“The Call of Wisdom”

Surveying the Source

Job 28:20, 23, 27; Ps. 37:30, 31; 111:10; Prov. 1:1–7, 20–23; Proverbs 2: 3:13–18; 21:1, 2; Pss. 37:30, 31; 111:10.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Understand the two types of wisdom: worldly and godly.
► Learn to seek and ask God for this wisdom through studying His Word.
► Know that God is willing to teach them, as long as they are willing to learn His ways.

Preparing to Lead

God is infinite. He is the beginning and the end, and He does not change. Therefore, His wisdom is wisdom that we are to learn, both here on Earth and forevermore in our eternal home.

The saying goes that by beholding we become changed. The more time we spend in the world through its forms of media, the more we learn about the world. But will the world’s wisdom save us? When we spend more time studying the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, we become changed, because the knowledge therein is the knowledge of God, and therefore, has transforming power.

Getting Started

A. With a whiteboard or laptop/projector, list the pros and cons of both worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. Using the reproducible activity (p. 31), compare and discuss these similarities and differences.

B. Make a list of adjectives to fit the pros and cons of worldly wisdom versus godly wisdom. Have each adjective written on a separate slip of paper. Give each student one of the pieces of paper. Then have each student decide if his or her adjective describes worldly wisdom or godly wisdom, and why.

Delving Into the Word

A. Discuss the following quote: “‘We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,’ Paul afterward declared; ‘yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For

Copyright 2015
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
what man knoweth the things of a man, 
save the spirit of man which is in him? 
even so the things of God knoweth no 
man, but the Spirit of God’”*

B. Have the students search their Bibles for the word “wisdom.” Discuss the context of some of the key verses.

Ask: ●“How is wisdom obtained?”
●“Did individuals in the Bible profit from this wisdom? If so, then how?” ●“What methods were used to increase their wisdom?”

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Based on what you have learned from this week’s lesson, how would you now define godly wisdom?
2. Do you daily ask God for wisdom? Why, or why not?
3. In addition to studying the Bible, how else can you grow in wisdom and understanding?
4. What are the costs of following wisdom? What are the costs of ignoring it?
5. What obstacles hold you back from gaining godly wisdom?
6. Is your walk with God going where you want it to be? If not, what are you going to change, and how?

**Closing the Activity**

Distribute index cards and pens or pencils. Instruct each person to write down a verse or two on wisdom that they have come across in the study that they will put to immediate memory. Ask them to share aloud the verse or verses that they chose, and to explain why. Have closing prayer.

_Alden J. Ho, Jefferson, Texas, U.S.A._

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOD’S WISDOM</th>
<th>WORLDLY WISDOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Ears to Feet

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Think about wisdom in the book of Proverbs and as it regards the Source of wisdom in their own lives.
► Have the opportunity to explore how the differences in Bible versions can impact the meaning of a verse.
► Learn more of what Scripture says about personally hearing God’s voice.

Preparing to Lead

As a Sabbath School teacher, you will surely want to get your wisdom from the living Source of wisdom (2 Cor. 1:22). Why else would you be told to guard your heart (Prov. 4:23) if that weren’t the place where Wisdom lives (Prov. 14:33)? Consider what Stephen said about where God resides and those who resist the Spirit (Acts 7:48–53).

Upon meeting and knowing Jesus, truth becomes a living reality for us. The personal impact of this life-changing relationship in our lives will demonstrate to those around us the truth that Jesus offers to all.

Getting Started

A. Ask class members to see how many of the following proverbs they can easily complete from memory:
- “Trust in the L ORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding . . .” (Prov. 3:5, 6, NKJV).
- “A soft answer . . .” (Prov. 15:1).
- “A man’s heart plans his way . . .” (Prov. 16:9, NKJV).
- “Pride goes before destruction . . .” (Prov. 16:18, NKJV).
- “There is a way that seems right to a man . . .” (Prov. 14:12, NKJV).
- “Train up a child in the way he should go . . .” (Prov. 22:6).
- “As iron sharpens iron, . . .” (Prov. 27:17, NKJV).
- “He who spare his rod . . .” (Prov. 13:24, NKJV).

B. Share these fairly contemporary proverbs with the class. Discuss the wisdom to be found in each:
- “Ah, well, I am a great and sublime fool. But then I am God’s fool, and all His work must be contemplated with respect.” (Mark Twain).
- “How many observe Christ’s birthday! How few, His precepts!” (Benjamin Franklin).
- “Don’t let yesterday take up too much of today.” (Will Rogers).
- “Our principles are the springs of our actions. Our actions, the springs of our happiness or misery. Too much care, therefore, cannot be taken in forming our principles.” (Red Skelton).
Delving Into the Word

A. Have your class do a word search for the phrase “left or right” within the following books: Deuteronomy; Joshua; 2 Kings; 2 Chronicles. Look for the verses with a context of “obedience.”

Ask: “With this much variability in written words, how can you become better at actually hearing the Author’s voice?”

B. Ask: “What do the following verses say about hearing God’s voice and knowing Him?” ●2 Chron. 15:2; ●Job 33:13–18; ●Ps. 95:6–8; ●Isa. 50:4, 5; ●Jer. 24:7; 33:3; ●Zech. 1:3; ●John 10:2–5, 14, 15; 16:12–15; ●Acts 2:16–18; 7:51–53; ●James 4:8; ●Rev. 3:20.

List Bible stories of when people heard God’s voice after they had sinned or failed in some way.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Throughout the Bible, who are the people who hear God talk to them? What distinguishing characteristics do they have? How do they compare with us? (See James 5:17, 18.)


3. If possible and/or comfortable, relate a personal experience of hearing God speak directly to you. What were the circumstances? What did you hear or sense? How did you respond? What was the outcome?

4. God wants to pursue a relationship with us. What are some reasons we might not want to have a relationship with Him?

5. How might Acts 28:27 apply to our attempts at incorporating Solomon’s wisdom into our own lives?

6. Relate a favorite Proverb of yours and tell why it is your favorite.

Closing the Activity

Spend a minute in silence, listening for anything the Holy Spirit might have to say to class members about an event that recently occurred in their lives that taught them something. Invite them to share the lesson in the form of a proverb.

Gill Bahnsen, Enumclaw, Washington, U.S.A.
Have class members read aloud Isaiah 30:20, 21 from as many different Bible versions as possible.

List each version under the most appropriate column heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>If Turning</th>
<th>Correcting Error</th>
<th>Needing Direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Matter of Life and Death

Surveying the Source
Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:20–23, 30, 31; 7:1–3; Isa. 58:6–9; Rom. 6:16–23.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Consider how the commandments are meant as a light to direct them and not a barrier to their freedom.
► Learn that by heeding godly counsel, they can avoid falling into sinful habits that pull them away from the abundance of life God has for them.
► Recognize that God provides His Word to open their eyes to understanding, so that they can in turn open their hearts to change destructive patterns.
► Desire to seek the wisdom and grace God provides through His Word and His Son.
► Ask God to help them receive the gift of freedom and life that comes through His Word.

Preparing to Lead
Solomon probably had no idea when he was asking God for wisdom that this gift would bring him international acclaim and wealth.

The wisdom in Proverbs is timeless. It offers the gift of enlightenment from the Everlasting One who gives understanding and eternal life to those who heed it.

Getting Started

A. Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 33). Split the class into small groups to work on it together. Then ask the groups to share their answers, titles, and the scriptures they came up.

B. Ask a volunteer to leave the room until you bring them back blindfolded. Using the available furniture and/or students, form a maze for the volunteer to walk through. The maze should have three endings. One path will lead to a dead-end where a student holding a rope will lightly tie it around the volunteer. (In this path, there should be a sign that reads “Worldly Voices.”) Another dead-end path will lead to a student with a blanket to put over the volunteer. (This dead-end should have a sign that reads “Sexual Indiscretions.”) The successful path through the maze will have a student with a flashlight that leads to the way out.

The light is on while all other lights are out. The sign at the end of this path says “Godly Counsel.” Bring the volunteer blindfolded into the middle of the room. Have the students guide the volunteer through the maze with their voice commands, hopefully to the correct path. The students acting as part of the maze also should add their enticing voices to try to get the volunteer to take their path. The volunteer finishes when s/he arrives at the end of the path s/he has chosen, whether or not it is the right path. The blindfold is removed, and the volunteer realizes which path s/he has taken. Say: “The Bible tells us that because of sin, we live in darkness, without understanding...”
or wisdom. But God shows us how to overcome that darkness. Sometimes it is confusing to know which path to take, but today we will see that God shows us the way to wisdom, light, and eternal life.”

**Delving Into the Word**

**A.** Divide the class into two groups, and divide up the following verses:  
*Group 1:* Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:20–24, 30–33; Isa. 58:9.  
*Group 2:* Prov. 7:1–5; 19–27; Rom. 6:16–23. On the whiteboard, print out the words “Empowerment,” “Entrapment,” and “Emancipation.” Ask the groups to list under each word how their verses help them to understand the following concepts: (1) why it is important to heed godly counsel; (2) how sin entraps us; and (3) how we can obtain freedom from sinful habits.

Bring the groups together to review their answers, writing their responses under the headings.

**B.** Have the class open their Bibles to Proverbs 6. Have someone read aloud verses 20–23. Then have someone read aloud Psalm 119:105.

Discuss how the Activity B in Getting Started demonstrated the truths in this passage. Then ask the students if they can name other Bible passages that echo or illustrate this advice.

As they answer, list the scriptures on a whiteboard. Give time for the students to read their selected scriptures. If none have selected Ephesians 5:8–15; 6:1–4, have them turn to these passages and ask for volunteers to read each one.

After having read these passages together, have the class break into small groups and discuss the following question: “Why should we view instruction as light instead of as infringing upon our freedom?” Bring the class back together so that all the groups can share their thoughts.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why is it tempting to disregard the advice of our parents, teachers, or school advisors?

2. What gives older people the credibility to instruct us and to share their advice?

3. Give examples of when you heeded the advice of a parent or mentor and it made things worse for you? Why do you think that happened?

4. How does God want us to view His Word? Why did He give it to us?

5. Why do you think the Bible instructs us to honor and obey our parents or elders? What is it about being older that gives them any better insight to your situation or path?

6. In what ways does following the Ten Commandments offer light to our life?

**Closing the Activity**

Ask: “What is the best advice you ever got and were grateful for? How did that advice impact your life?”

If there are young parents in your class, allow them to share attitudes and behaviors they have had to address with their children and the positive reactions or outcomes they have experienced watching their children learn to trust them and God’s Word.

Close by inviting a few volunteers to pray before you have the final prayer.

Jean Kellner, Fulton, Maryland, U.S.A.
Below is a list of book titles on the left and another list of self-help authors on the right. Match the correct author to the book by writing the book number next to the author's name. If you are not familiar with the titles or authors, use your cell phone or computer to search the book titles or the authors’ names.

1. 7 Habits of Highly Effective People  
   Author: Anthony Robbins

2. Awaken the Giant Within  
   Author: Zig Ziglar

3. Raising Positive Kids in a Negative World  
   Author: Stephen R. Covey

4. 13 Weeks to Peace  
   Author: Jennifer Jill Schwirtzer

5. Daring Greatly  
   Author: Joshua Harris

6. Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship  
   Author: Brene Brown

Add to this list any motivational/self-help books you have read. Write a Bible passage or verse that addresses the issues in the book titles.

Find Bible verses from this week’s lesson that fit these titles.
Divine Wisdom

Surveying the Source
Deut. 30:19, 20; 1 Kings 3; Prov. 8:1–31; 9:1–9; Jer. 9:23, 24; John 1:1–3; James 1:5.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
▶ Discover how to access divine wisdom.
▶ Consider the differences between godly and human wisdom, knowledge and understanding.
▶ Consider how to incorporate divine wisdom into their lives and how not to be lured into following human wisdom.

Preparing to Lead
“The follower of Christ will meet with the ‘enticing words’ against which the apostle warned the Colossian believers. He will meet with spiritualistic interpretations of the Scriptures, but he is not to accept them. His voice is to be heard in clear affirmation of the eternal truths of the Scriptures. Keeping his eyes fixed on Christ, he is to move steadily forward in the path marked out, discarding all ideas that are not in harmony with His teaching. The truth of God is to be the subject of his contemplation and meditation. He is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him. Thus he will find the wisdom which is divine.”

Getting Started
A. Say: “Solomon is recognized as the wisest man whoever lived. When given the choice of anything he wanted to receive from God, he requested wisdom.”

On a whiteboard or chalkboard, write the following questions:
● If God gave you the opportunity to choose one thing you could receive from Him, what would be your choice?
● What is the difference between being wise and being smart?

Divide the class into groups of 3–4 students. Distribute paper and pens. Have them discuss these questions and record their answers on the paper. Have them share and explain their answers with the rest of the class.

B. The Bible emphasizes that wisdom is an important part of the Christian life. Ask the students to use the following texts to outline five steps that will help them determine whether they are using godly wisdom in making their choices:

Also have them describe situations from their daily life when they could apply these steps in making decisions.

Delving Into the Word
A. Say: “The Bible has many stories of humans depending on either divine wisdom or human wisdom. At first it often seems easier to use human wisdom than
godly wisdom. The story of Job describes people looking at a situation with both human and godly wisdom. Although Job had faced the loss of his living, his children, his home, and his workforce, he continued to trust in God.

“On the other hand, his three friends could only look at his situation with earthly eyes. They were sure Job had done something to bring his troubles on himself. In the end, God rewarded Job for his faith during the worst of circumstances.”

Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 34), and ask the students to read the Bible verses, identify the characters involved in the story, and determine whether they used human wisdom or godly wisdom to make their decision.

B. People often think that wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are the same thing. Consider the definitions of the words and discuss how each of them can be either godly or worldly.

Have someone read Proverbs 2:6. Ask: “How does this verse apply to your discussion about the definitions of these words, and what does this verse mean to you personally?”

Discuss how the following Bible texts would have different meanings if you were looking at them from the perspective of godly wisdom and human wisdom: ●Exodus 20; ●Psalm 84:11, 12; ●Proverbs 3:13–18; ●1 Timothy 6:9.

Next, read James 3:15–17. Discuss the characteristics of godly wisdom that are outlined in these verses. Ask: “How can you use the principles outlined in these texts to help you know whether your decisions are from God or human directed?”

The story of Job describes people looking at a situation with both human and godly wisdom. Although Job had faced the loss of his living, his children, his home, and his workforce, he continued to trust in God.

“On the other hand, his three friends could only look at his situation with earthly eyes. They were sure Job had done something to bring his troubles on himself. In the end, God rewarded Job for his faith during the worst of circumstances.”

Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 34), and ask the students to read the Bible verses, identify the characters involved in the story, and determine whether they used human wisdom or godly wisdom to make their decision.

B. People often think that wisdom, knowledge, and understanding are the same thing. Consider the definitions of the words and discuss how each of them can be either godly or worldly.

Have someone read Proverbs 2:6. Ask: “How does this verse apply to your discussion about the definitions of these words, and what does this verse mean to you personally?”

Discuss how the following Bible texts would have different meanings if you were looking at them from the perspective of godly wisdom and human wisdom: ●Exodus 20; ●Psalm 84:11, 12; ●Proverbs 3:13–18; ●1 Timothy 6:9.

Next, read James 3:15–17. Discuss the characteristics of godly wisdom that are outlined in these verses. Ask: “How can you use the principles outlined in these texts to help you know whether your decisions are from God or human directed?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. What are the qualities of divine wisdom?
2. How can you determine whether your decisions are based on godly or human wisdom?
3. Why is it important to have wisdom as a part of our decision-making process?
4. Describe a scenario in your life where you used godly wisdom.
5. How can Christians influence the world by choosing to use godly rather than human wisdom?

Closing the Activity

Say: “Like Solomon, we should be prepared to ask God for His wisdom to guide our daily lives. We cannot trust ourselves to make the right decisions without His wisdom and guidance.”

Distribute copies of the reproducible activity (p. 34). Ask the students to contemplate how they can apply the principles outlined in these sentences to their lives.

To close the class, have the group sing “Father, Lead Me Day By Day,” found in the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal®, #482.

Deena Bartel-Wagner, Whitesboro, New York, U.S.A.

Read the Bible verses below. Identify the characters involved in the story. Then determine whether they used human wisdom or godly wisdom to make their decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible Verses</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Godly or Human Wisdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 3:1–8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 13:1–13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 14:1–24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Samuel 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 3:1–15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Kings 12:1–24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 18:23–35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 26:14–16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts 8:1–3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation 7:1–4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation 13:11–18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Our Subject of Contemplation and Meditation**

“The follower of Christ will meet with the ‘enticing words’ against which the apostle warned the Colossian believers. He will meet with spiritualistic interpretations of the Scriptures, but he is not to accept them. His voice is to be heard in clear affirmation of the eternal truths of the Scriptures. Keeping his eyes fixed on Christ, he is to move steadily forward in the path marked out, discarding all ideas that are not in harmony with His teaching. The truth of God is to be the subject of his contemplation and meditation. He is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him. Thus he will find the wisdom which is divine.”

The Blessings of the Righteous

Surveying the Source
Proverbs 10—13.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Identify specific areas of their lives where they need God’s righteousness.
► Pray that God will help them improve in some or all of those areas.
► Testify to how they have seen God’s righteousness in others and how or if those examples affected them personally.

Preparing to Lead

This week’s lesson is about what “righteousness” is—what it looks like in the Christian life, and all of the blessings that righteousness bring. Yet Isaiah 64:5, 6 and Romans 3:10–12 tell us that not one of is righteous and that all our attempts to do righteous deeds are like mere “filthy rags.”

Why, then, should we aspire to be righteous? Perhaps it’s not so we will have a flashy MVP of Righteousness award (which we will never deserve), but for the benefit of others and for the glorification of God. This week then, we will study who the primary benefactors are of righteousness.

Getting Started

A. Begin by asking students to call out (or list on a whiteboard) names of superheroes. Ask: ●“What do you like about them?” ●“What are these heroes fighting for?” ●“Why don’t they just flee and save themselves?” ●“Are the stakes just as high in the battle for righteousness? Why, or why not?” ●“What relationship is there to our own calling to rise up and live for the good of others?”

Direct the students’ attention to how we revere/respect people who fight for noble causes and the safety/happiness of others above themselves.

B. On a whiteboard, have the class list as many current or historical “noble” or admirable figures as they can think of. Then, have them discuss if the people listed could classify as “righteous.”

Ask: “What characteristics do these ‘righteous’ people have that the ‘not-so-righteous’ ones are lacking, despite their noble qualities?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the students into small groups. Have them open their Bibles to Proverbs 10 and 11. Pass out one sheet of paper and a pen or pencil to each group. Ask the groups to create two columns on their paper.

As they read through the two chapters, have them list in one column all the behaviors/actions/traits of a righteous person. On the other side, have them list the behaviors/actions/blessings of God.
towards these people. Once the groups have finished creating their lists, create a master list by having them call out their findings and writing them on the whiteboard.  

B. Have the students open their Bibles to Proverbs 10—11. One verse at a time, read the two chapters out loud as a class. Then have them close their Bibles and divide the class into two groups.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Whom have you known that you could describe as righteous? What were they like? How did you feel when you were around them?
2. Who is an example (past or living) to you of righteous living? How can you imitate this person’s life?
3. How can young adults be examples of righteousness? To whom can they be examples?
4. In what areas can you improve as you aspire to be righteous?
5. Who benefits the most from our righteous acts—ourselves, others, or God? Why?
6. How can you behave like a righteous person for the wrong reasons? What are the right and wrong reasons for trying to be righteous?

**Closing the Activity**

 Invite the students to take a moment to reflect on how they could improve their efforts to live righteously. Ask them to make a list in their phones (or on paper) of specific actions they could take (for example: swearing less, speaking more kindly to parents, standing up for their values, being more proactive in their community or family, befriending someone new).  

After giving students time to reflect, invite them to share their ideas. Then suggest they pray over that list each day during the coming week.  

To close the class, pray for the students’ efforts as a whole.

**Melissa Breetzke Meneses, Berrien Springs, Michigan, U.S.A.**
1. Name three things the righteous are delivered from ___________ (Prov. 10:2; 11:6, 8).

2. True or False: The righteous will not go hungry (Prov. 10:3).

3. ___________ crown the head of the righteous (Prov. 10:6).

4. The name/memory of the righteous will be used in ___________ (Prov. 10:7).

5. The mouth of the righteous is ___________ (Prov. 10:11).

6. Righteousness brings ___________ to God's people (Prov. 10:16).

7. The wages of the wicked are ___________ (Prov. 10:16).

8. The tongue of the righteous is ___________ (Prov. 10:20).

9. The lips of the righteous ___________ (Prov. 10:21).

10. What the righteous desire will be ___________ (Prov. 10:24).

11. The righteous ___________ forever (Prov. 10:25).

12. The prospect of the righteous is ___________ (Prov. 10:28).

13. The refuge of the righteous is ___________ (Prov. 10:29).

14. The righteous will never be ___________ (Prov. 10:30).

15. The upright are guided by ___________ (Prov. 11:3).
What You Get Is Not What You See

Surveying the Source
Ps. 119:105; Prov. 3:5, 6; 14:12, 27; 15:3; 16:9, 25; Matt. 7:15, 16; 24:24; Heb. 6:16–18.

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Appreciate how deception is often a means of attack and something we must be aware of.
► Consider how they might be at risk for deception in their own lives.
► Explore the meaning of discernment and discover biblical principles for faithful discernment.

Preparing to Lead
Have you ever purchased something at a market or food stall, paid the listed or agreed upon price, then been disappointed with what you received or realized that you paid more than it was worth?
Do you remember the feeling you had when you understood that you had been ripped off or otherwise deceived?

It can be disappointing and embarrassing to be duped or taken advantage of, even in the daily things of life. How much more serious it is when deception—and sometimes self-deception—lead us into spiritual danger, where we might risk losing our faith, our relationship with God, or even our eternal hope.

Getting Started
A. Ask for a volunteer to be blindfolded and follow directions to a “target” chair on the other side of the room.
   After he or she is blindfolded, instruct the rest of the class to give directions and tell them that you will nominate some people to give incorrect directions. Randomly point to about two-thirds of participants to give wrong directions.
   When ready, instruct students to begin. Allow the activity to continue until the “target” is reached, or for about one minute. Then, see how close the blindfolded student can come to the “target.”
   Ask this student how they felt about all the voices coming at them. How did they choose which voices or directions to follow?

B. Show pictures of animals that use camouflage in their natural environment. Examples might include chameleons, stick insects, tigers, fish, and birds.
   Say: “Many of these animals use camouflage as a form of defense, but more often this is a method of hunting. The animal blends into its background and either creeps up on its prey or waits until an unsuspecting animal comes close and then attacks it.
   “Similarly, many military forces use camouflaged clothing and vehicles to launch attacks. It is a type of deception that can be fatal, offering something that looks harmless, but in the end leads to death.”
Delving Into the Word

A. Divide the class into four pairs or groups (make additional groups, if needed) and assign each group a Bible verse from one of the following texts: Proverbs 3:5, 6; 14:12, 27; 15:3; 16:9, 25.

Provide each group with paper and pens or pencils. Be sure that each group has access to a Bible. Instruct each group to review their assigned verses and re-write the verse/s in their own words, perhaps in a way they might explain it to a friend who knows little about the Bible.

Then ask each group to illustrate their verse/s as a poster promoting the message of their assigned verse.

Allow sufficient time for creativity. Then have each group present their poster to the rest of the class, explaining what they have done. Commend each group’s work, and mount the completed posters on your classroom wall or—with permission—in the church foyer.

B. Using the reproducible activity (p. 36), have students write their own definition of “discernment” after consulting the dictionary. Then have them discuss what the word means in a practical sense.

Ask them to think of examples in which discernment might be important in their daily lives. Talk about why this is particularly needed in relation to our faith (see Matt. 7:15; 24:24). Working through the list on the reproducible sheet, identify the five principles of faithful discernment as identified in these verses. (The students may want to read the verses surrounding each reference to get the context in which the verse appears.) The principles are: (1) God’s Word gives light. (2) “Signs and wonders” can be deceiving. (3) Leaders should be judged by the “fruit” of their ministry. (4) God does not change. (5) We should seek the will of God and His leading.

Having identified these principles, lead the students in a discussion of how they can build up these aspects of discernment in their own spiritual lives.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Why does religion seem to attract many people who want to lead others astray or profit from them?
2. When we talk about deception, particularly in an end-time context, it can sound frightening. How can we be alert to deception without being unduly alarmed or becoming paranoid?
3. How much is our risk of deception about self-deception (see Prov. 3:5)?

   How can we learn to be more honest with ourselves? And why is this important for our spiritual lives?

4. How would you distinguish discernment from judging, which Jesus warned us not to do in Matthew 7:1, 2?

5. What do you think that you most need to do to build up your defense against deception?

6. How would you explain the “good news” about deception to a friend who is troubled by fear of deception?

Closing the Activity

Say: “Camouflage is often used in the natural and human worlds for helping with some type of attack. Sometimes, camouflage is used for defense as a way of hiding from a potential attack. However, in our spiritual lives, camouflage is not an option. Because we are God’s people, we are targets of deception and discouragement. Our adversary “prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour” (1 Pet. 5:8, NLT). But while camouflage won’t work for us, we can be covered. God will protect us spiritually, and “he will show you which path to take” (Prov. 3:6, NLT). That’s the good news on deception.

Nathan Brown, Warburton, Victoria, Australia
DISCERNMENT

Define “discernment” in your own words:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What are the principles or guidelines for discernment in the following verses?

Psalms 119:105 ___________________________________________________________________
Proverbs 3:5, 6 ___________________________________________________________________
Matthew 7:16 ___________________________________________________________________
Matthew 24:24, 25 ___________________________________________________________________
Hebrews 6:18 ___________________________________________________________________

DISCERNMENT

Define “discernment” in your own words:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

What are the principles or guidelines for discernment in the following verses?

Psalms 119:105 ___________________________________________________________________
Proverbs 3:5, 6 ___________________________________________________________________
Matthew 7:16 ___________________________________________________________________
Matthew 24:24, 25 ___________________________________________________________________
Hebrews 6:18 ___________________________________________________________________
Dealing With Fights

Surveying the Source

Prov. 17:9, 10; 18:13; 19:11, 25; Mic. 7:18; Eph. 6:12.

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Outline principles for dealing with conflict as revealed in Proverbs.
► Examine how Christ dealt with antagonists.
► Practice methods for building peace and unity.

Preparing to Lead

How to deal wisely with conflict is one of the most important life skills we can develop. The Bible offers examples of conflict, showcasing godly and ungodly methods of dealing with these fights. A number of Proverbs are particularly valuable in helping us understand the principles of conflict resolution. We can see them illustrated in Christ’s ways of relating to antagonists, as well as in the methods by which He promoted peace and unity.

Getting Started

A. Collaborate with your class in making a list of the conflicts various members have experienced or heard about during the past week. Create headings under which you can group these conflicts, such as fights with family members or friends, fights at work with coworkers or a boss, fights in the community, or national/international conflicts.

Ask: ●“Which fights are the most emotionally painful?” ●“Which have been going on the longest?” ●“Which may be the easiest to resolve?” ●“Which can have the greatest long-term effects on the lives of persons in the class in terms of personal happiness?” ●“In terms of health and stability for most people?”

B. With your class, make a list of the conflicts Christ faced in His life on Earth.

Ask: ●“What types of conflicts did He have with family members, friends, and disciples?” ●“What types of conflicts arose because of His work in the community?” ●“What types of national or international conflicts were reflected in the events of His life?” ●“How are these conflicts similar to the conflicts you face?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Ask for volunteers to stage a skit based on one of the unresolved interpersonal conflicts listed in the Getting Started exercises. Write the following Proverbs on a chalkboard: Prov. 17:9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 27, 28; 18:6, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19; 19:11, 20; 20:3, 18; 21:9, 10, 14, 19, 23, 29, 31. Depending on how many are in your class, assign a verse or two to each member, and ask them to apply these verses to the fight that was acted out. Ask: ●“What principle of behavior
contains severalverses from the following list: Proverbs 17:9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 27, 28; 18:6, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19; 19:11, 20; 20:3, 18; 21:9, 10, 14, 19, 23, 29, 31; 22:3, 4, 10, 11, 24, 25, 28; 23:10, 11, 12.

Ask each group to construct a list of principles for peace-making based on the verses assigned to them. Then reconvene your class. Using everyone’s input, condense the lists from the three groups into one document.

Using one of the local community, national, or international conflicts listed in the Getting Started exercise, discuss how to address the conflict using the principles of peace-making document your class just created.

What other biblical passages cast light on this conflict and may be helpful in describing how to relate to the situation?

What can your class do to help resolve the situation, using the principles of peace-making?

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Sometimes it is hard to make a connection between a principle from the Bible and a course of action in a particular situation. What have you found to help you during these times?

2. What examples can you share where the Holy Spirit helped you deal with a situation that needed a quick response? What other examples of conflicts can you share that required much prayer, time, and thought to be resolved?

3. What stories of Christ’s methods of handling the conflicts in His life have helped you relate to your own issues?

4. It is often easier to relate to conflict by leaving the scene. Sometimes this may be best, but not always. When is it good to leave a scene of conflict, and when is it important to stay and resolve the conflict?

5. Which of the proverbs have especially touched you and made a difference in your life, and why?

6. Which proverb do you want to apply to a situation you will be facing next week? Use the reproducible activity (p. 37) as a take-home reminder.

**Closing the Activity**

Ask if anyone in the class would like prayer regarding how to handle an area in their life in which they are facing conflict. They may not wish to disclose the situation, or they may ask for advice from the class in how to handle the problem using the biblical principles of conflict resolution and peace-making that were discussed during class.

If there are several requests, divide the class into groups. Have each group discuss and/or praying over a request.

Close with a general prayer.

Cheryl Woolsey Des Jarlais, Ringgold, Georgia, U.S.A.
My Proverb of the Week:

My Challenging Situation:

The Critical Principle:

My Prayer:
Words of Wisdom

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Describe why the wisdom of God is a priceless treasure.

► Explore the differences between human wisdom and God’s wisdom.

Preventing to Lead

Christian author Kent Crockett recalls living in a dorm during his college days. The door to each room had its own key. “However, Crockett writes, “the person in charge had a pass-key. That single key had the ability to open the doors to every room in the dorm.”

“Wisdom is like a pass-key, that will unlock difficult decisions and open doors for you. The Lord is the only one who has the key, but He’ll loan it to you, if you’ll ask for it”

Delving into the Word

A. Have the students turn to Daniel 3. Ask a volunteer to take notes on a whiteboard or chalkboard. Have that person write the following words, leaving room for brief notes: “Setting;” “Test;” “Consequences;” “Logical Choice;” “Actual Choice;” “Outcomes.”

B. Ask: “Have you ever met a person who was smart, even brilliant, but who couldn’t apply knowledge in a sensible way?” Invite the students to share examples. Be prepared to share a story of your own in case they can’t think of any.

Ask: “What’s the difference between God-based knowledge and wisdom and knowledge and wisdom that is based on human understanding?” “How does this apply to our spiritual journey?” “What about the religious leaders of Jesus’ day? In what ways were they knowledgeable about Scripture but without the wisdom to apply it properly?” “Why was this the case?” “How did it shape their actions?”

A. Say: “There’s humor in the stereotype of a man on a trip who refuses to ask for directions when he’s lost. But the stakes are infinitely higher in our spiritual travels. Each of us needs wisdom from God. Discovering more about this wisdom and how to apply it is our topic of discussion today.

Let’s start by going to God in prayer, claiming the promise found in James 1:5, which says, ‘If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him’ (NKJV). Ask a volunteer to pray.

B. Ask: “What’s the difference between human wisdom and God’s wisdom. Identify ways of gaining God’s wisdom.”
the student volunteer writes key thoughts under the appropriate headings. Say: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced the ultimate high-stakes showdown.”

Next, lead a class discussion, starting with the notes written on the board. Say: “Daniel’s friends faced a decision about enforced worship. Their civil disobedience was informed by fear of God—a recognition that He was far more powerful than any threat or action taken by Nebuchadnezzar.”

Ask: ● “How do you suppose Babylon’s elite reacted when they realized that three Jews were defying the king?” ● “Did anyone think disobeying the king’s order was a wise thing to do?” ● “In this story, what does the initial consequence and the final outcome say about God?” ● “What do the choices made by the king, the elite crowd, and the three friends tell us about each of them?”

B. Say: “Wisdom shows itself in the outcome of choices. God freely offers wisdom to those who humbly ask. Unfortunately, many people think they know how to make good choices, but their decisions result in problems. Consider the choices made by Abram and Lot when the time came for them to part ways.”

Ask a volunteer to read Genesis 13:8–12. Discuss why Abram deferred to Lot and why Lot chose as he did.

Ask three volunteers to read aloud Proverbs 3:5; 14:12; and 16:25. Say: “Why do you think Solomon repeated himself in the second and third texts?”

Read the following quote: “A man is traveling and comes to a place where there are several roads and a guideboard indicating where each one leads. If he disregards the guideboard, and takes whichever road seems to him to be right, he may be ever so sincere, but will in all probability find himself on the wrong road.”

Say: “How many of you have made a decision only to discover it was the wrong choice? God can guide all of our decisions, large or small. Let’s determine today to turn our independence into daily dependence on Him.”

### Discussing the Ideas

1. Think of examples in which human ideas are at odds with God’s wisdom.
2. When have you been tempted to follow your own understanding instead of what God says? How did it turn out?
3. What correlation exists between Christians who lean on their own understanding of truth and the Laodicean church (Rev. 3:17)?
4. Why do you suppose Solomon sought wisdom from God?
5. What steps will you take to acquire God’s wisdom?
6. In what specific ways will God’s wisdom transform your life?

### Closing the Activity

**Say:** “God alone is the infallible guide. The wisdom He freely offers will help us chart the best course through life, whether we’re choosing a career or spouse, or whether we need insights for raising children, handling finances, or sharing Jesus with others.”

Give each student a pen or a pencil and a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 38). **Say:** “Take a few minutes for quiet reflection as we create a personal written prayer asking God for wisdom.”

After the students have completed the activity, close with prayer.

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

Are you facing difficult decisions in your life? Not sure which way to turn? God offers you wisdom. Simply claim His promise and follow His leading. Create below a written petition as your prayer to God.

GOD’S PROMISE
“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5, 6, NKJV).

MY PRAYER
Father, I’m Your child. You’ve told me to ask for wisdom when I need it, and I do need it. Humbly, in faith, I claim Your promise and trust Your leading. Where my faith may be weak, strengthen it (Mark 9:24).

Right now, I’m feeling a need for Your knowledge and wisdom in these areas:

1. _____________________________________________________________
2. _____________________________________________________________
3. _____________________________________________________________
4. _____________________________________________________________
5. _____________________________________________________________

Thank You for hearing my prayer and for opening my eyes to the ways You choose to answer me. Help me live my life in a way that can bring glory and honor to You, my Father.

I pray this in Jesus’ name.

Your child,

_________________________________
(Your name)
Words of Truth

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:
► Define what truth means to them personally .
► Learn to apply Proverbs to various situations in their daily lives.
► Understand the inherent danger of lies.

Preparing to Lead

What is truth? There are entire college classes dedicated to studying the different methods of knowing truth and how to determine absolute truth.

How do you know that what you know is true? Is it absolute truth—truth regardless of the situation? Or is it relative truth—truth for you, but maybe not for someone else?

It is easy to get bogged down in the labyrinth of questions that can spring forth from this debate. Thankfully, we have the Bible, written by the One who said, “ ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’ ” (John 14:6, NKJV), and it is He who guides us through life’s tough questions.

Getting Started

A. Have the class play “Two Truths and a Lie.” Each class member makes three statements about themselves. Two of the statements must be true. One must be a lie. The class then determines which of the three statements is a lie.

Ask: • “Is it easier to determine that some people are lying more than others?”
• “How do you feel when something you believed to be true is revealed as a lie?”

B. Everyone has some wisdom, and it usually comes from experience. Split the class into groups of two or three and give each group a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Have them write down their words of wisdom, whether it be don’t roast marshmallows in the house or don’t cheat on a test.

Come back together as a class and have each group share their wisdom (and maybe how they got so smart!)

Ask: “Why is it easier to remember things you’ve learned from experience rather than wise teachings you have heard?”

Delving Into the Word

A. Say: “When a child starts to do something wrong, the first response from his or her parent is usually, ‘Don’t . . .’ If that child is old enough, then an explanation as to why will likely follow. Otherwise, the default is more often than not, ‘Because I told you so!’

“Solomon must have known that his
audience was going to question why when he started writing his ‘Thou Shalt Not’s.’ He even stated that he is ‘teaching . . . true and reliable words so that you can give true answers to anyone who asks’ (Prov. 22:21, NCV). He wanted us to know why we weren’t supposed to do certain things—the truth behind it all.”

Hand out the reproducible activity (p. 39) and a writing utensil to each class member. Working in pairs, have the class complete the sheet by writing in what Solomon stated they shouldn’t do and then the explanation for why not. When everyone has finished, go through the worksheet as a class. Ask: ●“Is it easier not to do something when you know why you should not be doing it?” ●“Why do you think that is?”

B. Say: “While Solomon did write many wise words and sayings, they don’t always seem to apply to our lives. How easier to follow if a narrative followed each “thou shalt not” explaining why it’s a bad idea to commit that sin? Explain your answer.

5. Is it easy to follow Solomon’s advice in Proverbs? Why or why not?

6. Are Solomon’s sayings more or less important now than they were in the past? Support your answer.

Discussing the Ideas

1. Does it really matter whether you are telling the whole truth or mostly the whole truth? Explain your answer.

2. If an honest answer is as pleasing as a kiss on the lips, why is it so hard to be honest with people?

3. How can truth be masqueraded as untruth?

4. Would the Ten Commandments be

Closing the Activity

Give each class member a piece of paper and a writing utensil. Write on the whiteboard the following four questions:

(1) What does truth mean to me? (2) How truthful am I with others? (3) How can I become more truthful? (4) In what specific ways can I share the truth with my friends and family?

The students should answer the questions on their pieces of paper. Have them share as they feel comfortable and as time allows.

Kristi Rich, Bozeman, Montana, U.S.A.
# Don’t Do That!

Look up the following texts in your Bible. Write what you are not supposed to do in the middle box and why not in the last box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse/s</th>
<th>Don’t</th>
<th>Why Not?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 22:24, 25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 22:26, 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:1–3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:4, 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:6–8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:10, 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:13, 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:17, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:20, 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 23:31–35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:1, 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:15, 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:17, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:19, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:21, 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov. 24:23–25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behind the Mask

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:
► Evaluate current common sense wisdom in light of the book of Proverbs.
► Apply passages from the book of Proverbs to current life.
► Extract and group principles from Proverbs into a “Proverbs 101” list.

Preparing to Lead

In 1989, Stephen Covey published his hugely popular The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, which Time magazine has named as one of the 25 most influential business books.¹

Covey was impatient with a theme he’d perceived in many other success-in-business books: learn to manipulate people to get what you want. So Seven Habits challenges its readers to brush aside the mind-tricks and become people of integrity who work from the best motives. Which is of course exactly what Proverbs is all about, except that its title could be Hundreds of Habits of Highly Moral Humans.

Getting Started

A. During the week, invite to class someone who is, or has been, an animal trapper, or knows a good deal about the subject. (If you can’t find such an expert, you could assign someone to do online research.) Remind the class about the lesson’s Introduction which refers to avoiding “Satan’s many traps.” Ask the expert:
● “Describe for us what you would do if someone asked you to trap a raccoon” [or other animal the expert would have dealt with].
● “Do you have to use different psychology for different animals?” Then open the floor for discussion about how this might relate to the devil’s spiritual entrapment activities.

B. Remind the class that the sayings in Proverbs are not only inspired Scripture but also solid common sense.

Ask the class for wise sayings they learned from their parents and others during their childhood (for example, “Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.”). Have them list a few of these on the board, numbering them like Bible verses. Ask if anything would need to be added to them to make them Bible-worthy.

Delving Into the Word

Say: “Imagine that your pastor, keenly aware of the negatives and positives of social media, has asked you to write a ‘gossip filter’ article for your church website or Facebook page. ‘Give us four or five principles to help decide what gossip is and what it isn’t,’ he suggests.

“Using Proverbs 26:20–22, as well as

1Copyright 2015 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
other Bible passages such as Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, 1 Timothy 5:13, and 1 Peter 4:15, create some gossip-filter guidelines.” Or, distribute the reproducible activity (p. 40), and have the students work on it individually. After 10 or 15 minutes, ask them to share some of their experiences.

B. Say: “Readers accustomed to well-organized articles and books can get really frustrated with Proverbs. If only its compilers had at least grouped its subjects together! Pretend that you are writing a Dummies-style book that seeks to interest readers in the book of Proverbs. Each of the book’s chapters will deal with one of Proverb’s major themes.”

Next, divide the class into four teams. Give the first team several copies of Proverbs 23, the second team copies of chapter 26, the third team copies of chapter 27, and the fourth team copies of chapter 29.

Tell them to use the subjects discussed to create potential book chapters.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Why should we be careful when eating with a “ruler” or a “miser” (Prov. 23:1–3, 6–8, NKJV)? What could be some possible dangers from either?
2. Discuss Proverbs 25:2, 3. Why is it “glory” for God to conceal and “glory” for a king to research what is concealed? What is the difference between these two “glories”?
3. Proverbs 26:17 deals with meddling in a quarrel that is not your own. How do you decide whether a quarrel is something you should avoid or something in which you should get involved?
4. When Proverbs 29:4 speaks with disfavor about giving and receiving bribes, how can this be applied to mission work in countries where bribing is a part of everyday life? Try to arrive at a Bible-based policy on this matter. 2
5. Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13, 14; and 29:15 suggest that punishing children by spanking them is good for them. Is this still valid, or are there better ways? What kind of disciplinary actions did your parents take?
6. Proverbs 27:17 seems to be talking about the effectiveness of teamwork. Describe an experience in your life when teamwork was proved to be quite useful.
7. Proverbs 26:18, 19 seem to forbid practical joking. How would you apply these verses today?

**Closing the Activity**

Say: “Today we’ve talked about several life principles found in Proverbs. Think about which ones appealed to you the most and how might you try to put them to work this coming week. For our next class session, plan a brief report on how your attempts went.”

Close with prayer.

**Maylan Schurch, Renton, Washington, U.S.A.**

Proverbs—the Bullying Book

If you look at it one way, Proverbs says a good bit about bullying. The “fool” pushes his weight around, pressuring polite people out of their comfort zones. Spoken words—depending on what they are and how they’re said—can do appalling damage, or they can turn away wrath. The “talebearer” (gossiper) can enflame workplaces, churches, even nations. News stories abound with accounts of people of all ages who bully other people.

Remembering that bullying can be verbal as well as physical, choose one of the bullies in your life and complete the chart below. When you’re done, write comments—or maybe a “proverb” or two—about how those childhood experiences have shaped your life for good or ill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Bullies</th>
<th>What they did to cause you discomfort</th>
<th>How you responded</th>
<th>How the authors of Proverbs suggest you could have responded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How have these experiences with bullies shaped your life?
Living by Faith

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
► Learn to obey God’s voice rather than man’s voice.
► Identify the consequences of trusting in their own powers.
► Learn to trust God regardless of the outcome of their wishes.

Preparing to Lead
“Faith is trust. Faith is a relationship. But faith also has propositional content. It is in many ways like a relationship between people who are close to each other.”

If you truly love someone, you get to know the person deeply and trust that person regardless of his or her judgments or character.

The Bible talks about people who overcame great challenges by faith. As Christians, we believe in God as our Provider. However, this does not mean that He will always grant us our wishes. We need to have faith strong enough to put our trust in Him completely, even if He answers contrary to our wishes.

Getting Started
A. Ask: “Who is your hero of faith?” Let each participant answer. Then ask: “Why did you choose _______ as your hero of faith?”

Discuss the answers as a class. Ask if they have ever accomplished anything by having faith in God, and have them share these experiences. Mention that faith is an important requirement in the lives of Christians. However, explain that faith does not eliminate disappointment.

Ask the participants how they respond to situations that are disappointing. Or, do the reproducible activity (p. 40).

B. Ask: “How does having faith in God help you with your college exams, family life matters, or looking for a job?”

Allow time for discussion, and write all the answers on the whiteboard. Then ask: “Do you always succeed when you have faith in God?”

Allow the class to discuss freely the two questions. Ask them to provide personal answers. Conclude by explaining that having faith in God enables us to respect His decision at all times regardless of the answer we get for our wishes.

Delving Into the Word
A. Ask: “Which guidelines do you follow when choosing what to eat or drink, God’s or man’s?”

On a whiteboard, write the responses from each participant. Discuss as a class each response to find out whether it is a
worldly solution or a godly preference. Have a participant read Hebrew 12:2 and explain that each decision we make should reflect our trust in Christ.

Distribute 3x5 index cards and markers and have the students identify two characters in the Bible who put their trust in God and triumphed in the end, and two who trusted in their own powers and failed. Discuss their responses and ask what they learned from each character.

Read Hebrew 11:1, and ask: “What prompts you to put your trust in God even though you have never seen Him?” Listen to each participant’s answer, and on the whiteboard, list three Bible verses that support God’s existence and His ability to fulfill His promises. During the discussion, encourage the participants to identify other biblical examples.

Say that putting our trust in God underscores the fact that He exists and that the Bible has enough evidence to show that He is always there for those who choose to place their trust in Him.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Share some of your experiences with God and how they have helped you to trust Him.
2. In making decisions about your daily life, how do you cope with people who tell you to do something contrary to what you believe in as a Christian?
3. Common situations in life dictate faith. For example, eating food cooked in a restaurant or driving across a bridge. How do these types of situations help us to have complete trust in God?
4. What are some of the consequences of trusting in our own effort, knowledge, and power?
5. Review the story in the opening paragraph of the Introduction for this week’s lesson in the *CQ Bible Study Guide*. How do you react when God does not answer according to your expectations?
6. Which activities can help us to strengthen our faith in Christ?

**Closing the Activity**

The lesson this week ends with a call to put God first (Matt. 6:33). Encourage each class member to memorize this verse as a defense against Satan. Have them write the verse on an index card to mount in a conspicuous area of their bed-room or study area. Encourage them to apply the verse in every area of their lives. Explain that our enemy is never at rest, and that our faith in the Bible—God’s law—is our only weapon against his traps.

**Toy Philip Oresse, Nairobi, Kenya**

In the following chart, identify the heroes of faith and give reason(s) for why they were heroes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrews 11</th>
<th>Hero</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verse 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verse 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Humility of the Wise

Surveying the Source

Plotting the Course
The students will:
▶ Extract lessons from Scripture and Ellen White’s writings about the roles of humility and pride in a Christian’s life.
▶ Share their understanding of the importance of humility in church leadership and soul saving.
▶ Meditate on God’s power as seen in nature in comparison with human frailty.

Preparing to Lead
In a 1999 study, a group of psychologists concluded that “people tend to be blissfully unaware of their incompetence.”

Most subjects assessed their knowledge and problem-solving skills as higher than their actual ability.

The exceptions to the rule were high performers who, while accurately assessing their own abilities, falsely believed that other test-takers also found tests easy and had performed better at those tests than they had.

While positive self-esteem is helpful, misplaced pride leads not only to mistakes but to repeated mistakes.

Proverbs warns about pride and the difficulties of teaching fools wisdom.

Getting Started
A. Ask class members to share their descriptions of someone they have worked with either for pay or as a volunteer, someone they would call a servant leader. After they have shared, have them brainstorm a list of characteristics that describe a servant leader.

B. Ask class members to think about (or look at) the way the furniture is laid out in the sanctuary of their church.

Ask: “What does the position of the furniture say about the power dynamics in the church?”

Brainstorm different ways the church furniture could be rearranged. Ask: ● “Do you think changing the furniture would change the power dynamics? If so, How?” ● “Would those changes be good?” ● “Does the communion and foot-washing ceremony change the power dynamics in church? If so, how?”

Delving Into the Word
A. Have the class members get together in groups of two or three. Then instruct them to read about one of the following people: Moses—Exodus 3:1–11; 11:1–15; Hebrews 11:24–28 (Prov. 30:24–28).

Ask them to consider the following questions when reading these texts, and then share their answers with the class:
● “What are some lessons about humility and pride that we can learn from this individual?”
● “What connection can be made between the story of the individual and the proverbs referenced in brackets?”

B. Ask your class to share in the reading aloud of Ellen White’s essay “Humility” from Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers (pp. 220–227).

The reproducible activity (p. 42) has quotations from this essay and discussion questions which can be introduced as each quotation has been read. Remind the class that this essay comes from a book written for church leaders.

Ask:
● “Do you think pride is a problem in church leadership? Explain.”
● “What can a member who is not in a leadership position take away from this essay?”

Discussing the Ideas

1. What was the first sin (Isa. 14:12–17)?

2. What is the biblical answer to pride? (Prov. 30:1–4; John 13:1–17).

3. Does humility bring wisdom, or does wisdom bring humility? Can you be wise without being humble (Prov. 15:33; 8:12, 13)?

4. Can too much humility be a problem? What’s a good balance between being confident and proud (Exod. 11:1–15)?

5. Can a church member be critical without being proud? Explain your answer.

6. Which is the most important job in a church, the pastor or the Cradle Roll Sabbath School leader? How do we show value in the church (1 Cor. 12:15–19)?

7. What are some of the motives for volunteerism? Are all these motives healthy to the individual and to the organizations? Explain your answer (Matt. 20:20–28).

8. What should be the motivation for Christian service? (Phil. 2:1–4).

Closing the Activity

Read aloud Proverbs 30:1–6. Ask:
● “What is the answer to the four questions in verse 4?”
● “How is meditating on God’s power an antidote to pride?”

Invite class members to close their eyes and imagine that they are standing some-

Jennifer Morgan, St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Instructions: Use the following Ellen G. White quotes from the essay “Humility” in Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers as discussion prompts during a group reading of this essay.

1. “When he who is a colaborer with Christ presses home the truth to the sinner’s heart in humility and love, the voice of love speaks through the human instrumentality” (p. 220). According to Ellen White, how does evangelism change the evangelist?

2. What lessons do you think Ellen White might want us to learn from Philippians 2:3–16 and Colossians 1:24–28 (pp. 221, 222)?

3. “It is the Holy Spirit that will enable us to overcome, that will lead us to sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, and learn His meekness and lowliness of heart” (p. 223). Which Mary is the example that Ellen White wants us to follow here? What are some things we might learn from her?

4. “We need to be on guard continually lest we manifest the spirit of overbearing, criticism, and condemnation” (p. 223). What does Ellen White mean by “overbearing”? How can criticism lead to condemnation? Ellen White goes on to warn that some church leaders are “dictatorial.” Is there ever a time when criticism is appropriate in church business? Explain your answer.

5. “Let everyone who professes the name of Christ consider the fact that he must meet every act of injustice, give an account for every harsh word, at the judgement seat of Christ” (p. 224). How does this statement make you feel about things you’ve said or actions you’ve taken when in positions of authority? What can be done to make amends? What if you can’t make amends with the individual?

6. “My brethren and sisters, will you bear in mind that in dealing with God’s heritage you are not to act out your natural characteristics” (p. 225)? What do you think Ellen White might mean by “natural characteristics”? What are some of the excuses she is not allowing us to give? Instead of following natural characteristics, how are we to act?

7. “If we have the full assurance of faith, we will not indulge in doubting our brethren and sisters” (p. 225). How might church leaders doubt the members of the church? How might confidence in our own salvation give us more faith in our church family?

8. “We are privileged to see Jesus as He is, to know Him as One who is full of compassion, courteousness, and divine politeness” (p. 225). Describe “divine politeness.” How does it compare with human politeness?

9. “Then blessed, humble, grateful confidence will be an abiding principle in the soul” (p. 226). How might humility lead to confidence?

10. "Those who inquire after the way of life need not be rich, need not be wise, learned, or honored; yet God will quicken their perceptions so that they may understand what they may do to be saved" (p. 226). Does Ellen White mean that you can’t be wise, learned, or honored and experience salvation? Is the solution to working out your own salvation different if you are wise, learned, or honored? Explain your answers.
Women and Wine

Surveying the Source


Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Explore and understand the difference that character strengths (virtues) can make in their lives and in the lives of those around them.

► Identify their key character strengths.

► Choose to be intentional about nurturing and developing their character strengths.

Preparing to Lead

People don’t talk much these day’s about virtues. But there is an increasing amount of research into character strengths—what they are and how we develop them. The virtuous woman demonstrated character strengths of perseverance, creativity, prudence, kindness, and humility.

Character strengths are the qualities we exhibit when we’re functioning at our best. Look through the 24 character strengths listed in the reproducible activity (p. 43). Which ones describe you at your best? Which character strengths would you like to develop?

Choose a character strength and do three things to nurture that strength before the class. Then share your experience with your students.

Getting Started

A. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group one of the following characters to consider: (1) a virtuous leader; (2) a virtuous woman; and (3) a virtuous man. Provide each group with flip chart paper, marker pens, and the following instructions:

1. List the character strengths (virtues) described in Proverbs 31. Add any other character strengths you can identify.

2. Create a poster identifying the top ten character strengths you think are important for the virtuous character your group has been given.

3. After working for 10 minutes, stick your posters on to the wall.

4. Look at the posters together. Discuss the differences and similarities between the lists of character strengths.

B. Say: “King Lemuel’s mother emphasized the importance of having a clear mind to facilitate wise, just, and compassionate decision-making.”

Divide the class into three groups, and give each group one of the following tasks: (1) List 10 reasons why it is important for us to nurture clear, positive minds. (2) List 10 things that can cloud and confuse our thinking. (3) List 10 things we can do to keep our minds clear, wise, and positive.

Give the groups 10 minutes to work. Then invite them to present their ideas to the whole class.

Materials

copyright 2015

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists®
**Delving Into the Word**

A. Discuss the benefits of a clear and positive mind (Prov. 31:1–9). Then discuss the relational wisdom shown by the virtuous woman (verses 10–31).

*Ask:* “How did her understanding of other people and how to build positive relationships with them contribute to her ‘virtue’?”

Next, divide the class into two groups, and give each group one of the following subjects to study:

1. Maintaining a clear and positive mind (Prov. 31:1–9; Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:4–13; James 1:5–11).
2. Developing relational wisdom (Prov. 31:8–31; Matt. 7:12; Rom. 12:9–21).

Allow time for each group to compare and contrast the different verses they have studied or to draft designs for a series of posters promoting positive Christian thinking and healthy relationships for your church.

B. List the different character strengths listed or implied in Proverbs 31. Think about Jesus and how He lived out these strengths when He walked on Earth. Divide into pairs. Choose one or two of the character strengths on the list. Identify specific occasions when Jesus lived out or spoke about each of these strengths. For example, Jesus rose up early and prepared food for His disciples. This action demonstrated His love, kindness, generosity and humility, and it is similar to the virtuous woman rising early to prepare food for her servant girls.

If you can’t find specific examples in Jesus’ life, then try to identify these strengths in the lives of God’s people in the Old and New Testaments.

*Ask:* •“How did these different people develop and live out their character strengths?” •“Are these virtues and character strengths associated with gender, culture, or class? Or do they transcend human differences? Explain your answer.” •“What insights have you gained into living a virtuous life from the Proverbs, the patriarchs of the Old Testament, and Jesus and His followers in the New Testament?”

Regroup and share your discoveries.

**Discussing the Ideas**

1. Do you think different roles (like leader, husband, wife, teacher, etc.) require different sets of character strengths or that all Christians should have a similar set of character strengths? Explain your response.

2. What ten character strengths would you/did you look for when choosing a life partner? Are these different from your own set of character strengths? Why?

3. What character strength would you most like to nurture in your life this week? Tell a partner how you plan to do this.

4. What are the things that are most likely to distract you and cloud your mind? (e.g., addictions, substances, social media, peer group, stress, lack of sleep, etc.) How can you minimize the effect of these negative factors in your life?

5. If you wrote down ten of the most important pieces of wisdom that you’ve gathered over the years, what would they be?

**Closing the Activity**

Give each person a copy of the reproducible activity (p. 43). Allow them five minutes to start working on the activity. They can finish this exercise at home.

Ask them to find a partner and share one thing they would like to do to nurture one of their character strengths during the following week.

Invite them to act on their ideas and to share their experiences with the class next week.

Have a volunteer close with prayer.
Growing Strengths

- Our character strengths grow when we intentionally focus on practicing them in our lives. They help us to have happy, fulfilled lives, and to grow more like Jesus. - Choose which strengths you want to work on each week. - Decide how you will put them into practice and notice the difference they make in your life and in the lives of those around you. - Study the Bible characters who used these strengths. - Identify your top three character strengths. - Notice and appreciate when other people use their strengths, so that you can encourage them. - The following information came from www.viacharacter.org where you will find posters, more information, and an assessment test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Strengths</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>How I Can Grow This Strength in My Life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wisdom Strengths</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Ingenious and original</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Exploring and discovering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>New skills and knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Thinking things through</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Seeing the bigger picture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Courage Strengths</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Speaking out, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perseverance</td>
<td>Persisting with a challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Integrity and authenticity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Energy and zest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring Strengths</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Nurturing relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Generosity and compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social intelligence</td>
<td>Understanding others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice Strengths</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Being balanced and just</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Helping group reach goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temperance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Merciful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Modest about oneself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prudence</td>
<td>Careful and cautious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>Self-controlled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transcendence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciating beauty</td>
<td>Filled with awe and wonder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Being thankful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Optimistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Sharing joy with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Faith, purpose, meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>