Introduction

The teacher's guide for CQ is unlike anything previously produced for adult Sabbath Schools. It is an attempt to change the environment in today's Sabbath School classes, to offer stimulating and practical approaches to the utilization of CQ in the study of God's Word.

Most Sabbath School members consider a successful class as nothing more than a stimulating discussion. Although thought-provoking discussion questions make up a part of CQ's teaching guide, exercises in active and interactive learning form the backbone of its approach. The goal is to improve the quality of teaching in our Sabbath Schools through the use of innovative teaching methods.

The following material describes in detail the purpose of each component of a week's teaching guide. The contents for each of these sections are deliberate and specific:

**Surveying the Source**
The scriptural basis for the teaching plan. It corresponds exactly with the scriptural basis of the "Logos" section of the lesson in CQ and the content of the adult Bible study guide for the same lesson.

**Plotting the Course**
Three objectives for the teaching of the week's Sabbath School lesson.

**Materials**
A detailed list of the components needed to conduct the various activities included in the teaching guide.

**Preparing to Lead**
A short paragraph explaining the background from which the week's lesson is to be presented. This may include a pertinent quotation or a reference to something that will help to introduce the topic.

**Getting Started**
Two alternatives for introducing the week’s topic of study. It attempts to fulfill two goals: (1) to introduce the topic to class members, and (2) to foster a comfortable and open atmosphere.
Delving Into the Word
Two alternative approaches to the content of the lesson. Each alternative leads all class members into the use of their Bibles through some form of active or interactive learning exercise.

Discussing the Ideas
Six to eight questions that stimulate thought and encourage discussion.

Reproducible Activity
An item that may be photocopied for use in the Sabbath School session.

Closing the Activity
A way for the teacher to draw the class to a close and for members to make a personal application of what they have been studying in the week’s lesson. This activity furnishes a way to make the topic personally meaningful.

Visit CQ’s Web Site
http://www.cqbiblestudy.org/

Questions? Comments?
E-mail: chiomentil@gc.adventist.org
Spiritual Adultery (Hosea)

Surveying the Source
Exod. 6:4–7; Hos. 1:1; 4:10–18; 7:8; 8:1, 9, 10; 13:2, 7, 8.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Compare two real stories—the unfaithfulness of Gomer and their own faithfulness—in order to draw out the two common factors in each story: (1) God’s love, and (2) His faithfulness.

Preparing to Lead
The story of Hosea the prophet and Gomer, his wife who became a prostitute, is a living parable that originally was meant for the erring children of Israel.

Though Hosea knew that Gomer would be unfaithful to him, he married her anyway and remained a faithful and loving husband, thus winning her back to him.

This story has applications for each one of us today. “Hosea illustrates God’s enduring desire for his people. . . . When we turn away from God, He does not wait for us to come back to Him. He pursues us and desires that we be reunited with Him.”

Getting Started
A. Organize the class into females and males. Give each group a piece of butcher paper and a marker. Tell each group (without the other group hearing) to list ten things they would do when they begin a relationship with somebody they like.

After ten minutes, have the groups reconvene and try to guess what items are listed on the other group’s paper.

Discuss the common and different items on the lists.

Discuss what everyone wants in a relationship. Relate these ideas to what God wants in a relationship with us.

B. Ask the students to think of a type of person they believe is valuable to God and another type of person who is not so valuable to Him. Without stating specific names, have the class discuss what makes them think so. Discuss how God looks at those individuals. Remind everyone that we easily perceive someone as more acceptable than others. However, God loves everybody the same in spite of who they are or what they have done.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into four groups. Assign the following texts to each group to read and discuss. These texts describe the various phases of life the children of Israel went through that show God’s reactions to their life situations. Class

Materials
cens or pencils; butcher paper; markers; index cards
members may sit in small circles and read the texts in a round robin fashion.
They are to discuss the highlights of each text as someone takes notes for each group.
1. Hosea 2:2–13—Unfaithful Gomer and unfaithful Israel
2. Hosea 2:14–23—God’s response of restoration of Israel
3. Hosea 4:1–3—God’s accusation against Israel

Have the groups share their discussion report to the entire class.

B. God used Hosea’s and Gomer’s experience to share valuable knowledge about His character with future generations. Their experience also points out Israel’s mistakes. Imagine that the prophet Hosea is leading out in a court trial as a prosecutor. This is his initial pronouncement on Israel: “Listen up Israel! God has a case against you.” Have class members do the reproducible activity (p. 31).

Discussing the Ideas
1. What similarities do we see between Gomer’s life and our lives?
2. Why is a knowledge of God (Hos. 4:6) so important to have?
3. What are some of the typical causes for our wandering away from God?
4. Are all troubles direct consequences of disobedience to God? Why, why not?
5. How has God’s pursuing love transformed your life?
6. In what specific ways can we pay forward the blessings God has given us?
7. How has your thinking about God changed because of studying the experience of Hosea and Gomer?

Closing the Activity
Give each member an index card and a pen or pencil. Have them draw two columns—Received and Pay It Forward.
Ask the class to take time to thank God for the undeserving mercy and love He has shown to them.
Then, have them prayerfully list in the first column (Received) specific ways in which God has been merciful to them in the past few days and weeks.
Then ask them to think of ways they can pay forward what they have received from God. Let these be listed under the second column—Pay It Forward.
Finally, have the members share their ideas and encourage each other to “pay it forward.”
Close with prayer.

Prema Gaikwad, Silang, Philippines
Imagine that you are in the courtroom where Hosea is pronouncing the Israelites guilty on three accounts. Take notes on the accusations listed below, using support from Scripture. Be prepared to share what you wrote with others in the courtroom.

There is no knowledge of God (Hosea 4 and 5).

There is no loyalty (Hosea 6 and 7).

There is no faithfulness (Hos. 11:12—13:16).
Love and Judgment—God’s Dilemma (Hosea)

Surveying the Source
Hos. 7:11, 12; 10:11–13; 11:1, 3.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Recognize that they are all prone to being enticed away from God.
► Understand that God will do whatever it takes to bring them back from their wandering.
► Find their heart warming with love for God.
► Discover how to resist the devil’s temptations by using Bible passages and events.

Preparing to Lead
Approximately two decades ago, one of our denomination’s magazines featured a powerful ad offering resource material to help parents keep their kids off drugs. A well-dressed woman in her mid-forties stared challengingly at the camera. Her mouth was set in a grim line, and she looked tough enough to cause trouble if she had to. In the space next to her head, in quotation marks, was this phrase: “Not my Jim.” I had the feeling this woman had made it her chief goal to keep her son from becoming an addict.

I believe this is what God is like. Obviously, since He has given us free choice, He can’t control what we decide to do. But as Hosea reveals, He is not above wading into any situation in which His kids are harming each other or themselves, and shaking some sense into them. His love is not so much a tender emotion coupled with fits of agony when we don’t respond to Him, as it is a muscular, two-fisted willingness to do what it takes to rescue us.

Getting Started
A. Ask: “What modern ‘idols’ (not necessarily images but other focuses of ‘worship’) do we need to be wary of?” “What could hold over us the same kind of fascination that Baal held over the Jews?”
B. Invite parents to your Sabbath School who have a child who has just learned to walk. Interview them, and if possible, have them stay to take part in the discussion.

Ask them to describe what they had to do to teach their child to walk. If they have more than one child who has learned to walk, ask whether the process was different for each child. On a whiteboard or other large writing surface, make notes of the parents’ comments so they can be used in the later discussion.
Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “When Hosea was writing, God’s people were tempted to indulge in at least two kinds of slavery. Hosea 7:11 mentions that Ephraim had a tendency to go toward Egypt (where they were once literally enslaved) or Assyria (whose enticing idolatries would also captivate them).

“Both slaveries were dreadful insults to God, besides being dangerous destinations.”

Ask: “What could be some contemporary ‘old slaveries’ (well-known sins) and ‘new slaveries’ (recently-discovered sins such as software piracy) that we need to be wary of?” Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 32).

B. (Use this option if you’ve used Getting Started, option B.) Have someone read Hosea 11:3, 4 aloud. Refer to the interview with the parents in Getting Started, option B. Mention that it is interesting that God compares Himself to a parent teaching a child to walk. Have the class think of other comparisons between human parenting and God’s parenting.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Part of God’s problem with His people during Hosea’s time was that their spiritual tastes had changed. Can you remember a book you read in your grade-school days that you wouldn’t enjoy all that much today? Can you remember another book that you would re-read with delight? Discuss the differences between these two books, and why one still attracts you and the other does not.

2. In Hosea 10:12, God urges His people to “sow for yourselves righteousness” (NIV). If Jesus’ imparted righteousness (not of our own doing) is the only way to salvation, what could His Father mean here? What would “sowing righteousness” look like in your life?

3. Hosea, as with all the other Bible books, portrays a God who is so thoroughly in love with us that He will go to any lengths to parent. Have you ever felt such a love toward another human being? Have you ever known another human being to express that kind of love for you? If so, share it with the class.

4. What possible attraction could Baal-worship have had in order for Israel to divert their worship from their life-giving, life-sustaining Creator?

5. In Hosea 10:11, God compares His people to a heifer who enjoys threshing grain, trampling on it with its hooves. However, God harnesses the heifer to a plow. What might this mean?

6. Why did God hate idolatry so much? Why didn’t He simply ignore it, as He might some harmless tradition?

Closing the Activity

Say: “In South Dakota, on the flat Great Plains, hills tend to be low domes rising from the prairie. One such hill is Sunrise Hill. On Google Earth, the resolution of the satellite photo of this hill is so sharp that one can actually see the old cow paths on the hill’s slopes.

“Cows had discovered the easiest, quickest routes between two places they wanted to visit. Herd after herd traveled those paths, eventually wearing them down and widening them so that the satellite camera could pick them up.

“God’s heart has often lamented how often His people take the easy, popular, ‘routes’ through life. Jesus said, ‘Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it’ (Matt. 7:13, NIV).

“Christianity is always swimming upstream, bucking the trend, always looking a bit unusual to the average person.”

Maylan Schurch, Renton, Washington, U.S.A.
The devil presents twin temptations: to distrust God and/or to displace Him. It’s possible that most, if not all, of the world’s ills happen because people succumb to the temptation of either or both. To check out this possibility, consider the news events you’ve heard about during the past couple of weeks. List the event in the first column, place a check-mark in one or both of the next two columns, and fill in the last column with a Bible passage or story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Event</th>
<th>Someone Is Distrusting God</th>
<th>Someone Is Trying to Displace God</th>
<th>Bible Passage or Story</th>
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A Holy and Just God (Joel)

Surveying the Source

Joel 1, 2.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Draw a comparison between God's warnings and His promises of restoration.
► Identify different methods God uses to wake people up.

Preventing to Lead

“That fire has consumed almost 29 square miles.”¹

“Colorado Springs firefighter Rick McNew, 42, said he could hear cows lowing in the distance as he laid water hoses around the 35 streets in the Mountain Shadows area. . . . When he returned four days later, the neighborhood where he urged residents to leave was burned to the ground. “You’re out there fighting the fire and it’s a life-changing event,” said McNew. “We’ll never forget it.”² Likewise, in this week’s lesson, Joel warns of coming events that will forever change the lives of both humans and animals.

Getting Started

A. Collect photos of devastating events in current news (wars, plagues, natural disasters, famines, death of livestock, etc.). Distribute one photo to each student and give them a few moments to imagine themselves in that place. Tell them to imagine that they were in that location before the crisis arrived and that they knew exactly what was going to happen before it occurred. Then ask the students to share how they would feel and what they would say or do to warn and prepare animals and humans of coming ruin.

B. As the students arrive, give each one a slip of paper and a pencil. Ask them to list three or more types of alarms and/or warnings. Encourage them to think of unique things (the beeping of large equipment in reverse, “code red” announced at a hospital for a fire, hair standing on end, etc.). When the students are finished, have them share while you write their responses on a whiteboard. See how many different alarms and warnings they can come up with. Discuss how God has given warnings in the past and how He continues to be creative in getting people’s attention today.

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide Joel 1 and 2 into smaller sections and ask various class members to read those sections aloud. At the conclusion of reading, divide the class into two
Discussing the Ideas

1. How might Joel 1:5 warn against turning to addictions in order to escape reality?

2. Why is it so important for people to help each other during crises? (Joel 2:16, 17).

3. In the context of Joel 1 and 2, would you say the priests are paid or volunteers? Why?

4. How has God spared you from being the subject of mockery when a trial came to you?

5. Have you ever experienced a dream or a vision? If so, would you be comfortable sharing?

6. What is the process of rending your heart?

Closing the Activity

Give the class slips of paper and pencils and ask them to write something they experienced that was beyond comprehension. Ask them to put this event in the context of Him blessing them. Close with a prayer of surrender to God’s fantastic ways of getting our attention while utterly saving us.

Lisa Poole, Elbert, Colorado, U.S.A.


2. Ibid.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Warnings of Physical Devastation</th>
<th>Promises of Physical Restoration</th>
<th>Warnings of Spiritual and Emotional Pain</th>
<th>Promises of Spiritual and Emotional Restoration</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Warnings of Physical Devastation</td>
<td>Personal Promises of Physical Restoration</td>
<td>Personal Warnings of Spiritual and Emotional Pain</td>
<td>Personal Promises of Spiritual and Emotional Restoration</td>
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Lord of All Nations (Amos)

Surveying the Source
Amos 3:1; Luke 12:47; 19:12–27; 1 Cor. 2:12–14; Eph. 1:3.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Explain the reality of God’s judgment against His professed people for their iniquity.
► Identify that the root cause of many people’s disobedience to God is their ignorance of Him and a misunderstanding of His character.
► Rejoice in the privilege of knowing God beyond the ability of human wisdom through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit.

Preparing to Lead
Those who have a legalistic view of religion see the spiritual blessings of God as liabilities for which they will be punished if they fail to live up to them. Those with a better understanding of God’s character see His blessings as motivators and empowering tools for them to return more effective obedience to the God they already love. While some of our study texts this week contain fair warnings against unfaithfulness for those who should know better, we can study them in the context of the other verses that motivate us by the incredibly positive experience of knowing the heart, mind, and character of our loving heavenly Father.

Getting Started
A. Ask the class if anyone has a story in one of two categories that they would be willing to share: (1) a time when they were punished for failing to meet a responsibility, or (2) a time when they were motivated to do something they were really excited about.

After a few stories are shared, ask the class to discuss briefly whether they would prefer being punished for failing or being positively motivated to obey.

B. During the week before class, collect two different stories, one in each of two categories: (1) a story of punishment for a crime, and (2) a story of someone motivated to save someone or something from danger. Share both stories with the class. Then ask them to explain which story motivates them the most to be a better person.

Delving Into the Word
A. On Retribution for Disobedience. Have the class read Amos 3:1 and Luke 12:42–47. In this part of the lesson, we want the class to explore the reality of God’s retributive actions toward His people. We want to understand why and when He does this, so that our motivations are not based on fear of punishment or a perception of harshness on His part. Define retribution as “requital accord-
ing to merits or deserts, especially for evil.” Discuss when and why this is either appropriate or inappropriate. Discuss any implications of God engaging in retribution upon “His people.” See Discussing the Ideas, questions 1, 2, and 3.

B. Both Sides of the Approval/Disapproval Coin. Read Luke 19:12–27 (the Parable of the Talents). In this second part of the lesson, our goal is to understand that different people with different perceptions of God are (1) motivated differently by those perceptions, and (2) receive a different reaction from God based on their behavior. Compare and contrast the approval and commendation talents to do what they did with the talents they received. How does a knowledge of or a misunderstanding of God’s character affect those motivations?

5. What perception did the servant who hid his talent have of his master? How did that perception affect his behavior and the master’s behavior?

6. What exactly are spiritual blessings “in the heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3, NASB)? Have the class explain this verse word-by-word.

7. What are the “things of the Spirit of God” (see 1 Cor. 2:12–14, NKJV) that cannot be taught by human wisdom?

C. The Real Prize. In this final part of the lesson, we want the students to rejoice in the prospects of knowing the person of God apart from their own behavior. We want them to not simply obey God, but to have a joyful motivation to find the very substance of God (the real prize). Ask the class to explain 1 Corinthians 2:12–14 and Ephesians 1:3 in terms that go beyond behavior. See Discussing the Ideas, questions 6 and 7.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Explain the degree to which people in your church and/or your denomination as a whole believe that they are immune to the retribution of God because of their status as “God’s people.”

2. Describe how you imagine God’s emotional state when He must engage in retribution. The use of scriptural examples would be best here.

3. Explain God’s retributive justice in the context of the Christ’s sacrifice and His mercy toward sinners. What is the real reason He must sometimes give His people what they deserve when He’s already provided a sacrifice for sin?

4. Describe and explain what motivated the three servants in the parable of the first two servants in the parable received with the disapproval the third servant received. See Discussing the Ideas, questions 4 and 5, or distribute the reproducible activity (p. 34).

Glenn Poole, Elbert, Colorado, U.S.A.

In the following activity, use the listed Scriptures to identify misunderstandings of God and His character that contributed to disobedient behavior. Then discuss and list the truth that contrasts each misunderstanding. Use Scripture to support your suggestions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scriptural Example</th>
<th>Explain the misunderstanding</th>
<th>The truth that counteracts the misunderstanding</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew 25:24, 25</strong></td>
<td>The man who received one talent in the parable told the master that the reason for his unfaithfulness was because of certain character traits of the master (see Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 362).</td>
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<td><strong>Matthew 26:51–56</strong></td>
<td>One of Jesus’ disciples was prepared to fight to the death to defend Him against a mob. He misunderstood Jesus’ mission (see The Desire of Ages, pp. 694–697).</td>
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<td><strong>Mark 14:3–10</strong></td>
<td>When a woman seeks to bless Jesus, Judas complains (John 12:4). Jesus rebukes him and Judas immediately goes to the priests to plot his betrayal (see The Desire of Ages, pp. 558–564).</td>
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<td><strong>Acts 9:1–8</strong></td>
<td>A young man named Saul had a rather determined opinion of the people following “The Way.” He misunderstood who it was he was working against (see The Acts of the Apostles, pp. 112–117).</td>
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Seek the Lord and Live (Amos)

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify the idols of today that distract them from a full relationship with Jesus.
► Identify time(s) when they might have received a call to action from the Lord.
► Identify different ways in which God calls people to service both in the past and today.

Preparing to Lead
Amos was called to leave his profession and take on new, challenging responsibilities. Jonah faced a similar calling, and his initial response differed greatly from Amos’ response. Our God knows the beginning from the end and has a role for each one of us to play in the battle between good and evil. Amos chose to take his responsibilities of speaking for God seriously and presented some very unpleasant news to his neighbors and to strangers. He is an example of what a life, dedicated to following God, looks like. When called, how will we respond? Like Amos or like Jonah?

Getting Started
A. One Christmas Day, as I sat in an airport waiting for my flight home, the still small voice whispered that I should go pray with a teenage boy waiting in the next row. Because the idea made me uncomfortable, I decided to pray for the boy, rather than with him. Feeling that I had fulfilled God’s request I felt satisfied until the end of the flight when I learned the boy’s traveling companion had died on the plane. God had a plan that I did not follow and the memory of that missed opportunity is always with me.

B. Picture yourself sitting on a beach reading a first aid manual. Suddenly a cry for help pierces the air. You look up and see someone down in the surf. A frantic friend is desperately seeking help. You have just read the section on water rescue and resuscitation. But you pause, wondering if this is really the type of situation you have been preparing for? Should you take your new knowledge and try to help, or hope that someone else will arrive in time to save the person. Now picture yourself studying your Bible and...
If the students insists they have never had such an opportunity, then help them remember someone from the Bible who had such an experience and have them participate from that character’s point of view.

Close with prayer.

Use the reproducible activity (p. 35) to help the students reflect on a time when they heard the Lord speaking directly to them. This could be God’s voice, the whispering of the Holy Spirit or a strong impression to do or say something that helped someone else or themselves.

Ask: “Why might you be surprised that individuals struggle with a personal call to stand up for God and work alone for Him?”

Ask: “How have God’s people in the past known they have been called to the service of the King?” ●Jer. 1:4–10; ●Ezek. 1:1–3; ●Dan. 2:10, and chapters 7, 8, and 10; ●Hos. 1:1; ●Joel 1:1; ●Amos 7:14, 15; ●Obad. 1:1; ●Jon. 1:1; ●Mic. 1:1; ●Nah. 1:1; ●Hab. 1:1; ●Zeph. 1:1; ●Hag. 1:1; ●Zech. 1:1; ●Mal. 1:1.

Ask: “What do these texts tell us about the methods the Lord might use to call us to do something specific?”

Have someone read Isaiah 6:8. Close by saying, “Isaiah’s response is one of the most familiar examples of how we should respond to God’s calling.”

Discussing the Ideas

1. Share an experience when God used you as His spokesperson. Was it easy or difficult? Why?

2. Life is full of distractions, like worries, emotions, and Facebook or Twitter. What can we do to keep our connection with God stronger than any distraction?

3. Whom have you seen or heard do something that has led you closer to Jesus?

4. The Israelites in Amos’ day struggled with physical idols. What idols distract us today?

5. What obvious things are we missing in our relationship with Jesus?

6. Have you ever known someone who was giving you bad advice? How did you know it was bad? Did you follow it? Why or why not?

Closing the Activity

Use the reproducible activity (p. 35) to help the students reflect on a time when they heard the Lord speaking directly to them. This could be God’s voice, the whispering of the Holy Spirit or a strong impression to do or say something that helped someone else or themselves.

If the students insists they have never had such an opportunity, then help them remember someone from the Bible who had such an experience and have them participate from that character’s point of view.

Close with prayer.

Judy Shull, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

Think about a time when you felt God was talking to you. (If you can’t think of such a time, think about someone in the Bible who described God speaking to them.) Draw a picture representing your surroundings when you (or your Bible character) heard the Lord’s call. Then answer the questions below the picture frame.

Where are you (or your Bible character) in this picture?

When was this event?

How did you (or your Bible character) know it was really God talking?

What was your (or your Bible character’s) response?

How do you (or your Bible character) feel when you think back on your decision?
Eager to Forgive (Jonah)

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Question the motivations that cause them to want others to succeed or fail.
► Explore the fears that hinder them from responding to God’s exhortations to show Him to others.
► Discover new attitudes concerning humbleness and attribute glory to God as they do His work.

Preparing to Lead
Share God’s decision not to destroy Ninevah with your class: “But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord, ‘Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity’ ” (Jon. 4:1, 2, NIV). Say: “Jonah faced complex motivations in response to God and His decisions. Remember that we too fight the tendencies to flee hard times, to claim great credits, and to boast of our important reputations.

Getting Started
A. Come to class with either some mismatched blouses/skirts and shirts/ties from your own closet or a thrift store, or wear such mismatched clothing yourself. Ask volunteers to put on the mismatched clothing and model them for the class, or model your own clothing choices for them. Ask: “How important is it to look good?” Then discuss whether or not we should worry about how nonbelievers perceive us as we tell them about our love for Jesus and His life-changing Word.
B. On 3 x 5 index cards, write out the following improvisational scenes: a cheater on taxes; a pastor doing good for his/her church; an envious middle class Lexus car mechanic; a loving grandmother; a devious politician. Also write the following on the same cards: “Before Jesus comes, this person will give her/his life to Him.”

Have class members interact in these roles for a minute or two. Then ask how they might feel to know that no matter what they do in their lives, they all have the same reward through God’s mercy.

Delving Into the Word
A. Bring with you a simple map downloaded from the Internet of the geographic area where Jonah lived, where Tarshish existed, and where Ninevah stood. With the class, proceed through the texts of Jonah while tracing both his own pro-
posed journey and his actual trek as directed by God. Go deeper into these texts via close readings of the scenes. For instance: ●“Why did the ship’s captain wake Jonah up and not a lower crewman?” ●“How frightened was every person on the ship?”

Take note as you travel in the text and on the map of how the people that Jonah encountered changed toward God. Also note how Jonah changed as he went along.

Then discuss the power God has to use imperfect people to bring about the changes He wishes to unfold.

B. Ask: “Does God need us to reveal His kingdom to others?” Then have the class think of a task they are familiar with, be it deck building, playing a musical instrument, drawing, writing, sewing, auto mechanics, etc. Discuss the tools needed to effectively accomplish a task within these areas. Once class members have written a short list on 3 x 5 cards, ask them to present their lists, then subtract one tool. Ask: “Can you still accomplish the task without that tool?” In many cases, they will be able to do so.

Next, proceed through the Bible texts of Jonah’s rebelling against God. Discuss where his rebellion took him and what God ultimately accomplished through him.

Ask: ●“Why did God choose to use Jonah as His tool for reaching Ninevah and the ship’s crew?” ●“Was God using Jonah in order to convert him, to perfect his character, or because he was the absolute best person for the job? Explain your answer.”

Discussing the Ideas

1. What keeps us from being an honest, effective witness?
2. Have someone read Ephesians 2:8, 9. Then discuss how pride and boastfulness can damage our witnessing.
3. Why would God choose any of us instead of our pastor, conference president, or a Christian professor to accomplish His work of reaching the non-believers in our lives?
4. How can God’s glory be revealed in unexpected and trying circumstances? Review the encounter the sailors had with Jonah and their subsequent conversion because they saw God’s power working around Jonah’s rebellious behavior.
5. Why did God use Jonah despite his anger, petulance, and selfishness in trying to flee from God’s initial call and in his behavior after God spared Ninevah?
6. How much more rewarding would Jonah’s witnessing experience have been had he been receptive to God’s call from the beginning?
7. How can each of us be stricken by the disease of pride and boastfulness to the discredit of God’s work and His presence in our lives? Why is it so hard for us to accept that God can redeem others who appear to have no hope?
8. Why do some Christians feel threatened by new church members who come from lives so different from their own?

Closing the Activity

Reflect on Jonah’s inward focus regarding how others would view his prophecies after God chose not to fulfill them. Discuss Jonah’s anger over the fact that God could accept the people of Ninevah in spite of the incredible wickedness of their former lives.

Have the class do the reproducible activity (p. 36). Then close with prayer.

Jeremy Vetter, Moscow, Idaho, U.S.A.
Name one specific situation in which you could swallow your pride and allow God to work through you to witness to someone else, without thinking about how others would perceive you, but only about how God can change your heart.

Name one thing you could do to be more open and inviting to a church visitor, new member from a previously worldly life, or someone who is ready to see God working in you. Remember that perhaps you might be the only Christian this person knows.
God’s Special People (Micah)

Surveying the Source

Mic. 1:4–9; 5:2; 6:1–4, 8; Rom. 12:2.

Plotting the Course

The students will:
► Understand what idolatry consist of today.
► Experience God’s forgiveness.
► Learn how to develop a forever-relationship with God.

Preparing to Lead

As the teacher, encourage class members not to be afraid of approaching God for forgiveness. Many people are weighed down with guilt that they feel they can never escape. “The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. He that ‘confesseth and for-saketh’ his sin ‘shall have mercy.’ ”

Getting Started

A. Give each student a small slip of paper and a pen or pencil. Ask them to write a brief description of something God has done for them. They do not have to write their names on the paper. Put the papers into a box or a hat. Then have class members take turns retrieving a slip of paper from the box and reading it aloud. Thank God that He cares for each one of us.

B. Propose this scenario to the class:

“Your friend wants to hang out with you, but you want to do something else.” On a whiteboard or flip chart, have the class list some other things you could do instead. Discuss:
● “Are any of these activities inherently wrong?”
● “Why would it be a problem if you did something other than hang out?”
● “How does this concept relate to God’s commandment that you should not have any other gods before Him?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Have class members look up and read aloud the following texts about idols and idolatry: • Exod. 20:3–6; • Lev. 17:7; • Lev. 26:1; • Deut. 4:15–20; • Deut. 29:16–18; • Ezek. 14:4, 7.

Ask: • “What kinds of things did Israel put in the place of God?”

Ask: • “What do we put in the place of God today?”

On a whiteboard or flip chart, make a list of things that get in the way of our relationship with God.

Say: “Micah’s job as a prophet was to call the people to repentance and to seek God’s forgiveness.”

Ask: • “If you were Micah today, how would you communicate this message...
using modern technology? How would you use e-mail, Facebook, or Twitter?”

Have the class decide on and design a modern-day message of repentance and hope.

B. Divide your class into five groups. Give each group one of the scenarios listed on the reproducible activity for this lesson (p. 37).

If your class is small, you can either have fewer groups, or give a scenario to each person. Each group is to discuss the scenario and develop a strategy that is based upon the principles of God’s kingdom for dealing with the situation. Have the following questions written on a whiteboard and tell your class that these questions are to guide the creation of their scenarios: ●What biblical concepts need to be the basis for any actions or reactions in these scenarios? ●How does the wronged individual handle the negative feelings and bitterness associated with the scenario? ●How can a wronged individual tap into God’s forgiveness in order to extend forgiveness to others?

After every group has had a chance to present their scenario, discuss how God dealt with Israel when they betrayed Him. Compare that with how God might react to these scenarios.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What do you feel is the most idolatrous thing in our culture today, and why?
2. What is the best defense against idolatry?
3. How can you avoid reliving your sins over and over again?
4. Is it easier to ask God for forgiveness or to forgive someone who has wronged you? Explain.
5. How would you explain God’s forgiveness to a friend who is not a believer?
6. What is the best method that you have found personally to strengthen your relationship with God?
7. What has God done to woo you to Himself?

**Closing the Activity**

Remind the class of the activity they did at the beginning when everyone wrote down something that God had done for them. Encourage them to make this a habit in their own family. They can make a Remembrance Box and place it somewhere in their house. Then whenever anyone in their family has a faith-strengthening experience, they can write it down and put it in the box. As a family, review the contents of the box at special times like birthdays, Thanksgiving, or Christmas. Lead the class in a prayer of repentance and ask God to keep everyone focused on Him.


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**Kris Stevenson, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada**
Your landlord uses his key to let himself into your apartment and steal some of your valuables to pawn. When you discover what is going on, what do you do?

Your boss is always critical of your work no matter how hard you try to please her. You finally find another job and leave without creating a scene, even though you feel you have been treated unfairly. Then you find out that she has called your new employer and told him negative things about you. What do you do about the situation?

You and your friend have shared life’s struggles for many years. You tell this friend how much you dislike a fellow classmate who has been putting you down in front of others. The next day everyone seems to know that you “hate” your fellow classmate and now you have a social nightmare to fix. Only your close friend could have spilled that information. What do you do?

Your parents promised you that you could have the family car when they got a new one. But when they purchased their car they gave the old one to your brother. They said it was because he needed it more since he is commuting to work by bus every day. But you need a car to get to school, and you feel that they have broken their promise to you. How do you handle this situation?

You apply for a part time job at a retail clothing store in town so that you will have a little extra money to pay bills with. You mention the job opening to a friend. The next thing you know, your friend has the job. What do you do?
Teacher’s Guide

Materials
large paper; markers; tape; different Bible translations; copies of Surveying the Source verses and Psalm 22; copies of hymns 225, 479, and 692 from The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal; enough pens with red ink or pencils with red lead for each student

Trusting God’s Goodness (Habakkuk)

Surveying the Source
Ps. 13:1; Hab. 1:12–17; 2:2–4; 3:13; Rom. 1:16, 17; Gal. 3:10–14; Phil. 4:11; Heb. 10:38.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Widen their perspective of God’s leadership in world history.
► Increase their understanding of Habakkuk’s message.
► Develop a strategy of patience while waiting for Jesus to return.

Preparing to Lead
Ellen White drew upon the Old Testament to give valuable insight into how God’s faithful people exercise patience and faith during times of adversity. She wrote, “The faith that strengthened Habakkuk and all the holy and the just in times of deep trial shortly before the Babylonian captivity, was the same faith that sustains God’s people today. In the darkest hours, under circumstances the most forbidding, the Christian may stay his soul in harmony with the source of all light and power. Day by day, through faith in God, his hope and courage may be renewed.” When we really understand and embrace this, we will truly represent Jesus in any age or situation.

Getting Started
A. Appoint three people to make notes of key points of each hymn in the materials list, using large pieces paper of taped to the wall or a chalkboard. Have other students check different Bible translations to see how the verses in Habakkuk vary. Have the class sing the three hymns. Pause between each one to ask the students to reflect on the themes in Habakkuk that shaped these hymns. Note how different translations present the words and reflect how the song might be changed if a different translation had been used.
B. Ask two people who are comfortable with public speaking to read Psalm 22 and the verses listed in Surveying the Source. Read the Source texts first. Ask the class how the messages came across. Talk about how these texts relate to times of trouble, especially in the closing days of earth’s history. Then have the other person read Psalm 22, a passage that Jesus referenced on the cross and that seems to reflect His experience there. Have the class discuss what they heard and how it parallels the first texts.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “Habakkuk presents his message as a dialogue with God. He describes the despair of God’s people and the destruction that will soon come. Then
he injects God’s perspective after which he continues to build the argument from the people’s perspective.” Have class members look at the descriptions of evil in chapters 1 and 2. Have them note the change toward the end of chapter 2, in verses 20 where it says that “the Lord is in his holy temple—let all the earth keep silence!” (NIV). Ask: ●“What is the role of silence?” ●“Could it be that we are so busy telling our side of the situation that we can’t hear God’s perspective?”

Say: “In chapter 3, Habakkuk presents a prayer that offers hope to the suffering. When time runs out and evil is fully exposed, God will exert control in a display that proves once and for all the true nature of evil. Then evil will be destroyed. Judgment will be rendered. When discouraged, review history and Bible passages that detail God’s control. Also read Habakkuk 3 and Psalm 22.”

B. Say: “History bears witness to tragedies. Whole nations and peoples are subdued, imprisoned, and wiped out.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why does Habakkuk 2:20 link silence to worshiping God?
2. How has this lesson changed your perspective about waiting for the Second Coming?
3. In Habakkuk, which descriptive language best describes your idea of pain or redemption?
4. How does one’s faith remain strong even when delivery doesn’t happen in one’s lifetime?
5. In light of the last line of chapter 3, what kind of music would best convey the message of Habakkuk?
6. What does it mean to be pilgrims seeking to reunite with our God, not settling for this imperfect world?
7. What “idols” do people worship today?

**Closing the Activity**

Distribute copies of the reproducible activity (p. 38). Have the class think out loud of faith-building activities and have each person write these activities inside the outline of the cross with a pencil with red lead or a pen with red ink.

Close with a prayer that the students’ faith will remain strong and that with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, they will live lives that reflect Christ’s character.

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

The Day of the Lord (Zephaniah)

Surveying the Source
Zephaniah 1—3.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Recognize the results of rejecting God and the rewards of claiming Him.
► Identify ways to boldly bear witness to their relationship with God.
► Celebrate God’s forgiveness and redemption.

Preparing to Lead
Before more high-tech systems, military aircraft would fly beneath radio detecting and ranging (RADAR) signals to avoid being spotted by enemy forces. At times, we humans also try to fly under the radar. We believe in God, but we don’t want to be obvious about it. We’d like to make standout choices, but it’s often easier to just go with the flow.

What if people scoff at us or think we’re too radical? We must take heed. Zephaniah has some stern warnings for those who try to fly under the radar when it comes to their relationship with God. Those who boldly stand with Him, however, can look ahead to the fulfillment of His exciting promises.

Getting Started
A. Divide the class into two groups.
Give each group a paper copy of Zephaniah 1:1 and tell them that they have 20 seconds to read and study the verse. After 20 seconds, take away the papers and give each group a container of the names on slips of paper. Tell the groups that they have one minute to arrange the names in order as they appear in the verse. The group with the most names in correct order wins.

Discuss how Zephaniah was a prophet with royal roots (traced back to King Hezekiah) and that we too are royal heirs as children of God.

B. Give each student a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 39), along with a pen or pencil. Allow a few minutes for the students to complete it. Discuss their answers. Talk about how modern warning signs can remind us of how Zephaniah warned against rejecting God.

Be sure to mention that warning signs are often positive things. They can help steer us in a safe direction if we pay attention to them and take proper action. In the case of Zephaniah’s warnings, the wise action would be to turn toward God, not away from Him.

Delving Into the Word
A. Divide the class into three groups.
Give each group a Bible and a group list of Bible texts that corresponds to the number of people in their group. Have

the groups look up the texts and mark them in the Bible with a small piece of paper.

Group 1: Zeph.1:4–6, 14–16; 2:8–10; John 3:36; 1 Thess. 4:7, 8.

Group 2: Job 36:5, 9–11; Ps. 27:9; Ezek. 18:31, 32; Zeph. 2:3; 1 Pet. 2:25.


When all of the texts have been looked up and marked, ask Group 1 to read their first text aloud. Next, have Group 2 read their first text aloud. Finally, have group 3 read their first text aloud. Proceed accordingly (Group 1, 2, 3) until all texts have been read.

Discuss the recurring theme in Zephaniah 1—3 (and throughout the Bible) of the pain of rejecting God, the relief of repentance, and the joy of forgiveness.

B. Place three bowls on a table in front of the classroom. Have the paper towels handy. Ask for three volunteers. Have volunteer 1 pour water in the bowls so each bowl is about half full. Ask volunteer 2 to pour the dirt and rocks in the far left bowl and stir with the spoon. Say: “This bowl represents humanity as we are in our sinful state, swirling in a sea of temptations. We face trials and make poor choices. Sometimes we can hardly see each other through clouds of pain. We can’t escape the situation on our own.”

Have volunteer 2 scoop the rocks from the dirty water into the middle bowl and swish to rinse them off. Say: “This represents what happens when we reach out to God, repent of wrongdoing, and ask for forgiveness. He lifts us out of the muck and mire and gives us a new start.”

Have volunteer 3 scoop the clean rocks out of the middle bowl, allowing the muddy water to drip away, then place the rocks in the clean water on the right.

Say: “This represents humanity as we are in our redeemed state. We are forgiven! We can face each other with clarity. We have been rescued by the One who loves us most.” Ask a volunteer to read Zephaniah 3:9–15.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why do you think God chose to communicate the way He did through Zephaniah?
2. What do you think is the difference between being complacent and being convicted in your own spiritual life? How do you decipher which side of the line you’re on?
3. In Zephaniah 1—3, what do you perceive as the major reasons behind God’s anger with the nations?
4. At what point does Zephaniah turn from warning people to reassuring them about God’s mercy? How do we turn the corner from worrying about our own future to feeling assured and secure?
5. How does Zephaniah 3:17 speak to you personally?
6. Why is it important to not keep our relationship with Christ to ourselves, but to boldly share it with others? Practically speaking, how can we bring Christ to light?
7. Why do you think it’s easy to lose sight of God’s awesomeness? How can we restore to our souls the perception of His greatness?

Closing the Activity

Talk with the class about recommitting their lives and futures to God. Mention that repentance opens the door to receiving forgiveness. Read Zephaniah 3:17 aloud together as a class.

Close with prayer, asking God to help the class avoid a life of complacency and to choose to live boldly for Him. Also thank Him for the mercy He readily gives when we lose our way.

Loree Waite, Walla Walla, Washington, U.S.A.
As we journey through life, we can’t help but notice warning signs along the way. These signals can alert us to danger ahead. If we pay attention, we may be able to steer clear of certain calamities.

Below are three columns. In the “Warning” column, write warning signals that come to mind (such as the fuel gauge in a car, tornado sirens, and road signs). In the “Ignoring” column, write what could happen if you choose to ignore the warning (you could run out of fuel if you ignore the gauge, for instance). In the “Acting” column, write what could happen if you heed the warning and take proper action (you could arrive safely at your destination).

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First Things First (Haggai)

Surveying the Source
Ps. 103:2–5; Hag. 1:1–14; 2:1–9, 22, 23; Zech. 2:8; 4:6; Matt. 6:33; Heb. 13:8; 1 John 4:8, 18.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Discover why God wants them to make His will the top priority in their lives.
► List reasons why people today might not do God’s will.
► Identify at least one specific area in their life that is not aligned with God’s will and commit to making a change.

Preparing to Lead
In 538 B.C., Cyrus, the king of Persia, brought an end to Babylonian captivity. The Jews were free to return to their land and rebuild the temple. Zerubbabel led a group back to Jerusalem, and work on the temple began in 536 B.C. Unfortunately, as the months passed, so did the initial excitement and sense of doing God’s will. Hardship and opposition discouraged the Jews, and within two years, the project was put on hold.

Getting Started
A. Ask for two volunteers. Tell them that their goal is to reach the door of the classroom within 30 seconds. Tell volunteer A to focus on reaching the door quickly. Tell volunteer B that he or she will politely answer class member questions along the way. Tell the students to ask the volunteers about classes they’re taking, favorite teachers, what their plans are for the afternoon—anything that might distract them. Begin timing the exercise and recap the results for the class. Say: “Stephen Covey, author of the popular book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, has said, ‘The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.’” Ask: “Can anyone cite a Bible text that puts this in spiritual terms?” (Matt. 6:33). Ask: “How important is it to keep focused on our main priority?”

B. Give each student a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 40), and a pen or pencil. Allow a few minutes for them to complete the activity. Then discuss their answers. Ask: “What could happen if each person listed on the activity sheet became distracted or decided that an unrelated set of priorities was more important?” Ask: “How important are spiritual priorities?”

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Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “The Jews who returned to Jerusalem enthusiastically began rebuilding the temple, but then became discouraged. They encountered a crisis marked by lack of belief in God. Let’s read of a similar crisis.”

Read together Numbers 13:17–33. Ask: “Why do you think there’s a human tendency to focus on problems instead of the Problem-Solver?” Read the following quote: “We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun” Ask: ●“What steps can we take to exercise and grow our faith in God?” ●“How does this help us to keep focused on God’s will and His priorities for our lives?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. What is God’s will or primary task for us today? (Matt. 28:19, 20).
2. How important is this commission? (Matt. 24:14).
3. How is our Great Commission like God’s command to the Jews to rebuild the temple? How is it different?

4. In what ways are you, like the Jews of old, distracted from your task?
5. What spiritual ailment is preventing us from fulfilling God’s priority for us?
6. What’s one specific thing you can do this week to help fulfill the Great Commission and hasten the return of Jesus?

Closing the Activity

Say: “Just as God had a plan for Zerubbabel and the Jews to rebuild the temple, He has a plan for us. Jesus commissions us to spread the gospel to the entire world so He can come again. As we consider this responsibility and privilege, let’s sing Seek Ye First.” Sing the song together: http://www.hymnal.net/hymn.php/ns/120.

Close with a prayer, asking for God’s help in renewing the students’ commitment to follow His will and asking for His blessing on the class.

Kevin Waite, Walla Walla, Washington, U.S.A.

Various occupations or jobs carry with them certain priorities and responsibilities. For example, a top priority for teachers is to help students learn. Below you’ll see a list of occupations. Complete the second column by listing one or more priorities for each occupation. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class.

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<td>Being a Christian</td>
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Visions of Hope (Zechariah)

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Recognize and accept God’s forgiveness.
► Develop a vision of the bright future God has for them and for the world.
► Experience deep gratitude in knowing that God is always faithful, even when we are faithless.

Preparing to Lead
Do you have hope for the future? Maybe you’re thinking you’ve sinned too much to be close to God and He can’t possibly still love you. Have you ever felt guilty? Have you ever wondered how God could give you the great future He’s promised in Jeremiah 29:11 when you keep forgetting about Him?

God’s love will never change. Your sins can be forgiven. You will be covered with Christ’s righteousness. Best of all, your struggles to not sin and to just get through life are worth it. All of God’s promises about a wonderful future are yours, and it’s going to be amazing.

Getting Started
A. Give each student a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 41). Say: “The poem dramatizes the fact that life is a series of good and bad events, but that God’s promises assure us which way the scales will tip. He offers forgiveness and a great future for each of us.”

B. Have a student read 2 Timothy 2:13. Say: “In this verse, Christ shows that His love for sinners is His own action, not a reaction, to how we treat Him. It’s the same with His forgiveness. We don’t deserve it, yet He forgives us anyway.”

Ask: ●“Have you ever been freely forgiven by someone when you knew you had wronged that person?” ●“How did you feel?” ●“Have you ever freely forgiven someone who truly wronged you?” ●“What did the person do?”

Discuss how God’s forgiveness helps us to humble ourselves and accept His power in our lives.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “The human story shows us how we are in a horrible situation with Satan, other sinners, and our own sinful hearts always working against us. But the
Bible shows us that God and the angels are for us, that sometimes we win and sometimes we lose, and sometimes we lose heart. But if we only knew what was happening behind the scenes and how the story would end, how different our attitude would be!

Next, have class members take turns reading aloud Psalm 106:6–43 and Zechariah 1:2–6. Discuss how the Israelites treated God. Then read Psalm 106:44–47 and 2 Timothy 2:11–13 together. Discuss how God treated the Israelites.

Ask: “What hope can these passages give us about the end of our stories and the end of the world?”

B. Say: “Imagine that you are best friends with someone. You and your best friend each have a unique quality. Your friend always forgives when you ask, and you always forget that your friend has forgiven you.” Then ask: ● “What effect do these two unique qualities have on the friendship? ● “Which quality will win out in the end—the forgetfulness or the forgiveness?” ● “If one of the friends could change, which one should it be, and why?”

Have class members take turns reading Psalm 106:6–46 aloud. Then say: “After all the Israelites did, what an incredible response from their Best Friend. We know how the Israelites’ story has turned out.” Ask: “What about your story? You will always need God’s forgiveness. But will you be the best friend who always forgives?”


Discussing the Ideas

1. Why does accepting forgiveness require humility?

2. What barriers keep many of us from genuinely accepting God’s forgiveness?

3. How might you respond if you sincerely forgive someone for some small thing, but they keep bringing it up over and over, insisting you couldn’t possibly forgive them?

4. When God forgives us and takes away the guilt of a sin we’ve committed, what does He give us in its place?

5. How can we handle the injustice of seeing others sin and thrive, while we struggle with sin and seem to fail?

6. What step can you take today that will bring you closer to living the future God has for you?

Closing the Activity

Have someone read Jeremiah 29:11. Then say and ask: “God gave this promise freely and openly in His Word, even though He knew the Bible would be read by sinners. The promise is for everyone.

God has a special plan and a great future for every one. How can each one of you begin today to live the life God has planned?”

Close with prayer.

Lorna Hartman, Spangle, Washington, U.S.A.
Fortunately I got a letter
Unfortunately it said I was fired
Fortunately I don’t have to work
Unfortunately I had to work at a zoo day and night
Fortunately I just fed the animals hay, meat, and berries
Unfortunately a tiger got out
Fortunately I can climb a tree
Unfortunately tigers can climb like monkeys
Fortunately he was just hungry
Unfortunately he ate me
Fortunately he barfed me out
Unfortunately a pack of tigers came
Fortunately gorillas came and beat them up
Unfortunately they are carnivorous
Fortunately they ate fish
Unfortunately there was no fish
Fortunately they fired me
Unfortunately there were tiny prints at the bottom of the letter
Fortunately it said JUST JOKING!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Heaven’s Best Gift (Zechariah)

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:
► Discover how to break free from idols.
► Learn how communicate hope to others.
► Explore how to accept God’s blessings.

Preparing to Lead

Daily news reports can make life on this planet seem hopeless. Stories about natural disasters, Christians being persecuted, and nations at war are just a few of the depressing things that people experience. It’s enough to make anyone despair. However, Zechariah 8:8 reminds us what Christ has promised: “And I will bring them back and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness” (NASB). This is the hope-filled message that Christians can tell the world.

Getting Started

A. Say: “It’s easy to shed tears of happiness when we picture the ways God has dealt with evil. When times are good, it’s easy to forget those tears and get caught up in life’s daily distractions. Then before we know it, our trust is invested in material things rather than in God. The Bible, however, talks about how He is the only one to provide for all our needs.”

Divide the class into groups. Have half of the groups write six different ways in which God has provided for their needs. Ask the other groups to write six different things that can become idols, thus keeping us from living a Christ-filled life. Have the groups share their thoughts with the class. Discuss ways to eliminate the idols that keep us from Christ. Ask: “How do idols steal our hope?”

B. Say: “The Bible reminds us to put our trust in God so that He can provide for our needs.”

Divide the class into groups. Instruct members of each group to recall times when they faced a challenge. Have them share with each other how depending on God gave them hope. Ask them to describe specific things they did to strengthen their relationship with God. How did this give them hope in their daily struggles? Have the groups share their discoveries with the class.

Delving Into the Word

A. Read the following synopsis to the class: “Picture a woman stuck in traffic on her way to work. Finally arriving thirty minutes late and appearing some-
what disheveled, she stumbles into her office. At last, she’s made it.

“Things don’t get better over lunch, when she spills grape juice on her blouse. Later in the afternoon, she learns that a truck accidentally hit her car, ripping off one of her side mirrors. Between piles of files stacked on her desk and endless phone calls, she stops to take a break. Is there more to life than this, she asks herself? She believes there is a God, but she’s not sure why that belief should even be a comfort to her.”

Divide the class into groups. Distribute the student worksheet (p.42). Allow 15-20 minutes for each group to complete the task. Discuss their results.

Ask: ●“What did you learn about why we should help others to find hope?” ●“To whom are we to offer hope?” ●“What are some ways we can offer hope to others?”

B. Say: “Think about the students you sit next to in class, or the people you workout with at the gym. Or think about your co-workers. There are so many people who still don’t know that God longs for them to be a part of His household. It’s important as Christians to understand why we need to reach out to others and communicate the hope that we have in Christ. Telling others about this hope provides us with the opportunity to share the blessings God has given us.”

Write the following texts on the board: ●Isaiah 65:17–23; ●Zechariah 8:3–5, 11–13, 23; ●Zechariah 10:4, 5. Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to read the verses and discuss how they reveal blessings that God will place on those who follow Him.

Ask: ●“Why can it be hard to accept God’s blessings?” ●“How do you personally tell others about the blessings in your life.” ●“Is it easy to do or do you struggle to do this? Why?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. How would you communicate hope to someone you don’t know?
2. With whom is it more difficult to share hope—someone you don’t know or a friend who knows the ups and downs you have had in your spiritual life? Why?
3. How should we react when we feel God isn’t blessing us?
4. How do you feel when you see people who don’t follow God receiving many blessings? Why do you feel that way?
5. What does Matthew 5:44, 45 mean to you as a Christian?

Closing the Activity

Distribute the song sheets for “We Have This Hope.” Sing the song together as a class. Say: “During the next week, tell at least one person about the hope you have because Jesus died for you. Also tell that person about the blessings God has given you.”

Close with prayer.

Ashley Trecartin, Whitesboro, New York, U.S.A.
There Is Hope!

Read each of the following texts. Determine which one of the questions the text is talking about: Matthew 5:16; Matthew 28:19; Mark 13:10; Luke 4:43; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 2 Timothy 1:8, 9; Hebrews 13:1–3; 1 Peter 3:13–15.

Why communicate hope?

To whom do we communicate hope?

How can we communicate hope to others?
Lest We Forget! (Malachi)

Surveying the Source
Mal. 1:1–12; Malachi 2; Ps. 51:17.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
➤ Discover what God requires as an acceptable offering.
➤ Understand that God has reached out and still reaches out to His creation, seeking that covenant relationship.
➤ Realize that respect for God can be infectious and spread to those around us.

Preparing to Lead
Have you ever felt completely valued on a date? Perhaps your significant other took your busy work schedule into account or took the effort to clean the car ahead of time. God is being seriously disrespected and He knows it! He’s in a relationship where His “date” is always late, the bouquet of flowers at the door is already wilting, and He gets dressed up for an evening at—McDonald’s. Turns out the heathen respect Him more than His own people. What is going on?

Getting Started
A. Say: “In our lesson, we learn that God is looking for a broken and contrite heart.” Then provide each class member with a large paper heart. Ask them to write the answer to the following question on their heart: “In what ways can a heart or spirit be broken and contrite?”

Next, have them turn their heart over and write the answer to this question: “How can you tell that the response of a broken and contrite heart is sincere?”

Have the students share their answers with the class.

B. List some ways that heathen religions throughout history have shown worship/respect for their gods. Then list ways Christians show worship/respect for God.

Discuss who puts more effort into their worship—heathens or Christians.

Delving Into the Word
A. R E S P E C T—Find out what it means to ME! Have the class take turns looking up the following Bible passages. Identify and share the different ways respect has been shown for God:

● Exod. 14:4; ● Deut. 6:5; ● Josh. 22:5; ● 1 Sam. 1:21–28; ● 1 Sam. 7:1; ● 1 Chron. 29:3–5; ● Neh. 9:1–6; ● Job 34:19; ● Ps. 27:4; ● Jer. 25:5; ● John 15:8; ● Acts 5:29; ● Acts 20:24; ● 1 Cor. 16:19; ● Phil. 2:9–11; ● 1 Tim. 3:15; ● Heb. 11:6; ● 1 Pet. 2:12. Include any others the class can think of.

B. In Malachi, God offers another chance at reconciliation with Him. Using the reproducible activity (p. 43), identify...
other instances from the Bible where God offered someone a second chance.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. What are some similarities between God’s covenant with us and the marriage covenant?
2. Whom do we disrespect more, those we don’t know or our own families? Explain.
3. Are there pastors causing people to “stumble” in our day and age? In what ways?

4. In Malachi 2:3, the people had dung on their faces. In what ways does God bring people down off their pedestals?
5. How does God use sarcasm to get Israel’s attention?
6. What does it mean to be partial “in matters of the law”? (Mal. 2:9, NIV).
7. What can we do to encourage others to have more respect for God?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “We don’t often think about God getting angry, but we see several places in the Bible where God displays His displeasure.”

Ask: ●“Are there ever times when you wish to ‘punish’ people who disrespect you?” ●“Is your goal then to teach someone a positive lesson or do you have another more noble motive?” ●“How do our human interactions differ from God’s interaction with us?” ●“What can we share from this lesson about the God we serve?”

Close with prayer.

**Kathy Hecht, Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A.**
Using your Bible and a concordance, list the opportunities God gave the following people for a chance at reconciliation and following His will. Add others you can think of. Some information has been filled in for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Character</th>
<th>Bible Texts</th>
<th>Opportunity for a Second Chance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abraham</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lot</td>
<td>Gen. 19:12, 13, 16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reunited with Esau under good terms.</td>
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<td>David</td>
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<td>Hezekiah</td>
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<td>Jonah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Became a pillar of the Christian church even after denying Christ three times.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saul</td>
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