Welcome

Welcome to the experience of teaching from Cornerstone Connections: Real. Solid. Stories.

The following are provided for your assistance:

• A Word About What’s Ahead (student introduction) [p. 2]
• Why the Bible Story Approach? (teacher introduction) [p. 3]
• What Tools Are Provided for Teaching the Stories? [p. 4]
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A WORD ABOUT WHAT’S AHEAD

The goal of Cornerstone Connections is to lead you to the Bible to see the big story of God and people. This big story continues from the first generation in Eden to your generation today. It’s about the lives of people as the God of the universe interacts with them.

If you are looking for a word from God that is real, Cornerstone Connections captures the message of Scripture and challenges you to make the connections to your real life.

God’s Word is not only real, but it is rock solid. For the first generation to hear God’s voice in the garden to the last group standing before Christ at the Second Coming, the Word of God has been and continues to be reliable.

The word from God comes to us in the stories of people who encountered Him and made a decision to either follow Him or walk away.

Real. Solid. Stories. You will find one in Into the Story in each lesson. Out of the Story will provide you with ways to search for truth you can apply to your life. In each lesson you also will find:

• What Do You Think?—a mental activity to get your mind and heart in gear for the story to follow. Every time you approach a Bible story, you are coming to it in the context of the story in which you live every day.
• Did You Know?—a brief statistic or definition that digs a little deeper into the story or simply provides some helpful facts to bring to the lesson.
• Key Text—a verse that points out a key concept from the story. It is also a great place to find verses that you can memorize and store away for later use.
• Punch Lines—a few other verses from Scripture that punctuate key concepts of the lesson. You may see connections between them and the Bible story as well as your own life.
• Flashlight—a brief snapshot of Ellen White’s input on the story. These glimmers that shed light onto the biblical passage will also give you a glimpse of what awaits you in the suggested weekly reading from her inspired commentary on the stories—The Conflict of the Ages.*
• **Other Eyes**—a couple of quotes from various contemporary or historic sources that may open up a slightly different perspective on the central message of the lesson.

• **Making It Real**—the guide to making the truths about God in this story your very own. Begin here if you are studying this lesson on your own prior to, or after, studying it in a Sabbath School class. Each day of the week you will be directed to explore one of the sections of the lesson, to relate it to the story you live, and to make the message from God apply to you personally.

**WHY THE BIBLE STORY APPROACH?**

There is a tendency to neglect God’s Word because the Bible seems so old and the issues of life today don’t seem to automatically connect with the ancient, inspired text. Trying to read through the Bible can leave young people in a fog. But the Bible was never meant to be read. It was meant to be studied, reflected on, and integrated into life. It wasn’t written to be analyzed as much as it was to be obeyed. It takes effort. If you simply want a story to entertain you, then the Bible isn’t for you.

The Bible is not a novel that grips you, but if you get a firm hold on the message of the Bible with a teachable heart and an eye that seeks God, you will find something more than entertaining. You will discover a message just for you. “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13, NIV). Jesus said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24, NIV).

The Bible is the tool that will be used by the promised teacher—the Holy Spirit. We, the earthly teachers, will be effective as we first let the Spirit teach us. Each of these lessons is built around a specific Bible story. You will lead the students *Into the Story* and help them mine truth for their lives *Out of the Story*. The gems of truth are not already mined for you. You and your students will have an opportunity to dig for yourselves.

“In daily study the verse-by-verse method is often most helpful. Let the student take one verse, and concentrate the mind on ascertaining the thought that God has put into that verse for him, and then dwell upon the thought until it becomes his own. One passage thus studied until its significance is clear is of more value than the perusal of many chapters with no definite purpose in view and no positive instruction gained” (*Education*, p. 189).

Welcome to *Cornerstone Connections*.

—The Editors

P.S. Don’t forget to check out the reading plan.

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*A special adaptation has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.*
what tools are provided for teaching the stories?

(Bolded text helps you review the suggested steps at a glance.)

❶ With each lesson in this Teacher’s Guide you will find an Explore box with topics listed that relate to this week’s story. **Use these resources to create a “program” that is relevant to your group.** At www.leadoutministries.com you will find a variety of resources for exploring the topic you choose—from discussion questions to illustrations, from reader’s theater scripts to learning activities.

❷ **Begin the actual “lesson” time with the What Do You Think? activity (and the Did You Know? information) in the student lesson.** The activities are designed to get your students to think, respond, and share with one another. The rich discussion that can grow out of this exercise is a great entry point. The key question to ask at the end is “Why did you respond the way you did?”

❸ Your Teacher’s Guide provides an illustration, along with a short “bridge” thought that will help you **lead your students into the Bible passage itself.**

❹ The heart of the lesson experience is to **read the Bible passage, Into the Story, together and to discuss it with the help of your Out of the Story for Teachers questions.** Other passages to compare to this one for further mining in the Word are sometimes provided as well.

❺ Then **share the information about context and background** that will make the story become more understandable for you and your students.

❻ You are provided with a short guide to help you **unpack the other sections of the student lesson with your class.** (Your students are also directed to work through one section of their lesson on their own each day by following the instructions in Making It Real.) Encourage them to do this the week before or the week after you discuss the lesson in class, whichever works best for your teaching situation.

❼ Each week’s Teacher’s Guide includes a teaching tip in Rabbi 101, that will be helpful for you to keep for future reference. You are also provided an activity and a summary with which to **draw the lesson together and close.**

❽ In each lesson students are provided with a reference to the volume from the Conflict of the Ages Series by Ellen White that corresponds with the week’s story. Students who choose to will be able to read the entire series in four years by following the reading plan.

• **Leadout Ministries** is a resource created especially for those who lead out in youth ministry at the local church. It is staffed by youth pastors and young people. Leadout Ministries can also be a clearinghouse for the great illustrations, activities, study guides, or other resources that you and your young people have used successfully and are willing to share. Just contact them (troy@leadoutministries.com) with your ideas.
2007
1st Quarter
1. Adam and Eve
2. The Serpent
3. Cain and Abel
4. Seth and Enoch
5. Noah
6. Tower People
7. Abraham
8. Isaac
9. Lot
10. Rebekah
11. Jacob and Esau
12. Jacob
13. Israel

2nd Quarter
1. Joseph
2. The Brothers
3. Moses
4. Egyptians
5. Fleeing Slaves
6. Unhappy Campers
7. Chosen Nation
8. Aaron
9. The Tabernacle
10. Miriam and Zipporah
11. Twelve Spies
12. Korah
13. The Bronze Serpent

3rd Quarter
1. The Borders Revisited
2. Balaam
3. Questionable Neighbors
4. Law Review
5. Moses’ Death
6. Crossing Jordan
7. Rahab
8. Blessings and Curses
9. Gibeonites
10. Canaan Divided
11. Last Words of Joshua
12. Annual Feasts
13. Early Judges

4th Quarter
1. Samson
2. Samuel
3. Eli
4. Philistines
5. First King
6. Saul’s Death
7. David Anointed
8. Fugitive
9. Lunatic
10. Crowned King
11. Incumbent
12. Sinner
13. Absalom

2008
1st Quarter
1. God’s People
2. Solomon
3. Temple Builder
4. Proud Potentate
5. Repentant Author
6. Rehoboam
7. Jeroboam
8. Asa, Ahab, Jezebel
9. Elijah
10. Evangelist
11. Coward
12. The Sabbath
13. Jehoshaphat

2nd Quarter
1. Ahab
2. Elisha
3. Prophet
4. Naaman
5. Jonah
6. Hosea
7. Isaiah
8. Jehovah
9. Ahaz
10. Hezekiah
11. Assyria
12. Manasseh
13. Josiah

3rd Quarter
1. Jeremiah
2. Approaching Doom
3. Last King
4. Captives
5. Daniel
6. The Dream
7. Three Hebrews
8. Nebuchadnezzar
9. Belshazar
10. Daniel
11. Daniel 7
12. Daniel 8, 9
13. Daniel 10-12

4th Quarter
1. Haggai / Zerubbabel
2. Zechariah
3. Temple Two
4. Esther
5. Queen
6. Ezra
7. Nehemiah
8. Builders
9. Plotters
10. Reformers
11. Jesus
12. Deliverer
13. Future Glory

2009
1st Quarter
1. Jesus
2. It’s Time
3. Mary
4. Simeon / Anna
5. The Wise Men
6. The Child Jesus
7. The Voice
8. Victory
9. Messiah Found
10. Marriage Feast
11. The Temple
12. Nicodemus
13. John the Baptist

2nd Quarter
1. Samaritan Woman
2. The Nobleman
3. The Lame Man
4. John the Baptist
5. The Anointed One
6. Peter
7. Capernaum
8. The Leper
9. Levi-Matthew
10. The Sabbath
11. The Disciples
12. The Centurion
13. The Demoniac

3rd Quarter
1. Woman / Jairus
2. The Seventy
3. The Disciples
4. Misunderstandings
5. Broken Barriers
6. Jesus’ Ministry
7. Who Is Jesus?
8. Lawyer / Ruler
9. The Children
10. Lazarus’ Family
11. Zacchaeus
12. Mary
13. James and John

4th Quarter
1. The King Comes
2. The Pharisees
3. The End of Time
4. Servanthood
5. The Last Supper
6. Gethsemane
7. The Trial
8. Calvary
9. Resurrection
10. Mary Magdalene
11. The Emmaus Road
12. By the Sea
13. Jesus’ Ascension

2010
1st Quarter
1. The Mission
2. The Holy Spirit
3. The Lame Man
4. Ananias / Sapphira
5. God’s People
6. Stephen
7. Paul
8. Peter
9. Paul / Barnabas
10. Gentiles Included
11. Spreading Good News
12. The Thessalonians
13. The Ephesians

2nd Quarter
1. The Corinthians
2. Workers for Christ
3. Romans / Galatians
4. Last Journey
5. Adventures and Trials
6. Philemon
7. Colossians / Philippians
8. Final Arrest
9. Before Nero
10. John the Beloved
11. Patmos
12. The Revelation
13. Church Triumphant

3rd Quarter
1. First Believers
2. Seekers
3. Wycliffe
4. Luther
5. Zwingli
6. French Reformation
7. English Reformers
8. French Revolution
9. American Reformers
10. William Miller
11. Prophecy Fulfilled
12. The Sanctuary
13. God’s Law

4th Quarter
1. Renewal
2. Investigative Judgment
3. Origin of Evil
4. Snares
5. Great Deception
6. The Papacy
7. Spiritual Challenge
8. The Bible
9. Last Chance
10. Time of Trouble
11. Deliverance
12. The End
13. The Beginning
1. Adam and Eve  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 1, 2.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 1 and 2.

2. The Serpent  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 3.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 3 and 4.

3. Cain and Abel  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 4:1-16.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 5.

4. Seth and Enoch  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 4:25 to 6:2.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 6.

5. Noah  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 6, 7:20–9:17.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 7, 8, 9.

6. Tower People  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 9:25-27; 11:1-12.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 10.

7. Abraham  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 12; 13 to 15; 17:1-16; 18.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 11 and 12.

8. Isaac  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 13.

9. Lot  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 19.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 14.

10. Rebekah  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 24.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 15.

11. Jacob and Esau  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 25:19-34; 27.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 16.

12. Jacob  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 28 to 31; Genesis 32; 33.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 17 and 18.

13. Israel  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 34; 35; 37.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 19.

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1. Joseph  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 39 to 41.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 20.

2. The Brothers  
**Scripture Story:** Genesis 41:54-56; 42 to 50.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 21.

3. Moses  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 1 to 4.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 22.

4. Egyptians  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 5 to 10; 11; 12:1-32.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 23 and 24.

5. Fleeing Slaves  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 12:34-51; 13 to 15.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 25.

6. Unhappy Campers  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 15:22-27; 16 to 18.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 26.

7. Chosen Nation  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 19 to 24.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 27, 29, 32.

8. Aaron  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 32 to 34.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 28.

9. The Tabernacle  
**Scripture Story:** Exodus 25 to 40; Leviticus 4; 16.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 30.

10. Miriam and Zipporah  
**Scripture Story:** Numbers 11; 12.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 33 and 31.

11. Twelve Spies  
**Scripture Story:** Numbers 13; 14.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 34 and 36.

12. Korah  
**Scripture Story:** Numbers 16; 17.  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 35.

13. The Bronze Serpent  
**Commentary:** Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 37 and 38.
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<td>5. First King</td>
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<td>13. Absalom</td>
<td>Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 13 to 19; 24; 1 Kings 1; 1 Chronicles 21; 28; 29.</td>
<td>Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 72 and 73.</td>
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January

6—The Way of Two Worlds [p. 11]
Both Creation and the fall of Lucifer begin the story of God’s uncompromising plan to be in relationship with humanity.

13—Law Meets Love [p. 15]
Adam and Eve break trust with their Creator and open the door of death and destruction that would ultimately cost Him His life.

20—Out of Control [p. 19]
The story of Cain and Abel provides the first recorded contrast between those who trust and obey, and those who rationalize and choose their own way.

27—A Very Long Walk With God [p. 23]
Enoch lives the story of how much God wants to be in relationship with us, and how a life of trusting togetherness will restore us back to permanent companionship with Him.

February

3—Noah Way! [p. 27]
Noah also walks with God in a story very parallel with ours today. He lived a life of faithful diligence in preparing for the storm ahead.

10—Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door [p. 31]
The futility of trying to find a way to save ourselves is exemplified in the story of the Tower of Babel. Only a life of trusting obedience brings ultimate and lasting safety.

17—Long, Strange Trip [p. 35]
Abraham’s name is a synonym for, and his life an example of, the kind of faith that God looks for in His friends.

24—Boy Wonder [p. 39]
The story of the miraculous birth of Isaac is the story of how God keeps His promises even when the most enlightened human reasoning pronounces the situation hopeless and impossible.

March

3—No Laughing Matter [p. 43]
By choosing a life close to the evils of his age rather than one as far away as possible, Lot laid the groundwork for the destruction of his family.

10—Winsome . . . and Then Some [p. 47]
The story of God, the matchmaker, provides encouragement in this age of shaky relationships. Rebekah also portrays the virtue of going the second mile in service to others.

17—Identity Theft [p. 51]
Through the story of Jacob and Esau we can explore themes of identity, delayed gratification, and integrity—all very relevant themes for coping with life today.

24—Struggle by a Stream [p. 55]
The life of Jacob points out the unconditional acceptance of God. Persevering through his problems, Jacob was able to experience joy as he trusted the broken pieces of his life to God.

31—Family Fiascoes [p. 59]
The effects of sin as well as the evidence of God’s healing grace are vividly portrayed in the story of Jacob and his family. Through it we are called to trust God with all our family challenges.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The book of Genesis introduced the human story with “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” but the story really began before the earth was created. God and the angels lived in perfect harmony by the basic rule of love until selfishness grew inside Lucifer. The selfishness that stirred in Lucifer’s heart soured the music of heaven, and many began to suspect that something was different about the musically gifted angel.

The Father in heaven made personal appeals to Lucifer to surrender his pride, but the honored angel responded to God’s kindness with only deeper resentment. As Lucifer’s jealousy of the Son of God intensified, open conflict in heaven became inevitable. Both God and Lucifer drew their weapons. Lucifer’s primary weapon was to deceitfully undermine the character of God with a well-placed lie. God, however, chose the only weapon His nature would allow: He chose to continue His rule of love and allow the fruit of sin to ripen in the arena of His creation. Love’s response to sin would not be to destroy it, but to pay for it and patiently allow sin to run its horrible course. God chose to create the world, including Adam and Eve, according to His perfect plan and expose the glorious world to the deceiver.

Many have wondered whether the world would have been better off if God had dealt with Lucifer quickly and quietly. This lesson leads us to wonder, “Why did God choose to create the world and mankind when the imminent danger of sin waited to corrupt God’s plan?” Ellen White says, “Had he [Lucifer] been immediately blotted out of existence, some would have served God from fear rather than from love” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 42).

When God commenced with the plan of creation, He was fully aware of the danger that lurked for His beloved children. Nevertheless, Adam and Eve and the inhabitants of the earth were created. The Sabbath, marriage, the joy of work, and communion with God became rich blessings for Adam and Eve. Their perfect world would remain as long as they were loyal to God and His rule of love.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Understand that the central rule of God’s government is love, which is why He allowed sin to begin and why He created humanity. (Know)

• Experience a sense of confidence in God’s law of love and His creative design. (Feel)

• Be encouraged to live patiently with a more resolute trust in God’s character. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Sabbath¹
• Marriage and family²
• Creation / Evolution³

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED
Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
A nurse in California recalled working tirelessly with the emergency room staff on a sweet-natured toddler who repeatedly showed up with breathing problems. Over the course of a year the little boy underwent examination after examination, each resulting in a diagnosis of asthma. The source of the illness eluded the doctors and nurses, and each time the little boy was examined the mystery of his struggle to breathe continued to baffle everyone involved. There was no prior history of asthma as an infant, and the notion of allergies was ruled out after further testing. Every symptom seemed to point to asthma, and so he was treated and sent back home.

But sure enough, he would experience difficulty with his breathing and show up in the emergency room again and again. While the staff grew to love the youngster, they were mystified as to how to fix the real problem. One day, when the child was again rushed into the emergency room struggling to breathe, an intern decided to take a look up the child’s nose. The doctor discovered a black jellybean lodged way up in the child’s nostril (probably placed there by his brother). The doctor and staff victoriously removed the obstacle, and the problem was solved. Can you imagine the relief that young boy felt when he finally was able to breathe properly?

As humans, we see the symptoms of sin, but do we understand what is causing the problem? God rarely answers our “whys” about His actions. What are the questions we should be asking to get at the source of the problem? What are the things we should be asking about the character of God and the character of Lucifer, the fallen angel?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story
Share the following in your own words:
When sin reared its ugly head in heaven, the solution might have seemed obvious: Stop Lucifer—at all costs! Keep the devil away from Adam and Eve! Erase Satan and sin will be no more! God looked much more deeply at the sin problem, and in light of His desire to create you and me He chose to banish Lucifer from heaven and continue with His plan of creation on earth. Our story today has two pictures: (1) a snapshot of the beginning of sin, and (2) a snapshot of God’s perfect world.

Out of the Story for Teachers
After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What are some key facts in these passages that show who Lucifer was? What was his role in heaven? What was he like? What was his downfall? What did he ultimately desire more than anything else? What was God’s response?
- Why do you think there are no reasons given in this passage as to why God allowed sin to continue? Are there reasons given in the Creation story as to why He created the earth and humanity?
- Highlight what you think are the most significant aspects of the Creation story.
- What do you think is significant about the fact that humans were created in the image of God? How do you think people would be different today if they had a better understanding of why sin was permitted?
- What do you think is significant about the fact that the Sabbath, marriage, work, and long walks with God existed before sin entered the world? How do you think people would be different today if they knew God’s ultimate reason for creating the world and people?
- What are some insights from this reading that you have noticed for the first time?
- Underline the verse that you think is the most important part of the story. Why do you think so?
- What do you think is more important to understand—why God let sin continue, or what God was thinking when He created the world and humanity? Explain. (You may want to connect the student responses back to the opening
activity in the Getting Started section by saying:
Who would benefit from an explanation of sin’s existence? Who would benefit from more insight into God’s mind at Creation? Why?)

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Ephesians 1; Revelation 20; 1 John 4:8; Isaiah 46:10; John 12:31; John 14:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

1. The cryptic story of Lucifer’s fall still seems to baffle those who read it. Why was sin permitted? Another question to ask might be: What kind of God would make creatures who had the power to choose whether to serve Him or themselves, and then wipe them out the moment they made the wrong choice?

2. The Hebrew word for Satan means adversary. In the New Testament the name for Satan is Diabolos, which means “one who slanders or accuses.” Every time Satan shows up in Scripture he attempts to bring down the character of God. For examples:
   (A) In Eden: “You will not surely die... For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:4, 5, NIV).
   (B) With Job: “God said to Satan, ‘Have you noticed my friend Job? There’s no one quite like him—honest and true to his word, totally devoted to God and hating evil.’ Satan retorted, ‘So do you think Job does all that out of the sheer goodness of his heart? Why, no one ever had it so good! You pamper him like a pet, make sure nothing bad ever happens to him or his family or his possessions, bless everything he does—he can’t lose!’ ” (Job 1:8-10, Message).
   (C) At the temptations of Christ: Feed Yourself by turning stones to bread. Save Yourself and mystify everyone watching with Your power. Make it easy on Yourself, and I’ll give you back the world and you won’t have to die for it (Matthew 4 and Luke 4).

3. This lesson is not only about the Fall and the impact of Lucifer’s sin, but about God’s character and the way He chooses to create humanity in the very presence of an enemy.

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? The word image in the Hebrew means a “copy or a shadow or reflection of an original.” Bible scholars agree that this word does not mean humans are an exact duplication of God, but rather the effects of God’s internal character and external qualities are evident in humans, thus making them different from any other created being. As time and sin have had an effect on humanity, our reflection of God is much dim-

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Teaching From...

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
mer than it was with Adam and Eve, but it is still there! Can you see attributes of God’s great character reflected in the Godlike people you know?

4. The following were in existence before sin marred humanity:
   - Human nature and the ability to freely choose to love others or self
   - The Sabbath
   - Marriage
   - Walking and talking with God

   What do you think the new earth will be like?

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Bring a mirror to class or bring the students to where there is a mirror. If the mirror is clean, the reflection will be pretty accurate. If you rub an oily substance on the mirror, it reflects a smeared image. But some of the attributes are still identifiable—just not clear. Talk about this dynamic with the students. If we are a reflection of God (“made in the image of God”), then His attributes are evident in the mirror. The mirror isn’t God. Ask the students to consider what things may dirty up the mirror the most.

Ask: What can we do today to better reflect to others who God is?

### Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The story of Lucifer’s tragic fall and deception provides snapshots of the way sin works us away from God’s way of life. In all of the unanswered questions about what God should or should not have done with sin there is still the truth about what He did do. God looked at the long road ahead. He saw the decay. He could sense the pain and horrible future of the human race during these dark times. What prompted God to create anyway? You! God wanted you to be able to be there with Him. In Psalm 139 and Ephesians 1 the Scriptures say that you were on God’s mind before anything was created. The questions about what happened in the beginning and what will happen in the end are interesting, but not as crucial as knowing that God wants you to know how much you matter to Him. Created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), you can’t help being awesome!

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1Fundamental Belief No. 20.
2Fundamental Belief No. 23.
3Fundamental Belief No. 6.
I. SYNOPSIS

The perfect atmosphere of Eden provided Adam and Eve with an abundant life. However, every good quality (wisdom, beauty, influence) that Lucifer possessed in heaven became a tool for the dark purpose of his self-absorbed existence. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only place that Satan was permitted to interact with Adam and Eve—but it was enough. The deceiver intrigued Eve not only to doubt God’s word but also to mistrust His motives. Satan tempted Eve to suspect that God forbade them to eat the fruit because He didn’t want them to become like Him. Eve took the bait, and Adam simply loved Eve more than He trusted God.

When God’s voice was heard in the garden, His question was, “Where are you?” Lost. Hiding. Broken. Afraid to face God. They tried to excuse their behavior or blame someone else. Selfishness leads to self-preservation. But God’s selflessness led to a solution to their problem. There was only one way fallen humanity could be restored, and that was for someone to pay the wages of sin. Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death,” and Hebrews echoes the unendable law of life—“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22, NIV). Paul describes the rule that since one man caused sin to enter the world, then one perfect life of obedience and sacrifice could pay the price (Romans 5:17-20). Only one in the universe could pay such a price—the Creator Himself. In the garden God revealed the future to Adam and Eve, as well as a promise about Satan’s demise.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the significance of the events that took place in the Garden of Eden. (Know)
- Experience the enduring love that prompted God to personally restore fallen humanity. (Feel)
- Be given an opportunity to fully embrace God’s provision of grace, and reject the sin and lies with which Satan snares humanity. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Temptation (dealing with)
- Obedience
- Great controversy*

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Cody grew up in a small town with friends who played music and competed on the baseball team. When Cody turned 16, he became interested in cars, while his core group of friends didn’t seem to share the
Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Are there any words or phrases that are new to you in this story?
- Who are the main characters?
- Underline all the questions that are asked. What is significant about each question? Look carefully at the way Satan twists the words around.
- What key words, phrases, and actions are crucial to the message of the story? Circle the key words and indicate why you think they are important.
- Divide the story into at least four scenes and create an appropriate title for each part of the narrative.
- As you read this story, is there: a warning to heed, an example to follow, a prayer to pray, a promise to claim, a sin to confess, a truth to believe?
- If you were to pick three verses from this reading that were key to understanding the plan of redemption, which three would you choose?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: John 3:16, 17; Revelation 12:10-12; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 5:8; Isaiah 53.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

1. The Law of God

While there are no “Ten Commandments” in the Garden of Eden as such, there is a law. The same law that Lucifer defied in heaven exists as the foundation of God’s kingdom. The law is about complete loyalty to God and a selfless love toward others. The Hebrew word for law or Torah actually means “to throw the rock.” It grows out of the ancient act of throwing a rock when traveling at night so as to negotiate your way in the darkness. When a traveler would reach an uncertain place in the road, they would throw a rock in the darkness and listen for evidence of what they could not see. If there was water, they would hear a splash. If there was a tree, they would hear a crack. If they heard nothing, it was probably a
steep drop-off. If they heard someone yell, it was safe to assume that someone was on the road ahead. The rules of God’s kingdom inform us about the right way to go. God’s Word and His law are trustworthy (Psalm 19:7).

2. The Temptation
Another important feature of this story is the way Satan twists the right words around to make them mean something slightly different. Satan didn’t come right out and overtly undermine God to Adam and Eve. Compare God’s words in Genesis 2:16, 17 with Satan’s question in Genesis 3:1. Eve corrects the serpent but gets caught in verses 3 and 4 when the serpent causes her to question why God might have such strict rules. And so God’s motives become suspect.

3. Death Enters the Scene
The idea and reality of death is introduced in the Garden of Eden. Death is not just a point at which a person ceases to exist. Death in the Old Testament includes the idea of corruption and suffering that is the product of a broken relationship with God. When mankind, and the whole earth, is cut off from intimate communion with God, things get pretty warped. Adam and Eve hide from God, Cain murders his brother, Lamech takes two wives, the earth gets cursed, and everything seems to go downhill quickly after sin enters. Death is more than the ending of a life—it’s the absence of the abundant life.

4. The Prophecy of the Woman, the Seed, and the Snake
God made a prophecy about the woman and the snake. In Genesis 3:15 God says, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (NIV). Compare this passage with Revelation 12:1-11 and notice the fierce enmity between the two over time. Not only are Eve’s children and the promised Messiah enemies of the dragon, but God promises that the snake will be defeated. Paul picks up on this promise in Romans 16:20 when he writes, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you” (NIV). You may want to have the students gather in groups and consider how these three passages are connected to the great plan of redemption. What is significant about what Paul wrote is that God’s grace is really what breaks the back of sin and Satan eternally.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Bring a few magnets with a variety of small nails, screws, and paper clips. Have students test which nail, screw, or paper clip is drawn to the magnet most.

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

• Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

• Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
Have the students move the magnet toward the elements and determine which is most likely to be drawn as well as which resists the pull most effectively. The point of the exercise is to show that, even though the nails do not really resist the magnet, there is less in them that is drawn to the magnet. This illustrates the way temptation works in our lives.

Ask: What is it in your life that is drawn to temptation?

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The whole story of Eden seems so far away from life today. But when we look at what Adam and Eve were tempted with, we recognize that the true nature of sin is to get people to distrust God and focus on self. The mess that was made in Eden is awful, but God’s response to sin is awesome. Ellen White penned these powerful words about the plan of salvation: “He [Christ] bade the angelic host to be in accord with the plan that His Father had accepted, and rejoice that, through His death, fallen man could be reconciled to God. Then joy, inexpressible joy, filled heaven. The glory and blessedness of a world redeemed, outmeasured even the anguish and sacrifice of the Prince of Life” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 65). Far beyond our brokenness and sin is the perfect and amazing grace of God that saves us.

*Fundamental Belief No. 8.

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Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapters 3 and 4.

* A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Cain and Abel depicts two types of people who travel two different paths in life. While Cain and Abel were raised by the same parents, they held different attitudes about God and His character—this is where their paths diverged. Abel saw the mercy of God in the way the Creator provided for the redemption of the human race, but Cain rebelled against God in his heart (see Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 71). The distinction may not have been obvious until it came time to sacrifice.

The drama between Cain and Abel is really about the struggle between Cain and himself. Although Cain was given a chance to turn around, he held ever more tightly to his stubborn pride and stumbled further away from God. The way of Cain and the way of Abel is a discussion of monumental importance to young people. Several themes should emerge from this study:

- God’s plan for salvation is not negotiable—it is a gift.
- The human heart, when it clings proudly to self, stumbles on a slippery downhill slope of destruction.
- God constantly reaches out to those who rebel to give them an opportunity to make a turn-around (repentance).

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the basic truths about sin, repentance, and redemption as portrayed in the story of Cain and Abel. (Know)
- Experience the conviction to trust fully in God’s redemptive work. (Feel)
- Have a choice to make Abel’s way their way, instead of going the way of Cain. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Worship
- Salvation (experience of)*

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Invite the students to share which would be the hardest thing to admit. You can ask for volunteers to share their number one, or simply ask, “Who thought cheating on an exam was number one (or hardest)? Why do you think you chose that one?”

Below is an alternative thought and discussion starter.

Voting: Ask the students to vote on whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: “The only way some people will learn is the hard way—hitting rock bottom.”

Commentary: Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 5.
Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

The hike almost ended without drama or injury. A group of 10-year-old boys with their nerve-racked leader were on the last leg of the journey. They had come to a steady downhill path that led to a grassy meadow in the park. The band of junior-aged hikers made their way down the trail. Naturally, they couldn’t just walk down. One had to lurch forward and jog, which inspired the others to follow in the same manner. Their leader was concerned and cautioned them as they picked up speed. But with the rush of adrenaline and a semblance of bodily control the young lads rumbled down on down the hill.

There came a point on the trail, however, at which their speed picked up drastically, and the leader could see the excitement on their faces turn to fear as their momentum overtook their control. Their shoes smacked the ground with flat-sounding slaps as their arms flailed wildly in the air for balance. One at a time they fell at the bottom of the hill as their feet hit the thick sand at the edge of the grass. The justifiable bruises and scrapes marked them as their parents arrived to take them home.

After all the parents had communicated their disapproval of the leadership, the leader studied the trail to see at what point the disaster could have been prevented. Exactly where had they gone wrong? he asked himself. Where had their walk gotten out of control?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The same questions could be asked of Cain. Where do you think he went wrong? If you compare the life of Cain to a hike down a hills, at what point do you think he started running? At what point did he become out of control? At what point could he have stopped? In the case of Cain, is it possible that he got to a point at which the only thing that would stop him would be a hard fall at the bottom? The story of Cain and Abel is a stark reminder of the truth that there are two responses to the problem of sin. One response is to deny it or justify wrong behavior, and the other is to admit it and repent of it.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What parts of the story are key? (Underline them.)
- What aspects or details of the story are new to you?
- What words or phrases best capture the various emotions of this story most? (Circle them.)
- What emotions, actions, and adjectives enrich this story? (Draw a rectangle around them.)
- What emerges as the central lesson of this story? In other words, why do you think this story is included in the record of Scripture? What other lessons can be gained from this story?
- How do you think the occupations of these two young men shaped their view of God?
- Note the points in the text (with a U-turn sign) that might have been pivotal points at which Cain might have avoided his folly?
- In verses 6 and 7, describe the attitude and approach God takes with Cain? Does it help or hinder the situation? What can we learn about God’s character in the way He speaks to Cain?
- What does it mean when someone’s face is “downcast”?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: 2 Samuel 12:1-13; Galatians 2:11-14; Acts 11:1-18.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

The story of Cain and Abel is set in the beginning of human history. Cain and Abel were born outside of the garden but were aware of the story of the serpent, the Fall, and the plan to restore humanity through the sacrifice of God’s Son. It is amazing that with such rich, vivid evidence of God’s blessing and the curse of sin, one of Adam and Eve’s children would adopt the same attitude as did Lucifer and act out his selfish pride.

Consider the following information:

1. The ritual of sacrifice was first experienced by Adam and Eve after the Fall. Notice two themes that are often emphasized by Ellen White in regard to the biblical story: (1) the awful
destructive quality of sin, and (2) the amazing, abundant grace of God.

“To Adam, the offering of the first sacrifice was a most painful ceremony. His hand must be raised to take life, which only God could give. It was the first time he had ever witnessed death, and he knew that had he been obedient to God, there would have been no death of man or beast. As he slew the innocent victim, he trembled at the thought that his sin must shed the blood of the spotless Lamb of God. This scene gave him a deeper and more vivid sense of the greatness of his transgression, which nothing but the death of God’s dear Son could expiate. And he marveled at the infinite goodness that would give such a ransom to save the guilty” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 68).

2. Consider this quote that comes from The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary on the story of Cain and Abel:

“Cain recognized the existence of God and His power to give or to withhold earthly blessings. Feeling it advantageous to live on good terms with Deity, Cain considered it expedient to appease and avert divine wrath by a gift, even though it be offered grudgingly. He failed to realize that partial, formal compliance with the explicit requirements of God could not earn His favor as a substitute for true obedience and contrition of heart” (The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 239).

3. In Genesis 4:6, 7 God appeals to Cain with brutal honesty mixed with hopeful mercy. God emphasizes how pivotal this moment is for Cain by warning him that “sin is crouching at [his] door” (NIV). The image is of a hunting lion ready to pounce. This is Cain’s defining moment—his response to God will dramatically shape his future. This is not the only place in Scripture we see this pivotal type of moment in someone’s life. Peter heard similar words from Jesus Himself:

“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren’” (Luke 22:31, 32, NKJV).

4. The Greek word for repentance is metanoeo, which means “to change one’s mind or purpose.” It implies that you have thought about things to the extent that you change the direction of your behavior. Essentially, what Cain needed to do was to seize the moment, to think about what he was doing and where he was going. Cain needed to have a change of mind.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
and a change of heart so that he could ultimately stop depending on his own merits for salvation and begin trusting God.

In Genesis 4:7, 10, and 15 is recorded God’s attempt to give Cain an opportunity to repent. But Cain refused God’s offers to the end of his days. Jude 11 refers to “the way of Cain” as a stubborn refusal to embrace God’s grace and turn away from selfish pride. Surely the “way of Cain” is still evident today.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Make a list of five ways that you have seen God giving people turnaround opportunities.

• How does He get our attention?

• What are some trailhead points on life’s journey that are good places to stop and examine our behavior, our motives, and our attitudes about God?

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Cain and Abel’s story is the story of how people respond to God, sin, and salvation. These two brothers represent the ways you and I think about God’s character, His plan of redemption, and ultimately what part we play in obtaining the free gift of grace. For his salvation, Abel trusted in the sacrifice of blood that pointed forward to Christ. Is that your choice? Cain chose to look selfishly at God’s plan and reject it, offering his own produce. There are two ways to pay: You can try to pay it yourself or you can have someone pay for you. Which do you choose? God offers turnaround moments to everyone. Maybe today is a turnaround moment for you. You can trust in God’s provision for you at Calvary and live a life of worship and devotion to Him, or you can refuse to turn around and keep going the way of Cain. May you take your place with Abel as one who trusted fully in the character and provision of God’s mercy.

*Fundamental Belief No. 10.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

It’s hard to imagine what it was like for Adam to live for almost 1,000 years with the memory of life before sin. And yet it was because of that memory of sweet communion with God and the promise that atonement would be made that Adam and Eve were able to pass on the lessons of their experience of God’s redeeming love and the awful consequences of sin.

The descendants of Cain, however, although intelligent and strong, continued to follow Cain’s self-centered approach to life. And the values of the deceiver’s kingdom continued through the line of Cain. As sin made its mark on the world, God made it clear that His judgment was coming. The faithful descendants of Adam and Eve lived long on the earth and witnessed the corruption of sin and the effects it had on the earth, except for Enoch.

In comparison to the other members of Adam and Eve’s family, Enoch lived a relatively short time on earth. Enoch was a man who walked so closely with God that God eventually translated him to heaven without dying. Not much is mentioned about Enoch in Scripture. The birth of Methuselah becomes a pivotal point in Enoch’s life. The Scriptures indicate that Enoch’s walk with God occurs after the birth of Methuselah. Other than he “walked with God” very little is known about Enoch. Three aspects of Enoch’s life do emerge in the limited information given in Scripture: (1) Enoch walked with God (Genesis 5:21-24); (2) Enoch pleased God (Hebrews 11:5); (3) Enoch witnessed for God (Jude 14, 15).

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Discover the attributes of Enoch’s relationship with God. (Know)
• Experience a desire to walk with God today. (Feel)
• Have a choice to live faithfully in the world but not be of the world. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Growth and transformation in Christ*
• Knowing God
• Prayer

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Henry Dempsey was piloting a commuter plane on a short trip from Portland, Maine, to Boston when he heard a conspicuous sound coming from the back of the airplane. He handed over the control of the aircraft to the copilot and made his way to the rear of the plane.
to check out the source of the noise. That turned out to be a pivotal moment for him.

The small plane encountered jarring turbulence so that Dempsey bounded hard against the back door of the plane. He soon discovered what the conspicuous noise was. The back door had not been latched properly, and when Dempsey fell against the door it flew open and sucked him out of the plane—a life-changing experience.

The copilot made contact with the closest airport to see if he could make an emergency landing and reported the loss of the pilot. A helicopter was immediately sent to search for the missing pilot in the area over the ocean where the accident had occurred. Dempsey’s body was not found in the ocean.

When the plane landed, they did find Henry Dempsey. He was found still clinging to the ladder on the outside door of the airplane. He evidently caught the ladder when he fell out and managed to hang on until the plane landed about 10 minutes later. It was all he could do to hang on to the ladder as the plane flew 200 miles per hour at an altitude of about 4,000 feet.

It was reported that when the rescue personnel arrived on the scene, it took a while for them to get Dempsey to let go of the ladder.

Isn’t it amazing how one event, one decision, one moment in time, can sometimes alter your whole life?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

One event seemed to have a life-changing effect on Enoch. The Bible says that “after he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years” (Genesis 5:22, NIV). It was after Enoch had a child named Methuselah that he became what some would call a “hero of faith.” This week’s lesson is not just about a very pious man named Enoch, but also about the times in which he lived. When you read this passage of Scripture, try to look behind what might otherwise be perceived as a meaningless genealogy of some really old people. Try to imagine their stories and what life was like in their time.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section together, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What are some initial insights you picked up as you read the passage?
- Which names are you most familiar with? Which names are new to you?
- On a piece of paper, make a time line that shows how long each person lived and how long their lives overlapped. How many descendants listed in this passage were born while Adam was still living?
- What do you think were the lessons that were passed on from generation to generation? If you could pass on godly advice to the next generation, what would you say (in 20 words or less)?
- According to the passage, when was it actually mentioned that Enoch walked with God? Why do you think the birth of Methuselah could have been that significant in his life?
- What do you think the Scriptures mean when they state that Enoch “walked with God”? What do you think that would look like today?
- Why do you think God “took” Enoch when He had not “taken” others who were faithfully devoted to Him?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Leviticus 26:12; 1 Kings 3:14; Psalm 56:13; 89:15; Revelation 3:4.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

1. Enoch’s long walk with God has many facets to study with young people. The most popular angle is the nature of Enoch’s relationship with God. There are three clear qualities of Enoch’s character that make him a hero of faith: His walk (Genesis 5:21-24); his testimony (Jude 14, 15); and his desire to please God (Hebrews 11:5). Have students look up these passages and discuss each quality in light of what they might have looked like back then, and what they might look like if Enoch were here today—as a teenager, as a church leader, as a parent.

There is also the question of what prompted Enoch’s urgency. The birth of Methuselah brought about a pivotal change in Enoch’s life, and while it is not explicit in the limited writings
of Scripture, *Patriarchs and Prophets* describes how the event made a profound impact on Enoch’s relationship with God. You might ask the students to look at the relationship from both angles—from the point of view of a parent, and from the point of view of a child. What are some things we can learn about a relationship with God by looking at the way parents and children relate to one another?

2. The world during Enoch’s life:

   Antediluvian Period. The word “antediluvian” means in or from the time before the biblical flood. However, your young people may be more familiar with it as a term used for something extremely old-fashioned.

   Methuselah (Enoch’s son) somehow lived to the ripe old age of 969. When Methuselah was 187, his son Lamech was born, and he lived another 182 years until Noah was born (187 + 182 = 369). So Noah was born when Methuselah was 369. The Flood came when Noah was 600 (600 + 369 = 969), which is how old Methuselah was when he died, so Scripture confirms that Methuselah died around the time that the Flood came. “Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth” (Genesis 7:6, NIV). So Methuselah died at age 969, the same year the Flood came.

3. Ellen White says, “Enoch’s walk with God was not in a trance or a vision, but in all the duties of his daily life. He did not become a hermit, shutting himself entirely from the world; for he had a work to do for God in the world. In the family and in his intercourse with men, as a husband and father, a friend, a citizen, he was the steadfast, unwavering servant of the Lord” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 85).

   Discuss with the students the principle of being “in the world, but not of the world.” Some of the most revered people in the Bible did not hide from the world but mingled proactively with it for the purpose of winning people to God.

   This attribute of Enoch can be compared with John the Baptist’s. Ellen White, in *The Desire of Ages*, claims that “the life of John was not spent in idleness, in ascetic gloom, or in selfish isolation. From time to time he went forth to mingle with men; and he was ever an interested observer of what was passing in the world” (p. 102).

III. CLOSING

**Activity**

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to think of someone they can identify, without a doubt, solely by the way they walk. It could be a family member, a friend, or a neighbor. Ask the students to describe the style of their walk (respectfully of course) and what makes the walk so distinctive. You might even have them mimic the walk of children at ages 1, 2, 3, and 4.
Ask: How would you describe the style of Enoch’s walk with God? What makes his walk with God so distinctive?

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

You don’t need to fall out of an airplane to designate a specific moment as the start of a new walk. What’s so compelling about Enoch’s walk is that it became an even more childlike faith when he was 65 years old. When you lean fully on the truth that you are God’s child, it is the beginning of a walk with God. Could a walk like Enoch’s start today? Could you begin by resting in the truth that you are a child of the King of the universe?

As you walk in that truth you’ll have opportunities to stand against sin and make plain the matchless grace of God. What if, like Enoch, you were to ask yourself, “What would make my Father in heaven smile today?” What if you asked that question in your work, your study, and your play? It might be that the walk that Enoch had with God is just as available to us today as it was back then. Instead of taking you to heaven, God may leave you around to spread the Word.

*Fundamental Belief No. 11.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

Induction. “How do I do a whole lesson on someone as unknown in the Bible as Enoch?” Inductive study is one approach. Using an exhaustive concordance, you can look up the name “Enoch” and find all the references to him in Scripture. With only 12 verses that mention Enoch, you can assign a verse or two to each member of the class and ask, “Be ready to tell us everything you can about Enoch that is revealed in the passage.” The details of Enoch’s life that are available can be related, and students can make inferences about the kind of person he was. Students can be led to do detective work from what little information there is.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 6.

*A special adaptation of Patriarchs and Prophets has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of Noah and the Flood is set in what is known as the Antediluvian Period. The Bible portrays the frustration God felt for a world of people who settled deeply into rebellion against their Creator. The Bible says: “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain” (Genesis 6:5, 6, NIV). The people of the world became so filled with selfishness that they devoted their entire lives to immoral living. About the antediluvians, Ellen White says: “Not desiring to retain God in their knowledge, they soon came to deny His existence” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 91). That is the sad truth about the effects of sin.

The good news that emerges from the story of Noah is about the faithful diligence of Noah’s walk with God. Both Enoch and Noah were said to have “walked with God” during an era of great immorality in a self-absorbed world. Noah modeled the kind of relationship with God that is needed today, as the second coming of Christ approaches. Several powerful lessons emerge from Noah’s story: (1) Although judgment is imminent, God initiates a plan of salvation for all—but there is only one plan. The ark was a symbol of God’s provision of grace in a time of need. (2) The ark was a symbol of faithfulness when the masses scorned and ridiculed Noah and his family. It is hinted in Scripture that the Sabbath will be a test of faithfulness in the final moments of history for those who are alive (Revelation 14). This lesson is a reminder that now is the time to walk with God and find grace in the eyes of the Lord.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Discover the many truths that can be found in the story of the Flood. (Know)
• Feel compelled to respond to God’s grace and provision. (Feel)
• Be given an opportunity to give God their loyalty and start a new walk with Him this week. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Secularism
• Millennium and the end of sin*
• The judgment

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

A curious phenomenon was observed at a Little
League baseball practice. During batting practice the 9- and 10-year-old boys were swinging at the baseball as hard as they could, but their attempts to reach the fence were fruitless. The young team was practicing on a full-sized field where the fence that marked a home run seemed like a mile away. The boys were discouraged because the fence seemed so far away. The coach became perplexed because the boys seemed to be giving up, even though he reminded them that the actual fence on the field where they would play their games was much closer and well within their range.

The next time the team practiced hitting, the coach brought out a makeshift plastic fence and placed it right where the fence would be in their upcoming games. It transformed their hitting. They tried harder because they saw how possible it was for them to hit all the way to the new fence.

The same phenomenon is true of us. When we see our “fence”—the lives of Bible heroes such as Enoch, Noah, and Abraham—way out of reach, we tend to get discouraged about our walk with God. We don’t feel we can “hit” (walk) in their league. But God asks us to walk with Him right in our own league, as we grow in Him.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

*Share the following in your own words:*

In the end of time God’s people will need to have the faith of Noah, but such faith seems so far out of reach sometimes. Heroes such as Noah and Enoch and Abraham were so faithful that we can’t see ourselves, with all our weaknesses, having such faith. But as you read the story of Noah and the Flood, remember that Noah’s kind of faith is within our reach today. Faith itself is a gift from God and grows as we walk with Him in trust.

Out of the Story for Teachers

*After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.***

- As you read through the story, underline key facts that you see are important.
- Who are the main characters included in the story? (Circle them.)
- *Highlight* the text that reveals information about the setting and the attitudes of people in this story.

- What is significant about the specific days of the month mentioned in this story? Why do you think the details of the days and the months and the years are given?
- After reading through the passage of Noah and the Flood, what would you say are some aspects of the story that you had not noticed until now?
- What do you see as the major themes that grow out of this story? How do you see themes such as grace, judgment, faith, and hope revealed in this story? What different pictures of God’s character do you see in the story?
- As you read this passage, is there: a promise to claim, a lesson to learn, an example to follow, a warning to heed, a thanksgiving to express, a prayer to offer, an action to take?
- If there is one message in this story that relates to your life today, what is it?
- How can the message of this story change the way you live this week for God?

*Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: Hebrews 11; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Luke 17:6; 1 Corinthians 2:3-5.*

Sharing Context and Background

*Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.***

The story of the Flood is rich with symbols and lessons for young people today. More than anything else, the Flood declares in a story some of the themes that will emerge in the final judgment—when Christ returns.

1. It is interesting to note that God knew beforehand how big to build the ark. Judgment was coming, and God already knew who would choose to come on the ark for safety—before the rain even fell. After all, it doesn’t require much faith to feel the raindrops and then knock on the door of the ark. The trick is trusting enough to get in the ark while the sun is still shining. God calls His people today to the same kind of faithfulness. What other biblical stories can you think of that required someone to “walk by faith and not by sight”?

2. Looking at the time line given in Scripture, it
appears that Methuselah (Enoch’s son) died the same year that the Flood came. Methuselah witnessed centuries of decline, knowing that God had already taken his father to heaven. If Methuselah represents a group of people at the end of time, whom would you say he represents? What are some similarities you see between Enoch and John the Baptist?

3. Notice that Genesis 6:3 says, “Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years’” (NIV). God gave Noah a specific time when He would bring His judgment, but He hasn’t given one to us today. Why do you suppose that is? Do you think having knowledge of a timeline would help or hinder the gospel going to the ends of the earth?

4. Notice that Genesis 6:4-6 describes how far the people had gone in their sin. “Every inclination” was “only evil” and this was “all the time” (NIV). Have you ever wondered what it would take for conditions to be so bad that God was “grieved” to the point of wanting to destroy the whole planet and everything in it?

5. Notice that the destruction of the Flood left Satan with an image of his own future. When the earth was destroyed by water, Satan was left with only eight faithful souls to harass on earth, and they had given their allegiance to God. This might have been a glimpse of the millennium for Satan. Check out the extra information on the millennium and the end of sin at www.leadoutministries.com.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have the students divide into groups of two to four, and ask them to write out a modern-day version of the Flood. They need to include the key elements of the ancient story in the modern version they create. They can act it out or just read or retell the story as it would appear in the news today. After they have reported their stories to the class, compare them with what they think the second coming of Christ might be like if it were to happen today.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The story of Noah has been popularized over time with cartoonlike representations of animals and a big boat, but the message of judgment and destruction is often not prominent. Even more, the fact that God did everything He could to save everyone is a testimony to His character of love. It seems true that He wants us to be saved more than we do at times. As you see the many sides of God’s character in the story of the Flood, remember Noah’s walk. The Noah way is a

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
walk of faith and not of sight. The only evidence Noah had of a flood was that God said it would happen. There were no pictures, videos, or images of any kind to help Noah’s mind capture the terrible day of judgment that would come. The same is true for us today. When people are saying that “it will never happen,” we need to sense how critical it is to be faithful to God and what He is calling us to do—even though there are no clouds in sight. Do you want to tell God, “I’m ready to jump on board today”?

*Fundamental Belief No. 27.

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Tips for Top-notch Teaching

When teaching young people to study the Bible it is essential to get them to notice the words, phrases, and themes that grow out of the text. Each word matters! For example, have them write and then read a paragraph, covering up or deleting key words. The meaning changes and the significance gets lost when each word is not considered. Have students focus on the three superlatives found in Genesis 6:5 (every, only, all the time). If we want young people to deepen their experience with Bible study, we have to teach them to observe the details like a detective and notice every single word.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
Few stories in the Bible capture the imagination as does the Tower of Babel narrative. It arrests our attention for several reasons. The sheer audacity that a group of people would set upon building a structure that would literally reach into the heavens is not spectacular. What is audacious is the reason for their project.

The Babel builders decided to pursue their project in clear violation of God's pronouncements. God had promised that He would never destroy the world by flood again, but they chose to erect an insurance policy in case He later changed His mind. They also built the tower to circumvent God's second command to disperse throughout the world.

The signature lesson we can take away from the Babel episode is one of obedience to God. When God tells us to do something, no matter how much it goes against our own way, we are to obey. This lesson explores the concept of obedience to God and seeks to get students to consider tearing down any Babels that they have erected in their own lives. As you teach, be on the lookout for other themes in this story, such as the power of unity.

II. TARGET
The students will:
- Learn about the importance of God's commands to His people. (Know)
- Understand that obedience to God's directives is the only route to peace of mind in the Christian life. (Feel)
- Be given an opportunity to prioritize God's voice and His commands in their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
- Peer pressure
- Obedience
- Ambition
- Humility

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
Who doesn't admire the obedience a dog shows to its master? Archibald Rutledge, first poet laureate of South Carolina, wrote that one day he met a man whose dog had just been killed in a forest fire. Heartbroken, the man explained to Rutledge how it had happened.

Because he worked outdoors, he often took his dog with him. That morning, he left the animal in a clearing and gave him a command to stay and...
were faithful followers of God who refused to go along with the plan. This may have been one reason that God simply confounded the language of the builders to stop the project.

**Out of the Story for Teachers**

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Who are the main actors in this story?
- What is the setting of this biblical narrative?
- What does this story say about crowds and group think?
- What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (Underline them.)
- What aspects of the story are new to you? (Place an arrow beside them.)
- What emotions, actions, and adjectives enrich this story? (Draw a rectangle around them.)
- What are two main lessons that you got from the reading of this story?
- What words or phrases most capture the various emotions of this story? (Circle them.)
- Is there another biblical narrative that demonstrates the level of arrogance displayed by the Babel builders?

**Sharing Context and Background**

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
The building of the Tower of Babel in clear contraven- tion of God’s commands happened several hun- dred years after the Flood. Other notable facts:

1. The Tower of Babel story seems to have taken place in Babylon, a city in what was then Mesopotamia, and what is today Iraq. The ancient peoples of this region were known to build massive structures and tall temple platforms called ziggurats. It appears that building and construction was simply in their blood.

2. It is estimated today that there are 4,000 to 5,000 different languages in the world. In Genesis 11:1 the Bible notes: “The whole world had one language and a common speech” (NIV). Many biblical scholars believe that our current plethora of languages is a result of God confounding the language of the builders at Babel. Of course, many others believe that this explanation is too simplistic.

3. In the statement below, Ellen G. White sheds light on why these builders assembled in the plain of Shinar:

“For a time the descendants of Noah continued to dwell among the mountains where the ark had rested. As their numbers increased, apostasy soon led to division. Those who desired to forget their Creator and to cast off the restraint of His law felt a constant annoyance from the teaching and example of their God-fearing associates, and after a time they decided to separate from the worshipers of God. Accordingly they journeyed to the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the river Euphrates. They were attracted by the beauty of the situa-
tion and the fertility of the soil, and upon this plain they determined to make their home” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 118).

4. Many Bible readers lament the seeming lack of grace in Old Testament narratives. In the Tower of Babel story we see a God who gives a command that is disobeyed. In fact, the folks disobeying God build a huge tower openly flouting His words. Yet God does not destroy them, though He had every right to. God simply confounds their language, thereby stopping the building process. Then He dis-
persesthe throughout the world to repopulate and replenish it. What does this tell us about God’s grace?

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask each student to say a silent personal prayer to God by finishing the following statement: “Dear God, I need Your power to help me overcome ____________.” Ask the students to continue to talk to God about the challenge with which they may be struggling.

Close with a prayer thanking God for answering each student’s prayer.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

If the Babel builders hadn’t been interrupted, they would have built a tower unlike anything the world had ever seen. However, God knew that their tower was meant to replace Him as the source of their safety and protection.
Not only that, the descendants of Canaan wanted greatness that belonged only to God. We can rest assured that when self-importance is cherished above a clear directive from God, God will intervene to make His will known.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 10.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

His name and life is a metaphor for faith. He is the father of many nations, and a man whose life sits at the center of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the world’s three foremost religions.

Abraham is revered for many reasons. He accepts God’s call to go into a land he knew not, and one that God would show him along the way. On his journey he runs into difficulties that expose his imperfections. He lies more than once about the fact that his sister is also his wife, for instance. But in each challenge, God delivers him, and his faith is buoyed.

He encounters the great challenge of family members who sometimes make bad decisions, as Lot did when he pitched his tent toward Sodom. Abraham begs God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah, but alas, God does not. However, Abraham’s concern and prayers for his nephew’s family help to save some of their lives.

As if this challenge were not enough, God tells Abraham to kill his son—the son of promise, the one through whom would come the many nations, and descendants as numberless as the sand of the sea. Abraham’s response in this situation almost strains credulity. With pained heart, he packs his belongings, packs up his son, and heads for the mountains.

Abraham’s life is a study in faith and obedience, even when the facts don’t seem to add up. God calls us not to look at the facts; He calls us to look at Him. However, if we persevere in trusting Him and doing His will, we will find ourselves as Abraham did—blessed beyond our wildest dreams. God kept His word to Abraham, for through his lineage came Jesus. Who can argue with that?

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Examine the life of Abraham to understand how God calls us and the challenges that sometimes result from His call. (Know)
• Become aware of the calling God has for their lives. (Feel)
• Be given an opportunity to accept God’s call in their lives. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Faith
• Obedience
• Character

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:
Few people will ever be asked by God to leave their home, family, and loved ones for an ill-defined place in the wild blue yonder. Yet this is what God called Abraham to do. Many people have answered what they perceive to be an inner call to pursue a dream or destiny. At age 15, the following famous people made very pivotal moves that led them to the notoriety they enjoy today. While they are not all advisable examples, share them with your students.

Then ask the students what drove these people to do what they did. After sampling answers, ask the students how the move made by these famous people is similar to or different from Abraham’s big move.

At age 15:
- Albert Einstein, with poor grades in geography, history, and languages, dropped out of school.
- Composer George Gershwin (“Rhapsody in Blue”) left school to pitch his songs in Tin Pan Alley.
- Chess champion Bobby Fischer became an international grandmaster and dropped out of high school to devote himself to professional competition.
- Swedish tennis star Bjorn Borg dropped out of school to concentrate on tennis. (Note: For every Bjorn Borg who drops out of school, there are thousands who drop out to chase their dreams, only to see their dreams dashed, not to mention their education.)
- American reformer Susan B. Anthony began teaching school.
- Isaac Asimov entered Columbia University.
- Henry Ford, disliking life on the farm, moved to Detroit and trained as a machinist.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

With the call of Abraham, God was fulfilling a promise made in Eden to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15). After sin had decimated the planet, leading to its destruction by flood, God picked Abram, whose name would later be changed to Abraham, as the person through whom the Deliverer would come.

God made of Abraham a great nation, whose ethnic purity remains to this day. Jesus, our Savior and Lord, is a direct descendant of Abraham. God kept His promise to Adam and Eve, both of whom died in peace knowing that their fall would not be the death knell of earth.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- Who are the main actors in this story?
- What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (Underline them.)
- What aspects of the story are new to you?
- God chose a man whose character seems less than sterling. What does this say to you about God?
- What new thing about God have you learned from Abraham’s story? Explain.
- What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (Draw a rectangle around them.)
- What lesson does Lot’s life teach us?
- What lesson from this story will you apply to your life?
- What words or phrases most capture the various emotions of this story? (Circle them.)

In the biblical passages below, you will notice major movements by God in the life of Abraham. Notice the frequency of God’s voice.

“The Lord had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

‘I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’

“So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.”

“After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.’ But Abram said, ‘O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’”

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord
appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers.’”

“God also said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.’”

“The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.”

(Genesis 12:1-5; 15:1, 2; 17:1, 2; 17:15, 16; 18:1, 2, NIV)

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

It is worth noting that God had great reasons for raising a peculiar people who would serve as an example of godliness for the rest of the world. Here are some other facts that give context to Abraham’s life and service.

1. When God called Abraham, he was living in Ur of the Chaldees, a very modern Babylonian city when compared to other cities of the day. Founded 600 to 900 years or so before the birth of Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees was a city with a legal code, a system of schools, and libraries. Abraham was not leaving the “boonies” for a life on the road. He was leaving a big established city, which no doubt made the parting more painful.

2. Babylon is synonymous with disobedience, confusion, debauchery, and other dastardly things. The city was also a place where idol worship flourished. Terah, Abraham’s father, is described in Joshua 24:2 as an idol worshipper. The residents of Ur worshipped gods representing the fire, sun, moon, and stars. But none were more revered than the one appropriately named Sin, who was the chief deity worshipped.

3. Abraham heard the voice of God. Notice, Abraham does not seem to mistake God’s voice for that of one of the other gods worshipped in Ur. He knows who God is. It says something about Abraham that even in the midst of an evil city, growing up in a home where his father worshipped idols, Abraham still knew God. When God called him, he did not question God’s reasoning. He didn’t lament the journey, though I’m sure he thought about it. He obeyed.

4. Ellen White shares the following about the power of Abraham’s faith:

“Abraham’s unquestioning obedience is one of the most striking evidences of faith to be found in all the Bible. To him, faith was ‘the sub-
stance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' ([Hebrews 11] verse 1). Relying upon the divine promise, without the least outward assurance of its fulfillment, he abandoned home and kindred and native land, and went forth, he knew not whither, to follow where God should lead. ‘By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a land not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise’ (Hebrews 11:9, RV)” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 126).

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask students to think of the longest journey they have ever taken. Some examples might be a long drive, plane flight, or train ride, perhaps, to see family members or on vacation. Ask them if they encountered any difficulties during the trip. Ask them if they prayed to God for help during their trials.

Close by inviting each student to pray silently for one minute asking God’s guidance in their daily journey of living for Him.

**Summary**

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Abraham was God’s choice as He sought to raise up a people who would obey Him and bless the world. While God chose Abraham, He never said that Abraham was perfect. In fact, he was very human.

However, Abraham’s weaknesses could be changed by God because he believed in God—he exercised great faith, and he was obedient. These two qualities set him apart from most biblical patriarchs and matriarchs. Abraham believed that God would not forsake him, and this God counted to him as righteousness. We too have the same opportunity to trust God and to see our lives transformed and blessed. However, we must be obedient, and we must exercise faith.
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Who doesn’t love a baby? That’s right, no one—at least no one in their right mind. Babies are special, a seeming nod from God affirming the human life cycle, affirming the process of perpetuation that He instituted in Eden.

Sarah, wife of the great patriarch Abraham, longed to experience the joy of a baby’s cry. She had been barren for years, and had long given up any hope of ever having a child. In spite of God’s promise to Abraham that He would make his descendants as numberless as the sands of the sea, God’s delay in fulfilling this promise meant heartache for Sarah. It was this heartache and disbelief in God that led her to encourage Abraham to bear a child with her servant, Hagar—a very, very disastrous decision.

God did finally fulfill His promise to Abraham and Sarah. Sarah got pregnant at a ripe old age and bore Isaac, a “boy wonder” if there ever was one. The events of this child’s birth were so miraculous that God’s later command to sacrifice him must have been a test of epic proportions for Abraham’s faith. However, at God’s command, Abraham does not flinch, pout, or hesitate; he immediately moves to obey God.

While it is certain that Abraham must have had doubts about God’s request, he chose to believe that God would provide a way of escape. In life we also face similar dilemmas, and we too must choose to trust God.

Another aspect of this great biblical narrative that makes it stand out is Isaac’s trust and obedience to his father. In this way Isaac was a type of Christ—obedient to the death, even the death of the cross, or in Isaac’s case, the altar. His obedience says much about the way his parents reared him, and his love for God. It is a great example for youth today.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- See in the miraculous birth of Isaac that God keeps His promises. (Know)
- Experience the challenge of trusting God when He asks difficult things of us. (Feel)
- Be given an opportunity to trust God to provide for them when called on to obey His commands. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

- Sacrifice
- Parents (relating to)
- The will of God
- Family dynamics

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.
**Illustation**

*Share this illustration in your own words:*

Motivational speaker and author Eric Fellman speaks of meeting a Chinese couple in Hong Kong while traveling to China.

A friend took me down a narrow alley to a second-floor flat to meet a man recently released from prison in China. I knew I would be pressed to carry Bibles and literature on my trip. But I was hesitant and tried to mask my fear with rationalizations about legalities and other concerns. A Chinese man in his 60s opened the door. His smile was radiant, but his back was bent almost double. He led us to a sparsely furnished room. A Chinese woman of about the same age came in to serve tea. As she lingered, I couldn’t help noticing how they touched and lovingly looked at each other. My staring apparently didn’t go unnoticed, for soon they were both giggling.

“What is it?” I asked my friend. “Oh nothing,” he said with a smile. “They just wanted you to know it was OK—they’re newlyweds.” I learned they had been engaged in 1949, when he was a student at Nanking Seminary. On the day of their wedding rehearsal Chinese Communists seized the seminary. They took the students to a hard-labor prison. For the next 30 years the bride-to-be was allowed only one visit per year. Each time, following their brief minutes together, the man would be called to the warden’s office. “You may go home with your bride,” he said, “if you will renounce Christianity.”

Year after year this man replied with just one word: “No.” I was stunned. How had he been able to stand the strain for so long, being denied his family, his marriage, and even his health? When I asked, he seemed astonished at my question. He replied, “With all that Jesus has done for me, how could I betray Him?” The next day I requested that my suitcase be crammed with Bibles and training literature for Chinese Christians. I determined not to lie about the materials, yet lost not one minute of sleep worrying about the consequences. And as God had planned, my suitcases were never inspected (Eric Fellman, *Moody Monthly*, January 1986, p. 33).

**II. TEACHING THE STORY**

*Bridge to the Story*

*Share the following in your own words:*

Our lives are often defined by crucial moments. In the life of Abraham and Sarah, several moments define their relationship with God. Their decision to help God fulfill His promise to make of Abraham a great nation—having Abraham bear a child with Hagar—was a moment of disbelief in God for which the world is still paying. The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians started in that moment.

In spite of this failure, God extends grace to Abraham and Sarah, and Hagar and Ishmael. By right, God could have made Ishmael the son of promise, the one through whom Abraham’s numberless seed would spring up and through whom the Messiah would come to save the world. But God didn’t do this. He kept His promise to Abraham and Sarah. He gave them Isaac, but because of their earlier disobedience they would have to endure another crucial moment: God’s call to sacrifice their only son.

*Out of the Story for Teachers*

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- How was Abraham so sure that God was the one summoning him to kill his son?
- What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (*Underline* them.)
- What aspects of the story are new to you?
- Why do you think God failed to stop the liaison between Abraham and Hagar? What does this say to you about God? (*Place an arrow* beside the verses.)
- What new thing about God have you learned from Abraham’s story? *Explain.*
- What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (*Draw a rectangle* around them.)
- What lesson from this story will you apply to your life?
- What words or phrases most capture the various emotions of the story? (*Circle* them.)

*Sharing Context and Background*

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. *Share in your own words.*

God’s love for us is unconditional. He never fails to reach out to us, even when we make a mess of our lives. God rehabilitated Abraham, rebuilding a life that now serves as a terrific example for us all. Here are other interesting facts that give context to this narrative.
1. The name Isaac means “he will laugh.” Sarah chose the name Isaac because the angel promised that she should become a mother. Being beyond the age of having children, she privately laughed at the prediction. When the child was born, she said, “God has made me to laugh; all who hear will laugh with me” (Genesis 21:6, Amplified Bible).

2. During the time in which Abraham and Sarah lived, male heads of families wielded enormous power over their household. They often had multiple wives, and could solicit the sexual services of their servants at any moment.

With this background in mind, it is not difficult to understand the treatment Hagar received at the hand of her masters. Granted, Hagar’s actions following the birth of Ishmael challenged the validity of Abraham and Sarah’s union, but this was a problem that they created. Hagar’s banishment was a source of deep pain to Abraham, and he begged God to allow Ishmael to be his heir, but God was resolute. However, God did promise to make of Ishmael a great nation. God was seeking a win-win in this difficult love triangle.

3. Mount Moriah, the site of Abraham’s aborted sacrifice of Isaac, has been considered a holy site throughout the years, and not just because it was the place where God tested Abraham’s and Isaac’s faith. It is also a revered site because Moriah was the place where Jacob had his dream of angels ascending and descending on a ladder between earth and heaven (Genesis 28:10-18).

It was also on this mountain that David built an altar and offered sacrifices to God some 1,000 years after Abraham (1 Chronicles 21:26).

4. Ellen White shares the following about the testing of Abraham’s faith:

“God had called Abraham to be the father of the faithful, and his life was to stand as an example of faith to succeeding generations. But his faith had not been perfect. He had shown distrust of God in concealing the fact that Sarah was his wife, and again in his marriage with Hagar. That he might reach the highest standard, God subjected him to another test, the closest which man was ever called to endure. In a vision of the night he was directed to repair to the land of Moriah, and there offer up his son as a burnt offering upon a mountain that should be shown him” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 147).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Give each student an index card. Ask the students to think of a challenge that they are currently facing. Then ask them to write a note to God explaining the

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- Other Eyes

  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- Flashlight

  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- Punch Lines

  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

When Jesus taught on earth, there was an unmistakable theme to His teaching: He taught love. What does this mean in practice?

In the life of Jesus we see Him healing broken people, forgiving sin, raising the dead, encouraging the downtrodden, and yes, castigating the hypocrites. In His earthly ministry Jesus focused on restoring people, giving hope to a people whose church leaders were guilty of religious malpractice.

In the narrative of Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac, emphasize the places where God brings restoration and healing to the characters. God is interested in doing something special in the life of Abraham and Sarah, in spite of their clumsy attempts to help Him. Hagar gets swept up in the mix and fails God, but God blesses her and Ishmael. Isaac’s life is saved when God provides a ram for the sacrifice. God looks for opportunities in our lives to show His wondrous love.

To close, ask the students to pray silently over their request, thanking God for answering their prayer according to His will.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

- God’s promises may take a while to materialize, but He is true to His word. We must never distrust that which God has promised to do in our lives. We must take hold of His promises, as if nothing else mattered, because nothing else does matter when God promises.

- The story of Isaac’s miraculous birth and Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice him at God’s command teaches us the truth that everything we have, including our children, parents, relatives, and friends, belongs to God. We have them because of God, and they will always belong to God.

- It also points us to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, and who one day will welcome us home with all the faithful children of Father Abraham.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 13.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Genesis 19 carries in its verses perhaps the strongest cautionary tale in all of Scripture of God's disgust with open, blatant iniquity.

This biblical episode is not so much about Sodom and Gomorrah, the two famous cities destroyed by God, as it is about a family led by a man named Lot. Lot was Abraham's nephew, and as such he had in Abraham a solid example of godliness. When Abraham offered him his pick of the promised land to which God had brought them, he chose the lush green plains within sight and earshot of Sodom. It was a fateful decision.

In this decision Lot had laid the groundwork for the destruction of his family. He had unwittingly brought dangerous influences close to his home. Among the serious lessons that cannot be ignored in this story is the importance of staying very far from evil influences lest one become corrupted.

The major lesson of Genesis 19, of course, is God's judgment against the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Their immorality was legendary, as evidenced by the homosexuality practiced by the men of the city, all of whom came to Lot's front door demanding sexual relations with Lot's angelic guests.

We also see in this story God's amazing grace, His willingness to save Lot and his family, if they would only obey. God always warns His children before He chastens them. It's up to us to heed God's warnings before it is eternally too late.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Learn that judgment is also a part of God's love for His creatures. *(Know)*
- Sense the blessing and freedom that comes from true confession and repentance. *(Feel)*
- Have an opportunity to ask God for strength and guidance to live a life of purity and obedience. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

- Wisdom/Counsel
- Purity
- Homosexuality
- World issues

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

A man who lived on Long Island was able one day to satisfy a lifelong ambition by purchasing a very fine
barometer. When the instrument arrived at his home, he was extremely disappointed to find that the indicating needle appeared to be stuck, pointing to the sector marked “Hurricane.”

After shaking the barometer very vigorously several times, its new owner sat down and wrote a scorching letter to the store from which he had purchased the instrument. The following morning, on the way to his office in New York, he mailed the letter. That evening he returned to Long Island to find not only the barometer missing, but his house also. The barometer’s needle had been right—there was a hurricane!

The response from the evil inhabitants of these two cities was similar to the response of the man who thought his barometer was broken. Sometimes truth is unsettling to us, but truth is not changed by our comfort or discomfort.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Throughout Scripture we see God’s warnings sometimes attended to, but more often not, ignored. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah ignored them at their peril.

One of the truly striking aspects of this story is the response of Lot’s sons-in-law when he warned them of the coming destruction. They laughed at their father-in-law. This response says much about the state of Lot’s family at the time that the angels showed up. Lot seems to have totally lost control of his family.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

• Who are some of the minor characters in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? What can we learn from them?
• What parts of the story are key to understanding it? (Underline them.)
• What aspects of the story are new to you?
• Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom. How do we sometimes do the same thing? How should God respond to us?
• What lessons can we learn from Lot’s family?
• What emotions, actions, or adjectives enrich this story? (Draw a rectangle around them.)

• What lesson from this story will you apply to your life?
• What words or phrases most capture the various emotions of this story? (Circle them.)

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

The history of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain adds much richness to this narrative.

1. On the south end of the Dead Sea is an area known today as Mount Sodom; it is the area generally thought to be the ancient site of Sodom. What most of us do not know is that Sodom and Gomorrah were not the only cities destroyed that fateful day when fire and brimstone rained down from heaven. So far, archaeologists have uncovered at least five cities that were turned to sulfur ash that day.

2. Some Christians wonder about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other evil cities on the plains of Mamre. God destroyed men, women, and children. Most of us think of children as innocents, not capable of giving consent to sin, but apparently this is not how God sees things.

When Abraham urges God to save the city for the sake of the faithful therein, God lets him know that there were not 10 faithful people living there. What are we to conclude from this? Perhaps the question of children perishing because of the sins of their parents is something we’ll have to ask God about when we see Him.

3. Another problematic part of this narrative is Lot’s willingness to offer his daughters to the angry mob of men at his door. This depraved mob would have raped the girls and probably killed them. Their sexual depravity led them to reject Lot’s offer in favor of the strangers inside.

What are we to conclude about Lot from this offering of his daughters? What kind of father would put his daughters at risk in this way? This moment tells us much about the stress that Lot was under, and the strong influence of the culture in which he lived.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 1, page 333, offers these com-
ments: “His belief in the solemn duty of hospitality, so highly regarded among Eastern nations, explains, though it does not justify, his decision. He who had taken a stranger under his protection and care was bound to defend him even at the expense of his own life. In some Near Eastern countries the duty of hospitality is still regarded in this light. Only to an Oriental mind, perhaps, would the obligation of a host toward his guests seem to justify, or at least excuse, Lot’s conduct on this occasion. The purity of his two daughters in a city like Sodom is evidence of the great care with which Lot had brought them up, and proves that the offer was not lightly made.”

4. Ellen White shares the following about the opportunities to know Him given by God to the citizens of Sodom.

“At the time of Lot’s removal to Sodom, corruption had not become universal, and God in His mercy permitted rays of light to shine amid the moral darkness. When Abraham rescued the captives from the Elamites, the attention of the people was called to the true faith. Abraham was not a stranger to the people of Sodom, and his worship of the unseen God had been a matter of ridicule among them; but his victory over greatly superior forces, and his magnanimous disposition of the prisoners and spoil, excited wonder and admiration. While his skill and valor were extolled, none could avoid the conviction that a divine power had made him conqueror” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 157).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Most cities have people who practice the sins that doomed Sodom and Gomorrah. While many people simply decry these evils, there are things that Christians can do to help spread a positive God-centered influence.

In closing, take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of possible projects your class can undertake to make your community a better place. Perhaps your class can select an outreach project that focuses on an underserved population such as the elderly, disabled, or young children.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

It was not God’s plan to judge Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plains of Mamre so severely. The decisions made by these evil peoples sealed their destruction.

This story is included in the biblical narrative as a cautionary tale on the dangers of living near to or associating with those who are doing wrong. However, God is not willing that any of us should perish, but that all should come to repentance. It is this love that led

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

• Other Eyes
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

• Flashlight
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

• Punch Lines
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
God to Lot’s door. It’s this love that led the angels to practically drag Lot’s family from their home kicking and screaming. God refuses to let us go until He has given us every opportunity to be saved.

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

Young people respect when adults are willing to discuss hard questions with them, admitting that they don’t know all the answers.

In the teaching of this lesson, encourage students to explore the difficult parts such as: The destruction of all inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot’s offering of his daughters to an angry mob, the hesitation of Lot’s family to leave their home even in the face of impending death, God’s attempts to save us even when there seems little chance of our accepting the salvation.

These issues should not be allowed to become the focus of the lesson study, but they should be considered in the discussion. Also, look for opportunities to make comparisons between the behaviors of Sodom’s inhabitants and those of people today. For instance, encourage students to compare today’s current acceptance of homosexuality with God’s view of this sin and its practice in Sodom.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 14.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.*
winsome . . .
and then some

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS
In the sunset years of his life Abraham wondered how God would fulfill His promise to make of him a great nation. After all, Isaac was still single. Sarah was dead. And he was 140 years old. Calling upon his trusted servant, Eliezer, Abraham says to him, “I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac” (Genesis 24:3, 4, NIV).

The future of God’s people hangs in the balance. So Eliezer assembles a caravan of 10 camels laden with gifts. He journeys to a city called Nahor, where he encounters an exquisite woman (see verses 16-18). Rebekah is very winsome. She is beautiful and hospitable. She offers Eliezer a drink. But notice, she is winsome, and then some. “After she had given him a drink, she said, ‘I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking’” (verse 19, NIV).

Rebekah did everything that was expected of her, and then some. It’s the and then some that made all the difference. It changed her life, not to mention world history. She became the matriarch of God’s people. She enjoyed a great adventure with God. And no generation since has forgotten her name. Why? Because she did what was expected, and then some.

This lesson has much to teach us about going the extra mile. It is also a helpful story when one is thinking about desirable virtues in a future spouse. And finally, it offers an encouraging reminder that God cares about the social component of our lives.

II. TARGET
The students will:
• Discover the matchmaking power of God as demonstrated by the union of Isaac and Rebekah. (Know)
• Sense the difference that excelling beyond expectations can make in relationships. (Feel)
• Have an opportunity to commit to always doing what is expected, and then some. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE
• Love is . . .
• Marriage
• Dating
• Service
You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity
Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration
Share this illustration in your own words:
Stories abound of the and-then-some mind-set that prevails at the clothing store Nordstrom. For example, an executive for a national retailer needed a suit for a business trip. Since his wife constantly babbled about Nordstrom, he ventured a trip to the upscale retailer.

He invested in a couple suits—one on sale, which meant he couldn’t get same-day alterations. The tailored suit, however, was promised for the following day. On his way to the airport in Seattle, he stopped to pick up the suit. To the executive’s dismay, it was still on the tailor’s to-do list.

That evening, when checking into his Dallas hotel he received a package upon arrival. Yep, it was from Nordstrom. Three expensive silk ties (that he never ordered) draped his tailored suits—all compliments of one of America’s greatest and-then-some stores. Tucked in the suit pocket was a hanky of apology from the salesperson who had called the executive’s home to learn his travel itinerary from one of his daughters.

Stories such as this one abound in the Nordstrom world. There is another well-worn story of Nordstrom accepting a return of old tires—even though their store has never sold tires! The bottom line is that Nordstrom has scored a gold mine by empowering employees to not just do their job, but to do what is required... and then some. It is a corporate culture that challenges all employees to exceed expectations.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

When God plays matchmaker, He gets it right! For a matriarch of His chosen nation, God selects a woman that models exemplary character. She not only serves Eliezer a drink—which would have been expected of her—but she offers to water his caravan of camels as well. In going the extra mile she was blessed by God. Now imagine what might happen if you lived with the same passion for exceeding expectations. What would that mean for your relationships? How would it affect you spiritually? academically? professionally?

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

• Why do you think that Abraham insisted that Isaac’s wife come from “my country and my own relatives,” and not from the Canaanites?
• How do you think Isaac felt as his father arranged this marriage?
• Is there any advice in this story that is helpful when one is choosing their future spouse? What is it?
• We catch a glimpse of Rebekah’s character when she offers to get water for Eliezer’s camels. What kind of character would this be today? What hints of this and-then-some spirit have you seen in your friends?
• What does this story tell you about Abraham? Isaac? Eliezer? Rebekah?
• How does this story inform our understanding of modern romance?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today’s story: 1 Kings 3:7-15; Acts 21:1-6; Matthew 5:27-30, 39-41; 1 Corinthians 13; 2 Timothy 2:22.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

For this story it should be easy to get the students brainstorming about what it would be like if their parents were tasked with arranging the marriage for their kids as Abraham did for Isaac. Ask students to think about character qualities that would be important to their parents for a future son-in-law or daughter-in-law. From this opener, guide the discussion into the following areas:

1. Notice what was important to Abraham in selecting a wife for Isaac. She was not to come from the Canaanites. Moreover, Eliezer wanted someone who did not just cover the basics of hospitality; he had as a sign from God that the woman was to go beyond basic manners and offer to care for the camels as well.
2. Discuss Eliezer’s approach to knowing God’s will. Clearly he understood the high stakes involved in this decision. He was careful not to go against God’s will. Thus he prayed fervently (Genesis 24:12-21) and outlined a plan as to how he would know the right woman. God’s direct answer came immediately. Is such an
approach still valid today? Can we know God’s will by dictating to Him the circumstances that He should use to reveal His will?

3. Laban quickly accepted the ring and bracelets in exchange for his sister, Rebekah. The custom of giving gifts to family members of the bride can be traced back to the time of Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.). It probably grew out of an era when men would purchase a bride. What does the snapshot of Laban in Genesis 24:29-33 tell you about the kind of man he was? Contrast what he reveals about his character to that of Rebekah’s.

4. Consider another snapshot of Rebekah’s character in Genesis 24:49-61. In the ancient culture it was customary for the family to keep the bride-to-be before the wedding. In some cases the woman would remain home for a month, but in this story the family requested a period of 10 days (verse 55). Rebekah, however, weighs in and states her preference—to begin the journey immediately. Like Abraham had done many years before, she was willing to step out in faith.

5. Two words are worth noting in the final scene of this story. In the final verse of chapter 24 it says: “He loved her; and Isaac was comforted” (NIV). What a heartwarming picture of God’s goodness in bringing this woman so far from home into a marriage in which she could experience love. Moreover, she brought comfort into the union. Discuss this ancient marriage that God orchestrated in the light of what holds modern marriages together.

III. CLOSING

Activity
Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Read and discuss this final paragraph from chapter 15 in Patriarchs and Prophets, page 176:
“True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse and which suddenly dies when severely tested. It is by faithfulness to duty in the parental home that the youth are to prepare themselves for homes of their own. Let them here practice self-denial and manifest kindness, courtesy, and Christian sympathy. Thus love will be kept warm in the heart, and he who goes out from such a household to stand at the head of a family of his own will know how to promote the happiness of her whom he has chosen as a companion for life. Marriage, instead of being the end of love, will be only its beginning.”

Ask students to generate a list of specific things they can do during the week to practice “faithfulness to duty in the parental home.”

Summary
Share the following thoughts in your own words:
The story of Rebekah becoming Isaac’s wife is a powerful picture of God’s guidance in our social context.

Teaching From . . .
Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
affairs. Moreover, it is a textbook case study on character. By going above and beyond expectations, Rebekah secured her place in history. She did the minimum, and then some.

So what is your and-then-some quotient? The apostle Paul said: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV).

Challenge students to attack every aspect of life with all of their heart, “as working for the Lord.” As we studied in the case of Rebekah, it is a worthwhile goal to pursue with regard to one’s social life. But it is also an ideal target to strive for at school, in the home, and at church.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

One effective way to help students learn is through role playing. After the students are familiar with the story of Isaac and Rebekah’s getting together, have volunteers act out the role of the major players in the story. You may wish to have them role-play the story in a contemporary setting. For fun, you may specify that they must role-play in a specific genre, such as sci-fi or country and western.

Prepare the audience by assigning them questions to be discussed at the conclusion of the role play. Examples include: Would this work in real life? Why or why not? How would you have handled the situation? In what ways would a contemporary role play of this story differ from the original?

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 15.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.*
PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This story is the first documented case of identity theft. At the time of this story Isaac was about 137 years old. He was blind. Thinking that his life was almost over, he called for his eldest son, Esau, in order to transfer a blessing to him. In the ancient culture the firstborn son received a double portion of blessing because it was his responsibility to take care of the family after the death of the father. Desiring this blessing, Jacob schemed with his mother, Rebekah, and stole his brother's identity.

A number of themes emerge from this story that are particularly relevant to young people today. First, there is the theme of identity. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), it was on this point of identity that Satan tried to trip Jesus: “If you are the Son of God” (verses 3, 6, NIV). But Jesus made it clear that He knew who He was and there was no reason to prove it. Still today, Satan is a master of spiritual identity theft. It is important that young people know who they are in Christ.

A second theme of this story deals with the issue of delayed gratification. Had Jacob trusted God to fulfill the promise of the birthright, he would have saved himself immeasurable heartache. Sadly, he couldn’t wait, and thus he lived up to his name, “the deceiver.”

A final theme that is embedded in this text deals with the issue of integrity. Between Jacob and Rebekah, there is plenty to discuss about honesty and the role this virtue should play in a Christian’s life.

One way you might wish to approach these themes is through the lens of family dynamics. If students believe their family to be dysfunctional, in many respects they aren’t much different from families of old.

II. TARGET

The students will:

• Learn the value of delayed gratification. (Know)
• Experience the conviction to live a life of integrity. (Feel)
• Be encouraged to determine to model a Christlike character in daily decisions. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Behavior (Christian)
• Identity (personal)
• Integrity

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

You may have seen the commercials on TV that
portray the grisly nature of identity theft. An elderly woman sits in a chair talking in the voice of some man. She talks about her truck with the Daytona tires, the mud flaps with the silver naked lady, and the fuzzy dice hanging from the rearview mirror. Another commercial has a man sitting on a lawn mower, and in a female voice he talks of fingernails with the diamonds built in and then brags of how he is the best-dressed person in the whole development.

Identity theft is a criminal offense. It occurs when a person knowingly uses, without authority, a means of identification of another person with the intent to commit or to aid or abet any unlawful activity that constitutes a violation of federal law or that constitutes a felony under any applicable state or local law. It is the fastest-growing crime in America. This past year more than 9.9 million Americans were victims of identity theft costing them more than $5 billion. Every 79 seconds in America someone becomes a victim of identity theft. Technology has opened the opportunities for this crime to the extent that some experts predict that in a few years there will be a massive identity theft crisis in our nation.

The tragedy with identity theft is that you can spend your whole life building your credit, forming a positive identity, and in one moment somebody can swipe your identity, and your future is destroyed.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following story in your own words:

The lesson today offers the first documented case of identity theft. Jacob stole Esau’s identity, and the consequences were severe. He anguish for more than 20 years about his sin. And he destroyed a family already teeming with dysfunction.

The devil would love to destroy your identity in the same way. Instead of your trusting God completely, the devil hopes to sabotage your soul by causing you to compromise. The devil invites you to take a shortcut, rather than waiting on God. He wants you to cheat, rather than being honest. He’ll delight in any sin, no matter how small, for every little sin erodes your identity as a child of God.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

• Read the entire story and reflect on the spiritual lessons that jump out at you.
• Circle the phrases in the story that are new to you.
• What does this story teach us about integrity?
• What does the story teach us about delayed gratification?
• Besides the importance of integrity and delayed gratification, what other lessons emerge from this story?
• What are the primary emotions of the story? Underline the phrases in the text that capture these emotions.
• What is the key verse in the story? Why?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

As you lead the students through the story of Jacob and Esau, you may find it helpful to share some of the following perspectives.

1. The birthright was a symbol of taking responsibility for the well-being of the family. But with responsibility came privileges. For example, the recipient of the birthright (typically the firstborn) enjoyed the status of leader of the family and received a double portion of the inheritance (see Deuteronomy 21:15-17). This birthright was obviously more important to Jacob than it was to his brother. It’s interesting to note that Esau is not the only man to have brokered such a trade. In the late 1920s archaeologists discovered a clay tablet in the Iraqi city of Nuzi that tells of a similar exchange. In this other case, however, the man at least got “three sheep” rather than a bowl of stew!

2. While the passing on of a birthright is foreign to our way of thinking, Ellen White broadens the idea of selling the birthright to include other arenas of life. “Multitudes are selling their birthright for sensual indulgence. Health is sacrificed; the mental faculties are enfeebled, and heaven is forfeited; and all for a mere temporary pleasure—an indulgence at once both weakening and debasing in its character. As Esau awoke to see the folly of his rash exchange when it was too late to recover his loss, so it will be in the
day of God with those who have bartered their heirship to heaven for selfish gratifications” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 182).

3. Jacob and Rebekah went to great lengths to deceive Isaac. This old man had all of his senses fooled. His eyesight was not trustworthy. He felt the hairy arms and guessed wrong. He smelled the earthy aroma of Jacob’s clothes and mis- calculated. He listened to the voice and was deceived. He tasted the stew and thought he knew what he was eating, but his taste buds failed as well. Deceit is of the devil.

4. Think about the consequences of sin. Who paid most dearly for this family debacle? Their family life was destroyed, and consequently, each family member suffered many lonely hours of separation, disillusionment, and shame. Rebekah would never see her favorite son again. Jacob was now facing a life without a father, mother, or brother. Esau would obsess over bitter feelings of revenge. And Isaac would die knowing that he had been duped and that the family had been splintered.

III. CLOSING

**Activity**

*Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.*

In groups of four, describe each other’s “identity.” Limit your descriptors to positive character qualities. Next, brainstorm specific ways the devil might seek to undermine each person’s identity by tempting them in these areas. Finally, discuss ways that you can resist the devil’s temptations.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

Some years ago psychologists conducted an experiment known as the “marshmallow test.” A 4-year-old sits by a table with one marshmallow on it and is informed that the experimenter must leave temporarily. If the kid can wait for the experimenter to return, he will be rewarded with two marshmallows. If he opts to eat one right now, he can—but he doesn’t get another one later.

What is most fascinating about the study is the correlation between being able to delay gratification at the age of 4 and the outcome in the lives of the child participants. A Stanford University research team studied the kids for many years. Consider the final report:

“Those who were able to wait as four-year-olds grew up to be more socially competent, better able to cope with stress, and less likely to give up under pressure than those who could not wait. The marshmallow-grabbers grew up to be more stubborn and indecisive, more easily upset by frustration, and more resentful about not getting enough. Most amazingly, the group of marshmallow-waiters had SAT scores that averaged 210 points higher than the group of marshmallow-grabbers!” ²

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  *Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

- **Flashlight**
  *Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.*

- **Punch Lines**
  *Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.
  
  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.*
**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

We learn at a deeper level when we experience something. For example, one of the best ways to teach delayed gratification is to invite the students to experience it. One way to do this is to offer three M & M candies (or a dollar bill or any kind of treat) to any student who wants to enjoy the reward immediately. For those who wish to wait until the following week in class promise a much bigger reward, such as a whole bag of M & Ms. Experiential learning, of course, is enhanced when there is a time for reflecting and debriefing. In this case you may ask students questions such as:

What factors did you weigh while making your decision either to take the immediate reward or to wait?

How did choosing to wait for a bigger reward make you feel?

How did you feel when others got a bigger reward the next week and you had nothing?

What can you learn from this exercise that might inform decisions you make in your diet? exercise? sexuality? etc.

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**RABBI 101**

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 16.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.

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Ask the students: Do the results surprise you? Why or why not? How can your character be strengthened by delaying gratification? How does this affect your identity?

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1Fundamental Belief No. 22.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

The story of salvation is deeply embedded in the life of Jacob. Overwhelmed with guilt and running for his life, Jacob encounters God on his way to Haran. He dreams of a ladder stretching to heaven. “The ladder represents Jesus,” Ellen White tells us. “Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 184). The story of Jacob showcases God’s unconditional acceptance and grace. There are several other themes that emerge from this season of Jacob’s life. For example, the story underscores the grisly consequences of sin. For more than 20 years Jacob suffered in fear and shame as a result of his deception. Every day Jacob worried that Esau’s hit man would come knocking on his door, reminding us of how sin robs us of the daily joy and freedom we can experience in Christ. Another theme that could be explored in this lesson is the virtue of perseverance. When Jacob found himself on the receiving end of Laban’s trickery, he forged ahead and worked another seven years in order to marry Rachel. We also find the theme of reconciliation in this story. In time, Jacob was reconciled to God and to his estranged brother. And finally, the idea of God using our weaknesses to make us strong is a prevalent theme in Jacob’s life. The flaws and failures in Jacob’s life are easy to find; nevertheless, he soared above his mistakes and emerged a spiritual giant. In the end, Jacob prevailed because of his unyielding faith. God transformed Jacob’s weakness into strength.

II. TARGET

The students will:
• Learn of the unconditional acceptance of God. (Know)
• Be asked to experience the joy of persevering through problems. (Feel)
• Be challenged to commit every aspect of life to God. (Respond)

III. EXPLORE

• Forgiveness from God
• Learning from failure/mistakes
• Faith

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of the student lesson.

As an alternative, ask the students to assume the role of TV personality Dr. Phil and offer advice on how to remedy the following family situations similar to Jacob’s experience:

A son lies to his parents and steals from them. The parents wonder what they should do with this son.

A young man has been ripped off by his brother. His brother is so angry that this young man fears for his life. How can he find reconciliation with the
offended brother?

A businessman signs a contract with his future father-in-law, but when the time comes for the father-in-law to make good on his commitment, he refuses to pay up. Instead, he demands that the businessman continue to work for another seven years. Should this father-in-law be trusted? What advice would you have for the son-in-law?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Remember that story the next time you’re inclined to beat yourself up because of your flaws. Like Jacob in the Bible, you’re a perfect collage of strengths and weaknesses. Embrace them both. For God can work through you even when you feel inadequate; or better yet, especially when you feel inadequate. That’s what we see in the story of Jacob.

The apostle Paul once wrote this: “I quit focusing on [my] handicap. . . . Now I take limitations in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size—abuse, accidents, opposition, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And so the weaker I get, the stronger I become” (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10, Message).

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

Invite the students to line up and represent how Jacob felt during the different seasons of his life. As you read the list of Jacob’s experiences below, have students lie on the floor if they think Jacob felt very low and stand straight up if they believe Jacob felt especially strong at that time. Bending at the waist indicates a neutral feeling on Jacob’s part.

Experiences of Jacob:

• Receiving the birthright from Esau for a bowl of stew
• Trickling his father into giving him the birthright
• Running away in fear that Esau would murder him
• Meeting Rachel
• Getting duped (in a similar fashion to how he had tricked his dad) and having to work seven more years in order to marry Rachel
• Sleeping with the maidservant, Bilhah, thanks to the conniving ways of Rachel
• Leaving Laban
• Reconciling with Esau after 20 years

There are four primary stories included in this biblical passage. Divide students into small groups and have them decide on the central life lessons that emerge from the following stories.
1. Jacob’s dream of the ladder and angels ascending and descending to heaven
2. Jacob working for Laban in return for his wives, Leah and Rachel
3. Jacob wrestling with the angel
4. Jacob meeting Esau

Sharing Context and Background
Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

There are many nuances in this story that offer rich spiritual insight. Here are a few suggestions for further study:

1. The Spiritual Highs and Lows of Jacob—Jacob’s spiritual journey was punctuated with extreme highs and lows. He seemed to have hit bottom when he cried out, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear . . . , then the Lord will be my God” (Genesis 28:20, 21, NIV). Here’s a man whose unbridled greed compelled him to use the most despicable means imaginable to secure the meatiest share of the inheritance now humbly begging for the basic necessities of life. His story offers a valuable lesson in humility.

2. The Meaning Behind the Names—In the ancient world great significance was given to names. Each of the sons of Jacob and Leah got names that disclosed the mother’s thoughts at the time of the birth. All the names reflect the tension between the two sisters. The name “Reuben” means “behold a son.” Leah was extolling the compassion of God, who noticed her affliction and showed her mercy. “Simeon” meant “answer.” She trusted God and He answered. “Levi” meant “attachment.” Her desire with this son was that her husband would at last feel attached to her. “Judah” was an expression of praise to Jehovah. With this son, Leah’s joy was complete. Similarly, further study shows that all of Jacob’s sons had names that were significant.

3. The Contrast Between the Sisters—It is noteworthy that this “second-class wife,” Leah, became the mother of the seed in whom all nations would be blessed. The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 1, offers this contrast between the sisters: “Leah must have been a pious woman, a devoted wife, and a faithful mother. According to the Sacred Record she mentioned the name of Jehovah in connection with the birth of three of her first four sons. Although from an idolatrous family, she must have accepted her husband’s religion and become a sincere believer in Jehovah. In contrast, Rachel’s conversion seems at first to have accomplished little more than a superficial change. While outwardly she too had accepted her husband’s religion, her heart remained attached to the old family idols, or she may have had an idyllic family, she must have accepted the religion of her husband and become a sincere believer in Jehovah. In contrast, Rachel’s conversion seems at first to have accomplished little more than a superficial change. While outwardly she too had accepted her husband’s religion, her heart remained attached to the old family idols, or she may...
have taken them in an attempt to secure the family inheritance (ch. 31:19)” (p. 389). Rachel seems much more self-centered (see Genesis 30:1-3, 8, 15). Moreover, time seemed to soften Jacob’s attitude toward Leah (see Genesis 31:4, 14; 49:31).

4. The Wrestling Match as a Foreshadowing of the Last Days—Ellen White goes into some detail to connect Jacob’s wrestling match with the scenario to be played out at the end of time. It might be helpful for students to explore statements such as these: “Jacob’s experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ’s second coming” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 201). “Such will be the experience of God’s people in their final struggle with the powers of evil. God will test their faith, their perseverance, their confidence in His power to deliver them” (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 202).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have students confess specific struggles and weaknesses to God by writing Him a letter. Then remind them of the story of Jacob that showcases God’s willingness to forgive every fallen sinner. Perhaps, like Jacob, they have messed up and find themselves in the gutter of life. Infuse each student with an extra portion of hope. Emphasize God’s amazing grace. Remember that God specializes in bringing saints out of wells of weakness. Conclude by burning the letters so students can revel in the complete forgiveness of God.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jacob’s story is punctuated with the gritty gravel of real life. He lies. He cheats. He manipulates. His family redefines “dysfunctional.” He needs Dr. Laura, Dr. Phil, and Dr. Seuss! Jacob messes up on a grand scale. Ah, but this inevitably prepares the platform for our God to showcase His grace.

In spite of Jacob’s failures, God’s character ultimately prevailed in his life. It was not an easy journey. It was strewn with lots of potholes along the way. But in the end, Jacob manifested the character of Christ. He grew to love the woman who deceitfully became his wife. He was reconciled to his estranged brother. And he developed into a fully devoted follower of God.

Tips for Top-notch Teaching

A very effective form of teaching comes by way of a testimony. For example, to teach this lesson find someone in the church who has a compelling story of triumphing over a weakness. You can share the concept of God making us strong out of our weakness all you want, but students will remember the idea much longer if they connect a face and a story to it. Put skin on concepts by utilizing the testimony approach to teaching.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is Patriarchs and Prophets, chapters 17 and 18.

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PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Jacob’s family continues to be a source of great pain during this era of his life. First, there is the fiasco involving his daughter, Dinah. After Shechem, son of Hamor the Hivite, violated her, Dinah’s brothers, Simeon and Levi, attacked Hamor’s city and slaughtered every male.

Next, Jacob’s family proves to be a source of great personal pain. After returning to Bethel, Deborah, the nurse for Jacob’s mom, died. This loss was followed by Rachel’s tragic death—which occurred while giving birth to Benjamin. Then Jacob’s father, Isaac, died. To make matters worse, during this period Reuben, Jacob’s oldest son, slept with his father’s concubine, Bilhah. She was the mother of two of Reuben’s half brothers, Dan and Naphtali.

Jacob’s family woes only intensified as he showed blatant favoritism toward his son Joseph. This sparked intense jealousy among Joseph’s brothers. A dream that Joseph’s brothers would someday bow to him only fueled the inferno of envy. The sibling rivalry grew until Joseph’s brothers betrayed him, selling him to merchants. Then Jacob’s sons deceived Jacob by bringing Joseph’s coat covered in blood, suggesting that Joseph had been killed. There is great irony in their act, for now Jacob was deceived in a fashion similar to the way he had duped his dad. Clearly there is plenty in this story to perplex even professional family therapists.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- See the ugly consequences of sin as they are played out in the context of family. *Know*
- Experience the healing grace that God offers to His children. *Feel*
- Have the opportunity to trust God in all family matters. *Respond*

III. EXPLORE

- Family dynamics
- Peer pressure
- Anger

You will find material to help you explore these and other topics with your students at www.leadoutministries.com.

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

You come home from school and plop yourself on the sofa to faze out with your favorite reruns. Your thoughts drift to fond images of your close encounter with “Blue Eyes” in chemistry class.

Suddenly your mom interrupts your fantasy. “I think we met the perfect match for you today—Leslie. Yes! We’ve decided it’s Leslie for you.”
Not that your opinion matters, but you saw Leslie once at a youth rally, and your heart didn’t flutter. Not that Leslie’s ugly, but freckles and braces aren’t your thing. Also, you would prefer someone at least as tall as you.

But your parents have been scouring the social circles for years, and they’re convinced Leslie is the one. So after the formal introductions you and Leslie get married and move in together, even though you are strangers.

Does it seem too ludicrous? It’s not unlike a number of situations in which you already find yourself.

Think about it. You had no choice in who your parents would be. Did you choose your brother or sister? Chances are you didn’t choose your teacher. Yet you are forced to live with these people whom you did not select. The results can be as disastrous as an arranged marriage—but not necessarily.

Even today half of the marriages in the world are arranged. Many of these relationships flourish. Likewise your “arranged marriage” can work. Your family connections can be healthy and gratifying. What makes for a healthy family? The key is not in finding the perfect partner or getting linked up with exceptional siblings. Rather, functional families result when all the members make choices to support and build up the family unit. By doing this, you can contribute your vital part to building a God-honoring family.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

The Bible gives this promise for young people: “Obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has placed them in authority over you. . . . If you honor your father and mother, yours will be a long life, full of blessing” (Ephesians 6:1-3, TLB). In this week’s lesson we observe a family that failed to follow such advice. Our case study features a family that is dysfunctional enough to merit their own reality TV show (similar to The Osbournes!). This takes us back to an era when most marriages were arranged, and yet many of the factors that sabotaged Jacob’s family are just as prevalent today.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- This season of Jacob’s life is filled with many family traumas. Underline each one, then rank them in order of difficulty.
- What picture of God do you get when reading these stories from Jacob’s life?
- Circle the phrases that suggest dysfunction in Jacob’s family.
- What can we learn from this season of Jacob’s life with regard to the following issues? Identify a part of Jacob’s story that informs our understanding of each issue listed below, then write down the principle we learn from the biblical account.
  - The consequences of sin: ________________________________
  - Sanctification (growing to become like Jesus): ________________________________
  - Uncontrolled anger: ________________________________
  - The dangers of being aligned with the world: ________________________________
  - Peer pressure: ________________________________
  - Community: ________________________________
  - Revenge: ________________________________
  - Human nature: ________________________________

If the following stories were produced into Hollywood movies, what titles would you give them?

- Dinah and the Shechemites (Genesis 34) ________________________________
- Jacob’s return to Bethel (Genesis 35:1-15) ________________________________
- The deaths of Rachel and Isaac (Genesis 35:16-29) ________________________________
- Joseph’s dreams (Genesis 37:1-11) ________________________________
- Joseph sold into slavery (Genesis 37:12-36) ________________________________

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share in your own words.

There are many details worth exploring deeper (with the help of a good commentary) in this lesson. Here are some cultural insights that illuminate the major stories in Genesis 34 to 37:

**Dinah and Peer Pressure**—In his treatment of the story of Dinah’s rape, Josephus, the first-century...
Jewish historian, mentions the ancient custom for the girls of Shechem to participate in wild festivities. Dinah, believed by scholars to be about fifteen years old at the time of the incident, was likely in the habit of hanging out with the Shechemite women. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, volume 1, offers this insight: “Dinah was curious to know the ways and customs of the surrounding people. This led to unguarded intimacy with them and ended in her disgrace. Her danger came from seeking to be free from parental control and supervision, and from disregarding the admonition to remain separate from idolaters and their evil habits” (pp. 412, 413). In ancient times, as well as today, peer pressure is an important issue for teens. “Bad company ruins good morals” (1 Corinthians 15:33, ESV).

**Jacob as a Father**—There are numerous hints in the text that Jacob was far too passive in his role as father and spiritual leader in his family. For example, when Jacob learned that Reuben had committed incest with Bilhah, the mother of two of his half brothers, Jacob failed to confront the sin. Notice in Genesis 35:22, 23 when the writer discloses the sordid affair, he then drops the story and goes on to list the names of Jacob’s twelve sons. Another example of Jacob’s passivity is recorded in Genesis 34 when he failed to do anything after his daughter was raped. Understanding this character defect in Jacob helps to explain the deception, the anger, and the out-of-control jealousy that poisoned the ranks of Jacob’s sons—all of these attributes were modeled by the father.

**Joseph’s Coat of Many Colors**—Old Testament scholar, H. C. Leupold, points out that Joseph’s coat of many colors was sleeved and extended to the ankles. His conclusion is based on the Hebrew word used to describe Joseph’s coat, *passeem*, which means “ankles” or “wrists.” Consider the implications of Leupold’s assertion: this was a garment of nobility. This was not clothing that would have been worn by the working class. The laborer’s garb in that day consisted of a short, sleeveless tunic. Such an outfit enabled the worker to freely move his arms or legs. By dressing Joseph in “a richly ornamented robe” Jacob was saying, “You can sport this beautiful garment because you don’t have to work like those brothers of yours.”

### III. CLOSING

**Activity**

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Have the students write modern paraphrases of the following passages:

- Proverbs 6:20-22
- Romans 12:9-13
- Ephesians 6:1-4

In closing, remind the students that no family is perfect. Parents are far from perfect, and kids are just as flawed. However, every family can improve if each member is willing to invest in making it better. The late President John F. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but instead what you can do for your country.”

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**Teaching From . . .**

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Other Eyes**
  
  Ask them how the quotes in Other Eyes convey the point of the story in this lesson.

- **Flashlight**
  
  Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**
  
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them read the passages and ask each one to choose the verse that speaks most directly to them today. Then ask them to explain why they chose the one they did.

  Or you might assign the passages to pairs of students to read aloud and then discuss, in order to choose the most relevant one to them.
for your country.” The same principle rings true for families. Challenge the students: “Ask not what your family can do for you, but what you can do for your family.” Let students know that you are willing to support them in their quest to improve less-than-ideal home situations. Remind them as well that God is a ready help through any trouble.

**Tips for Top-notch Teaching**

“Group investigation” is an effective technique that can be used in teaching a Sabbath School class. This approach comes from the social model of learning and is based on John Dewey’s educational theories. It encourages cooperative inquiry and group learning. To use this approach, have students form small groups and work toward accomplishing a shared goal. For this lesson, the goal might be to design a calendar that facilitates more family time. Another goal might be to plan and present a seminar to the rest of the group or the church on how to improve family communications. The possibilities are endless. The point is to facilitate students learning in community.

**Summary**

*Share the following thoughts in your own words:*

While families have changed through the years, in many ways they remain the same. Jacob’s family lived around 4,000 years ago. Although the culture has changed, some of the moral failures and relational challenges prevalent in Jacob’s family are still common today. From Jacob’s experience, it is important to remember these principles:

- The consequences of sin can plague a family for many generations.
- Sin must be confronted in the family. Ignoring issues only exacerbates the problems.
- Peer pressure and friendships outside of the family have great potential for good or evil.
- Left unchecked, rivalries, envy, and anger can destroy a family.
- You were created for community. It is the one nonnegotiable condition for flourishing as a human being.
- God can bring grace and healing—even to the most horrific and dysfunctional families.

Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 19.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: cornerstoneconnections.adventist.org.