in craft stores) or pebbles for everyone in your group to have one. Read 1 Peter 2:5–12. *Ask:* •“What reasons for sexual purity does this passage emphasize?”

Offer class members the opportunity to take a stone as an affirmation of their choice to let God build them into His temple.

Sharon Wright, Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A.

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...On his shoulder was a little red lizard, and it was twitching its tail like a whip and whispering things in his ear. ... “Would you like me to make him quiet?” said the flaming Spirit—an angel, as I now understood. ... “Do what you like,” [he] bellowed ... but ended, whimpering, “God help me. God help me.” ...Something seemed to be happening to the lizard. ... So far from dying, the creature was still struggling and even growing bigger as it struggled. And as it grew, it changed. ... Suddenly I started back, rubbing my eyes. What stood before me was the greatest stallion I have ever seen, silvery white but with mane and tail of gold. It was smooth and shining, rippled with swells of flesh and muscle, whinneying and stamping with its hoofs. ... The new-made man turned and clapped the new horse’s neck. It nosed his bright body. ... The man turned from it, flung himself at the feet of the Burning One, and embraced them. When he rose I thought his face shone with tears. ... In joyous haste the young man leaped upon the horse’s back. Turning in his seat he waved a farewell, then nudged the stallion with his heels. They were off before I knew well what was happening (The Great Divorce, pp. 106, 110–112).

When I sacrifice lust, I give up... When I submit my desires to God, I gain...

When I sacrifice lust, I give up...
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When I submit my desires to God, I gain...
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The Second Generation: Admonitions

Surveying the Source

*Numbers 26–32; Prov. 27:6; Romans 5.*

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Contemplate areas in which God might be telling them to change.
► Understand that God loves us, even when we make mistakes.
► Determine to follow God no matter what the cost, no matter how many obstacles.

Preparing to Lead

It is falsely comforting to think that our relationship with God relies on many factors, some of which are out of our control, such as genetics, the behavior of others, or even our church family. It gives us a convenient excuse when we don’t feel like making the necessary effort to develop our relationship with Him. But the truth is, our relationship with God is between just two beings: us and Him. We answer to God alone about how we handle our relationship with Him, whether we try to run the show ourselves—like the Israelites—or humbly follow His leading, as Moses did.

Getting Started

A. **Say:** “When we follow God, He promises to save us spiritually for eternity. And while He may even save us from the consequences of our sins here on earth, He does not promise to do so.”

   Discuss how the Israelites were not spared their 40 years in the wilderness. Hold up one balloon and ask what happens if you overfill a balloon. Blow up the balloon until it pops. **Ask:** “Can we make the balloon whole again?” **Say:** “Likewise, we cannot fix all the consequences of our mistakes. But God can still save us if we will follow Him.”

B. The good news of the gospel is that no matter what a train wreck we have made of our lives, God can save us. He can turn us around, and He can even make good things come out of our terrible experiences.

   Pass out the reproducible activity sheets (p. 42). After students have completed the activity, explain that this is our opportunity to start fresh. God gives each one of us a chance to start over, to recommit ourselves to Him, and to begin again. Encourage each student to take advantage of that opportunity this week.

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide students into four groups.

   Write the following verses on index cards and give each group one card. Each group should look up their text and discuss

   - Numbers 26–32
   - Proverbs 27:6
   - Romans 5
ways they can pantomime the verse for the others to guess. When all the groups are done, have each group as a whole or a representative from the group act out the verse and ask other groups to guess what the verse is saying.

Verses: ●“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Ps. 103:12, NIV); ●“Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isa. 1:18, NIV). ●“You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot” (Mic. 7:19, NIV); ●“And hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19, NIV).

Discuss with the class what each of these verses mean and how they give us hope no matter what we have done in our lives. Ask if anyone can contribute any other verses describing how God will deal with our sins.

B. Have the following written on a whiteboard ahead of time: ●Moses (Exod. 2:11–13; Num. 20:1–12); ●David (2 Samuel 11–12:23); ●Peter (Matt. 6:18–20; John 21:15–19); ●Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9); ●Saul/Paul (Acts 9:1–20).

Say: “The Bible offers us many examples of God’s redemptive power. In its pages we find the stories of men and women who made mistakes and received His grace and forgiveness.” Then ask students to look up the stories of these individuals and answer some of the following questions about their lives: ●Where did this person go wrong? ●What was his sin? ●How were they redeemed? ●What hope does this give me in my life? ●Does this story apply in any way to my life? If so, how?

Say: “While we may not be able to identify with the particular sin of the individuals we have talked about today, each of us, no matter to what degree, has ‘sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (Rom. 3:23, NIV). The good news is that Christ can save us if we trust in Him.” Then encourage students to make a renewed commitment to God this week and receive His grace and mercy for themselves.

Discussing the Ideas

1. In what ways do you feel God is leading (and not following) in your life?
2. What are some specific examples of ways you have personally felt God’s leading in your life?
3. Why do you think God allows us to experience the consequences of our sins sometimes, but not always?
4. What, specifically, would improve your relationship with God today?
5. Name some ways God speaks to us.

6. In what ways can we keep our relationship with God strong when we are discouraged or facing trying times in our lives?
7. What can we learn from Moses’ humble submission to God’s decision not to let him into the Promised Land?
8. How do you react when God leads you in a direction you don’t want to go? How should you act instead?

Closing the Activity

Pass out stones, several to each student. Instruct them to spend time this week thinking and praying about what God might be challenging them to let go of—bad habits or outright sin. They should either write the sin or bad habit on one of the stones or symbolically place it on the stone and repent of it, giving it to God. Then they should throw the stone, demonstrating their desire to put the sin far from them. Additionally, they can claim this text: “Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts” (Ps. 119:94, NIV).

Céleste Perrino-Walker, Rutland, Vermont, U.S.A.
Because our relationship with God is not face to face, it sometimes helps to use tangible methods of communicating with Him. Participate in the following dialogue with God. Then write His response found in Isaiah 1:18.

**God:** What is standing in the way of you and me having a closer relationship?

**You:**

**God:** If you could improve one area of our relationship, what would it be?

**You:**

**God:** Let me carry your burdens. Write them out for Me.

**You:**

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**God’s Response (Isa. 1:18):**

Copyrigth 2009 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
Cities of Refuge

Surveying the Source
Numbers 33–36; Josh. 20:1–7; Ephesians 2.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Draw a correlation between the cities of refuge and the refuge found in Christ.
► Help to create a safety zone/refuge in the local church.
► Renew their commitment to Christ as the only true refuge.

Preparing to Lead
“Forty-eight cities in different parts of the country were assigned the Levites as their inheritance. . . . Six of the cities assigned to the Levites—three on each side of the Jordan—were appointed as cities of refuge, to which the manslayer might flee for safety.” 1 Ephesians 2:12, 13 teach us that Christ is our refuge. He has paid the penalty for our sins. All we have to do is follow the clearly marked signs on the well-maintained road to reach our place of refuge.

Getting Started
A. Use the reproducible activity on page 43. The answers are: (1) six, (2) three, (3) a half day’s walk, (4) Levites, (5) for people who had accidentally killed someone, (6) Hebrews, strangers, and sojourners, (7) the high priest died, (8) the person left the city, (9) Christ, (10) Christ paid the price for those who accept Him; death is the penalty for all others. Discuss what could be modern-day cities of refuge in today’s world, and why.

Delving Into the Word
A. Have seven class members read aloud one verse each of Numbers 35:9–15.
Say: “The Levites were God’s agents of mercy. His plan for the Promised Land included urban areas. And the Levites acted on His behalf as organizers and leaders of 48 cities, caring for flawed humans in the six cities of refuge.”

Share the following quotes: “Two students in the law were appointed to accompany [the manslayer]” in case the avenger overtook him before he reached the city. In the city of refuge, the manslayer was assigned a home and was taught a trade. “The mothers of the high
priests used to feed and clothe these unfortunate fugitives.” Ellen White stated about Numbers 35:11, “This merciful provision was rendered necessary by the ancient custom of private vengeance. . . .” In contrast, the role of other cultures’ priests is described in the following way: “The priestly class emerged as the primary organizers of the new urban order. It fell to them to articulate the divine principles placing man over nature, inculcate systems of worship, and regulate the activities of a large number of often unrelated people around complex communal tasks. . . . Priests set the calendars that determined times for work worship, and feasting for the entire population.” Control and power were their watchwords.

B. Have seven class members read aloud one verse each of Ephesians 2:12–18. Say: “When Christ died, the ceremonial laws pointing to His death were abolished. He paid the price for our transgressions. Now, instead of fleeing to a location for refuge, we find refuge in Christ.”

Next, have five class members read aloud one verse each of 2 Corinthians 5:16–20. Say: “When we accept Christ’s safety, we become His ambassadors. As such, we take the role of the Levites—caring for fellow flawed humans. Our church should be a hospital for sinners, not a sanctuary for saints. The church is a safety zone. Its members are agents of safety. This is the directive from God. Some principles for creating a safety zone include respect for everyone, listening to people regardless of their opinions, freedom for people to express their views, limiting judgmental attitudes, and not repeating confidences that people share. Creating a safety zone doesn’t mean compromising your values. Rather you allow others to express their concerns and questions—exploring questions together. They won’t care what you know until they know you care.”

Discussing the Ideas

1. When God divided up the Promised Land, why was the tribe of Levi assigned cities and not grazing land?
2. What does it mean to have Christ as our city of refuge?
3. What are the clearly marked signs on the well-maintained road to Christ—our place of refuge?
4. What activities or places are people relying on for refuge but that do not offer true safety?
5. How can we make our church a refuge/haven for flawed people?
6. How is your life different now that you’ve learned about cities of refuge?

Closing the Activity

Light a candle and put it under the whole pot. Light the second candle. Place the glued-together pot over it. Say: “We can’t be seen if we’re perfect. Only flawed pots show light.” Next, have someone read Matthew 5:14–16. Say: “These verses teach us that our deeds reflect on God. Because we have refuge in Christ, we serve the community on Christ’s behalf. That is how the community knows our church is a safe place for flawed humans.” Close with a prayer that we can all be a safe haven for someone during the coming week.

Norma Sahlin, Springboro, Ohio, U.S.A.

1. There were ______ cities of refuge.

2. _____ cities of refuge were on the eastern side of the Jordan.

3. The __________ lived in the cities and staffed them.

4. Why have cities of refuge? ____________________

5. Who could seek shelter in the cities of refuge? ____________

6. If a person accidentally killed someone, they could stay in a city of refuge until _____________, and then return home.

7. What safe zone is available today? ____________________

8. What is the penalty for flawed humans today? ____________.